Exploring the Habitus:
A Phenomenological Study of Transformative Learning Processes

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Exploring the Habitus:
A Phenomenological Study of Transformative Learning Processes

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this personal inquiry to the memory of two people who impacted my life and inspired me in innumerable ways. First, to my father, Roger Kennedy, who loved me as only a father can, and who modeled courage and commitment in pursuing personal growth and transformation the last several decades of his life up until the moment he died. Words can never express how much I love and miss you, Dad.

Second, a very special note of acknowledgement and thanks goes to my dear friend, Dr. Max Boisot, whose intellectual curiosity, rigor, and passion for learning never ceased to inspire me. His probing questions and gentle humor challenged me to reach further and work harder throughout my research and in other areas of my life. From the bottom of my heart, I thank you, Max.

May you both rest in peace and continue your learning—however that unfolds.

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Abstract of Dissertation

Exploring the Habitus:
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This qualitative study investigated how a holistic approach to learning may support transformation. By examining how an environment incorporating elements of mind-body-emotion-spirit impacted members of a holistic health center, the study elicited a description of how such an approach is experienced in support of transformative learning. The focus of the study was transformation of the *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1990), an embodied system of dispositions that is visible in a pattern of behaviors.

The problem context for this research was the type of transformation that results in a new perspective with a concurrent change in behavior, and the deep level of learning that makes ongoing adaptive change possible. Such a long-lasting modification of perspective may result in changes in lifestyle and behavior that can be recognized as part of a transformative learning process (Mezirow, 2000).

Ten individuals met the membership and demographic criteria of the study and were accepted as participants. The interpretivist research design used phenomenological methodology due to its emphasis on understanding the lived experience of the participant. In-depth interviews (Seidman, 2006) elicited this perspective by exploring the ways in which individuals interpreted and derived meaning from their experiences. The interview transcripts and participant journals were crafted into Participant Profiles as well as analyzed with descriptive line coding to obtain both individual-level and overarching themes.

Three overarching themes emerged in response to the research questions exploring the relationship of a holistic approach to learning in transforming the habitus.

In the first theme, participants discussed the interwoven interplay of the mind, body, emotion, and spirit, describing the importance of physical practices in facilitating change. The second theme emphasized how individuals transformed through shifting from an external to an internal focus. The third overarching theme depicted how individuals transformed themselves in and through relationships.

In synthesizing the theoretical approaches of transformative learning (Mezirow, 2000) and strong structuration (Stones, 2005), the study demonstrates a way to further theorize, research, and implement practices to facilitate a transformative learning experience in the context of the interdependent relationship of the individual and the collective.

Table of Contents

Page

Dedication iv

Acknowledgments v

Abstract of Dissertation vi

List of Figures xiv

List of Tables xv

Chapter 1: Introduction 1

Overview 1

Statement of the Problem 6

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions 8

Conceptual Framework of the Study 8

Relationship of Learning to Internal and External Structures 10

Learning and Internal Structures 10

Learning and External Structures 13

Relationship of Internal and External Structures 15

Statement of Potential Significance 19

Overview of the Methodology 21

Delimitations and Limitations of the Study 23

Definitions of Key Terms 24

Chapter Summary and Overview of Remaining Chapters 28

Chapter 2: Literature Review 29

Introduction 29

Epistemological Roots of Transformative Learning 29

Historical Development of Transformative Learning 31
Theoretical Foundation and Conceptual Framework 34
External Structures 35
Internal Structures: Conjuncturally-Specific and Habitus 37
Conjuncturally-Specific Internal Structures 38
Habitus Internal Structures 38
Habits of Mind 44
Active Agency: Levels of Learning and Whole-Person Learning 45
Levels of Learning 46
Whole-Person Learning 48
Conclusion 50
Chapter 3: Methodology 53
Overview 53
Research Procedures 53
Ontology and Epistemology 53
Research Perspective 56
Research Design 58
Research Questions 58
Research Design Strategy 62
Data Collection Methods 62
In-Depth, Semi-Structured, Two-Part Interviews 62
Participant and Researcher Journaling 64
Participant Observation 65

Subjectivity Statement 66
Contextual Analysis 67
Research Site/Participants 68
Research Site 68
Participants 69
Data Analysis 71
Verification and Trustworthiness 72
Conclusion 75
Chapter 4: Results—Part One 77
Overview 77
Findings 78
Overview of Participants 78
Participant Profiles 79
Grace 79
Julia 84
Cynthia 92
Anisha 98
Raina 103
Dira 111
Debra 119
Nolan 124
Nakari 131
Tuan 136

Summary 140
Chapter 5: Results—Part Two 142
Overview 142
Findings 142
Contextual Description of Research Site 142
Aggregate View 146
Comparison of Codes by Family 151
Analysis and Profile Maps by Participant 156
Participant Profile Analysis: Grace 158
Participant Profile Analysis: Julia 162
Participant Profile Analysis: Cynthia 167
Participant Profile Analysis: Anisha 170
Participant Profile Analysis: Raina 173
Participant Profile Analysis: Dira 178
Participant Profile Analysis: Debra 183
Participant Profile Analysis: Nolan 187
Participant Profile Analysis: Nakari 192
Participant Profile Analysis: Tuan 196
Synthesis of Results 200
Minority Findings 206
Summary of Overarching Themes 207
Theme #1: Linkage of Physical Practices to Transformation 207
Theme #2: Participants' Perception of Shifting to an Internal Focus 210

Theme #3: Recognizing Transformation in the Dynamics of Relationship 211
Summary 214
Chapter 6: Conclusions and Recommendations 217
Discussion and Interpretation of Results.....217
Summary of Interpretation by Research Question 218
Research Question #1 218
Research Question #2 219
Research Question #3 221
Note. 222
Primary Participant Theme: 222
Secondary Participant Theme: 222
Tertiary Participant Theme: 222
Theme #1: Linkage of Physical Practices to Transformation.....223
Theme #2: Participants' Perception of Shifting to an Internal Focus.....227
Theme #3: Recognizing Transformation in the Dynamics of Relationship 235
Interaction of Overarching Themes.....239
Implications.....240
Theory 240
Transformative Learning Theory.....241
Strong Structuration Theory 244
Research 253
Practice.....259
Concluding Remarks.....262

Appendix A: Interview Protocol....266
Appendix B: Background Questionnaire....272
Appendix C: Study Invitation....273
Appendix D: Screening Questionnaire....274
Appendix E: Research Consent Form....275
Appendix F: Audio/Video Release Form....279
References....280

List of Figures

Page

Figure 1. Internal Structures: The habitus as a system of dispositions. 7

Figure 2. Conceptual framework of the transformative learning process. 10

Figure 3. Interrelationships of transformative learning theory constructs. 32

Figure 4. Affective phenomena. 41

Figure 5. Interview questions. 150

Figure 6. Codes per family by participant. 156

Figure 7. Profile map for Grace. 162

Figure 8. Profile map for Julia. 167

Figure 9. Profile map for Cynthia. 170

Figure 10. Profile map for Anisha. 173

Figure 11. Profile map for Raina. 178

Figure 12. Profile map for Dira. 183

Figure 13. Profile map for Debra. 187

Figure 14. Profile map for Nolan. 192

Figure 15. Profile map for Nakari. 196

Figure 16. Profile map for Tuan. 200

Figure 17. Linkage of physical practices to transformation. 228

Figure 18. Shifting in focus from external to internal structures. 234

Figure 19. Relationship between internal and external structures. 236

Figure 20. Interaction of overarching themes. 240

Figure 21. Continuum of change. 254

List of Tables

Page

Table 1. The Levels of Learning 47

Table 2. Methodology Table 59

Table 3. Participant Demographic Overview 78

Table 4. Selection of Participant Codes Sorted by Groundedness 148

Table 5. Inclusive Code Comparison 149

Table 6. Category and Frequency of Interview Questions Asked 151

Table 7. Examples of Codes for Each Family 152

Table 8. Participant Example of Top Codes by Family 154

Table 9. Comparison of Codes per Family by Participant 155

Table 10. Relative Percentages of Code Family by Participant 158

Table 11. Participant Themes 202

Table 12. Comparison of Top Families and Codes by Participant 203

Table 13. Relationship of Themes to Research Questions 222

Chapter 1: Introduction

Overview

Learning, growth, and change are natural processes of life for most adults. Learning that reaches the deepest aspects of one's being, including one's core assumptions, beliefs, and ways of interpreting the world appears much more difficult to achieve. Transformative learning (Mezirow, 1978) is one stream of theory, research, and practice within adult learning and development that has for more than three decades studied profound changes that can occur as a result of learning. In defining transformative learning, Mezirow (2000) describes it as a process in which our frames of reference are transformed to "make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change, and reflective so that they may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action" (p. 8).

Understanding the process of transformative learning requires exploring not only the mechanisms of learning specific to the individual but also looking at the cross-level interactions, that is, the reciprocal relationship of the individual at a micro level to collectives and structures at a meso level within a social context. To better comprehend this dynamic relationship and its impact on personal transformation, this study uses a phenomenological perspective to explore how a holistic approach to learning may influence an individual's potential change of perceptual individual schema, or habitus (Bourdieu, 1990), during the transformative learning process.

Cardiac surgeons report that when their heart patients are told they must change their lifestyle habits to survive, only one in seven patients is able to do so (Kegan & Lahey, 2009). Clearly, cognitive awareness of the need to change is not an issue. Why

then is it so difficult for individuals to follow through on rational decisions regarding desired behavioral shifts? Bourdieu (1990) asserts that the primary habitus is an embodied internal structure that is acquired through early social conditioning; it tends to influence human action from an unconscious level of awareness and is particularly durable throughout one's life.

The far-reaching impact of the habitus seems similar to Mezirow's (1996) statement that "A belief is a habit that guides action" (p. 163). There are differing definitions of the construct of "belief." Mezirow's use of the term appears analogous to Wittgenstein's assertion that one's framework propositions are beliefs that form the basis of one's unquestioned assumptions (Campbell, 2001). Eilan (2000) describes framework beliefs as "those fundamental beliefs we do not question, and which globally constrain our inferences and our interpretation of our experiences" (p. 108). Similar to the unquestioned nature of framework beliefs, Mezirow (2000) defines habit as a "set of assumptions—broad, generalized, orienting predispositions that act as a filter for interpreting the meaning of experience" (p. 17). In the case of both framework beliefs and habits, they seem to fundamentally influence an individual's disposition to act in certain ways. The two dimensions of "habits of mind" and the resultant "point of view" make up what Mezirow (2000) calls a "frame of reference" (p. 16), "the structure of assumptions and expectations through which we filter sense impressions" (p. 16).

Individuals construct meaning within their social context, make decisions, and take action using the perceptual filters of their unique habitus. In describing the construct, Bourdieu (2005) clarifies that the habitus is a "system of dispositions" (p. 43) that provides the long-lasting schemata underlying action. This interrelated system of

dispositions may also be understood as patterns of behavior that create a tendency to act in certain ways. Bloomer et al. (2004) describe the dispositions of the habitus as principles that guide practices, linking meaning-making with action. An important aspect of the habitus is that dispositions are acquired chronologically, with primary social experiences being disproportionately influential (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992).

Despite the apparent similarity of habitus to habits of mind, the habitus incorporates the notion of the complex interrelated nature of the embodied mind as expressed in its variegated systems of dispositions, whereas the habits of mind construct appears to be more related to the rational aspects of cognition that drive behavior (Yorks & Kasl, 2002). The difference between habits of mind (Mezirow, 1996) and habitus (Bourdieu, 1990) is even more fundamental in terms of the assumptions underlying the two constructs. The notion of habits of mind focuses attention on a rational mental faculty that, while acknowledged to incorporate some values and assumptions below the level of conscious awareness, nevertheless implies an ability to transform through the process of critical self-reflection (Mezirow, 1998).

Current philosophers of mind, however, assert that reason and reflection cannot be separated from their inherently embodied nature, stating that "Reason is not disembodied…, but arises from the nature of our brains, bodies, and bodily experience" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999, p. 4). They go on to assert that, in contrast to the emphasis among some transformative learning scholars on critical reflection, "the mind is inherently embodied, reason is shaped by the body, and since most thought is unconscious, the mind cannot be known simply by self-reflection" (p. 5).

While rejecting the Cartesian dualism of mind and matter, cognitive scientists still describe the interactions of both individuals and their environment (Clark, 1997, 2008; Clark & Chalmers, 1998; Noë, 2009; Varela et al., 1991). Strong structuration theory (Stones, 2005) frames this interaction as consisting of a reciprocal duality between external and internal structures, incorporating the dispositional aspect of habitus into the agent's internal structures. These internal structures consist of acquired dispositions that influence both the agent's interaction with the external environment as well as the agent's decisions for action within a specific *in-situ* ontological context.

The enactive approach to cognition (Stewart et al., 2010; Thompson, 2007; Varela et al., 1991) describes the reciprocal interaction between a living entity and its environment as structural coupling, where it is the "history of recurrent interactions between two or more systems that leads to a structural congruence between them" (Thompson, 2007, p. 45). By means of this structural coupling, the theory of enaction contends that cognition, broadly defined, is a type of self-emergent consciousness that occurs dynamically and spontaneously due to the interaction of elements (individual and environment) within an interconnected system.

From a phenomenological perspective, the strong structuration (Stones, 2005) framework should be regarded as a theoretical tool that artificially separates what is, in fact, indivisible. The French philosopher Merleau-Ponty expressed the inextricably intertwined nature of self and world when he said, "The world is not an object such that I have in my possession the law of its making; it is the natural setting of, and field for, all my thoughts and all my explicit perceptions" (Merleau-Ponty as cited in Varela et al., 1991, p. 3).

Due to the use of the habitus as a multidimensional complex system of dispositions, exploring the transformation of this system, or aspects thereof, requires a similarly complex approach to transformative learning. Whole person learning (Boyd & Fales, 1983; Yorks & Kasl, 2006) emphasizes the importance of a holistic approach that incorporates all aspects of a person's being; mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual. This use of a holistic approach acknowledges that the whole is more than the sum of its parts, and that to be transformational a learning process should engage the whole person. With its variegated nature as an embodied system of dispositions, the habitus offers a means of exploring how a complex learning process can impact the core of one's being.

Since early social conditioning and interaction seems to play such a major role in the formation of the primary habitus (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) as well as in the transformative learning process, it is important to explore this relationship of situational context as represented by external structures and an agent's internal structures. Mead (1934) was one of the early social science scholars to provide a theoretical framework for understanding the significance of the social environment in creating a sense of "Self." According to Mead, both the attitudes of "others" as well as larger social groups influenced the development of the "Self," stating that "there is a social process out of which selves arise" (p. 164). In this sense, Mead was one of the proponents of the social constructionist view that reality is apprehended and co-created within a social context.

This notion of a self arising out of the immersion in a social environment is echoed by many other authors (Bandura, 2001; Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Bluth, 1982; Clark & Chalmers, 1998; Dewey, 1922/2002). Like Mead (1934), Berger and Luckmann (1966) propound the social constructionist view that individual and environment are

indivisible in terms of the reality that is both co-created and mutually understood. Berger and Luckmann contribute to the theoretical understanding of the intersubjective co-creation of reality, extending this proposition so far as to say that "We not only live in the same world, we participate in each other's being" (p. 130). From this perspective, environment not only provides a container in which the individual can grow and be sustained; the environment is an integral part *of* the individual. To discuss personal transformation then, it becomes necessary to consider the external structures of the social environment as an inseparable aspect of an individual's internal structures (Stones, 2005), both in terms of who they are as well as who they wish to become.

Statement of the Problem

A plethora of self-help books in any library or bookstore attest to the widespread desire of individuals to change some aspect of their selves. Despite all the apparent recipes for successful self-improvement, most people would likely admit difficulties with making behavioral changes, whether related to career development, relationships, or weight management. Current authors in the fields of psychology and self-improvement address such challenges as one's "immunity to change" (Kegan & Lahey, 2009, p. 32) or the capacity for change (Seligman, 2007).

The challenge of change is amplified in an organizational context where managers often resort to the "carrot or stick" approach to motivate the desired behavioral shifts (Pink, 2010). To make a change in one's behavior often requires a deep level of learning about the internal structures of oneself and the external structures of one's social context, a level of learning described by Bateson (1972/2000) as Level II or III (LII/III). It is at these levels that individuals assess the assumptions and worldviews that guide behavior,

leading to a depth of understanding and learning that can shift perspectives and mental models sufficiently to generate new sustained patterns of behavior. However, adults in the 21st century have been inculcated in a style of education and learning that Bateson describes as Level 0 or I (L0/I), learning by rote and providing the "right" answer in an environment that is relatively stable and predictable.

Most learning activities are targeted and oriented to specific outcomes, such as learning objectives outlined in traditional classrooms, or in corporate development programs. However, for the type of transformation to occur that results in a change in the individual's system of dispositions, a process orientation may be required. Due to the complexity of the interaction between the habitus, itself an interrelated system of dispositions with the earliest formed primary habitus at its core (see Figure 1), and the social environment of external structures, true and lasting transformation may be difficult to achieve. The problem addressed by this study is thus the type of transformation that results in a sustained new perspective with a concurrent change in behavior, and the deep level of learning that makes such ongoing adaptive change possible. Such a long-lasting modification of perspective may result in changes in lifestyle and behavior that can be recognized as part of a transformative learning process.

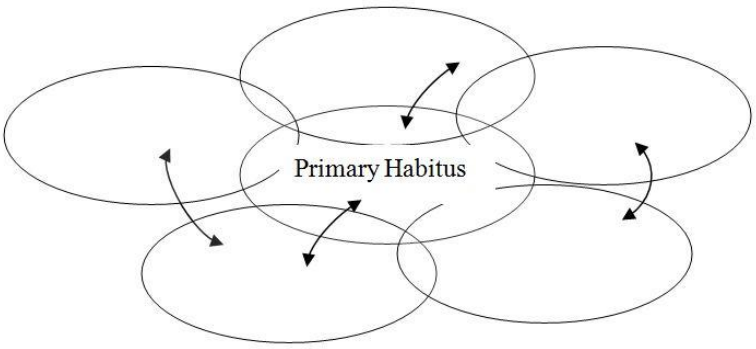

Figure 1. Internal Structures: The habitus as a system of dispositions.

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to explore how an individual's worldview or perceptual schema, as designated by the system of dispositions known as the habitus (Bourdieu, 1990), is influenced by holistic learning processes incorporating a mind/body/emotion approach during the transformative learning process. Such an approach is exemplified by whole person learning strategies that incorporate "multiple ways of knowing" (Yorks & Kasl, 2002, p. 185) at an affective, cognitive, and kinesthetic level of experience.

The overarching research question addresses this issue as follows:

1. What is the relationship of a holistic approach to learning to transformation of the habitus as a system of dispositions?

To better understand this process, the study asks the following sub-questions:

2. How is the dynamic interaction between the conjuncturally-specific and habitus aspects of internal structures influenced during the transformative learning process?
3. How do external and internal structures co-evolve during the transformative learning process?

Conceptual Framework of the Study

Transformative learning theory offers an explanation of how profound learning, as seen in a perspective transformation, may occur in adults as an ongoing or epochal process (Mezirow, 2000). A perspective transformation consists of a change in the meaning perspective that influences the way individuals perceive the world with a specific frame of reference. Bourdieu (1990) describes such habitual ways of thinking,

perceiving, and acting as a result of one's embodied habitus, the subjective means of both apprehending and impacting objective reality.

This notion of interacting from one's internal perspective with an externally perceived reality is supported by the theoretical framework of strong structuration (Stones, 2005) with its "quadripartite cycle of structuration" (p. 9) consisting of:

1. *external structures* as conditions of action;
2. *internal structures* within the agent;
3. *active agency*, including a range of aspects involved when agents draw upon internal structures in producing practical action;
4. *outcomes* (as external and internal structures and as events) (p. 9).

The conceptual framework in Figure 2 illustrates the relationships of these elements of strong structuration. The transformative learning process is conceptualized as occurring within the agent, shown as three concentric circles, in conjunction with reciprocal interaction with the environment, represented by external structures. The following sections describe the plausible relationships indicated by the arrows in Figure 2: the relationship of learning to internal and external structures; and the relationship of internal and external structures.

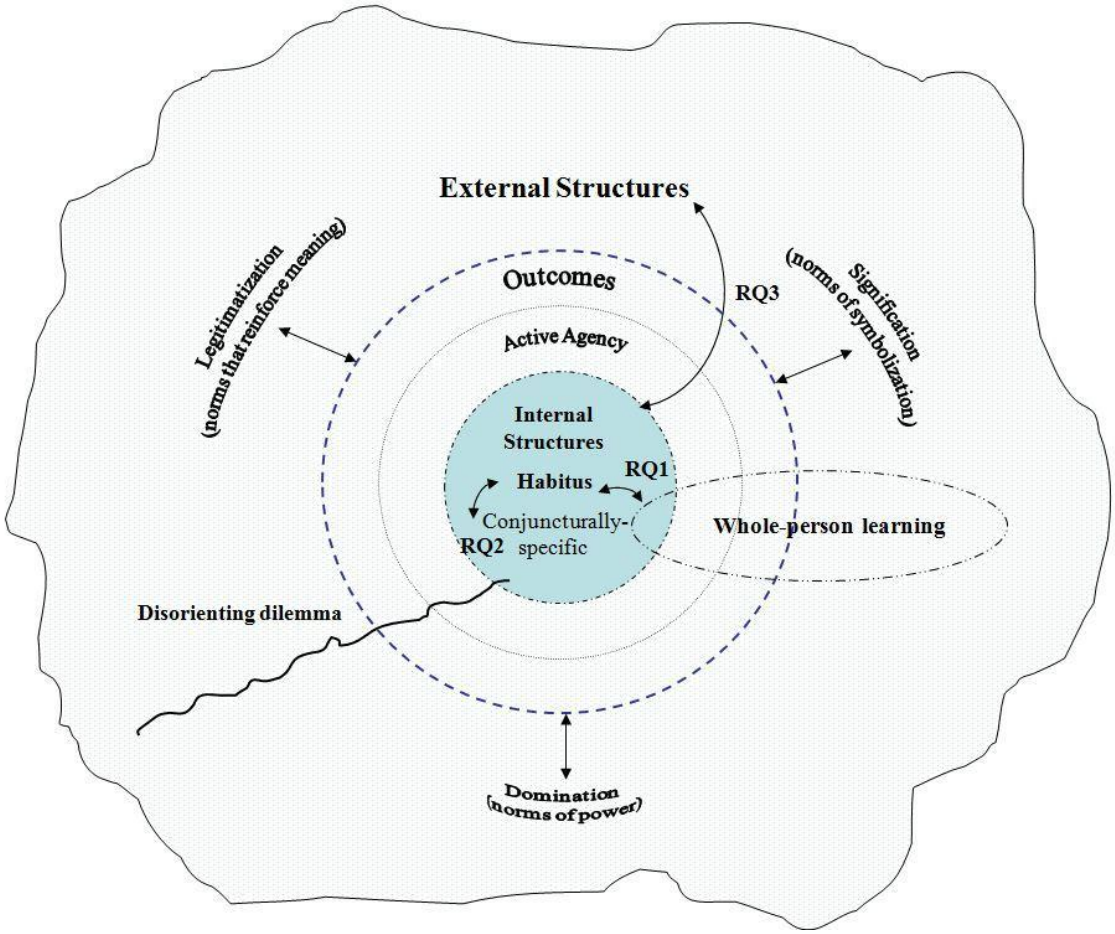

Figure 2. Conceptual framework of the transformative learning process.

Relationship of Learning to Internal and External Structures

Learning and Internal Structures

Learning is a process that occurs naturally as part of the ongoing aspect of life, or it may be engaged in purposefully with the goal of achieving a particular objective. One definition of adult learning describes it as "a change in behavior, a gain in knowledge or skills, and an alternation or re-structuring of prior knowledge" (Hoare, 2006, p. 11). From a biological perspective, Maturana and Varela (1980) define learning as the "transformation through experience of the behavior of an organism" (p. 35). The notion

of behavior, in this sense, may be not only the actions of a particular organism, but a "collective phenomenon comprising brain, body, and environment" (Thompson, 2007, p. 71). Mezirow (1981) expands on the notion of adult learning in general to define a transformative type of learning that leads to what he terms a "perspective transformation," a process of becoming

> critically aware of how and why the structure of psycho-cultural assumptions has come to constrain the way we see ourselves and our relationships, reconstituting this structure to permit a more inclusive and discriminating integration of experience and acting upon these new understandings. (p. 6)

The process of learning and restructuring prior knowledge is at the center of the overarching research question: *What is the relationship of a holistic approach to learning to transformation of the habitus as a system of dispositions?* The focus in this section is thus on describing the plausible relationship between learning and internal structures, particularly the process of transforming such structures through a holistic approach to learning, as well as the relationship of learning to external structures.

Many authors discuss various elements of the transformational process at an individual level. Berger and Luckmann (1966) describe the type of re-socialization that must take place when an individual transforms his subjective reality to the extent that he actually "switches worlds" (p. 157). They name such extreme transformation "alternation" to distinguish it from the more common process of modifying one's subjective reality in response to ongoing normal changes in one's environment.

In describing re-socialization, Berger and Luckmann (1966) emphasize that it is both a cognitive and affective process, that is, more holistic in nature than a predominantly rational focus. Later authors likewise stress the importance of incorporating affect and emotion into the model of personal transformation they term

"radical change" (Fiol & O'Connor, 2002, p. 532; Huy, 1999, p. 325). Bandura (2001) places perceived self-efficacy at the heart of human agency, including the ability to change. His description of forethought and self-reflection as part of the core aspects of agency emphasize the role of conscious cognition more than affect. This is similar to Mezirow's (2000) emphasis on critical reflection as the path to perspective transformation.

York and Kasl (2002, 2006) contend that there is a bias in Western philosophy of education (Dewey, 1916) on emphasizing the role of conscious cognition to reflect on experience and develop self-knowledge that may result in some level of transformation. While some authors take a more holistic perspective by incorporating both affect and cognition into their description of transformation (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Cranton & Roy, 2003; Dirkx et al., 2006; Fiol & O'Connor, 2002; Huy, 1999), other scholars (Bandura, 2001; Mezirow, 2000) emphasize primarily cognitive aspects of understanding the self.

Being an integral part of internal structures, the system of dispositions known as the habitus is essential to the learning process. Earlier definitions have described the comprehensive nature of the habitus which incorporates the somatic aspect of embodied history, as well as the cognitive nature of individual schemata. Bourdieu (1990) explains further that the habitus is the impetus for change in terms of its creativity, inventiveness, and adaptive nature. Such a description links back to the earlier definition of learning as a "change in behavior. . . or re-structuring of prior knowledge" (Hoare, 2006, p. 11).

In contrast to a primarily rational, cognitive methodology of learning, the inclusion of affective and kinesthetic dimensions represents a more holistic approach

(Yorks & Kasl, 2002, 2006). Wacquant (2004) further evokes the notion of duality of internal and external structures in describing practice as a means of engaging the "mutual solicitation between a body and a field that question and provoke each other" (p. 117). His longitudinal study of the practice of boxing led him to emphasize the importance of actual physical practice where sparring was just one example of a type of learning that reeducates the "body-mind complex" (Dewey as cited in Wacquant, 2004, p. 97) as a "multi-sensorial structure" (Wacquant, 2004, p. 87).

Learning and External Structures

Another critical relationship to consider in the transformative learning process is that between learning and external structures. That is, learning ultimately takes place at an individual level, however, such learning may be conceptualized as being part of an externally imposed learning environment, that is, part of an agent's external structures.

When an agent is actively involved in the process of learning, the type or level of learning that occurs may vary. Bateson (1972/2000) describes a hierarchical typology of learning from Level 0-IV that delineates differences in learning processes and outcomes. Level 0 (L0) represents simple stimulus and response type of learning as described by the behavioralist approach (Merriam, et al., 2007). Level I (LI) is one step beyond L0 but is still a type of rote learning. Both L0 and L1 are typically found in most educational institutions and more or less day-to-day life, where the learning results in incremental changes within an individual learner but not the context in which the learning is understood.

According to Bateson (1972/2000), Level II (LII) is the point at which learners begin to reflect on the assumptions of their own perceptual schema, sometimes prompting

a reevaluation and adjustment of assumptions within a specific context of learning. Level III (LIII) learning is catalyzed by a perception of conflict with the LII framework, similar perhaps to Mezirow's (1994) description of a "disorienting dilemma" (p. 223). McWhinney (2005) clarifies that LIII incorporates more of a continuous process of questioning and modifying core assumptions, as compared to the stability that may be achieved after coming to a new perspective in LII learning. Both LII and LIII learning correspond to the enhanced and more inclusive worldview that Mezirow (2000) states is characterized by a perspective transformation. Research into this process of a deeper level of learning as indicated by LII or LIII may yield insights into how to more effectively make it possible for individuals to sustain transformation.

Another consideration in the learning process is the role of narratives in creating memory and continuity between past, present, and future. Gallagher (2000) refers to the self-image produced by this process as the "narrative self" (p. 15). The learning that occurs through stories and recounted as the narrative of one's life may not always be a conscious, rational, or reflective process. Rather, it may be more akin to implicit learning (Reber, 1993) that occurs beneath the level of conscious awareness.

While the LII level of learning seems to emphasize a more cognitive approach, Bateson (1972/2000) posits that it may not even be possible to rationally describe the LIII learning experience. For this type of learning, the expanded ways of knowing as described by whole-person learning (Yorks & Kasl, 2002, 2006) incorporate affective, cognitive, kinesthetic and other ways of integrating such a deep level of learning.

According to developmental psychologist Thelen (2000), a holistic approach to learning is imperative to fully engage the embodied cognitive apparatus through dynamic interaction and coupling with the external environment. She explains that

> To say that cognition is *embodied* means that it arises from bodily interactions with the world and is continually meshed with them. From this point of view, therefore, cognition depends on the kinds of experiences that come from having a body with particular perceptual and motor capabilities that are inseparably linked and that together from the matrix within which reasoning, memory, emotion, language, and all other aspects of mental life are embedded. The developmental issue. . . becomes not so much to describe the purely abstract structures of the mind but to understand the emergence of a dynamic and flexible coupling between direct and online cognition. (Thelen, 2000, p. 5)

Relationship of Internal and External Structures

The second research question asks: How is the dynamic interaction between the conjuncturally-specific and habitus aspects of internal structures influenced during the transformative learning process? Within internal structures, Stones (2005) describes two different types of dispositions, the conjuncturally-specific and the general-dispositional, or habitus (Bourdieu, 1990). While the conjuncturally-specific type of disposition relates to the agent's situated role or position within a specific context and occurs at the nexus of interaction between internal and external structures, the habitus is acquired within the context of external structures.

The primary habitus is of particular interest in this study due to its development by means of early social conditioning as well as the characterization of the habitus as incorporating unconscious schemata that function as a "matrix of patterns of cognition, perception and action that produces in interplay with actual context conditions of the social field an actor is situated in, the praxis of the actor" (Fuchs, 2003, p. 395). The embodiment of the habitus at a level beneath conscious awareness may imply more

difficulty in surfacing and transforming through the cognitive, rational means of reflection as described by transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 2000).

An individual wishing to transform the system of dispositions within one's internal structures would be engaging in what Mezirow (1978) terms a perspective transformation, and what Huy (1999) describes as "radical change," a "discontinuous change in the basic philosophy of one person" (p. 325). Some scholars contend that such a deep change typically involves both affective and cognitive processes (Cranton & Roy, 2003; Fiol & O'Connor, 2002; Huy, 1999; Taylor, 2007) and impacts personal agency at multiple levels, including identity and core assumptions. According to Hoare (2002), Erikson defines identity as the "partly conscious but predominantly unconscious sense of who one is as a person and as a contributor to the work of one's society" (p. 31). Erikson also addresses the interplay of conscious and unconscious cognition in his explication of the influence of beliefs on how one perceives reality. In his later years, he reversed the popular statement of "seeing is believing" to "believing is seeing" (Hoare, 2002, p. 109). With this statement, Erikson explicitly echoes Parsons (Bluth, 1982) in depicting how perceptual filters, often at an unconscious level, influence an individual's view of the world.

Perceptual filters illustrate one way in which the actor imposes the lens of the internal structures on the perception of external structures. Fuchs (2003) draws on the lessons of complexity to illustrate how active agency resembles bottom-up emergence in terms of unpredictable outcomes. Not only does the habitus itself manifest the paradox of "chance and necessity, freedom and determinism, creativity and conditioning, the unconscious and consciousness, society and the individual" (Fuchs, 2003, p. 393), but it

also interacts with the external environment in ways that produce new structures. Fuchs theorizes that both society at a macro level and the individual habitus at a micro level demonstrate the characteristics of a self-organizing system in which there is the "appearance of at least one new systemic quality that cannot be reduced to the element of the system" (p. 398). Wacquant (2004) echoes this interaction of micro and macro levels in his assertion that the habitus co-evolves in context, with dispositions the result of "individual and collective reason" (p. 17).

This notion of individual and collective co-evolution begins to address the third research question: How do external and internal structures co-evolve during the transformative learning process? Scholars from various streams of literature have theorized about the influence on the individual of external structures as experienced in a social context (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Bourdieu, 1990; Hoare, 2002; Mead, 1934; Stones, 2005). Berger and Luckmann describe the process of primary socialization as both a cognitive and affective process whereby a child develops an identity by means of absorbing roles and attitudes in a primary social context. The identification of the child with the social context is internalized, making it difficult for the adult to later change aspects of the identity should the desire arise.

Parsons (Bluth, 1982) addresses this notion of how the social context or cultural setting contributes to the formation of core assumptions in terms of latent pattern maintenance. The "L" quadrant of his AGIL model represents the socialization process that is responsible for the maintenance of institutionalized values, as well as how such values are manifested in behavior. Bluth (1982) describes institutionalization as the "process whereby actor systems translate cultural values and ideas into ways of doing and

interacting" (p. 52). In terms of the influence of the socializing environment such as culture on the individual actor, Parsons depicts the contextual situation as imposing a type of filter on the actor's perception that may be "explicit, implicit, conscious or unconscious" (Bluth, 1982, p. 26).

According to Parsons, the sharing of cultural norms is a prerequisite for the stability of any social system. Giddens (1983) appears to concur with other scholars (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Bourdieu, 1990; Mead, 1934) regarding the influence of social and cultural norms on the individual, describing such normative rules as legitimization structures as well as the external structures of signification and domination that materially influence internal structures such as semantic rules and beliefs regarding power and authority. Jarzabkowski (2008) incorporates these three external structures of legitimization, signification and domination into one "institutional realm" (p. 622) that she describes as providing a historical background of beliefs, norms and power for individual actors. Key to this concept is the assertion that these external structures become internalized, forming a substrate for active agency.

Mezirow (1978) likewise addresses the topic of external structures such as culture on the development of an individual's internal structures and belief system. He describes an individual's meaning perspectives as being formed by the "structure of cultural assumptions within which new experience is assimilated to—and transformed by—one's past experience" (p. 101). These cultural assumptions may emanate from any type of social system, familial, educational, political, religious, within which the individual is embedded. Wacquant (2004) demonstrates the critical nature of social context in his anthropological study of his own apprenticeship as a boxer, asserting that the learning of

a pugilistic habitus, defined as the "specific set of bodily and mental schemata" (p. 16) that characterizes a boxer, is only possible by means of a "network of relations" (p. 124) within a specific context.

Cognitive science scholars similarly emphasize the dynamic interrelationship between internal and external structures. Clark and Chalmers (1998) coin the term "active externalism" (p. 8) to describe the active role of the environment in cognition, stating that "the human organism is linked with an external entity in a two-way interaction, creating a *coupled system* that can be seen as a cognitive system in its own right" (p. 8). From their perspective, learning within a context of external structures is intimately related to the individual's development at a neural level. They develop this proposition further to posit that "Once we recognize the crucial role of the environment in constraining the evolution and development of cognition, we see that extended cognition is a core cognitive process, not an add-on extra" (p. 12).

The common theme in this discussion is the influential nature of the social context, as described by external structures such as familial background, work and community settings, on the co-evolution of an individual's internal structures. The conjuncturally-specific aspect of internal structures as manifested in role-specific identities such as family and occupational roles represents the theoretical point at which these external and internal forces recursively interact.

Statement of Potential Significance

While theory, research, and practice related to transformative learning has addressed many of the cognitive and emotional aspects of personal learning and change (Cranton, 2006; Mezirow, 1978, 1981, 2000; Taylor, 1997, 1998, 2007), far less attention

has been paid to ways in which to use holistic or whole-person approaches (Yorks & Kasl, 2002, 2006) that incorporate multiple paths that may be required to transform a system of dispositions. Thus, it is important to study the transformative learning process for four reasons: (a) to enrich transformative learning scholarship by contributing to an understanding of how a holistic approach supports transformative learning; (b) to incorporate an understanding in adult learning education of how an individual's social context influences the type of learning that occurs; (c) to expand on transformative learning research by presenting a diverse set of perspectives on the experience of the transformative learning process as described by individuals from various demographic groups; and (d) to enhance the theoretical framework of transformative learning with a strong structuration lens.

Within adult learning theory and practice, transformative learning scholars offer a multitude of perspectives on the outcomes and processes of transformative learning (Cranton, 2006; Cranton & Roy, 2003; Dirkx et al., 2006; Mezirow, 1978, 1981, 1994, 2000; Taylor, 1997, 1998, 2007; Yorks & Kasl, 2002, 2006). This study follows and expands on the stream of emphasis on holistic learning by focusing on a construct, the habitus (Bourdieu, 1990), which is itself representative of the complex, embodied aspect of the self. Additionally, the habitus is incorporated into the internal structures construct of strong structuration theory (Stones, 2005) which offers a framework for conceptualizing and researching the interdependent and reciprocal nature of the cross-level interactions between the micro (individual) and meso levels of social context. A better understanding of the individual's phenomenological experience of this dynamic relationship as it pertains to learning could improve not

only the theoretical approach to transformative learning, but also suggest alternate means of researching and facilitating the process of transformative learning. The following section provides an overview of the methodology to be used in the study.

Overview of the Methodology

At the heart of transformative learning is the individual's personal, subjective interpretation of what transformation is and how it may occur. To begin to understand this first-person lived experience, this study used an interpretivist, subjective approach (Burrell & Morgan, 1979) to explore this phenomenon. Within the interpretivist framework, the social constructionist perspective asserts the reciprocal, interdependent relationship between individual and social context. This view is in accordance with the emphasis of strong structuration theory (Stones, 2005) on the dynamic and recursive relationship between an agent's external and internal structures.

While the interpretivist paradigm utilizes a range of qualitative methodological approaches, phenomenology is most concerned with understanding the lived experience of the individual (Gallagher & Zahavi, 2008; Polkinghorne, 1989; Van Manen, 1990). One of the most direct means of eliciting this experience is through in-depth interviewing that focuses on exploring and understanding an individual's experience and the ways in which the individual interprets and derives meaning from that experience. Thus, this study employed a two-part version of Seidman's (2006) in-depth interview structure, beginning with a background questionnaire to better understand the contextual factors of the individual's history. The first interview then elicited the details of the experience under study, and the second interview prompted the participant to reflect on the meaning of experience in question.

In addition to the in-depth interview process which represents a rational, linguistic means of eliciting a description of a transformative learning process, participants were encouraged to communicate their experience by other means. For instance, participants were asked to bring a token that symbolized their experience, this may have been a meaningful object of some sort, art, or music that catalyzed or supported their learning process. Another alternative was to demonstrate kinesthetic practices that may have been instrumental in their transformative journey. By incorporating these additional options for expression, it may be possible to better understand the influence of a holistic approach to learning.

Due to its focus on the phenomenological perspective at the individual unit of analysis, this qualitative study used purposeful sampling (Creswell, 2009; Polkinghorne, 1989) to identify individuals most likely to have experienced, or be experiencing, the phenomenon of interest as well as to maximize variation of experience and context. Therefore, members of a network of holistic health centers that emphasizes growth and transformation from a holistic perspective were solicited as participants for the study. To increase the chances of identifying members who may have already experienced some level of transformative learning, the study focused on individuals who had signed up as lifetime members of the health centers.

Data collection procedures incorporated the modified Seidman (2006) two-part in-depth interview structure, as well as participant and researcher journaling, participant observation, and contextual analysis. Researcher reflexivity, member check, triangulation, and thick, rich description addressed the four elements of trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985): credibility; confirmability; dependability; and transferability.

Data analysis followed the guidelines provided by Seidman (2006) to facilitate analysis, synthesis, and interpretation of the data. This process began with organizing and preparing the data for analysis, then reading all the data for a general overview. The next step was to study, reduce, and analyze the text inductively, allowing codes to emerge, and generating overarching themes from the codes. The findings were then described through participant profiles that detail participants' responses in their own words. Additionally, themes were derived that showed how the research questions relate to one another. Finally, the meaning of the data in connection to the research questions was interpreted, suggesting implications or avenues for further research.

Delimitations and Limitations of the Study

This study is delimited by its bounded scope of exploring the transformative learning processes of members of a network of holistic health centers. Within this scope, the study sought to obtain maximum variation in terms of the members' demographic, ethnic, gender, and cultural characteristics. After it was determined that the local center did not have sufficient variety of interested and qualified participants, the geographical reach of the study was increased to one other center in the vicinity.

Though qualitative research does not attempt to generalize results to larger populations, limitations of the study may include the following factors:

1. Participants are drawn from a particular context, a network of holistic health centers within one metropolitan area on the East Coast, potentially limiting transferability of results to other contexts.

2. The researcher is a member of the holistic health center and may have, despite epoché and attempts to bracket her own experience influenced the results of the study.
3. Understanding the transformative learning process from the participant's perspective will rely on retrospective reconstruction of the participant's lived experience. As such, there may be distortions in the participant's ability to accurately recall and reconstruct these experiences.

Definitions of Key Terms

Following are definitions of key terms that will be used throughout this dissertation:

1. **Active agency:** the agent's embodiment of practices that interact with both internal and external structures. The five aspects of active agency include "shifting horizons of action; creativity, improvisation and innovation; degrees of critical distance and reflection; conscious and unconscious motivations; and the ordering of concerns . . . into a hierarchy of purposes" (Stones, 2005, p. 101).
2. **Adult learning:** "a change in behavior, a gain in knowledge or skills, and an alternation or re-structuring of prior knowledge" (Hoare, 2006, p. 11).
3. **Critical self-reflection:** rational, cognitive process of reflecting on the assumptions that influence one's beliefs, values and judgments, culminating in a better understanding into the development of one's frame of reference (Mezirow, 2000).
4. **Conjuncturally-specific internal structures:** related to the agent's situated role or position with its own structure of embedded rules or norms. The nexus of interaction between internal and external structures.

5. **Disorienting dilemma/learning catalyst:** a triggering event or incident in one's life that is interpreted as a crisis, catalyzing an examination of basic assumptions and problem-solving approaches (Mezirow, 1994).
6. **External structures:** the external context within which the agent both acts and reciprocally influences the same structures (Stones, 2005).
7. **Field:** the meso or macro level of the social context within which the individual acts and is acted upon. It has its own recognizable, distinct character, described as "distinct microcosms endowed with their own rules, regularities, and forms of authority" (Wacquant, 2007, p. 7).
8. **Frame of reference:** made up of two dimensions: (a) meaning perspectives (habits of mind) consisting of the predispositions that influence the way we filter and make meaning of experience; and (b) points of view, the clusters of meaning schemes that together make up meaning perspectives (Cranton, 2006).
9. **Habitus internal structures:** embodied, unconscious internal structure that is both durable and malleable in its ability to simultaneously enable and constrain action. Both the *opus operatum* (result of practices) and *modus operandi* (mode of practices) (Bourdieu, 1990). See also "system of dispositions."
10. **Holistic learning:** a process-oriented view of learning that balances multiple ways of knowing—affective, cognitive and kinesthetic—that supports the whole person (Yorks & Kasl, 2002). See also "Whole person learning."
11. **Internal structures:** an agent's acquired dispositions, either habitus or conjuncturally-specific, that influence both the agent's interaction with external

structures as well as the agent's decisions for action within an *in-situ* context (Stones, 2005).

12. **Levels of learning:** hierarchical typology of learning from Level 0 – IV (L0-LIV) where L0 is a simple response to a specific stimulus, LI is a kind of rote learning resulting in incremental changes, LII addresses assumptions in the LI process to effect second-order change, and LIII is a continuous process of transformation by means of questioning core assumptions and beliefs. LIV was postulated as a change in LIII learning that may potentially occur (Bateson, 1972/2000; McWhinney, 2005; Tosey & Mathison, 2008).
13. **Meaning perspectives/habits of mind:** "broad sets of predispositions resulting from psychocultural assumptions which determine the horizons of our expectations" (Mezirow, 1994, p. 223). Habits of mind is a newer term that explains meaning perspectives more specifically as six dimensions, epistemic, sociolinguistic, psychological, moral-ethical, philosophical, and aesthetic, that profoundly influence the way one sees and interprets the world (Mezirow, 2000).
14. **Meaning schemes:** the beliefs, values, assumptions or judgments that influence one's interpretation of experience (Mezirow, 1994). Meaning schemes are often unarticulated and implicit (Cranton, 2006). Clusters of meaning schemes form meaning perspectives.
15. **Outcomes:** encompassing both external and internal structures as well as events. In this study, outcomes are considered the agent's personal transformation that may occur through the interaction of the habitus with the learning process.

16. **Personal transformation:** individual-level epistemic transformation of the "very form by which we are making our meanings" (Kegan, 2000, p. 53).
17. **Perspective transformation:** the heart of transformative learning: the "emancipatory process of becoming critically aware of how and why the structure of psycho-cultural assumptions has come to constrain the way we see ourselves and our relationships, reconstituting this structure to permit a more inclusive and discriminating integration of experience and acting upon these new understandings" (Mezirow, 1981, p. 6).
18. **Social agent:** the individual actor imbued with agency and embedded within a social context. A "physical, embodied actor, subject to developmental, cognitive and emotive constraints and affected by the very real physical and institutional configuration of the field" (Lizardo, 2004, p. 376).
19. **Strong structuration:** extension of structuration theory by Giddens to a "quadripartite cycle of structuration" (Stones, 2005, p. 9) consisting of external structures, internal structures, active agency, and outcomes.
20. **System of dispositions:** the variegated, complex and self-organizing aspect of internal structures, known as the habitus. The principles that guide practices, linking meaning-making with action (Bloomer et al., 2004). A system of "long-lasting (rather than permanent) schemes or schemata or structures of perception, conception and action" (Bourdieu, 2005, p. 43)
21. **Transformative learning:** the "process by which we transform our taken-for-granted frames of reference (meaning perspectives, habits of mind, mind-sets) to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change,

and reflective so that they may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action" (Mezirow, 2000, p. 8).

22. **Whole-person learning:** a holistic approach to learning that includes cognitive, affective and kinesthetic dimensions of facilitating personal transformation (Yorks & Kasl, 2006).

Chapter Summary and Overview of Remaining Chapters

In summary, Chapter 1 provides an overview of the study with its focus on habitus (Bourdieu, 1990) in relation to the transformative learning process. Additionally, the theoretical foundation and conceptual framework places the study in the broader context of transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 2000) and strong structuration theory (Stones, 2005). Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature of transformative learning and strong structuration, with particular emphasis on the internal structures construct of the habitus. Furthermore, Bateson's (1972/2000) typology of learning levels provides a means of better describing the type of learning that may result in a perspective transformation. Chapter 3 describes the ontological, epistemological and methodological approach to studying the transformative learning process from the perspective of an individual's lived experience.

Chapter 4 presents part one of the results in the form of Participant Profiles that describe the transformative learning process in the participants' own words. In Chapter 5 the results are presented in an aggregate view, as well as analysed thoroughly by participant. The chapter finishes with a description of the overarching themes that emerged from the study. Chapter 6 interprets the findings by theme, presenting conclusions and implications for theory, research, and practice.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Learning is a crucial aspect of growth, flexibility and adaptability for organizations and for individuals. Vaill (1996) addresses the importance of learning in his injunction that managers be continuous learners to adapt to the turbulence of what he terms "permanent white water" (p. 4). According to Vaill, traditional institutional learning methods are insufficient to equip learners for today's complex environments. Instead, he recommends a variety of learning styles that encompass the whole person, meaning "all levels of awareness and . . . our unconscious minds" (p. 43). This study investigated a holistic, mind/body/emotion, learning approach to personal transformation.

At the heart of the learning process is the ability for individuals to question the assumptions and schema that create their perceptual filters. The adult learning theory known as transformative learning (Mezirow, 1978, 1996, 1998, 2000) provides a framework for understanding and facilitating just such a change in one's meaning perspective. To better comprehend the transformative learning process of individuals within their social context, this chapter explores the epistemological roots and historical development of transformative learning, and develops a conceptual framework of personal transformation using the theoretical framework of strong structuration (Stones, 2005), and transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 2000).

Epistemological Roots of Transformative Learning

Transformative learning belongs to the category of adult learning theories within interpretivism known as constructivism (Merriam, Caffarella & Baumgartner, 2007). Proponents of the constructivist perspective believe that meaning is derived

from experience with the strand of social constructionism asserting that reality is a social construction, stressing the sociocultural influence on learning in an intersubjectively created reality (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Mead, 1934). Another characteristic of the constructivist paradigm is the emphasis on reflection, described by Dewey as a crucial aspect of problem-solving (as cited in Schwandt, 2005). Both Mezirow (1978, 1998) and Schön (1987) focus on the reflective process as the key to identifying assumptions and core values that may need to be altered in the learning process. For Mezirow, one's past experience provides a framework for understanding the world that must be critically assessed and transcended in order for a perspective transformation to occur.

In providing an overview of transformative learning, Mezirow (1996) highlights the theory's relationship to both the objectivist and interpretivist paradigms. These two paradigms are synthesized in terms of the emphasis on both instrumental learning—incorporating the rational, realist assumptions of objectivism—and communicative learning—drawing on the intersubjectivity inherent in the interpretivist tradition. Key to both types of learning is the communicative and rational activity of discourse whereby participants together assess and validate assumptions, forging a consensual and shared meaning. Thus, individuals use critical reflection as a means of understanding and assessing received truths from the social context to which they belong. Mezirow's (1978) description of this conscious, rational process of profound change launched the theoretical and research field of transformative learning. The following section describes the development of transformative learning theory and research in the intervening three decades.

Historical Development of Transformative Learning

In his summary of the evolution of transformative learning theory since its inception, Kitchenham (2008) traces the lineage of transformative learning to Mezirow's (1978) study of women returning to school or the workplace after an extended absence. In analyzing the responses of these women and how they were transformed by their experiences, Mezirow elaborated a theory of transformative learning. In his development of this theory, Kitchenham describes the impact on Mezirow of Kuhn's construct of paradigms, Freire's description of conscientization, and Habermas's theories regarding the instrumental and communicative domains of learning. Together, these scholars influenced Mezirow in his development of the transformative learning concepts of "disorienting dilemma, meaning schemes, meaning perspectives, perspective transformation, frame of reference, levels of learning processes, habits of mind, and critical self-reflection" (Kitchenham, 2008, pp. 105-106). See Figure 3 for Kitchenham's (2008) diagrammatic representation (p. 119) of Mezirow's (2000) Transformative Learning Theory that illustrates the interrelationships of these constructs.

According to Mezirow (1978, 1998), change is initiated by means of a cognitive, rational approach with the role of critical reflection on assumptions as crucial. He states that this process is emancipatory in that it "frees the learner from frames of reference, paradigms, or cultural canon. . . that limit or distort communication and understanding" (Mezirow, 1998, pp. 191-192). While Mezirow has been relatively steadfast in his emphasis on a cognitive approach to transformative learning, other scholars have since

explored a broader range of learning processes (Cranton & Roy, 2003; Dirkx & Smith, 2009; Taylor, 2001; Yorks & Kasl, 2002, 2006).

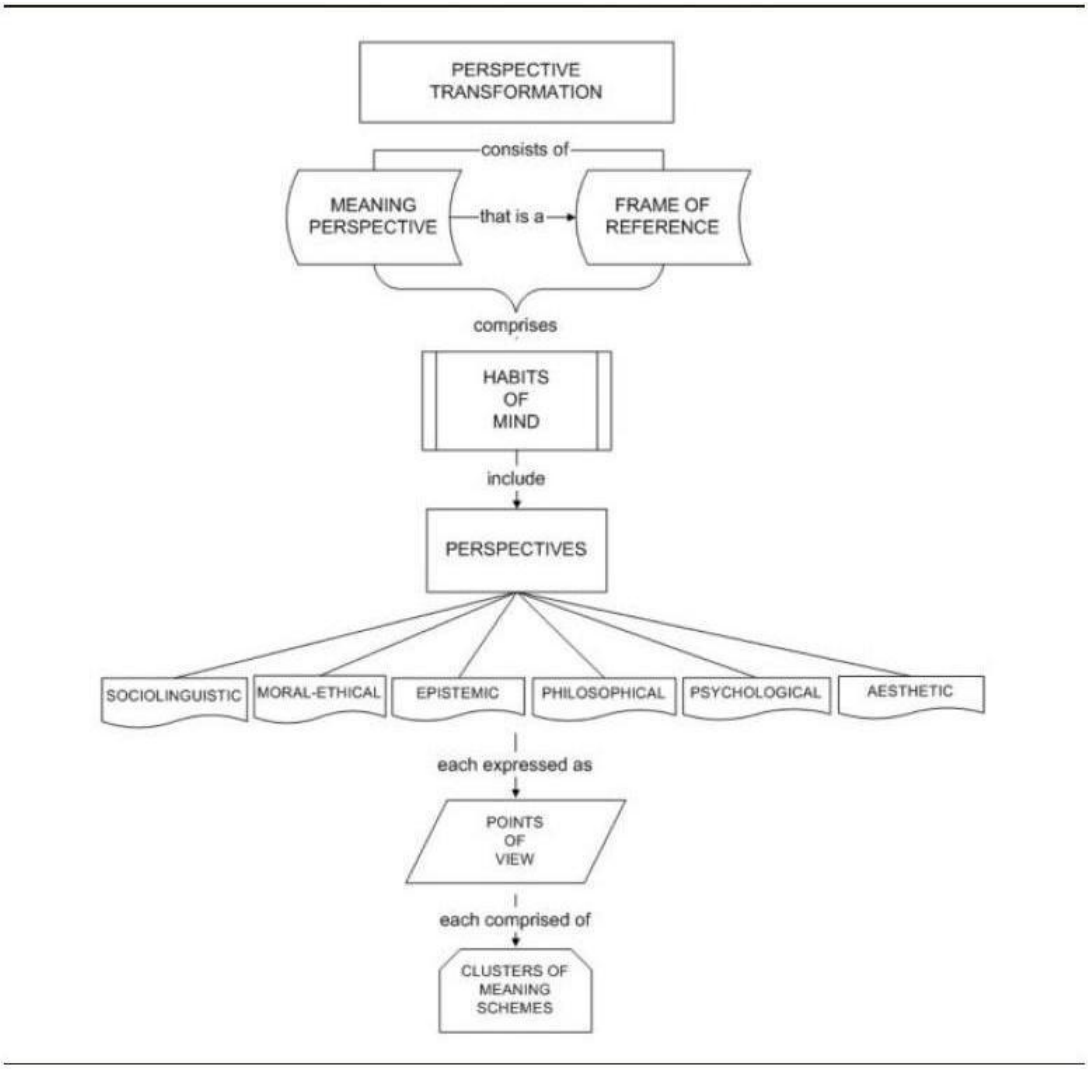

Figure 3. Interrelationships of transformative learning theory constructs.

Taylor's (1997) extensive review of empirical studies that focused on transformative learning highlights the importance of factors other than cognitive processes in achieving perspective transformation. In his critical review of 39 empirical

studies over a 17-year period, Taylor identifies a number of gaps as well as several research initiatives. Gaps include a lack of discussion in the literature about transformative learning theory as a distinct adult learning model, as well as few discussions regarding the implications for practice based on the research conducted.

Taylor's (1997) synthesis also confirms the criticism levied by many scholars that transformative learning theory relies too heavily on conscious, cognitive processes of critical reflection. On the contrary, the studies reviewed by Taylor highlight the importance of other ways of transformative learning such as nonconscious learning, defined as "learning that takes place outside of one's focal awareness" (p. 52), and whole person learning, the "awareness and use of all the functions we have available for knowing, including our cognitive, affective, somatic, intuitive and spiritual dimensions" (p. 48). These extensions to Mezirow's (1978) foundational description of transformative learning theory as primarily a conscious, rational approach offer new ways of approaching the problem statement regarding the ability to question assumptions and schema that make up an individual's perceptual filters. Taylor (1997), in fact, describes the need for understanding how "on a conscious level, to promote and activate the involvement of these various dimensions [affective, somatic, intuitive, and spiritual] in the process of a perspective transformation" (p. 52).

In an update to his first comprehensive review, Taylor (2007) analyzes an additional 41 empirical studies conducted in the period from 1999-2005. His analysis further corroborates the essentiality of critical reflection in the transformative learning process, as well as the frequent element of a disorienting dilemma to catalyze the new learning. Other themes in the studies extend the original theory by focusing on how to

best foster transformative learning, studying the essential components of transformative learning, and investigating the nature and influence of transformative contexts.

One of the criticisms levied by Taylor (1997) in his first review, as well as by other scholars, was the ambiguity of the original description of a perspective transformation (Mezirow, 1978). In his later review, Taylor (2007) describes several ways in which subsequent studies have addressed this issue. These include describing the irreversibility of a new perspective, as well as its sustainability over time. Further studies offer greater clarity to the notion of a meaning scheme change, as well as clarifying the three types of reflection, content, process and premise and how they result in different kinds of changes. Kegan (2000) maintains that a true transformation must in fact be an epistemological change where we change "the very form by which we are making our meanings" (p. 53). In the following section, the four elements of strong structuration (Stones, 2005), external structures, internal structures, active agency, and outcomes are described as a theoretical framework for better understanding the transformative learning process within the conceptual framework of personal transformation.

Theoretical Foundation and Conceptual Framework

In addition to the theory of transformative learning with its emphasis on individual processes of learning, strong structuration theory (Stones, 2005) provides a theoretical framework through which to better understand the interdependent relationships of structures such as the social contexts within which individual agents both create and are instrumentally influenced by such structures. Stones (2005) extends the work of Giddens to develop a "quadripartite cycle of structuration" (p. 9) consisting of:

1. *external structures* as conditions of action;
2. *internal structures* within the agent;
3. *active agency*, including a range of aspects involved when agents draw upon internal structures in producing practical action;
4. *outcomes* (as external and internal structures and as events) (p. 9).

Stones (2005) describes the interaction between the structures created in the external environment, and the individual's own acquired dispositions as the conjuncturally-specific aspect of internal structures. The general dispositional aspect of internal structures may be evidenced in an individual's response to new or turbulent external structures. This element of internal structures is strongly influenced by social conditioning and is termed by Bourdieu (1990) as the habitus. Figure 2 showed the representation of the conceptual framework. The following section describes three elements of the conceptual framework—external structures, internal structures, and active agency—and their relationship to transformative learning.

External Structures

Stones (2005) conceptualizes external structures as the agent's "conditions of action" (p. 84). In other words, these structures are the context within which the agent both acts and reciprocally influences these same structures. Stones includes within this category the three types of structures termed by Giddens as legitimization, signification, and domination (Schwandt, 2008). Legitimization structures may be understood as the social norms, cultural norms, or normative rules that govern an agent's actions. Wacquant's (2004) research into the world of the apprentice boxer confirms that the practice of boxing must be learned through immersion and initiation into the norms of the

pugilistic habitus. The structuration modality of signification provides the semantic rules that enable agents to engage in meaningful communication with one another. Finally, the modality known as domination denotes the power inherent in structural relations that confers command or authority over resources and/or people. For Wacquant, the gym displayed its domination as a "quasi-total institution" (p. 56) that provided authoritative structure for developing pugilists.

Stones (2005) explains that external structures may be conceptualized in an abstract ontological manner, or more specifically "in-situ" (p. 84), that is, at the conjunctural level where structures and agents interact. With his emphasis on the micro level of analysis, Stones focuses on the agent, specifically the "action-horizon of *in-situ* agents" (p. 84). In understanding how the agent may respond to two different categories of external structures, Stones describes "irresistible causal forces" and "independent causal influences" (p. 111). In both cases, external structures are characterized as being fairly autonomous relative to the agent. In the first instance, an "irresistible causal force" would be an example of an external structure that an agent may be physically able to influence or resist, but be cognitively unable to do so. Stones points out that in this case the degree of influence felt by the agent is related to the level of agent efficacy. The second type of external structure described as exerting "independent causal influences" (p. 111) is indeed autonomous from the individual agent. In this case, the agent has no physical ability to resist or impact the external structure regardless of the extent to which the agent may desire to do so. Some examples of this type of external structure may be national culture, economic conditions, or institutional policies.

From a structuration perspective, culture provides the norms (legitimization) of the external structures and may be commonly thought of as one's national culture, or in an organizational setting, as the culture of a particular company. In his classic article on transformative learning, Mezirow (1978) describes the assumptions guiding one's life as "meaning perspectives" (p. 101), which he defines as the "structure of cultural assumptions within which new experience is assimilated to—and transformed by—one's past experience" (p. 101). In Mezirow's usage, cultural assumptions include an array of social systems, including "economic, political, social, religious, occupational or educational systems" (p. 104). In short, the assumptions making up one's meaning perspectives may emanate from the external structures of any social context within which an individual has been embedded.

Internal Structures: Conjuncturally-Specific and Habitus

If the meaning perspectives described by Mezirow (1978) are inculcated through cultural means, one may posit that personal values and belief systems are likewise absorbed from one's social and cultural milieu. Stones (2005) describes the interaction between the structures created in the external environment, such as the organization's culture, and the individual's own acquired dispositions as the "conjuncturally-specific" (p. 89) aspect of internal structures. An individual's personal schema that influences response to new or turbulent external structures is also strongly impacted by social conditioning. This system of personal dispositions is termed by Bourdieu (1990) as the habitus. Tension between the conjuncturally-specific and habitus aspects of internal structures may require a learning process that addresses both of these crucial elements of an agent's internal structures.

Conjuncturally-Specific Internal Structures

In distinguishing between these two aspects of internal structures, Stones (2005) explains that the conjuncturally-specific structures are related to the agent's role or position that has its own structure of embedded rules or norms. Examples of such roles or position may be in terms of one's social relationships such as parents or children, or other relationships such as those found in the workplace between managers and employees. The conjuncturally-specific is also the nexus of interaction between the internal and external structures, the place at which the agent is simultaneously focused outward on the external situational context and focused inward on the perception of what that external situation might mean.

Stones emphasizes that the agent builds up a level of knowledge about the external structures that is "acquired and embodied over time" (p. 91). This allows the agent to make decisions for action based on knowledge of the *in-situ* context at a specific time and place. According to Wacquant's (2004) research, the reciprocal interaction of internal and external structures catalyzes the co-emergence of the habitus within a specific context.

Habitus Internal Structures

If the conjuncturally-specific structures are linked to the agent's external context, the habitus (Bourdieu, 1990) or "general dispositional" (Stones, 2005, p. 88) internal structures are an essential aspect of the agent's inner being that are transposable to a variety of situational contexts. Habitus is a philosophical term with an ancient lineage, with its first recorded usage ("hexis") by Aristotle (Wacquant, 2007, p. 6). Later writers such as Aquinas, Durkheim, Hegel, Husserl, and Weber also incorporated the concept

into their writings. Bourdieu adopted the construct in 1967, later expanding it and incorporating it as a key part of his theory of human agency. One of the most frequently cited definitions of habitus is:

> The conditioning associated with a particular class of conditions of existence produce habitus, systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operation necessary to attain them. (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 53)

This definition captures the notion that habitus, while long-lasting, is at the same malleable in that it can both be internally structured and serve as a catalyst to influence external structures. Another way that Bourdieu expressed this concept was to say that habitus is both the *opus operatum* (result of practices) and *modus operandi* (mode of practices).

The definition of habitus as a system of dispositions (Bourdieu, 1990) also links this concept to that of affective style, defined by Davidson, Scherer, and Goldsmith (2003) as "relatively stable dispositions that bias an individual toward perceiving and responding to people and objects with a particular emotional quality, emotional dimension, or mood" (p. xiii). Burkitt (1997) maintains that one's culture provides a kind of "emotional habitus" that constitutes a "language and set of practices which outline ways of speaking about emotions and of acting out and upon bodily feelings within everyday life" (p. 43). This emotional habitus can be both cognitive and pre-cognitive.

The scholarly literature on emotion elucidates some of the lingering contention around the conscious or unconscious nature of emotions, as well as the distinction between emotions and feelings (Damasio, 1999; Prinz, 2005: Winkielman & Berridge, 2004). Damasio (1999) takes a neuroscientific perspective in examining the relationship

between the body and emotion, stating categorically that "All emotions are biologically determined processes" (p. 51). He elaborates further, explaining that "Emotions are complicated collections of chemical and neural responses, forming a pattern" (Damasio, 1999, p. 51). While there may still not be consensus on this point, the literature surveyed agreed that emotion may be either conscious or unconscious. This distinction is delineated by the term "feeling" where feelings constitute conscious awareness of an emotional state (Damasio, 1999; Prinz, 2005). In terms of the traditionally cognitive emphasis of transformative learning, Taylor (2001) examines the role of emotions from a neurobiological perspective, discussing the indispensible link between emotion and rationality.

To provide further delineations between the terms related to emotion and feelings, scholars in the nascent field of affective science (Davidson et al., 2003) contend that there are six major affective phenomena:

1. Emotion: a relatively brief episode of coordinated brain, autonomic, and behavioral changes that facilitate a response to an external or internal event of significance for the organism.
2. Feelings: the subjective representation of emotions.
3. Mood: a diffuse affective state that is often of lower intensity than emotion, but considerably longer in duration.
4. Attitudes: relatively enduring, affectively colored beliefs, preferences, and predispositions toward objects or persons.

5. Affective style: relatively stable dispositions that bias an individual toward perceiving and responding to people and objects with a particular emotional quality, emotional dimension, or mood.
6. Temperament: particular affective styles that are apparent early in life, and thus may be determined by genetic factors.

The following figure provides a visual depiction of these affective phenomena organized according to the possible intensity and duration of each.

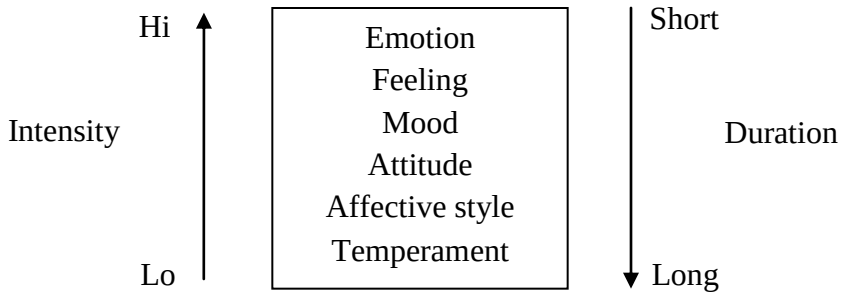

Figure 4. Affective phenomena.

Dewey (1922/2002) likewise provides a philosophical perspective regarding the importance of emotions in his tri-partite model of human nature incorporating habit, impulse (emotion), and intelligence. He explains that habit is acquired through interactions in a social environment and that it can be remade via the environment. He sees habit as the foundation of thought and action in addition to manifesting as artistic skills or abilities. Impulse, he maintains, is secondary to and dependent on habits, and yet "habit is plastic to the transforming touch of impulse" (Dewey, 1922/2002, p. 102).

Not only does Dewey (1922/2002) construe impulse as dynamically interdependent with the social environment, but he states that impulse can serve as a means of adaptation, change, and growth by giving direction to habits. His description of the transformational ability of emotion presages transformative learning theory in his assertion that "Impulses are the pivots upon which the re-organization of activities turn, they are agencies of deviation, for giving new directions to old habits and changing their quality" (Dewey, 1922/2002, p. 93). The final aspect of the tripartite model is intelligence which Dewey views as subject to both habit and impulse. At the same time, he sees intelligence as both enlivened by impulse and as its "clarifier and liberator" (p. 255). He recommends that intelligence be used to "modify the environment and change habits" (p. 302).

In the decades since Bourdieu (1990) began theorizing about the impact of habitus within the social sphere, his use of the term became broad enough to have generated much debate among scholars as to its precise affect on human agency. Part of this debate may be related to Bourdieu's (1989) attempt, by means of the habitus construct, to transcend what he saw as the false dichotomy between objectivism and subjectivism. He conceptualized habitus as the subjective means of both apprehending and impacting objective reality. In so doing, he was attempting to synthesize the structuralist and phenomenological approaches to epistemology.

One of the enduring descriptions of habitus found in Bourdieu's writings (1989, 1990) is both its kinesthetically embodied, and unconscious, or taken-for-granted nature. Thus, he explains, habitus can influence unintended action as it is "coherent without springing from an intention of coherence and a deliberate decision; adjusted to the future

without being the product of a project or a place" (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 51). This description highlights the creative aspect of habitus, described by Lizardo (2004) as a "generative dynamic structure that adapts and accommodates itself to another dynamic mesolevel structure composed primarily of other actors, situated practices and durable institutions" (p. 376). In addition to its dynamic nature, Wacquant (2004) emphasizes the holistic nature of a developing pugilistic habitus, calling it a complex blend of physical, mental and emotional processes.

Fuchs (2003) highlights the paradoxical nature of habitus in its ability to both enable and constrain an actor's ability to take action. He elaborates by asserting that habitus "suggests dialectics of chance and necessity, freedom and determinism, creativity and conditioning, the unconscious and consciousness, society and the individual" (Fuchs, 2003, p. 393). In its ability to generate new structures in concert with the external environment, Fuchs theorizes that habitus is itself an example of a self-organizing system, a system in which there is the "appearance of at least one new systemic quality that cannot be reduced to the element of the system" (p. 398).

In addition to its dynamic and self-organizing nature, a number of scholars (Bourdieu, 1989, 1990; Collins, 1998; Fowler, 1996; Fuchs, 2003; Lizardo, 2004; Wacquant, 2007) emphasize the way in which habitus incorporates unconscious schemata that function as a "matrix of patterns of cognition, perception and action that produces in interplay with actual context conditions of the social field an actor is situated in, the praxis of the actor (Fuchs, 2003, p. 395). This description of habitus as schemata may be similar to the habits of mind described by Mezirow (2000) in his later elaboration on the construct of meaning perspectives.

Habits of Mind

The notion of transforming or substantially influencing the habitus is not a subject that appears to have been addressed much in the literature surveyed to date. Fowler (1996) claims that transformation of the habitus is possible by means of "humans' generic capacities for strategic action to master their surroundings" (p. 10). One way to further explore this idea is to better understand Mezirow's (2000) description of the six habits of mind that may change during a transformative learning process (Cranton, 2006). These include epistemic, sociolinguistic, psychological, moral-ethical, philosophical, and aesthetic habits of mind. While Cranton emphasizes that the six habits of mind are simultaneously interdependent as well as interrelated, sociolinguistic, psychological, and epistemic habits of mind are particularly relevant to this conceptual framework.

Sociolinguistic habits of mind include social norms, and cultural expectations as well as norms in usage of language (Cranton, 2006). This description would seem to incorporate both the external structures construct of legitimization, as well as the conjuncturally-specific internal structures construct that includes norms and values. Cranton (2006) notes that all of the habits of mind tend to be unexamined assumptions that form the basis for individual action, however she emphasizes for sociolinguistic habits, in particular, that they are usually "deep and unconsciously absorbed" (p. 26), linking this process to the creation of unconscious schemata in the habitus.

Psychological habits of mind incorporate self-concept as well as personality traits, forming an unconscious filter in how an individual perceives the environment. This is similar to Parsons' depiction of how a socializing context influences an individual actor by imposing a type of filter on the actor's perception that may be "explicit, implicit,

conscious or unconscious" (Bluth, 1982, p. 26). Finally, epistemic habits of mind are perhaps most foundational in that they determine how an individual both acquires and uses knowledge. This relates to the knowledgeability of the agent captured in the construct of conjuncturally-specific internal structures (Stones, 2005). It also relates to the dynamic process of acquiring knowledge by the habitus (Bourdieu, 1990). The following section addresses processes that may support a holistic approach to personal transformation through learning.

Active Agency: Levels of Learning and Whole-Person Learning

Active agency is the aspect of strong structuration where the agent embodies the practices that interact with both internal and external structures. In describing these practices, Stones (2005) delineates five different aspects of active agency: "shifting horizons of action; creativity, improvisation and innovation; degrees of critical distance and reflection; conscious and unconscious motivations; and the ordering of concerns . . . into a hierarchy of purposes" (p. 101). Agency, he notes, may not always be active. Sometimes it is emergent and self-organizing (Stones, 2011). In this sense, passive agency may be similar to the notions of pre-reflective self-consciousness, the "immediate and first-personal givenness of experiential phenomena" (Gallagher & Zahavi, 2008, p. 46) or a pre-reflexive experience, the "phenomenal experience as it is happening—as it is directly lived" (Stern, 2009, p. 308). Both terms of pre-reflective and pre-reflexive capture the idea of one's experience and reactions to it being at a tacit, implicit, or nonverbal level.

The active agency aspect of "creativity, improvisation and innovation" (Stones, 2005, p. 101) is related to the thesis of this study in terms of its use of dispositional skills

inherent in the habitus. The emergent, unpredictable nature of this aspect of active agency illustrates the principle of self-organization described earlier as a characteristic of habitus. Such a description shows the malleability of the habitus to changing in response to reciprocal interaction with external structures.

The aspect of active agency described as "degrees of critical distance and reflection" (Stones, 2005, p. 101) may be similar to the type of critical reflection described by Mezirow (1978, 1996, 1998, 2000) as crucial to the transformative learning process. Finally, the aspect of "conscious and unconscious motivations" (Stones, 2005, p. 101) relates both to the often unconscious nature of the habitus in influencing agent's actions, as well as to the interaction of the two aspects of internal structures. Stones (2005), in fact, declares,

> It is clearly the case that both conscious and unconscious emotions can have an autonomous affect on the way that both general-dispositional and conjuncturally-specific internal structures are, first, mediated and perceived, and, then, are drawn upon by agents in the production of practices. (p. 103)

The following sections describe specific agency in terms of learning that may facilitate a transformative process.

Levels of Learning

The type of perspective transformation that characterizes transformative learning has been described by organizational learning theorists as double- or even triple-loop learning (Argyris & Schön, 1996). This notion of a hierarchical typology of learning levels was first described by Bateson (1972/2000) as Level 0-IV learning. Level I (LI) is the standard kind of rote learning found in most educational institutions and more or less day-to-day life, resulting in incremental changes within an individual learner but not

within the context in which the learning is understood. See Table 1 for an overview of Bateson's Levels of Learning as summarized by Tosey and Mathison (2008).

Table 1

The Levels of Learning

Bateson's Learning Levels	Description of Learning Level
Learning IV	"would be *change in Learning III*, but probably does not occur in any adult living organism on this earth."
Learning III	"is *change in the process of Learning II*, e.g. a corrective change in the system of sets of alternatives from which choice is made."
Learning II	"is *change in the process of Learning I*, e.g., a corrective change in the set of alternatives from which choice is made, or it is a change in how the sequence of experience is punctuated."
Learning I	"is *change in specificity of response* by correction of errors of choice within a set of alternatives."
Learning O	"is characterized by *specificity of response*, which—right or wrong—is not subject to correction."

Note. Adapted from "Do Organizations learn? Some Implications for HRD of Bateson's Levels of Learning," by P. Tosey and J. Mathison, 2008. *Human Resource Development Review*, 7(1), p. 19.

Level II (LII) is the point at which a learner begins to reflect on the assumptions underlying the learning process, sometimes prompting a reevaluation and adjustment in assumptions that allow a new type of contextual learning to occur. Tosey and Mathison (2008) describe LII learning as the type of learning that produces "second-order, discontinuous change" (p. 19), incorporating new alternatives from which to choose. In an organizational context, this might mean the learning of "principles, governing rules or patterning of a context" (Tosey & Mathison, 2008, p. 19). LII learning includes the ability to pick up more intangible cues from the environment and integrate them into existing frameworks to create new meaning. McWhinney (2005) emphasizes that while

LII learning can be transformative, the learner does come back to a state of stability, albeit with a different worldview from before.

Bateson (1972/2000) describes Level III (LIII) learning as precipitated by the perception of conflict with the previous framework of Level II, perhaps similar to how Mezirow (1978) theorizes about the catalyzing influence of a dilemma in one's life. For Bateson, not only is LIII learning a rather rare occurrence, but it may not even be possible to articulate the experience by rational, cognitive means. In this regard, whole-person learning (Yorks, & Kasl, 2006) encompasses affective, intuitive, aesthetic and other expressive ways of integrating a LIII learning experience.

Later authors have built on Bateson's typology to discuss third-order change or triple-loop learning (Hawkins, 2002; Peschl, 2007; Tosey & Mathison, 2008). McWhinney (2005) uses a neuro-physiological model to describe LIII learning more definitively than did Bateson, saying that LIII puts one on a path of continuous transformative process of questioning and modifying core assumptions. The whole-person learning approach expands on the notion of critical reflection as a crucial aspect of transformative learning (Mezirow, 1978). Other scholars (Taylor, 1997; Tosey, et al., 2005; Yorks & Kasl, 2006) appear to agree with the transcendent nature of LIII learning in that they contend that transformative learning is the result of more than just conscious cognitive learning processes. Rather, it is constitutive in nature as individuals gain awareness due to the "intententional ativities of consciousness" (Thompson, 2007, p. 15).

Whole-Person Learning

Yorks and Kasl (2002, 2006) focus on the study of whole-person learning that incorporates cognitive, affective, and kinesthetic dimensions as a way of facilitating

transformational learning. The means by which they address this process is through "expressive ways of knowing" which they define as "people's intuitive grasp of what they perceive through images, body sensation and imagination" (Yorks & Kasl, 2006, p. 43). As a theoretical framework, the authors use Heron's Theory of Personhood which incorporates four intertwined modes of psyche: affective, imaginal, conceptual, and practical; and four ways of knowing: experiential, presentational, propositional, and practical.

In linking Heron's Theory of Personhood to transformative learning, Yorks and Kasl (2006) use the empirical analysis of eleven case studies, combined with a purposeful sample of seven interviews to extend the focus of transformative learning from primarily cognitive, rational modalities to affective, intuitive, somatic, and spiritual ways of knowing. In their findings, they conclude that learning environments can be enhanced by using expressive ways of knowing to facilitate whole-person learning, as well as to bring feelings and emotions to a level of conscious awareness to enhance cognitive learning. While his focus was not on the transformative learning process, Wacquant's (2004) research into an apprentice boxer's development of a pugilist habitus demonstrated the holistic nature of such learning. He describes the "psychic conversion" (Wacquant, 2004, p. 69) that takes place when the boxer achieves a "comprehension of the body" (p. 69) in addition to purely cognitive understanding.

In the years since Taylor (1997) conducted a critical review of the extant literature on transformative learning, calling for a more holistic orientation to transformative learning theory, a number of scholars have explored this terrain. Cranton and Roy (2003) discuss the Jungian process of individuation that promotes a conscious knowing of the

self. They blend this perspective with that of authenticity, the "expression of the genuine self in community" (Cranton & Ray, 2003, p. 93), describing how this process of transformation is fostered in relationships. Other scholars call for perspectives that embrace "radical interconnectedness" (Selby, 2002, p. 81), affective approaches (Dirkx & Smith, 2009), and presentational ways of knowing (Yorks & Kasl, 2006; Mezirow, 2009).

Some recent literature has focused specifically on physical practices that may enable personal transformation (Amann, 2003; Kram, 2010). Somatic learning, for instance, asserts the essential nature of embodiment in the learning experience (Amann, 2003; Brockman, 2001), with embodiment understood as including "both the body as a lived, experiential structure and the body as the context or milieu of cognitive mechanisms" (Varela et al., 1991, p. xvi). Amann (2003) defines several dimensions of somatic learning: kinesthetic learning, sensory learning, affective learning, and spiritual learning. In her model of somatic learning, she demonstrates how the body plays a role in these multiple dimensions of learning. Kram (2010) gives concrete examples and suggestions for using the interaction of the body and emotions to transform oneself by "cultivating somatic awareness" (p. 149).

Conclusion

In conclusion, adult learning theorists and researchers have long attempted to understand the mechanisms of learning and transformation. Transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 1978, 2000) and its emphasis on a primarily cognitive means to transformation has been critiqued and extended over the years by multiple researchers (Cranton, 2006; Taylor, 1998, 2007). In recent decades, scholars have begun to

incorporate other approaches such as multiple ways of knowing and whole-person learning (Yorks & Kasl, 2002, 2006).

To more fully understand the dynamics and interdependencies of the adult learners embedded in a specific situational contexts, it may be useful to study transformative learning theory in combination with strong structuration theory and Bateson's (1972/2000) levels of learning. Stones (2005) described outcomes as encompassing both internal and external structures as well as events. In this conceptualization, outcomes are first linked to the agent's internal structures and active agency, but also connected to external structures in terms of recursiveness of the "duality of structure" (Stones, 2005, p. 16).

The notion of transformation by means of learning was first theorized by Mezirow (1978) as a change in an individual's frame of reference that led to a new meaning perspective, or way of interpreting and responding to the external environment. Such a transformation may take place gradually over time, or it may be "epochal" (Mezirow, 1994, p. 229) in terms of the individual's profound realization of a new way of interpreting the world. Current scholars in transformative learning expand on Mezirow's emphasis on the cognitive driver of transformation to include intuitive, affective, aesthetic, kinesthetic and extrarational ways of achieving personal transformation (Cranton & Roy, 2003; York & Kasl, 2002, 2006). Kegan (2000) emphasizes that true transformation must incorporate an epistemological change of the "very form by which we are making our meanings" (p. 53).

Thus, while transformation theory (Mezirow, 1996) now incorporates more than a purely rational means of understanding the transformative learning process, strong

structuration theory (Stones, 2005) includes the construct of habitus (Bourdieu, 1990) which, combined with Bateson's (1972/2000) Levels of Learning, may offer a more comprehensive means of understanding the adult learner's dynamic relationship and interdependencies within a social context. By postulating a way to describe and visualize the patterns of interaction between the individual and collective levels of society, strong structuration provides a framework for studying the process of transformative learning. Bateson's Levels of Learning provide a means of understanding and describing the type of learning that may be transformational. Studying the transformative learning process within a framework of strong structuration may therefore enhance the ability to decipher the ways in which the assumptions and schemata of the habitus co-evolve and become institutionalized, thus enabling a process of surfacing this deep structure to potentially transform it.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Overview

This study explored the lived experience of individuals undergoing transformative learning. Thus, the phenomenological approach of in-depth interviewing provided the qualitative methodology best suited to the purposes of the study. To gather the data most likely to address the research questions, a slightly modified version of Seidman's (2006) three-part interview structure was the primary vehicle of data collection. Other sources of data included participant and researcher journaling, participant observation, and contextual analysis. Participants were selected using purposeful sampling from a network of holistic health centers on the East Coast of the United States. The following Research Procedures describe the ontological, epistemological and research perspectives guiding the study. The Research Design provides further description of the data collection methods, data analysis, and measures for addressing verification and trustworthiness.

Research Procedures

Ontology and Epistemology

The term ontology is derived from the Greek "onto" which means "being," and "logia," meaning science or study. Thus, ontology is the study of the nature of being, or of reality (Crotty, 1998). Burrell and Morgan (1979) contend that ontological assumptions are an essential part of any sociological inquiry. They define the poles of these assumptions as being "realism," an objectivist approach that believes that there is an external reality independent of the individual, and "nominalism," a subjectivist approach stating that there is no "real structure" apart from individual cognitive perception (p. 4). Bourdieu (1990) takes the middle ground between the objectivist and

subjectivist stances, emphasizing instead that relations between the social agent and the world give rise to an "ontological complicity" between the socially constituted habitus and the world that reciprocally shapes it (p. 20). This ontological perspective seems similar to that of "constitutive ontology" as explicated by Maturana (1988).

"To constitute" means to "bring to awareness, to present or to disclose" (Thompson, 2007, p. 15). Thompson explains that constituting is a process whereby "objects are disclosed or made available to experience in the ways they are thanks to the intentional activities of consciousness" (p. 15). Maturana (1988) similarly describes the ontological constitution of reality as being revealed in the "praxis of living" (p. 33), a praxis which starts with interdependent relations between the observer and the observed. In this view of reality, the observer enacts a world constituted of the ongoing dynamic interactions with the world.

Epistemology is the philosophical study of the nature of knowledge (Crotty, 1998). Similar to one's objective or subjective ontological stance, one's epistemological perspective influences scientific approaches to sociological research. Burrell and Morgan (1979) describe the objectivist epistemological approach as "positivism" in which knowledge is regarded as tangible, and something that can be acquired. In positivist research, scientists look for "regularities and causal relationships between its constituent elements" (p. 5). At the other end of the spectrum is the subjectivist approach that considers knowledge to be intangible and gained through personal experience. This research stance is termed "anti-positivism" and its adherents believe that the social world is relativistic and can "only be understood from the point of view of the individual" (p. 5).

A researcher's ontological and epistemological perspectives inevitably influence the study's methodology and interpretation of results. Burrell and Morgan (1979) use the dimensions of subjective-objective and the sociologies of radical change-regulation to create a matrix of four sociological paradigms that influence organizational analysis: functionalist, interpretive, radical humanist, and radical structuralist. Of primary interest to this study is the paradigm of interpretivism.

Interpretivism is a subjectivist approach that explores the nature of the world from the individual's perspective. In this paradigm, the social world is considered an "emergent social process which is created by the individuals concerned" (Burrell & Morgan, 1979, p. 28). Ontologically, social reality is considered to be a "network of assumptions and intersubjectively shared meanings (Burrell & Morgan, 1979, p. 31). Researchers in the interpretivist paradigm are interested in the fundamental meanings inherent in the everyday social world, examining these from an individual's subjective perspective, and looking for "culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social life-world" (Crotty, 1998, p. 67).

In terms of its emphasis on this unique, individual point-of-view, interpretivism may be related to constructivism, a philosophical strand within adult learning theory that emphasizes the individual's derivation of meaning from experience (Merriam et al., 2007). Transformative learning is akin to this perspective, both in terms of its emphasis on learning from experience and reflection, as well as the social constructionist belief that reality is intersubjective and is socially co-constructed by interdependent agents (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Schütz, 1972). Bourdieu's (1990) depiction of habitus as being both

structured by and itself structuring the social environment may also relate it to the social constructionism theoretical perspective.

Strong structuration theory (Stones, 2005) as well is concerned with the action of the agent within a social context. The construct of "ontology-*in-situ*" (p. 8) conveys the notion that it is the agent's interpretation of specific experience in a specific context at a specific time and place that is of greatest interest to the researcher. This emphasis on the agent's situational context, as well as the interdependent, reciprocal relationship between the agent's internal and external structures likewise links strong structuration to the interpretivist and social constructionist traditions.

Research Perspective

Scholars in the area of qualitative research seem to agree on at least one fundamental description of the field: there are some basic paradigms of inquiry that guide research, though the lines between them are often blurry and ill-defined (Creswell, 2007; Crotty, 1998; Lichtman, 2006). Among the paradigms of inquiry known as positivist, post-positivist, critical theory, interpretivist, and post modern/post structuralism, the interpretivist paradigm seems to strike a balance between the poles of objectivism and subjectivism by avowing an epistemology of socially constructed intersubjectivity.

A constitutive ontology supports the notion of the interdependent interrelationship between the individual and the social context, with a concomitant belief in the enactment of reality through the experience of living (Maturana, 1988). This ontological perspective is echoed by the epistemological stance of the interpretivist paradigm that focuses on a social world co-created by individuals (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Crotty, 1988).

These ontological and epistemological stances influenced the selection of a methodological approach. Some of the typical research methodologies within the interpretivist paradigm include ethnographic and phenomenological, as well as hermeneutical research. Such methodologies may utilize research methods such as questionnaires, participant or non-participant observation, in-depth interviews, or case studies. The purpose of these methodological approaches is to understand, as fully as possible, the lived experience of the research participant (Lichtman, 2006).

In considering the research questions guiding this study, the interpretivist paradigm (Burrell & Morgan, 1979) with its emphasis on understanding the individual's subjective experience as emerging from an intersubjectively co-created social world best fit the theoretical foundation and conceptual framework. Specifically, the research questions explore the process by which beliefs about reality become internalized and encoded at such a deep level of personal belief as to become core assumptions that subsequently drive behavior (Jarzabkowski, 2008). It is this internal structure that may be implicated in the transformative learning process.

The phenomenological perspective emphasizes understanding the subjective, first-person experience of the individual "as it is lived from the inside" (Petitmengin, 2006, p. 230). Despite the difficulties in accessing and verbalizing a first-person experience, (Gallagher & Zahavi, 2008), interviews offer a means of approaching an understanding of this unique lived experience. Since the collection of interview data is actually one step removed from the person describing the experience, such interviews have been termed a "second-person" method (Petitmengin, 2006, p. 231). Exploring the relationship between the individual's habitus as formed, reformed, and transformed within a social context is

thus supported by an interpretivist research perspective that uses the phenomenological research methodology of interviews.

Research Design

Research Questions

The overarching research question of this study is as follows:

1. What is the relationship of a holistic approach to learning to transformation of the habitus as a system of dispositions?

To better understand this process, the study asks the following sub-questions:

2. How is the dynamic interaction between the conjuncturally-specific and habitus aspects of internal structures influenced during the transformative learning process?
3. How do external and internal structures co-evolve during the transformative learning process?

The methodology table (Table 2) on the following pages shows the linkages between the research questions, the operational variables, sources of data, methods of collection, interview themes, and method of analysis. A complete description of the interview protocol, along with the interview themes and possible probing questions is included in Appendix A. Note that the term “preconceptions” figured prominently in the interview protocol. This term was a key concept in one of the two foundational workshops taken by all study participants. The term was used in the workshops in the traditional sense of being a preconceived idea or bias with the added assumption that this bias was acquired earlier in life and contributed to limitations or constraints on one’s current actions.

Table 2

Methodology Table

Research Questions	Operational Variables	Source of Data	Methods of Collection	Interview Themes	How Analyzed
Questionnaire How is the interplay between the conjuncturally-specific and habitus aspects of internal structures influenced during the transformative learning process?	1. **Internal Structures***: Habitus* a. Primary *habitus* (formative years); b. Secondary *habitus* (professional training, other life experiences) 2. **Internal Structures**: Conjuncturally-specific– interfaces most directly with external structures. 3. **External Structures** a. cultural background; a. familial background; b. situational context	1. Study participants 2. Study participants 3. Study participants & researcher observation	1. Questionnaire; participant journaling 2. Questionnaire; participant journaling 3. Questionnaire; participant journaling	• Description of formative years (ages 1 – 18) • Values and preconceptions learned in formative years • Life experiences from age 18 to present • Description of current family/life situation	Step 1. Manage data for analysis (Seidman, 2006) – administration of interview process including security of data. Step 2. Record & transcribe data – to include verbal and nonverbal material. Step 3. Study, reduce, and analyze text, allowing codes to emerge. Step 4. Share interview data via profiles and themes. Step 5. Interpret the meaning of the data.

Research Questions	Operational Variables	Source of Data	Methods of Collection	Interview Themes	How Analyzed
Interview – Part 1 How does a holistic approach to learning influence the *habitus* as a system of dispositions during the transformative learning process?	**Internal Structures:** 1. ***Habitus*** – system of dispositions, personal worldview, schema, "embodied history" 2. **"Holistic" approach** (mind / body / emotion) a. *Mind* – explicit teachings b. *Body* – specific physical exercises c. *Emotion* – explicit teachings & guided participation	1. Study participants 2a. *Mind* – classes & workshops taught by master teachers & instructors; participant descriptions 2b. *Body* – participation & observation during classes & workshops; participant descriptions 2c. *Emotion*– special workshops; participant descriptions	1. Interviews with study participants 2a. – 2c 2-part interviews; researcher & participant journaling; participant observation	• Reason for joining the Center • Participation in Center activities • Process of learning (mental, physical, emotional) • Incorporation of learning into daily life • Description of any major lifestyle changes since joining Center • Description of changes in interactions with others	Step 1. Manage data for analysis (Seidman, 2006) – administration of interview process including security of data. Step 2. Record & transcribe data – to include verbal and nonverbal material. Step 3. Study, reduce, and analyze text, allowing codes to emerge. Step 4. Share interview data via profiles and themes. Step 5. Interpret the meaning of the data.

Research Questions	Operational Variables	Source of Data	Methods of Collection	Interview Themes	How Analyzed
Interview – Part 2 How do external and internal structures co-evolve during the transformative learning process?	1. **Primary *Habitus:*** formative years; early conditioning 2. **Secondary *Habitus***: dispositions acquired later in other contexts (school; work; community life)	1. Study participants 2. Study participants	1: 2-part, semi-structured interviews; participant journaling 2: 2-part, semi-structured interviews; participant journaling	• Reflection on personal changes since joining Center • Influence of preconceptions on life • Any specific difficulties with making lifestyle changes • Description of the meaning of new way of being	Step 1. Manage data for analysis (Seidman, 2006) – administration of interview process including security of data. Step 2. Record & transcribe data – to include verbal and nonverbal material. Step 3. Study, reduce, and analyze text, allowing codes to emerge. Step 4. Share interview data via profiles and themes. Step 5. Interpret the meaning of the data.

Research Design Strategy

In keeping with the theoretical perspective of interpretivism, a qualitative approach was used. This allowed the participants' meaning and understanding of this process to come to the fore. The focus on exploring the transformative learning process from the participants' perspective also elicited the maximum variation in individual experiences, an emphasis of the phenomenological approach. In keeping with the primarily inductive nature of qualitative research, the final design was emergent to maximize flexibility and adaptability to conditions in the field (Creswell, 2009). The data collection section below describes the methods that were used.

Data Collection Methods

Within the qualitative tradition of phenomenology, the researcher is considered one of the instruments of data collection. As such, the researcher's own biases and assumptions were identified to understand how the researcher's interpretation impacts the entire research process. This reflexivity was accomplished through epoché, as well as by means of researcher journaling throughout the study process. The data collection methods utilized were semi-structured interviews, participant and researcher journaling, participant observation, and contextual analysis.

In-Depth, Semi-Structured, Two-Part Interviews

As a means of gathering first-person reports about the phenomenon in question, interviews offer the researcher a glimpse of how the study participants describe and make meaning of their experience (Petitmengin, 2006; Seidman, 2006). Polkinghorne (1989) stresses that a phenomenological interview is more like a "discourse or conversation" (p. 49) than a

simple interaction between two people. One way to approach the interview process is to follow Seidman's suggestion as a phenomenological researcher to conduct separate interviews with each participant, with each interview designed to elicit a different aspect of the experience in question.

Prior to the first interview, a questionnaire (Appendix B) was administered to gather background information on the participants' historical life experiences up to the event that was the focus of the study. This questionnaire addressed topics such as a characterization of the participant's formative years (ages 1-18), a description of the participant's educational background and professional training, and a brief description of the participant's current family and life situation. Further, the participant was asked to indicate the initiating event or condition that had brought them to the Center, as well as the types of classes regularly attended, and the kinds of personal changes made since joining the Center.

The first interview then addressed the phenomenon under study, in this case, the transformative learning process. In addition to interview questions intended to elicit a narrative-type description of the individual's lived experience of transformative learning, the participants were encouraged to express elements of their experience in other ways. For example, they were asked to bring a token that symbolized their transformative learning experience. During the description of their transformative experiences at the Center, they were also invited to demonstrate specific practices that had been instrumental in their learning process.

The second and final interview guided the participant to reflect on the meaning of the experience under discussion. Throughout both interviews, all nonverbal means of communication, whether vocal such as pauses or intonation supporting emotional expression,

gestures, and other body language were recorded as accurately as possible to enrich the linguistic description of their experience. Using this interview process with the study participants in conjunction with participant journaling may yield increasingly telling insights. The complete Interview Protocol is available in Appendix A.

Participant and Researcher Journaling

Participant journaling specifically incorporates critical reflection on the transformative learning process, a cornerstone of Mezirow's (1978) theory. Such journaling allowed the participants to reflect at their leisure on learning that may have been precipitated by involvement in classes, workshops, or other activities at the Center. To increase the level of reflection and depth of conversation in both interviews, participants were provided with a list of themes to be addressed in each interview. They were asked to keep a daily journal on these themes for at least three days prior to the scheduled interview. Following is a list of the applicable themes per interview:

1. Interview One: Transformative learning processes
    a. Reason for joining the Center
    b. Process of learning new practices (mental, physical, emotional)
    c. Incorporation of learning (exercises, concepts) into daily life
    d. Description of changes in interactions with others
2. Interview Two: Meaning of transformative learning experience
    a. Reflection on personal changes since joining enter
    b. Influence of preconceptions on life
    c. Any specific difficulties with making lifestyle changes

d. Description of the meaning of new way of being

Researcher journaling likewise used the process of critical reflection on experiences both as researcher and as a member of the Center. This journaling incorporated thoughts and responses following each interview, as well as reflections precipitated by the topics of the interviews in conjunction with the researcher's ongoing participation in activities at the Center. The advantage of such an approach was that the discipline of journaling about the research process aided in identifying and clarifying the researcher's subjective perspectives on the research phenomenon. This was especially important as the researcher had an emic viewpoint as a member of the community that was studied.

Participant Observation

Being an active member of the study site afforded the researcher the opportunity to maintain field notes on the situational context from a variety of perspectives. Though the interviews and participant journals touched on the holistic learning aspects such as mind, body, spirit, and emotion, the researcher was able to pay attention to and record how all of these aspects interacted in the learning process from her emic perspective.

Thus, observations included but were not limited to reflection-in-action (Schön, 1987) during classes, workshop, or other Center activities in terms of personal responses and observation of the responses of others, as well as reflection-on-action after the completion of the activity. These reflections incorporated recording of physical sensations or responses (pain, stress relief, and so on), as well as emotional reactions (elation, frustration, joy, sadness, and others). The process of reflection incorporated not only conscious, cognitive practices, but also

increased the level of personal awareness available to the researcher during the activities under study.

Such participant observations are necessarily subjective from the researcher's point of view. However, they provide a means of triangulating to similar themes that may arise from the other data collection methodologies. As a way of enhancing trustworthiness, the researcher engaged in epoché, the setting aside and bracketing of her own experience to identify biases and assumptions in relation to the phenomenon under study (Moustakas, 1994, p. 41). The purpose of such epoché was to "reinhabit [the research experience] in a fresh way, namely, with heightened awareness and attunement" (Thompson, 2007, p. 19). Through this process, the study gains credibility by means of transparent discussion and bracketing of the researcher's own frame of reference.

Subjectivity Statement

The researcher's assumptions about reality are rooted epistemologically in the interpretivist paradigm that adheres to a socially constructed view of reality (Berger & Luckmann, 1966), and in the constitutive ontology of enaction theory (Maturana, 1988; Stewart et al., 2010). Regarding the two interpretivist strands of social constructionism and constructivism, social constructionism is better aligned to the researcher's belief in the ultimate indivisibility of the self and society, a relationship of reciprocal duality captured by strong structuration theory (Stones, 2005). In regard to the focus of this specific study, the researcher's personal journey of transformative learning has inspired and continues to guide the passion for better understanding and facilitating the transformative process.

In consciously embarking on this transformative journey in the late 1980s; extensive reading led to an awareness of the influence of external structures such as the social and historical context of the formative years on the development of internal structures, including core beliefs and assumptions. This realization was deeply disorienting as it caused self-critical questioning of the validity of those truths that were previously taken for granted. Being tempted to retreat to the safety of dogma and received truth, the researcher chose instead to embrace the uncertainty of not knowing what might really be truth and instead discovering the nature of truth and reality through an iterative process of exploration and self-reflection.

Subsequent years brought ample opportunities to challenge and enlarge the researcher's worldview through extensive study and travel abroad, culminating in moving to Europe. Being so far physically removed for eight years from the external caldron of social, cultural, and familial influences that had shaped internal structures allowed the researcher to view this original context more objectively, facilitating a deeper understanding of how her upbringing had both enabled and constrained her personal growth and learning. The exploration of this process of transformation through learning continued in this study, during which the researcher consciously and deliberately strove to practice epoché in bracketing, or setting aside (Moustakas, 1994), her own experiences and expectations regarding transformative learning, focusing instead on the essence of the stories related by the study participants.

Contextual Analysis

A further source of data was the context of the research site itself. Given that the study participants came from a wide variety of social and demographic backgrounds, the research site gains importance as the context which all participants have in common. Having experienced both

classes and workshops at seven different centers in three different states from 2007–2011, it appears to the researcher that there are commonalities in terms of class format, norms of member participation, communication materials (posted on the walls as well as provided in brochures, newsletters, and online), décor, and overall ambience. Providing thick, rich description of this context provides additional insights into the influence of this specific external structure on the transformative learning process of the participants.

Research Site/Participants

Research Site

Qualitative methodology stresses the importance of purposefully selected sites and participants to study those individuals who are most likely to be able to address the research questions of interest (Creswell, 2009). Thus, the setting for the research design was a holistic health center in the East Coast of the United States. This Center is part of the Dahn Yoga international network of 1,000 centers worldwide that offer a wide variety of fitness and holistic healing programs. The international headquarters is based in South Korea, with centers in 18 States in the USA, as well as in Brazil, Canada, Japan, Germany, Russia, South Africa, South Korea, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. Due to the Center's emphasis on personal well-being as an integrated balance of mind, body, emotion, and spirit, it offered a context in which to examine the impact of a holistic approach to transformative learning.

To gain access to the site, the researcher approached the Center Master, explaining the purpose, objectives, and design of the study, as well as the measures that would be taken to protect the rights of the study participants. He gave his assent then forwarded the request to the U.S. headquarters for formal permission to proceed. Upon receiving this permission, one Center

on the East Coast was identified as the primary site. Two participants from a nearby Center were later accepted to achieve the goal of maximum variation of study participants.

Participants

After following the process described above to obtain overall permission from the U.S. headquarters, and identify the primary site, the Center Master was contacted, requesting guidance as to the best means of soliciting study participants. The primary means of contacting volunteers included an email from the Center Master to the "Gold" members at that site (see Appendix C), explaining the study (using text provided by the researcher) and recruiting volunteers via "snowball" sampling (Lichtman, 2006) where some of the earliest study participants recommended other members as potential participants.

The study focused on "Gold" members as a purposeful sampling of individuals who may have experienced, and may continue to experience, transformative learning. This criterion was chosen for two reasons. First, many members join and then drop out within the first year. A "Gold" member has made a significant commitment to lifelong practice, both in terms of the monetary investment, and the decision to continue engaging in these practices for the foreseeable future. Second, individuals who have invested in "Gold" membership may be more likely to have experienced a broad range of classes, workshops, and special programs that could have facilitated a transformative learning experience. Of particular interest to the notion of transformative learning were the participants' perspectives on events or processes they had found most meaningful and transformative over the course of their memberships. This may have included the two foundational workshops communicated by the Center as facilitating a transformative experience.

To summarize, the first criterion for participation was that the individual be a "Gold" member at one of the identified Centers. Additionally, the member should have already attended the two foundational workshops, though this criterion was later modified to allow for just one foundational workshop to provide maximum variation in study participants. Additionally, members accepted into the study were active participants in the Center's programs which include fitness classes, workshops, and special events.

The demographics of the primary Center were mostly female of a wide variety of backgrounds in terms of ethnicity, education, and profession. The original target was to incorporate at least four males and six females in the study. This target was later modified to at least two males and eight females, in keeping with the overall membership ratio of about 20% male and 80% female. The age range encompassed young people in their early 20s to mature adults in their late 60s or older. The average age appeared to be about mid-40 to mid-50. To achieve maximum variation in terms of the experience of the transformative learning process, it was necessary to widen the scope of participants to include members from a neighboring location on the East Coast. The revised target was to interview ten "Gold" members with the goal of achieving maximum variation, defined as follows:

1. Gender: at least two males, and eight females;
2. Ethnic background: at least four participants of different Ethnic backgrounds (e.g., Asian, Black, White, Hispanic, or other);
3. Age: participants from at least four different age brackets (20-30; 31-40; 41-50; 51-60; 60+)

4. Educational background: participants from at least three different categories (high school diploma; some college; college graduate; graduate; post-graduate)

A screening questionnaire (Appendix D) was administered to ensure that volunteers met the membership and demographic criteria identified above. The purpose of the criteria described above was to maximize variation of external structures such as the influence of one's ethnic and cultural heritage, generational influences, as well as the influence of one's education and/or profession on the resulting internal structures. The administration of the screening questionnaire additionally provided the opportunity to explain the two-part interview process (Seidman, 2006), ensuring that interested volunteers were able to commit to the time required for these two interviews. Volunteers who decided to participate in the study were then briefed on the consent process, and signed the Research Consent Form (see Appendix E) and the Audio/Video Release Form (Appendix F) prior to any further interaction.

Data Analysis

One crucial aspect of qualitative research is that it tends to be more inductive than deductive, allowing themes to emerge from the participants themselves. The following steps described by Seidman (2006) provide a guideline for the analysis, synthesis, and interpretation of the data:

1. **Managing the data**. This includes all of the administration related to the interview process, participant forms, consent forms, interview recordings and transcriptions, as well as a means of ensuring the security of the interview data.
2. **Recording and transcribing interviews**. Use of a recording device maintains the integrity of the participants' own words in explaining the phenomenon under study. A

detailed interview transcription incorporated not only the verbal but also the nonverbal material such as pauses, voice intonation, noticeable gestures, and other body language to preserve the session as faithfully as possible.

3. **Studying, reducing, and analyzing the text**. The process of interpreting and reducing the data inductively, allowing codes to emerge, and using the participants' *in vivo* language whenever possible. The qualitative data analysis software, ATLAS.ti, was used to aid in the process of coding the interviews, and categorizing the codes into families.
4. **Sharing interview data—Profiles and themes**: One way to share interview data is to craft a participant profile using the participants' own words. This process preserves a sense of continuity in the participant's story, and it more convincingly links the experience under discussion to the social context. A second means of sharing the interview data is to interpret and link the codes—derived from the previous step—back to the research questions, including grouping the codes into families, and then into categories of overarching themes. The themes themselves provide a means of understanding how various aspects of the research questions relate to one another.
5. **Interpreting the material**. In this final step, the researcher interprets the data once again, specifically in light of the research questions to ascertain what has been learned, comparing the findings to other studies in the literature or suggesting new avenues of research that might further deepen understanding of the phenomenon in question.

Verification and Trustworthiness

The combination of interviews, reflective journaling, participant observation and contextual analysis provided the basis of thick, rich description of the transformative learning

phenomena. The data was collected and analyzed in a manner that enhanced the four elements of trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985): credibility, confirmability, dependability, and transferability. Specific measures of trustworthiness included the following:

1. **Member check**. Providing of processed interviews and profiles to participants to elicit feedback regarding the accuracy of the researcher's interpretations.
2. **Reflexivity**. Researcher journaling to surface assumptions and capture subjective impressions during the research process that may bias data analysis.
3. **Triangulation**. Comparison of data from at least three different perspectives, for example, interviews, journaling, and participant observation.
4. **Thick description**. Rich, detailed description of the research site, participants, observed learning processes, and any other contextual factors that may aid in interpreting the data.
5. **Prolonged engagement**. Interaction within the research context as well as with the study participants for an extended period of time.
6. **Peer auditor.** Independent interview coding.

An additional means of enhancing trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) is to engage a peer auditor to independently code the interviews as an interrater. This process may contribute to confirmability, "the degree to which results could be confirmed or corroborated by others" (Lichtman, 2006, p. 195). The researcher provided the interrater with a summary document containing the purpose of the study and the research questions, along with the conceptual framework and the complete interview protocol. Using this baseline information, the interrater

conducted descriptive line coding for one complete interview transcription, noting clarifying questions in the background information provided as well as in the transcript.

To summarize the comparison of the researcher and interrater coding, the researcher's descriptive line codes were much more granular than those of the interrater, resulting in 2.3 times as many codes. The next analytical level is to group these descriptive line codes into "families." At the family level of coding there was interrater agreement on 48% of the codes prior to the code comparison and discussion. After the comparison, the researcher added 91% of the interrater codes that had not been in the original coding. The researcher and interrater discussed the remaining 9% of her codes with the result that some of them were added to the document coding, she identified two of them as miscodes, and the remaining four codes were all for nonverbal communication, a category that was ultimately not incorporated into the coding process. At the completion of this review and discussion process, there was 98% agreement on the interrater codes.

Following are some examples of codes that were synchronized:

- "I think even my religion is always about *others*…"
    - Interrater coded this as "spiritual" whereas researcher coded it as "religion"
    - Interrater described religion as being an aspect of one's spiritual life
    - Agreement that researcher would keep the code "religion" while noting that it will eventually be part of the higher-level "spiritual" family

- "…sometimes it's very painful…"
    - Interrater coded this as "cognitive" whereas researcher considered "pain" and related words as "affective" ("emotional")
    - After discussing, interrater agreed that "affective" was a more appropriate coding

- "…and there's a lot of memories that come up with it."
    - Interrater coded this as "preconceptions" referring to the broader context of the sentence where the participant is saying that she tries to be objective, but in fact, "everything is subjective." In this context, the interrater considers

"memories" to be contributing to the participant's frame of reference more so than in a previous quote where "memories" come across more as simply the cognitive aspect of the individual.
    - After discussing, researcher added the code of "preconceptions," making note of the interrelationship of the constructs of "preconceptions," "cognitive" and "memories."

- "…there's just an automatic *chemical* release…"
    - Researcher coded "chemical release" as "physical" whereas the interrater coded it as "affective"
    - Interrater explained that it was indeed a physical process but that the process was perceived by the individual as an emotional state (such as "runner's high")
    - Researcher agreed and added the code of "emotional"

In brief, the peer auditor independently corroborated the coding process, contributing to confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) of the data analysis process. In those cases where the researcher and interrater codes differed, the differences were discussed at length, and differences were resolved with a final interrater agreement on codes of 98%.

Conclusion

From a phenomenological perspective, each individual's learning experience is unique. Nevertheless, studying a number of participants within the same social context may offer insights into the research question: *How does a holistic approach to learning interact with the habitus as a system of dispositions during the transformative learning process?* The ability to offer some answers, or at least theorize about answers, to this question and others posed in the study could enrich the adult learning and development literature in terms of better understanding how to facilitate and support the transformative learning process.

Furthermore, transformation may occur at both a micro, individual level, and at the meso level of organizations. This study explored the process of transformative learning of individuals in the context of their environment, possibly providing insight into the contextual influences on

the learning process. Studying the interrelated, dynamic process of individuals who transform in the context of specific learning environments contributes as well to the field of human and organizational learning with its emphasis on systemic changes that occur in the nexus of individuals and organizations.

Chapter 4: Results—Part One

Overview

The core of the phenomenological approach is to capture and communicate the essence of the participant's lived experience (Lichtman, 2006; Petitmengin, 2006; van Manen, 1990). The Seidman (2006) method of phenomenological interviewing was the vehicle for eliciting these experiences from the ten study participants. The data gathered from the background questionnaires, interviews, and participant journals was voluminous, presenting the challenge of an analytic process that both preserved the unique perspective of each individual, while producing codes and themes that could indicate possible areas of similarities and differences.

Seidman (2006) recommends sharing the interview data via a combination of profiles and themes. The Participant Profiles are created in the first-person, using the participants' words from their journals and from interviews. To preserve the integrity of the individual phenomenological perspective, the presentation of results is divided into two parts: Part One, Chapter 4, presents the Participant Profiles with brief introductions to each study participant; Part Two of results, Chapter 5, lays the ground for a thematic analysis by means of a contextual description of the research site, an aggregate view of code totals, and a comparison of codes per family for each participant. The primary purpose of the individual, first-person descriptions of transformative learning experiences that follow in the Participant Profiles is to address the overarching research question of this study: *What is the relationship of a holistic approach to learning to transformation of the habitus as a system of dispositions?*

Findings

Overview of Participants

In accordance with the Research Design, ten individuals who met the study criteria were accepted as participants. They ranged in age from the early 30s to the early 70s, and came from a variety of ethnic backgrounds, with five participants (Anisha, Raina, Dira, Nakari, and Tuan) being first-generation immigrants. All of the participants resided in the metropolitan area of the research site during the data collection phase, and were fairly homogenous in terms of educational background, with no participant having less than a college degree. The following Table 3 summarizes the basic demographic information for all ten study participants, each of them being identified with pseudonyms to protect confidentiality.

Table 3

Participant Demographic Overview

Name	Gender	Age Range	Ethnicity	Education	Years Member
Grace	Female	61+	White	Grad degree	5
Julia	Female	51-60	White	Post grad	4
Cynthia	Female	61+	White	College	4
Anisha	Female	31-40	Asian	Post grad	1
Raina	Female	31-40	Hispanic	College	4
Dira	Female	51-60	Asian	Grad degree	4
Debra	Female	51-60	White	Grad degree	4
Nolan	Male	51-60	White	College	1
Nakari	Female	41-50	African	Grad degree	7
Tuan	Male	31-40	Asian	Grad degree	>1

Participant Profiles

The following Participant Profiles are each prefaced with a one-paragraph introduction to the individual. The subsequent indented, single-spaced text is crafted entirely from the participants' own words. Quotations in the profile text indicate where participants were quoting others, or were referring to phrases used in talking to themselves. Where text from interview transcriptions is used, the researcher followed Seidman's (2006) suggestion to remove characteristics of oral speech such as "um," "uh," "you know," indicating removal of other text with "…". Where it was necessary for the researcher to insert text for clarification, such text is inserted in brackets "[ ]". In the instances where the participant placed extra emphasis on words, this is indicated in *italics*. Nonverbal expressions captured in the transcripts are designated with the "< >" symbol (such as <laughter>).

Grace

Grace is a long-time professional, White woman in her early 60s. She emphasized the importance of her spiritual journey which began more than 30 years ago. She considers her practice a means of supporting total well-being that encompasses physical, spiritual, mental, and emotional health. The following narrative profile describes her experience in her own words:

> This is a really good time in my life.… Spiritually, I felt a deep urge, a deep longing, from the time I was a child. My family was traditionally religious, and it was mandatory that we attend the Episcopal church every Sunday. I was in the choir from elementary school through high school, and my brothers were acolytes. That was a joy, and we all looked forward to Sunday service, and I to choir practice. Then when I wanted to get married in the church and suggested we write some of our own prayers or part of the ceremony, the priest said absolutely not, and that the service had been good enough for my parents and it should be good enough for me. We got married in the Unitarian church in the next town, with a ceremony we wrote ourselves, and my father was not happy, even through he walked me down the aisle…. When my daughter was born, I was adamant that she not be baptized until she could decide for herself. The priest, his wife, my parents, all begged me to have her baptized, and I was viscerally opposed to it.

I dedicated her in a private ceremony attended by me and her…. When she was twelve, she was baptized in the Presbyterian church we attended at the time. Later I found out I was descended from Anabaptists, who were persecuted and died for not believing in infant baptism.

Her birth triggered a search for reaching that deep loving feeling I knew was inside me…. I believe that every person has this wonderful place…deep inside where joy resides…. How does [this practice] fit into this? Meditation aligns us with the universe, with our energy flow, helps us touch that joy. It does not exercise the body. We are both spiritual and physical. [Yoga] is able to tone the body, to quiet the body to get us ready to feel that spiritual energy. There are a plethora of techniques to get us to that place, and each person who feels the call to find it will find a way to get there. [This practice] uses the physical gateway, and the results can be the same—to follow your spiritual development to its fulfillment. I need to exercise, and as I get older, to maintain this body in its optimum condition. [Yoga] helps me do that, and also connects the body-soul energy almost effortlessly. The body is the tool through which we can realize our spiritual potential here on earth. It is therefore incumbent upon us to maintain this tool to its intended perfection. Of all the yoga classes I have attended, [this] is the one that fits me and my body the best…. I may not need all the spiritual teachings it offers, but I am willing to listen and learn. You see, the lessons are the same because the teachings are of universal truths. The names of the stages or energy fields or the search itself could change, but the end result is personal, physical, and spiritual fulfillment and the attainment of inner peace. For me, [this] teaching is one of two signposts in this path I am on.

[The issue that brought me to the Center was] mostly physical, because I feel better when I'm exercising. Also, I have some problems with my knee and my back, and I wanted a yoga class that was not "death by yoga" but gentle, yet would over a long period of time add strength and flexibility to my body…. I don't think you can really say that there's one particular exercise [that's most effective in addressing this] because it's all integrated…and as you go through each it handles each section of the body…. And the meditation kind of pulls all of it together.… When you're working with the exercises…, each of the muscles get stretched, exercised, and then relaxed…. And, as each of those sections is freed from its tension, one can feel the energy, the electrical system of that particular body relax, and the energy flows better…; there's more than one system involved, all connected by an electrical energy path. And when a muscle is tensed, either through mental exertion, or mental or physical stress, the energy flow is blocked, very similarly as if you had an electrical cord that had a crimp in it, and so the electricity couldn't flow through. So, what you're doing with each of the exercises is to help open those paths…. I am sensitive to those energies…, so I can tell that in my particular body that the energy level starts to bring up. Sometimes there are places in the body that are more resistant, or a little more cramped than other parts, and that's when you can feel it even more once it relaxes…. It's so subtle, and so gentle that I don't think from day to day I realize it, but then there are moments where…all of a sudden I

go, “Well, I feel that I can compare that to two years ago, and realize how much stronger I am.”

I really didn’t think too much about my body in my early life, because it did everything I wanted it to, and I was quite active…, in great condition. So, I never really thought too much about it. I just thought it would always be that way, and it turns out it’s not <laughter>… About twenty years ago I contracted Epstein-Barr virus which led to a nine-month period of [being] almost inactive, so that’s when it hit me that “Gee, maybe I better start taking care of this body a little bit more *consciously.*” I think people who are sensitive psychically tend to ignore their bodies, because that’s not where they’re living…. [Currently]…my job can be sedentary, except when I’m traveling, so that’s a negative thing…. Exercise is not something at this point that I run to. I just do it because I *have* to, so I might as well enjoy it, and I think a *lot* of that has to do with the fact that I’m very attuned to energy, so I’m drawn to the [Center] because it works with both. And, it’s that *high* that one gets when one is physically exercising in a way that opens the energy pathways that attracts me.

[To describe the emotional aspects of the practices here,]…I think the first thing is that one always feels welcomed…with a hug and a smile, and it can easily become an extended family. And…this is a…coming into realization that physical, tactile experience is important between human beings…. I think that gives people something…; it helps heal them in a way…. I feel that I need to have someone push me when I’m exercising, because I’m lazy, I’m too easy on myself, and if it hurts just a little bit, or I’m a little too strained, if I were working at home, I’d stop…. I know that I could do these things at home, but I also know that I *won’t* do them at home, and that I need to exercise *with* other people…. I think stretching is valuable, but I think the ***whole*** exercise class is valuable…. [The emotion I experience in class is]… generally joy, all the way through. Happy to be there, glad to be there, a deep feeling of satisfaction and comfort, and that feeling of that ***place*** that’s further in that only certain things can touch, and particularly as you get closer into the meditation.

When I first started [this practice] I was really conflicted between my spiritual master… and the teachings of [the Center]…; it felt as if they clashed…, where they’re actually leading you to the same place, but using different methods. And I felt conflicted with loyalty, conflicted as to did it have to be one way or the other, one path or another path? And then I went away for three years to another country for my job and kind of…gave everything a rest. And then when I came back I realized that actually I can integrate that. I can integrate those two paths, because it’s really all part of what I need…. The emphasis in [this practice] is really on total physical health, and using this physical body as the tool, and so because of that I don’t really have as much conflict as other people might, because I know that I need it physically.

…My view of life is that this is a school, and that in this school of life we all have the same lessons to learn…. The deal is that, though, not all of us take the same classes, but

we all end up having to learn the same lessons…. One of the lessons is that you are born alone and that your spiritual journey is really yours alone, a personal thing and it can't really be dictated by someone else. You have to follow where you're led, but…I believe that every experience we have is a learning experience, positive and negative…. What I've discovered from that is that I'm a pretty strong person who can get through just about anything. However during these times I felt really guided, felt strongly that it was the right decision, and felt a certainty that these changes were part of my journey through this life, that I had grown out of the current situation and it was imperative I move on. And I felt that as a spiritual guidance…. As far as spiritual journey goes, I think it's very important to realize that it's *all* an ongoing process.

[How have I changed the way I interact with others in my various roles as a result of what I've been learning?] I think there are two answers to that question…. I interact with more understanding, and it is sometimes difficult when I feel that I need to be strong to hold up my point of view; I will give in often in situations of conflict. Not always, in fact when it's really, really important I go in the opposite direction…. The second is that having a giving nature and being able to give that healing and to give that energy sometimes depletes me to the point where I've got to take a few days to recover, and that has led to physical problems on my part…. So, I'm still learning, ***I know*** how to protect myself but I forget to do it…, so, I'm learning how to keep a bit in reserve.… There's a balancing act between wanting to give your whole self, and giving *almost* your whole self, so that you can keep that physical body healthy enough to continue in that role, and it depends on how healthy you can keep that body which is a "machine" that kind of houses the energy that is who you are…. There's part of you which is immortal and there's a part of you which is very finite. Your physical body is finite, and this life that we have…is the perfect melding between the spiritual and the physical, kind of like oil and water combined, and it's a unique moment in time when the mortal and the immortal dwell for a very short period together. And, I think what I'm learning through [this practice] is I think I've been one-sided for most of my life, which is in the spiritual realm versus the physical realm, not even caring about my body, 'cause it kind of took care of itself, thank God. But through [this practice] I'm realizing the true integration of that body-spirit together and, of course…, the formal definition of yoga is "mind-body connection," and that's really what that is. So, what I'm learning and continually trying to balance is the spiritual and the physical together.

[When I'm reflecting on the changes I've made in my life,]…a lot of it is introspection; these insights that one gets when one is meditating or just thinking about how life is now and how I can always make it better. And how I am feeling about [it] when I don't go to [class], I feel I can go about two days without my body telling me that I need it. And that would be an extra stiffness or maybe a pain here or there. The day after, that evening and the day after yoga class, I'm feeling so much better. That's the balance that my body needs to have…. And also with the energy being able to feel your various energy levels. And [this practice] makes you more aware of that, I believe. And especially during class I can feel the energy moving where it needs to go. It reminds me

that we really can heal ourselves if we train ourselves properly to do that. The body is composed of more than its physical manifestations. It has an energy field around it…that has actually been measured by Kirlian photography and other electronic means that are now more sensitive than they used to be…. Anyone could attune themselves to it if you believed it, or if you wanted to do it. There is a saying of "Where your mind goes, your body will answer to where your mind goes." For instance, when you are doing meditation and someone says "jaw" your jaw will relax because your mind is thinking about your jaw muscle. And that is something that you can feel immediately because you are aware of it in your mind. There are other feelings…, they call it energy but it's really electrical, it's just part of how we are made up…. I think [we are coming to the] time when we are able to get more sophisticated to the point where science actually believes what it is that the mystics and psychic have been talking about essentially. So, to say what it feels like, it feels like a moving—could be a little heat going through—from one part of your body to another… . It is a thickness in the air around that particular thing that you are thinking about. It's pretty simple in the…exercise where, after relaxation physical and relaxation exercises, one puts one's hands close together but not touching, you could feel like there's a heat exchange there. And then as you move very slowly—you feel like expanding that space in-between—it's actually being connected by an energy field.

[To connect what I've learned to the idea of preconceptions…,] I think that the tie is that connection that one feels to God, or to what I *called* God, the feeling that I get when I am in that deepest state that is sometimes called "bliss." [I believe this]…is something that you can attain every day. So the preconception that there is only one God, the preconception that there is only one Messiah, the preconception that you don't need a guru to help you in your spiritual development, the preconception that a guru is someone who takes over your mind, in a mind-control sort of way and then leads you mindlessly into things that may not be good for you; that has happened that way, but that's not the norm. So those preconceptions had to be overcome for me to accept as willingly as I do in a very slow, learned and deliberate process.… And I believe that this has been my spiritual journey. And that there is a part of me that is leading me on to the next step. And that means necessarily to let go of preconceptions. [Some of these preconceptions I discovered during my experiences at the Center, such as]…the preconception that one couldn't accept two masters. That's one. And the real conflict I felt five years ago when I was beginning to find out more and more, and go deeper into [this practice]…. And I believe that there is a cultural difference between [where this practice originated in Asia] and the United States. And to understand that it is a cultural difference and accept that there are certain parts of [this practice] that we won't be privy to, that one has to almost grow up in that tradition to be able to understand more.

[Some of the specific emotions that I experienced during this process included]… conflict and the loyalty between one spiritual discipline and another…. Anger at being pushed a little bit, pushed to take this class or to take this discipline or to do the next thing when all I wanted to do was the exercising… And the other is feeling like I know

that already, I really don't need to learn that again. So that was one thing I think I experienced. [My increased understanding about my preconceptions is]…more of an extension of the way I live my life, as opposed to *changing* how I live my life. I don't say to myself "There's a preconception I need to get rid of," mostly because I tend to be very open; I can't wait to see the next thing… It is kind of interesting that as I've got older, I've gotten more settled. I've found what works for me. That's not specifically a preconception, from my standpoint anyway, rather "Okay, I have done all this exploration. I have really explored this area to the point where I have found what works for me."

[The aspect of my early environment that may have influenced development of these preconceptions,] I would think it would be family mostly, church secondly, the Anglican Church particularly…, and because …it's really a self-learning that just keeps going on within that teaching. [My experience of discovery in this process tends to be]…sharing with a friend or two. [This] is the most valuable for me, talking through things. But the end result is how you feel. [What has this process of discovery, learning and change has meant in my life?]… It *is* my life…. There are some people who live for exercising…. And there are people who live for their profession, and I have done that, too. I have given that more emphasis than other things in different times in my life. But the continual thread of what makes me happy is always attached to the spiritual journey. And if I were independently wealthy, and I could do anything I wanted to do, I would follow that more than anything. So the continual thread of my life is a never-ending traveling along a spiritual journey. In fact, there will never be a point when I feel that it is over. And it really doesn't have to do with what I am going to do in the afterlife…. People buy into it in most religions and even in [this practice] that we need to sharpen ourselves for what happens to us afterwards. We need to perfect our souls to move into preparation for the afterlife. I believe that we need to do that for *this* life.

Julia

Julia is a long-time professional, White female in her early 50s with graduate-level education. She was a public school teacher for the past ten years. She originally came to the Center with a friend, primarily out of curiosity, but immediately signed up when she discovered how good she felt after participating in class. Over time, she participated in regular classes as well as specialized workshops and training, discovering levels of emotional and spiritual self-knowledge that prompted significant transformation in her life, including becoming a Master in

the months following the interviews. The following narrative profile describes her experience in her own words:

> The issue that actually got me in the door was a friend of mine who had lost her husband, and I suggested we go together. But I think the issue that *kept* me in the door was… something spiritual is missing, and I feel like I'm at the stage of my life that, "OK, it's time to pay attention to *me*, and find that missing piece." Most of my adult life…I've always been focused on people outside of me, starting with my younger brothers and sisters.... I think as I got married and had children my needs really became subdued to their needs…. I think I kind of forgot about who *I* was.... I wanted to get back to that person that was *me*, that wasn't so afraid of things and was more *willing* to take risks and try new things in order to *experience* different things…. Some of the initial trainings… made me look *inside* where I had been focused outside.... So, the intersection maybe of middle age approaching and, "Wow! I really have ignored this whole part of me!" came at the same time, and the trainings helped me realize that.
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> …The *physical* exercises [helped me get in touch inside, because] there's always an awareness to watch your body— "How do you feel on this?" and *observe* the changes. Then applying that—how I last felt pain in this position translates to that's how I approach pain in my real life. So, I was very *fascinated* by that, and from the simple practice of just *watching* myself and…*realizing* all these things, to some of the deeper workshops…, they all *chiseled* away a little bit. [The experience of looking inside,] at different times it is felt differently. Sometimes it's very painful and very sad because old memories come up, and I try to look at them objectively, but, of course, everything is subjective…. And trying to analyze them too much gets me sometimes caught back into where I was when things happened.… Sometimes the relief of stress is just so overwhelming that tears come up, too. And just actually letting go of memories or situations that…really make me sad or angry, or held me back…; it's a very positive, *light* feeling. I left big burdens behind, so I think that's *incredibly* powerful. And then also the calm when I feel like I'm really connected to *me*, and not everybody's idea of me, that's what keeps me coming back. It's like I feel at *one* with everything around me, and I feel…very open and accepting, not only of me, but of others around me. And *that* ability has transferred to my personal life.... Before I started this practice my sister and I weren't even speaking, and my step-mother and I…, we were speaking but it was strictly what's civil…. And by me dropping any judgment of them, and letting go of the need to work *through* everything, we were able to really build up a whole new relationship, and…that's been very powerful.… I noticed a lot of *health* changes, too. Just more flexible, I had a lot more energy, I lost some weight without trying and I just *felt* really *good*…. So I noticed physical changes right away, and that practice of watching myself inside, that was really strong and I started to see then the spiritual aspect of that, and watching how I reacted to situations around me, and "Who's in control here, is it the outside or the inside?"

[In terms of external demands,] I've seen changes in that, some of that I think is positive, some of it I'm still not so sure <laughter>. I found that some things that previously I had been involved in I really didn't care to keep going because it wasn't really me, …so…I felt stronger saying, "No, I really don't want to spend my time *doing* this because *you* want me to do it that way. I want to spend time doing things that *I* want to do." At work that helped me be very focused…, or that I was *choosing* that I wanted to be at the Center more because I liked the way it made me feel. So, the preconceptions of what I *should* be doing and what I *chose* to do sometimes were in conflict…. I think because my mother died at such a young age, and my [other] brother, that I was always trying to please my older brother…; I felt I was always being measured by that, and that I had to *please* my brother and my father…. So there's a preconception there that I needed to be strong, and…the whole circumstances surrounding my mother's dying…. I was in the hospital that whole summer, and my brother was there, too, for part of that time, but we got out of the hospital and we never talked about it, ever…. So, a lot of things, I believe, were unresolved, but that's just the way it was…; it was just part of the baggage that came with me, so I dealt with it…. It started getting a little more difficult when I was in High School because I was…in conflict between what was expected of me, and what I wanted to do. So, I'm sure there were a lot of preconceptions that I had to just let go…. Now I'm a mom and I'm a wife, and I'm supposed to act a certain way, and sometimes to be honest…it's a little difficult when I look at my relationship with my husband, because there's *huge* expectations of how we're supposed to act there, and…we probably had different expectations of what marriage over a *long*-term is supposed to be like…. I guess I looked at it as "I'm still an independent person, I'm not giving up being *me* just because I'm married." I don't take being married lightly. I know it's a huge commitment, but I don't see that I lose myself because of that, so that can be a little tense sometimes and full of conflict.

[As an example of] a *physical* practice that we do...I'd say [the] bowing exercise.... When I first did bowing I thought, "Well, this is really interesting. This *really* goes against the preconceptions of my religion, my growing up, and even physically, just getting through it all without being out of breath." So, it was *physical* at first, but then I found as my body adjusted to it that it was really very spiritual. And I bow every day now, so that's something that's carried over into my life…. Some of it is just physical waking up; it opens up your whole body, it uses all your joints, everything, but also it's a time to become centered and to center myself for the *whole* day, and to connect to who that person is really inside, and connect to the *energy* really that *everybody* has. And when I miss that, my whole day is off..., so I have in my mind now that I know I'm always better off when I get up and do that…. When I was able to get to the point where it's one fluid motion it really helps with the centering. As I come down I pull the energy in and then as I'm bowing forward and coming down to my knees I *consciously* try and empty myself of any judgments, any worries, any preconceptions, any tiredness. And then as I'm coming *up*, I feel new energy coming in and start over again.... It's all about accepting *my* condition and what it's possible for me to do, and the people around me, too. And I think that's a *huge* principle to take into life! That everybody's where they're

at, it's the right place, and everybody's trying the best they can. There are a lot of applications to that.

…I think my view of life is fairly optimistic. I'm a 'half-full cup' instead of a 'half-empty cup.' … I believe that each of us starts all good, and there's so many different reasons that make us loaded down with baggage, some of it positive, some of it negative, but if we can see *past* that to the person, the soul underneath all that, it opens up everything to *huge* possibilities. I think sometimes we get overwhelmed with the fear, or sadness, and that those things can really hold us back. I see it with my own sons, I see it with my husband, I see it with my *students, all the time*…. I know I hold on to things longer than I should, whether it's anger, or sadness, and I *see* how it holds me back, and I know I have to let go, otherwise it's like a self-fulfilling prophecy. If I choose to be that way *I'm* going to stay there. But if I choose to just keep changing that…I can affect the outcome of how *my* day goes, how it goes it for others.... And *knowing* the power of being able to change how *I* feel will also affect how they feel, and how everything ***each*** person does has those ripple effects to everyone they can come in contact [with], that's made me be a little bit more cautious about things I say and do.

…There are a few things [in this practice] that were really new to my way of thinking. I was raised Catholic, and I went to Catholic school up through graduate school, so I'm *well* indoctrinated <laughter>! … And then, in some ways, I guess I'd say there are two different aspects of it, there's a cultural thing because this is rooted in Asian culture…, and the idea of the community, the common good, versus *individual* liberties and rights.... So that was a preconception that I've really had to struggle with, and I think where I am right now is…we need each other, and *no one* on Earth has gotten it right yet. We're trying to *find* the best way, and we need each other, we need the *whole* in order to make one… "Love your neighbor as yourself." That's in *many* traditions, and you have to love *yourself*! That part's really important, 'cause if you don't really love yourself, and you're not connected to a love for God, then how can you *truly* be connected to others? … So some things are the same, but some things, just the packaging is different…. Obviously, I'm still struggling with some of the concepts.… I haven't totally resolved it. I think part of it is that individualistic tendency that…, "Oh, no one can tell me what to do!" which in some roles that I play that has served me well, but other roles it doesn't serve me well because it also sets up for conflict, and that sets up for "How are we *different*?" instead of "How are we the same?" …That really *is* what we need to emphasize, is what we *do* have in common. We're not going to get anything done. We're not going to save the world <laughter>…if we just concentrate on how *different* we are.... So, I see some new ways of looking at things, and what my role is in new ways, maybe I don't understand it really, but OK, if we keep on doing things the same way it's not going to change, so maybe I've got to try something in a new way. And maybe I have to give up some of my *questioning*, "Well, it's not the way I do it; my habits, my preconceptions!" If we're really going to change things and get people to really *realize* what all the religions teach, then we've got to do something new. So,

I'm dropping some of my natural stubbornness to say "Well, why not? Let's give it a try!" "Let's see where we go."

…Because of this practice, it's helped me do two things: accept the issues *I* have as an individual, and accept where *other* people are more. And just starting out from accepting wherever we're at, it's made a *big* difference and helped *me* see…, maybe this is what *I* need <laughter>…. Just by starting from saying "Yes, is there a way to do it?" it's changed in *all* levels of my life.… The example I had earlier with my sister that she and I weren't speaking…, when I was able to see things from *her* perspective more, and I stopped judging her more, we were able to establish a relationship again…. I accepted, and we could rebuild from there, and it's made a big difference…. Sometimes I found…when all these things were happening, it would just *eat up* my insides, and I couldn't sleep, and I'd get *so* angry and I was *so* tense, and just "Rwrrrr!"…. I know through this practice, first by learning how to reduce stress and just calm myself down and connect with who *I* really am—I can't control what my sister does, I can only control how I react to it—so…it doesn't tear me up inside anymore, *because* of the practice. Just being able to calm my mind down more, and know that it's OK.

…The physical component [of this practice] would be the training.... I find when I'm not doing stronger physical training that my ability to *choose* to not get all wrapped in it, or my ability to calm myself down and connect with *me*, it's much harder to do. The physical training [is] a stress reliever, but it's a way of making choices. Like when I set a goal of this many push-ups, or hold this position for this long, or do this many bows, if I give *up*, then it's easier to give up in other things, but if I *make* that goal, then it builds my confidence, but also shows that I can set those goals and I can choose to keep going…. If you push yourself and challenge yourself, then you're gonna reach a limit, and then you go one inch further, and then "whoa!" there's just an automatic *chemical* release in your body, and it can not only help work out blocked areas…, but then your mind feels the chemical release, and your *body* feels that physical release. Endorphins are kicked off and cortisol levels go down and your heart rate is healthier, and…in Eastern terms, there's more of a proper energy balance, and energy circulation, and when your energy's in balance, you can withstand all those things. So if you have bad health, or [you're] in real pain, how can you really concentrate on anything but that pain? … So the physical healing *has* to come first. And one more extension of that is when…you use the physical training to get in touch with your spiritual, and "Oh, I can do this," use those limits. But then, you can also use it the other way around, you can use your brain, use your mind to overcome that goal, so even when your body is *screaming* out in pain, you're going to keep going. And so it helps both ways.

…I'm usually very optimistic and positive-thinking, but underneath all that there's a sadness, and it probably comes from losing my mother at such a young age…. I think a lot of layers…, or perhaps things I hadn't really thought about or confronted before have certainly come to the surface.... So, it's not as rose-colored as before…; in my early 50s now, it's a different perspective than when I was younger…. So, in that

respect, I think more of the big picture of my life instead of day-to-day…. Whether that's timing or, some of the training I've learned…to pay more attention to that inner voice inside, I'm not sure…, but it's definitely a change. [As I reflect on these changes], a lot of times I go for a walk…. Before…I would never share my feelings. And the…practice is *very* big on that from the beginning.... I used to resist it a lot more than I do now…, but I realized the value of that; [it] makes it more *real* for me…, so I understand the value of sharing with words. I still don't like it. It's not the way I was raised. And I think I look to nature a lot to help me when I feel…a lot of questions that are nagging at my head, or my brain, or my heart.

[My token] would represent nature.… [It is] a maple leaf…, and it hangs up in my house. Leaves to me are a symbol of trees…. When I was little I was always climbing a tree…, and then as I got older I felt more inhibited and can't really climb trees, but I still love trees…. It's a different *view* of the world, so it felt like it's my own view…. Trees also symbolize to me a very strong foundation and they're rooted, and we should be proud. I have a big poster over my desk at work about advice from trees…, "Pay attention to your roots. Be willing to go out on a limb. Stand tall and be proud of your roots." Trees are amazing. They kind of bridge the earth up to the heavens. [This token reminds me]…that I need to always keep those connections in mind, that those trees and nature, and the earth was here way before me as physical body, and that it gives great strength and nurturing to me. I think a lot of people love going away from their daily life into nature. So there's a really strong connection to every human there, and that *I* need to pay attention to it as an individual, because it gives me great peace, and then as a species, we need to pay attention to the earth.

…I think growing older, period, makes you change your perspective, and finding out that people live differently than I was raised.... I didn't have a lot of exposure to a lot of different ways of living until I left [home]. So, that broadened my horizon, but…I love learning different ideas about how things work. Some of the ideas that I've come to accept are very different from what I was raised with…. I was raised on a traditional catechism in the Catholic Church…. The energy that is shared among all living things, and humans, and between humans and God, or what you perceive as God, I think that's the same, no matter what tradition. And basic respect for humanity, [is] all the same.… For a while in college I went through the time, "Well, is there really a God, or do I still have to go to church now that I'm not living at home?" And I found…that seed to connect me to my beliefs was *very* important, even if I didn't agree with the strictures of what the Church said…. I have found more *meaning* in the principles taught, or the real law of the Catholic religion, faith in Jesus, through [this practice] than I felt I *ever* did going to 20-some years of Catholic school… I know many, many Catholics who are loving and they really do try and live according to the Commandments…, but I've never felt that people are accepted just as they are, no matter where they came from…. Whereas [here]…people are who they are, and they made the best decisions that they could at the time, and maybe they have to change for the future, but there's no judgment, and I think that that's really one of the biggest things I've gotten out of [this

practice]…. Just accepting, "OK, this is who you are, this is what you've done" also reflects a decision to accept inside them and let it go.

I think the first time it really came to me [that I can accept people for who they are] was…when I [was] trying to calm my thoughts, and instead of calming my thoughts and trying to feel energy or peaceful, I keeping thinking of these other things, and then I would get frustrated, and then I'd lose my concentration even more, and the Masters said, "Just let it go. Don't judge yourself; just keep coming back to what you're trying to do." And with practice I was able to do that more and more. And then I remember right before [the first workshop], we came and did some pre-training and the Master said, "When you go, just do your best and try not to judge. Don't judge yourself, your reactions, and don't judge others. Just experience the training for what it is, and see what comes to your mind, see what comes to your heart or your emotions." I wasn't really sure what he meant until we got there, and after some of the experiences when we'd go back and really look at your past, and then I understood.

And…I didn't really express a lot of my feelings previous to this training. You just "suck it up, keep it inside and just move forward!" And here I was being asked, "Well, no, you need to stop and let it out, and you need to let it go and look at it, and let it go." And if you didn't like something about yourself, it's OK, you can't go back and change, but you can choose to make a different decision when you go forward. So, [this workshop] was probably the first training where I really felt that with *myself*, and then through different trainings I came to expand that more in my view of others…. [I experienced] a couple of different [emotions during this process]. One would be anger at my father. He died when I was 25, and I felt that he didn't put up a good fight. He just gave up.... And since then, I've realized he probably was much stronger, and it was the exact opposite, that he'd been fighting for a very long time, but it was his time; he was willing to let go. So it took me quite a while to work through that, but I had to let go of anger first to do that. And there was probably also that my mother died when I was 3 ½, so not anger at her, obviously…, but anger at not growing up with my mother…. That I recognized there, and what a stupid thing to be angry about! I still had a lot of love growing up. And then another emotion that came up, after I was able to let go of the angry part was gratefulness that the 3 ½ years I did have…, I obviously felt her love or I don't believe I would have such a fairly positive outlook on life, or being willing to establish a loving relationship with so many people in my life if I didn't have that from her.

… We're all souls. We all want to go back to that connection, that oneness with God, or oneness with all of us…. And that's the same connection and oneness that is more openly discussed in [this practice]. And when I realize that and can *see* that, I'm much more accepting of people who earlier I would find fault with…. Find what's in common and build a bridge from that. So, I think that's been a big change, and more of a helpful way to look at life. [In terms of discovering my preconceptions], I've done another [workshop] that was really kind of disturbing for me.... I experienced some of going

back to the ambulance…, and I have a very distinct memory of being in the ambulance, but like my soul was separate from my body, and I was up looking at everybody. And I've had that ever since it happened, and I never really trusted it until I was much older and this friend of mine showed me a newspaper report of the car accident, detailing all the people that were involved. And it wasn't until I saw that newspaper account that I knew what I had seen was very real, because I knew there was always a baby in there and we didn't have any baby, but the other car had a six-month old baby…. And…I've been able to talk to some people about who my mother was, and what she was like, and feel it, but I've *never* been able to talk to anybody about what my brother was like…. There are some pictures of me with my brother who died and he looked like he was really *fun*, and like he was really protective of me.…

And so there was all of that coming back, but then this realization that maybe *I* was the one who was supposed to die. That I had already separated [from my body] and *I* was looking over everything. But I was the one who *lived*, and [my brother] died. So there was all this guilt that came up, and I didn't know what to do with it for a long time. I kept thinking, "I wasn't supposed to be here. What am I doing here?" [My brother] should have lived. He was the dynamic, the strong one, the star, the one that made everybody laugh and everything, and what have I done with my life to justify that I'm the one who's here?" So that took a lot of letting things go. And just accepting it that I didn't have to figure it out, maybe there was no figuring it out. It's OK that it came up. Let it go! That was a big one. That was pretty big! [To describe the actual experience, there were] tears, crying, crying! I don't cry <laughter> … I was raised, "We don't cry about that. We rarely even discuss it, much less cry." So when my own emotions come up, for *me*, having tears streaming down, that's pretty off the charts…. I remember that weekend I couldn't stop crying, for hours…, so that was a real emotion for me to feel that. But then I was able to let it go because of that. If I kept it all in, it would still be bothering me. So I still remember it, obviously, but it doesn't keep me awake at night like when I first started feeling that. So, the crying is a big release. It just [helps] you feel lighter…. I think these workshops are so helpful because you *are* with people who are experienced, and because of the non-judgment…. And you're just accepted for whoever you are. And then when you experience that, then you can learn to accept yourself and all the things you've done, that I've done that I may not approve of. You can accept it, and let it go.

[To summarize the changes during my four years of practice], I think the biggest change was my health at the beginning. And then [my] journey inside instead of always being focused outside, [I] found out who *I* really am, and *listening* to that instead of covering it up all the time…. "What do I really want?" When I can accept myself I've been able to accept others more, because I can see the similarities…. It's all attitude and we really need to change our way of thinking, that we *are* all connected, and that we really need to accept that everyone's doing the best they can, given their level of awareness. And that has meant so much to me…. Some people have a lot more negative baggage than others.... And so when you have all these preconceptions and all this stuff *stuck* in you,

> some people are going to be angrier than others, some are going to be so negative about everything, some are going to be very open, some are going to be on their way towards it, but we're all going the same place…. And everybody, given their knowledge and awareness, everybody does what they can. And that makes a difference in how I view others.

Cynthia

Cynthia is a retired professional, White female in her early 70s with graduate-level education. Cynthia characterizes herself as a "searcher for spiritual wholeness in the universe" who is on a lifelong journey to develop and continually grow. She sees her current practice as another step in this journey, particularly in terms of enlarging her perspective through the transformation of her preconceptions. In the year following data collection, Cynthia completed additional training to become an Instructor. The following narrative profile describes her learning experience in her own words:

> We live in the mountains of Colorado in the summer, and in a very small community of about 50 people. And they gather once a week to do yoga together in the mountains…. It was very interesting because it stretched your muscles and aligned your joints, and [the instructor] would go around and actually do the alignment. And you could *feel* the difference, and you could really *feel* something happening as he aligned you in these yoga poses.... So when I got back in September, about a month later…, I drove by in the shopping center to pick up something, "Yoga Center, oh, this is around the corner! I'll go in and *see* what kind of yoga they're doing!" So that's how I got there—just by chance. If you call it "chance." I was looking for something, and this was close by, and it was worth trying out…. So that's how I came, by chance, because I was searching for a type of yoga that would align my body structure in a way that it felt properly aligned. The interesting thing was, once I got in there, and…joined the practice after a month's membership, I realized that it was more than the physical alignment, and it was more of *connecting* with the universal energy, which I had been doing *some* of, but it really gave definition to this energy. So…it very quickly became more than physical. It was a connection with something much more in terms of a universal energy…so it became both a physical *and*…I guess you could call it, a spirit-moving type of thing.
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> …There are three components to this…, the emotional component came in when you try to validate the spiritual, the mental, the physical, the emotional, "Is this real, is this not real?" Or "How does it feel?"…"Do you trust it?"…. All these questions play in your mind when you're coming into a new practice, and trying to sort it out in terms of

your prior experience. I feel it *begins* with the physical. If your body isn't physically aligned properly then you can't get connected in other ways as easily. And so *a* specific exercise would be…hard to think of one off-hand, because I think it's a combination of things…[that] all lead into a point where if you stretch your body and extend it as high as you can, and *reach*, then you begin to feel an energy flowing through if you're aligned properly. But if you're not working to the fullest of your *physical* capability, then it's not connecting as well. So, there's a combination of working to your most physical potential to reach a level that will allow the energy to [flow], but then there's also a relationship between physical exertion and then calming your body to a quiet state. So I think you need the combination of both.

…I basically am a searcher for spiritual wholeness in the universe, and find it through intellectual pursuits and reading …And, so, this was a different aspect and [I] approached it a little bit differently and I wanted to see how this would combine, or whether it would conflict with some of my previously discovered ideas about energy and the universe, and the human soul, and spirituality…I'm a pretty free spirit! <laughter> I've explored a lot of ideas, and …a number of belief systems and psychological explanations, and scientific explanations for what's going on…I'm always looking to expand this knowledge, and this was another little thing in that expansion and understanding of how the mind works, and people think.

[To discuss just one practice], let's pick body tapping… Physically, it means taking your hands and tapping a part of the body which you wish to tap with your hands made into a fist and gently, or to whatever degree of hardness you would like, to tap a specific part of the body that you're asked to tap, or that you wish to tap. I'd never done it before here…, so it's very new, and I think that's why I was *drawn* to it, because it was something I had *never* done, and I really was very surprised that I'd never paid any attention to these parts of my body before! And when I tapped them, "Whoa, they were really parts of me!" It was an interesting reaction.… I found you generally tap your body and get in touch, and then sometimes you'd have a pain where your stomach tapping was going on, and you'd tap it and tap it, and it might *relieve* that pain. And so I began to pay more attention to where my body was having some, I mean it's not *real* pain, but you sometimes feel it, a spot that says, "Whew!" And you tap it and "Oh, my goodness, something happened!" and that feeling of discomfort disappeared, or moved on. I also did some…brain tapping. And I was very much aware of the parts of my brain, you know, the right side, the left side, the neocortex, all this and you could actually *feel* the actual brain, and in particular the thalamus …. When I did get into the practice I decided to set a goal to get off medication. Just to see if it worked. I mean, this is a test! I test all these practices, and so I gave myself three months to get off this medication, which I did! But, pain was recurrent, and one of the places I had pain was in the thalamus, and so I would tap it, and tap it, and could really get in touch with it, and it would relieve this…. So it was a very interesting experiment that I got off the medication, but whenever these pain symptoms occurred in the various parts of the

body, I would try to get in touch with them through tapping to help me get through the period.

I think what [this practice] has done has just reinforced parts of my exploration on the path I've been. And it's been able to help me focus more, and say, "Yes! This is where I was going. I was feeling some of these aspects of spirituality and the universality of Man, and, the functioning of the universe in terms of all that goes into making up the universe in terms of atoms and molecules and all the minutiae." And this just sort of said, "Yes!" and it solidified it, and maybe *defined* it more specifically so I can put my finger on it and say, "Oh, ah ha!" …And so your path leads you around exploring various ideas, and one leads to another, and to another, and then you get to one that says, "Oh, this puts it all together."…"Ah ha," that we're *all* connected, and that energy is universal energy that circulates throughout the order of creation, and the universe, and that it's all connected. And we're a minute part of it, and yet we're as big as the universe.

How do [I] describe [my] view of life?... We're all on a journey, and it's up to us to take the steps of this journey…., and it's up to you to decide what kind of adventure you want it to be. And I've decided to take my adventure and make it as beautiful an adventure, to learn as much as I can about life on this spiritual journey, to incorporate as much as I can…. Sometimes you hit highs, sometimes you hit lows, but you're always on a path, and you're always moving…. I know that the steps I take are going to take me in a positive direction if I set my mind to making the experiences in life positive, because I see now having experienced [this practice], I see in other people, and not judgmentally, but I see how they can make their journeys negative by what they say…. So…, you begin to see how people create their own emotional lives through their attitude.

[In terms of changes in how I interact with others in my various roles,]… I'm less judgmental; I'm more understanding, because maybe I've come to a deeper understanding of myself on a growth pattern… I think it's probably a universal principle in a lot of belief systems, to not be so judgmental, but I think [this practice] taught me to be more at peace with who *I* am. So, I can [be] at peace with who other people are…. I think the best thing that helped me to bring myself to this state of consciousness is getting into deeper meditation, which I didn't allow myself to do. Learning to be quiet, and I had begun to do that, having read books on the Buddha practice, and just sitting and "being," but this made me go a lot deeper into that.

…This practice is just a step in a *long* journey that's leading me, and it certainly has been a very enriching and probably the most powerful step I have taken, because it combines—most of the steps I've taken have been more or less intellectual, rather than an emotional, or plain physical, like walking, or, exercise—but it never has combined all three steps. There might have been two linked, but this has linked mind, body *and* spirit; the physical, the intellectual, and the spiritual into one practice. And this is the

first time all three have been linked together in a practice where others have taken one or two elements.... I think this is why it feels so complete that you're taking all three aspects of that, and combining it in one practice. I guess I've always been on a journey…. And I've always…pursued this journey with diligence, sometimes more, sometimes less…. Life's journey [is]…defined by a spiritual path, a belief path. My beliefs are never held in a box, they're always growing. And this is just another step in that growth. It wasn't a *sudden* jolt because I've done some energy work before, and I'd done a little bit of yoga before, and so…it all came together in this practice, both the spiritual *and* the physical, and mental. So, it was sort of, "Oh! They're not separate within me, they're all connected." And it was that "ah ha" that changed.

…I think [my life is] a *lot* better because I've been defining my preconceptions, which I've discovered are very many, and I think it holds one back from making progress; that you get *stuck* in these preconceptions and you don't move forward. You just *stay* there. …So I've *really* been working with that this whole timeframe, and trying to understand what my preconceptions are, and peeling them away, and by understanding and getting rid of them you become open to greater experiences, to moving on, to greater understandings in both relationships with other people—you understand your relationships with them; why they react to you; why you react to them—and it clears a lot of negative things that can happen in families, in good friends when you work with preconceptions in relationships…. My process [of working on these preconceptions] is probably learning to just be quiet through meditating, and listening to the wind, feeling the sun, getting rid of everything, the busyness in my mind, and just *being*. And most of the time I do it through walking the labyrinth. I have built one out in my backyard, a simple seven-ring labyrinth, and…I will walk it almost every day at some point; never the same time because it changes if you walk it in the morning, or you walk it in the evening, if you walk it at night…you get a different perspective.

[The labyrinth is] a focus [to calm the mind]. The labyrinth is designed so you follow a path…to the center. And the center of the labyrinth is…a symbol for your center [of being], and then in the center you think about what you might do, where you might want to go, some problem in life. And you're quiet in the center, and then you maybe discover something, maybe you get a little peace of mind, and you take that nugget of what you discover, and you walk back out into the world. So it's a centering device where you take yourself out of the world by walking in, being quiet in the center, finding some center point there, and taking it back out into the world. And…it's symbolic in other ways, too…. One of the symbolisms I like is that the maiden is the person walking in on her maiden's journey, the center is the mother, and the crone is the person walking out..., with wisdom to take back to the world. So it can be used in many symbolic ways, but it is a way of centering, and it is a way of physically walking on a journey.

…The preconceptions are realized in quiet time, whether it's walking the labyrinth or just being quiet. [Once they have been realized,] what do you do with it? Well, you

better get it down before you forget it <laughter>, so I usually journal about them. And when you realize you have a preconception, that is the beginning point of getting rid of that preconception, because most preconceptions we don't realize we even have—you recognize it, then you acknowledge it, then you say, "Look at what it's done to your life," and then you say, "I really don't want to carry this around. It's holding back my happiness. It's holding back my ability to move forward. It's holding back my career." And so you have to work. It's not easy to get rid of it, but acknowledging it, and saying "I don't want it. I don't want to live with this," and then you consciously have to, every time it comes up, because it will continually come up, because it's a long-lived habit. So you gradually are beginning to say, "Oops, there it is again. I don't want to deal with life this way." And then you find out, "Oh, it feels so good not to have it dominate this relationship," and you feel freer, so you're going to keep practicing it. But it doesn't mean you're going to just get rid of it instantaneously, but your awareness is the key step to moving forward.

… I like to rationalize things. So that's an easy step. The emotional step is much deeper. And the "letting go" of the emotional part is…so *freeing* when you let go of the negative emotions that's involved with preconceptions. So it's just like, "Wow! I've been carrying that around and I didn't know it?!" And it's like a release, and it brings joy and happiness, and you look at relationships totally differently. So the result of the analytical part of it results in a freeing of the emotions. Basically, it's after you exercise and you *physically* get a releasing, and you feel the heat … from all your exercise, then you calm down and are very quiet. And it's in that time where you just lay there and are quiet, or you're doing energy work that I find I often have some kind of experience in terms of an "Aha, oh my goodness, that's going on!" and I can recognize it. So it's at that quiet, still point in the classroom, or in the yoga class that I find that same experience. And I have experienced, I think that's what drew me, you know, to *really* get deeper into this …practice was the fact that I was *finding* this within the classes. And…meditating on your own works on the other side with meditating there, and they *enhanced,* I mean, I became deeper in terms of ability to meditate through the practice, and then I could take that back and get deeper in my own practice, on my own. So, [getting involved with this practice] *definitely* had an influence.

[The way I live my life]…has changed! I've gotten rid of some of those preconceptions, and I'm much more understanding of some of my family and family situations. It makes me a lot happier to understand these people, and understand why I was reacting the way I was because of my preconceptions, and I'm freed of that now. And I think it makes me a happier person. I don't dwell in the negativity of relationships. [In thinking about where they originated,] I think some of these preconceptions you grow into…I always was a rebellious person <laughter>, and…I did what I wanted to do, and I think as I got older and had a family, I couldn't do what I wanted to do <laughter>. [During] my growing years, I rebelled…I was saying, "I don't like this," "Forget it!" But…[the preconceptions] were *out* there. They were put upon me, but I said "Why should I do it this way?" I went through Nursing School and I kept asking questions because I was

very inquisitive, and then I kept getting put down, "Those are things you don't *need* to know." And I think I was beginning to realize there that you had a place; you were being put in your place. And your preconceptions about yourself, about the world around you, began to close in…. Cultural preconceptions, but also my preconception of what children should do, what family should do, how I wanted to bring them up, what value systems I wanted to place on them. These are all sort of putting things into a structure.… As a child I didn't want to play any role, and as a student I wanted to have the whole world open to me. And your preconception of roles that you play as a parent, as society, as a parent, as a wife, then these preconceptions begin to take away your freedom to be who you are, who you were meant to be. [In the last six months that I've been working on them,]…I'm being freed again from those preconceptions, but in being free, I understand where my family members are coming from, and how my reaction, by putting my preconceptions on what a husband should be…, or a child should be, were interfering with relationships.

I think the [advanced training] was very, very powerful for me, because we really had to stretch our body limits, our physical limits. And…as you stretched your physical limits, it was amazing that your spiritual side became more aware at the same time. You have to keep doing it, doing it, and you thought you were going to die…you thought, "I can't do it anymore. I can't do it anymore." Yes, but you could do it some more! And it was really very stretching to realize you could stretch your body, and in stretching your body, you stretched your mind. And I enjoyed that body stretching, because it stretched my mind, so I think that dual type of thing really, really helped. That was more or less a comfortable process. The most difficult process was where I had to conform to a certain practice or way of thinking. So here comes my nonconformity! So at [one training workshop] there were things we had to do that were more conforming than I found uncomfortable, so I would have to take myself away and meditate, and quiet myself before I could go back and do it…. I couldn't just accept it, it had to become my own, and it had to become my own on my *own* terms…. The main emotion was I had to take myself away from the situation, and become centered…. I guess you would say it was fear of losing my center, because you have to have your center to function. And the fear of loss of that centering ability, or being taken over by something you were not totally ready to conform to.

[In terms of a significant event in my formative years that still has an impact on me,]… one of the things I think back in my formative years was when I was in High School, I was going through searching for a path, and, I joined…this group called "Youth for Christ" and went to a Baptist Church … My parents worried about it, but this friend and I decided we would get together and pray earnestly until something happened…. And we were very sincere about this, and we were given some kind of vision…, and we both felt this same "force", and were absolutely amazed because we looked at each other and said, "This is *real*!" and it was a force that we felt all around us. And so the next day we decided that the whole high school had to learn about Christianity. And so we went to a Baptist Church, and we asked for all their tracts, and we went and we stuffed every

> locker with the Christian tracts <laughter>. And the result was very interesting, "Who did this? Who did this? What's this in my locker" <laughter>. Even now, we've seen each other twice at reunions, and we still look at each other and say, "That was real. Do you remember that?" I'll never forget it! …We were so empowered by this experience that we went and did something that affected everybody in our class in school…. But then the results of this were so amazing and far-reaching…; there was fear involved with if you *really* got connected with this force all the time, what would happen? It was so powerful, and would you be giving up some of yourself? So I relate that to maybe the question you asked about what I feared at this workshop where things were getting uncomfortable and I was losing control of my centering, and had to go back and center. So I think that has influenced me in various ways.
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> [To describe what this process of learning has meant in my life,]…I just think I've become a calmer and more peaceful person. I've also taken on their process of visions…. And the approach really works, because my vision was to…teach children…to connect body, brain and spirit. And it's still my intention, because I feel they're the future of the world, and if *they* can catch on to this, and don't have to wait until they're so old, think of what it will do for the world, or for them as *individuals* in their journey…. And the more you focus on that vision, the more that you make it your intention, the more likely it is to be realized.

Anisha

Anisha is a young professional, East Asian immigrant in her 30s with graduate-level education. She initially joined the Center to deal with physical challenges related to stress, but then learned some practices to achieve better control of her emotions, an issue she continues to work on. The following narrative profile describes her experience in her own words:

> [The issue that brought me to the Center was]…mostly physical. My workplace is kind of crazy with all the work going on…. And sometimes it's 12–14 hours I'm sitting and typing <using hands to illustrate posture>…, so lots of mental tension *and* physical stress. So I used to get very bad, severe shoulder pain, and actually neck pain, so even typing was *really* difficult…. So I came here and took the personal assessment thing they do, they check just to see what is the problem. So I said, "OK, I'm ready to do it right now!" <laughter>. So I did that that same day, and I joined and I've seen a *lot* of improvement…. First of all, when I joined I took the healing session as well, so that kind of helped a little bit, but I don't know, it's just that the class I'm doing, I'm not doing really any special things. I could feel it, it was like really hard <squeezing the shoulder>, now I don't feel it that way, so I think it's more flexible…. Every class I feel relaxed after the class.... I think if you ask me what is my favorite; Friday, brain wave vibration. That day, all my body with all the shaking and everything feels so hot, and

then everything it feels so loose. I think that probably helps me a lot…. I feel like when we stop, I feel like something is going out of my fingers, and my toes. I feel like something is traveling, like energy is traveling, going out, and I feel like I'm right next to a fire. And so much heat is coming out of me. I could feel the warmth around my body. I don't have to touch it…; I could feel the warmth coming out of my body. So, that's exactly how I feel.

…Ten years ago I started working for this company…. I started at the bottom level with the knowledge, because I didn't have so much work experience…, so I always felt like I'm the student there. And, I'm interested in learning, so I learn everything I can…. Since I'm a student, I'm so flexible compared to them, I could learn this and this. So now they come to *me* with problems. So that's how much I like to, because I think if they're paying me a dollar, I have to do at least $1.50 worth of work…the work ethic definitely makes me do more than they expect me to do…. So that's physical, that will cause me, of course, probably cause mental stress also, because I'm like *rushing* to get things done, and trying to solve problems…, and it's a satisfaction. So if I'm working for somebody they have to be well-satisfied, at the same time, it's job guarantee, so it's peace of mind for me and also for them, because "Oh, yeah, we can trust this person. She's hard-working" so, it's good for everybody, I think…. My mother is a hard-working…I mean, every time we see her she is doing *something* as a housewife, with three kids and stuff, so, I think probably it came from her, the hard work mentality.

I think the importance I give is to the Monday class, the intestine exercises. I have a thyroid problem…which means it could have an impact on the digestive system…. So I've had some digestive problems…; I was having like cramps and pains, stomach pains, and stuff, but after I started this practice, I don't really feel it so much, so that's why I try not to miss this class. [To describe the exercise,]…the first thing we start is tapping the abdominal area, which is two inches below the belly button…, and it really becomes warm, and actually kind of loosens up that area, so when we start in the intestine exercises, like pulling in and pushing out the abdomen…, we can do it easier after tapping. And by doing the pulling and pushing we could actually feel the intestines…, so you could actually exercise the whole abdominal area.

[This exercise]…is mostly physical…, probably 70%; 30% is…, I'm a kind of [an] emotional person, so I really need to control. I mean, it's a good thing, what I've heard is, it's always good to express what you feel…, like one perfect example…, I saw this woman with two small kids…, I think one she was carrying, and the other one was actually next to her sleeping. She didn't wake him up until the bus driver arrived. At that point, she was just dragging him, like "Get up!" She was literally dragging him. That made tears come, because it's just not right… So I really need to control, I think, at least not to show. I mean, it's a good thing to feel, but…, when I took that [first workshop], what I learned is…it was bothering me, how the mother is treating her child, it was bothering me, but…it could be stressful on myself…, nothing I could do. But I'm like, "Oh, why is she doing like that?" and I think about that for the next few hours, or

few days. It happened six years ago probably. I still remember it…. So, if I had learned the exercises back then, I would have said, "OK, calm down! Just focus on something that they taught us, focus on the abdominal area or something, and just let it go. Don't let it affect you." So, I think it does have the relation with the abdominal exercises, in order to be able to focus on a certain place to keep things away from impacting you.

[I still use this practice if I'm feeling emotional and want to control my emotions.] If I'm outside and I cannot do anything then I can just do the intestine exercises or something very slowly, so that not everybody can see me, in and out, but I'll try to do something. Because I have not reached the point where I'm not doing anything, but be able to focus. So I have to really do something to focus, so I do the intestine exercises to focus and let things go…. I think I'm [controlling my emotions]…better compared to before. It's not that I'm ignorant, that I didn't know that I needed to control my emotions, but I didn't know how to, so I think with this practice at least I'm trying different ways to see what will fit my needs, and see what I can use to achieve my goal…. So many things you cannot really do *anything,* but you're just feeling and, you're just torturing yourself <laughter>.… So, at that time I think you need to notice, "OK, this is something I cannot do anything. Just let it go."

[To describe my view of life,]…there are so many things I wanted to do in my life. First of all, I want to do something good for society. I'm not there yet <laughter>. So…to make it a short answer, you want to have a good life and make sure at the same time others have a good life. And do whatever you can to help others, not to just enjoy the stuff you have, I think you should be able to share…. So, I think that's how I view my life. I mean, not just, "OK, I'm happy, I have all my things; I have a house and I have food." I don't think that's enough. I want to be able to point that "OK, I have enough, I need to help others." So, I think that will give the fulfillment to the life. Until then it's kind of not really full, complete. [That view hasn't changed since I started attending classes here.]…. I've had that from the beginning and I think I will actually achieve something <laughter>. I want to continue viewing life in that way so I could do something…, maybe because that's how I was raised, and I've seen so many different situations or people in different situations, so I have a better understanding. And then I know, because yoga is kind of part of our culture.

…Definitely one thing [has changed in how I interact with others in my various roles,] because I'm trying to be more calm. I've tried to do ten things, and you cannot do, so what are you doing? It's too much frustration in yourself when you try to do too many things in very limited time, with very limited resources, so that causes a lot of frustration. When you're really frustrated, you're not doing a good job. So I now I think I've kind of slowed down a little bit, and…I'm trying to be more reasonable now with less frustration…. And it's comfortable for the family…, so, I think it's helping me more than helping others, I think; change of my behavior with controlling all those emotions…. At home I think it may help my family because I'm kind of slowing down, [instead of] running around all the time, so they're always trying to catch up with me

<laughter>…. Now since I'm slowing down and taking time to spend with them, I'm not trying to get everything done, so I think it really helps the family, at least they're more happy, I think.... Nothing changed [in my specific roles], because I'm *always* trying to [do] more than I can in every role. I want to be the best wife, I want to be the best mother, and a best colleague. So, I don't see anything to improve actually, in my case, it's probably more than most of them have. They want to improve; mine I have to slow down. [As far as the physical aspect]…, the pain is gone.... Other than that my energy levels are always, even [if] I'm physically not feeling well, I keep up my pace at the same level. [As far as how I feel about my different roles,]… I don't know if there's any difference at work. As a colleague, I don't think there's much difference, but at home, obviously, because I'm trying to slow down, spending more time, or trying to spend more time, so that role I think has changed, like a mother, and a wife. I don't know how much.

[To describe the change in my life since joining the Center,]…I do have emotional things I want to be in control of, but that didn't change so much, so it's mostly physical. So I can't say, "Oh, this is how I was before, and this is how I am now," but I do pay attention to not to have people impact me physically with their emotions and stuff. So, I would say, there was no barrier between me and whatever the other person, or whoever, whatever they're saying, everything was affecting me, but at least [now] I could somewhat put some barricade between, if someone is being negative, I could at least stop it. So, it's not impacting me so much as it used to…, but at least after doing [this practice] I think I said, "OK, just focus on myself and don't just, kind of let them do whatever they want to do or say."…. [There are definitely some things that I can handle differently now, for instance,]… my brother's situation. If it was before, I would have just cried and could be not in control at all, like emotionally collapse because he's so dear to me. I love him so much, so knowing that something is not right could have made *really, really*, I could not have been a functional mother, because I couldn't do the routine things I usually do for kids and all that. But now in this situation I'm like, "OK, is there anything I can do?" I love him…, I need to do anything I can do, all kinds of research and whatever I can do…, but I'm not emotionally collapsed. I'm being really strong and able to do other duties that I should be doing. I'm sure if it was before this, I wasn't physically, emotionally strong I should say, before starting this class…. Initially I was doing my abdominal exercises, because I couldn't just focus… somewhere else, taking my mind off something was not that easy. But now I think, I don't know what kind of barrier, or how I stop it, but somehow it becomes easier, so it's like, "Yeah, I don't really want to think about that now, let me do something else, let me think about something else." Or I don't really have to do anything physically, if I'm really, really out of control then I'll just do abdominal exercises to keep my mind there, instead of going somewhere else. But I think I'm in the process of getting there.

[To describe a preconception,]…I think here people express more [emotion] than [where I grew up], because it's like, "You shouldn't show that."…. Of course, if someone dies, it's a really heartbreaking thing then you just totally show, but for some

things, like if you're sad for a small thing, or someone saying something, they say, "Don't show that!" "You should be able to handle it." "Why are you so getting upset? There's no need to." So kinda like, "OK, so don't even show…" My mother showed so much, and I have kids, and here's my kids and it's like, "Oh, you show that affection," but I don't think that they do that [where I grew up] so much. Now I think it's changing, but when we were kids, you love your kids by default, you don't have to show them. They know it, everybody knows it, you don't have to show, but here you express that. You just say, "I love you." It doesn't mean they don't know that you love them, but still you say it…. So, even…coming from a different culture to *this* one… and here I think people show more, so even before joining the [Center] I thought, "You…should express your feelings!" Not the bad ones maybe, but the good ones.

[Showing my emotions more has changed my life]…I think a little bit because, first of all, if I'm showing, then there will be a response to that, so that is kind of encouraging. Just in my family itself, because I grew that up you don't show so much…. So now I show more towards my family, so I get it back. So, I think it's a really good thing…. [Growing up where I did helped to develop that preconception, because]…that's how life is there <laughter>. At least, that's how it used to be. My parents never spent so much time with the kids…, because they're busy in their own things…, so it's they don't have time to show anything. We know they like us and we love them, and they loved us, but there is no showing thing at all. And it's actually, in some ways, it's considered to be wrong to show…. It is society-wide…, that's the common thing. It's uncommon if you *show* something.

[The workshop and the process of discovery]…was all OK for me, because…I want to share, and I like sharing, so…I'll open up. It's no problem, so it didn't feel uncomfortable at all. It felt painful at times when you have to do some exercises, I got really tired, but…no other problem at all…. It was kinda exciting, because I really wanted to get there…. I mean, first of all, what do you want to be? I want to be a nice person, and so many times if you're emotionally overreacting, then you cannot be a nice person, because you're not taking care, you're just reacting, instead of trying to do something. So, I thought, "OK, all these things help me to get there," so I was really excited…. Emotionally, it's a process that when we went through you have to be able to open up…and just be clear, pure. So, I think, even in the day-to-day life you have to be that way, because so much is negative in this world right now.

[To describe in general what this process of discovery, learning and change has meant in my life,]…so many times, so many things are so hard…for me. Like…that example with my brother…, in a normal situation, just being myself, if I don't have all this yoga knowledge, then I would have just emotionally collapsed. It's a shocking thing for me. It was really a shock, because he was fine, and all of a sudden you hear something. First of all, I couldn't believe it, then once you say, "Yes, that is true," so, it is *really* shocking news. With all these things…, you try to be strong. It's not that you don't feel for him, but at the same time you feel for him and you are emotionally able to stand up

> when you try to do things, instead of just being not able to do anything…. I still think, "How am I able to do all these things?" When I heard that incident, when my mother passed away, or when my sister wasn't feeling well, other things when I heard before…, I would get frustrated, even for a small thing, because I was really hurt emotionally. Even a small thing could upset me, like a big reaction. So, I think I'm able to be calm, even when I heard that big news, I was able to be calm and try to focus and see what I can do, because reading all these medical journals to find out if there was anything I *could* find out, and…before I don't think I would have been able to even read and understand things, because my mind was totally somewhere else, but now I think I'm in a better situation…. So I think that's a big difference.…Still, I'm not there yet, I know that, because so many times, I think it's maybe more like a physical thing, so that's what is causing me not to achieve my emotional control. Sometimes because I'm physically weak, or tired, then I would react. I can't stay calm. Small things can impact me, like kids not doing something right, "That's your daily thing. How could you not do it right?" There's no need to react, really, everybody makes mistakes! Then after a few minutes I realize that, and then I calm…, so I think this is a long process. It's not that simple to get there, so still working <laughter> and hoping to get there…, [to be] able to control yourself is a big thing, so still working on that.

Raina

Raina is a young professional in her mid-30s. She is a first-generation immigrant from Latin America who initially joined the Center out of curiousity, but then discovered emotional and spiritual issues to address. Her relationship to her family and close friends formed the backdrop against which her learning unfolded. Many of her deepest insights and most profound changes seemed related to experiences from her childhood and primary family relationships. The following narrative profile describes her experience in her own words:

> I think my curiosity drove me [to visit the Center…]. I had maybe a little problem sleeping, but nothing drastic…. And, of course, that was always that emptiness, so maybe my curiosity was looking for how I'm going to be able to fill that emptiness, that little hole inside me.… I consider myself a very athletic person, because I always do exercise, but…this type of exercise, it was challenging for me just to stretch my body…. And then they were saying, "Your body's flexible, your mind will be flexible." That really caught my attention at that moment. So, I said, "OK, I need to keep working deeper in getting my flexibility."… Then I was seeing little changes, some struggles, and finally I went to [the first workshop], and that was the big door for me that actually allow[ed] me to see deeper that I had emotional issues. That was related also to how my mind was set up, and how I see things, and, the spiritual, too, because I grew up in a

Catholic family.… When it was time to make a decision to go to Healer's School…, it opened another big door for me, because I always keep searching about my profession. I grew up in a family business, so I always was oriented to the business, but I remember when I was a little girl, I used to play and say that "I want to be a doctor…" And when somebody got injured I always run, try to help…. So that was fun, but it was just the 'little girl' who talked, and nobody listened…. So, I end up studying international business…. And that's another thing for me, too. We are two girls, my younger sister [and me], and she's been always very smart. So, from little we always compete, and she was able to make it to the university; I didn't, and then I just went to a college, and I studied for three years, got my degree, and then after that I just go back to work with my parents, taking care of the business, and that was the mentality…. [It] is like the parents build up something, so the kids are supposed to continue with that, the tradition, the business, and everything.

…On the other hand, Latin American people they are machismo. Man is very important, the son. My father didn't have a son; it was only two girls and I'm the oldest. So I put a *lot* on my shoulders, but it was a point where my body didn't handle, my mind, and then I got in a big depression there. Then I was in therapy, was able to deal with that, but it was a good point at that moment because my parents and I, we got closer. We actually start *knowing* each other…. We didn't know how to talk about our personal things, share our personal emotions…So then I got the chance for me to come here…, and I said, "Well, maybe I should start meeting people from here so I can improve my English," and that's how I…met my ex-husband. At that moment…, I was like, "OK, maybe it's time for me, I'm ready to have a family, [get] married," and that's how we fall in love…. So I received some help from [my parents] to start my life here, but…for a reason [my ex-husband] said that since he met me he was interested to have a business. So, I don't know, but every man I relate to they are in the business. So I was maybe kind of running away [from] that, because I didn't have a life, and I [wanted to]…create that balance in my life, but it didn't happen. And then, my ex-husband, he had a big heart and he wants to help me, but the way he did it, it didn't work with me…. At the end, it wasn't the English, we were not for each other, or maybe I was not ready for that relationship yet.

…That's why I decided to go to Healer's School, because I thought that I have to face my divorce. Find out who was the person [at] fault…, and I want to heal that wound. I went there and discover, it wasn't related to him at all…. It goes back to my relationship with my father…, my blockages…. I had a session with one of the Masters, and she just did a meditation with me and then, basically, came something to my head and it was that little girl that always go to the reunions, always say "Hello" very nicely to everybody, well-behaved, and very courteous with every single person, but then my uncles, they used to ask my father, "So, when are you going to have the kid, the boy?" So, that little girl feel guilty, "I am not the boy that my father was looking for." So…, unconsciously I didn't want to be that girl...; deep inside I want to be that boy for my father. And, it's kind of denying who I am.… And, then I was able to call my parents

and I said, “Look what I find out.” I was sharing, “Look what that little girl was holding,” saying that “I am not the boy.” And my father listened; my mother, too…, and she said, “I’m glad the way that you are expressing to us, you are not feeling bad, and seeing inside, and good for you!”…Then I came back and I say “I need to start practicing…. I like really to work with people’s body,” and then use the techniques. So I start doing that with my closest friends, my relatives, and it was amazing how many people I was able to reach, and connect. But then I discovered the other part when you do that healing, you connect deeper…, and the people I share with them or did the healing, they keep asking me for more…, so I was able to connect with some people deeply…. And no matter what, you always connect, but on the other hand…, you get a circulation of energy from every single interaction, relationship, even in nature.

…I was lucky, blessed, to have beautiful people in my life…, and they actually introduced me to new things [like] hiking…. So [my friend] said, “Keep observing yourself.” So I…said, “How is my body feeling?” I’m just observing myself, or I’m observing the nature, the trees, the stones, how is the path itself, and I noticed when I see [a] big rock, I just go around it, I don’t step on it, I always like to go around it…. And when we were walking on area where it was a lot of rocks, some people they just step on the rocks, but I was fearful. And something came to me, I said, “This is how it is in life, too. You have obstacles.” Some people they just quickly jump on it. They use that to move faster, but I always try to get around. I don’t know how to use them…. I don’t use it as a tool…. So that’s how I start seeing my hiking. It wasn’t just to walk a trail. It was more to observe myself, connect with the environment itself, and then what they’re telling me. [On one hike]…we got lost, and we decided to come back. Suddenly a guy showed up…. We were lucky, so he guide us, and we were on the top…, walking between the rocks and everything, and he said…, “When you start falling, be like a child, lose yourself, don’t put a resistance,” and then, of course, it was a moment that we need to slide. Things like that actually you use it in your life, and it’s true. When it’s difficult, don’t build that resistance. Like…[they say at the Center], “Accept it,” and then they said, “Love your pain.”

… I would say the emotional [issue changed the most]…; that’s the strongest one. [And the training most effective in addressing that]… I would say [was the workshop]…. I think that let me see clear my emotional situation; how much I was holding, repressing. I was able to feel my anger…. [To describe the experience]…, I just said “OK, let’s try and see what happens.” And when we were doing the different activities…, kind of [like] a puzzle, the little pieces were coming up. And when we have to just do the meditation… then I start seeing how emotional I was getting, and painful, too. So, I think that for a reason I was repressing or numb myself, and getting distracted with things outside, but, of course, that emptiness was there, so that was the big sign for me…. [To relate what I learned to my preconceptions]…, I come from a family, very traditional…. It’s always, “You need to take care of the family; your parents” but it wasn’t that learning, “You need to take care of yourself first if you want to give more.” So that was a *huge*, huge preconception that I have to face. I always want to help, but I

said, “Even though I help, I am empty”. So understanding that…, yeah, I need to have a career, and be successful in that career…, through [this practice I learned to think about]…what you really want, your soul wants. So it’s not the outside, society goals or maybe my family goal, or a tradition…. So that also let me see deeper, like this is what my soul wants…. And especially with my parents…, they worked so hard, I barely see them, so that was also another thing that, “Yeah, they’re your parents, you love them,” but I was able to tell them that… I think I respect them, but I don’t know if I love them. So, that was also very huge thing for me, and then [to] discover that if you don’t love yourself, you’re not going to be able to love anyone around you. So that was another thing that “Wow!” they were just coming one and another, but [this training]…, little activities they open different things, so that’s how I was facing my preconceptions with the first training.

[To describe one of the practices that I’ve been learning],… every deep training…that is related to tapping, it’s when I connect with my body, and I start feeling the pain of my body…. The interesting thing is the intensity for me when I do the tapping…I need to [do] it harder to feel that I’m being sincere with myself…. And focus on the body but at the same time my mind is wandering…, but then I keep saying, “OK, focus on your body.” [I] keep kind of fighting between my mind and my body, even while I’m doing the tapping…. Also, I feel the vibration in my body. So, I start tuning with myself that vibration…. And, finally when I finish I feel like I tap a lot of tension from my body.... When I went to Healer’s School we have to tap on our thigh and…, at that moment we were tapping it was our anger, releasing the anger.... “Why am I holding so much anger?” So, through the tapping my body shows me how much I’ve been holding.… To be honest, when I start tapping I have no idea which emotion will come. And actually I’m kind of wondering, “So what is it today? What I’m gonna see now?”…. Really, through the tapping, for me, I really need to connect in a certain way physically to really have the sense that I’m *feeling* something. I discover also that it’s hard for me to feel, to recognize, so the tapping allows me to do that. Always they said in the training, “Your body is not going to lie to you. Your body’s going to tell you what it is.” …To talk about the most recent one, when I was doing the tapping…and when we have to chant, also, doing the tapping, or express what we feel, the word that always came was “furious, very furious.” And I keep tapping. And then, I don’t know, for a reason I feel like it was a wall that I need to break, and, of course, keep tapping, just tapping, and tapping, and tapping, I said, “How much? I’m just weak!” and I need to keep tapping. So, it was that internal conversation, it was my hands on my body itself that kind of [feeling]…like a little, little child. Sometimes the parents are fighting and you want to help, but you don’t know how to. “Powerless,” that’s the word. So I said, “And that makes me furious.”

…Actually it’s becoming more natural [to incorporate these principles into my daily life]. For example, in my work environment, I have a lot of challenge being with patients, and I just observe myself, “Why is it affecting me too much?”…. So I started looking and say, “There is something in my *own* relationship with myself that I need to

work on."….Then I started doing some declarations…that allow me to start focusing on my center of energy…. And deeper and deeper tried to really get that answer, "What allows me to complete my soul?" "What is the purpose for me in this planet, in this moment, in this country, in this time?" Now my view [of life] is wider; life is beautiful and we tend to complicate it…. Be honest with yourself, sincere, because it's a constant practice every day, and then have responsibility.... That is my new view now, learning to feed from the Universe and then here just give without any expectations. Let it go, it's a lot of attachments that really create attention, so that's my new way to see. And another part of me [knows] if I make myself stronger I know I'm going to be able to help more people, but the principle is starting with you.… [In] the past, [I was] very judgment[al]…, now I really observe more [with an] open [mind], and try to understand "Why did I choose that?" And, learn to be grateful for that, too. I think that opens a lot to me, because my tendency before was to be [a] very resentful person…. Now, it's like, "There is a reason," "Are you still in the same pattern?" "What do I need to see?" "What do I need to learn?" "Did I learn it?"…That is I would say the biggest evolution for me—instead of focusing outside, it's inside, and I get distracted easily, so finding the ways to really start learning more about myself.

[I've changed the way I interact with others since starting this practice.]…First is with my parents…. I was living with them for 27 years, [but I] didn't "know" them. Since I moved to this country…we are not close to each other [physically], but [it's amazing how] strong is our communication now. So, that really allow me to experience that it's not the physical love, it goes deeper than that. With my sister, that's a relationship I need to still work on. My sister and my grandmother, for a reason those are the two challenges right now for me…. I know my mom said that we are like the sun and the moon. Each one has their own power, but they are not of the same type.… My grandmother, she raised me, there was a point in my life that I feel that she was my mother, because I rarely see my mother…. [My grandmother] always taught me how to be organized, very well-behaved, but on the other hand, fearful, too. She said, "Don't do that! Your father gonna get upset!" and things like that that she also learned from before. So she just shared with me; passed it [on]. And then suddenly she left…Then this little girl didn't have an explanation…. You were not allowed to ask "Why?" She left and I felt like an orphan. Actually, that's what I've been experiencing. I always felt like an orphan, even though I have my father and my mother. And now that I have the chance to live with [my grandmother], I struggle to express my love…. Our interaction triggers my anger a lot. So, that's the part now I keep observing.

[In terms of] co-workers, every work environment I go there is trouble at the beginning. I'm very shy…And, then I *always*...find somebody who wants to take advantage of me. So, I said, "What is it? I'm still in the same pattern." But then I said "Well, this is time for you to keep training to stand up for yourself," so that's the way I took it. And, then I observed why I don't flow with this person…? And, once I open and share that then we start flowing…. When I said "I flow," it means accept the person the way it is, and then bring that good side from them, not from me, so create that circulation.… I learned in

[this practice] a lot, because it's kind of observing myself…, so it's kind of "OK, I need to work on something." And then it's one layer more that I need to remove. Once I start working towards that or I put the intention or the will, then suddenly it comes. It takes time or it can be suddenly…, but it comes…. Now, when I meet somebody, when I do something it's "What is the purpose of this?" "What am I gonna learn?" or "What am I gonna share?" So, I always look for that…. And I feel deeply…that if [I'm] able to spread this [teaching, this view of life] to every single person, I would go for that…. I'm amazed to see how much power we have inside of us…. I think it's not only the physical opening. It really connects you deeply <gesturing from head to heart to abdomen>…; the spiritual, the mental and physical. And since I've been experiencing that, I don't feel that hole sometimes. So, it comes sometimes because the preconceptions or the pattern doesn't let you go totally, because it's a process, but I really don't feel that anymore.

I've done so many trainings, but there's a point that you need to cross that bridge. And I think this is the point. Through this [interview] experience, it's just "OK, *now* I have the strength, the courage to see that I'm going to go to a different level,"…and I think that experience allow me…to move forward, and feel confident to cross that part…. I notice my attachments, a load of attachments…, so for me that would be the next step, crossing that bridge. [I brought a quartz pendulum as the token of my transformative learning experience]…. I look more towards the stone itself and I always check how transparent it is. And then I know that part of it is the energy also itself, and it's how sincere, how honest I am. I try to look always through that and then remind me that about myself.… That was a present from a Reiki teacher. And from that time I know that she put a seed inside of me, and it was just my choice to make it grow; kind of telling me where is my path going towards…. When I put it on I say, "Yes, it's my turn now to deliver energy in part of me, in different ways."…Through my different trainings in [this practice] and different other practices, [it] really opens different doors for me about healing.… I think it's always very important to remember what is your origin. [The pendulum reminds me]…when I start, what is really the purpose, the *simple*, the simple and clear purpose of this training that I keep choosing.

[Before I joined the Center, I was]…full of preconceptions. I wasn't living *my* life. I was living somebody else's expectations…. I wasn't happy. I always feel an emptiness inside. I want to help, but because I have that emptiness, not because I really wanted to give. I was also holding a lot of my emotions, a load of them and I wasn't able to recognize. Even though I'm still struggling in recognizing some emotions, through the trainings I'm able to learn, and recognize them also. [After joining the Center]…now it's kind of the opposite from what I described before. I'm first of all discovering myself, identifying those emotions…. Then I'm finding that all the situations in my life, or every experience, I choose them, consciously or unconsciously, so that is a big revelation for me. I said, "Did I do that?" … Now I understand that it's easy to blame somebody, or a situation, and basically repeat the pattern. And, I understand that is a reflection of *me*, and it's something that I need to start looking inside, let it go, accept it,

and then move on. Feed myself in a positive way, so that is also a big step in my life now…. The other thing right now is the commitment; it's looking for that mission…. I think now I understand *better* what is my purpose to be ***here***, a sincere purpose…, still with my baggage, my things that I'm still trying to let it go…. Now…it's starting appearing some light there. So, that is actually after I've been letting go…; doing my trainings. I can see something now. I *feel* something.

…I think I was living in two worlds when I was growing up. My parents, my grandparents are from the mountains, but they moved to the city, to the capitol looking for better opportunities, but their mind and customs are still based on their time in the mountains. So you live one reality in the city, but you need to practice the customs from the town…. They didn't limit themselves; they work very hard to provide better opportunities. All the materialistic limitations that they have, they don't want their kids [to] have it. So they devoted their life to work …. And I remember that when I was younger, I have to go to work and my father would say, "I want you to supervise somebody." And I'm talking about a machissim society…; you imagine a child, a girl supervising somebody else, a male, older person. So it was a lot of challenge there, but my father's orders were like I have to do it, no matter what…. So, I think when we were talking about the expectations, they expect me to do it, no matter what…, but I think I expected to do [it] *perfectly*, ***zero*** mistakes.… And, then I have another uncle…I love him so much…; he's very close to my parents so I see him as my Grandfather. And he called me one time and said, "You know that you are the oldest one, and you need to take care of your parents' business. So you need to start focusing more on that." [I was]… maybe 14 years old.

When I was in the school, that was *my* world…; the religion itself tell you, "You need to sacrifice." That's what I always get in my head: "sacrifice, sacrifice, sacrifice," and I never learned that you need to take care of yourself…. So, on one hand, the nuns keep teaching you, "Family is important. Religion is important." [When I] go back to my house, I didn't have that…. So I always feel like I was cut in [two]; in the morning I was one person, and when I go back it's a different person.… So many things were imposed, I would say.… So, it was little contradictions in *many* situations, and I notice also at a young age that my parents give us a lot of material things, and my sister and I decided, "No, we want to spend time with you."… And that was my childhood and youth…, but now I'm able to see it. Before…, I got another impression because I think it was so much conflict. The things were not clear for me. I get information from one side, my actions say another, I do other things, so it was always that cloudiness, that sadness maybe.… Right now it's coming very strongly [the preconception] about my relationship with my sister, the fact that even though we were raised in the same place doesn't mean we have to be the same way…. When we used to be little, we used to play and then, well we have our little discussions 'cause when we fight, we fight…Beside that then we're in peace, then we take care of each other. And then, I don't know when that disappear, when we start pulling ourselves apart…. My mother said "You need to take care of your sister."…That was the big preconception that I have at that moment—

I have to protect her no matter what…. Even now talking about that, I feel a pressure, tension in my chest, so it's something deep. And I think it's the fact that I didn't know how to take care of myself, and I'm looking to take care of somebody else. And that really hurt me…. But I always recognized it as a hole, that emptiness inside, and actually *now* I have the determination that you only feed yourself.

[As a physical practice to assist in this process of discovery,] the tapping for me is very meaningful…. I have my routine in the mornings…; I start with the bowing. It's telling my body, "Letting go," "Open the blockages." Then after that I do my brain wave vibration, tapping my lower abdomen…, that means 'charging myself,' and at the same time focusing on *my* brain, kind of cleaning my brain…. In every single step I see it healing…, so the physical process itself, I've been discovering it started as a simple exercise, but then it start going deeper on that, allow[ing] me to *connect* with myself, connect with the universe, the nature. So that's how I've been experiencing lately my physical trainings, and now I observe *more*, try to *feel* more when I do a posture. "What is opening? What isn't?" And I notice my resistance, too, when I have some limitation in the physical exercise itself.

…Understanding [my preconceptions] is kind of accepting the situation, and then part of me is asking myself, "Do you really want to keep living that way?" So, it opens the door for choices to me…. So, then I said, "So what feeds me?" And based on that is when I start choosing…. And then it's kind of for me like "OK, I can let it go. I just realized that. I see it." Simple like that; and it makes me happy to be able to see what is underneath that.… I would say that now my life is meaningful because I know there is a purpose. And it could be, try to look for that circulation; I give and receive at the same time. And then also allow myself to be open; observe myself that when I do something, how open and sincere and honest I [am] with myself? I'm just starting to discover the power inside of me, and I want to make it grow. So how much is holding me [back]? Then [I] discover that I'm the one who also creates those blockages for *myself*. And…, at the end what I think I wanted to do is learn to have compassion. I feel like I haven't, really to be honest, reached that point *at all*…. The relationship with men comes from my father relationship that I'm always looking [for] men's attention or affection.… Now it's different because I'm understanding, but just [to] see how *much* I was *holding*…. I am aware, and then I can make it work for me. I can let that feed me, instead of destroy me…. I keep observing the real relationship for me is why that tension between my relationship with men. Maybe it's more *my relationship* because we are the energy, we have both, that's the yin and yang. So, what is it with my yang energy? Why I create the blockage; I don't let it flow in my body? … I can *see* myself through that interaction…. [This process of discovery has]…been a lot of challenge, because I tend to be very emotional, and I also want to give up easily…What it really mean to me is letting me see that I have a mission here. This discovery is letting me see that there is a path I need to follow…. So this has been a wonderful experience for me, even though it was through pain, emotions, but at the end of the tunnel, you always see the light, and every time you get out, the light is brighter and brighter.

Dira

Dira is a middle-aged professional and full-time homemaker. She is a first-generation immigrant from East Asia who has lived in the United States since she was 15 years old. For the past 12 years, she has raised her four children in the United States while her husband runs his business from their country of origin, traveling to the United States every few months to be with the family. Dira thus juggles the demands of being a full-time mother and mostly single parent with a long-distance relationship with her husband. Recently, they came to the decision that she would return to her home country, and begin her life over once more. Dira originally joined the Center to improve her physical health and chronic pain issues. She subsequently discovered that the physical practices enabled her emotional and spiritual growth. Dira is one of three study participants who became a Master within the six months following the interviews. The following narrative profile describes her experience in her own words:

> I started [at the Center] close to probably four years ago, because at that time I really felt physical exhaustion, emotional and mental fatigue. I have a lot of [physical] …problems way, way back already…. So, the purpose was for me to get a relief, physically. But then as I was joining I find out that it's more than just [a] physical center…. Somehow it's something that I needed for my heart, or my soul, basically, to really let it out. So, physically now I'm much better, because I can do the exercises. [When you're doing a practice that relieves the tension,]… it feels so light on your body, and you don't have to waste your energy managing the pain, then you feel a lot happier, and a lot lighter. And then I guess you feel…calmer…. The pain itself it's not excruciating, but it's the energy that goes out with that for me is really what's draining…. Knowing that I have to be here, knowing that I have to handle everything on my own that puts some kind of like a heavy weight on my shoulder. And then knowing that I have to be brave, I have to go venture into the unknown myself…, that gives me a lot of tension on my stomach, and it's like your nervousness. And then the fear that, "Oh, I have to be brave and everything" put a lot of heavy burden on your heart.… Before, because I don't have the control over my own body, or my mind or my brain is not there to observe it yet, I go to the Center, and I let them go through all these trainings, stretching, and I feel much better…. So, I depend on the Center a lot to release that physical fatigue. But after I've done the [advanced] training, I supposedly

know how to heal myself with all the practices. So, I am now to do it at home, and really practice with…how to get your energy aligned…. But I was depending on the Center a lot in the past…. When you have to be responsible for yourself that's…what they emphasize a lot on the training. Take mastership of your own body, and be in charge.

I thought that if I loved my husband that I would dutifully do everything he said, because it's for the goodness for the family, for the kids—I have to sacrifice. That's my preconception …, which I find it that doing sacrifice and having no voice is really what get me depressed and stressed…, or numb myself so that I don't feel the pain…. So I have to train my heart not to be weak…. So, all these years is being depressed, depressed, and then at one time I just felt that—I got no love for him anymore. I couldn't feel…. He also has his preconceptions and what he's doing, so we don't communicate well in that level. We communicate about the kids' education, about the expenses, about the money issue, about everything else that is so menial outside of our Selves. We never talk about our heart, we never talk about our soul, we never talk about…[my] frustration.

[To give one example of the practices I've been learning,]… we have to do the bowing meditation, [which]…is when you align yourself and do physical movement which started from standing up with your hand on your chest…. At the same time, you [are] also chanting the prayer…which means something like the principle of "Tao," or "The Way" of life or the universe, that "You are One," and "You are Nothing," and at the end is "You are Everything."… And then you vocalize this chanting which supposedly will align your soul, your heart, and your mind at the same time with the physical.… The emotional [aspect] will come with your mind and your thought while you are doing the bowing, and I think each person will react differently…. And supposedly out of this practice you will get some kind of spiritual clearance about the question…, so I guess they try to use different physical body movements to get to that core question, "What do you want in life? Who are you?"…. The other practice, like the brain wave vibration, I like it because that's with music…. For me it's entertaining, and it's refreshing because I like the music; I like the movement. And then the heart tapping; it's good because, you know, I feel the pain all over and I can tap it, so it's more real, more physical. I was more physically aware of the result, but with the bowing, it's kind of deeper. Somehow it's not yet instant, but physically, of course, it's also more rigorous.

I would say my view of life in general is a very loving world; is a very generous world…. And I believe that people of whatever religion basically naturally are good, but I don't close my eyes to the fact that some of the religious people are fanatical…. I have my own conviction, but I don't have to force it on people…. I believe in soul mates. I have to believe in love, right? And I really do embrace compassion…in my life, because that's what the world needs. [Since joining the Center I have]… more awareness that if I have compassion; if I have faith in God, but if I don't have a good, strong energy within me, it's not gonna bring you a lot more…. But if you really have a

big heart, and you want to grow bigger, and you want to do all these big things that you have in your head, spiritually…for the humanity, you need more than a good religious practice…. And I find that the answer is what [they teach here]; it's all in your brain and the way you change your brain, your mind, and then the energy to connect the mind with the body…. So, for me [this practice] is more than just the physical, but through the physical I get stronger.

…[When] I came into the Center four years ago…. I was depleted of…caring, connection with people, and I didn't feel that [connection] at all wherever I was helping…, because probably I was too worried about my own problem and tried to cover it. And with my immediate friends I wasn't really opening it up, because they were all looking up to me, and they said "Oh, how strong you are—I always have to come and call you; get the strength from you." And I cannot show them that I'm weak, that I cry through tears every night, that I couldn't sleep, that I felt my life is empty…, so that burden [I] carried with me. So my first thing when I joined the Center…[one member] is coming, and I like the way she embrace me, because she's earthy, she's motherly, nurturing. I said, "OK, I'll give it a try." So, that's what I was looking for, nurturing, because I came from a very close-knit, heart-to-heart soul, environment back home since I was growing up, and I miss that…. So that yearning, that fulfillment that I'm looking from other people, now not necessarily have to come from just another human being, but it can come from the practice itself to awaken my Self, then refill it within myself. That's how I've been growing the last four years.

[I've changed in how I express my different roles in life.] As a mother…, I was very rigid. I take care of four kids, they are in that stages where they're very demanding physically, they're very active, and I have to keep them straight in school, I have to make sure they did their homework…, making me a disciplinarian, and I didn't use my heart so much. And then I think it shows in the way my kids are feeling the depression, the stress that I felt…. Now, since some of the trainings that I have done at yoga, I talk to my husband and I let him know how fearful I was until to this day…. Then I was able to let him know how I felt *all* these years, driving him to the airport, and coming back from the airport, and have to face the kids…. So, I was letting him know there's still pain in my heart every time he goes back. But now I was able to let him know, and I think he's very appreciative of that…. Then I let my kids know now that they're grown up, I let them know how I felt…, and I told them what happened to me…, so I give them a different energy…. And I want to enjoy my time with them more, more than completion of the task; done this, do that. It's more like, "OK, what can we do to have more time to be happy together?" It's from the different perspective…. So I'm being more aware and being there. So that's the changes.

I'm beginning to integrate; I guess before it was my left brain that's control[ling] my body with all that structural precision. And after [these] practices somehow it's a soul awakening, opening up, my right brain is taking charge more, probably because it lacked that side for many, many years, so now it needs to be balancing out…. I started

to paint last year, my first painting and everybody say, "Well, you've been painting for many years?" I said, "No, that was my first painting!" "Really?!" I guess I was really doing it fully with my right brain skills which didn't have any outlet before, even growing up…. The best part that I like about [the Center] is when they have the free music, the disco, I'm the first one to jump up, because I don't *care* what other people are doing, *this* is my thing. It's like I was yearning for it forever <talking with energy and passion>. And I felt *good* about doing it myself. [One practice that helps release and experience emotions more]…is the heart tapping …, and then some of the training that we have to go through usually involves a lot of self-healing and, like the [workshop], also you go deep, deep, deep, deep down, and you try to really study emotion…. And then the energy dance, I like that also because it just makes my creativity, my love flowing…. So that way I express my beauty, my love, in the [energy] dance…. [Before I joined the Center,]… I was moving, doing things that I need to do, mostly tasks, checklists—did this, did that—mundane things…. And, as far as fun or enjoyment, I don't think I've really done a lot of that…I'm [a] pretty sociable person, but not doing to the full of capacity that I thought I should be doing, or enjoying…Now, [four years after joining the Center] I'm still in the same environment, situation, and I'm still having the same group of people that I socialize with, the difference is that I'm paying more attention to what making myself happy, more than doing and complete a task for other people, for my family, for my husband. And it turns out that I did all that, *plus* what I do enjoy, and I will say that at the end of the day I'm more content, more at peace, and [have] more gratitude.

[One way I reflect about the changes I've made,]…I started doing painting about a year ago…to express my emotion. And then I also make journals [of] what I feel about a particular painting. And then in the meantime, I go to the Center to just physically exercise, but I also take some of the special training that they have…. There's a level, or choice how you want to do about your training, but there is just physical for stretching, relaxation, then you just come for that class…. And then in addition if you're interested to find out more deeply about your emotion, or your spiritual growth, then they provide this Tao lecture teaching where you can…learn more about the way to conduct your living, which has a lot do with what you believe is the truth, what you believe is the right way, what you believe is what is reality. And then there's also another aspect of the training which trigger your emotion, and then that part usually is when I respond very well, because then you get all your emotion out, and then after that you visualize what is it that you really want, what your soul really want, who are you, things like that. So, that's where I think I was spending more and more time to go deeper inside, and to find out what is this thing about *me*, what is life leading up to, and where's my next journey, or what should I be doing next?…Another fact that I'm now searching is…"What does my soul want next?" Like "What is the completion of my soul in what way, what path is that leading to?" And I'm in that quest right now.

[To pick one specific issue or change, let's talk about]… dependency, about needing to have somebody to lean on; you are incomplete by yourself, you feel like something's

missing, you're sad, you are depressed, or you are feeling empty. Now that feeling is been with me *all* this time, *all* these years, and I guess, *all* my lifetime since I remember it. But now with this training I've been able to draw that feeling of contentment from inside. So I'm still having relationships with the people I mentioned, but it's not coming from the place of me needing their love. It's more like what my soul wants to be compassionate to these people. So, it seems like [I] have a switch somewhere in my mind, or in the brain that you don't draw these people, or you don't need to do anything to please these people so that you can belong with them or you can be accepted among them, but it's just that you already build up so much fulfillment inside yourself, from yourself, that you want to *share* your love with these people. So that's the transformation that I had.

[I relate that feeling of dependency to the]…preconception, especially true in my case, that everybody has done wrong to me. I mean, that's my world—my parents they beat me, but actual[ly] *I* probably need to learn how to overcome that closure…. So, *now* I said, "I want to give the best because my soul wants to love and want to give whatever."…. Before it was like "Oh, you have to do *this* so that you can be happy,"**....** But now, even though as a parent I still do that, but at the very bottom of my soul, my heart, I would say "Yeah, do everything the best for you, and choose what makes you happy, and what you want." And with my husband it has come to the realization…that "OK, I do have my own soul, and I have a choice, but it's my soul that chose the hard way for its own growth, so I should not blame him. Instead, I should be thankful and grateful, because he is there to let my soul go through all this trial, so that at the end of the day I should thank him if, because of him, I have to work harder overcoming." So, then I came to an understanding or an acceptance that, "I have more compassion to help him, instead of putting blame and burden on him." I'm in that stage in my mind, in my intention, but I haven't really been practicing it…[I feel like] "OK, I have to look at it from my angle, see what he needs, where he needed the help," then because it's *my* turn to help him, his soul, his life. And for me that's [a] 180% turn.

[I came to this learning]…, I guess, over a period of time, not just one particular training or action, but a combination of all. I would say a lot of times when I go to the Center I have a special kind of one-on-one training, like a consultation. That's when they started to press some part of my body, which is very painful, and with that physical exertion somehow the memory then coming up. So, they believe that even though the memory, or what happened emotionally, already happened a long time ago, maybe under your consciousness you [have] already forgotten about it, but the reaction in your body is still there. So, your body's pain has a memory of what makes it pain in the first place; what is it holding. So, I guess the belief was that the practices try to trigger that pain to come out from your physical [body], then they press it, then the emotion comes out, *then* that's what happened to me some of the time. And another thing is that I read a lot of self-discovery books…, kind of like spiritual guidance book…So, and then I learn it on my own; try to internalize things. And then, I guess I would say, wisdom from

prayer…And then also through the help of people or friends who…understand what I'm going through.

…I have a lot of baggage I guess in my life, my soul level, because I do believe each soul has its own journey…. My belief is that my soul engage me in experiences beyond my own control, leading me to a situation where sometimes…we don't know, "Why did we do that?".... So, in knowing those beliefs, then I believe, "Oh, OK, then if I felt like this, then maybe I need to do something to kind of like go back, and see what is it coming from?"…. I keep telling [the Master] that "Yeah, for me family is very big." … My soul itself carry a lot of other people's burden, even though they say, "Don't worry about it! It's your own soul!" but I cannot. It's like it has the purpose of carrying all those souls. So that means, I have to do a lot *more.* So, and then you know what she said? "Do 1,000 bowing!" … I was limping. I said, "Didn't she know I was injured?" … She said, "Go to the Center tonight. Do 1,000 bowing." That was Friday night, and Saturday I was teaching…. So, I believe that somehow in my life…since I was young I…do a lot of praying for my family. I don't know why…; It's not that the church asking me to do that. I do it on my own to redeem the sin, or the karma from my parents, grandparents. I did that for many years; probably close to about 20 years, the prayer, the longing to cleanse the whole clan…. Once I heard the Tao teaching about completion of soul, I really want to do it, and after I did the 1,000 on Friday night…, I did 3,000 by Sunday night. In 48 hours I did 3,000 bowings, with my condition…, [in] about 10 to 12 hours until Sunday at 5 [in the morning]. Where is that coming from? You ask me, I have physical strength? I was in pain! So, that's what I'm saying; it's becoming so *spiritual* for me. The journey is kind of, "OK, somebody else wants me to do it and I have to obey!"… Before I realized how my body would react my soul said "I want to do 3,000," without realizing what I just said. Oh, my God! So, that was the transformation.

[Recently]…I went to this [special] training. And over there I pour out whatever it is that has been bugging inside of my heart. And then also I have a vision quest [about] what I would like to do when I get back home. So that vision quest has manifest[ed] itself in that training…. So, that's what I've been clinging on because of that vision, that's how I want to go back home; that's how I'm gonna start my life. And with that same vision then I start getting more involved…in terms of other training, because…the vision has to do with opening up something like a yoga center [back home in Asia]…. That's when I get more into those deeper and deeper trainings…, but I have struggled because I use my mental calculation, "What is this?" "Is this good for me?"…. But at the end I knew that my spirit and my soul [are] winning me over…. But that's the transformation that I feel is coming…. I can have compassion, because supposedly if you are getting rid of your own preconceptions, then you should have a feeling of compassion to anybody, you cannot say "Oh, I have compassion for one person, but I don't have compassion for…" No, when the soul is pure, when you are in the state of non-attachment, non-judgment compassion goes through—anybody! Your husband, your kids, stranger, anybody!… So I'm being challenged to go to that compassion level.

That's the preconception that I have about compassion—like, dislike—and I'm learning how to overcome that aspect.

…In a private session, [the Master] pressed my [chest] and I was so in pain, she said "Oh, OK, what do you feel?" And…with the physical pain, you're supposed to come up with some emotional or a memory trigger. She tries always to dig into that…, and she said, "If your right side is in pain, usually it has a lot to do with pride, holding on pride, and anger."…I connect that incident—what happened to me physically [at the training]—with what she said before, and how I felt during that pain, how I felt during the walking, how I felt with all these people's attention and "What's wrong with you?" I had to say, "There's some truth in it!" because I remember myself being always so… proud of my posture, of my standing that I felt like I'm in charge of my body and that give me satisfaction…. And whenever I see my husband not walking straight, my kids, my daughters… or something, I always get upset and irritated. I really do! I say "Walk straight!" …And it became an obsession for me…. So, I realize going through the pain [at the training], "Ah, yeah, now I'm not so much like, oh, there's only one truth, one way of doing things, my way, the right way. If you don't do this one, then you are no good, you are less than good." That's the projection, the image, the energy I pass on to my husband…. So, that kind of energy vibration that I need to change…, the energy that goes with your emotion, it has to change. And I accept that out of this training what happened to me.

[To describe one way I reflect on my experiences,]…from [early] February until [mid-April], I've done twenty poems…The last three [follow the theme]…"Who am I?" that goes with the training…; this is the third one:

Who am I?
Without my names and identities,
Without my profession and security,
Without my attributes and standing,
Without my families and friends,
Without my charities and contributions,
Without my comfort and possessions,
Without my emotions and desires,
Who am I?
You mean I have to give up *everything*?
Could I do that?
You also want me to give up loved ones?
Why should I?
We should have no physical body?
What is left?
I see a beautiful heart in bright light with angel wings,
Floating up joyfully to meet its Creator
What a soul I am!

[In] some [cases] I wrote the poem and tried to think what my next painting would be.… I guess that's my spiritual journey…. I pour all my emotion in that painting. And then [when] I was done with it I was so surprised, I could paint! Then it's where my longing for life can be expressed…. Then I started to transfer my emotion, my love, my emptiness through the painting. That's why each of my painting[s] has a poem! 'Cause it's a healing process for me.

I think, in the beginning, because of my physical fatigue…, I have to carry this body, and I have no energy, I have no life…, I'm working, I'm doing tasks, but so much pain; that first realization brought me to the Center. And then with the certain thing in the Center where they give you a lot of hugging, that was what I was missing a lot, that hugging and that community closeness that they build around you, I think that will soothe me, because of my background where I came from…. In the way that they're doing their things…, there's a lot of things that might not suit me 100%, but as I go along I would say they help me 50% of the time where I needed to be…. The other 50% is I'm still doing it, and it comes from my perseverance, from my own faith in God, in my Church, in my prayer…. And then the Center later on help me realize the need of my soul, the beauty of my soul…. So, the only place to me to be who I am…is this Center.…

I guess the uncomfortable [part of this practice] comes from…how they present it to you…. They kept insisting, "You have to do this, because maybe this will help you."… I said, "You know, you're making me feeling uncomfortable, and I tell you, making a lot of other members feeling uncomfortable, too." But, surprisingly, after I went to this [advanced] training…I understood why they force me to do all of this at one time, because it has to do with my physical, my emotion, my heart, and my mind, my spiritual being alive in one alignment. And to do this, this is the training, to do this, this is the training, to do this, this is the training, and [it] have to be reinforced, reinforced, reinforced all the time. So, it looks like the same thing you are doing at the training but the level of consciousness, or the level of awakening that [is] happening to you will be different. Because it depends on how much you put *in* yourself, the energy that you put *in* that you believe in the training, then that much is how much is opening up for you. And I believe that now…. And for the first time, it's like my emotion at one time was thanking, was saying to me like, "Thank you. Thank you!" like "Wow!" Like I'm in love with myself! For the first time, after all these years! Trying to find love everywhere else <talking with the sound of joy in her voice>…. It meant that for the first time I will serve the purpose of my soul, which at the end, for its completion is like giving love to humanity <beginning to cry> regardless [of] who you are, and regardless to whom. I guess that's the longing of the soul itself.

Debra

Debra is a middle-aged professional who at the time of data collection was on the verge of retirement from a civilian position after having been in the Army for her first career. A life-long devout Catholic, she initially came to the Center for physical and emotional reasons then discovered that the teachings were also conducive to her spiritual practice. The following narrative profile describes her experience in her own words:

> [I came to the Center after]…I had been diagnosed with breast cancer in 2004, and went through chemotherapy and mastectomy as part of the treatment…. I started going into the depression phase…, then all the emotions start coming up.... I knew instinctively… that physical activity would help to keep my brain from getting into a very depressed mode, and help me sort through the emotions…, and make me feel a lot more *normal* about myself…. I thought yoga might help, and I happened to go by this place when there was an open class, so I stopped in and it immediately felt right, so I stuck with it…. Just having the physical activity made me feel better about myself…. And then I was spending usually three to four, maybe five days a week at the Center, because I was really dedicated to making this work for me, and the more I went, the better I felt, so the more I went.
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> … I had gone out for [advanced] training to Sedona, Arizona in January of 2007, just a few months after I had started. And it's a *very*, very *physically* oriented, very *intensive*, introspective program. And that, of all the training that I've taken subsequently, was really the most dramatic for me in many, many ways…. It's kind of different for everybody because it depends on how receptive you are to really coming to grips with yourself and your own issues, and your own emotions, and your own personal baggage…. So you come to find a lot of pain and physical challenges that you have to push past…. If you allow yourself to go past it, kind of hang in there and push past it, then you can feel higher levels of peace, but then, of course, as soon as you get there, there's one more obstacle.…The introspective piece of it is that you really become very, very aware of your body, and the way they teach it is that your body is holding everything that is *you*, so all the experience of your past is somewhere in your body. And pain is a lot of times…your own self-evaluation. So, you have to come to see what these are. And sometimes it's just a pain, and you don't know what it is, but once you push past it you feel just such an emotional release that you may end up crying. And then some people just get to a certain point and then they resist and they don't want to push past it. So, if you allow yourself, it's truly mind-boggling, the release that you feel from it.

…There [are] preconceptions like you form ways of looking at things based on what's happened to you in the past. You also hold a lot of things that have happened to you in the past, [for example] somebody hurt you and you just keep nursing that hurt forever.… Because you hold that hurt, the next time you deal with somebody that colors the way you interact with them. So, then you're projecting things, or you may judge people cause one person did something to you then you're afraid [someone else] is going to do it to you…. I think I was an already aware person [regarding] these kinds of things, and going through [the workshop] was more like, "OK, I realize that I will probably think a certain way because I was brought up Catholic, for instance. And the morals that I have were formed from that environment, and others will not think necessarily the same way." But having done a lot of traveling, and interacting with a lot of different cultures, I understand that there's different ways to think. So…, you're limited to what experiences you've already had, but I don't know that I was bogged down by preconceptions, because I was also very open to the fact that other people don't necessarily think the way I do, don't have the same grounding.

[To pick one practice to focus on,]…I guess the early morning training we'll do every once in a while is probably the most regular thing that I do. So, it's the bowing, chanting and that, and that I really enjoy doing…. [The bowing is]… different [on] different days… The first day is…more the *physical* aspect of it, but then once I've done it a day, the next day for *me* it becomes much more the energy aspect of it, because I'm not focused on the physical body…. I develop very quickly a rhythm, and then it's more about the energy. And I'm very quickly able to calm my mind and stay focused on it…. They stress so much about emotion versus the deepness of your soul. It's more the connection with your soul than it is connections with emotions, to differentiate that. But, it's a very calming thing for me. And also lends to becoming joyful, so it brings a much more positive feeling to me. And then my emotional side is calmer and more focused on the "glass half full" aspect of life.

[In terms of principles that I've begun to incorporate in my life,]… I don't know if it's so much learning but it's like awareness of what I already knew inside…, and it's happened in other things, not just [at the Center], but in places where I've gone to college courses and they had names for things. And it's like, "Oh, I just thought that was something that everybody knew, or did, or whatever, but it's actually something that some people have to learn to do, and it has a name and it can be defined." [So]…, it's not so much that I'm learning something *new*, but that I'm able to say, "Oh, yes, this is a 'thing.' It was just part of a big process in my head, but there's actually a definable thing and you can focus on that, and control it…." And if you can now apply it in a structured way, then you can focus on it more…. It gave language to it, but it also showed that…it's not a one-dimensional thing; it's multi-faceted so you can go in many different directions and apply it in many different ways.

…What do I think about life?… I'm always focused towards the future. And to me it's exciting; I like change. I describe it as I'm the person who'll get up on the high dive,

close my eyes, hold my nose and jump. And I know I'm gonna hit the pool sometime. I don't know when, I don't know how, I don't know what's gonna happen when I do, but I'm definitely gonna hit the pool…. I think [my experience at the Center has]…made it more comfortable [to deal with change]…. [For example, it has]…probably helped me understand the emotions of different people a little bit better. And dealing with my own emotions…; it's putting a language to it.… I've now started watching myself do this in different situations where I can go into a room and gather the energy, and gather the mindset with people. So, [the Center] has given me that language to observe that and to be able to put it into practice. [As an example of something I've been learning that didn't fit my previous experience,]…we've had the 'religion vs. spirituality' discussion a number of times, because a lot of the Masters come from Korea, [and] a lot of them have not had religious upbringing…. I'm a fairly devout Catholic, and it's up to *me* to reconcile…. So, I can describe it in a number of different ways, but I don't really *have* to to *them.* It's for me; it's how I'm internalizing this, and how I'm dealing with the spirituality. So, to me spirituality is sort of the umbrella that holds us *all* together…

[I haven't really changed the way I interact with others,]…it's more of the awareness of how I interact with people…, so that's why I said this isn't like an "Ah ha" – I started [this practice] and all of a sudden life is wonderful, but it helped me focus on things that may have happened in the past. A number of years ago I…came up with a New Year's resolution…that was "me first."… That's really the premise of all of this; you have to focus on yourself first. [For example,]…I was having difficulties with my mother…; the two of us didn't get along as well [as me and my father]. I would drive home, and I didn't really want to go home and visit because I knew that I would be bombarded with all this negative energy when I got there, but I [would] do it anyway. So, I had this sense of *obligation* that I had to go and visit my family, and I'd walk in the door and she wouldn't even say hello.… Then one day I just thought about it and I went, "You know, if it's 'me first,' am I doing this cause I want to? Or am I doing it out of a sense of obligation?" So, meeting someone else's expectations instead of taking care of my own, and, of course, you can't control other people no matter how hard you try, you can influence them or impact them a little bit, but you can never control them. So, I decided that I could control myself.… Just knowing that you have a choice my contention was that you may still do things that you don't want to do, but you're doing them because you've made the choice to do it, even if you don't want to. So, I'm no longer going out of *obligation*, even if the relationship hadn't changed, I'm going because *I* want to see my parents. I can't control how *they* deal with the interaction…, so, the sense of obligation is now my responsibility because I've taken ownership of the situation…, and then if you *do* it that way you don't project that negative energy on somebody else.

[In terms of my pending retirement,]…I know that this kind of major transition, although I relish change, is also a lot of stress…. Stress doesn't actually have to have a negative connotation all the time, so it's very comforting to me to have this as kind of a safety net…. This is the first time I'm walking into no structure dealing with living in the 'now.'… There will probably be emotions even though I'm excited to be done with

all of this…. So just to take it one day at a time, and figure out, "OK, can I sit down over the next couple of weeks and just look at where have I come through all of this?" because I'll have the time to focus on it, so, and then having that structure and that language to be able to express it will be very helpful for me. And then also to be able to apply things, probably come to the Center and teach classes or help out…, [and also] to really take the time for the 'me first,' the more contemplative stuff.

…. There's a Beatles song, and I don't remember which one it is, but at the end it has this cacophonous building of momentum – "Da-da-da-da-da-DA!" and then it just goes "brrrrm." That's how I felt my life was, that I was just moving and moving and moving and moving, and going faster-faster-faster-faster <talking faster and faster>. [I] really wasn't paying that much attention, it was just this jumble of things, and then there was this resolution, this chord that just played and resonates, and that's kind of like the "Hah!"… I'd like to keep feeling that feeling of that resolution, because I know what it feels like now. And there [were] glimpses all through my life of "This is the right thing," but it would be so fleeting that it's like "How do I recreate that feeling?" I don't even remember really what the situation was where I felt it, and it was just so fleeting that I couldn't recreate that. So now I have that ability to recreate it on a regular basis, and reinforce it, [so] that I can keep going back to the basics on it, and when things start to spiral out in different directions and everything, then that brings me back to that centeredness and that calm peacefulness.

[Before,]…the chaos was like I'm being pulled in lots of different directions, and I don't really have a lot of control, and I'm just trying to keep up with everything that's going on. And the more I think I'm getting something done, it just opens up that many more things that still need to be done, so it was a much more sort of external "I'm just going along with where I'm being pulled" versus "OK, the resolution brings me back to me." And talking in terms of that "me first"…, think about what's going on, make a decision, a deliberative decision as to what you want to be doing right now. Understand that if you even do something you wouldn't necessarily want to do that you've made that positive choice, and you're responsible for the consequences, so you can't beat yourself up, you can't beat anybody else up, because it's totally within your own control. Not only is it making a difference for me, but it's making a difference for [my parents], too. They *can't* respond to me the same way they did before, because I'm not allowing them to get under my skin, so it's had them…thinking about maybe how they had been reacting or responding to me as well, because they've obviously been influenced by my decision to not allow them to control me. That's how we see things spreading a little bit, even in a very specific personal one-on-one kind of thing, and knowing then that that can happen throughout the world. So, there is the ability to influence people by your energy.

I think [my process of reflection is]…more cerebral...; just thinking in terms of changes that I've made, and then even looking at different problems that have been there all along that seemed maybe overwhelming, or very negative or whatever, and channeling

a much more creative way to look at it.… And then I'm an observer, so I sort of stand back sometimes from myself…, trying to be a third-party in my own mind on a lot of things. [One particular change that comes to mind is]…more awareness of myself and then really trying to stay with myself all the time…. So this is a good thing, but it brings most of the time a consciousness of "How am I responding to this right now? Am I falling back into old habits?" And that helps you stop for a second, too, and take that break and go "OK, we don't have to fall back." Let's look at it again; figure out what you need to be doing that keeps helping you to move forward with your new Self.

… In terms of the cancer, there was a situation that happened when I was in my mid-twenties that according to the Master that I was dealing with out in Sedona had a significant impact on me now. Emotionally, I thought I had gotten past it, but apparently that was something that I was holding in my body, and that's what she has said was the cause of the cancer. So, we talked in terms of absorbing a lot of stresses and stuff, even good stress, but it's all memory in your body somewhere. So, I'm not sure that I've worked through that all completely, but there was a total release when she said that like "Yeah, that has to be right." [A]…total emotional release, and then like almost a sense of urgency to talk to somebody about it after that, which was something I had never done before. I'd never uttered words out loud that clearly I needed to be able to do, so that was some of the real significant benefit that I've gotten from this program, because that apparently was significant enough to have caused cancer in my body.

…I do tend to be a little bit cerebral about things, so I'm a little bit less accepting of things right off the bat, which I think holds me a little bit tight sometimes. It's not that I'm not open to new things, but [I think]…I gave myself over to the Center Master and the other Masters that were helping mentor me…. So, there are some things that I relinquished control, because I felt like maybe I was too much in control, or needing to control too much, and then now I'm being told that "Well, that's no good either," so it's like "All right, where's the balance again? If I say 'no' to you guys, then I need to say 'no,' and you need to stop pushing me as though I'm doing something wrong." Cause that preconception of that good Catholic girl's gonna come out, and that guilt's gonna start pounding on me, and I don't want to be put in that position…. So, that was some of the struggles that I have that I still work with…. I didn't come here because I felt like I was totally lost, and that they were going to now *save* me. That was something that I was going to find within myself, and I felt that this program, in looking initially for a *physical* program that was going to provide something, met that requirement *plus* more. So, its much more holistic focus was a perfect *fit*, because…it was more of a lifestyle change. And it *did* have a lot of aspects of things that I'd explored even when I was much younger, and had gotten away from…. So, I think that being able to use that as a springboard for lots of other things was really, really helpful…. I don't think I had to give up *everything*, though, they didn't have the 'only way,' but they provided a lot of different perspectives for me.

> I don't know that it's been [a] dramatic [change in the way I live my life]…, but it's certainly been helpful to go from a 'glass half empty' kind of person, which I think I was for *many* reasons…. I try to sort of get out of that mindset and really be a much more positive person…. I think [the Center] has…given support to what I had already been doing with myself, and knowing that I'm not the first one to do some of these things that there's process out there, there's a systematic way of looking at things…. So, this helped me feel a little bit more comfortable in knowing that it's OK to do it, and… to know that it's OK within my Catholic faith to do what I'm doing.… It's probably something that might have happened anyway, just because of my age and what I'm going through with my life and stuff like that, but it has helped me feel…that I've sort of had a longing that I couldn't put my finger on, and this has really helped me understand what it is that I was trying to find out. Not that it gave me the answer, but at least it said, "Oh, this is what's happening. That your soul has a longing to do something, or to find out what you need to be doing, and it's not going to be something out there. It's going to be something inside." And then the actions that you take from here on should focus on what is satisfying your soul as opposed to satisfying somebody else's expectations.

Nolan

Nolan is a middle-aged professional manager in the consulting business. His initial impetus to join the Center was to improve his physical health in response to a heart attack, though once he experienced the classes and teachings of the Center he discovered broad-based applicability to his life in a variety of areas, including emotional and spiritual growth. The following narrative profile describes his experience in his own words:

> I had a mild heart attack in December, 2008.… I was surprised, and happy that it wasn't serious. I didn't sustain any damage to my heart, but I still wanted to attack the root cause…so that this wouldn't happen again…. I was walking by the [Center]…one day, and I thought, "Why not?"… I really started purely with the intent of improving my physical health…. When I got there…I was pleased to see that there was more to this than just the physical exercise…, and this made it *much* more interesting…, because it was easy for me to see right from the beginning that there were a lot of analogies between what I was experiencing in the class and what I experienced in my everyday life…. After a month I became a core member (buying a lifetime membership), doing this mainly to encourage myself to continue [the] practice in a way that would help me to improve my health, but also, at least partly, in response to encouragement from [the] Masters who seem very focused on recruiting new members and encouraging them to move ahead as quickly as possible.

This sense of urgency is still something that I have a little trouble accepting, but in general I benefit a great deal from the high level of commitment and concern of the Masters…, and that urgency is really a hallmark of everything that they do…; they feel that if you don't want it urgently, then it won't happen.… I think they're trying to teach us that the normal sense of complacency we might feel is a way to guarantee that we'll never achieve anything, because we don't really *want* to achieve badly enough…. They feel that if you really *want* something very badly, you're more likely to get it, and you're likely to be able to go deeper.… I thought the [workshop] was very powerful…. It really is a very important part of their training, but I think it's just the initial discovery of who you are, what you want. For me it's a continuing process…. But in [this] program that process of discovery and self-knowledge is kind of accelerated…, so that was an important moment, but really in a way my deciding to accept it before I even took it was even more important, because that's where I did the work really.

… I'm more of a *feeling*-oriented person… I do an awful lot of thinking, but I think the thinking is more prompted by my feelings. It's like an attempt to either figure out why I'm feeling the way I am, or to do something about why I'm feeling a certain way. But I'm not a person who starts with the thinking as a way of resolving something…. Basically I adapted to the daily class regimen, after being told that I should come "as often as I can"… These immediate benefits served as a great motivator to continue daily practice. I was so excited that sometimes I would attend twice a day…. Physical exercises are challenging for me, but the connection with mind and spirit was fascinating to me and served as a big motivator. Increasingly I have seen the…yoga classes as a microcosm of my larger life, an environment where I show all of the same strengths and weaknesses that I experience outside of yoga. The fact that the world [at the Center] is constrained and, in many ways, non-threatening, allows me to experiment more with my attitudes and to see the result without making major changes in my life. I find this also to be fascinating.

When I learn something that I think is valuable, I try to apply it to my life right away and see if I can get some results out of it…. I have some insights about how I think and what I believe and particularly the things I can do by acting differently with people, or taking action differently in my life. That's the thing that I tend to do first, because it just seems easiest to me…. Lately, I have become aware that…Masters who are able to complete their exercise obligations (which are much greater than what they're asking of me), approach their exercises with an attitude of gratitude, joy and love. I am just beginning to understand how I might apply this lesson to my own challenges in life, including but not limited to bowing meditation. This type of insight, if I am able to accept it, could give me another tool for accomplishing important personal development goals. As always, I see a rather direct relationship between the…exercises and practices, and the challenges and opportunities of my larger life.

[The] physical exercises are making me stronger in a way that I recognize on a daily basis. My back is straighter, I am more flexible and conscious of many parts of my

body—generally this makes me feel better, more confident and capable. These feelings translate into more effective behavior. The process seems very effortless, almost a natural result of the exercises that I'm doing in class and at home…. [I've begun] connecting my knowledge of what was happening to my body with events, particularly at work…I would observe when I had certain types of encounters how my body would tense up again…. That was a real lesson to me. And then, interestingly enough, I think it works both ways, not just as a reactive thing but once you realize that then I think "Well, if I can maintain a calmer state of my body, a more relaxed state, then I'm less likely to react in ways that I would."… I'm at the point now where I think I'm actually feeling more stable sometimes and I just don't react that way, so I don't *feel* that tension anymore; it's not happening…. I think that's part of the conserving energy and staying grounded in your body. You're remaining focused on yourself; I think that's a very valuable part of [this practice], and I'm still learning how to do that…. So, that is a very important part of this whole thing for me. It's connecting how my body feels with my emotional reactions. Now I'm getting more into the mental and spiritual side, and that I'm not 100% comfortable with yet.

… [The] spiritual concepts are a new area for me and a source of uncertainty. I have never been actively involved in any kind of religion; even the concept of "soul" is really very new to me (in terms of direct experience)…. They have this concept…that God exists…. In terms of the words I think [it] is very similar to what we believe in Christianity…, but they take it more literally…; it's more direct and more practical in their approach as to how they *use* the concept…. I think that's the real strength of [these teachings]; this attempt to integrate things and in a way that you can actually use to improve your quality of life, and potentially make a contribution to the human race, for lack of a better term…. Altogether, [these] concepts are a fascinating blend of familiar knowledge combined with some new, perhaps radical insights. [I] don't know what to make of this, but it attracts me deeply—that is, I want to know more and to understand all of this, so that I can adopt what makes sense to me and reject what doesn't. At the same time, I find that [these] concepts generally don't lend themselves to partial adoption. They have a system and it works best when you simply adopt the system and start to make use of it…. I am surprised that I have a growing spiritual interest and that this too appears to be completely integrated with [the] physical and energy concepts.

… I have always been somewhat uncomfortable in groups, not knowing exactly what my role/posture should be…. I see interactions with others a little differently since beginning my practice. Particularly lately, I am more conscious of the value of belonging to a group and of the reciprocal relationship of member and group…. [The teachings and practices at the Center] provided the "energy framework" to help me understand this better. Also, [it] enabled me to use energy more actively, as opposed to just reacting to it, e.g. when a person with a negative attitude comes into my office…. I've started to see things from a broader perspective…. I feel now that relationships and what happens between people…have become more important…. I'm more successful, I think, in managing my relationships with people, overcoming conflicts, even avoiding

conflict without actually giving up what I want to accomplish…. I think I intimidate people sometimes, because I right away start to analyze what they've told me.… So, instead of doing that…, I try to express my concern, my love for them really as a fellow human being…, and I'm getting, I think, a lot of benefits from that, and I started to see major differences in their/our behavior, leading to big improvements in the quality of my interactions with them…. So, that's probably the single biggest thing.

[In the special lectures]…they are stressing the importance of the organization, and the relationship between the individual and the organization. It's very much the Asian, the Taoist type of thinking, very socially oriented. I've seen that with my wife and her relatives…, but I hadn't really internalized what that means. And so, now that insight is starting to make me think about groups differently and how I might interact with them better. And it's also making me think about [the Center] differently, because originally I didn't really want to be part of that group. For whatever reason I felt some distrust…, but… I am increasingly positive about fellow…members [at the Center], particularly those who are more seriously interested in the transformational change opportunities that [this method] offers…, and it feels like a liberating experience…. I do have a growing dependence on our Center's…community. Surprising to [me] is my growing desire to contribute to the growth and health of this community…, [but] I'm getting involved with something that presumes a lot more interdependence that I previously experienced. And that interdependence is kind of a scary thing to me, because I was always a loner, introvert, more or less, at least in my core…. I presume I always have the chance to decide whether I want to pull out, or agree or disagree on specific things, but I can kind of see the logical structure being built…; I'm building this logical structure for myself with their guidance, which is gonna leave my choices, I think, much more constrained. "Constrained" has a negative implication, maybe a better way would be to…encourage me to focus my actions more on what I really want to achieve…, but "constrained" it represents the fear that am I gonna end up too narrowly focused, essentially programmed to believe a certain type of thing? And it makes me a little nervous sometimes.

My personal changes continue to be a work in progress. While [this] program is powerful, its holistic nature makes it hard to follow piecemeal. Since I would like to make progress in all three areas: physical, energy, and spiritual, I have lately been trying to define the precise goals of my development. I find this challenging. I think that the answer lies at least partly in achieving a more disciplined life…. I see my life as very much dependent on the demands that are made of me, and as about making other people happy. I guess that's maybe the best way to summarize it…; my happiness is dependent on making other people happy with what I do, even what I think…. [This view is] really in the process of changing…. I took a step a few months ago [when]… I said to myself, "I'm just gonna accept [this teaching] and see where that takes me." … That starts to change my view of life as being a place where I do things for other people, because [in these teachings]…you decide up front what your purpose in life is, and then you live your life accordingly, based on certain principles…. So, when I made

the decision to accept things right away, immediately, I found that my performance in the physical exercises improved—a lot. I felt a real rush of energy…., and I started really to respond just across the board to all the stuff that I was seeing at [the Center], all the practices, the thinking. And I was amazed at the *power* that came with that acceptance…. Anyway, that was a very powerful thing for me, and I felt that this was something that I could *really* use in my life, in a very broad sense.

I'm at a stage…where they're trying to encourage me to go more deeply into things…, and I'm willing because I've seen a lot of benefit from what I've learned so far, so I'm willing to go further. But, again, not uncritically; I'm just not going to buy into this stuff without feeling that it's really what I want…. The fact that they have an integrated view of things is very attractive. And so in a way I'm kind of thinking I like this integrated view. I'd like to go further with it, but I'm not sure I like *all* aspects of *their* integrated view…; the integration of the mind, body, and spirit, even these energy concepts, and this notion of cosmic energy, they kind of see it all as one thing…. I was used to thinking of exercise as just exercise, and now I feel that it's part of just my overall self…; I think it has to do with connecting the body and mind, like *seeing* the relationship—it's just connecting everything really. So, that is probably the biggest change.

… I'm now using what's happening with my own body and my own mind as kind of a reference point for things in my life, asking myself, "Is it really, is this OK with *me*?" I never was able to do that easily, because I wasn't sure what *I* really was… Now [this practice has given] me a way of *seeing* myself as integrated with other things…. So I'm using myself more as a reference point, and that's a good feeling. It makes me feel more stable. It's not still really a complete, a decisive and complete change. It's just the way I'm feeling sometimes, which I never felt before.… The way they presented things it kind of reframed everything for me. And that made me a lot more receptive to what they were saying, because then it became like a voyage of discovery, and I was a participant. So, that was far more powerful than the actual heart attack itself.

At the same time, my learning has been limited by "pre-conceptions", my past experience and my personal values. More recently, as I've tried to accept more fully [these] practices, I find myself going back and forth between acceptance and rejection. Really, I want to move ahead.… Emotionally, I had a really difficult childhood with my father. I was always trying to figure out what he wanted from me, and how I could give it to him. And I never really succeeded, because he was very arbitrary and mercurial…. At the time when I was a kid, I think it just really was a mystery to me…. I couldn't understand why he made the demands on me…. I would ask him even, but I just never got any answers.… I had a lot of situations…that finally just kind of made me feel that I wanted to detach myself from him, because it was just too threatening and dangerous…. As a result of that I think I was more in a survival mode, and I've kind of stayed in that mode…. My mother was quite different and I think she's a genuinely nice, *normal* type of person. You can understand her; she's rational, predictable, and loving, so whatever I

learned that was positive, I think it was more from *her*. So, maybe that's why I'm *receptive* to another way of doing things.

…. The parental influence, I think, is really primary. And then when you go to school, I think what happens is that you just play out the same thing in a slightly broader way.… I guess it all comes back to my experiences with my father. I guess I'm always thinking about "What does this person need from me?" Like, emotionally, what do they need from me, what do they want from me? And if I know that, and I'm giving that to them, then I feel more comfortable and I can focus on other things, but if I don't know that then it's a bit uncomfortable for me.… I know that I react to people, quite often, in the way that I reacted to my father…. I haven't deeply examined those things. Maybe I'm trying to avoid making a really deeper change…. That's an area that's too sensitive for me to really know what I'm doing. I'd need to have some objective guidance to do that. And I haven't sought that…. Maybe I'm trying to keep to changes that are—I hesitate to say "superficial"—but kind of at a superficial level where they're less threatening.

… The main preconception in my life, I think, is that I believe that most people were a lot like my father, that they were very demanding, mercurial…, that I had to figure out what they wanted from me. And really, in most cases, it's pretty simple. People are *not* like my father, they're pretty easy to figure out. So, my preconception was that they *are* like my father, and so I would always go further than I needed to. I would do more analysis. I would do more work.… My perfectionism is conditioned more by what I perceive to be the demands of others.… I think I've always known most of my preconceptions really, because I think a lot, and I'm fairly open with myself in terms of what I think about. But I think that what was missing for me was really *feeling* preconceptions at an emotional level. Feeling the damage that they had done to me, and how they had limited my personal growth and my experience. *That's* the part that I started to think about in the [workshop] really…. Because I'd been wondering, why do I behave in the strange ways that I do?… But then to actually *feel* what that does and what the result of that is, it really made me feel quite sad. I started crying and that was the powerful part…. It connected me with the emotional aspect of those preconceptions.

[The process of discovery, learning and change has…] given me an insight into who I am in a broader sense than I previously considered, and particularly in how different parts of me interact to be "me."… I don't think that I've really achieved a "new way of being" through my…practice. I have glimpsed some new ways of thinking and behaving that are very interesting and beneficial to me…. The mind-body connection—that's very powerful, and the self-awareness is a very powerful thing…. The ultimate learning objectives seem to be kind of holistic progress with all of the things that they talk about.… The physical aspect of things and what they call "energy"…, and using energy as a way to connect with your spiritual side, to me all that is very effective thinking. I think it's very practical in a sense because it ties what you're thinking to what you feel physically. And the energy stuff I'm not sure I really understand it, but it seems like a valid part of the whole picture…. As a person it gives you some *evidence*

in terms of how you *feel* about what you think, and what you believe that's quite unusual.

… I think the heart attack was for me was the initial motivation to do *something*, but I didn't really know what that would turn out to be. But once I started [at the Center]…, what I found was that this initial focus on the awareness of the body, and connecting it with emotions, this was something I'd never done before…. It kind of reframed things for me…. but when I could see the potential and I started to apply that thinking to everything around me, I found that a very rich process.… I'm still discovering how far that goes into the spiritual domain, but I discovered pretty quickly about the connection between the emotions and the body, and that's something that I'd never thought about directly….

I was thinking about it when I was in the classes experiencing these exercises. That, too, is powerful because it kind of integrates in a very practical way what you're thinking and what you're feeling, and then both what you're feeling emotionally and what your body is feeling. So that was a new experience to me. I'd always thought of exercise, especially yoga I thought, it's like a series of postures which basically help to train you to be able to behave in a certain way, and to respond to life in a certain way, and maybe even take action in a certain way. But I'd never thought of it as something that would help you to decode what the influence of things in your environment *is* on *you*, and then once you're aware of what the influence is you can decide whether you like it or not, and take steps to change it, or enhance it if you want to.

Probably the most meaningful token that I can think of, that relates to my experience, is the Chun Bu Kyung. The rather mystical nature of this chant, the sounds of the spoken words, the rhythm of the chant, and its use to guide the bowing meditation make it a powerful device. I see it mainly as an aid to meditation, but it also encapsulates the meaning of the [whole] experience, particularly the union of body and mind—from a broader perspective: heaven, earth and human. The Chun Bu Kyung truly does embody much of the [this] experience for me. The discipline of the physical exercise combined with the chanting and spiritual allusions are very powerful.… I think what it does for me—it helps me to focus, it makes me calmer. I just feel more grounded…. It also still has a spiritual side to it…. The bowing is starting to help me to deal with [the stress of my job]…, because I feel a little more remote from the urgency of these things, and able to analyze better what is *really* important and what I should be doing. And then to *do* it more effectively when I start doing it…. And just doing this practice repeatedly, doing it every day I think is an important step in developing the discipline that I hope to acquire in things.… The same thing applies to the whole…practice. If I can develop the discipline to do these exercises which I really didn't find easy to start with, and I've been doing it for a year now, in a very dedicated kind of way, then I feel good about that. I'm achieving something that *I* want to do, as opposed to doing something for other people.

Nakari

Nakari is a middle-aged professional, first-generation immigrant from Western Africa. Having arrived in the United States at the age of 28 without a high school diploma, she completed her GED, as well as her Bachelor's and Master's degrees while raising a family. At the time of data collection, it had been three years since she began teaching French at a local university. Her transformative learning process began after seeking help for a physical ailment diagnosed as resulting from stress. Seven years later, she describes her transformation as an ongoing process of discovering ever deeper layers about herself. The following narrative profile describes her experience in her own words:

> The first time I came to yoga I was having trouble with losing my hair.… I went to see three different doctors…, and they told me "You have a lot of stress. You have to go to yoga."… I said, "I'm not doing any yoga. I get dizzy." And I was really staying away from yoga…. I went to the gym, but yoga was the last thing in my mind. So, when I was facing this problem…, one day I was in a supermarket, and I see this sign, "Yoga in Centerville," and I went in. And they told me what the problem was, that the energy in my body was stuck and it needs to be released, and "You have too much stress in your life. It needs to be released, too. And energy needs to be moved around in your body, balanced." And I didn't understand that either…. So, when I talked to one of the Masters I felt good about it, and they convinced me. So, I checked in…, and I did about fifteen healing sessions. And then I went to yoga every day.
>
> [This yoga practice]…is all about energy healing, and so at least the problem was addressed after a year. It took a long time for my hair to come back, but I saw some transformation, some *changes* of the energy. I'm breathing better, I went to workshops…, and it was really weird, because you put yourself inside to keep that relationship between your mind and body, and…starting to know about yourself…. After seven years it's started to make sense to me, because it *has* been a transformation for me, and so my hair has come back, even better, and I'm a believer in the thing, because I believe in myself, I can heal myself…. Coming to class regularly made a *huge* difference…, three times a week, *at least*.… It takes time, not everybody has the same condition, so for me I'm still going through changes, and I'm still going even deeper in my training.
>
> I went to Healer's School, and I did seven days…. And as you go deeper, the blockages are loosened up…. I had a major burn accident almost two years ago, and that was very,

very tough…. I was burned, deep second [degree] burns, and I was rushed to [the] burn trauma hospital …, and I stayed three days there. And all of this… was a total nightmare…, and I wanted to leave, but they said, "No, no, no, you can't leave. You're going to have skin grafts." And I said, "No, I don't want to have any skin graft." And the surgeon said, "Why do you want to leave?" and I said, "Well, I do yoga, I do energy yoga and I believe in that. I can heal myself." So I came home and, one of the physical therapy they were going to do was just do stretching. I said, "I can do stretching. I go to yoga and I do stretching." So, and I came here…; it was really, really painful…. So, yoga again helped me do the stretching…so my skin will not get all wrinkled. And the meditation helped, I mean, I recovered 10 times better than any patient at the hospital, and they told me that…. But we all are healers…, so the nurse was *so* surprised, she said, "I don't understand what you're doing, but whatever you're doing, it's great, because we never had anybody like you, first, who never wanted to take medication, second, who is recovering so quickly. What are you doing?" So, I recovered quicker than anybody…, and after a year and a half, when I went to Sedona…I was still healing. So, that training helped a lot. And part of the area on my stomach was white, [it] was deeply burnt and they said to put a skin graft. Now, the skin pigment is coming back.

I was really stressed…. By coming to yoga [it] has helped me a lot… Now I learned how to focus on me…. When my dad died…, I cried a lot. And again yoga helped me relieve all these emotions. And it's OK to feel emotional, and I find it much easier now than it was before, because "emotion is not me, they're mine." …The "I" is my body; is not me, but mine. So, you become a "master" of your emotions…. You become in control…. I have changed in a way, I used to get really, really mad, my temper was really hot…. I've learned to observe what's going on instead of getting in the middle, I'm an observer. And there were some situations where my emotions got the best of me. Now…, that notion is that "Oh, I see the situation differently! And *I* react differently!" …Even my husband noticed that I don't get as emotional as I used to, or get very mad as I used to…. I'm more settled, more poised than I used to be. I mean, it has changed my thinking about life, about how to address things in life, about how to see things.

…To purify your body, you need bowing. Bowing is awesome! The experience of bowing, coming from Muslim background with prayers, it's just a wonderful feeling…. It's just like your whole body goes through pain, pain, pain, pain, you go through the pain, and after that you feel lighter…. It's physical, mental change, spiritual changes…. You have to go on your pace. Nobody would know you better than anybody else except you, and that mind-body connection that you develop, you become to know your Self better, and that soul talking to inner soul, your Self. You have that connection, and you're in great shape, healthily you're great, spiritually you're wonderful, and that's what I look forward [to] as I get older…. Oh, really, yes, it changes [you], oh, yes, but you continue.… And, not only that, it will align you with this [attitude of], "I can do it."

…. If you are patient with your body, like I said, quick fix is not going to happen in overnight; it takes years, and after seven years, it's still taking the time…. Also, I want

to talk about something—healing. I started healing a long time ago with the result that I have that confidence in healing, and when I went to Sedona they taught us how to heal other people. And I'm not a healer—it takes years to become a healer, but I am an energy transmitter…. I like that aspect of healing and comforting, giving massages to my friends. I've spread this energy, 'cause you get so much of it, you need to spread it to other people. For example…, this afternoon I went to see a friend of mine, a 75 years old man who fell down the stairs, broke his hip…, and he broke his arm. He's a really great guy, we will go to lunch together, and seeing him like that it just broke my heart. And now I go nearly once a week and massage his legs and hands. And he feels that energy.

[How would I describe my] view of life? Live your life in the moment, day-by-day. I know we have to plan, but I come from a culture, we don't plan. The faith of the Muslim is to live the day and things that you cannot get in control of, God can control. So…, [yoga] has the same faith as my faith, so yoga and my belief are going together in a lot of ways. We do the same bowing…; so everything's going parallel and I see a lot of similarities between the two. And that's another thing that makes me feel good that we all come from one place. We all name it differently…; it reinforces my belief, and going back to my Source to know more about my own belief.

[The way I interact with others]… has changed a lot, my relationship with my husband, and all my kids…. I used to have an explosive temper…. It really made my temper mellow down in a way that I do still get angry, but I don't get angry as fast as I used to, because my emotions were taking the best out of me, and they consumed me. Now, I really, I have control now over that, and it really helped my situation with my girls a lot, and we have a better relationship than when they were teenagers…. They also told me, "Mom, you have changed" in that sense. And my husband also—the other day he was telling me something and I didn't really react to it as I used to. So, he said, "…what's happened to you? I can't even get you mad." I said, "Well, that's the investment in yoga." … And my relationship with my students also has changed, because I've seen the evaluation from early years, "Professor has more tolerance, more patience, doesn't get mad as quickly. She's patient with our learning."… It's very easy to become impatient with students especially…. Now, I'm *very* patient, and I get evaluations from students that I'm very patient, very tolerant, more so than I was before. That says a lot, because five years ago I wasn't that person.…So, yoga has really changed my ways of doing things. It really empowered my way of being, also it gave me more confidence in myself. I've become more intuitive…, I've become more spiritual.

[Before joining the Center,] I used to do aerobic classes, I played tennis a lot, I still play, but yoga has really transformed my life…. When I was little I used to play with my hands. I always felt that energy in my hands…, and I was always intrigued with that magnetic [feeling] in my hands…. So, when I discovered this yoga I was just like "Wow, magical!" It's just something that brought me back to my childhood…. Before I didn't know what it was to be with yoga. So when I discovered yoga it [was] just

"Awesome!" Now, I won't live without [it]...; [in] numerous ways [my life is] better. One of the things that improved my life [is] the fact that I can heal myself in many ways. And coming from a culture where we didn't rely on taking pills a lot, this is what I want…. As I get older, um, I want to stay healthy…, just to stay pain-free, and be able to cure that pain. And energy yoga has that power…. So, and I want to transmit that message to people that we are all healers, and first we can heal ourselves, and then that healing can transfer to other people.

I go to yoga every day if I can, and if I don't, I do it at home…. I was always, always intrigued knowing my *own* body, and have that connection with my mind and body. And this energy yoga has given me that. And so there's more discover. I'm just taking my time and for fifty years, or forty-five years, I had to deal with misconceptions and blockages and all that…. So there are a lot of workshops where you can go even deeper. And, to tell you the truth, I'm afraid to go any deeper to see what to discover. I'm hesitant to do that. So, I'm going slowly. More changes are going to take place, I'm sure, and with my drumming…, like I said to one of the members on Friday [when] I drummed and she said, "How did you do this? I mean, how did you become a drummer here in America?" I told her when I came from [my country. It]…is a very competitive, a very noisy place. I mean, in the street people are hopping, there are things going on, smells and everything in the streets. I grew up in the Medina which is the Middle Ages, thousands of years old city where people are next to each other, you hear the other one. And all of a sudden, I'm here. It's death to me. It really is…; nothing negative in it. To *me* it sounded that way. So, I needed to drum– my hands were literally itching. And so…, I started drumming…. And that drum has really suited me a lot, and I find a lot of relief in it, and stress-relieving, and, like, back to my country. It's something, it's my baggage. I have to revive my baggage…; I needed that relief.

So, with yoga, transformation has taken place also in the drum…. When people are dancing I feel their energy, and I get energized even more. And I drum as their moves, or the way they are. So, as I drum, then I feel that and I go even deeper. And I feel negative energy – it goes to the drum, through my hands. I feel it. It's a weird feeling, to describe it, but it's just awesome…. This is a transformation I discovered with the drum…. Now that energy comes from the universe through me, and then it involves everybody else when I'm drumming through that. It's a *wonderful* feeling…. When actually I finish drumming my whole body is like "Wow!"… All the power, the energy points in the hands, and the feet, and everything is circulating.… Before people just drummed for the fun of it, but there's connection, energy there between the drum and me and people I'm drumming for.

I've become more creative in the sense of I have more tolerance for doing things…. And having no limitation no matter the age is, as long as I'm, you know, healthy and I can do it, I want to do it.… I really know a lot about "me," about the blood that's going through my veins, about the pulse, I feel it. About the stomach, I'm in touch with my body; that "my body" connection I had no idea what it meant, now I know. And I want

to know more, because there's more to know about our body, it's a little universe within a universe.

[The significant event from my formative years that still has an impact on me would be the]…relationship issues with my mother and sister. This I have to address, and it's been always there bothering me. I don't talk to my older sister and it's been a huge issue in the family, and it's just separated the family. We're nine, and so we're like in groups. If one doesn't talk to the other one, that one doesn't talk to the person. So, I'm in the situation right now, and this is not the first time it happened.… In our culture the parents invest in the children, they're the stocks. So, she invested in this sister, and made her the person who was in charge and control, and even though we are married, she wants to keep that control in long distance. And I broke away, and I was very rebellious—I'm still rebellious—and yoga has helped me somehow to deal with it, but they have not changed in that way, and there was always me who was going to change…. So, for me, I need to go deeper in order to deal with this issue <big sigh>…. I know it's not a healthy situation not to talk to people, but one thing I haven't said. It has transformed me. Before when I had issues with somebody I would become mute, especially with my husband. Now I talk. That's a huge one! It changed in me—I talk about issues right away.… My older sister is very abusive to me physically, and I have to work through a lot of issues…. So, I went to a psychologist and, in the past, they helped, but going to yoga has tremendously helped, more so than anything else.… The [foundational workshop] was the one that really felt like an onion taking away the layers…, [and] as you take those layers, you feel fulfilled. You feel empty, and that emptiness, it's fullness.

You take that preconception out, you take that layer, layer by [layer], and then I have more layers…. It never stops. This is your journey in life. What happened to you in the past is always there with you. It will never go away, but you can forget it if you don't have people who remind you of it…. You get stuck in emotions, and you don't know how to deal with the situation, then you close up…. [I experienced a lot of emotions during the workshop,]… I was crying, I remember…, [I was] angry, [it was] upsetting, I was kind of lost.… They bring [you] to that stage of emotion when it happened…. So, you go through it, and you become at peace with it…. I used to be very, very, very, *very* angry. I'm not that angry anymore…. It's really dissipated.… So, now I can help my daughters, if they do have that I can help them with, any way I can not to have that accumulated anger through their adult life, I mean, resolve any problem, whatever they have with me, with their father…. So, yes, I did shed a lot of layers with still more to go.

Going deeper, you don't know what to find, that's why I'm reluctant.… So I'm doing baby steps, really, little by little. I've done a lot, and then I'm taking it easy…. Sometimes as it just changes, something happens and you feel instable. I mean, these changes can take you when you had some bad moments in your life, and you lived them…, and that still lingers, you live those moments, those feelings <big sigh>. So,

> you never know where you gonna be, and they help you through [those] changes. So, I guess, we'll see just the way it is continued going to workshops, and teaching has given me a lot of relief, and joy, meeting different energies…. And I think this is maybe the reason I took up more classes, because I'm interested in knowing, not even people, their energy, and knowing more energy…. I feed on energy; when I'm with people I'm a lot happier. My husband is the opposite. So, I like to have more people. I like to have guests. I like to stay longer with them…. For my husband, it makes him tired. He likes to be on his own…. So, I have created that kind of relationship with people, teaching gives me that. And, so I want to continue that relationship.

Tuan

Tuan is a young professional, first-generation immigrant from Southeast Asia. He originally joined the Center to improve his physical health and well-being. The newest member of all the study participants, Tuan experienced dramatic and profound changes within just one year of regular practice and attendance at workshops. During the course of this two-year research study, Tuan fulfilled his vision of becoming a Master. The following narrative profile describes his experience in his own words:

> [I came to the Center because]…in the last couple of years I had a lot of stress [and] anxiety. A friend of mine gave me the flyer [from the Center]. About a year ago I came to the Center and had a check-up. It wasn't good…. [I had] a lot of tension on my meridians, or something like that. [I had] tension on the shoulders, and I was very weak physically…. [I noticed the stress] because I had insomnia. I could sleep around maximum five hours, usually around three to four hours for a long time, for like two years. But when I got up, I felt like I haven't slept yet. And I was very, very weak…. [The stress was]…also emotional. I felt very sad, negative-thinking, [and spoke in a] crying voice….; my voice sounded like I was about to cry, even though I didn't cry…. [After] a few weeks of practicing, I felt like I got more energy…. After a few weeks I could feel only the energy, I feel healthier, stronger. But after probably a couple of months, I could feel the other emotional problem and insomnia subsiding…. I think the [foundational workshop] was one of the most effective [practices for addressing this]. I cried a lot in that workshop, and I felt that I was releasing a lot of emotional, stagnant energy…. Also the [advanced training] help a lot releasing fear, I used to have a lot of fear. [To relate those original issues to some preconceptions,]… I'm a perfectionist, so everything I do I want to complete it 100%, and that create a lot of anxiety [and] nervousness…. [But] in the [workshop I learned that] "mistakes are OK." So, that changed my view, my thinking, and that helps…. I consciously change [my view]…, but I felt like subconsciously it changed, too.

[To give one example of the practices I've been learning here,]… Brain Wave Vibration is the practice where you focus on your brainstem, the center of your brain, and then turn your head side to side…. After doing [a] couple of minutes of Brain Wave Vibration I could feel my anxiety subside, and my emotion subside.… Usually I do it, like, five minutes, but sometimes I do longer…. I used to use the music with a lot of drumming…. For Brain Wave Vibration you need the music that has more rhythm, more drumming, less melodic stuff.… After I practice Brain Wave Vibration for a while…, [I feel] calmer, more peaceful. Also this exercise, chest tapping exercise <demonstrating the tapping on the chest> release a lot of emotional issue…. [If I had a bad day at work,]…I would do Brain Wave Vibration and Sleeping Tiger, or Sleeping Dragon to calm myself down. [Other things I've begun to incorporate on a regular basis,]… I go out more and practice [energy] walking, biking, have more time outside playing sport, tennis, yoga, meditation…. The physical [activity] is going to help, I believe, with the emotional issue, too.

[Since I started practicing here]…I'm not bothered by the surrounding too much. 'Cause I learned from Tao, "Life is nothing. Life is meaningless." Yeah, that's hard to comprehend, but somehow—I took Tao several times—that information just kept going into my head, into my subconscious mind, I believe, and I feel more relaxed. Before I was very conscious of the surrounding, of people around me, but now I could focus more on myself and [be] less distracted by people around. A couple of years ago, my view of life used to be dull and dark. No way to get out, I used to feel like I was trapped in a box with no way to get out. But now I can open myself to the whole Universe. I can see I change a lot in the last 12 months. Even though I still have stress from work, but I can handle it pretty well…. [Other people notice the change, too,] they say I look brighter, and my eyes look brighter and more focused, a lot more focused. My eyes used to be very distracted. [This new view affects me at work because]…when you relax then automatically the quality of the work improves. When you're so stressed, you feel like you try a lot, but actually you don't get much [accomplished]. I could feel like in the past I could do my work 60%, 70%, but now it's better.

[Some of the things I've been learning didn't fit my previous experience,]… like the [statements] "Life is nothing. Life is meaningless," was hard for me to accept…. "Life is nothing," that one I could comprehend a little bit, scientifically, because I like physics, and I read physics and [study] physics a lot. And in physics they found out that like 99.9999% of the universe is empty space, nothing…. [Still] it's hard to accept. But somehow, I don't know, somehow learning Tao over and over, that statement, that concept, I believe got absorbed into my mind, probably my subconscious mind. And I feel less nervous, less conscious of the surrounding, people around.… Now whenever I get nervous by teaching or speaking in front of people…, I remind myself "Oh, life is nothing," [and] I start focusing on my lower abdomen…, the second chakra, which is the center of physical body. When I focus more on the inside myself, I feel less distracted, less conscious of the surroundings.

[The way I interact with others has]…definitely [changed]. I'm more socializing now. I used to hide away from people, because of my emotional issue. I used to be embarrassed and shy. Now I meet people more, talk to people more…. [Also] now I don't get so emotional talking in front of people like I used to be before, because I learned [that] sadness or joy, all of those emotions, we have to have. We cannot only have joy without the other. So, it's OK to be sad in front of people…. Before I thought it was bad, it was not OK to show the negative emotions…. I don't think just in [the country where I grew up]; I think everywhere people don't want to show the negative emotions…. But I learned that crying is OK, so that's helped me a lot. [Before]…I was afraid to show any negative emotion—anger, sadness…, [but] it was OK to show positive emotions. But now my thinking [is that] it's OK to show any kind of emotion. I focus more on myself, not much at how people look at me, how people judge me.

[Something else to add is that]…I feel great really with nature. The more I am outside at the beach, or on the mountain, I feel so relaxed and calm…. When you meditate you feel relaxed and calm, but if you meditate outside with nature it will add more, the effect will be much more…. [For example,] many times in the last couple of years, I got up in the middle of the night, like one o'clock in the morning and drove to Ocean City, three hours driving, and sat at the beach, only myself, nobody around, because it was too early, five o'clock in the morning. So I sat at the beach and meditate watching the sun rise, and I felt…great, great, very comfortable, very relaxing…. Later I found out that at the beach the oxygen density is very high. Actually, ozone density, O3, very easily break[s] down to oxygen. And also they say when the waves come in they clean the Chi energy…. And also in my thinking, because I'm an RF Engineer, so I know a lot about RF, radio frequency, and that cause problems that affects your brain, affects your physical health. And I believe at the beach there's no cellular tower, so electromagnetic waves are reduced by half…. I'm in a very comfortable place. I can be my true self with nature.

[In order to reflect on the changes I'm making,]… definitely I talk to someone. I talk to my sister, my parents, and [the] Master[s], [or other members]…. Also sometimes I just sit out by myself and reflect. [Or playing my guitar]…gives me joy, and a sense of connecting to my soul…. Most of the time I do it by myself, for myself. I would love to share [my music], but I still have the preconception of perfectionist, so that still [makes me] very nervous and uncomfortable. [To relate some changes to preconceptions from my formative years,]… I'm a little more talkative these days. I used to be very quiet…. Because of my talking, I don't have the communication skill, and that caused me several ex-girlfriends. I hurt them unintentionally. And that makes me even more shy; I don't want to talk, don't want to open my mouth. [The event from my formative years happened]…when I was four years old. My parents left me and that, I believe, caused the problem. I was confused and lonely. [I went to live with]…my grandmother. [She] took care of me until I was 18…. She loved me a lot. She took care of me very well, but she didn't talk much to me…. My grandmother [also] left me when I was like 25 [when

she died].… That information went into my subconscious mind. That's what the psychiatrist told me. And after that some of my ex-girlfriends left me. It's like a pattern.

… Preconceptions means the experience that you gained in the past that affects your life in a negative way.… The preconception that we've been talking about with [the Center] is, I believe, mostly negative.… If a preconception is positive then we don't have to worry about that…. Like now I haven't figured out why I used to be a perfectionist…. [It might come somewhat from my culture,]…but [if] that's the culture that affects everybody, why am I so perfectionist compared to my friends?… And one more thing that just came up to my mind, when I was very young and in school, I was doing very well in school. I represented my school to go compete with other schools in Math and Physics, since 5th grade to 9th grade. [And then] Math in tenth grade, and [in] eleventh grade [I] represented the school to go compete in Physics…, and I made my Grandmom happy.… I was trying to always to please my Grandmom. She's the one who taught me Math when I was four, and she always wanted me to do good in school, and I tried my best to be very good, and to make her happy.

[The feeling of abandonment]… caused emotional problems…. I believe [the workshop] somewhat helped me overcome that. [During the workshop, one of the emotions I experienced was]… resistance. [For example…,] I believe I didn't put 100% effort [into the shouting exercise], even though they told me "Use 100% of effort to do it." [The other emotion I experienced]…very strongly [was] sadness [and] a little bit of anger. I was crying a lot.… At the [workshop] I didn't think about [why I was crying]. When [the] Master said, "I'm sorry, I'm sorry" to myself, then all of a sudden, I cry. Maybe now I think I know why. Because I think I abandoned myself a long time [ago], and now I'm getting back to my soul. I believe at the [workshop] my conscious mind didn't figure [it] out, but something just stimulate the subconscious mind, and it just burst to tears.… So I believe the conscious mind was drained, was tired and probably somehow stopped, so you can access the deeper part of the brain, the mind. [The conscious mind is]… like a barrier.

[A physical practice that helps get past this barrier is]…the back bend, [the] Cobra posture. At the [advanced training] we had to do it for 20 minutes, and I got a lot of pain in my lower back, extreme pain, and I had to drop after like 15 minutes. And later I found out that that posture help you release the fear energy. And I believe I have a lot of fear—fear of separation. [For the Cobra posture] you lie on your stomach, and put your hands under the armpit and push, and that cause a lot of pain in the lower back where the kidneys are. And I learned that the kidneys store fear energy…, and that posture help you release fear energy. After that I practice often. I [took the workshop] a second time as a staff. And I felt much, much more comfortable doing the shouting compared to the first time. So, I know that now my preconception is less.… Before I used to worry about how people would judge me, how they'd look at me, but after [the workshop], less of that…. [The part of the workshop most useful in helping me get past my shyness was] probably the part where we use 100% of the energy to shout out loud whatever we

> want, that we want to be happy, and we want joy, [or] "I can do it."… And the second time I could feel the power came from my lung and [lower abdomen], but the first time, I believe, the power just came from the throat.
>
> [What has the process of discovery, learning, and change meant in my life?] A big life-transforming experience…. I feel more comfortable interacting with people, and teaching class. And before I always thought that I have to do the work, like 100%, now I just kind of relax and just let it flow. I do the same [work], but with [a] different mind. Before with anxiety, but now even if I'm late, I'm still relaxed…, [and I have] less judgment of myself. [It's affected my relationships because] I guess when you [are] more relaxed, then there will be less tension between you and your friends, or the opposite person. [Now] I think I have to keep working, keep practicing yoga and meditation to calm myself even more. Cause now I'm still nervous and stressed…. [It's an on-going process,] the Masters, they've been doing it for twenty years. [I want to be]… more open, open myself to the Universe. That will help me connect to the nature, to the Universe more, and probably bring out my "true self" more…. My long-term vision would be to become a Master…'cause I've seen this lifestyle help me. It helps me improve.

Summary

To summarize, the Participant Profiles provide insight into the unique experiences of the ten study participants, each of whom told of learning and discovery that in some way transformed their lives. While the impetus for joining the Center may have been similar for many of them in terms of the desire to address some sort of physical health issue, the impact of the subsequent holistic learning process varied by individual. Grace, for instance, acknowledged the importance of a holistic approach to learning, but emphasized that her priority was on spiritual growth.

Unlike other study participants, Julia did not seem to have had a "disorienting dilemma," coming to the Center out of curiosity. Yet, once there, she discovered emotional and spiritual issues that set her on the path to discovery and change. Many participants told only positive stories of their transformative learning process, but others described the difficulties they experienced during the process, whether in terms of conflict that arose in

their relationships with others, internal struggles in accepting new practices, or the pressure they experienced from external sources to adopt the teaching, philosophy and practices of the Center.

In conclusion, all of the study participants spoke about physical, emotional, cognitive, and spiritual dimensions of their transformative learning experience. Depending on the individual's unique perspective, one or more aspects of this holistic approach seemed to have been emphasized more than the others. Thus, in response to the first research question, a holistic approach to learning appears to have been a powerful means of transforming the habitus as a system of dispositions. To better understand this process, the following chapter presents a different view of the results to address the subsequent two research questions.

Chapter 5: Results—Part Two

Overview

In this chapter, the findings are analyzed and presented in variety of ways to facilitate the emergence of overarching themes, ultimately addressing the final two research questions:

- *How is the dynamic interaction between the conjuncturally-specific and habitus aspects of internal structures influenced during the transformative learning process?* and
- *How do external and internal structures co-evolve during the transformative learning process?*

To answer these research questions, this chapter sets the stage with a contextual description of the research site, followed by detailed data analysis of the findings in an aggregate view of groundedness totals, with a comparison of codes per family for each participant. Additionally, the codes are mapped by family for each participant into "Profile Maps," with an analysis of each participant related to the research questions. The chapter concludes with a synthesis of results and presentation of overarching themes. Thematic interpretations, implications and suggestions for future research follow in Chapter 6.

Findings

Contextual Description of Research Site

Each participant was unique in terms of external structures such as family of origin, cultural and ethnic background, and professional training they had experienced in the course of their lives. Since each participant volunteered as an individual rather than as a member of a corporation or other type of structured organization, the only external structures context they had

in common was the research site itself. A contextual description of the site provides a view into the characteristics of this particular external structure.

A first-time visitor to one of the 1,000 centers worldwide would probably initially notice the exterior signs advertising yoga, Tai Chi, or other Eastern practices. Entering the Center, one is greeted warmly with a hug by a Master, someone who has completed a structured process of advanced training and apprenticeship, or an Instructor, someone who has likewise completed advanced training that qualifies the individual to teach classes. The entry area is typically compact, incorporating administrative functions (desk and computer for the Head Master running the daily operations), marketing functions of books, clothing and other paraphernalia related to the teachings of the Center, and practical functions of storage for shoes before members enter the practice area. The researcher has attended programs at seven such Centers in the United States, five on the East Coast, and two on the West Coast. Though the layout of the spaces varied, each Center incorporated at least these three basic functions in the entry area.

The Center offers a variety of activities, ranging from 2-3 exercise classes each day, Monday through Saturday, monthly workshops at Centers throughout the metropolitan area, week-long intensive programs in Arizona or New York, and masters-level training that culminates with a 3-week immersive program in South Korea. Due to the options in class times as well as the personal and professional schedules of members, members may go weeks or longer without seeing fellow members, even if they all go on a regular basis. The researcher typically attended three to five exercise classes per week, evening "Tao" lectures on a regular basis, and special workshops on occasion.

Upon entering the practice room, there is a feeling of peace and calmness facilitated by the sound of meditative music, and soft yellow walls and matting. Additional décor in the form of posters, wall hangings or descriptions of special programs vary by location and by Head Master. A first-time visitor or new member in the United States may be perplexed by the proliferation of Korean text in these materials. Having been founded in the early 1980s in South Korea, and then brought to the U.S. and other international locations in the late 1990s, the Center's teachings and programs retain a fair number of Korean words and phrases. These terms are usually explained or translated when used, but there is very little attempt to fully "Westernize" the teaching for Western audiences. Thus, the Eastern origin of these practices remains explicitly recognizable on a regular basis.

All of the Centers in the United States observed by the researcher also include a Healing Room. The Masters are trained in healing modalities that they offer in private sessions. Some members schedule these sessions in addition to attending regular classes and workshops. Non-members may also schedule private sessions. The healing practices and teaching used in private sessions were only observable in the researcher's own sessions, where they seemed to be a more intense version of the teaching offered in other venues.

New attendees or members are welcomed warmly by existing members. There are varying levels of membership options available, ranging from a 10-class pass, to single or multi-month memberships, or a lifetime membership that requires an investment of several thousand dollars up-front, with minimal renewal fees thereafter. Lifetime members are also referred to as "Gold" members. Classes are often followed by 'tea time' where attendees and the Instructor sit in a circle and share their experience of the class. This may be a short statement such as "I really

enjoyed the class today," "I feel much more relaxed," or a longer description of someone's experience. The overall atmosphere of caring and nonjudgment allows attendees the flexibility to share their feelings and experiences in the way they desire.

Longer-term members form an extended community with fellow members, Instructors and Masters in which they support, celebrate, and encourage their respective learning and growth. Masters are rotated regularly to and from other Centers throughout the United States, providing a variety of instructional styles for members to experience in terms of types of exercises used in the class and the sequence in which they are presented. At the end of 2010 there were twelve Centers in the metropolitan area of the research site. Special regional programs may bring together participants from a variety of these Centers. Thus, members can form bonds and friendships with others who have shared similar experiences, widening the circle of relationships and community, and supporting the ongoing process of learning.

At first glance the Center appears to be a place to simply achieve greater physical health through practices such as yoga or Tai Chi. In talking with one of the Masters or reading on-site material, though, prospective members quickly discover that the underlying mission of the Center is to facilitate a transformative experience. One of the two foundational workshops advertises the opportunity to discover one's "true self" through experiential learning. Ultimately, the founder's goal is to be a positive force for transformation of humanity. Hence, the selection of this research site was purposeful in that it provided a context where transformative learning was more likely to be experienced.

Of the ten study participants, two attend the Center in the vicinity of the primary research site, and the rest of them either still attend the primary Center or were members at that location

during the data collection phase of the study. As a regular member of the primary Center for four years, the researcher thus had the opportunity for real-time, longitudinal, emic observations. At any one or more of these events, it is common for at least two or more of the primary Center study participants to also be in attendance. Not only have the observed study participants demonstrated on-going commitment to their new lifestyle, but several of them have gone further with their training and engagement, becoming Instructors or Masters. The differences detected in terms of participation and level of training pursued will be explored later as a possible means of understanding the type or depth of transformation experienced.

Aggregate View

The second means of data analysis recommended by Seidman (2006) is to code the data, letting themes inductively emerge. In following this process, the researcher subjected all data to descriptive line coding using qualitative software, ATLAS.ti, for the initial coding process as well as the next analytical level of grouping the codes into families. The final step of analysis was to derive overarching themes that relate back to the research questions.

As described in Chapter 4, ten individuals ranging in age from early 30s to early 70s met the study criteria and were accepted as participants (see Table 3, Participant Demographic Overview). While the Participant Profiles in Chapter 4 preserve the unique stories of each individual from a phenomenological perspective, the commonalities and differences of the individual experiences under investigation may be more evident by examining the results as whole.

This aggregate view resulted from a process of descriptive line coding, a line-by-line analysis of participant journals, background questionnaires, and twenty interview transcripts that

considered how specific words or phrases shed light on the research questions about the transformative learning process. The detailed analysis produced a total of 748 codes, with 3,976 associated quotes. Using ATLAS.ti qualitative software, these codes were then exported into a spreadsheet, organized by Primary Document (PD) for each participant. Sorting the codes by highest to lowest revealed the frequency of codes, designated as groundedness, across the study population (Table 4). Arranging the codes by groundedness shows not only how prevalent some codes were in comparison to others, but this sorting may also provide some indication of the relative importance of certain aspects of the transformative learning experience as described by the participants.

Table 4

Selection of Participant Codes Sorted by Groundedness

Codes	Grace	Julia	Cynthia	Anisha	Raina	Dira	Debra	Nolan	Nakari	Tuan	Totals
Totals	574	974	617	487	1417	1211	797	1469	729	474	8749
Physical	23	23	18	26	13	43	13	24	11	10	204
Preconceptions	13	23	44	13	16	21	16	31	4	14	195
E - emotional	0	25	10	22	27	19	17	25	17	19	181
Personal changes	4	3	7	7	10	15	6	31	33	23	139
Energy	18	7	15	3	13	25	12	10	27	4	134
EN - tension	6	21	4	1	13	6	41	32	4	3	131
Physical - body	25	5	13	2	19	18	6	20	17	1	126
Spiritual	34	8	10	0	6	13	10	21	3	0	105
EN - conflict	8	16	1	0	9	10	34	12	11	0	101
Relationship	2	18	9	1	28	3	4	17	9	0	91
Inner focus	1	10	3	0	17	7	20	11	7	8	84
Different perspectives	0	16	3	1	2	1	7	46	2	5	83
Connection to others	6	11	4	1	26	15	5	7	6	0	81
Bowing	1	7	0	0	4	23	15	20	10	0	80
Training	0	15	0	0	16	37	6	1	5	0	80
Yoga	16	0	8	6	1	7	2	3	36	1	80
Improvement	1	2	1	7	0	2	3	22	19	18	75
Interactions with others	1	0	1	5	24	3	6	20	6	6	72
Cognitive - understanding	2	8	8	1	17	6	4	18	1	0	65
Making choices	0	17	7	0	14	9	6	11	1	0	65
Awareness	5	15	13	2	10	2	7	9	1	0	64
stress	1	5	1	8	0	5	7	16	9	10	62
External influences	0	17	0	0	4	0	10	18	0	10	59
Spiritual - soul	3	4	2	0	4	31	4	5	3	3	59
Share my feelings	0	3	0	6	17	14	9	4	3	2	58
Exercise	16	0	3	6	5	4	0	19	1	3	57
Pain	0	3	6	9	6	22	3	0	4	2	55
Family - general	3	12	5	5	11	9	4	2	2	0	53
Practice	1	2	13	3	8	9	1	6	6	4	53
Learning process	2	1	10	4	16	4	1	13	0	1	52
EP - acceptance	0	14	1	6	3	2	1	20	1	3	51
Help others	5	0	0	4	17	8	1	4	11	0	50
EP - love	4	8	0	0	9	23	1	4	0	0	49
Formative years	2	0	4	1	21	2	1	11	4	3	49
Ongoing process	5	2	6	4	7	6	2	5	11	1	49
Family - mother	0	7	1	4	5	10	6	6	8	0	47
Focus	0	5	4	12	7	2	9	3	1	4	47
Original issue	2	3	3	3	3	5	3	9	7	9	47
Cognitive - mind	2	5	7	0	10	8	2	7	3	2	46
Incorporation into daily life	1	6	4	2	3	6	5	8	5	6	46
Early conditioning	2	15	0	7	10	3	5	2	1	0	45
Healing	6	1	0	2	8	5	2	1	20	0	45
Meditation	9	2	8	0	3	5	2	6	4	6	45

At first glance the number one code, with a groundedness of 204, is "physical." Examples of quotes coded as "physical" include "I noticed physical changes right away," and "the purpose was for me to get a relief, physically." Adding all codes related to "physical" (e.g., body, brain, heart attack, and others) reveals a groundedness total of 429. Upon closer examination, though, codes related to emotional terms have an even higher level of groundedness due to the granularity of codes for these terms. At the most abstract level, a code of "emotional" was applied when the participant spoke more generally about the emotional dimension of the learning experience. At a more granular level, codes related to very specific emotional states were applied. In order to capture the range of codes related to emotion, the prefix "EN" (emotion-negative) was applied to emotions with a negative valence (such as tension, conflict, anger), while the prefix "EP" (emotion-positive) indicated a positive emotional valence (e.g, love, happy, grateful). Tallying all the codes related to emotion yielded the groundedness total of 1,117, making this—by far—the number one code (Table 5).

Table 5

Inclusive Code Comparison

Inclusive Code Category	Total Number of Codes	% of Codes
Cognition	169	8.9%
Emotion	1117	59.1%
Physical	429	22.7%
Spiritual	175	9.3%

One might ask whether the emphasis on emotion was the result of how participants experienced transformative learning, or whether the results were biased by the questions asked of the study participants. The interview protocol in Appendix A contains ten questions, many of them with optional probing questions. These interview questions were included in the coding process simply to keep track of which questions were asked, and how often. Figure 5 shows these interview questions as captured in ATLAS.ti, including the frequency with which they were posed to participants.

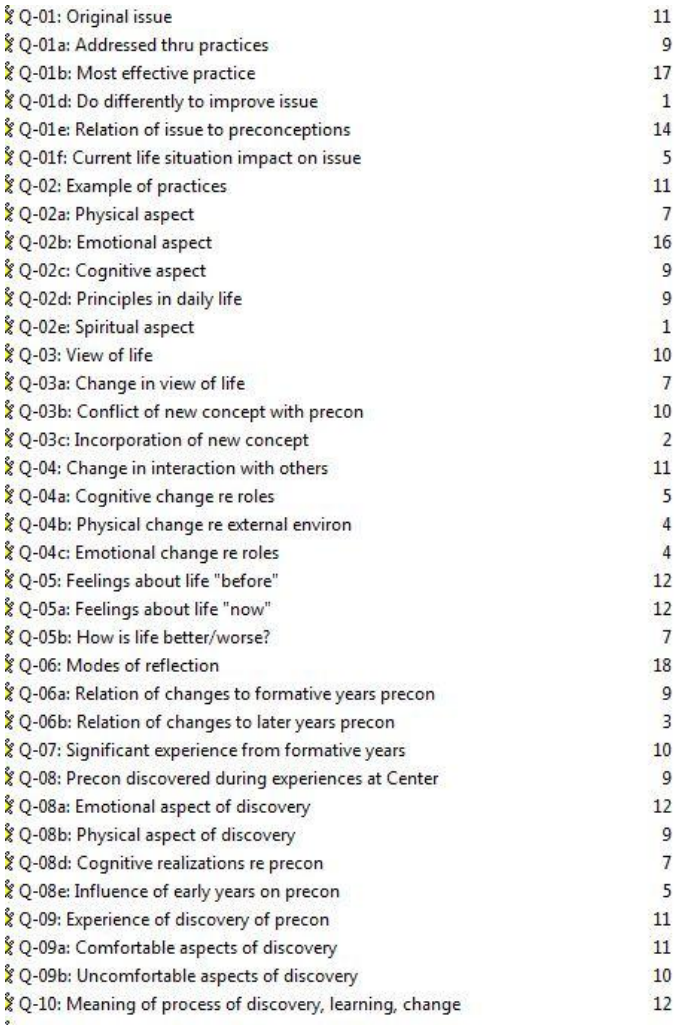


Figure 5. Interview questions.

Examining the questions in Appendix A in terms of its emphasis on physical, cognitive, emotional (including questions that asked how individuals "felt" about the experience) or spiritual aspects of learning, and then tallying the number of times these questions were asked yields the following totals:

Table 6

Category and Frequency of Interview Questions Asked

Physical	Cognitive	Emotional	Spiritual
44	143	115	15

If participants were truly biased by the subject of the question, or the way in which it was posed, one would anticipate that this would be reflected in coding results, with the greatest emphasis being on cognitive, then emotional, physical and spiritual codes. Contrariwise, the actual results demonstrated that participants perceived emotional and physical aspects of their learning experience to be most dominant.

Comparison of Codes by Family

The next stage of analysis was to group the codes into a higher level of abstraction, designated in ATLAS.ti as "families." To facilitate the process of relating the results to the research questions, families included the major constructs of the conceptual framework, "internal structures," "external structures," "active agency," and "outcomes," as well as the dimensions of holistic learning—"cognition," "emotion," "physical" and "spiritual." There were a number of codes, though, that did not fit neatly into these categories, necessitating the creation of additional families of "energy," "personal growth & development," and "relationships." Codes were only

incorporated in the families if they crossed the threshold of groundedness for the entire study population, in this case, a frequency of about 25 with dispersion across at least half the population. See Table 7 for examples of codes in each of the eleven families.

Table 7

Examples of Codes for Each Family

Family Name	Number of Codes	Sampling of Codes
Active Agency	20	achieving goals, attendance frequency, bowing, control, incorporation into daily life, letting go, making choices, share my experiences, training
Cognition	17	awareness, understanding, different perspectives, personal changes, preconceptions, view of life
Emotion	24	acceptance, calm, emotional, conflict, tension, happy, love, external influences, personal changes, relationship, stress, training, improvement
Energy	10	bowing, centering, connection to energy, connection to others, energy, healing, holistic approach, stress
External Structures	17	connection to others, early conditioning, conflict, tension, external influences, family, interactions with others, relationship
Internal Structures	20	connection to others, connection to self, conflict, tension, preconceptions, relationship, roles in life, significant event formative years
Outcomes	8	achieving goals, application to life, changes, focus, fulfillment, improvement, making choices, training
Personal Growth & Development	21	different perspective, acceptance (others & self), improvement, incorporation into daily life, interactions with others, personal changes
Physical	21	awareness, bowing, emotional, energy, pain, personal changes, physical (incl. body), stress, training, yoga
Relationships	19	changes, connection to others, different perspective, conflict, tension, understanding, family, help others, relationship, share my feelings
Spiritual	19	bowing, connection to others, faith traditions, healing, help others, incorporation into daily life, meditation, spiritual, soul, yoga

In the process of grouping codes into families, it also became evident that many codes as understood in the context of the related quotations actually belonged to multiple families. This point gains in importance when deciphering the interconnections, or structural coupling, between families that are shown in the Profile Maps for each participant. Staying true to the phenomenological purpose of understanding the uniqueness of the individual's lived experience the results were also sorted by level of groundedness by participant to reveal the most frequently occurring codes. It then became necessary to tease out not only the top 40-50 codes per person, but to understand how those related to the higher level categories of families. This was accomplished by sorting the top codes for each individual into the respective families that had emerged for the study population as a whole. See Table 8, Participant Example of Top Codes by Family, for an example of an individual view of codes associated with families. Highlighted cells were codes that were not dispersed among the study population, but were part of the top codes for this participant.

Arranging the top codes by family for each participant and then comparing these results across the study population revealed both similarities and differences among the participants (see Table 9). First, the overall top two families of "emotion" and "physical" were, perhaps unsurprisingly, the families with the highest level of groundedness for eight of the ten participants. The two exceptions were Cynthia and Raina. For Cynthia, her number one family was "cognition," followed closely by "physical." The results for Raina were more unusual, with "relationships" being the number one family. She was the only participant for whom "emotion" or "physical" was not one of the top two families. These similarities and differences are

highlighted in the Participant Profile Analysis for each individual, as well as in the synthesis of results that follows.

Table 8

Participant Example of Top Codes by Family

Family	Codes by Family	Totals
Active Agency	labyrinth	12
	making choices	7
	ongoing process	6
Cognition	preconceptions	44
	awareness	13
	realization	12
	learning process	10
	cognitive - understanding	8
	meditation	8
	personal changes	7
	cognitive - mind	7
	holistic approach	6
	release	5
	beliefs	5
Emotion	awareness	13
	E - emotional	10
	learning process	10
	relationship	9
	personal changes	7
	pain	6
	release	5
	EP - peace	5
	centering	5
Energy	energy	15
	holistic approach	6
External Structures	relationship	9
	family - general	5
Internal Structures	preconceptions	44
	practice	13
	relationship	9
	ongoing process	6
	freedom	6
	quietness	6

Family	Codes by Family	Totals
Outcomes	making choices	7
	changes	5
Personal Growth/Dev	awareness	13
	practice	13
	journey	13
	personal changes	7
	ongoing process	6
	experience	5
Physical	physical	18
	physical - body	13
	energy	15
	awareness	13
	E - emotional	10
	yoga	8
	physical - body tapping	8
	personal changes	7
	pain	6
	release	5
Relationships	relationship	9
	cognitive - understanding	8
	family - general	5
	changes	5
Spiritual	journey	13
	labyrinth	12
	spiritual	10
	yoga	8
	meditation	8
	experience	5
	centering	5
	spiritual - spirit	5

Table 9

Comparison of Codes per Family by Participant

Family	Grace	Julia	Cynthia	Anisha	Raina	Dira	Debra	Nolan	Nakari	Tuan
Active Agency	0	46	25	24	80	80	56	109	36	10
Cognition	27	90	**125**	44	161	77	78	232	53	52
Emotion	39	**204**	70	107	226	**262**	**198**	**337**	171	**154**
Energy	24	11	21	11	56	63	50	75	85	19
External Structures	26	167	14	28	278	152	141	213	95	56
Internal Structures	33	166	84	32	215	112	152	191	81	35
Outcomes	0	45	12	19	37	46	26	61	30	22
Personal Growth/Dev	25	80	57	31	110	53	73	254	121	70
Physical	**109**	78	103	**110**	154	225	115	252	**243**	116
Relationships	25	144	27	34	**297**	160	142	220	88	34
Spiritual	89	19	66	6	58	97	46	111	88	12

Another way to get a sense of the importance of the various families in an aggregate view is to graphically represent the groundedness of codes per family by participant (see Figure 6). This view also demonstrates the relative importance of emotional and physical dimensions of the transformative learning process. Likewise, it shows that external structures, internal structures, and relationships were significant in the participants' stories of transformation. The families with the lowest level of groundedness were active agency, outcomes, and energy. Reflecting the emphasis in the results on the families of emotion, physical, external structures, internal structures, and relationships, as well as the decision to incorporate all dimensions—emotion, cognition,

physical, and spiritual—of holistic learning, the Profile Maps used only these families, rather than all eleven families shown in Table 9.

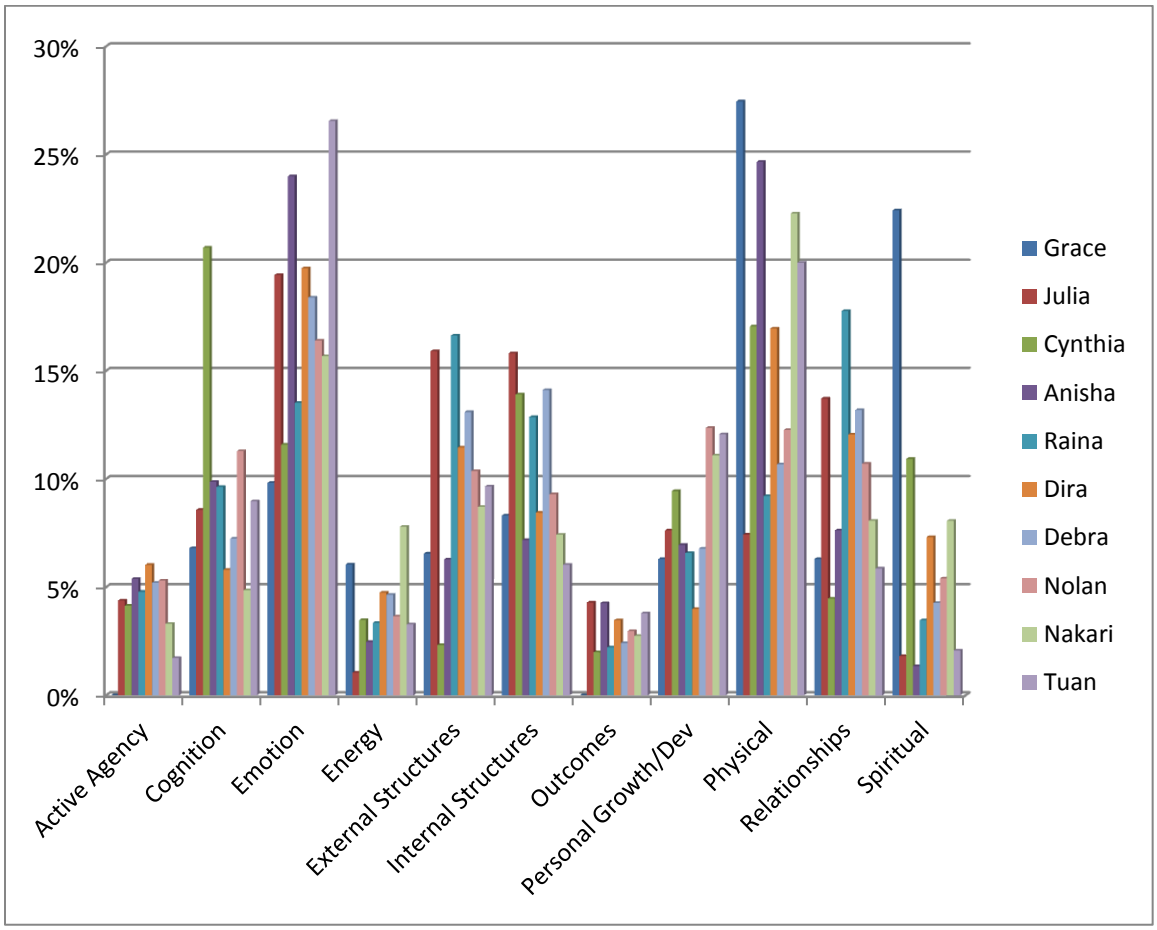


Figure 6. Codes per family by participant.

Analysis and Profile Maps by Participant

From the analysis thus far, it appears that the highest level of code groundedness —emotional and physical—is fairly consistent across the study population at a local level, as well as in a global, aggregate view. To return once more to the level of the individual from a phenomenological perspective requires analysis that focuses on the individual. Table 9 shows the comparison of codes by family by participant, but does not

show the interconnections between these families. Focusing on the level of families also makes it impossible to understand how the codes within these families reflect the experience of the individual study participants. Thus, Profile Maps were created to better reflect and represent in a graphical format the transformative learning experience as related by each participant.

The first step in creating the Profile Maps was to convert the total of codes per family for each participant into percentages that show the relationship, by participant, of the code families to each other. The highlighted rows are those that are included in the Profile Maps where the size of the bubbles is in proportion to the percentages shown in Table 10. The families of emotion, cognition, physical and spiritual are grouped together in a cluster to represent a holistic unit, with the degree of overlap between the bubbles representing the number of codes the families have in common.

The remaining families of external structures, internal structures, and relationships are connected by lines of various widths, where the width of the line is a direct function of the number of connections between the bubbles, visually reflecting the strength of the tie between families. Finally, each bubble is overlaid with a "cloud" of codes where the code frequency, or groundedness, for each individual profile is indicated by the size of the font, with the number one code in bold font. The following section presents an analysis of each participant as related to the research questions, and their respective Profile Map in turn.

Table 10

Relative Percentages of Code Family by Participant

Family	Grace	Julia	Cynthia	Anisha	Raina	Dira	Debra	Nolan	Nakari	Tuan
Active Agency	0%	4%	4%	5%	5%	6%	5%	5%	3%	2%
Cognition	7%	9%	**21%**	10%	10%	6%	7%	11%	5%	9%
Emotion	10%	**19%**	12%	24%	14%	**20%**	**18%**	**16%**	16%	**27%**
Energy	6%	1%	3%	2%	3%	5%	5%	4%	8%	3%
External Structures	7%	16%	2%	6%	17%	11%	13%	10%	9%	10%
Internal Structures	8%	16%	14%	7%	13%	8%	14%	9%	7%	6%
Outcomes	0%	4%	2%	4%	2%	3%	2%	3%	3%	4%
Personal Growth/Dev	6%	8%	9%	7%	7%	4%	7%	12%	11%	12%
Physical	**27%**	7%	17%	**25%**	9%	17%	11%	12%	**22%**	20%
Relationships	6%	14%	4%	8%	**18%**	12%	13%	11%	8%	6%
Spiritual	22%	2%	11%	1%	3%	7%	4%	5%	8%	2%

Participant Profile Analysis: Grace

The number one family for Grace was "physical," and her top code was "spiritual," supported by her description of the integral relationship she perceived between these two dimensions of herself (see Figure 7). The emphasis on spiritual growth and development began at a young age for Grace, "Spiritually, I felt a deep urge, a deep longing from the time I was a child." She believes this was heavily influenced by her primary family, including their regular involvement in church. This is in line with Bourdieu's (1990) assertion that there is a chronological dimension to the formation of the habitus, with one's earliest experiences forming the core of the primary habitus.

For Grace, this longing to find spiritual fulfillment has been a constant throughout her life, explaining that the "continual thread of what makes me happy is always attached to the spiritual journey." In that sense, her exposure to holistic learning at the Center did not appear to precipitate a transformative learning experience. Rather, these holistic practices reinforced and supported her existing intentions and activities for personal growth and development. While she discovered some preconceptions, and changed some of the ways in which she interacts with others, overall she stated that her increased understanding about her preconceptions is "more of an extension of the way I live my life, as opposed to *changing* how I live my life."

The main impetus for Grace to join the Center was to support physical health as a way of enabling her spiritual journey. With her ultimate goal being a sense of unity, alignment with the universe and "attainment of inner peace," she believes the practices at the Center allow one to use the "physical gateway…to follow your spiritual development to its fulfillment." She described how yoga supports this goal:

> Meditation aligns us with the universe, with our energy flow, helps us touch that joy. It does not exercise the body. We are both spiritual and physical. [Yoga] is able to tone the body, to quiet the body to get us ready to feel that spiritual energy.

The first research question asks about the relationship of a holistic approach to learning to transformation of the habitus as a system of dispositions. The most important elements of the holistic approach for Grace were the spiritual and physical dimensions of the learning process. She did address emotion in terms of the conflict she initially felt between the teachings of her spiritual master, and the teachings of the Center, "I felt conflicted with loyalty, conflicted as to did it have to be one way or the other, one path or another path?" She also felt conflict regarding how to prioritize continuing her daily

meditation practice, versus going to yoga class. Over time, she resolved both conflicts, deciding that physical exercise supported her spiritual journey. Thus, the holistic practices she learned strengthened her already existing focus on spiritual growth and development, with the added emphasis on physical well-being. She stated:

> What I'm learning through [this practice] is, I think, I've been one-sided for most of my life, which is in the spiritual realm versus the physical realm, not even caring about my body, 'cause it kind of took care of itself, thank God. But through [this practice] I'm realizing the true integration of that body-spirit together and, of course…, the formal definition of yoga is "mind-body connection," and that's really what that is. So, what I'm learning and continually trying to balance is the spiritual and the physical together.

The second question asks how the dynamic interaction between the conjuncturally-specific and habitus aspects of internal structures are influenced during the transformative learning process. This interaction is often visible in terms of the roles that people play in their lives. Grace described some changes in how she interacts with others, saying that "I interact with more understanding." More important to her seemed to be learning how to better balance her deep-seated desire to care for others, and her realization that she must also take better care of herself, "There's a balancing act between wanting to give your whole self, and giving *almost* your whole self, so that you can keep that physical body healthy enough to continue in that role." Again, the changes she described did not seem to be significantly different from her previous way of interacting, but her experiences at the Center enabled her to more effectively continue down her chosen path.

The third research question explores how external and internal structures co-evolve during the transformative learning process. As the profile map for Grace shows (Figure 7), the families of internal structures, external structures, and

relationships are relatively small in comparison to the spiritual and physical dimensions of her learning process. In describing some of the internal tension between her previously chosen spiritual path and the philosophies of the Center, she explains that, "When I first started [this practice] I was really conflicted between my spiritual master… and the teachings of [the Center]…; it felt as if they clashed…, where they're actually leading you to the same place, but using different methods." After moving to an overseas assignment for her job and reflecting on the tension she was experiencing between the two approaches, she said, "When I came back I realized that actually I can integrate…those two paths, because it's really all part of what I need." Once she felt a resolution of this internal tension, she described the emotions she experiences in class as "generally joy, all the way through…; a deep feeling of satisfaction and comfort, and that feeling of that *place* that's further in that only certain things can touch, particularly as you get closer into the meditation." Grace's focus was on her spiritual journey, emphasizing that "it's very important to realize that it's *all* an ongoing process." The holistic approach to learning at the Center thus appears to have reinforced rather than transformed her habitus, with some changes taking place in internal structures.

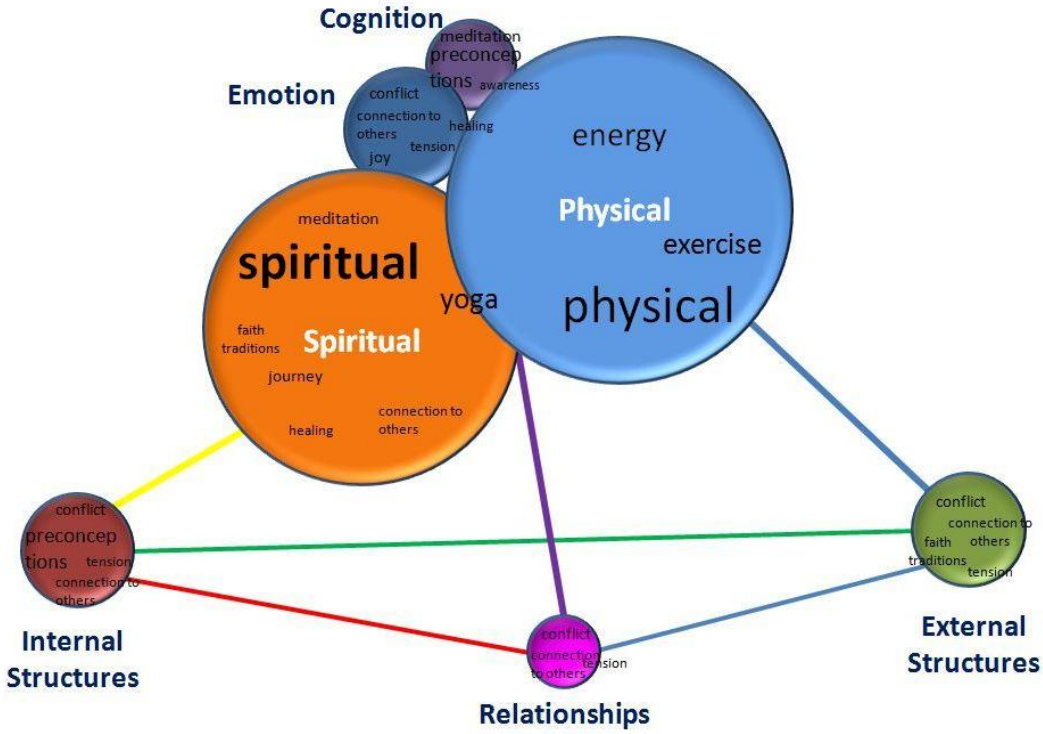


Figure 7. Profile map for Grace.

Participant Profile Analysis: Julia

Julia was one of five participants, or 50% of the study population, for whom "emotion" was the number one family, followed closely by external structures, internal structures, and relationships (see Figure 8). Within the "emotion" family, her top code was "emotional," followed by "tension." She spoke in broad terms about the importance of learning how to acknowledge, share, and gain mastery of negative emotions such as anger or sadness. Extending this into her relationships, she told how "*knowing* the power of being able to change how *I* feel will also affect how they feel, and how everything *each* person does has those ripple effects." More specifically, she described some of the challenges she had faced during the transformative process with tension, for the most

part, being between internal and external forces, such as between her own desires and her perception of what others expected of her, "the preconceptions of what I *should* be doing and what I *chose* to do sometimes were in conflict."

As Julia learned ways of enhancing her self-awareness and becoming calmer through her practices at the Center, over time she began to resolve these tensions, "I felt stronger saying, 'No, I really don't want to spend my time *doing* this because *you* want me to do it that way. I want to spend time doing things that *I* want to do.'" While she continued to experience tension and conflict with relationships—especially with close family members—over the personal changes she was making, she continued to question the influence of external versus internal structures, describing how some of the training "made me look *inside* where I had been focused outside." In summarizing her learning over the four years of her practice, she portrayed this shift from external to internal primacy as the "journey inside instead of always being focused outside. [I] found out who *I* really am, and *listening* to that instead of covering it up all the time…. 'What do I really want?'"

Julia's transformation in placing greater emphasis on internal over external structures addresses the third research question about the co-evolution of external and internal structures during the transformative learning process. While her emotions played a significant role in this learning and transformative process, she also emphasized the physical aspect of her experiences, "physical" being her second highest code. She began with learning how to increase her awareness of the interaction of her body, mind, emotion and spirit through self-observation, gradually extending this awareness to the interaction between herself and others around her:

> So I noticed physical changes right away, and that practice of watching myself inside, that was really strong and I started to see then the spiritual aspect of that, and watching how I reacted to situations around me, and "Who's in control here, is it the outside or the inside?"

Further, she began to see the physical aspect of her practices as a vehicle for spiritual growth and making conscious choices. When asked to pick one physical practice that would best illustrate her transformative journey, Julia chose to describe her bowing meditation, saying that "it was *physical* at first, but then I found as my body adjusted to it that it was really very spiritual. And I bow every day now, so that's something that's carried over into my life." She explained the interplay of the physical and spiritual dimensions as:

> Some of it is just physical waking up; it opens up your whole body, it uses all your joints, everything, but also it's a time to become centered and to center myself for the *whole* day, and to connect to who that person is really inside, and connect to the *energy* really that *everybody* has.

She illustrated the interaction of physical and cognitive processes in terms of active agency, saying:

> The physical training [is] a stress reliever, but it's a way of making choices. Like when I set a goal of this many push-ups, or hold this position for this long, or do this many bows, if I give *up*, then it's easier to give up in other things, but if I *make* that goal, then it builds my confidence, but also shows that I can set those goals and I can choose to keep going…

In depicting the physical practices as a means of becoming aware and then making choices, Julia characterized the physical body as a kind of "gateway" to the transformative learning process, together with cognitive, emotional and spiritual dimensions of learning. She also explained how she extends her personal realizations into her daily life in her interactions with others:

> As I come down I pull the energy in and then as I'm bowing forward and coming down to my knees I *consciously* try and empty myself of any judgments, any

> worries, any preconceptions, any tiredness. And then as I'm coming *up*, I feel new energy coming in and start over again.... It's all about accepting *my* condition and what it's possible for me to do, and the people around me, too. And I think that's a *huge* principle to take into life! That everybody's where they're at, it's the right place, and everybody's trying the best they can. There are a lot of applications to that.

Julia's portrayal of the interwoven and integrated interplay of mind, body, emotion, and spirit during the process of transformative learning addresses the primary research question that explores the relationship of a holistic approach to learning to transformation of the habitus as a system of dispositions. Her transformation began with physical practices that both prompted and supported deeper reflection on long-standing beliefs and patterns of behavior that characterize the habitus. Integral to the learning process were both her conscious reflection and growing awareness of the changes she was undergoing, as well as her deliberate choices to keep pursuing specific outcomes.

The third highest code for Julia was "preconceptions," limiting beliefs based on prior experience or assumptions. As she began to uncover the preconceptions driving her behavior, she realized that changing her behavior meant that "maybe I've got to try something in a new way. And maybe I have to give up some of my *questioning*. 'Well, it's not the way I do it; my habits, my preconceptions!'" She also re-examined preconceptions in the form of role-related expectations, leading to an expanded perspective, "I see some new ways of looking at things, and what my role is in new ways." In probing the genesis of her preconceptions, she discussed the importance of her primary family, including a significant event that took place in her formative years when her mother and one of her older brothers was killed in a car accident. This traumatic experience not only taught her to suppress emotion, "there's a preconception there that I needed to be strong," but also to keep silent and not discuss the pain.

During one of the workshops she attended after joining the Center, Julia confronted the unresolved emotional trauma, as well as the preconceptions it had engendered, experiencing the healing power of acceptance and letting go:

> When my own emotions come up, for *me*, having tears streaming down, that's pretty off the charts…. But then I was able to let it go because of that…. So, the crying is a big release. It just [helps] you feel lighter…. And then when you experience that, then you can learn to accept yourself…. You can accept it, and let it go.

The recognition, acceptance, and release of preconceptions addresses the second research question examining the dynamic interaction between the conjuncturally-specific and habitus aspects of internal structures as manifested in her understanding of how her preconceptions had influenced her role-based behaviors over time. Julia's experience of transformation and growth impacted not only her own development as an individual, but her view of the learning process for others:

> When you have all these preconceptions and all this stuff *stuck* in you, some people are going to be angrier than others, some are going to be so negative about everything, some are going to be very open, some are going to be on their way towards it, but we're all going the same place…. And everybody, given their knowledge and awareness, everybody does what they can. And that makes a difference in how I view others.

The Profile Map (Figure 8) graphically depicts the most relative frequency codes for Julia, and the interrelationship of the holistic elements of learning with internal structures, external structures and relationships.

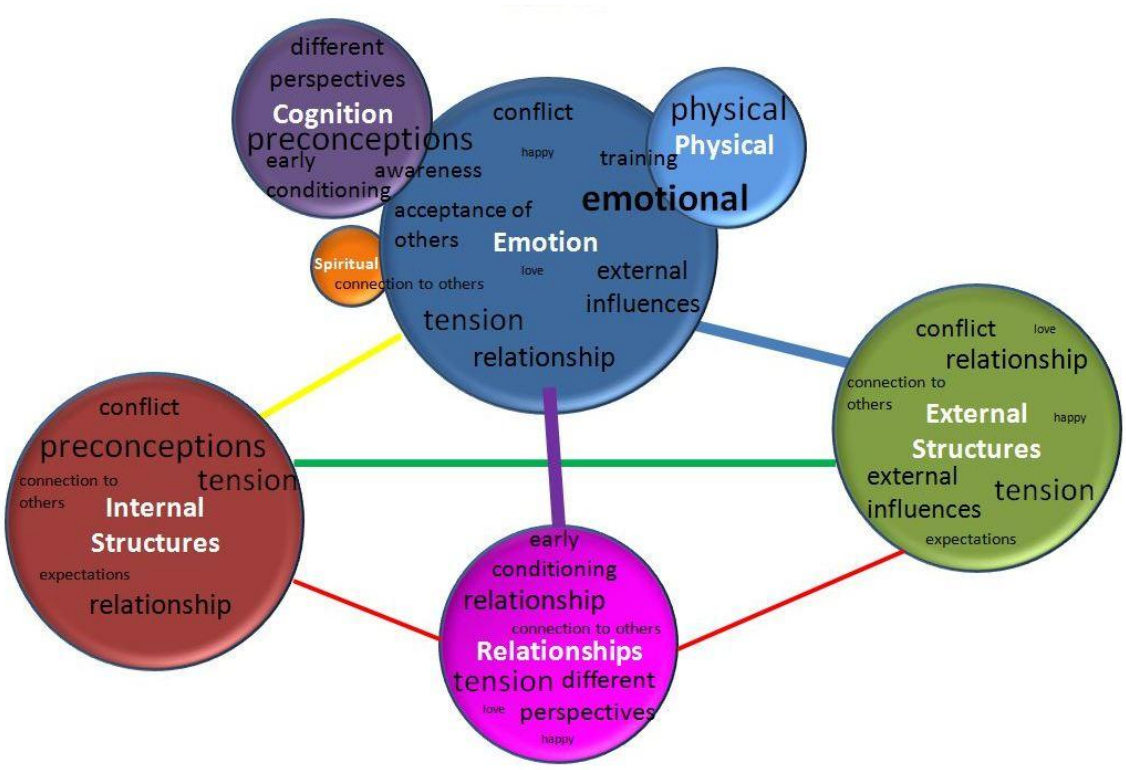


Figure 8. Profile map for Julia.

Participant Profile Analysis: Cynthia

Cynthia was the only participant for whom "cognition" was the number one family, and "preconceptions" the number one code (see Figure 9). Though Cynthia first joined the Center to find a type of yoga practice that would support her physical goals, she soon realized "that it was more than the physical alignment, and it was more of *connecting* with the universal energy." She described this as a holistic approach with several components, "the emotional component came in when you try to validate the spiritual, the mental, the physical." She characterized herself as taking a rational approach to new experiences, yet she also said, "I feel it *begins* with the physical. If your body isn't physically aligned properly then you can't get connected in other ways as easily." She elaborated on this connection between the body, mind, and spirit further as

she described physical exercises where "as you stretched your physical limits, it was amazing that your spiritual side became more aware at the same time…. And it was really very stretching to realize… [that] in stretching your body, you stretched your mind."

For Cynthia, this holistic approach to learning appeared to play a major role in enabling the transformation of her habitus, one element of which were the preconceptions she realized were limiting her personal growth and development. She described significant changes in her life that resulted from the identification and letting go of preconceptions, though as she described, becoming aware of one's preconceptions is only the first step:

> You have to work. It's not easy to get rid of it, but acknowledging it, and saying "I don't want it. I don't want to live with this," and then you consciously have to, every time it comes up, because it will continually come up, because it's a long-lived habit. So you gradually are beginning to say, "Oops, there it is again. I don't want to deal with life this way". And then you find out, "Oh, it feels so good not to have it dominate this relationship", and you feel freer, so you're going to keep practicing it. But it doesn't mean you're going to just get rid of it instantaneously, but your awareness is the key step to moving forward.

In addition to describing the emotional impact of releasing preconceptions, "[it is]… so *freeing* when you let go of the negative emotions that's involved with preconceptions," she also told how such a release impacted her interactions with others. She characterized herself as being "less judgmental; I'm more understanding, because maybe I've come to a deeper understanding of myself on a growth pattern…. [I'm] more at peace with who *I* am. So, I can [be] at peace with who other people are." Thus, her expanded awareness of her own internal structures, whether behavioral patterns indicative of the habitus, or the conjuncturally-specific nexus of

self in relation with others, led to greater understanding of family members and improvement in her relationships as well.

Cynthia's reflective nature with her predilection for meditation and walking a labyrinth may account for the noticeable emphasis in the Profile Map (Figure 9) of internal structures over external structures. She described many of the changes she's experienced during her tenure at the Center, such as becoming a "calmer and more peaceful person." However, she also portrayed herself as a "searcher for spiritual wholeness in the universe," with this practice being "just a step in a *long* journey."

As she described it, the major difference for Cynthia in getting involved in the practices at the Center versus some of her previous activities were that "this has linked mind, body, *and* spirit; the physical, the intellectual, and the spiritual into one practice....I think this is why it feels so complete that you're taking all three aspects of that, and combining it in one practice." In Cynthia's view, "Life's journey [is]…defined by a spiritual path, a belief path. My beliefs are never held in a box, they're always growing. And this is just another step in that growth." From this perspective, her learning experiences at the Center might be seen as part of the larger arc of transformation over the span of her life.

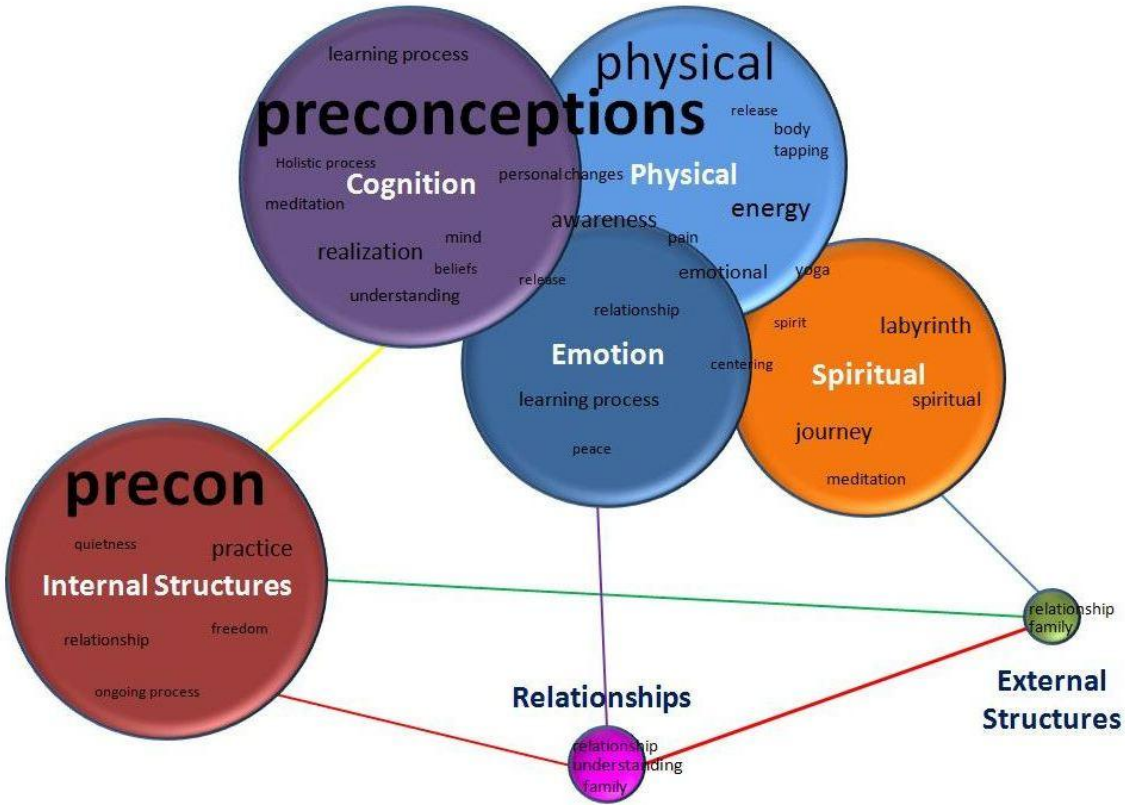


Figure 9. Profile map for Cynthia.

Participant Profile Analysis: Anisha

The number one family for Anisha was "physical," with the family of "emotion" close behind (see Figure 10). In looking at the code groundedness, "physical" was also number one at first glance. There were several codes related to emotional issues, though, and the consolidation of these emotional related codes brings "emotional" to the number one position (groundedness of 70 versus 41for all "physical" codes). The interdependent relationship of these codes was reflected in the way Anisha described the physical impetus for joining the Center, and then the subsequent realization that physical practices could help her achieve mastery of her emotions. Physically, she was under a lot of job-related stress, causing "severe shoulder pain, and actually neck pain, so even typing was

really difficult." Within a short time after joining the Center, she said, "I've seen a *lot* of improvement." She later stated that the pain was entirely gone.

Despite Anisha's insistence on the primacy of the initial physical issues and practices at the Center to address these, the recounting of her experiences brought up the emotional dimensions of learning even more. She depicted herself as "kind of [an] emotional person" who needed to find ways to control her emotions. She found that the physical practices she learned enabled her to protect herself from the emotions of others, saying that "everything was affecting me, but at least [now] I could somewhat put some barricade between…, so it's not impacting me so much as it used to." She also discovered that she was more emotionally resilient to external stress such as the mysterious and undiagnosed illness of her only brother. In that particular example, she said that "if I don't have all this yoga knowledge, then I would have just emotionally collapsed." Thus, for Anisha the most important aspects of a holistic approach to learning seemed to be the physical and emotional dimensions.

Role-related interactions are one way to tease out the dynamic interaction between the conjuncturally-specific and habitus aspects of transformative learning. In this regard, Anisha offered mixed statements. At first, she described a definitive change in her role as a wife and mother, saying "I'm trying to be more calm." She thought this was helpful to her husband and young sons as it made her more available to them both in terms of time and attention, "Now since I'm slowing down and taking time to spend with them, I'm not trying to get everything done…, at least they're more happy, I think." She then went on to say, "Nothing changed [in my specific roles], because I'm *always* trying to [do] more than I can in every role."

Despite Anisha's ambivalent statements about the changes she had experienced during her membership at the Center, there was some indication of a relationship between external and internal structures during her learning process. As she described her efforts to gain emotional mastery, she painted a picture of changing her focus from external to internal, saying "I have to really do something to focus, so I do the intestine exercises to focus and let things go…. I think I'm [controlling my emotions]…better compared to before." In discussing preconceptions that may have been influenced by her country of origin, she admitted that there were strong cultural mores against showing emotion, except in cases of extreme distress, such as the death of a loved one. Notwithstanding the strength of this externally imposed belief system, Anisha found a way to control those emotions that she believed were inappropriate to express, while expressing others such as showing her love for her family. In doing so, she described the reciprocal effect, explaining that "if I'm showing, then there will be a response to that, so that is kind of encouraging…. So now I show more towards my family, so I get it back."

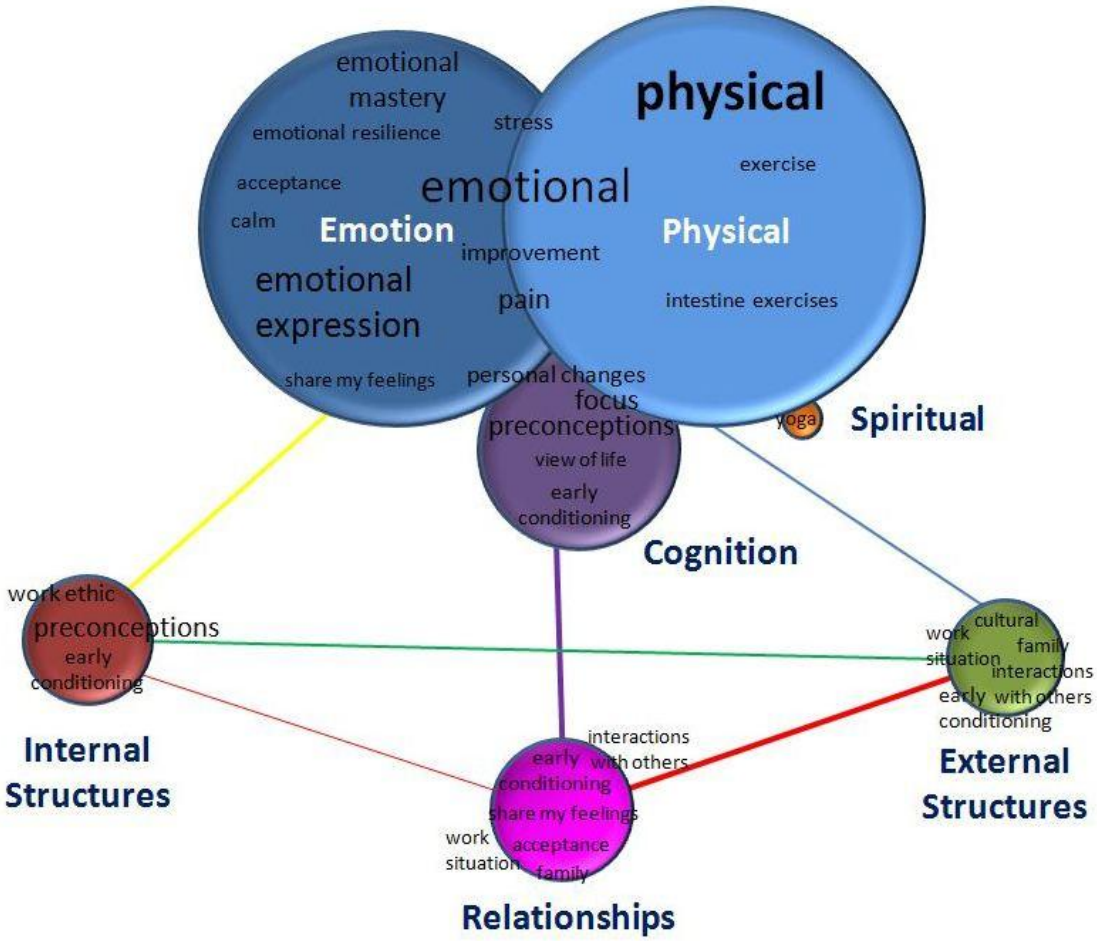


Figure 10. Profile map for Anisha.

Participant Profile Analysis: Raina

Raina was the only participant for whom "emotion" or "physical" was *not* one of the top two families. In her case "relationships" was the number one family, followed by "external structures" and then "emotion" (see Figure 11). Looking at the code groundedness, "relationship" also seemed to be the top code with a groundedness of 28. Similar to other participants, however, there were a variety of emotional related codes for Raina. Adding all of these yields a groundedness of 86 for codes about emotion at a granular level.

Raina was eloquent as she told the story of the major shifts in her life since joining the Center. She was initially curious about what the Center had to offer, then discovered that the practices addressed a long-term need she hadn't articulated, explaining "that was always that emptiness, so maybe my curiosity was looking for how I'm going to be able to fill that emptiness, that little hole inside me." She discovered after the first foundational workshop that "I had emotional issues" which she related to the influences that formed her primary habitus, "That was related also to how my mind was set up, and how I see things, and, the spiritual, too, because I grew up in a Catholic family." Emotionally, she realized that she had been repressing her feelings to the point of becoming numb. Physically, the body tapping training provided a means of becoming aware and accessing these deeply buried emotions:

> Through the tapping my body shows me how much I've been holding.… To be honest, when I start tapping I have no idea which emotion will come. And actually I'm kind of wondering, "So what is it today? What I'm gonna see now?"…. Really, through the tapping, for me, I really need to connect in a certain way physically to really have the sense that I'm *feeling* something. I discover also that it's hard for me to feel, to recognize, so the tapping allows me to do that. Always they said in the training, "Your body is not going to lie to you. Your body's going to tell you what it is."

For Raina, a holistic approach to learning seemed a powerful and necessary way to transform her habitus as manifested in her habitual patterns of behavior. Her description of her experiences and learning process were continually interwoven with physical, emotional, cognitive, and spiritual aspects of learning. At one point, she explicitly made the connection between these dimensions by describing how the physical training "really connects you deeply <gesturing from head to heart to abdomen>…; the spiritual, the mental, and physical. And since I've been experiencing that, I don't feel that

hole sometimes." Similar to other participants, she also seemed to view the physical exercises as a gateway into a more holistic understanding of herself:

> so the physical process itself, I've been discovering it started as a simple exercise, but then it start going deeper on that, allow[ing] me to *connect* with myself, connect with the universe, the nature…. And now I observe *more*, try to *feel* more when I do a posture. "What is opening? What isn't?" And I notice my resistance, too, when I have some limitation in the physical exercise itself.

Relationships seemed significant for Raina as both the source of many of her perceived blockages, as well as a mirror for her transformative learning process. Her first realization was of the influence of her upbringing and her cultural background on her primary habitus. Due to the emphasis in Latin American cultures on male lineage, she had internalized the message that "I am not the boy that my father was looking for." Even though she had accepted her responsibility as the oldest of two daughters to carry on the family business, after a time, she said, "unconsciously I didn't want to be that girl...; deep inside I want to be that boy for my father. And, it's kind of denying who I am." Through her training, she realized that her relationship issues with men were traceable to her relationship with her father.

She described preconceptions about sacrifice and taking care of others that were likewise tied to role-based relationships, such as taking care of her family members. This, she said, was a

> *huge*, huge preconception that I have to face. I always want to help, but I said, "Even though I help, I am empty"…. [And] My mother said "You need to take care of your sister."…That was the big preconception that I have at that moment—I have to protect her no matter what…. Even now talking about that, I feel a pressure, tension in my chest, so it's something deep. And I think it's the fact that I didn't know how to take care of myself, and I'm looking to take care of somebody else. And that really hurt me…. But I always recognized it as a hole, that emptiness inside, and actually *now* I have the determination that you only feed yourself.

Her training enabled Raina to recognize and change the ways she interacted with others in various roles. She described major improvements in her relationship with her parents, as well as with co-workers in her ability to accept them and "create that circulation," meaning a reciprocal flow of interaction, as well as to use these relationships as another means of enhancing her self-awareness and personal transformation.

Raina's sensitivity to the importance of relationships may account for the strong ties visible in her Profile Map (Figure 11) between internal structures, external structures, relationships, and the holistic cluster of cognition, emotion, physical, and spiritual. More than most participants, she described the tensions she experienced between internal and external structures. These were manifested in terms of preconceptions from her primary family and cultural context, expectations from others, and externally driven goals. These external and internal structures co-evolved, first, as she learned through her practices at the Center to reflect on "what you really want, your soul wants. So it's not the outside, society goals or maybe my family goal, or a tradition…. So that also let me see deeper." This reflection and greater self-knowledge led to a better relationship with her parents. Second, as Raina learned new healing techniques, she used these to reach out to others, realizing that "when you do that healing, you connect deeper…, so I was able to connect with some people deeply…. And…you get a circulation of energy from every single interaction, relationship, even in nature." Finally, she explained that changing her focus from external factors to an internal perspective was "the biggest evolution for

me—instead of focusing outside, it's inside…, so finding the ways to really start learning more about myself."

Raina's description of her personal transformation illustrates both the durability and the plasticity of the habitus. Before joining the Center, she described herself as

> full of preconceptions. I wasn't living *my* life. I was living somebody else's expectations…. I wasn't happy. I always feel an emptiness inside. I want to help, but because I have that emptiness, not because I really wanted to give. I was also holding a lot of my emotions, a load of them and I wasn't able to recognize. Even though I'm still struggling in recognizing some emotions, through the trainings I'm able to learn, and recognize them also.

Despite these revelations and the concomitant changes, she found it to be an on-going effort, explaining that "preconceptions or the pattern doesn't let you go totally, because it's a process." She took personal responsibility for her growth and development when she realized that

> all the situations in my life, or every experience, I choose them, consciously or unconsciously, so that is a big revelation for me.… Now I understand that it's easy to blame somebody, or a situation, and basically repeat the pattern. And, I understand that is a reflection of *me*, and it's something that I need to start looking inside, let it go, accept it, and then move on.

While the decision to increase her self-awareness and make choices regarding her personal growth and development may be seen as an example of epochal transformative learning, Raina clearly described both her new-found sense of purpose, as well as the long-term nature of her commitment:

> I think now I understand *better* what is my purpose to be *here*, a sincere purpose…, still with my baggage, my things that I'm still trying to let it go…. Now…it's starting appearing some light there. So, that is actually after I've been letting go…; doing my trainings. I can see something now. I *feel* something.

Thus, for Raina, transformation can be best described as a process requiring continued commitment over time, despite what she described as "a lot of challenge, because I tend

to be very emotional, and I also want to give up easily…. This discovery is letting me see that there is a path I need to follow."

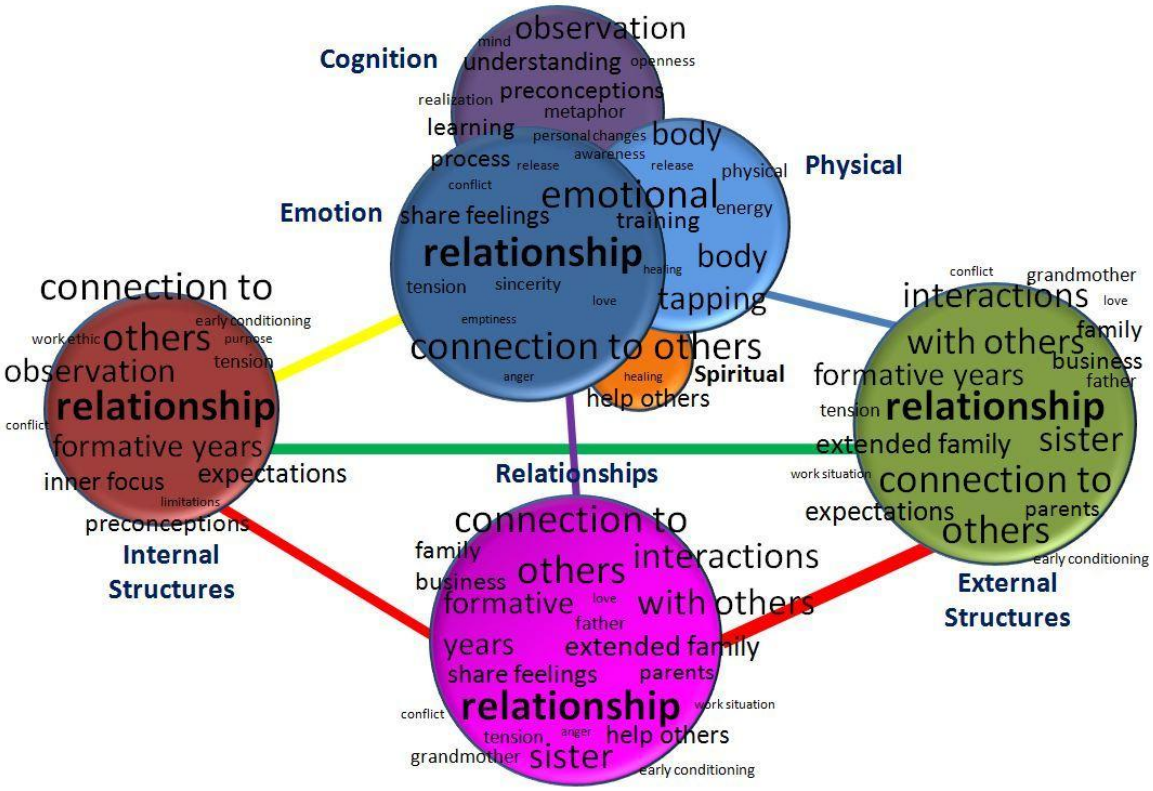


Figure 11. Profile map for Raina.

Participant Profile Analysis: Dira

Dira was one of five participants for whom "emotion" was the number one family, with "physical" in the number two place. Interestingly, while it's not necessarily visible in the size of the "spiritual" family (see Figure 12), her third highest code after "physical" and "training" was "soul." The leitmotiv heard throughout Dira's story was of a sense of emptiness and yearning that she gradually recognized as her soul crying out for

completion. A large part of her transformation was the process of discovering that spiritual fulfillment.

Like many of the other participants, the issue that brought Dira to the Center was mostly physical in nature, "at that time I really felt physical exhaustion, emotional, and mental fatigue…. So, the purpose was for me to get a relief, physically." She quickly discovered, though, that the Center offered a more holistic approach, "I find out that it's more than just [a] physical center…. Somehow it's something that I needed for my heart, or my soul." Dira told of emotional pain, depression and numbness, and of the physical practices that enabled her to identify and release deeply held, and often unacknowledged, memories and emotions:

> A lot of times when I go to the Center I have a special kind of one-on-one training, like a consultation. That's when they started to press some part of my body, which is very painful, and with that physical exertion somehow the memory is then coming up. So, they believe that even though the memory, or what happened emotionally, already happened a long time ago, maybe under your consciousness you [have] already forgotten about it, but the reaction in your body is still there. So, your body's pain has a memory of what makes it pain in the first place; what is it holding. So…, the practices try to trigger that pain to come out from your physical [body], then they press it, then the emotion comes out.

In addition to Dira's description of the interdependent relationship between her body and emotions, the holistic approach to learning and its impact on the transformation of her habitus was revealed in her portrayal of the bowing meditation. After both describing and demonstrating the physical motions of the bowing meditation, she talked about the cognitive aspect of chanting the ancient Korean words depicting the "Tao" philosophy. It is the chanting along with the physical movements that she says will "align your soul, your heart, and your mind at the same time with the physical.… The emotional [aspect] will come with your mind and your thought while you are doing the bowing."

The purpose of this practice, she explained, is to use a set of bodily movements to answer core spiritual questions such as, "What do you want in life? Who are you?" Dira found that using physical practices as the gateway to a holistic approach to learning worked well for her, stating that:

> It's all in your brain and the way you change your brain, your mind, and then the energy to connect the mind with the body…. So, for me [this practice] is more than just the physical, but through the physical I get stronger.

Dira spoke about two aspects of internal structures and how they had changed during her transformative learning process. First, the habitus includes both a system of dispositions and habits of mind that may be reflected in an individual's preconceptions. The second aspect of internal structures, the conjuncturally-specific, is usually manifested in the roles an individual plays. Dira revealed that she had a preconception that her role as a wife and a mother meant sacrificing her own desires and well-being for the good of the family. Through various practices at the Center, she discovered this preconception and realized that "doing sacrifice and having no voice is really what get me depressed and stressed…, or numb myself so that I don't feel the pain."

In her previous state, Dira explained how did her best to take care of four kids as a single mother much of the time, describing herself as a "a disciplinarian, and I didn't use my heart so much. And then I think it shows in the way my kids are feeling the depression, the stress that I felt." After discovering and addressing that core preconception of sacrifice through the holistic practices at the Center, she told of the improved relationships with her husband and children, saying "so I give them a different energy…. It's from the different perspective…. So I'm being more aware and being there."

The conjuncturally-specific aspect of internal structures is also related to the third question addressing the co-evolution of external and internal structures during the transformative learning process. As Dira talked about the emptiness and depression she had felt for many years, she said she had since learned that the "yearning, that fulfillment that I'm looking from other people, now not necessarily have to come from just another human being, but it can come from the practice itself to awaken my Self, then refill it within myself." In essence, she described a shift in the focus from external structures as reflected in her relationships with others to a focus on internal structures.

This shift was both facilitated and supported by external structures, that is, the teachings, philosophies, and practices she learned at the Center. In Dira's experience, individuals could choose the level of activity and engagement that matched the growth and development aspired to:

> There's a level, or choice how you want to do about your training…; just physical for stretching, relaxation, then you just come for that class….And then in addition if you're interested to find out more deeply about your emotion, or your spiritual growth, then they provide this Tao lecture teaching where you can…learn more about the way to conduct your living, which has a lot do with what you believe is the truth, what you believe is the right way, what you believe is what is reality. And then there's also another aspect of the training which triggers your emotion.

As she absorbed and integrated the teachings of the Center, Dira experienced not only changes in her Self, or internal structures, but then displayed new behaviors with others in her external environment. She explained, "now with this training I've been able to draw that feeling of contentment from inside….You already build up so much fulfillment inside yourself, from yourself, that you want to *share* your love with these people."

In concluding her answer to what this process of discovery, learning, and change had meant in her life, she told how uncomfortable she had been with some of the external

pressures she felt from Masters at the Center, but then achieved a new level of growth after advanced training, saying "I understood why they force me to do all of this at one time, because it has to do with my physical, my emotion, my heart, and my mind, my spiritual being alive in one alignment." In her mind, this was due not only to the constant reinforcement in the classes, workshops, and special training, but also because of the strong desire she had for change, and the effort she put into the process:

> This is the training, and [it] has to be reinforced, reinforced, reinforced all the time. So, it looks like the same thing you are doing at the training but the level of consciousness, or the level of awakening that [is] happening to you will be different. Because it depends on how much you put *in* yourself, the energy that you put *in* that you believe in the training, then that much is how much is opening up for you.

For Dira, after years of sacrificing herself to her family and friends, the transformation she experienced was both highly emotional, and deeply spiritual:

> For the first time, it's like my emotion at one time was thanking, was saying to me like, "Thank you. Thank you!" like "Wow!" Like I'm in love with myself! For the first time, after all these years! Trying to find love everywhere else <talking with the sound of joy in her voice>…. It meant that for the first time I will serve the purpose of my soul, which at the end, for its completion is like giving love to humanity <beginning to cry> regardless [of] who you are, and regardless to whom. I guess that's the longing of the soul itself.

In the months following the interview, Dira fulfilled her vision and training to become a Master, move back to her country of origin, and open her own holistic health center to serve her community. Thus, in focusing on her own inner needs and deepest desires, she was able to turn her attention outwards once more to positively impact the external environment.

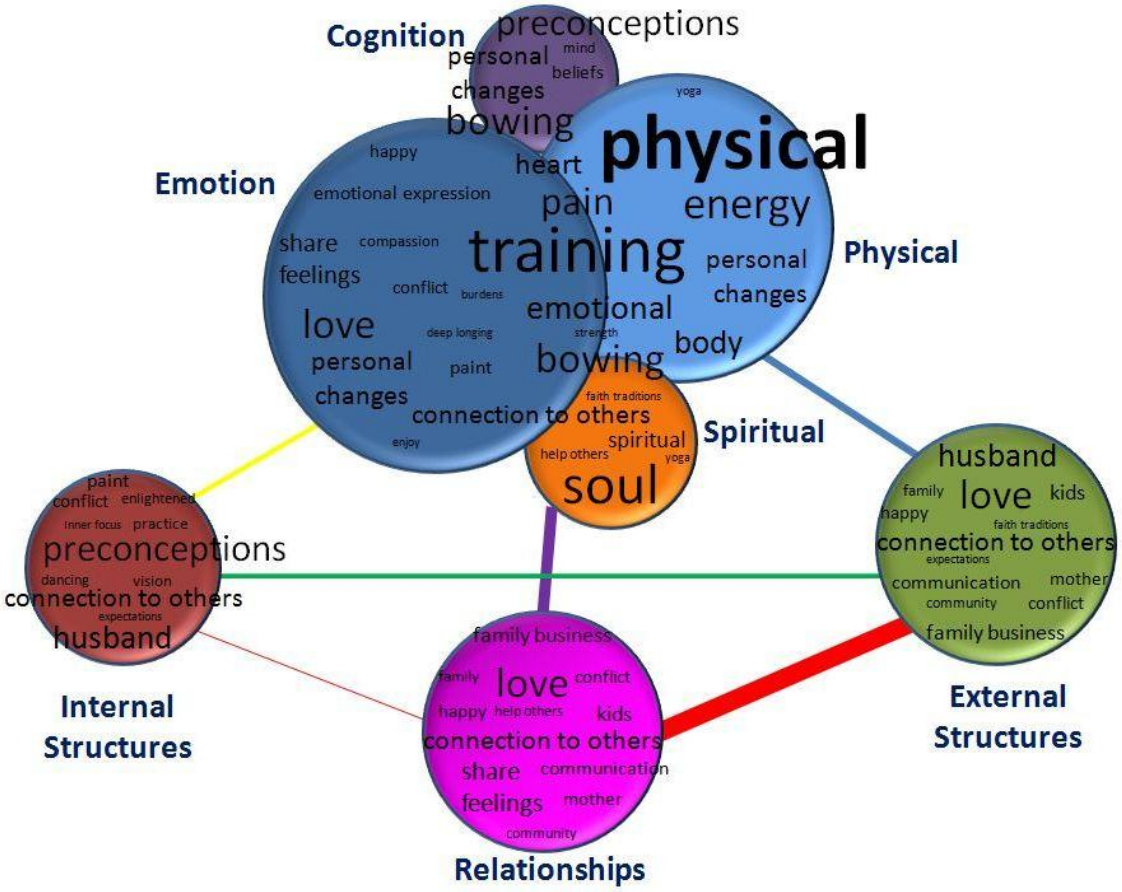


Figure 12. Profile map for Dira.

Participant Profile Analysis: Debra

Debra was one of five participants for whom "emotion" was the number one family, with almost equal weight given then to internal structures, external structures, and relationships (see Figure 13). Three of her top five codes were in the family of "emotion," the top two being "tension" and "conflict." The codes of tension and conflict are in multiple families—emotion, internal structures, external structures, and relationships—due to the contexts in which participants described these emotions. For Debra, as for several others, family and work relationships seemed fraught with tension and conflict. In telling her story, she focused first on the physical aspects of her

transformative learning experience. For instance, describing the recovery process from breast cancer, she said she knew that "physical activity would help to keep my brain from getting into a very depressed mode, and help me sort through the emotions."

In addressing the first research question of the relationship of a holistic approach to learning to transformation of the habitus, it is interesting to note that Debra incorporated all the holistic elements of learning—cognitive, emotional, physical, and spiritual— into the account of her transformation. The first major breakthrough was an advanced training program that she depicted as "a *very,* very *physically* oriented, very *intensive,* introspective program." While the physical aspect was the starting point of the learning process, she also emphasized the cognitive aspect of reflection and self-awareness leading to significant emotional breakthroughs. Further, she discussed how one's willingness to engage with one's "baggage," or habitus, determined the type of growth that occurs, saying "it depends on how receptive you are to really coming to grips with yourself and your own issues, and your own emotions, and your own personal baggage." In the following excerpt Debra vividly illustrates the interwoven interplay of physical, emotional, and cognitive dimensions in her experience of transformation:

> So you come to find a lot of pain and physical challenges that you have to push past…. If you allow yourself to go past it, kind of hang in there and push past it, then you can feel higher levels of peace, but then, of course, as soon as you get there, there's one more obstacle.…The introspective piece of it is that you really become very, very aware of your body, and the way they teach it is that your body is holding everything that is *you,* so all the experience of your past is somewhere in your body.… Once you push past it you feel just such an emotional release that you may end up crying…. So, if you allow yourself, it's truly mind-boggling, the release that you feel from it.

Debra's process of transforming herself was cognitive in terms of her practice of observing herself, reflecting on the situation, making conscious choices to act differently,

and monitoring herself by asking, "How am I responding to this right now? Am I falling back into old habits?" Her transformation was physical in her understanding that the stresses of her life were stored in her body, and had to be released through the body. The emotional dimension of her transformative learning process was evident in the description of the tension and conflict that she had experienced over the course of her life, and had then learned to better identify, understand, and release. Finally, Debra explained how her faith as a devout Catholic had been integrated with her new practice to realize that "spirituality is sort of the umbrella that holds us *all* together."

In describing the nature of her relationships, Debra at first insisted that she hadn't really changed the way she interacted with others in her life, saying instead that her practice mainly enhanced the "awareness of how I interact with people…; this isn't like an "Ah ha" – I started [this practice] and all of a sudden life is wonderful, but it helped me focus on things that may have happened in the past." She subsequently described the frequent tension and conflict she had experienced throughout her lifetime, chiefly with her mother in the past, and with her supervisor during the time of the research study. Much of this conflict seemed to be related to her focus on the expectations of others versus meeting her own needs.

Debra's increasing awareness of the tension between internal and external demands led her to shift to an internal focus, enhancing her sense of self-efficacy and calming the emotional turmoil engendered by external chaos. Through the disciplines of her new practice, she explained that "now I have that ability to recreate it on a regular basis, and reinforce it…, and when things start to spiral out in different directions… then that brings me back to that centeredness and that calm peacefulness."

The dynamic interactions between internal and external structures seemed most evident for Debra in the context of the relationship with her parents, particularly her mother. Once Debra had exercised her agency in moving her life in a new direction, she noticed that her relationships correspondingly changed as well. Regarding her parents and the influence one can have on others, she explained that:

> They *can't* respond to me the same way they did before, because I'm not allowing them to get under my skin…. They've obviously been influenced by my decision to not allow them to control me. That's how we see things spreading a little bit, even in a very specific personal one-on-one kind of thing, and knowing then that that can happen throughout the world. So, there is the ability to influence people by your energy.

In summarizing the impact of the transformative learning process on her life, Debra again emphasized that she hadn't made any dramatic changes in the way she lived her life. Rather she saw the holistic practices at the Center as a "perfect *fit*, because…it was more of a lifestyle change" that reinforced the path she had been on, providing new perspectives and explanations for some of her life's experiences. The final answer to life's questions, she said, would come from internal rather than external sources, "your soul has a longing to do something, or to find out what you need to be doing, and it's not going to be something out there. It's going to be something inside." Based on that realization, the actions one should take "should focus on what is satisfying your soul as opposed to satisfying somebody else's expectations."

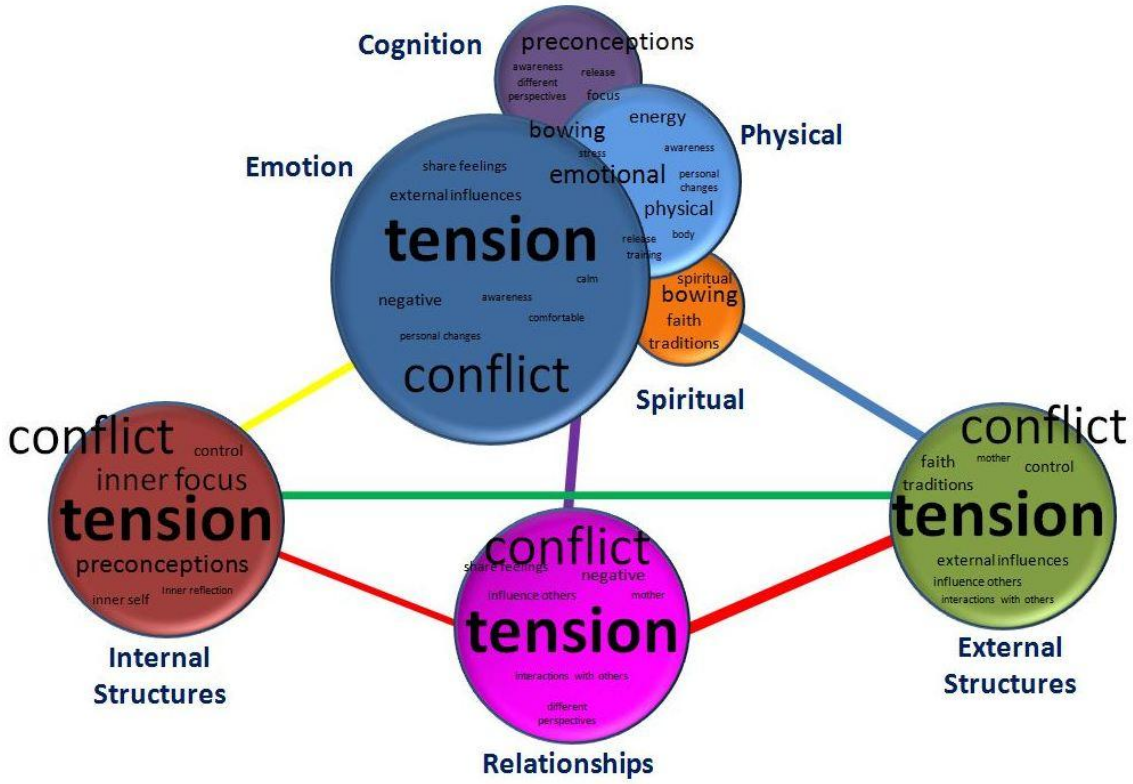


Figure 13. Profile map for Debra.

Participant Profile Analysis: Nolan

"Emotion" was also the number one family for Nolan, with a tie for second place between "physical" and "personal growth and development," followed closely by "relationships" (see Figure 14). Despite the emphasis on emotional learning throughout his narrative, three of his top five codes were in the "cognitive" family—different perspectives, personal changes, and preconceptions. Nolan was the most loquacious of the ten study participants, generating 85 pages of data with his background questionnaire, journaling and two 90-minute interviews. He had been reflecting deeply on his experiences and welcomed the opportunity to discuss his thoughts.

Nolan's impetus for joining the Center was to improve his health following a mild heart attack. What he discovered instead of just yoga or physical exercises was a holistic approach to well-being that he said "made it *much* more interesting…, because it was easy for me to see right from the beginning that there were a lot of analogies between what I was experiencing in the class and what I experienced in my everyday life." Nolan made the commitment within a month of joining to become a "Gold" member to support his desire for sustained change. While he recognized personal changes that were evident in many areas of his life, he also regarded his learning as an "ongoing process," the most important phase of which was the conscious decision to embark on the "voyage of discovery." This decision, he said, and the process of applying his new insights to his daily life was "far more powerful than the actual heart attack itself."

Like other participants, Nolan readily described the separate holistic elements of the learning process, but he also emphasized the importance of the integrated approach, explaining how such a process is "powerful because it kind of integrates in a very practical way what you're thinking and what you're feeling, and then both what you're feeling emotionally and what your body is feeling." From a physical perspective, Nolan noticed that he felt stronger and more flexible, and that feeling better physically translated into "more effective behavior." He also spoke repeatedly about the connection between his increased awareness of his body and the corresponding relationship to his emotions. He described the powerful impact of better understanding this reciprocal relationship in his daily work life:

> [I've begun] connecting my knowledge of what was happening to my body with events, particularly at work…. I would observe when I had certain types of encounters how my body would tense up again….That was a real lesson to me. And then, interestingly enough, I think it works both ways, not just as a reactive

> thing but once you realize that then I think "Well, if I can maintain a calmer state of my body, a more relaxed state, then I'm less likely to react in ways that I would."… I think that's part of the conserving energy and staying grounded in your body. You're remaining focused on yourself…, and I'm still learning how to do that…. So, that is a very important part of this whole thing for me. It's connecting how my body feels with my emotional reactions.

Nolan characterized himself as a "feeling-oriented" person who used self-reflection as a means of better understanding his emotional reactions. He elaborated on the interrelation between the cognitive, emotional, physical, and spiritual aspects of his experience in terms of the "energy" connecting these elements, saying "I think it's very practical in a sense because it ties what you're thinking to what you feel physically." While the Asian concept of omnipresent "chi" energy had been unfamiliar to him, Nolan thought it seemed like "a valid part of the whole picture…. As a person it gives you some *evidence* in terms of how you *feel* about what you think, and what you believe that's quite unusual."

Throughout both interviews, Nolan demonstrated his openness and willingness to experience and embrace new and different perspectives, one of the hallmarks of transformative learning. He also clearly described his struggles in accepting this new thinking due to the limitations of his prior experience and values encapsulated in his preconceptions. The main preconception of concern was the belief that most people were like his father, "very demanding, mercurial" and impossible to please. His traumatic childhood with his father had created a focus on others' expectations, and a perfectionist mindset he described as "conditioned more by what I perceive to be the demands of others." Nolan's predilection for introspective analysis had provided him rational understanding of this particular preconception, but the training he experienced at the Center revealed the emotional impact as well:

> I think that what was missing for me was really *feeling* preconceptions at an emotional level. Feeling the damage that they had done to me, and how they had limited my personal growth and my experience. *That's* the part that I started to think about in the [workshop] really…. Because I'd been wondering, "Why do I behave in the strange ways that I do?"… But then to actually *feel* what that does and what the result of that is, it really made me feel quite sad. I started crying and that was the powerful part…. It connected me with the emotional aspect of those preconceptions.

Nolan was most uncertain about the unfamiliar spiritual teachings he encountered at the Center, though his interest grew as he experienced the integration of physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual aspects of learning. When asked to provide a "token" of his transformative learning, Nolan chose to talk about the bowing meditation that incorporated a set of physical movements as well as an ancient Asian chant. Once again, he referenced the effect of the holistic approach as he explained how the bowing "encapsulates the meaning of the [whole] experience, particularly the union of body and mind—from a broader perspective: heaven, earth, and human." From both a physical and emotional point of view, he found that the bowing helped reduce stress, additionally he said "it helps me to focus, it makes me calmer. I just feel more grounded…. It also still has a spiritual side to it."

Along with the transformation of the habitus as influenced by a holistic approach to learning, Nolan described the dynamic interaction between the conjuncturally-specific and habitus aspects of internal structures as manifested in changes in his relations with others. He described multiple benefits of his more conscious awareness of the "reciprocal relationship of member and group," including an understanding of the impact of negative energy in the workplace, the ability to more successfully manage conflict, and the desire to connect with his co-workers at a deeper level of shared humanity. These changes, he said, resulted in "major

differences in their/our behavior, leading to big improvements in the quality of my interactions with them." As Nolan talked about the impact of one role-based relationship in particular—his father—he didn't describe any similar improvements in that relationship, though he did have a better understanding of how the predominance of parental influence had subsequently influenced his own behavior with others.

In discussing the importance of parental power and authority, Nolan clearly indicated the role of external structures in determining his own internal structures in his formative years and beyond. He began to realize how this had informed his previous view of life which he characterized as "my happiness is dependent on making other people happy with what I do, even what I think." Through his experiences at the Center, he began to shift to a more internally focused perspective with the concomitant desire to achieve "something that *I* want to do, as opposed to doing something for other people." At the same time, he struggled with the Asian influence of the Center's philosophies and teaching as reflected in the emphasis on community and interdependence.

Nolan described this tension between reclaiming the primacy of his internal structures while simultaneously allowing for interdependence with a new external community as "kind of a scary thing to me, because I was always a loner, introvert…, at least in my core." Nevertheless, he found this new approach to life powerful, especially in the way it enabled one to "decode what the influence of things in your environment *is* on *you*, and then once you're aware of what the influence is you can decide whether you like it or not, and take steps to change it, or

enhance it." Ultimately, he said, this practice had given him a way of "*seeing* myself as integrated with other things."

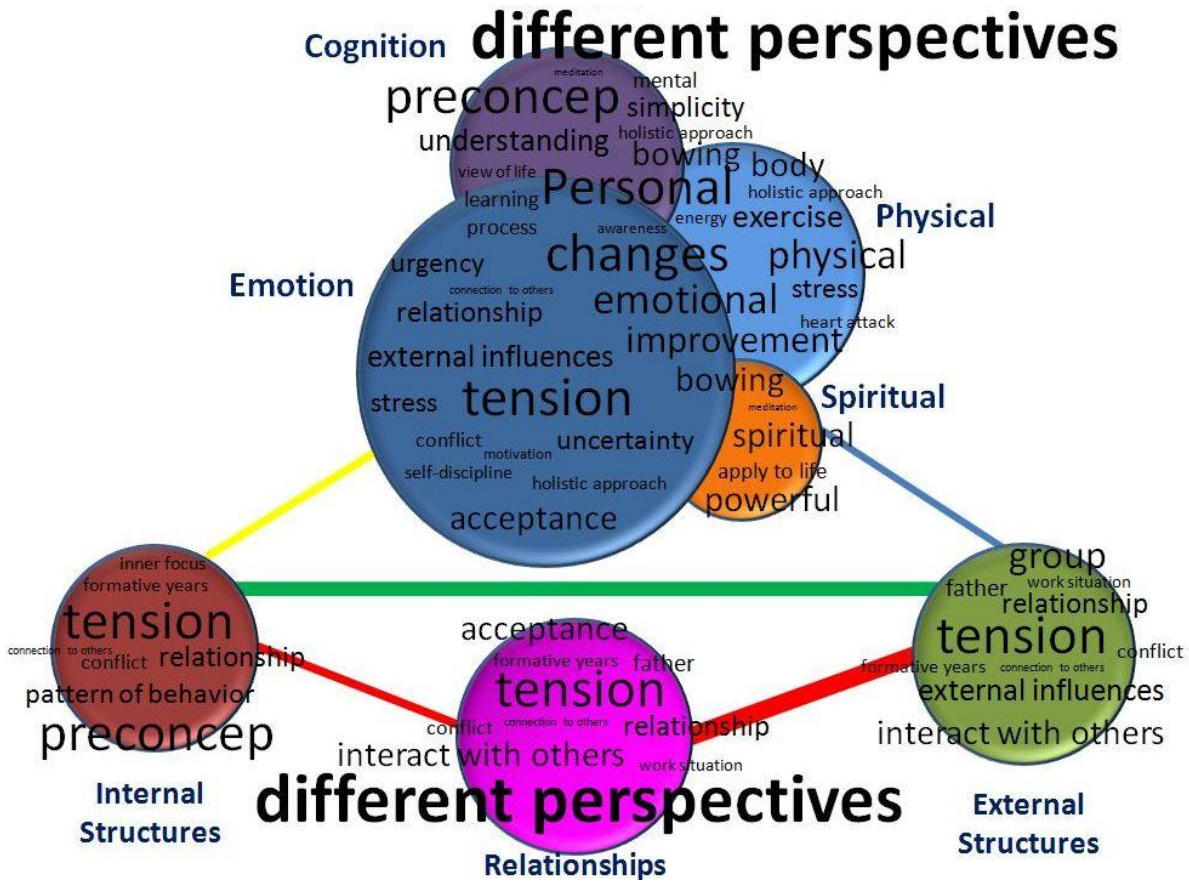


Figure 14. Profile map for Nolan.

Participant Profile Analysis: Nakari

Nakari's number one family was "physical" followed next by "emotion" and then "personal growth and development." Within the family of "physical" her top four codes were "yoga," "personal changes," "energy," and "healing." These top codes reflect the primary emphasis of her story which centered on the healing and transformation she had experienced through what she alternatively referred to as "yoga" or "energy yoga." As

might be noted by the overlapping of codes in the bubbles of her Profile Map (Figure 15), several of these codes are in multiple families, indicating the close interrelationship of these holistic elements of learning.

Like several other participants, Nakari's impetus to join the Center was physical. She was losing her hair, attributed by several doctors to stress. Although she initially resisted the recommendation to take up yoga for stress management, she eventually had an evaluation after which she was told that the energy in her body was "stuck" and needed to be "released." She began attending classes regularly and said that after about a year her hair came back better than before. She also stated, "I saw some transformation, some *changes* of the energy." A second turning point from a physical perspective for Nakari was engaging her faith in self-healing after an accident in which she sustained second degree burns. Instead of receiving skin grafts, taking medication, or physical therapy, she used her yoga practice and self-healing techniques to recuperate. Her medical team later told her that she had "recovered quicker than anybody."

These two experiences were pivotal for Nakari in her transformative learning process, but she also related several major emotional changes that took place in tandem. Whereas previously she used to get extremely angry and had an "explosive temper," Nakari learned how to focus inwardly while experiencing difficult or traumatic emotions. She described this as becoming a "master of your emotions," where "emotion is not me, they're mine." She brought in the cognitive aspect of this process as she told about her newfound ability to "observe what's going on instead of getting in the middle." This resulted in the ability to both perceive the situation differently and to have a different

reaction, a transformation she characterized as "it has changed my thinking about life, about how to address things in life, about how to see things."

Despite the influence of two specific experiences on her transformative learning process, Nakari emphasized that it was an ongoing process of ever deeper growth and development. She illustrated how this felt when she described the impact of one workshop where it "really felt like an onion taking away the layers…, [and] as you take those layers, you feel fulfilled. You feel empty, and that emptiness, it's fullness." Nakari described the durable nature of the habitus as the layers of the onion that were due to the preconceptions related to one of her sisters. As she engaged in the learning process, she said, "You take that preconception out, you take that layer, layer by [layer], and then I have more layers…. It never stops. This is your journey in life. What happened to you in the past is always there with you." The process of discovery and awareness was also steeped in emotion, sometimes the most difficult part of the process:

> You get stuck in emotions, and you don't know how to deal with the situation, then you close up…. [During the workshop,]… I was crying …, [I was] angry, [it was] upsetting, I was kind of lost.… They bring [you] to that stage of emotion when it happened…. So, you go through it, and you become at peace with it…. I used to be very, very, very, *very* angry. I'm not that angry anymore…. It's really dissipated.… So, yes, I did shed a lot of layers with still more to go.

Having been a member for seven years at the time of the interviews, Nakari indicated that not only was transformation an ongoing process, but that she was at times reluctant to delve more deeply, explaining that "Sometimes as it just changes, something happens and you feel instable." One area in which she had experienced major changes, but also continued to struggle was in her relationships with others. She described significant improvements in her interactions with her husband, her

daughters and her college students, yet she still felt emotionally blocked in dysfunctional relationships with her older sister and her mother. While she believed that her yoga practice had been the most valuable in helping her to grow and deal with that family situation, she also said "I need to go deeper in order to deal with this issue "<big sigh>. Nakari's experience of positive change in some relationships, while being stymied in others illustrates one way in which the tension between a conjuncturally-specific role and the habitus could be resistant to change.

Whereas people most seem to refer to their "baggage" with a negative connotation as a limitation or constraint to be discarded, Nakari spoke of it in a positive rather than negative sense, seeing it as a link to her heritage. In looking for a way to relieve the stress of being an immigrant, and to reconnect with her cultural upbringing, Nakari took up drumming, saying "I find a lot of relief in it, and stress-relieving, and, like, back to my country…. I have to revive my baggage…; I needed that relief." While drumming enhanced an aspect of her habitus that she wanted to maintain, she also experienced it as a way to enact a relationship between internal and external structures. As with the personal changes she had experienced through yoga, she said "transformation has taken place also in the drum." She described this dynamic reciprocal, co-emergent relationship between internal and external structures as follows:

> When people are dancing I feel their energy, and I get energized even more. And I drum as their moves, or the way they are. So, as I drum, then I feel that and I go even deeper. And I feel negative energy – it goes to the drum, through my hands. I feel it …. This is a transformation I discovered with the drum…. Now that energy comes from the universe through me, and then it involves everybody else when I'm drumming through that. It's a *wonderful* feeling…. So, yoga has really changed my ways of doing things. It really

empowered my way of being, also it gave me more confidence in myself. I've become more intuitive…, I've become more spiritual.

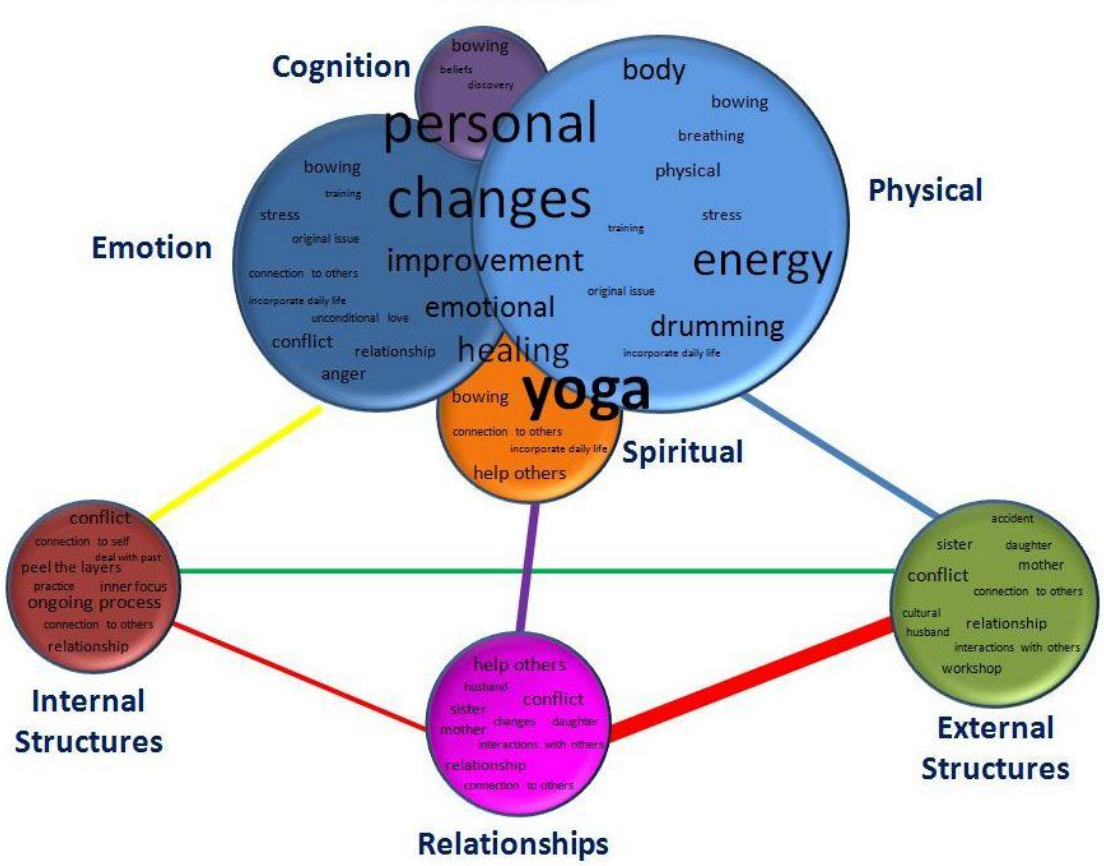


Figure 15. Profile map for Nakari.

Participant Profile Analysis: Tuan

Tuan was the fifth participant for whom "emotion" was the number one family, and one of three participants for whom the number two family was "physical" (see Figure 16). Three of his top five codes—personal changes, emotional and improvement—are in the families of both "emotion" and "physical." The close relationship between these two families in the coding was a reflection of the tight connection between these two elements of holistic learning. Tuan originally joined the Center due to physical symptoms like

muscle tension, insomnia, and overall weakness. He attributed these symptoms to emotional issues such as excessive stress, anxiety, nervousness, and a pervading sense of sadness. Within a few weeks of attending classes, he saw improvements in his physical condition, saying he felt, "healthier, stronger." A couple of months later, he said, "I could feel the other emotional problem and insomnia subsiding."

In describing the process of addressing these emotional issues, Tuan emphasized physical practices as being most effective, saying "I could feel my anxiety subside, and my emotion subside…. [I feel] calmer, more peaceful." He also demonstrated a chest tapping exercise which he explained helped him to "release a lot of emotional issue." In addition to physical practices that are part of the daily classes, Tuan described a more holistic combination of physical, emotional, cognitive, and spiritual processes that he experienced at one of the foundational workshops, during which he began to address his perfectionism, something he identified as a major preconception. He realized that due to his desire to complete everything perfectly, he had created "a lot of anxiety [and] nervousness" for himself. He learned in the workshop that "mistakes are OK" and this simple realization influenced him to change his way of thinking and behaving. He explained, "I consciously change [my view]…, but I felt like subconsciously it changed, too."

Another breakthrough occurred when he realized that being abandoned by his parents at the age of four had created in him a "fear of separation." This had also caused "emotional problems" that he was able to somewhat overcome during the workshop. He explained the emotional and cognitive processes in his account of the experience:

> [One of the emotions I experienced was]… resistance…. I believe I didn't put 100% effort [into the shouting exercise], even though they told me "Use

> 100% of effort to do it." [The other emotion I experienced]…very strongly [was] sadness [and] a little bit of anger. I was crying a lot.… At the [workshop] I didn't think about [why I was crying]…. Maybe now I think I know why. Because I think I abandoned myself a long time [ago], and now I'm getting back to my soul. I believe at the [workshop] my conscious mind didn't figure [it] out, but something just stimulate the subconscious mind, and it just burst to tears.… So I believe the conscious mind was drained, was tired and probably somehow stopped, so you can access the deeper part of the brain, the mind. [The conscious mind is]… like a barrier.

Of the eight study participants from the primary Center observed by the researcher over an extended period, Tuan seemed to exhibit the most dramatic changes in the shortest period of time. Considering the second research question and how it is often demonstrated in the context of relationships with others, Tuan confirmed that the way he interacts with others has definitely changed. He explained, "I'm more socializing now. I used to hide away from people, because of my emotional issue. I used to be embarrassed and shy. Now I meet people more, talk to people more." He related his previous fear of judgment from others to the preconception that "it was not OK to show the negative emotions," defining such a preconception as "the experience that you gained in the past that affects your life in a negative way." He elaborated on the negative influence, saying that "if a preconception is positive then we don't have to worry about that." When asked to describe what the process of discovery, learning and change had meant in his life, Tuan responded, "A big life-transforming experience… I feel more comfortable interacting with people, and teaching class….I guess when you [are] more relaxed, then there will be less tension between you and your friends, or the opposite person."

In considering the co-evolution of external and internal structures during his learning process, Tuan talked about the impact of many of the teachings he had

learned from the Tao lecture series, seemingly paradoxical statements from ancient Asian traditions such as "Life is nothing. Life is meaningless." These teachings were difficult for him to accept, but he said, "Somehow learning Tao over and over, that statement, that concept, I believe got absorbed into my mind, probably my subconscious mind. And I feel less nervous, less conscious of the surrounding." Over time, Tuan internalized the teachings to help him change his nervousness about "teaching or speaking in front of people." In such circumstances, he now simply reminds himself, "Oh, life is nothing," and then he begins a physical practice such as intestinal exercises that focuses on the lower abdomen, an area described by Asian martial arts as the center of the physical body. When Tuan is able to change his focus from external to internal structures, he said, "I feel less distracted, less conscious of the surroundings."

While changing his focus from external to internal enabled Tuan to change his worldview as exemplified by his habitus, as well as his attendant behavior, he subsequently also learned to expand his focus to a broader set of external structures. Tuan described the difference before and after his transformative learning experience as:

> A couple of years ago, my view of life used to be dull and dark. No way to get out, I used to feel like I was trapped in a box with no way to get out. But now I can open myself to the whole Universe…and probably bring out my "true self" more.

Tuan was so inspired by the changes in his own life that he decided to become a Master and help others achieve similar transformation. Within the course of this study, and less than two years after joining the Center, he achieved this vision.

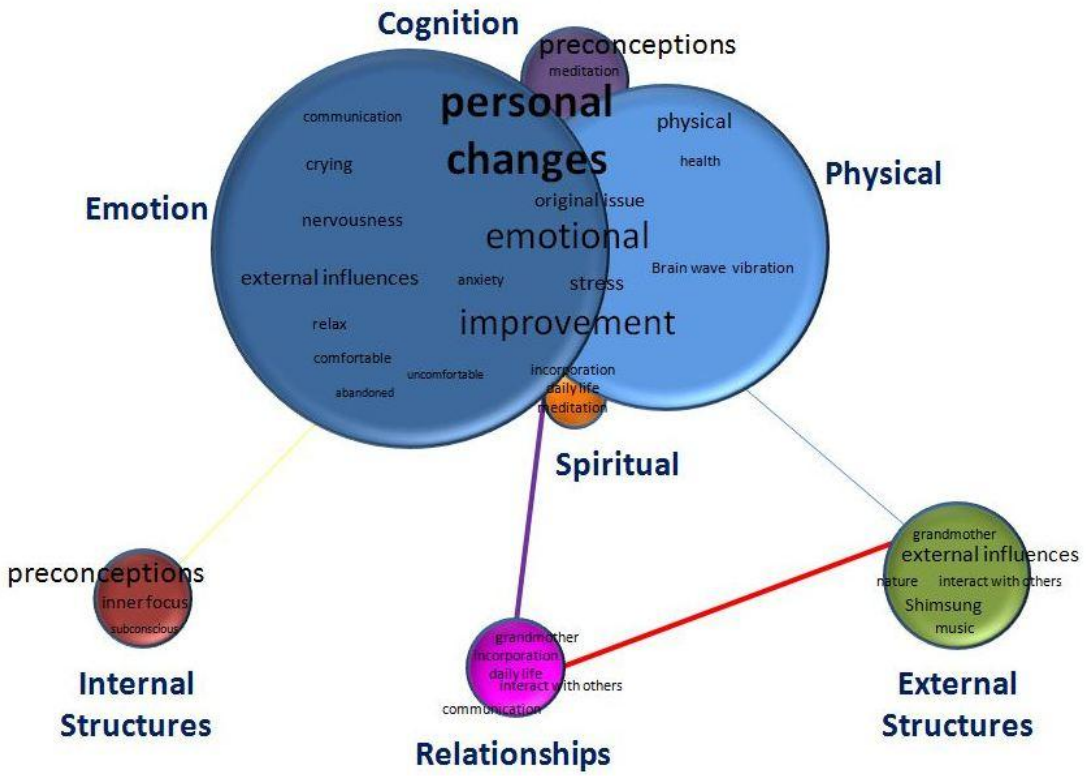


Figure 16. Profile map for Tuan.

Synthesis of Results

Ten participants were accepted into the study based on their meeting the membership and demographic criteria outlined in the Research Design in Chapter 3. These criteria were intended to maximize variation among the study population in terms of both internal and external structures. While each participant clearly had a unique story to tell, there were also some noteworthy similarities across the pool of participants. As indicated in Table 11, Participant Themes, eight of the ten participants originally came to the Center to address some kind of physical health issue. Of these eight participants, seven subsequently discovered emergent issues related to emotional or spiritual well-being.

The Participant Profiles in Chapter 4, and Participant Profile Analysis for each individual in Chapter 5 provided the basis for determining primary, secondary, and tertiary themes by participant (Table 11). Examining these themes across the study population shows some commonalities and differences. Similar among participants was the theme about the enabling characteristic of physical practices. Some variant of this theme (e.g., "Physical practices support my spiritual growth" or "Physical practices enable emotional and spiritual growth") was the primary or secondary theme for eight participants. The importance of physical practices as the basis for transformation in the cognitive, affective, and spiritual dimensions addresses the first research question exploring the relationship of a holistic approach to learning to transformation of the habitus.

Six participants described a theme such as "I shift to an internal focus" as either a secondary or tertiary theme. This theme has a bearing on both the second and third research questions, exploring the dynamic interaction between the conjuncturally-specific and habitus aspects of internal structures, as well as the co-evolution of external and internal structures. Finally, seven participants had a primary, secondary, or tertiary theme about relationships, such as "I transform myself through relationships." This theme also addresses the second and third research questions. There were also some differences in the patterns of the participant themes. For instance, Grace was the only participant who did not describe an emergent issue and for whom the primary theme was "I am on a spiritual journey." Other participants told stories of spiritual awakening only after they had been exposed to physical or holistic practices that brought this issue to their awareness.

Table 11

Participant Themes

Participant	Original Issue	Emergent Issue	Participant Theme (1)	Participant Theme (2)	Participant Theme (3)
Grace	Improve physical health	No change	I am on a spiritual journey	Physical practices support my spiritual growth	N/A
Julia	Curiosity	Emotional, spiritual	Physical practices enable emotional & spiritual growth	I shift to an internal focus & awaken my Self	I transform my preconceptions
Cynthia	Improve physical health	Preconceptions	I transform my preconceptions	Holistic practices support my life's journey	I transform my relationships
Anisha	Improve physical health	Emotional mastery	Physical practices enable emotional mastery	I shift to an internal focus	N/A
Raina	Curiosity, some insomnia	Emotional, spiritual	I transform myself through relationships	Physical practices enable holistic transformation	I shift to an internal focus & awaken my Self
Dira	Improve physical health	Emotional, spiritual	Physical practices enable emotional & spiritual growth	I shift to an internal focus & awaken my Self	I transform myself through relationships
Debra	Improve physical health	Emotional mastery	Holistic practices support my life's journey	I shift to an internal focus	I transform my relationships
Nolan	Improve physical health	Emotional, spiritual	I choose to embrace new perspectives	Physical practices enable emotional & spiritual growth	I transform my relationships
Nakari	Improve physical health	Emotional, spiritual	I heal myself through holistic practices	Physical practices enable emotional healing & mastery	I transform myself through relationships
Tuan	Improve physical health	Emotional mastery	Physical practices enable emotional healing & mastery	I transform my relationships	I shift to an internal focus & awaken my Self

Another way to synthesize results is to compare the top families and number one code for the ten participants, the strength of the ties between families in the Profile Maps, and the ranking of "relationships," a family not originally included in the conceptual framework. From this perspective, the families of "emotion" and "physical" were in the top two rankings for eight of the ten participants. Overall, "emotion" was the number one family for five participants (Julia, Dira, Debra, Nolan, and Tuan), and "physical" was the number one family for three participants (Grace, Anisha, and Nakari). "Cognition" was the number one family for Cynthia, and "Relationships" the top family for Raina. The number two families varied quite a bit among the participant pool, with two individuals having ties for their second place families (see Table 12).

Table 12

Comparison of Top Families and Codes by Participant

Participant	#1 Family	#2 Family	#1 Code	Ties	Rank of "Relationships"
Grace	Physical	Spiritual	Spiritual	Med	8
Julia	Emotion	External/Internal Structures	Emotional	Med	4
Cynthia	Cognition	Physical	Preconceptions	Weak	7
Anisha	Physical	Emotion	Emotional	Weak	4
Raina	Relationship	External Structures	Emotional	Strong	1
Dira	Emotion	Physical	Physical	Strong	3
Debra	Emotion	Internal Structures	Tension	Strong	3
Nolan	Emotion	Physical/Personal Growth	Different Perspectives	Strong	5
Nakari	Physical	Emotion	Yoga	Strong	5
Tuan	Emotion	Physical	Personal Changes	Weak	7

The number one code for each participant was sometimes—but not always—part of the top two families. Notable exceptions in this regard were Raina, whose top code was "emotional" (based on including all emotional-related codes in the groundedness total), and Nolan whose top three codes were all in the "cognition" family. Considering the predominance of emotion, both in terms of the top families, as well as code groundedness (see Table 5, Inclusive Code Comparison), a clear pattern emerged from the synthesized results—emotions were noted in the transformative learning process for all ten participants. The types of emotions described ranged from positive emotions such as acceptance, happiness, calmness, love and joy to negative emotions such as tension, conflict, anger, sadness, and depression.

Another pattern visible across the participant pool was the interrelationship between the families of "emotion" and "physical." For half of the ten study participants (Anisha, Dira, Nolan, Nakari, Tuan), both "emotion" and "physical" were in the top two families. The overlapping of the bubbles representing these families in the respective Profile Maps for these five participants graphically demonstrates the interwoven and interdependent nature of these two elements of holistic learning. In their stories, participants vividly described a number of practices by which emotions are discovered and released through the physical body. Examples of such practices included a series of stretching and strengthening exercises during regular classes, body tapping, holding of specific postures for an extended period of time, and applying deep physical pressure to specific areas of the body. The similarity of these stories across a diverse population leads to an overarching theme about the linkage of physical practices to transformation.

The Profile Maps presented earlier in this chapter (Figures 7-16) provide succinct graphical views of not only the most salient aspects of transformation for each participant, but also the connections between them. These are indicated by the lines between the various families where the width of the line shows the strength of the tie as calculated by the number of codes in common between the respective families. It may be conjectural to assign meaning to the strength of ties. Nevertheless, the similarities and differences between participants are visually striking. As shown in Table 12, three of the participants (Cynthia, Anisha and Tuan) have relatively weak ties between families, with Tuan being the only participant without connecting ties between all families in the Profile Map. Two participants (Grace and Julia) have medium strength ties between families. The remaining five participants (Raina, Dira, Debra, Nolan and Nakari) have one or more extremely strong ties between families.

Finally, a column is included in Table 12 showing the ranking of the family of "relationships" for all participants. As noted earlier in the chapter, three families (energy, personal growth and development, and relationships) were created after the coding process, adding these families to those from the conceptual framework. Of these three new families, only "relationships" had a high enough level of code groundedness to be included in the Profile Maps. The addition of the family of "relationships" was a surprise, not only because it hadn't been conceptualized as an integral part of the transformative learning process, but also because of the comparative importance of this family in the final results.

For one participant (Raina) "relationships" was the number one family. As shown in Table 12, this family also seemed fairly important for other participants, being in the

top three families for Raina, Dira, and Debra, and in the top five families for seven of the ten study participants. Both the unexpected nature of the significance of relationships, as well as its status as a primary, secondary or tertiary theme for seven participants (Table 11), raises it to the level of an overarching theme for the study, addressing the research questions about the dynamic interaction of the conjuncturally-specific and habitus aspects of internal structures, as well as the co-evolution of external and internal structures.

Minority Findings

Another way to consider the results is to examine the minority findings and the differences in results across the population. One surprise in the results was the low level of code groundedness for the family of "outcomes," a major construct in the conceptual framework. From one perspective, the outcome overall may be considered the personal transformation of the study participant. And yet, participants didn't speak as if the process were completed. Rather, they spoke in terms of a "journey," or ongoing process, implying that the interest was more on "becoming" than on arriving at a particular end state.

At an individual level, other minority findings included unique primary themes such as "I am on a spiritual journey" for Grace, "I transform my preconceptions" for Cynthia, and "I choose to embrace new perspectives" for Nolan (see Table 11 for a listing of all participant themes). Three participants (Cynthia, Debra, and Nakari) also had a primary or secondary theme regarding holistic practices that did not become one of the three overarching themes. The importance of holistic practices, in particular, addresses the first research question. In Chapter 4, the participants' stories in their own words more fully answered this question regarding the importance of a holistic approach to learning,

by describing an emphasis as captured in the first overarching theme of physical practices to enable this holistic approach. The following section provides a summary of the overarching themes derived from the Participant Themes listed in Table 11.

Summary of Overarching Themes

As shown in Table 11, Participant Themes, there were three themes that had some degree of commonality across the study population. The first of these captured the importance of physical practices in the transformative learning process for eight of the ten participants. The second most numerous theme described how participants perceived a shift to an internal focus during the transformative learning process. The third theme in common was the role of relationships in supporting or enabling transformation. Following is a presentation of these overarching themes based on the detailed analysis of each participant, as well as the synthesized results provided in this chapter.

Theme #1: Linkage of Physical Practices to Transformation

The interdependent nature of the physical body and holistic approaches to transformation was captured in terms of code groundedness (physical being the second most frequent code after emotion), the importance of the family of "physical" for the study participants, as well as both "emotion" and "physical" being the top two families for half of the study population. Perhaps more notable were the ways in which participants described this interrelationship, saying that the physical body was the gateway or portal to discovering and releasing long-held emotions. Additionally, several participants explained how physical practices led to a greater sense of spiritual fulfillment, as well as to cognitive shifts through means such as critical self-reflection and enhanced self-awareness. The use of physical practices to facilitate transformation in

these different dimensions may be referred to as "embodied affect," "embodied spirituality," and "embodied cognition."

Embodied Affect

Emotion was the number one family for 50% of the participants, and the code groundedness of emotion across the study population was more than twice the number of the second highest code category, physical. From an individual perspective, the impact of physical practices on emotional transformation was the primary theme for 40% of the participants (see Table 11). The description of this process ranged from the use of physical practices to discover and release emotions, to the healing or mastery of emotions. For instance, Raina explained how body tapping training enabled her to connect to her body in a very concrete manner in order to discover and recognize long-buried emotions, whereas Nolan described how he discovered the reciprocal relationship between the body and emotions to proactively influence his physical and emotional well-being.

Julia's account of the interaction between physical practices and emotion detailed reactions such as hormonal release in response to sustained physical exertion, as well as the feeling of "lightness" that obtained from crying to release repressed emotion. Dira experienced how the pressing of various parts of her body triggered the release of emotional memories, and Tuan demonstrated a chest tapping exercise that enabled him to let go of emotional issues. Nakari experienced the healing of substantial hair loss that had been caused by severe emotional stress. Other participants spoke of the efficacy of physical practices in achieving emotional resilience or mastery. For Anisha, the physical practices helped her master her emotional reactions, as well as be more resilient to

traumatic emotional experiences. Nolan used the physical practices to proactively remain centered and calm despite emotional tension in the workplace, and Nakari learned physical techniques to help her gain mastery of her emotions.

Embodied Spirituality

In addition to the importance of physical practices in facilitating emotional growth, several participants described the impact of such practices on their spiritual growth and development. Though none of these participants claimed that a desire to enhance their spirituality was the issue that brought them to the Center, five participants described how the physical practices subsequently enhanced their awareness about the desire or need for spiritual growth. Grace was the only participant for whom the primary theme was the importance of her spiritual journey. She explained that physical practices were a requisite support of her continued spiritual growth. Spirituality was an emergent issue for Julia as she discovered that the physical movements of the bowing meditation enabled her to center her Self and find a deeper connection to others. Raina likewise described the spiritual effect of physical practices in supporting the connection to her Self, nature, and the universe. Both Dira and Nolan also cited the bowing meditation as the example of a physical practice that enhanced their spiritual growth.

Embodied Cognition

From a cognitive perspective, many participants described how they developed the ability to observe themselves, and gain self-awareness about the interrelationship of their mind and body. For Julia this developed as a process of self-observation, critical self-reflection and active agency in terms of making conscious decisions about exercise goals and on-going training. Raina also emphasized the importance of observation in

becoming more aware of how her body responded to the physical demands of her training. Even while describing the cognitive aspect of their transformation engendered by physical practices, several participants emphasized the integral interrelationship of all aspects of holistic learning—mind, body, emotion, and spirit. For Dira, the physical practices were a concrete, disciplined method to align her body with her mind and soul. Raina, as well, highlighted the importance of physical training to connect the spiritual, mental, and physical aspects of her being. Finally, Nolan stated that the bowing meditation affected him cognitively in its ability to improve his focus, but that he experienced it as a means to powerfully integrate all holistic dimensions of learning.

Theme #2: Participants' Perception of Shifting to an Internal Focus

In telling their stories of transformation, participants vividly described situations of tension and conflict as they struggled to make sense of the interaction of their internal and external structures. External structures were described as including the family and cultural background that laid the foundation for their beliefs about the world and the expectations of how they should behave in their various roles in life. For Julia, as for several other participants, her increased self-discovery and self-awareness led to the realization that she had sublimated her own desires to the preconceptions about how she should live her life as a wife and a mother. Her transformative learning process included a focus on internal structures as seen in the affirmation of her agency in honoring her own needs and making different choices in life.

Raina likewise described how the external structures of her primary family and Hispanic cultural heritage formed her expectations about herself and how she should live. She began to experience tension between these preconceptions and her newfound desire

to focus on her inner needs. Learning how to shift the focus to her internal structures not only transformed her own perspective, but led to a revitalization of relationships with her family members. In telling of her transformative learning experience, Dira also described the impact of her family and cultural background, speaking passionately about the shift in looking for external sources of fulfillment to the awakening of her Self and the ability to find fulfillment internally.

Both Anisha and Tuan emphasized the importance of physical exercises as an internal focusing mechanism to inoculate them from the impact of external structures. For Anisha, this took the form of abdominal exercises to help her let go of negative emotions and provide a barrier against the undue influence of stressful emotions in her external environment. Tuan also described using abdominal exercises to enhance his internal focus. He was able to use this technique not only as a shield, but also as a means of enhancing the discovery of his "true self." Finally, Debra depicted the tension between external expectations of family members and colleagues in the workplace, and her own internal needs. In shifting to an internal focus, she experienced a transformation in terms of enhanced self-efficacy and being able to remain calm and centered despite stresses in her external environment.

Theme #3: Recognizing Transformation in the Dynamics of Relationship

This theme acknowledges and explores the significance of the interaction between internal and external structures as captured in relationships. "Relationships" was the only family added to those from the conceptual framework that also had a high enough level of code groundedness to be represented in the Profile Maps. The theme that emerged speaks to the structuring and restructuring of relationships in terms of the conjuncturally-

specific and habitus aspect of internal structures as manifested in role-based relationships. The transformation of oneself through relationships was the primary theme for Raina, and either a secondary or tertiary theme for another six participants. Most of these participants portrayed a transformative learning process in which many family and collegial relationships greatly improved, but other relationships were proving more resistant to change.

For example, as she described her transformative learning process, Raina repeatedly spoke of the seminal influence of her role-based familial relationships, particularly with her father and her younger sister. In the case of her father, Raina had internalized the cultural expectations about a son carrying on the family business to the extent she denied her own identity. The belief that she had failed her father by not being the son he wanted led to difficult relationships with other men. She had also absorbed the preconception that she should sacrifice her own desires to take care of her younger sister. Raina portrayed the releasing of repressed emotions regarding these relationships as an important element of her transformative learning experience, leading to an enhanced self-awareness and acceptance that positively impacted the ongoing relationship with her parents as well as with co-workers. Raina explained that she continued to struggle to improve the relationships with her sister and grandmother.

Like Raina, both Debra and Nolan had difficult relationships with a parent, as well as challenging relationships with co-workers. In Debra's case, she described how the tension and conflict with her mother had lessened as Debra learned to take responsibility for her interactions with her parents. On the other hand, the acrimonious relationship with her co-worker remained unresolved at the time of the interview. Nolan's transformed

experience of relationships was part of his new perspective regarding the interdependent and reciprocal nature of the individual and the group. In embracing this new perspective and being willing to engage more fully with others, he described an increased understanding and ability to cope with negative energy in the workplace, as well as an improvement in his managing of conflict. He also experienced an ability to connect more deeply with his colleagues. While he spoke eloquently of the negative influence of his father in the course of his life, Nolan did not indicate at the time of the interview that his transformative learning experience had facilitated an improvement in that primary familial relationship.

Cynthia, Dira, and Nakari all described improvements in relationships with family members following their understanding and transformation of role-based preconceptions about how they should behave with others. Cynthia explained that the release of such preconceptions allowed her to achieve a greater understanding and acceptance of herself and others. Dira told of the depression and emotional numbness resulting from the preconception that she should sacrifice herself for her husband and children. As she transformed this perspective, she revitalized the relationships with her family, as well as her ability to care more deeply for others beyond her family. Nakari likewise experienced a change in her relationships with her husband, daughters and students, but like Raina, Debra and Nolan, Nakari continued to struggle with improving the dysfunctional relationships with her mother and older sister. The common thread for all seven participants in this theme is that “relationships” may not only be a means of linking external and internal structures, but of transforming and co-evolving this interdependent connection.

Summary

In brief, the analysis in this chapter presented the results for each participant individually as well as across the study population, addressing the second and third research questions. The second research question asked, *How is the dynamic interaction between the conjuncturally-specific and habitus aspects of internal structures influenced during the transformative learning process?* This question is related to both the second and third overarching themes in that the conjuncturally-specific aspect of internal structures describes the interaction of the individual within a specific context, and from a role-based perspective, thus incorporating the notion of relationship of the individual and his or her internal structures with those in the social environment of external structures.

The overarching theme describing the shift to an internal focus was a secondary participant theme for Julia, Anisha, Dira, and Debra (Table 11). Common elements of their stories included the tension they experienced between the habitus aspects of internal structures, such as worldview, cultural schemas, and embedded psychological habits of mind, and the conjuncturally-specific aspects of internal structures, particularly as related to their positional roles such as spouse, parent, or colleague, and the social norms and expectations associated with these roles.

The dynamic interaction between the habitus and conjuncturally-specific aspects of internal structures was revealed not only in the growing awareness of how these participants had been influenced by the expectations of others as associated to these external roles, but in their questioning of unconscious, taken-for-granted assumptions to begin placing more emphasis on the habitus aspect of internal structures. Julia described this as a "journey inside instead of always being focused outside." Dira likewise

explained how she had examined her preconceptions of role-based expectations as well as looking to others for internal fulfillment, learning that she could connect more deeply to her own sense of self to satisfy her longing for fulfillment.

The third and final research question asked, *How do external and internal structures co-evolve during the transformative learning process?* Considering other individuals within one's social context as being an important part of external structures, this question is related to the third overarching theme of recognizing transformation in the dynamics of relationship. This was a primary theme for Raina, a secondary theme for Tuan, and a tertiary theme for five other participants (Table 11). The areas of transformation described by these participants included a growing awareness of previously unconscious aspects of their habitus such as preconceptions, and taken-for-granted frames of reference about the world. In increasing their self-knowledge through a combination of physical, emotional, cognitive, and spiritual means, these individuals learned to release limiting preconceptions, and gain a greater understanding and acceptance of themselves, as well as of others.

They explained how their own transformation had impacted their relationships, improving them in most cases, though some participants still struggled with patterns of behavior embedded in primary, familial relationships. For Raina, her enhanced self-awareness and transformation not only led to an understanding of the reciprocal flow and dynamic co-emergence of relationship between herself and others, but it also allowed her to heal the bond with her father. Tuan described how his new-found ability to release preconceptions, and long-held fears drastically improved his interactions with others, so much so that he decided to devote himself to becoming a Master and supporting others in

their own process of transformation. The following chapter provides an interpretation of these overarching themes as related to the research questions, in addition to the implications of these themes for theory, research, and practice.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter provides conclusions and recommendations in the following sections: (a) Discussion and Interpretation of Results presents a summary of interpretation by research question, an interpretation of the three overarching themes, and a description of the interaction of the overarching themes; (b) Implications presents the implications of the study's results for theory, research and practice; and (c) Concluding Remarks summarizes the study's contributions to theory, research, and practice.

Discussion and Interpretation of Results

The purpose of this research was to explore how an individual's exposure to a holistic approach to learning might facilitate transformation of the habitus as a system of dispositions. The research site of a holistic health center was chosen as a context that provided such an approach. The participants represented a purposeful sampling of individuals who had already self-selected into the research site for a variety of reasons, most of them joining the Center initially to address some kind of physical issue. The study used a phenomenological interview method (Seidman, 2006) to elicit first-person accounts of the lived experience of transformation, including the individual's reflection on the meaning of this experience.

The ten individuals in this study represented a diverse sample in terms of age, ethnicity, gender, and cultural background, with five participants being first-generation immigrants. Each participant had a unique story to tell in terms of their process of transformation and what it had meant in their lives, some of them emphasizing the importance of emotions in the learning process, and others describing the impact of physical practices, cognitive, or spiritual growth.

Despite the variation in the individual experiences and the heterogeneity of the sample, there were also commonalities across the participant pool, leading to the emergence of three overarching themes. Each of these themes addressed one or more of the study's three research questions. In Table 13, the relationship of the overarching themes and research questions is visually represented with primary, secondary, and tertiary participant themes depicted graphically. The first research question, *What is the relationship of a holistic approach to learning to transformation of the habitus as a system of dispositions?* is addressed by two overarching themes: Linkage of physical practices to transformation; and Recognizing transformation in the dynamics of relationship.

The second and third research questions, *How is the dynamic interaction between the conjuncturally-specific and habitus aspects of internal structures influenced during the transformative learning process?* and *How do external and internal structures co-evolve during the transformative learning process?* are both addressed by the second and third overarching themes: Participants' perception of shifting to an internal focus; and Recognizing transformation in the dynamics of relationship. The following section provides a summary of results by research question, an in-depth interpretation of the three overarching themes and a description of the interaction of the overarching themes.

Summary of Interpretation by Research Question

Research Question #1

What is the relationship of a holistic approach to learning to transformation of the habitus as a system of dispositions?

The primary research question explored transformative learning from the perspective of the individual and how that individual's experience of transformation of the habitus may be facilitated by a holistic approach to learning. Despite the ethnic, cultural, age, and gender diversity of the sample population, all but one of the study participants spoke to the importance of all the holistic elements—physical, emotional, cognitive, spiritual—of their transformative learning experience. Many of them emphasized both the physical and emotional aspects of their learning process, including the fact that physical symptoms or distress had been the initiating factor for them to join the Center. This was the case for eight of the ten participants. After their exposure to teachings and practices at the Center, participants described how the integrated, holistic approach was a powerful aspect of their transformation. Many also noted, often with surprise, how the physical practices enabled long-buried emotions to surface, or how they discovered spiritual fulfillment that had been lacking. Consistent throughout was the emphasis both on emotional transformation, as well as accessing these emotions through physical practices, that is, the relationship between body and emotion. The importance of physical practices in enabling the transformative learning process was a primary or second theme for eight participants, leading to the overarching theme, "Linkage of physical practices to transformation."

Research Question #2

How is the dynamic interaction between the conjuncturally-specific and habitus aspects of internal structures influenced during the transformative learning process?

The interaction between these two aspects of internal structures was most visible in the variety of role-based relationships that participants described. The reciprocal nature

of structuring describes a process by which one's habitus may both be formed by, and contribute to the forming of others. The experiences described by the study participants exemplified this process in their stories of role-based preconceptions from the perspective of child, spouse, sibling, or parent, preconceptions that controlled or constrained their behavior. Participants told of awakening to the influence of such beliefs, and learning to be more understanding, less judgmental, and more accepting of themselves and others. They also described how they consciously exercised their sense of agency to change from an external to an internal focus. This was a secondary theme for four participants and a tertiary theme for another two participants (Table 11). This became the overarching theme of "Participants' perception of shifting to an internal focus."

For many participants, a significant aspect of their transformative learning process was seeing how their relationships with family members, friends, and co-workers improved by means of their own change in worldview. By the same token, several participants also told of their ongoing struggle to change deeply rooted preconceptions and behavioral patterns with parents or siblings. The temporal nature of influence on habitus formation in one's early years may be related to the durability of certain aspects of the habitus relative to conjuncturally-specific aspects of internal structures as manifested in role-based relationships. Seven of the ten participants had primary, secondary or tertiary themes describing the influence of relationships on their transformative learning process (Table 11), leading to the overarching theme of "Recognizing transformation in the dynamics of relationship."

Research Question #3

How do external and internal structures co-evolve during the transformative learning process?

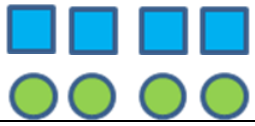
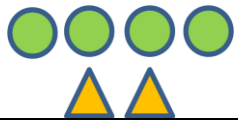
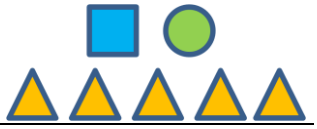
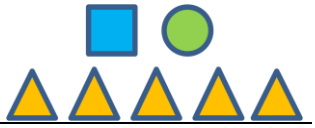
External and internal structures might be seen as two sides of the same coin: neither exists without the other. Despite the heterogeneity of the study population, participants were remarkably consistent in their description of the interaction of internal and external structures: not a single participant recounted his or her transformative learning experience as something that took place in isolation. Rather, it was in the individual's interaction with external forces—whether family, friends, community, or other social entities—through which they both recognized and shifted their perspectives. In the Center, as well as the extended community, members are challenged and supported in this process. Many participants talked about the reinforcement and importance of community support, usually in terms of the Masters. A critical phase in this process for several participants was a shift in the focus from external structures, as understood by the expectations or pressures from individuals or groups outside one's self, to internal structures as defined by one's inner self, including the habitus. This process is described by the overarching theme, "Participant's perception of shifting to an internal focus."

Participants also told how their relationships and interactions with others transformed along with their own inner perspectives, reflected in the overarching theme of "Recognizing transformation in the dynamics of relationship." The relational improvements depicted by participants were by no means constant across the spectrum of their relationships. Rather, several participants described how they continued to struggle with dysfunctional primary relationships, generally with a parent or a sibling. The

variability of change experienced across a range of relationships may be indicative of the relative durability of the primary habitus established in the earliest period of one's life. Once they had shifted to an expanded frame of reference through transformative learning, many participants subsequently described their vision to serve the broader community to aid in the transformation of others. Thus, the external world may be both a mirror and a means of transforming oneself, and sometimes, others. In the conclusions that follow, the overarching themes will be explored in terms of their implications for theory, research, and practice.

Table 13

Relationship of Themes to Research Questions

Research Questions	Theme 1: Linkage of Physical Practices to Transformation	Theme 2: Participant's Perception of Shifting to an Internal Focus	Theme 3: Recognizing Transformation in the Dynamics of Relationship
Relationship of a holistic approach to learning to transformation			
Dynamic interaction between the conjuncturally-specific and habitus aspects of internal structures			
Co-evolution of external and internal structures			

Note.
Primary Participant Theme:
Secondary Participant Theme:
Tertiary Participant Theme:

Theme #1: Linkage of Physical Practices to Transformation

The results of this study suggest that there was a common emphasis on the crucial nature of physical practices, arguing for a holistic approach to learning that is *rooted* in the phenomenology of embodiment. Following is a more detailed interpretation of the study results, exploring the emotional, spiritual, and cognitive elements of transformation from an embodied perspective. These three dimensions of holistic learning are termed embodied affect, embodied spirituality, and embodied cognition.

Embodied Affect

Emotions have a reputation for being ephemeral in nature, and yet they are firmly grounded in the body. When one is emotionally aroused, this is typically visible to others in the musculature of the body—clenched fists, change in posture—as well as in the subtle shifts in facial expression—grimacing, blushing, scowling, and the like. Other bodily changes such as release of hormones, peptides, or neurotransmitters may not be externally visible (Damasio, 1999; Prinz, 2005), yet they are readily apparent to the tools of affective neuroscience, with "affect" defined as the inclusion of emotional body states, as well as the feelings that may emerge in response to those emotions (Panksepp, 2003).

The recounting of the emotional aspects of transformative experiences was consistent among all the study participants. Indeed, they seemed to have considered their learning experiences to have been transformative due to the often dramatic change in emotional states before, during, and after their learning processes. For example, several participants described the affective valence of feelings such as depression, sadness, or a sense of emptiness being transformed to feelings of joy, peace, and calmness. Central to this transformation was the use of practices such as regular physical exercises, body

tapping training, deep pressure applied to the body to identify, heal, release, or master emotions from a concrete bodily perspective.

The use of the body to facilitate emotional transformation may be similar to one of Amann's (2003) dimensions of somatic learning—affective learning—which she defined as the "acquisition of knowledge as a result of paying attention to and honoring our feelings and emotions" (p. 29). The construct of affective learning acknowledges the role and importance of emotions in the learning process; nevertheless it does not seem to draw out the implications of the interdependent nature of the body and emotions that may occur while learning.

Philosophically, the stories recounted by participants are in harmony with the phenomenological perspective that considers the body as essential to creating conscious experience (Gallagher, 2006). As Gallagher and Zahavi (2008) explained, the body is "deeply implicated in our relation to the world, in our relation to others, and in our self-relation, and its analysis consequently proves crucial for our understanding of the mind-world relation… and for our understanding of the mind-body relation" (p. 135). Nolan and other participants explained how the integration of physical practices and emotion enabled him to take a more proactive stance towards understanding and managing his emotions on a day-to-day basis. In this study, then, the essential role of emotion in the transformative learning was confirmed by the lived experience of the study participants, with the further emphasis that they became conscious and aware of their feelings by means of physical practices used to heal, release, or master emotions that had previously been at an unconscious level of awareness.

Embodied Spirituality

Several participants mentioned their religious upbringing during the course of the interview process, but they were emphatic about describing "spirituality" as being more inclusive than religious beliefs. Spirituality in the context of personal transformation was depicted by this study's participants as a connection to one's "true self" or soul. In discovering the essence of their own selfhood, participants also described a greater sense of connectedness with others, and even the whole of the universe. This perception of being part of a greater whole is similar to Dei's (2002) definition of spirituality in the transformative power of education as "connectedness, belongingness, identifications, well-being, love, compassion, peaceful co-existence with nature and among groups" (p. 123).

The discussion of spirituality as an important part of their transformative learning experience ranged from Grace who described herself as being on a lifelong "spiritual journey," to Nolan who said he had never considered spirituality before. The common thread in both of their experiences, as well as several other study participants, was the critical role of physical practices such as meditation or bowing in supporting or catalyzing spiritual growth. Such practices, they said, enabled them to find or sustain a sense of internal centeredness while simultaneously creating a sense of unity with others. Nolan, in particular, found this to be a novel and powerful experience of transformation.

Embodied Cognition

Classical cognitive scientists studied the mind empirically from a perspective of disembodiment (Brockman, 2011; Gallagher & Zahavi, 2008). In the next generation of cognitive science, researchers began to call this paradigm into question, taking a

biological approach (Maturana, 1988, 2002; Varela et al., 1991) in realizing that the sensory structures of the body itself fundamentally determined what the mind was capable of perceiving and experiencing (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999). The embodied cognition framework inherent in the enactive approach explains that "bodily action does not simply express previously formed mental concepts; bodily practices including gesture are part of the activity in which concepts are formed…; concepts are created and manipulated in culturally organized practices of moving and experiencing the body" (Stewart et al., 2010, pp. 428-429).

The transformative stories of the study participants support this embodied perspective in their description of the inextricable linkage between their physical practices and their cognitive processes. Many participants explained how the physical nature of the training and other workshops prompted them to observe their bodies, reflect on their reactions, and gain greater self-awareness about their preconceptions regarding personal limitations or constraints.

For Julia, this interaction between her mind and body revealed itself in the conscious intentions with which she made deliberate choices regarding physical training. The success she achieved in training reinforced her self-confidence and desire to keep setting more ambitious goals. Cynthia likewise described how the physical exercises meant to stretch the body concurrently stretched her mind, with a reciprocal influence on her body. A number of other participants depicted the cognitive benefits of physical exercise in terms of better concentration and focus, but they also stressed that the interaction of the mind and body during their learning process was so interwoven that it was difficult to disentangle them.

The emphasis placed by participants on the bodily aspect of their cognition and transformative learning experience resonates with the description of the habitus as a "physical, embodied actor, subject to developmental, cognitive and emotive constraints and affected by the very real physical and institutional configuration of the field" (Lizardo, 2004, p. 376). Likewise, the participants' description of the physical body as a portal to transformation substantiates the call for acknowledging and exploring methods beyond rational, critical reflection to facilitate and enable transformative learning (Stuckey, 2009; Taylor, 2007; Yorks & Kasl, 2006).

To summarize the interpretation of this theme, the primary research question explored the relationship of a holistic approach to learning to transformation of the habitus as a system of dispositions. The overarching theme showing the linkage of physical practices to transformation (see Figure 17) addresses this question by showing the importance of an *embodied* holistic approach to transformation. Such a viewpoint is in line with the phenomenological perspective described by Gallagher and Zahavi (2008):

> The body is not a screen between me and the world; rather, it shapes our primary way of being-in-the-world. To be situated in the world means not simply to be located someplace in a physical environment, but to be in rapport with circumstances that are bodily meaningful (p. 137).

Theme #2: Participants' Perception of Shifting to an Internal Focus

The second overarching theme describes a transformative learning process in which the participant perceived a shift in the focus from external to internal structures. Some variant of this process was a secondary theme for four participants (Julia, Anisha, Dira, and Debra), and a tertiary theme for two participants (Raina and Tuan) (see Table 11). This theme emerged in the stories of these participants as they described how external structures such as family of origin, national culture, or peer groups had

influenced the development of their internal structures. Their stories also included depiction of the dynamic co-emergence and interdependency of these external and internal structures. The emerging and temporal elements of transformative learning became evident as participants described the gradual shift from an external to internal focus, including the knowledgeability of the individual in discovering the impact of both acknowledged and unacknowledged conditions of action (Stones, 2005, 2011).

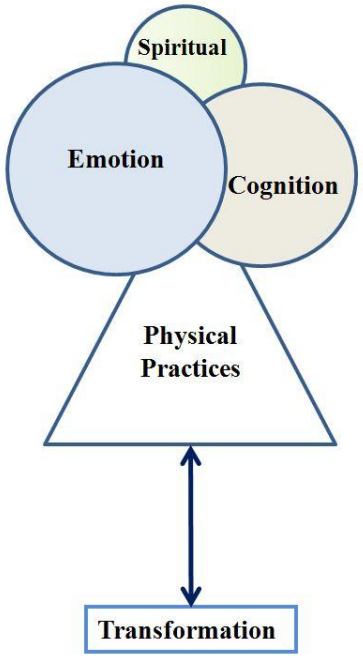


Figure 17. Linkage of physical practices to transformation.

External Influence on Internal Structures

Bourdieu (1989) explicitly described the influence of external on internal structures in his definition of habitus as socially created "schemes of perception, thought and action" (p. 14) that is both "*opus operatum* (result of practices) and *modus operandi* (mode of practices)" (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 52). The emphasis on the influence of externally

imposed social conditions is echoed by Collins (1998), who stated that agents are "socially inculcated" (p. 728) within an "embodied social structure" (p. 728), resulting in the habitus which informs the present as well as future perception and action. A corollary to the notion of external structures is what Bourdieu terms the "field," defined by Wacquant (2007) as "distinct microcosms endowed with their own rules, regularities, and forms of authority" (p. 268).

In terms of this study, the field may be seen as not only research site itself, but the international network of health centers to which it belonged and from which it derived its structuring practices, mostly Eastern in origin. The ten participants in this study represented a demographically diverse sample, hailing from vastly different ethnic, cultural, and professional backgrounds. Yet, despite this heterogeneity of external macro influences and the variation in the unique experiences conveyed, the individual participant themes coalesced into three overarching themes that showed some commonality in their transformative learning processes. Since these ten participants were not members of a single organizational entity such as a corporation or government agency, the only external structure they had in common was their context for learning, the research site itself. Their membership in the Center may also be seen as a kind of organizational entity, yet one with much looser ties between members who may attend infrequently, drop out, or be deeply engaged in a variety of activities on-site.

One interesting example of the potential influence of the external structure of the Center may be found in the comparison of the preexisting disorienting dilemmas as captured in the original issue for joining the Center versus the emergent issues that participants discovered after getting engaged in the Center. Eight of the ten participants

described specific physical issues as their impetus for joining the Center (Table 11, Participant Themes). With only one exception, all of these individuals discovered emergent issues in the course of their engagement with the Center. Many of them cited one of the foundational workshops as the starting point for realizing that they had emotional, cognitive or spiritual issues to address. The question that arises is whether the workshop itself functioned as an external *inducer* of a disorienting dilemma, prompting or facilitating a deeper level transformative learning experience that may have already been underway.

Interdependency of External and Internal Structures

No matter how diverse the macro external structures such as culture, organization, or other collective entities, individuals at the micro-level are both embedded in these larger structures as well as connected to other agents throughout the structures (Stones, 2005, 2011). One way that this interdependency is manifested is in the position-practices of a particular *in-situ* context. For this specific research study, these position-practices included regular classes, as well as special workshops and longer, more advanced training sessions. Engaging in these position-practices on a regular basis allows individuals to internalize such externally structured practices into what Stones (2011) termed a practice-oriented habitus. The network of agents for the context of this research study was constituted of Masters, Instructors, "Gold" members and regular members.

One advantage of the researcher's emic, longitudinal perspective was the ability to observe participants over time. In terms of position-practices, it became evident that the degree of embeddedness of the different participants varied greatly. Not only did core "Gold" members seem to have embedded themselves much more than other members,

attending classes and special training on a more regular basis, but those who seemed to have exhibited the greatest amount of change engaged in further position-practices such as Instructor or Masters-level training. This prompts the question of whether the study participants embedded themselves more as their transformative learning process continued, or whether the transformative learning process deepened as their embeddedness increased.

Shifting from External to Internal Focus

The overarching theme of gaining a new perspective as a result of shifting to an internal focus was a process that participants described as occurring over a period of time. Perhaps crucial to this process was the notion of intention or active agency in consciously pursuing a new way of being. Gallagher and Zahavi (2008) explain that "intentions are not hidden in the mind, but expressed in behaviour" (p. 167), linking this concept to Stones (2005) description of active agency as the embodiment of practices that interact with and recursively specify both internal and external structures. Some examples of active agency for the study participants included achieving goals, incorporating the new physical practices into their daily lives, making different choices, and committing to regular and on-going training.

Related to the first overarching theme of the linkage of physical practices to transformation, the process of shifting their perception from external to internal structures had physical, emotional, cognitive, and spiritual dimensions. The rational, cognitive process of reflecting on their assumptions, beliefs, or preconceptions, thereby gaining a better understanding and enlarged frame of reference is known as critical self-reflection (Mezirow, 1998). Describing such a rational, cognitive process may imply conscious,

deliberate pursuit of specific outcomes. This may have been the process for some participants. For others, their stories indicated more of a gradual awakening to the influence of external structures, and the realization through exploration of new behaviors prompted by practices at the Center that their true sense of agency and self-efficacy was to be found internally rather than externally. This shifting of their internal structures in relation to their experiences is similar to the self-organizing, emergent nature of the habitus described by Fuchs (2003) as "a matrix of patterns of cognition, perception and action that produces in interplay with actual context conditions of the social field an actor is situated in, the praxis of the actor" (p. 395).

The extent to which an individual employs conscious, deliberate actions, or engages in a more ad hoc, unpredictable process may be related to what Stones (2005) terms the "knowledge-ability of the actor" (p. 22). This construct is based on Giddens's theory of structuration which claims that structures "enter into" the actor, becoming by this means both embedded and embodied (Stones, 2011). The pre-existing external structures may influence the actor in terms of being either "unacknowledged conditions" or "acknowledged conditions" (Stones, 2005, p. 27). The former leads to unintended consequences, and the latter to intended consequences.

In the case of transformative learning for the participants in this study, acknowledged conditions may be seen as the original issue that brought them to the Center, for instance, specific physical issues such as stress-related pain, insomnia, breast cancer, or heart attack recovery. Unacknowledged conditions for these participants may have been issues such as discovering preconceptions that had been unexamined drivers of behavior, as well as emerging emotional or spiritual concerns. Similar to the traditional

transformative learning practice of engaging in critical self-reflection (Mezirow, 1998), holistic learning practices at the Center could have promoted knowledgeability for participants in a variety of ways—cognitively, emotionally, and/or spiritually—supporting their desire to change in line with their conscious intentions.

A visual depiction of the lived experience of shifting to an internal focus as portrayed by more than half of the study participants (see Table 11) may be represented in Figure 18 where "T1" indicates the pre-transformative state of the individual. In this state, individuals perceived the primary influence to be externally driven, and the agent focus was on the expectations, desires, or sway of forces external to the individual. For instance, Julia described how her transformative learning process was a "journey inside instead of always being focused outside. [I] found out who *I* really am, and *listening* to that instead of covering it up all the time." Raina explained that before joining the Center, "I wasn't living *my* life. I was living somebody else's expections."

Over time, participants described how their practices and new way of living enabled them to withdraw their focus of attention from external structures such as parents, other family members, colleagues at work, or other socially based structures external to the individual. Instead of concentrating outwardly, they directed their attention inward, intentionally shifting their focus to internal structures. Dira explained this transformative process by saying that "now with this training I've been able to draw that feeling of contentment from inside…. You already build up so much fulfillment inside yourself, from yourself, that you want to *share* your love with these people." Debra said she had learned that the answers to life's questions would come from an internal souces, saying "your soul has a longing to do something, or to find out what you

need to be doing, and it's not going to be something out there. It's going to be something inside." This shift to an internal focus over a period of time is depicted at "T2" as a relative increase in the size of internal structures, and a change in the size of the arrows of influence. This notional depiction of "T2" should be seen as a dynamic process rather than a static end state.

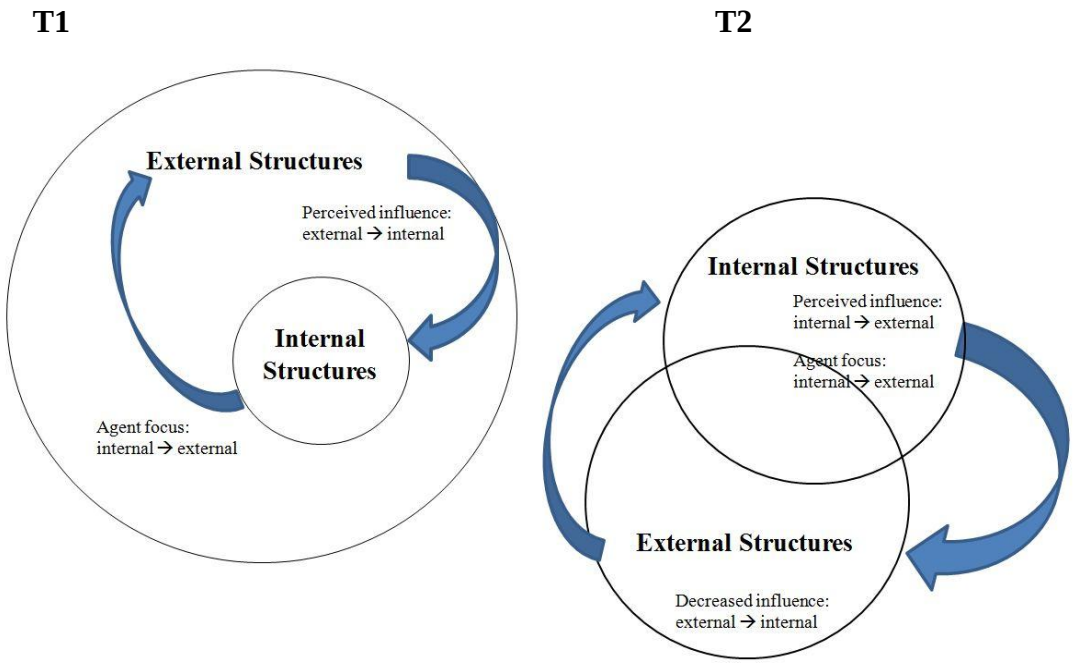


Figure 18. Shifting in focus from external to internal structures.

In summary, participants exercised a sense of agency, "the pre-reflective experience or sense that I am the author of the action (e.g., the experience that I am in control of my action)" (Gallagher & Zahavi, 2008, p. 161), in shifting their perceived focus from external to internal structures. This process incorporated a gradual awareness of both the formative influence of external structures, as well as a renewed appreciation for the interdependent nature of external and internal structures. In essence, they began to

understand how they had enacted their world through their embodied actions (Stewart et al., 2010).

Over time, these individuals increased their level of knowledgeability to understand both acknowledged and unacknowledged conditions of action, facilitating their ability to consciously engage in practices of transformative learning. In this sense, the habitus of these individuals showed itself to be a "generative dynamic structure that adapts and accommodates itself to another dynamic mesolevel structure composed primarily of other actors, situated practices and durable institutions" (Lizardo, 2004, p. 376).

Theme #3: Recognizing Transformation in the Dynamics of Relationship

The third and final overarching theme brings out the importance of relationships in the transformative learning process. This was a primary theme for one participant (Raina), a secondary theme for another (Tuan), and a tertiary theme for another five participants. While learning is often characterized in the adult learning literature at the individual unit of analysis (Hoare, 2006), incorporated into the concept of his Levels of Learning, Bateson (Visser, 2003, 2007) insists that learning takes place at a dyadic level, that is, in relationship. In describing the ten phases of learning in the transformative process, Mezirow (2009) also included the criticality of role-based relationships in terms of "exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions; provisionally trying of new roles; and building competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships" (p. 19).

The construct of relationship is implied in strong structuration theory (Stones, 2005) by the interactions inherent between the habitus and conjuncturally-specific aspects

of internal structures, as well as between external and internal structures. The importance of "relationship" surfaced in the Participant Profiles and coding process, resulting in the inclusion of relationship in the Profile Maps, and in Participant Themes (Table 11). In addition to "relationship" emerging as one of the eleven families (Table 9), the strength or weakness of ties between families in the Profile Maps may be seen as demonstrating relationships between those families (Table 12). Figure 19 visualizes "relationships" as an example of structural coupling between internal and external structures where the relationships dynamically co-emerge from the space between those structures due to their mutual reciprocity and interdependent interaction.

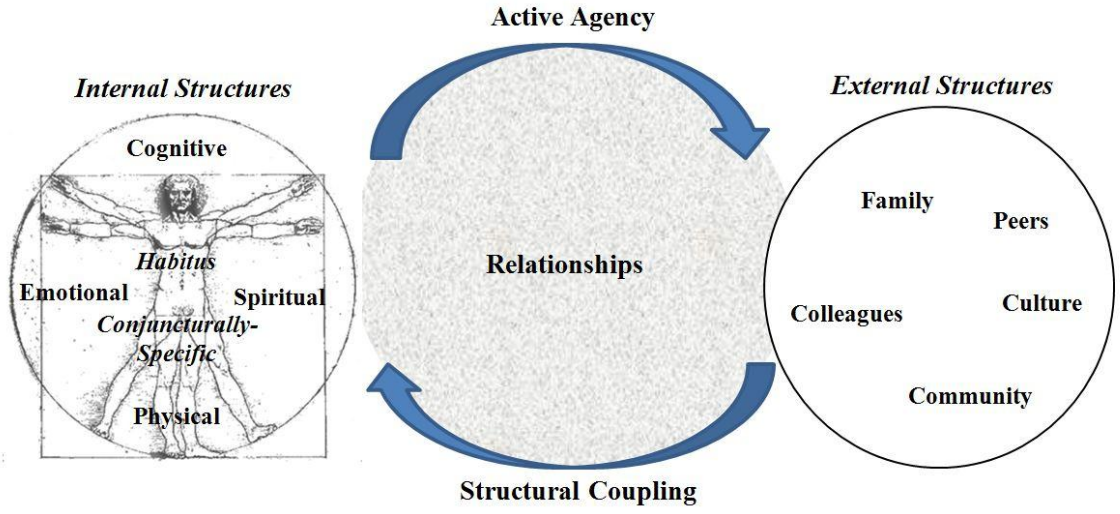


Figure 19. Relationship between internal and external structures.

The participants in this study referenced relationships repeatedly in their stories of transformation. For many of them, their primary familial relationships—parent, spouse, or sibling—were full of tension and conflict. The individuals making up those relationships constituted the external structures for the study participant. As brought out in the previous theme, the transformative learning process for several of these

participants entailed a shift in focus from external to internal structures. In terms of role-based relationships with others, they described major improvements in these interactions, perhaps resulting from a change in the intersubjectivity enacted between the individuals. Gallagher and Zahavi (2008) explain that,

> Social interaction is as such an embodied practice….To gain a more comprehensive understanding of the embodied mind, one needs to take a much wider scope, and the first step in developing this expanded concept of the mind is to consider the complexities of the circumstances in which more than one body is involved and where there is intersubjective interaction…Intersubjectivity is not found simply in the proximity of two or more passive subjects, but is also an encounter between agents. (pp. 148-149)

Fuchs (2003) contends that the habitus is a mediator of "mutual relationship of social structures and actors/groups" (p. 398). At the same time, the conjuncturally-specific aspect of internal structures represents the agent's positional role with all its embedded rules and norms, incorporating the interaction of the agent within a specific *in-situ* context (Stones, 2005). Enaction theory offers explanation for the importance of structurally coupled relationships by asserting that "the locus of cognitive activity is not exclusively internal and mental, but rather external, taking place in the interface where organism and world meet" (Stewart et al., 2010, p. xii). Considering the dynamic interaction of these two aspects of internal structures, the change over time in role-based relationships may have been indicative of the externalization of a perspective transformation.

Another element of "relationship" described by participants was the extent to which existing role-based relationships constrained or supported the transformative learning process. For participants whose primary relationships were unsupportive of the changes experienced during the learning process, relationship tensions were unresolved

despite perspective transformation experienced by the study participant. In other instances, participants described how their own shifts in worldview and subsequent behavior had had a positive, ripple effect on their relationships, whether familial or collegial.

In every case where the relationship itself proved fairly immune to change, it was a familial relationship—parent or sibling—with deeply embedded patterns of behavior enacted over time by members of the relationship. The relative intractability of such relationships to the influence of transformation may indicate the durability of the primary habitus (Bourdieu, 1990) as compared to dispositions acquired later in life. Bourdieu alludes to the temporally embedded aspect of relationship in stating that "human action is not an instantaneous reaction to immediate stimuli, and the slightest 'reaction' of an individual to another is pregnant with the whole history of these persons and of their relationship" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 124).

Another consideration in the dynamics of relationship is how the taking on of new roles may support or deepen the transformative learning experience. "Building competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships" (Mezirow, 2009, p. 19) is characterized as the penultimate phase constituting a transformative learning process. During the course of this study, five of the ten participants became Instructors or Masters. Gaining this level of certification entailed not only extended training, but commitment to teaching on a regular basis. Further embedding themselves in the position-practices and field of the Center with its concomitant structures, norms, and practices may have not only supported the transformative learning process for these participants, but also contributed to the sustaining of their new perspective over time.

Interaction of Overarching Themes

As depicted in Table 13, the overarching themes show some overlap in the ways they address the research questions. Likewise, the participant experiences illustrate how the themes are themselves interrelated and interdependent. The first overarching theme, "Linkage of physical practices to transformation," seemed to be foundational for the study participants. This theme described how physical practices provided an entrée to transformation in the cognitive, affective, and spiritual dimensions. For six of the ten participants, their transformative experience also incorporated the overarching theme of, "Participants' perception of shifting to an internal focus," a process reciprocally enabled and facilitated by their ongoing physical practices.

In their portrayal of the shift to an internal focus, many participants couched these stories in the context of role-based relationships in various external structures such as family, work, and community. The interaction between internal and external structures presupposes an interactive relationship of some kind. As described by a number of participants, the relationships with others provided a canvas on which they both enhanced their own self-knowledge, understanding, and acceptance, but also changed the patterns of behavior constituting their interactions with others. Their internal experience of transformation thus became visible in the dynamic of their relationships, the third overarching theme.

Some relationships, such as with parents or siblings, proved more resistant to change. In these cases, participants described their ongoing struggle and commitment to continue their learning process to both sustain and deepen their personal transformation. Integral to the learning process was the discipline to continue training and physical

practice. Figure 20 depicts the interaction of the overarching themes with the linkage of physical practices to transformation as both foundational and interdependent with the themes of shifting to an internal focus and transformation being made visible in the dynamics of relationship. The following section explores the implications of the study results for theory, research and practice.

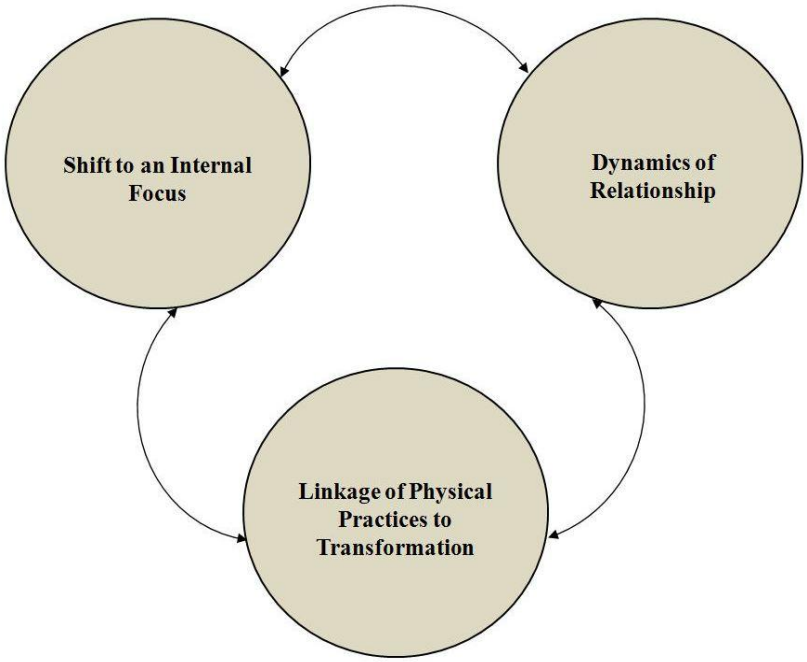


Figure 20. Interaction of overarching themes.

Implications

Theory

The theoretical foundation for this study's conceptual framework was based on transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 2009) incorporating a holistic approach to learning (Yorks & Kasl, 2002, 2006), as well as on strong structuration theory (Stones, 2005). Using a conceptual framework is one way to create a lens through which to study

and interpret a phenomenon of choice. Another alternative would have been to start with a research question, collect the data, and then allow the data to inform the theory and resulting framework. In this study the results support the basic tenets of the conceptual framework, but the data also suggest some ways to extend and perhaps synthesize the theories of transformative learning and strong structuration in fruitful manners. The following section addresses the implications of the findings for transformative learning theory and for strong structuration theory.

Transformative Learning Theory

In his groundbreaking research on the high numbers of women who returned to college in the 1970s, Mezirow (1978) used a methodology of grounded theory to study this phenomenon. The findings showed that participants went through ten phases in their transformative learning process:

1. A disorienting dilemma;
2. Self-examination;
3. A critical assessment of assumption;
4. Recognition of a connection between one's discontent and the process of transformation;
5. Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions;
6. Planning a course of action;
7. Acquiring knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans;
8. Provisionally trying of new roles;
9. Building competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships; and

10. A reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's new perspective (Mezirow, 2009, p. 19).

In the qualitative study described here, the purpose was not to test or validate these ten phases, but to explore how a holistic approach to learning might impact transformation of the habitus (Bourdieu, 1990). Mezirow (1994) contends that transformative learning always begins with a disorienting dilemma, a triggering event or incident in one's life that is interpreted as a crisis, catalyzing an examination of basic assumptions and problem-solving approaches. While such a dilemma is typically understood as "disorienting" from a cognitive perspective, the participants in this study described the issue prompting their change as originally physical in nature (stress, pain, illness, and so forth), with emotions being the most frequent issue that emerged after they began the learning process.

Subsequent phases in transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 2009) likewise take a cognitive, rational approach with individuals conducting self-examinations and critically assessing their assumptions. These self-evaluative phases seemed to also be present for participants in this study who told of a reflective process of examining their preconceptions, and gaining greater awareness and understanding of the beliefs and judgments underpinning their behavior. In addition to this cognitive emphasis, study participants highlighted the emotional aspect of their learning process, telling how physical practices enabled them to identify, heal, and release emotions. They also described a process of spiritual growth and development in conjunction with cognitive, emotional, and physical changes. This holistic incorporation of mind-body-emotion-spirit into the transformative learning process is in accordance with whole-person learning

(Yorks & Kasl, 2006), and other approaches that emphasize holistic means of achieving perspective transformation (Fisher-Yoshida, Geller & Schapiro, 2009; Hoggan, Simpson & Stuckey, 2009; Mezirow & Taylor, 2009). The importance of an embodied holistic approach to learning was captured in the overarching theme, "Linkage of physical practice to transformation."

Phases five through ten of Mezirow's (2009) transformative process are action-oriented, with a focus on finding the right fit between the individual's new perspective and the behaviors that would support it. Participants in this study were also action-oriented, exercising their agency in terms of making choices, setting new goals, and incorporating new practices into their daily lives. Another aspect of the active agency displayed by participants was the decision to shift their focus of attention from external to internal structures. The commonality of this process across the study sample led to the overarching theme, "Participant's perception of shifting to an internal focus."

The transformative learning theory phases (Mezirow, 2009) related to the importance of roles and relationships were particularly vital for these study participants with some of them describing how several of their role-based relationships had changed and improved over the course of their transformative learning experience. Other participants continued to struggle with dysfunctional primary relationships. It also seemed as though the participants who experienced the most dramatic change since joining the Center were those who committed to on-going, advanced training, taking on the new roles of Instructor or Master. The importance of interactions with others in either supporting or constraining their learning process emerged in the overarching theme, "Recognizing transformation in the dynamics of relationship."

Strong Structuration Theory

While the unit of analysis in transformative learning theory tends to be the individual, strong structuration theory provides a multilevel approach (Klein & Kozlowski, 2000) for examining the interaction of the individual in conjunction with the externally situated context. External structures may be understood as any social entity external to the individual (Stones, 2005), providing the context in and through which the individual acts. In this respect each individual is uniquely shaped by external forces such as family of origin, national culture, and the variety of social milieux experienced in the course of life. For the purposes of this study, the research site provided a context for an external structure common to the study participants, yet they each had an array of other external structures that played a role in the forming, reforming, and transforming of the habitus during the transformative learning process.

The participants in this study spoke at length about the influence of external structures such as family and national culture in forming their primary habitus, that aspect of the habitus that is embedded and embodied through early social conditioning. The formative nature of the social environment on the Self is a stance propounded by philosophers such as James (1892/2001), Dewey (1922/2002), and Mead (1934). Likewise, theorists such as Giddens (1983), Bourdieu (1990) and Stones (2005) discuss the reciprocal duality between individual and collective in influencing the practices of each.

The mutual reciprocity between external and internal structures was addressed in the research question asking, *How do external and internal structures co-evolve during the transformative learning process*? As the study participants developed a conscious

awareness of the formative elements of their external structures, gaining in self-knowledge and understanding of the constraints of their preconceptions, they began to question their meaning schemes, the beliefs, values, assumptions or judgments that had been influencing the interpretation of their life's experiences (Mezirow, 1991). While some of these meaning schemes may have been previously known to them, others had been unarticulated and implicit (Cranton, 2006). The holistic practices at the Center provided an external influence on the reforming of the habitus by introducing new meaning schemes in terms of practices to maintain physical fitness, release and gain mastery of emotions, and to seek new levels of spiritual growth and awareness.

External structures also contributed to the transformation of the habitus by supporting the various phases of transformative learning (Mezirow, 2009). Each individual entered the context of the Center with a different motivation, or impetus, to address a particular dilemma. Some individuals seemed to have chosen this particular context because it resonated with their values and previous experiences, offering a structured environment in which to continue a journey already underway. Other individuals seemed to have joined the Center for one purpose, only to discover emergent issues or triggers, giving rise to even deeper transformation. During the course of the study, five of the ten participants embraced the new perspective they had achieved so thoroughly that they became Instructors or Masters in order to reach back out into their social environments to support the growth or transformation of others.

Exploration of internal structures, particularly the habitus (Bourdieu, 1990), was the heart of this study. Stones (2005) defines internal structures as consisting of the habitus and the conjuncturally-specific aspect of internal structures that includes

positional roles with their own embedded rules and norms. All three research questions addressed one or more aspects of internal structures. In the various definitions to be found on the habitus, authors discuss its cognitive and affective aspects, noting that the habitus is mostly tacit and embodied, adapting and evolving over time. The individuals in this study described how they had grappled with the "baggage" of their habitus, oftentimes surfacing the embodied nature of their taken-for-granted assumptions and beliefs by means of physical practices that connected them kinesthetically with cognitive, affective, and spiritual aspects of their being. While many of the participants told stories that reflected the dramatic changes they had undergone, they also described ways in which they had not yet been able to change, saying that there were unending layers to discover and transform.

One way of expanding the understanding about the depth of an individual's learning may be to incorporate Bateson's (1972) Levels of Learning, where Levels II (LII) and III (LIII) appear most similar to the kinds of shifts experienced in transformative learning. According to McWhinney (2005), LIII puts one on the living path of continuous change of questioning and modifying core assumptions, making LIII transformative not only in the sense of challenging core assumptions, but as an ongoing rather than epochal process. McWhinney lists some of the "tools of change'' for LIII that Bateson advocated:

1. *Accepting contradictions:*…going beyond resolving paradoxes to accept both poles as essential to articulation of an issue.

2. *Learning the context of contexts of LI:* transcending the comfort of stability …uncovering and challenging assumptions until one is no longer at peace with LII achievements.
3. *Letting go of one's self* – becoming free of roles or the habits of personality (p. 33)

McWhinney (2005) concludes by saying "Staying with LIII is not arriving at a place but following a path of continual questioning assumptions and values, accepting the consequences of holding polarities and tolerating uncertainty" (p. 34). Most of the individuals in this study described the learning they had experienced in ways that may fit the descriptions of both LII and LIII: they had questioned their assumptions and achieved a new perspective; they had reached a level of stability, then pushed beyond it; the constitutive learning represented a new phase in their lives; they had changed aspects of their habitual patterns of behavior; and they perceived the learning process to be ongoing.

Providing the nexus for interaction of external and internal structures is the conjuncturally-specific aspect of internal structures. This incorporates positional roles of the individual within specific, *in-situ* contexts. The influence of social norms and expectations on the individual's perception of norms, power and meaning (Giddens, 1983) may also be captured in the transformative learning construct of sociolinguistic habits of mind (Cranton, 2006). Individuals in this study stressed the vital influence of their role-based relationships, describing the preconceptions they had absorbed in the role of child or sibling, as well as expectations about how to behave as a spouse or parent. The interactive nature of this aspect of internal structures with the external structures of their social environment was visualized in Profile Maps for each participant where the degree

of interaction described was represented in the thickness of the lines connecting the constructs in the maps. The apparent importance of role-based relationships on the learning process for participants led to the overarching theme, "Recognizing transformation in the dynamics of relationship."

While they had come to understand the power of social norms and expectations in forming their internal structures, participants did not explicitly discuss the new norms they had absorbed in the course of adopting holistic practices. Rather, they expressed their new perspective in terms of beliefs and philosophies taught at the Center. Studying the similarities and differences among the study participants in using common terminology and constructs would be an interesting follow-up to explore the impact of a particular external structure in the transformative learning process.

The final two elements of the quadripartite cycle are active agency and outcomes. Stones (2005) outlines five different aspects of active agency: "Shifting horizons of action; creativity, improvisation and innovation; degrees of critical distance and reflection; conscious and unconscious motivations; and the ordering of concerns…into a hierarchy of purposes" (p. 101). Study participants described their active agency in terms of the intentional choices they had made to commit to regular and ongoing training, learning how to identify and release limiting preconceptions, and long-held emotions. They engaged in purposeful self-reflection, working on issues that had been conscious as well as unconscious. They continued to exercise their agency as they incorporated new practices into their daily lives, contributing to the sustainability of their transformation.

The primary outcome for participants was the perspective transformation (Mezirow, 1981) that guided them into a pattern of new behaviors, indicating a probable

change in some aspect of their habitus. Interestingly, the fewest number of codes emerged for the family of "outcomes." One possible explanation for this is that participants repeatedly stressed that their new way of being was not a particular end-state, but was instead an iterative ongoing process. They described this process as a "journey," using the metaphor of peeling the layers of an onion as they continued the process of learning, growth, and discovery. In this sense, they seem to have gone through several phases; first, LII learning that took them to a new perspective, and next, awareness that they could go deeper, further in their process of transforming. Many of the participants talked about integrating and maintaining their new way of being, and then achieving the next stage in the process.

The ongoing, unpredictable, and emerging nature of transformative learning described by many participants bears a resemblance to the characteristics of complex adaptive systems, defined by Schwandt (2008) as incorporating the properties of "emergence, schemata, non-linearity, and self-organizing" (p. 113). Davis and Sumara (1997) expand on the notion of social context in learning by showing how the interrelationships between individuals determine the co-evolution and emergence of the learning phenomenon. In this study, participants learned and embodied physical practices within a specific *in-situ* context that facilitated and guided transformative learning. The learning process for each individual was unique and, to some degree, unpredictable with issues emerging in unexpected ways. Participants emphasized the social aspect of their learning process, describing not only how their internal structures had been shaped by the external structures in their environment, but subsequently embodying their new knowledge and behaviors in the context of their various social milieux.

The descriptions of transformative learning processes offered by the study's participants were replete with apparent dualities such as internal/external, body/mind, emotion/cognition and others. Yet, instead of perceiving these pairs as "either/or" dualities, several participants spoke of the integration of holisitic dimensions of learning, as well as the interdependent relationship between the self and others. Kelso and Engstrøm (2006) provide a complexity perspective to such interaction, hypothesizing that it is the co-specifying coordination inherent in all aspects and at every level of life, from the most microscopic to the grandest macroscopic scales, that is crucial to study and to understand.

Kelso and Engstrøm (2006) use the science of coordination dynamics, "a set of context-dependent laws or rules that describe, explain, and predict how patterns of coordination form, adapt, persist, and change in natural systems" (p. 90) to explain how this occurs. They describe complementary pairs as complementary aspects that are "fundamentally mutual. They are distinguishable yet coexistent. They are coemergent, codefining, and coimplicative. Being mutually coupled, complementary aspects are also dynamic: they flow in and out of each other in subtle and seemingly mysterious ways" (p. 41). They use the tilde (~) symbol as syntax to show the interconnection and essential complementarity of complementary pairs.

Adopting this syntax, some of the complementary pairs addressed in this study may include: individual~collective; internal~external; body~mind; emotion~cognition; rational~extrarational; and plasticity~stability. Kelso and Engstrøm's (2006) description of coordination as an essential interaction between what they call "complementary pairs" may be an apropos means of exploring further how the habitus is formed, reformed, and

transformed within the context of an external environment. One possibility is that complementary pairs such as internal and external structures, or body and mind become complementary through a structuring process (M. Boisot, personal communication, September 9, 2009) like that described by strong structuration theory (Stones, 2005).

Similar to coordination dynamics, enaction theory posits a complex, co-evolving structural coupling between an organism and its environment within an interconnected system. Thompson (2007) explains that the enactive approach to cognitive science incorporates five basic ideas:

1. Living beings are autonomous agents that actively generate and maintain themselves, and thereby also enact or bring forth their own their own cognitive domains;
2. The nervous system is an autonomous dynamic system. . . the nervous system does not process information in the computationalist sense, but creates meaning;
3. Cognition is the exercise of skillful know-how in situated and embodied action;
4. A cognitive being's world is not a prespecified, external realm, represented internally by its brain, but a relational domain enacted or brought forth by that being's autonomous agency and mode of coupling with the environment; and
5. Experience is…central to any understanding of the mind, and needs to be investigated in a careful phenomenological manner. (p. 13)

The results of this study illustrated the tenets of this approach in the participants' description of how they enacted their transformative learning experience from an

embodied, relational perspective. Further study of the transformative learning process may benefit from incorporation of the theoretical perspective of enaction theory to explore the interdependent, co-specifying process of individual and collective (Stewartet al., 2010; Thompson, 2007).

There are a number of implications of the foregoing for transformative learning and strong structuration theory. In accordance with recent literature describing the core elements of transformative learning (Mezirow & Taylor, 2009), this study in particular validated the core elements of critical reflection, a holistic orientation, an awareness of context, and the importance of authentic relationships. Critical reflection has always been a core element of transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 1978, 1994), and the participants in this study clearly engaged in and benefited from the critical reflection process.

In more recent years, many scholars have highlighted extrarational, affective, kinesthetic, and spiritual ways of knowing and learning (Dei, 2002; Hoggan et al., 2009; O'Sullivan, Morrell, & O'Connor, 2002), advocating for a whole-person approach to learning (Yorks & Kasl, 2006). A holistic orientation to transformation has now been included as one of the six core elements recommended to foster a transformative learning experience (Mezirow & Taylor, 2009). In this study, participants stressed the importance of all holistic elements of their learning experience, explaining how physical practices enabled them to access and transform aspects of themselves that were previously unknown to them. The implication for transformative learning theory is that a holistic orientation to learning should be rooted in the phenomenology of enaction.

Furthermore, the learning process for these study participants was not linear or predictable. Issues emerged after they had been exposed to new practices and ways of viewing the world. They described the structural coupling of interdependent, interconnected relationships with individuals in their various social contexts, relationships that supported or constrained their learning process over time. Incorporating the theoretical perspective of complexity science into transformative learning theory could provide new ways of understanding how transformation occurs at the intersection of the individual and the collective.

Research

One challenge in studying the phenomenon of transformative learning is determining if the shift engendered by the learning experience is sufficient to label it as "transformative," and how such a transformation may be sustained over time (Mezirow & Taylor, 2009). In the context of members of the Center, not only did the observed study participants demonstrate on-going commitment to their new lifestyle, but several of them went further with their training and engagement, becoming Instructors (Cynthia, Nakari) or Masters (Julia, Dira, and Tuan). If the level of engagement and commitment to on-going practice is an indicator of the level of transformative learning, these five participants exhibit an expanded, transformed perspective that has led to a new and sustained set of behaviors.

Another way to interpret the stories of transformation may be to arrange them along a "Continuum of Change" (see Figure 21) that ranges from "little to no discernible change" to "drastic, sustained change." There were no surveys, or research instruments that directly led to this conceptual scale. Rather, the researcher based the placement on

her interpretation of the raw data, results in the form of Participant Profiles and Profile Maps, as well as longitudinal observation over a period of several years. Indicating the placement of the participants on this scale with an icon representing the participant's number one family demonstrates a potentially interesting pattern: the participants with the highest level of discernible change all had "emotion" as their number one family.

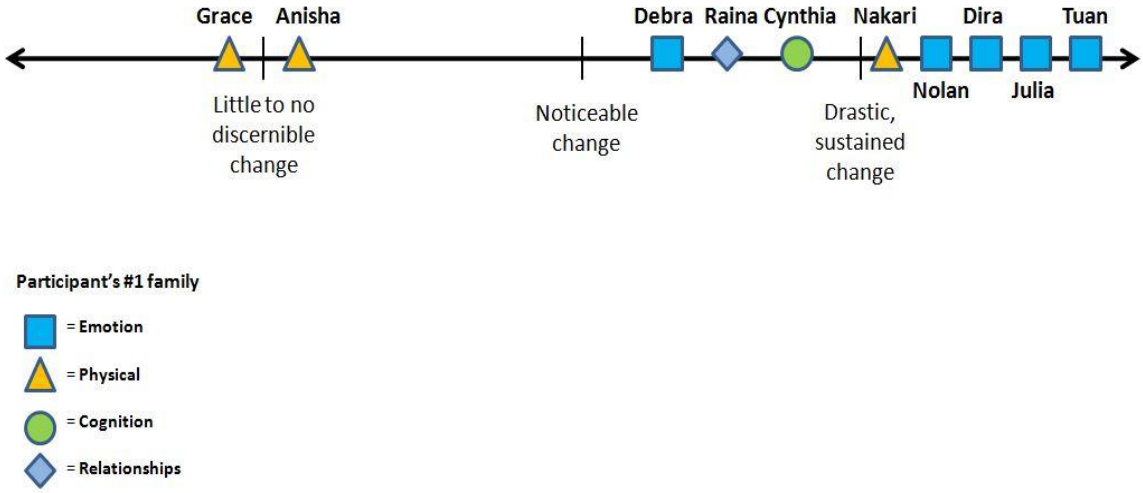


Figure 21. Continuum of change.

Future research might focus on the emotional component of a holistic approach to sustaining of transformation over time. Such research should consider not only emotion, but "affective phenomena" as defined in Chapter 2 to include emotion, feeling, mood, attitude, affective style and temperament (Davidson et al., 2003). Another important consideration when studying affect is to consider the valence of such affect. Varela and Depraz (2004) assert that valence ranges from attraction (++), to neutrality (0), to rejection (--). They argue that "affect-emotion is not simply one among many types of lived experience; they are *generative for consciousness itself*" (p. 174). Croswell and

Gajjar (2007) concluded in their study of mindfulness that "emotion can be seen as the energy of transformation" (p. 25). Understanding the role of emotion, or more broadly, that of affect, in transformation could support the fostering and maintenance of this learning process.

The research site for this study was purposefully selected as a context that provided a holistic approach to learning. As noted on Figure 21, Continuum of Change, members appeared to have experienced different levels of change. Of particular interest on this conceptual scale are the two members, Grace and Anisha, who demonstrated to the researcher little to no discernible change. A possible rationale for Grace is that she described herself as having been on a spiritual journey for most of her life. For her, the practices at the Center represented another step in that process rather than a drastic change in worldview. Further research into the temporal aspect of transformative learning could explore the kinds of shifts that occur over a longer period, where the cumulative transformation over several decades could be dramatic, yet take place incrementally over time.

Anisha was the other participant who seemed to have exhibited minimal change. Interestingly, she was also the only member who did not take one of the two foundational workshops offered to new members. It was originally conceived as part of the criteria for participation in the study that all members would have taken both of these workshops. This criterion was relaxed when it seemed as though there would not be enough members who qualified based on all the original criteria. Considering that Anisha was the only one of ten participants who did not take this workshop, and she seems to have evidenced

much less change than those participants who did, what might this imply about the influence of the workshop in facilitating transformation?

Additionally, the primary activity engaged in by all participants were physical practices such as yoga and Tai Chi. This emphasis on physical practices may have influenced the participants' experience of transformative learning. To further explore the impact of external structures such as specific training, teaching or emphasis on physical practices, a multi-case study could be conducted that explores the transformative learning process in a variety of contexts that both do and do not employ a holistic approach to learning.

Another type of influence brought to bear by external structures may have been the teachings and philosophy passed on by the Masters and Instructors to the members. Such influence may be evidenced by the ways in which participants both experienced and described their transformative learning process. One way to test this possible influence in a future study might be to interview a number of Masters and Instructors as representative of one aspect of external structures, comparing this data to that collected from the members.

A significant aspect of the research site may also have been the external structures influence of Eastern philosophies and practices. Nisbett (2003) presents a variety of empirical studies showing the demonstrable influence of culture on cognitive processes. He asserts that differences between Eastern and Western views of the world date back to the ancient Chinese and Greek philosophers, and that these differences persist today. Relevant to this study, Nisbett concludes that Easterners are far more attentive to context and to relationships than Westerners, that Easterners tend to think holistically whereas

Westerners take a more reductionist, deterministic view, and that Easterners see the world in constant flux while Westerners strive for stability.

Future research into the relationship of a holistic approach to learning might explore prospective study participants' meaning structures (Mezirow, 2000), as well as their psycho-cultural heritage prior to their engagement in the learning context. Such a method would be in accordance with Husserl's phenomenological approach to the importance of context. According to McGilchrist (2009), Husserl asserted that "things only are what they are because they find themselves in the surroundings in which they find themselves, and are connected to whatever it is that they are connected to" (p. 144). To better understand the influence of external structures on transformation, it would be necessary to control for the relative differences in context before and after the learning experience.

In the decades since Husserl introduced transcendental phenomenology as a means of understanding the lifeworld, or the "world of lived experience" (Van Manen, 1990, p. 53), of the individual, a variety of other approaches to phenomenological research have evolved (Lewis & Straehler, 2010). Van Manen (1990) describes hermeneutic phenomenology as a "philosophy of the personal, the individual, which we pursue against the background of an understanding of the evasive character of the *logos* of *other*, the *whole*, the *communal*, or the *social"* (p. 7). With his emphasis on obtaining experiential accounts of the lifeworld as a means of studying the essence of a phenomenon, this study incorporated many of the tenets of hermeneutic phenomenology, in particular the use of interviewing to gather individual life stories about the phenomenon of transformative learning.

Van Manen (1990) suggests additional methods for researching lived experience, including protocol writing which obtains written descriptions of the experience under study, and observation, including both "close observation" (p. 68) where the researcher attempts to "enter the lifeworld of the persons whose experiences are relevant study material" (p. 69), and "gatherer of anecdotes" (p. 69) in which the researcher collects anecdotal stories about the phenomenon under study. In future research, both of these methods could be used in conjunction with interviewing to provide additional verification and trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Yet another approach to the study of the lived experience is dialogal phenomenology (Strasser, 1969). A key emphasis in this approach is the intersubjective, social nature of the phenomenon. Strasser contends that individuals influence one another in every aspect of life since human consciousness is "intimately connected with its social character" (p. 20). In this respect, he maintains that the manner in which individuals grow, develop, and change has a reciprocal impact on the external environment, saying "if I change, there is then also a change in the world around me" (p. 20). Proponents of dialogal phenomenology as a research method believe that dialogue is not only a vital part of the interaction between researcher and participant, but that incorporating dialogue into the entire research process deepens understanding of the phenomenon under study (Halling, 2005). Future research into transformative learning processes may thus incorporate the methodology of dialogal phenomenology where teams of researchers collaboratively study and interpret the phenomenon of interest.

Complementing the array of qualitative methodologies to researching transformative learning, future research could incorporate quantitative means of

measuring the degree of change experienced by individuals, perhaps operationalizing the Bateson (1972/2000) Levels of Learning for this purpose. Subjecting these results to power law analysis (Boisot & McKelvey, 2011; Davis & Sumara, 2006, p. 180) may indicate the outliers, that is, those individuals whose perspective transformation had been more drastic than others. Yet another approach to researching the transformative learning process in terms of the interaction of the individual and the collective would be to conduct a multi-level study. Such a study would need to examine both individual and organizational level learning, exploring the interactions and relationship between these micro and meso levels.

Practice

The findings of this study have a variety of implications for practice. First is the consideration of a holistic approach to transformative learning. Yorks and Kasl (2006) advocate a whole-person approach to learning that includes cognitive, affective. and kinesthetic dimensions of facilitating personal transformation. Based on the results of this study, all the holistic elements of learning—mind, body, emotion, spirit—play a role in transformation. Of these four elements, participants spoke most about the emotional dimensions of the transformative learning experience. Scholar and organizational change consultants, Heath and Heath (2010) take a practical approach to arguing for the powerful impact of unifying the rational and emotional minds, asserting that emotions are foundational to the ability to achieve and sustain transformational change at an individual or organizational level. The results of this study corroborate the relative importance of emotions in the transformative learning process, lending support to organizational change practices that incorporate the emotional mind.

The study participants also highlighted the interdependent relationship of their bodies and emotions, portraying the body as a portal to transformation. Of practical interest to educators and others who aim to foster transformative learning experiences is thus the importance of physical practices to facilitating this process. A holistic approach to learning that is rooted in embodiment argues for a conscious inclusion of physical practices into the learning process.

The role of a disorienting dilemma in triggering a transformative learning experience has been well-documented within the scholarly literature (Cranton, 2006; Mezirow, 1978; Taylor, 2009). The importance of critical self-reflection has also been established as a core element for transformative learning (Mezirow & Taylor, 2009). Less clear in relation to these two points is the role of the context within which the learning occurs. Some individuals may have a disorienting dilemma such as the death of a loved one, or the loss of a job and be forced to cope with the resulting disorientation more or less on their own. Other individuals may seek out an external environment, such as the Center, that appears to address the presenting issue.

In this study, some participants seemed to have been engaging in critical self-reflection as part of their ongoing journey of self-discovery. Many participants, though, described how the teachings and practices of the Center prompted them to reflect deeply on the effect of their preconceptions on their lives. As part of their overall learning process, they discovered the power of shifting to an internal focus, both to understand themselves more deeply, but also to reduce the power of external influences. The importance of critical self-reflection and an inner focus substantiates the inclusion of

critical reflection as one of the six core elements to foster a transformative learning experience (Mezirow & Taylor, 2009).

Finally, the study results emphasize the importance of external structures to facilitate and support the transformative learning process in terms providing the holistic approach to learning, aiding members in shifting to an internal focus, and building relationships to support the sustaining of the transformative learning experience. This finding is in accordance with one of the six core elements of transformative learning, awareness of context (Mezirow & Taylor, 2009). Context in terms of this study may be understood as the macro influences such as family of origin, national culture, and professional background that distinguished study participants from one another. Despite the heterogeneity of context for participants in this regard, they all had the learning context of the research site in common. From a macro perspective, Eastern culture was likely the primary influence on the Center's philosophy and practices. Considering the similarities of experience as described by the overarching themes across a diverse sample, this argues for the formative influence of the context of their learning, the Center. Educators and other practitioners may want to incorporate a variety of support structures and processes to provide a context that similarly fosters a transformative learning experience.

A vital aspect of the context for learning would be the relationships with others who are part of this context. Participants in this study spoke of numerous ways that their relationships changed in the course of their transformative learning process. The importance of relationships in co-creating reality is at the heart of social constructionism (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Husserl discussed relationship in terms of intersubjectivity.

McGilchrist (2009) stated that Husserl "came to the conclusion that there was an objective reality, that it was constituted by what he call intersubjectivity. This comes about through shared experience, which is made possible for us by our embodied existence alongside other embodied individuals" (p. 144). The centrality of relationships in the experience of transformative learning of the study participants is similar to one of the core elements of transformative learning (Mezirow & Taylor, 2009), authentic relationships. An implication for practice is not only to provide a context where transformative learning may be fostered and further supported, but for this context to be a place where individuals can develop the relationships essential to enable their ongoing growth.

Concluding Remarks

This study used a phenomenological approach to explore how a holistic approach to learning may influence the transformation of the habitus, the embodied aspect of an individual's internal structures. As Seligman (2007) contends in his empirically grounded proposition, growth and change is *endemic* to adulthood. At issue is not whether adults change, but how much and in what way. Better understanding this process of change may enable individuals, educators, or practitioners to more effectively foster and sustain transformation.

The ten participants in this study represented a diverse sample of age, gender, ethnicity, and cultural heritage. Despite the variety in their backgrounds and the uniqueness of their individual stories, the participant themes evidenced some similarities across the sample. The first overarching theme describing the linkage of physical practices to transformation enriches the transformative learning literature by

demonstrating the importance of an embodied holistic approach to transformation. This essential embodiment of the agent *in-situ* supports the development of the constructs of embodied affect, embodied spirituality, and embodied cognition.

The results of the study also contribute to a better understanding of how context influences learning. Strong structuration theory (Stones, 2005) provides the framework of external structures, internal structures, active agency, and outcomes. The individuals in this study depicted a range of historical and current external influences on the development of their habitus. They also described the interdependency of external contextual influences with internal structures, particularly as these are revealed in the position-practices of the Center. The overarching theme portraying the shifting in focus from external to internal structures took place within a context that supported and encouraged this shift.

Research on transformative learning over the past three decades has been conducted in various contexts across the globe (Fisher-Yoshida et al., 2009; O'Sullivan et al., 2002). This study expands on this global perspective by incorporating a diverse sample of participants from seven different nations, five participants being first-generation immigrants. Each participant had a unique story to tell, particularly in terms of the formative external influences from their early years. Interestingly, despite the heterogeneity of ethnicity, national culture, age, and gender, the ten participants described a transformative learning process that was similar in many regards. Such similarity despite the diversity in the study population argues for the strong influence exercised by the method and context for learning.

Finally, this study incorporated the theoretical perspectives of both transformative learning (Mezirow, 1981, 2009) and strong structuration (Stones, 2005). The synthesis of these two theoretical perspectives contributes to the literature by providing a way to theorize, research, and potentially implement practices to foster transformation of the interdependent relationship of external and internal structures as represented by the collective and the individual. The construct of internal structures enhances transformative learning theory with a means of micro-level analysis of the habitus and conjuncturally-specific aspects of the individual as these interact with external structures. Active agency provides another way of addressing the action-oriented phases of the transformative learning process. Lastly, the construct of outcomes combined with Bateson's (1972/2000) Levels of Learning may provide a tangible method for measuring the type of learning that has occurred.

In the decades since Mezirow (1981) defined perspective transformation as the process of becoming aware of how one's assumptions constrain one's view of oneself and others, leading to a process of "reconstituting this structure to permit a more inclusive and discriminating integration of experience and acting upon these new understandings" (p. 6), a number of scholars have explored cognitive, affective, extrarational, kinesthetic, and whole-person approaches to transformative learning (Cranton & Roy, 2003; Fisher-Yoshida et al., 2009; Hoggan et al., 2009; Yorks & Kasl, 2006). Based on this broad array of research methodologies and emphases, as well as the results of this study, one might expand the definition of transformative learning to describe a perspective transformation as a deep and far-reaching change in one's way of *seeing* embodied in a new way of *being*, essentially a re-creation of the Self—

emotionally, physically, mentally, and spiritually—in relation to the world. Further research and exploration of this dynamic, interdependent relationship between self and other may provide additional suggestions to enhance the transformative learning process.

Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Study participants who took the screening questionnaire and qualified for the study were informed about the purpose of the study, an exploration of the transformative learning process from the perspective of the lived experience of each individual. They reviewed their rights and protection as described in the Research Consent Form (Appendix E). Following the decision to proceed, each participant signed the consent form.

Participants were then briefed about the interview process which incorporated a background questionnaire, and two in-depth, semi-structured interviews, spaced at least three days, but no more than one week apart. Each interview was at least 60 minutes, but no more than 90 minutes in duration. Participants signed an agreement for the interviews to be digitally recorded. They had the opportunity to review the transcribed interviews as part of the member check process. Transcriptions included the verbatim verbal dialogue, as well as non-verbal elements of communication such as pauses, voice intonation, noticeable gestures and other body language.

Following is an outline of the two-part interview structure. Participants received the themes for each interview at least three days prior to the scheduled session, with instructions to journal daily for at least 15 minutes about the themes of the upcoming interview. The interviews followed the guidelines of the themes listed below, with the probing questions shown as examples of what may have been asked during the actual interview sessions.

Interview – Part 1 (***Description*** of transformative learning process)

Themes provided to participants:

a. Reason for joining the Center

b. Process of learning new practices (mental, physical, emotional)

c. Incorporation of learning (exercises, concepts) into daily life

d. Description of changes in interactions with others

Guideline of questions with possible follow-on probes:

1. Describe your experience around the issue that brought you to the Center (physical, mental, emotional, spiritual).
    a. Give me an example of how you feel that this has been addressed through the practices here.
    b. What practice has been most effective in addressing this issue? Describe what your experience feels like in the circumstances when you think the practice is working.
    c. If this issue hasn't improved, how do you feel about this?
    d. What might you do differently to improve this issue?
    e. How would you relate this issue to your preconceptions, i.e., when you look back at your life before this practice, were there principles or rules that you had in regard to this issue that have now changed because of this practice?
    f. What aspects of your current life situation (home, work, community) impacts this issue?
2. Tell me about one example of the practices you have been learning here.
    a. What is an example of the physical aspect of what you have been learning?

b. What kinds of emotions have you experienced while learning the practices taught here?
c. How have you changed your way of thinking as a result of what you have been learning here?
d. Which principles have you incorporated in your daily life?
    i. What are some examples of these principles that you incorporate physically, emotionally, mentally?

3. How would you describe your view of life?
    a. How has this view changed since you started attending classes here?
    b. Can you describe a time when something you were learning here didn't fit your previous experience or preconceptions?
    c. How did you incorporate this new kind of concept?
4. How have you changed the way you interact with others in your various roles (family, work, community) as a result of what you have been learning?
    a. Tell me about a specific change you have made in how you think about your various roles.
    b. Tell me about a specific change you have made in the physical aspect of your various environments (family, work, community).
    c. Tell me about a specific change you have noticed in how you feel about your various roles as you interact with others (family, work, community).

Interview – Part 2 (***Reflection*** on the ***meaning*** of the transformative learning process)

Themes provided to participants:

a. Reflection on personal changes since joining center
b. Influence of preconceptions on life
c. Any specific difficulties with making lifestyle changes
d. Description of the meaning of new way of being

Guideline of questions with possible follow-on probes:

5. How did you feel, in general, about your life before joining the Center?
    a. How do you feel, in general, about your life now?
    b. Can you give me an example of how life is better (worse, etc.) compared to before?
6. In what ways do you reflect on (think about) the changes you've already made in your life since joining the Center? (Examples: journaling, talking with a friend, dancing, writing poetry, doing something artistic, making music, attending workshops)
    a. How does this change (or changes) relate to any preconceptions from your formative years?
    b. How does this change (or changes) relate to any preconceptions acquired later in life?
7. Briefly describe a significant life experience from your formative years that might still have an impact on you.
8. What kinds of preconceptions have you discovered during your experiences at the Center?

a. What specific emotions did you experience during the process of discovery?
b. What specific physical practices assisted in this process of discovery?
c. How do you feel now about these discoveries?
d. How has your increased understanding about your preconceptions changed the way you now live your life?
e. Do you have a feeling about what aspects of your early environment may have influenced the development of these preconceptions?
    i. Examples: family (parents, siblings, other family members); community (school, church); national culture

9. What was your experience of discovery as you identified these preconceptions? (Examples: self-reflection, role-playing, interactive games, sharing with a partner, other experiences or practices)
    a. What aspect of this method of discovery was most comfortable for you?
        i. How did you feel during the process?
        ii. How did you feel afterwards?
    b. What aspect of this method of discovery was most uncomfortable for you?
        i. How did you feel during the process?
        ii. How did you feel afterwards?
10. What has this process of discovery, learning and change meant in your life?

Follow-on probe if response is not sufficiently descriptive:

"Can you give me an example of when . . . ?"

	Questionnaire and Two-Part Interview Themes		
Research Questions	Historical Background	Description of transformative learning processes	Reflection on meaning of transformative learning processes
What is the relationship of a holistic approach to learning to transformation of the habitus as a system of dispositions?		Questionnaire: 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 Interviews: 1(a-f), 2(a-d), 3(a-c)	Questionnaire: 14, 15 Interviews: 5(a-b), 6, 7(a-e), 8(a-b), 9
How is the dynamic interaction between the conjuncturally-specific and habitus aspects of internal structures influenced during the transformative learning process?	Questionnaire: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8	Interviews: 1e, 3b, 3c, 4a, 4c	Interviews: 6b, 6c, 7e
How do external and internal structures co-evolve during the transformative learning process?	Questionnaire: 1, 2, 6, 7	Interviews: 1f, 3c, 4b	

Appendix B: Background Questionnaire

1. How would you characterize your growing-up years? (For example, where did you grow up, what was your home, family, and community like?).
2. Briefly describe your educational background.
3. Briefly describe your professional training.
4. Briefly describe your current family situation.
5. Briefly describe your current work situation (physical environment—office, outdoors, etc.; social environment—supportive, hostile, close relationships, impersonal, etc.)
6. Briefly describe your different roles in life (spouse, parent, co-worker, manager, etc.).
7. What brought you to the Center (physical, mental, emotional, spiritual issue)?
8. Which classes and/or workshops do you regularly attend?
9. How often do you attend these programs?
10. Have you attended similar kinds of classes elsewhere in the past? If so, briefly describe.
11. What kinds of personal changes have you noticed since becoming a member here?
12. What types of changes would you still like to make?
13. In terms of the personal changes described earlier, how long have you maintained this new way of being?
14. Is it now a natural way of living, or do you have to work to maintain this change?
15. Can you imagine going back to your previous way of living (seeing the world)?

Appendix C: Study Invitation

Dear "Gold" member,

Have you noticed changes in your life since you became a member of the Center? Would you be interested in telling your story of transformation?

Sherry Kennedy-Reid, a Dahn Yoga "Gold" member is doing her dissertation study on transformative learning experiences. She is looking for 10 "Gold" members who would like to share how their lives have changed through this way of learning. Interested members will receive a screening questionnaire to determine if they meet the study criteria which includes ensuring a representative demographic sample.

Sherry will interview each participant two times within a 2-week period, beginning in January 2010. Every effort will be made to ensure confidentiality and anonymity of study participants.

If you are interested in participating and would like more information, please contact the researcher, Sherry Kennedy-Reid, directly via email, or call her directly. This study has been approved by Dahn Yoga Headquarters and by the Institutional Review Board associated with The George Washington University.

Appendix D: Screening Questionnaire

1. How long have you been a member of this Center? _____
2. When did you become a "Gold" member? _____
3. Have you already taken the two foundational workshops? _____
4. In which of the Center activities do you regularly participate (for example, yoga classes, workshops, special events, other)? _____
5. The following information is for demographic purposes To select a diverse group of participants:

   a. Gender: Male ____ Female____

   b. Age range: 20-30 ____
      31-40 ____
      41-50 ____
      51-60 ____
      61+ ____

   c. Ethnic background: Asian ____
      Black ____
      White ____
      Hispanic ____
      Other ____

   d. Educational background: High school ____
      Some college ____
      College degree ____
      Graduate degree ____
      Post-graduate ____

Appendix E: Research Consent Form

Exploring the *Habitus*: A Phenomenological Study of Transformative Learning Processes

GW IRB number: 080928

Principal Investigator: Dr. David Schwandt

Sub-Investigator: Sherry Kennedy-Reid

Sponsor: NONE

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1) Introduction

You are invited to participate in a study under the direction of Dr. David Schwandt of the Graduate School of Education and Human Development, Department of Executive Leadership Doctoral Program, George Washington University (GWU). Your participation in this research study is completely voluntary.

2) Why is this study being done?

You are being asked to participate in this study because you are a lifetime, "Gold," member of Dahn Yoga and you have met the criteria for participants in this study. The criteria include being a "Gold" member who has taken the two foundational classes, "Initial Awakening" and "Shim Sung." Additionally, you are an active participant in the Center's programs which include fitness classes, workshops and special events.

The purpose of the study is to understand the learning processes that may lead to personal transformation. The research will be conducted with participants from two centers on the East Coast who attend programs and classes at the Dahn Yoga Center.

A total of 10 individuals will be asked to participate in this study.

3) What is involved in this study?

If you decide to participate in this study, you will fill out a background questionnaire, and be interviewed two times, for approximately 90 minutes each time. You will also be asked to journal for at least three days, 15 minutes per day, on the themes provided to you for the upcoming interview.

The background questionnaire addresses themes such as the participant's growing up years, educational and professional background, current work and family situation, engagement with programs at the Center, and personal changes since joining the Center.

The first interview addresses the participant's description of their transformative learning process, including themes such as the reason for joining the Center, the process of learning new practices, the incorporation of learning into daily life, and description of changes in interactions with others.

The second interview provides the participant the opportunity to reflect on the meaning of his/her transformative learning process. These themes include reflection on personal changes since joining the Center, possible influence of preconceptions on his/her life, any specific difficulties with making lifestyle changes, and a description of the new way of being.

As preparation for the two interviews, each participant will be asked to keep a daily journal for 15 minutes per day, at least three days prior to the interview, reflecting on the themes of the upcoming interview session.

The total amount of time you will be engaged with this study is no more than 5 hours, including filling out of the background questionnaire, keeping a journal during the research process, and participation in two interviews.

4) What are the risks of participating in this study?

There are not any physical risks associated with participation in this study. One possible risk, however, is the loss of confidentiality. We will take every precaution to protect the confidentiality of your information; however this cannot be absolutely guaranteed. There is a possibility that some of the questions we ask may be uncomfortable to answer. You have the right to refuse to answer any question at any time. You may also stop participating in the study at any time.

5) Are there benefits to taking part in this study?

There may not be any personal benefit to taking part in this study. The results of this study are expected to add to the theory and practice of transformative learning, specifically in adults. The benefits to science and humankind may be: a better understanding of transformative learning processes that enable the facilitation of deep, profound personal transformation.

6) What are my options?

You do not have to participate in this research study. If you do choose to participate, you can stop participation whenever you desire.

7) Will I receive payment for being in this study?

You will not receive compensation for taking part in this study.

8) Can I withdraw from the study?

Your participation is entirely voluntary. You may decide to withdraw from the study at any time.

9) How will my privacy be protected?

The investigators will make every effort to protect your privacy. The audio recordings of your interviews will be stored under password protection until transcription is complete. They will then be destroyed. Likewise, any computer files related to the study will be password-protected and only accessible to the Sub-Investigator. These files will remain securely stored until the completion of the study. The computer files will then be deleted.

Your identity in this study is confidential. Every effort will be made to ensure this confidentiality. You will be quoted using a pseudonym unless you specifically indicate to the researcher that you want to be quoted with your actual name. If the results of this study are reported at conferences or in academic journals, no research participants will be named or otherwise identified. In the event that representatives of regulatory agencies or the study's sponsor request permission to review the study documentation, all identifying information will be removed from relevant parts of your records. All research study records will be kept confidential unless you specifically authorize their release.

10) Problems or Questions

If you have any further questions about your rights in this research study, you may contact the Office of Human Research of George Washington University, at number (202)994-2715. If you have any other concerns regarding your participation, you can contact the Principal Investigator of this study, Dr. David Schwandt. Additional information regarding this study is available from the Sub-Investigator, Sherry Kennedy-Reid.

11) Documentation of Informed Consent

If you agree to take part in this study, please sign below:

_____	_____
Participant's Name (printed) and Signature	Date
_____	_____
Name (printed) and Signature of Person Obtaining Consent	Date
_____	_____
Sub-Investigator's Signature	Date

After you sign this Consent form, the research team will provide you with a copy. Please keep it in case you want to read it again or call someone about the study.

Appendix F: Audio/Video Release Form

I hereby authorize Sherry Kennedy-Reid to use my video image and/or audio recording in her video for the project entitled, *Exploring the Habitus: A Phenomenological Study of Transformative Learning Processes*, in her presentation. I have indicated below the name I wish to appear with my image and or voice. I understand that by signing this form, I am releasing all recordings to her for this expressed purpose. I further certify that I am over the age of 18 years.

Name (Print): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Please initial:
Video only: _____
Audio only: _____
Audio and video: _____

Investigator's initials _____

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