TRANSFORMATION OF HUMAN AGENCY

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Abstract

The general purpose of this study was to examine
transformations of human agency in natural contexts. Existing
theoretical formulations have primarily been confined to laboratory
investigations. Moreover, the principles generated by such
theories have not been validated beyond the laboratory setting.
With this purpose in mind, there were two immediate aims of the
study. The first aim was to contribute to counselling theory by
assessing five prominent theories of human agency and providing a
basis from which to potentially establish more adequate theoretical
formulations. The second aim was to contribute to counselling
practice by providing concrete information and a more informed
basis through which to enhance agency in clients.

A multiple case study design integrating intensive
interviewing and Q-methodology was utilized for the study. Ten
individuals, five women and five men, ranging in age from 28 to 64,
were identified through a network of contacts for participation in
the study. Based upon convergence of qualitative evidence from
interviews and quantitative evidence from Q-sorts, rich, detailed
narrative accounts of transformation were constructed for each
individual. Each account was validated by the individual for whom
each was written and by an independent reviewer. Through a
comparative analysis of the ten diverse accounts of transformation,

extensive commonality was identified. Twenty-two common themes were extracted from the accounts that portrayed significant features of the transformation. Based on these themes, an abstract story of the common pattern revealed in the transformation was plotted.

Individual aspects of each of the theories of agency were validated as well as qualified in some important ways. In addition, the results extended these theories in three main ways. First, the results indicated that transformations of human agency were complex wholes that involved a configuration of features rather than any one or two isolated features. Second, the findings indicated that context played a critical role in transformations of agency. And third, the results emphasized the important role of powerful emotions in the process of transformation. The results of this study also generated a beginning holistic portrait of transformation which has implications for counsellors in terms of understanding and facilitating transformations of agency in clients.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Within the field of counselling psychology, people are largely
viewed as active agents who can formulate plans, make decisions,
and perform actions. With its natural emphasis on human
development, a primary goal of counselling is to foster human
agency; to empower persons as agents that they might live in more
satisfying, productive, and meaningful ways. Across the history of
counselling psychology, this emphasis on the enhancement of human
agency has been remarkably consistent. Brewer (1938) argued that
"the ultimate aim of the guidance endeavor was to make the
individual capable of self-guidance in the many and varied
activities of everyday living" (cited in Van Hesteren & Zingle,
1977, p. 106). Williamson (1965) stated that the "task of the
trait factor type of counselling is to aid the individual in
successive approximations of self-understanding and self-management
by means of helping him [or her] to assess his [or her] assets and
liabilities in relation to the requirements of progressively
changing life goals" (p. 198). More recently, Gysbers and Moore
(1987) stressed that "in helping individuals reach their potential
we are stimulating career consciousness - the ability for
individuals to visualize and plan their lives" (p. 3). From

varying perspectives and periods of time, there is consistent
agreement that an essential goal of counselling is to enhance the
powers of human agency in order to live more fruitfully.

The overall purpose of this study is to gain a meaningful
understanding of transformations of human agency in natural
contexts. With this purpose in mind, there are two immediate aims.
First, to contribute to counselling theory by assessing five
prominent theories of agency and providing a basis from which to
potentially establish more adequate theoretical formulations.
Second, to contribute to counselling practice by providing concrete
information and a more informed basis through which to enhance
agency in clients.

The Concept of Agency

Before addressing the concept of agency, the context of human
development within which human agency exists will be briefly
outlined. There are three main models of human development:
(1) the mechanistic or reactive model, (2) the organismic or active
model, and (3) the dialectical or interactive model (Stevens-Long,
1984). Proponents of the mechanistic model are inclined to
understand human beings as essentially passive in their own
development. Development is viewed as the result of external or
environmental forces which act on individuals and to which

individuals react. Proponents of the organismic model are inclined to understand human beings as active agents in their own development. Development is viewed as the result of internal forces within the individual. External environmental events are not viewed as inevitably deterministic forces of development.

Proponents of the dialectical model attempt to incorporate important realities of both the mechanistic and organismic models by understanding human beings as active agents who play a role in their own development and who, at the same time, are influenced by the external environment. Development is viewed as the result of an actively changing individual within the context of an actively changing environment. For this reason, the concept of agency, as it is used in this study, fits within the dialectical model. That is, people are viewed as active agents who exist within larger physical, social, and cultural contexts, and who cannot be fully comprehended without an understanding of the texture and fabric of these contextual realities.

On the surface, the concept of human agency is reasonably clear and simple. That is to say that everyone has an ordinary language sense of agency by virtue of growing up with such concepts as responsibility, freedom, and self-direction. Beneath the surface, however, human agency is a most challenging and complex psychological concept which has spawned great effort by

philosophers and psychologists in the struggle to define, articulate, and clarify (Mischel, 1977).

The traditional posture in such work on human agency has been to acknowledge the vital importance of beginning with our ordinary language sense of human agency, for whatever might be found in the subtle, artful refinements of philosophical articulation and scientific research cannot contradict this ordinary language sense of meaning and also remain a valid and useful study of human agency (Harré & Secord, 1972). This posture of beginning with an ordinary language sense of the concept of human agency is adopted here as the initial understanding within which the subsequent research itself will be permitted to contribute depth and breadth to the definition of the concept. As such, the focus of this study is on the generic processes involved in becoming more of a human agent. For this reason, topics such as gender differences in agency are not directly addressed in this study. A specific focus on gender and agency might be considered a derivative topic of the present investigation.

A human being both does and undergoes, is both a subject and an object, both makes things happen and has things happen to her or him. In characterizing a person as an agent or a doer rather than solely as a patient or a mere reactor (Harré, 1983), one emphasizes planning, deciding, and acting, the capacity of a human being to be

active rather than passive in shaping life. In attempting to bring

something about, a person is able to monitor and to adjust her or

his performances (Harre & Secord, 1973). Part of agency, however,

is not just a matter of planning and self-regulation to reach

goals, but also to be a self-legislator of the kinds of goals worth

having. Self-evaluation seems to be intimately connected with this

capacity to reflect upon the worth of one's projects (Taylor,

1977). Largely for this reason, a person's sense of agency (power,

potency etc.) forms part of agency generally. For example, a

person's sense of confidence seems empowering in itself without

which a person's actual confidence might be diminished.

Theoretical Conceptions of Agency

There are currently a number of very influential theories of

agency within the field of counselling psychology, namely,

Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy, Rotter's (1966) locus of control,

Seligman's (1975) learned helplessness, Kobasa's (1979) hardiness,

and deCharms' (1968) personal causation. Bandura (1982, 1989) has

proposed the concept of "self-efficacy" as central to human agency.

Self-efficacy refers to people's judgements of their personal

capabilities and is the result of the cognitive processing of

various sources of information, particularly performance

accomplishments. Rotter's (1966) concept of "locus of control"

refers to a generalized expectancy about the extent to which
reinforcements are under internal or external control. Seligman's
(Seligman, 1975; Abramson, Seligman, & Teasdale, 1978) concept of
"learned helplessness" refers to the causal attributions people
make when they learn that their responses and outcomes are
independent. Kobasa's (1979) concept of "hardiness" refers to a
constellation of three personality characteristics: control,
commitment, and challenge. Persons without personality hardiness
are thought to be passive, to lack initiative, to feel threatened
and powerless. DeCharms (1984) has proposed the concept of
"personal causation" as central to human agency. Personal
causation refers to the underlying motivation for being the cause
or the origin of one's actions rather than on the particular action
itself.

Limitations of the Existing Research

The research upon which these theories is based has largely
been confined to laboratory investigations. There is an absence of
real world accounts of how agency is enhanced in natural contexts.
Consequently, there is no complex, holistic portrait to guide
counsellors. Moreover, the valuable insights and principles
generated by the existing theories have not been validated beyond
the laboratory setting. Through an investigation of naturalistic

accounts of transformations of human agency, the basis for potentially more adequate theoretical formulations may be established. Additionally, the concrete information provided by these naturalistic accounts may have important implications for counsellors in terms of enhancing agency in clients.

Rationale for the Study

There are a number of important reasons for conducting a study of transformations of human agency in natural contexts. First, the existing research has largely been confined to experimental studies and laboratory settings. Consequently, how people are able to make this change in natural contexts has not yet been investigated. In short, the configuration or pattern of change is not yet known. Moreover, aspects of agency highlighted by current theoretical formulations need to be assessed in natural settings rather than solely under the artificial conditions of the laboratory setting.

Second, there are several differing theories of human agency. One theory would lead practitioners to focus almost exclusively on attributions, another on reinforcements, another on experience, and so on. This study assesses five of these theories in an effort to discover which seems more fruitful, and to establish a basis for potentially more adequate theoretical formulations.

Third, one area of agreement in all the theories is that a sense of personal agency is believed to be vital to the healthy functioning of the individual (Bandura, 1977; deCharms, 1968; Kobasa, 1979; Rotter, 1966; Seligman, 1975). Given its importance, the main practical concern of counsellors is how to enhance a person's sense of agency. And yet, the focus of much of the existing research has been on measuring the presence or absence of agency rather than on the pattern of change that is involved in moving from a low to a high degree of agency. The focus of this study is on identifying and describing the pattern of change in order to contribute directly to an understanding of how agency is enhanced.

Fourth, problems of human agency are believed by many to form the core of the psychotherapeutic process. For example, Erwin Singer (1965) has suggested that:

> The single proposition which underlies all forms of psychotherapy: the proposition that man [or woman] is capable of change and capable of bringing this change about himself [or herself]... were it not for this inherent optimism, this fundamental confidence in man's [or woman's] ultimate capacity to find his [or her] way, psychotherapy as a discipline could not exist, salvation could come about only through divine grace. (p. 16)

Similarly, Hilde Bruch (1974) has written that:

> The task of therapy in general terms is to assist a patient in the development of a center of gravity so that he [or she] experiences himself [or herself] as self-directed ... free to

> assert himself [or herself] and to pursue satisfaction in
> terms of his [or her] own goals of living. (p. 141)

Herbert Lefcourt (1972) has echoed the same sentiments and proposed

that an "internal locus of control, with its assumed correlates of

competence and the hope of success, is a common goal of

psychotherapy" (p. 27). The current popularity of the

self-efficacy approach to psychotherapy (Bandura, 1982, 1986)

further illustrates the interest of enhancing agency as a central

therapeutic goal. Despite this pervasive view, clinical

researchers have seldom studied agency directly.

> Most of the fundamental questions in this area of inquiry [the
> nature and functions of the self] are concerned, directly or
> indirectly, with the problem of human agency. The matters of
> interest center on whether, and how, people exert some
> influence over what they perceive and do. The issue of
> whether people serve as partial causes of their own actions
> has received considerably greater attention in philosophical
> than in psychological analyses. This relative neglect is
> surprising considering that self processs [sic] are central to
> an understanding of human functioning. Moreover, it is around
> questions of personal causality that some of the major
> theoretical controversies in psychology revolve. (Bandura,
> 1982, p. 3)

This study is directly concerned with investigating the phenomenon

that many people have identified as central to the therapeutic

encounter. That is, the focus of this study is on clarifying how

human agency is enhanced.

Fifth, from constructivistic perspectives such as Kelly's

(1963) it is the individual's construction of an experience that

mediates future behaviour. Kelly maintained that "man [or woman]

to the extent that he [or she] is able to construe his [or her]

circumstances can find himself [or herself] freedom from their

domination... man [or woman] can enslave himself [or herself] with

his [or her] own ideas and then win his [or her] freedom again by

reconstruing his [or her] life" (Kelly, 1963, p. 21). In other

words, it could well be the individual's construction of the

transformation that is the most empowering aspect of the

experience. From this perspective, the construction of people's

transformation may be as important as what actually happened. For

this reason, this study is concerned with eliciting accounts of

transformation from the individual's perspective.

Approach of the Study

The overall purpose of this study is to gain a meaningful

understanding of transformations of human agency in natural

contexts. A multiple case study design is selected as the

appropriate methodology for an investigation of this nature. Case

study accounts are based upon convergence of two ways of eliciting

significant information from people. The first way is through

detailed interviews. The second way is through the Q-sorting or

the individual charting of change with terms that are of

theoretical interest. Based upon the convergence of evidence from

these two sources, rich, detailed, narrative accounts of

transformations of agency are constructed for each person. These

narrative accounts constitute the core research product of the study. A comparative analysis of the narrative accounts is conducted in order to identify commonality among individual accounts. The narrative accounts and the comparative analysis of the accounts provide a rich basis for theory validation and theory development, and suggest implications for counselling practice.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The ultimate aim of this study is to contribute to counselling theory and practice by providing a more informed basis through which to help people enhance agency. This study is concerned with describing transformations of human agency in natural contexts. Currently, there are several very influential theories of human agency that can facilitate an understanding of this transformation in individuals. These theories can heighten sensitivity to significant issues and details within the descriptions elicited from individuals.

To this end, a brief background of the concept of agency is presented followed by a review of five current psychological theories of human agency. The salient features of each concept are highlighted, followed by the relevant research. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the limitations of existing theoretical formulations of agency and an overview of the approach of the present study.

Psychological Concepts of Human Agency

The concept of agency is not new. Historically, in the field of psychology, the notion of human agency has been resurrected under a variety of different names and presented from a number of different perspectives. As early as 1907, Alfred Adler stressed the importance of agency in human behaviour. According to Adler, the core motivation for all human beings is to achieve "superiority" or in more contemporary terminology, to achieve a sense of competence and fulfillment (cited in Monte, 1980). For Adler, the general aim of this striving toward superiority is to overcome limitations in our potentialities and to successfully adapt to the demands of the external world. While this striving for superiority is inherent in all of us, each person strives uniquely according to her or his own personality and subjective interpretation of life's meaning. Thus, in Adler's view the individual shapes her or his life according to individually defined goals, and in this way acts as a creative artist of personality and an active constructor of life events (Adler, 1956).

Another prominent theorist is Robert White who, in 1959, stressed human agency but chose the term "competence" to denote his particular formulation of it. The concept of competence was proposed to describe those behaviours that produce effects on the environment (e.g., exploratory behaviour, manipulation, and general

activity). Competence then, according to White, is producing an effect. He termed the motivation to have an effect on the environment "effectance motivation." The experience that corresponds with producing such effects is called the "feeling of efficacy" (White, 1959). Bandura's (1977) more recent concept of self-efficacy (a concept presented in more detail in the next section) bears an apparent resemblance to White's (1959) concept of competence.

Over the past several decades, there have been many terms used to convey the idea of human agency, such as superiority (Adler, 1956), competence (White, 1959), self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977), internal locus of control (Rotter, 1966), learned helplessness (Seligman, 1975), personality hardiness (Kobasa, 1979), and personal causation (deCharms, 1968). Despite the diversity of labels, the basic phenomenon being addressed is a human being's ability to be the partial cause of what happens in her or his life.

1.   Bandura's Self-Efficacy

Introduction and Background

The concept of "self-efficacy", stemming from a social cognitive model of behaviour, has been proposed by Albert Bandura (1982, 1989) as the central mechanism in human agency. "Among the mechanisms of personal agency, none is more central or pervasive than people's beliefs about their capabilities to exercise control over events that affect their lives" (Bandura, 1989, p. 1175). Self-efficacy is defined as one's judgment of "how well one can execute courses of action required to deal with prospective situations" (Bandura, 1982, p. 122). The concept of self-efficacy is not concerned with the skills one has, but rather with the judgements one makes about the skills one possesses.

Bandura (1977, 1982, 1986) maintains that all behavioural and psychological change occurs through the alteration of a person's sense of personal mastery or efficacy. According to Bandura (1977), "people process, weigh, and integrate diverse sources of information concerning their capability, and they regulate their choice behavior and effort expenditure accordingly" (p. 212). He further claims that "psychological procedures, whatever their format, serve as ways of creating and strengthening expectations of personal efficacy" (Bandura, Adams, & Beyer, 1977, p. 126).

According to Bandura's (1977, 1986, 1989) self-efficacy
theory, people's judgments of their personal capabilities are
hypothesized to influence a wide range of areas of human
functioning, including cognitive processes, motivational processes,
affective processes, and selection processes. With regard to
cognitive processes, self-efficacy beliefs are thought to affect
thought patterns, which in turn, affect the goals people set and
the commitments they make to those goals. With regard to
motivational processes, self-efficacy beliefs are thought to affect
how much effort a person will expend and how long a person will
persist in the face of obstacles. With regard to affective
processes, self-efficacy beliefs are thought to affect a person's
emotional reactions during taxing situations. With regard to
selection processes, self-efficacy beliefs are thought to affect a
person's choice of behavioural settings and activities. An
accurate appraisal of one's capabilities is thought to be of
considerable functional value because misjudgements of personal
efficacy can produce aversive consequences such as failure, and
self-limiting choices such as avoidance which can, in turn,
restrict the possibility of potentially rewarding or corrective
experiences.

Bandura (1977, 1986) conceptualized efficacy judgments as
varying along three major dimensions: level, generality, and
strength. Level refers to the degree of difficulty of the tasks or

behaviours that the individual feels capable of performing, ranging from simple and moderately difficult tasks to extremely taxing ones. Generality refers to the range of activities and situations in which an individual judges herself or himself efficacious. Strength refers to the confidence a person has in her or his capabilities.

Bandura (1977, 1986) hypothesized four major sources of information which contribute to a person's knowledge about self-efficacy: (1) performance mastery experiences, (2) vicarious experiences, (3) verbal persuasion, and (4) physiological states. From Bandura's perspective, the information gained from these four sources is not particularly useful or instructive, but rather it is the cognitive processing of this information that is critical. Cognitive processing refers to the way the information is selected, weighted, and integrated into self-efficiacy judgements. This inferential process is affected by a number of factors, including the personal, social, situational, and temporal circumstances under which the events occur. For this reason, success experiences alone do not necessarily raise self-efficacy. The impact of such experiences depends upon how they are cognitively processed by the individual.

<u>Sources of Self-Efficacy Information</u>

A description of the four sources of efficacy information, the various factors that may influence the cognitive processing of the information, and the research cited in support of each of the sources is presented.

1.   Performance Mastery Experiences

Performance accomplishments provide the most influential efficacy information because they are based on actual experiences of personal mastery (Bandura et al., 1977; Biran & Wilson, 1981; Feltz, Landers & Raeder, 1979).   In general, successes raise self-efficacy and repeated failures lower it.   The weight given to new success experiences depends upon the nature and strength of the existing sense of personal efficacy held by the individual. Individuals that have established a strong sense of efficacy are unlikely to be affected by occasional failures, are more likely to attribute failures to situational factors, insufficient effort or poor strategies (Bandura, 1986), and are able to generalize their sense of personal efficacy to other situations (Bandura et al., 1977; Bandura, Jeffery, & Gajdos, 1975).

The extent to which individuals will alter their sense of personal efficacy through performance experiences depends upon the cognitive processing of various factors (Bandura, 1986).   The

difficulty of the task is one such factor. Mastery of easy tasks
does not alter one's self-efficacy, whereas mastery of challenging
tasks does. Experiences are more likely to enhance personal
efficacy if the circumstances in which the tasks are mastered are
varied and are performed independently. The amount of effort
expended will also influence the impact of performance experiences.
Success with minimal effort reinforces a strong sense of efficacy,
whereas success achieved through a great deal of effort connotes
lesser ability and has a weaker effect on efficacy enhancement.
The rate and pattern of performance accomplishments also provide
information for judging personal efficacy. Individuals who
experience setbacks, but observe a progressive improvement will
raise their self-efficacy more so than those who succeed but see
their performances level off comparatively. Biases in the
self-monitoring of performances can also affect self-efficacy
judgements. People who focus on and remember the negative aspects
of performances can underestimate their efficacy, while those who
selectively focus on and remember successes can increase judgements
of self-efficacy.

Causal judgements also affect efficacy judgements of
performance experiences. Successes are more likely to enhance
self-efficacy if performances are viewed as the result of skill
rather than the result of situational factors. Conversely,

failures are thought to reduce self-efficacy when attributed to ability rather than to situational circumstances. Failures do not lower self-efficacy when they are attributed to insufficient effort, adverse conditions, despondency, or physical debilitation. Research indicates that people who see themselves as efficacious attribute their failures to insufficient effort, whereas those of comparable skills, but who see themselves as inefficacious, view their failures as the result of low ability (Collins, 1982). People with a low opinion of themselves inaccurately ascribe personal competency to situational or external factors rather than to their own ability (Bandura, Adams, Hardy, & Howells, 1980).

Strategies for enhancing personal efficacy judgements from performance experiences have included mastering challenging tasks independently to reinforce personal capabilities (Bandura, 1977), verbalizing thought processes during mastery experiences to monitor the cognitive processing of enactive efficacy information (Bandura, 1983), and selective self-modeling focusing on success experiences (Dowrick, 1983).

2. Vicarious Experiences

The next most influential source of efficacy information is derived from vicarious experience. In general, seeing or visualizing modeled successes by similar others raises personal

judgements of efficacy (Bandura et al., 1980; Kazdin, 1979), while

seeing modeled failures lowers personal judgements of capabilities

and undermines efforts (Brown & Inouye, 1978). Vicarious

information is particularly effective when people have no prior

experience or knowledge of their own capabilities and, thus, rely

more heavily on modeled indicators of performance (Takata & Takata,

1976).

The effects of vicarious information on judgements of personal

efficacy depends upon the criteria by which ability is evaluated.

Social comparative information is important in this regard because

most performances are evaluated in terms of the performances of

others, particularly when factual evidence for gauging performance

is unavailable. People convinced vicariously of their inefficacy

tend to behave in ineffective ways, thereby confirming their

beliefs. Conversely, modeling influences that increase

self-efficacy weaken the impact of failure experiences by

sustaining performance in the face of repeated failure (Brown &

Inouye, 1978; Weinberg, Gould & Jackson, 1979).

The cognitive processing of information derived from vicarious

experiences depends upon a number of factors. Past performance

similarities and knowledge of the model's attainments in the new

situation are two such factors. Brown and Inouye (1978) found that

people who perceived themselves as superior to a failing model

maintained their sense of efficacy in the face of failure, whereas people who perceived themselves as having comparable ability to the model experienced lowered self-efficacy and gave up easily in the face of difficulties. Another factor is the similarity to models on personal characteristics assumed to be predictive of performance capabilities (Suls & Miller, 1977). Similarity of attributes between the model and the observer generally increases the power of modeling influences even though the model's characteristics may be spurious indicators of performance capabilities (Rosenthal & Bandura, 1978). Observing a variety of people master difficult tasks is found to be superior to exposure to the same performance by one model (Bandura & Menlove, 1968; Kazdin, 1974, 1975, 1976). People gain more from seeing models succeed by intensified, determined effort than from seeing competent models succeed with relative ease (Kazdin, 1973). Gains achieved in this way reduce the negative effects of temporary setbacks, and reinforce the belief that perseverance eventually brings success and that failures reflect a lack of effort rather than a lack of ability.

Effective coping strategies taught by models can enhance self-efficacy for those individuals who have had many negative or failure experiences (Bandura, 1977; Bandura, Reese, & Adams, 1982). Modeled performances designed to alter coping behaviour emphasize predictability and controllability. These two aspects

have been found to enhance judgements of personal efficacy (Bandura et al., 1982).

3. Verbal Persuasion

Verbal persuasion refers to the process by which people are persuaded to believe that they possess the capabilities to achieve their goals. Although limited in power, social persuasion can promote a sense of personal efficacy, particularly if it raises realistic beliefs of personal competence and leads people to try harder to succeed. Persuasive means are most effective on people who have some reason to believe that they can produce effects through their actions (Chambliss & Murray, 1979a, 1979b). However, if social persuasion raises unrealistic beliefs of personal competence, it can invite failures, discredit the persuaders, and further undermine a person's perceived self-efficacy.

Persuasory efficacy information is weighted in terms of who the persuaders are, their credibility, and their knowledgeability about the nature of the activities (Bandura, 1986). Efficacy information through persuasive means often takes the form of evaluative feedback about ongoing performances. Evaluative feedback has been shown to affect judgements of personal competence and subsequent accomplishments (Schunk, 1982, 1983). Other forms of treatment used to enhance self-efficacy through persuasive means

are suggestion, exhortation, self-instruction, and interpretive
treatments (Bandura, 1977).

Bandura (1986) stated that it is likely more difficult to
produce enduring increases in self-efficacy by persuasory means
than to undermine it. Illusory boosts in self-efficacy are easily
disconfirmed by the results of one's actions. Those people
persuaded of their inefficacy tend to avoid challenging activities
and give up easily in the face of difficulties, thus validating
their negative self-judgements.

4.   Physiological States

In judging capabilities, people also rely on, to some extent,
information from their physiological state. This process refers to
the associations individuals make between their levels of
physiological arousal and performance. According to Bandura (1977,
1986), high arousal usually debilitates performance. Therefore,
people expect success more often when they are not showing signs of
aversive arousal. Research has shown that eliminating the
emotional arousal usually associated with threatening situations
increases perceived self-efficiacy and, in turn, improves
performance (Bandura & Adams, 1977; Barrios, 1983).

The impact of arousal on efficacy judgements depends upon the
cognitive processing of a number of factors such as the appraisal

of the sources of arousal, the level of activation, the
circumstances under which arousal is elicited, mood states, and
past experiences of how arousal affects one's performances
(Bandura, 1986). The effect of the arousal on self-efficiacy
depends upon the particular factors singled out and the meaning
attached to them. Bandura (1977) has proposed that attribution,
relaxation and biofeedback, symbolic desensitization, and symbolic
exposure are treatment modes for addressing efficacy information
conveyed through physiological states.

Self-Efficacy and Self-Inefficacy

Based on the research findings across diverse domains of
functioning, Bandura (1986) has argued that "people who regard
themselves as highly efficacious act, think, and feel differently
from those who perceive themselves as inefficacious" (p. 395).
Thus, the quality of human functioning is thought to be different
for persons who have a sense of personal efficacy compared to those
who do not.

Overall, people with a strong sense of self-efficacy set more
challenging goals (Locke, Frederick, Lee, & Bobko, 1984), exert
more effort to master a challenge, (Bandura & Cervone, 1983),
persevere in the face of failure (Brown & Inouye, 1978; Schunk,
1981), see failure as the result of insufficient effort rather than

insufficient ability (Collins, 1982), approach threatening tasks

with less anxiety, and experience little in the way of stress

in taxing situations (Bandura et al., 1982; Leland, 1982). Such

actions, thoughts, and feelings are thought to produce performance

accomplishments which, in turn, reinforce personal self-efficacy.

Those who regard themselves as having little self-efficacy shy away

from challenges, slacken their efforts and give up easily in the

face of obstacles, focus on personal weaknesses, have lower

aspirations, and suffer from anxiety and stress. These actions,

thoughts, and feelings are thought to undermine performance

accomplishments which, in turn, reinforce low self-efficacy

(Bandura, 1984).

Range of Applicability

In response to early objections that the research on

self-efficacy was too narrowly based on work with snake phobics,

Bandura and his colleagues attempted to show that self-efficacy

could account for the effects of different methods applied to

people with other phobic disorders, such as agoraphobia (Bandura,

Adams, Hardy & Howells, 1980). In addition to being documented as

an important mechanism common to phobic disorders, the concept of

self-efficacy has been applied to diverse domains of psychosocial

functioning, including anxiety disorders (Bandura et al., 1980;

Biran & Wilson, 1981; Bandura et al., 1982), depression (Davies &

Yates, 1982; Kanfer & Zeiss, 1983), motivation (Bandura & Cervone,

1983), achievement behaviour (Bandura & Schunk, 1981; Collins,

1982; Schunk, 1984), career choice and development (Betz & Hackett,

1981; Hackett & Betz, 1981), athletic performance (Barling & Abel,

1983; Weinberg, Gould, Yukelson & Jackson, 1981), health behaviour

(O'Leary, 1985), addictive behaviours (DiClemente, 1986),

assertiveness (Lee, 1983, 1984), and school achievement (Schunk,

1984, 1985), with largely supportive results. Bandura has

concluded that these diverse lines of research provide converging

evidence that self-efficacy is an influential mechanism in human

agency (Bandura, 1984).

2. Rotter's Locus of Control

Introduction and Background

The concept of "locus of control" was developed out of Julian Rotter's social learning theory (Rotter, 1954; Rotter, Chance, & Phares, 1972). According to this theory, human behaviour is predicted on the basis of three variables: expectancies, reinforcements, and the psychological situation. Expectancies are the subjective estimates or beliefs that a particular behaviour will result in the desired outcome. Rotter identified two forms of expectancies. The first is a generalized expectancy, generalized to the extent that it is elicited across a variety of different situations perceived to be related or similar. The second form of expectancy is that which is specific to a particular situation. Reinforcements refer to the subjective value attached to a desired outcome and represent the degree of preference an individual has for a given outcome. The psychological situation in which the behaviour is to occur determines expectancies (general and specific), as well as the value of the reinforcements. This model suggests that the probability of a given behaviour increases when both the expectancy and reinforcement value are high in a psychological situation previously associated with the occurrence of the behaviour.

Of particular importance to the locus of control concept are expectancies. Locus of control refers to a generalized expectancy about the extent to which reinforcements are under internal or external control (Rotter, 1966). People characterized as "internals" believe that reinforcements are determined largely by personal effort, ability, and initiative, whereas people classified as "externals" believe that reinforcements are determined largely by other people, social structures, luck, or fate. A reinforcer is defined by Rotter as anything "that changes behaviour in some observable way by either increasing or decreasing the potentiality of its occurrence" (Rotter, 1954, p. 112). Positive reinforcers increase the potential for a response while negative reinforcers decrease the potential.

Locus of control is conceptualized as a continuum along which people can be ordered rather than as a typological concept (Rotter, 1982). It is intended to provide a single dimension for measuring a range of general control expectations (O'Brien, 1984). Although the terms internal and external are used, Rotter (1966) emphasized that a person's behaviour cannot be classified as one or the other because, in any given situation, an individual's behaviour is the result of many converging factors including situational and personality variables.

Research

Research on the locus of control concept has largely been directed at testing the assumption that the expectancy of control influences the way individuals behave. Taken as a whole, the evidence from this voluminous body of literature (see reviews by Lefcourt, 1980, 1982; Phares, 1976; Rotter, 1966, 1982; Stipek & Weisz, 1981) has indicated that individuals characterized as internals show higher levels of adaptive functioning than do individuals characterized as externals. For example, although there are clearly some exceptions in particular studies (e.g., Fontana & Gessner, 1969; Harrow & Ferrante, 1969), internality as compared to externality is generally found to facilitate (a) a more active and attentive approach to those aspects of the environment which are relevant to desired goals, superior cognitive processing and recall of that information, and more incidental as well as intentional learning, (b) a more spontaneous involvement in achievement activities, selection of more challenging tasks, and better ability to delay gratification and to persist under difficult circumstances, (c) higher levels of academic and vocational performance and more positive achievement-related attitudes, (d) more attempts to prevent and remediate health problems, (e) better interpersonal relationships, more assertiveness toward others and more liking and respect from

others despite greater resistance to their influence, (f) more assertiveness in correcting social and political problems, and in remedying personal, institutional, and work-related difficulties, and (g) better emotional adjustment such as higher self-esteem, better sense of humour, more positive mood states, greater freedom from depression, anxiety, and other forms of psychopathology, and greater reported life satisfaction and contentment.

Evidence from cross-cultural studies of locus of control reveal consistent findings. Nowicki and Duke (1983) concluded in their overview of the cross-cultural research that "externality seems to be related to maladjustment, lower achievement levels, and powerlessness, much as is found in United States samples. Internality is related to higher self-esteem, self-acceptance, and other general indicators of adaptive functioning" (p.21).

More recently, investigators have raised arguments against considering internality as a stable optimal state and externality as always being a deficiency or negative state (Reid, 1984; Wong & Sproule, 1984). Rotter (1966, 1975) himself suggested a curvilinear relationship between locus of control and adjustment. In other words, individuals falling at either extreme of the internal-external continuum may be more maladjusted than those individuals who are more moderate. Those at the internal end may not recognize their personal limits and may believe they have more

control than is warranted by reality. Alternatively, individuals
at the external end of the continuum may underestimate the amount
of control that they can realistically exert. Lefcourt (1982) has
stated that in the former case we approach the pathological
processes associated with paranoia, ideas of reference, delusions
of grandeur, whereas the latter would likely involve depression,
withdrawal, apathy, and retreatism. Since most studies compare the
two ends of the internal-external continuum, very little is known
about the moderate group which Rotter views as the most adjusted of
the three (Wong & Sproule, 1984).

In his 1976 review, Phares concluded that "the most basic
characteristic of internal individuals appears to be their greater
efforts at coping with or attaining mastery over their
environments. This is the most elemental deduction that could be
made from the nature of the I-E variable" (p. 78). He also stated
that "perhaps related to internals' feelings that they can control
the environment is the feeling that they can control themselves"
(p. 68). Lefcourt (1982) concluded that the way in which
individuals apprise themselves with regard to causality makes a
considerable difference to the ways in which many life experiences
are managed. He further stated:

> It would be fair to conclude that internal control
> expectancies about personally important events that are to
> some reasonable degree controllable, will be related to signs

of vitality - affective and cognitive activity that indicates an active grappling with those self-defined important events. Where fatalism or external control beliefs are associated with apathy and withdrawal, the holding of internal control expectancies presages a connection between an individual's desires and his [or her] subsequent actions. As such, locus of control can be viewed as a mediator of involved commitment in life pursuits. If one feels helpless to affect important events, then resignation or at least benign indifference should become evident, with fewer signs of concern, involvement, and vitality. (p. 184)

Changes in Locus of Control

In light of the empirical evidence demonstrating the relationship between internal locus of control and positive behaviour, investigators have shown interest in ways to change locus of control orientation. Lefcourt (1982) has pointed out:

The shifting of one's locus of control from an external to a more internal position would seem to be a natural goal for professional psychologists whose aims are often to revive their patients' flagging efforts in pursuit of satisfactions they have foresaken as hopeless. (pp. 149-150)

(a) Natural and Accidentally Occurring Changes

To some extent, researchers have investigated the natural and accidental changes in locus of control such as those associated with age, the passage of time, and the effects of contemporary and changing life events. In his study of the relationship between age and locus of control, Penk (1969) found that chronological age per se does not appear to be the key component. Rather, it is the

growth of mental age, the extent of vocabulary development and usage that become associated with a sense of being able to determine the course of one's life. In their critical review of 33 studies on age and locus of control, Weisz and Stipek (1982) argued that no clear conclusions can be drawn at this time given the lack of consistent findings across the studies. With regard to the passage of time and locus of control, Harvey (1971) found that the longer people held administrative positions in the upper echelons of government the higher their scores of internality on Rotter's locus of control scale.

Two studies revealed the effects of contemporary events upon people's perceptions of causality. Gorman (1968) found that on the day following the 1968 Democratic National Convention, the scores of students who were supporters of Eugene McCarthy were more external than the national norms for university students at that time. The high external scores were thought to reflect the committed students' disappointment and their possible disillusionment with the political process. McArthur (1970) administered Rotter's scale to Yale undergraduates on the day following a lottery that was conducted by the United States government to determine draft eligibility for the armed forces. Students affected by the lottery (those who were 19 years or older) had higher external locus of control scores that those control

subjects who completed the scale prior to the lottery. Those
students who were favourably affected by the lottery scored in a
more external direction than those who were not. McArthur reasoned
that because most of the students expected to serve in the armed
forces the lottery represented good luck, that is, a chance to not
serve in the army. Therefore, those eliminated from the draft
could be thought of as enjoying good fortune.

Changing life events may also effect locus of control. Smith
(1970) found that locus of control scores for clients in a crisis
intervention treatment program at a neuropsychiatric facility
significantly declined from the external to the internal over a
period of six weeks. Smith reasoned that acute crises induce a
sense of helplessness (or externality) and as crises become
resolved a return to a more internal locus of control is probable.

(b) Deliberately Contrived and Behaviourally Assessed Changes

Deliberate attempts to alter locus of control have been
conducted on children and adults using a variety of different
approaches. Interventions with children have primarily used
behavioural approaches such as classroom management (e.g., Matheny
& Edwards, 1974), structured camp programs (e.g., Nowicki & Barnes,
1973), and relaxation therapy (Barry, 1981). The findings of these
studies indicate varying degrees of change toward internality and

the positive social behaviours associated with that internality.

However, other studies applying a behavioural approach to changing

locus of control in children have found mixed and nonsignificant

results (Fontana-Durso, 1975; Morris, 1977; Stahl, 1977). Overall,

the data indicate that the most successful behavioural

interventions are those that are long term and broad based (Nowicki

& Duke, 1983).

Approaches other than behaviour management have been used to

try to change locus of control orientations. For example, in a

year long intervention study focusing on subjects living in

low-cost housing units, Knapp and McClure (1978) attempted to make

"the environment more stimulating and the quality of life better"

(p. 280). Interventions consisted of tutorial assistance, values

clarification workshops, psychological counselling, referral

services, and constructive activities for youth. The results

indicated that both adults and adolescents became more internal

compared to control subjects on the I-E scale. Johnson, Duke, and

Nowicki (1980) found that children involved in a structured fitness

program became more internal and developed higher self-esteem, and

maintained these changes for up to one year.

Unlike the work with children, attempts to change locus of

control orientations in adults have not been characterized by

behavioural approaches. Most nonbehavioural interventions with

adults have taken place in educational settings. One of the most

extensive intervention programs of this nature was developed by

Roueche and Mink (1976), who studied 3,000 students from nine

community colleges over a period of three years. The program was

designed to influence socio-interpersonal and academic development.

In order to develop a sense of internal control in their students,

they used a system of individualized learner-oriented instruction

that emphasized careful behaviour sequencing. They also

implemented an intense "counselling for internality" strategy which

consisted of a composite of successful methods discussed by past

researchers to work with people who feel powerless and alienated.

The strategy involved a number of techniques, including an expanded

version of reality therapy designed to foster perceptions of

control over one's life. The results clearly indicated that the

planned interventions significantly changed the students' locus of

control orientations in the internal direction. The most

significant changes toward internality occurred in those

interventions that attempted the broadest base in their impact.

This study is viewed as one of the few that has helped to clarify

some of the potentially critical components of the change process

(Nowicki & Duke, 1983).

A number of short-term interventions have also been successful

in changing locus of control orientations. One study found that

change toward internality was related to the type of teaching strategy rather than to the specific instruction about the locus of control concept (Newsome & Foxworth, 1980). Another study trained teachers to teach in ways that would facilitate the development of an internal locus of control using an education program (Maresca-Koniz, 1980). The results indicated a significant change toward internality midway through the project, but not at the end.

Deliberate attempts to alter locus of control have also been conducted in clinical settings. For example, Masters (1970) reported a case study in which he reduced an "adolescent rebellion" by therapy that focused upon the reconstrual of causality. The therapy consisted of the verbal reinterpretation of events which, in turn, caused actual changes in the family dynamics, improvement in the adolescent's morale, and a shift toward internality.

3. <u>Seligman's Learned Helplessness</u>

<u>Introduction and Background</u>

"Learned helplessness" is the term used to describe the expectation that responses and outcomes are independent. Martin Seligman and his colleagues (Overmier & Seligman, 1967; Seligman & Maier, 1967) found that animals, when exposed to uncontrollable events, learned <u>not</u> to try to control the events. Instead, the animals learned that responding was futile. In other words, the animals learned helplessness. With respect to humans, Seligman (1975) hypothesized that exposure to repeated uncontrollable outcomes alters people's beliefs about themselves and their ability to influence the environment.

The learned helplessness model was originally formulated on the basis of laboratory experiments with a variety of animals (see Maier & Seligman, 1976, for a review of the animal research). However, as investigators began applying the concepts originating in animal helplessness to human helplessness, a number of inadequacies became apparent (e.g., see Buchwald, Coyne, & Cole, 1978; Roth, 1980; Wortman & Brehm, 1975 for critiques). In response to these criticisms, a reformulation of the original theory was proposed (Abramson, Seligman, & Teasdale, 1978).

The reformulated model refined and integrated aspects of Weiner's (1972, 1974) attribution theory. Briefly, the reformulation states that unlike animals, once people learn that their responses and outcomes are independent they attribute their helplessness to a cause. The causal attributions made for the uncontrollable outcome will influence the nature of the person's deficit as well as how far this deficit will generalize and how long it will last.

The first inadequacy of the old model was its inability to distinguish between cases in which outcomes are uncontrollable for all people and cases in which they are uncontrollable for only some people. The proposed resolution of this inadequacy is the attributional dimension of "internality" which is used to define the distinction between universal and personal helplessness (Abramson et al., 1978). Universal helplessness is characterized by the belief that an outcome is independent of all of one's own responses as well as the responses of other people. Personal helplessness is characterized by the individual's belief that there are responses available that would produce the desired outcome, but that she or he does not possess them. An individual can be either internally or externally helpless. Universally helpless individuals make external attributions for failures, whereas

personally helpless individuals make internal attributions for failures (Abramson et al., 1978).

The second inadequacy of the original model was its inability to explain when and where the helplessness will generalize once people believe they are helpless in one situation. The attribution an individual makes about the cause of her or his helplessness is thought to affect expectations about future helplessness which, in turn, determine the chronicity and generality of the helplessness (Abramson et al., 1978). "Chronicity", or the consistency over time, is addressed by the attributional dimension "stable-unstable". Stable factors are thought of as long-lived or recurrent, whereas unstable factors are short-lived or intermittent. "Generality" of helplessness across situations is accounted for by the attributional dimension "global-specific". Global factors affect a wide variety of situations, whereas specific factors affect only a particular context.

To summarize, there are three attributional dimensions proposed by the reformulation that have been designed to address the criticisms of the original learned helplessness model. All three dimensions are conceptualized as continua rather than as dichotomies (Abramson et al., 1978). The first dimension, "internal-external", predicts the type of helplessness (universal versus personal); the second dimension, "stable-unstable", predicts

the chronicity of helplessness over time; and the third dimension, "global-specific", predicts the generality of helplessness across situations.

Research

The cornerstone of the learned helplessness hypothesis is that learning that outcomes are uncontrollable results in debilitating consequences (Abramson et al., 1978). Originally, three deficits were proposed: motivational, cognitive, and emotional. A fourth deficit, low self-esteem, was proposed by the attributional reformulation. Each of the proposed deficits will be defined, followed by the experimental evidence that has been cited in support of it.

Motivational deficits refer to the way learned helplessness undermines the incentive to respond. Studies cited as evidence of motivational deficits are those in which people exhibited a failure to escape noise (Glass, Reim, & Singer, 1971; Hiroto & Seligman, 1975; Klein & Seligman, 1976; Miller & Seligman, 1976), and a failure to solve anagrams (Benson & Kennelly, 1976; Gatchel & Proctor, 1976; Hiroto & Seligman, 1975; Klein, Fencil-Morse, & Seligman, 1976).

Cognitive deficits refer to the way learned helplessness retards the ability to learn that responding works. Studies cited

in support of this type of deficit are those in which people

exhibited a failure to see patterns in anagrams (Hiroto & Seligman,

1975; Klein, Fencil-Morse, & Seligman, 1976). Klein and Seligman

(1976), and Miller and Seligman (1976) found that in skill tasks,

expectations for future success increased less following success

and/or decreased less following failure for helpless subjects than

for nonhelpless subjects (but, see Willis & Blaney, 1978; and

McNitt & Thornton, 1978 for alternate findings). From these

results, it was inferred that the helpless subjects had acquired a

generalized expectancy of response-outcome independence which

interfered with seeing the relationship between their responses and

outcomes.

Douglas and Anisman (1975) found that subjects who failed on

simple tasks exhibited later cognitive deficits, whereas those who

failed on complex tasks did not. According to the attributional

reformulation, subjects likely attributed their failure on the

simple tasks to more global and internal factors (e.g., I'm

stupid), whereas the other subjects attributed their failure on the

complex tasks to external and specific factors (e.g., These

problems are too difficult). Similarly, Roth and Kubal (1975)

found that subjects who failed on tasks defined as "important"

showed greater cognitive deficits than those subjects who believed

the tasks were "unimportant". The new helplessness model suggests

that subjects in the "important" condition likely made more global, internal, and stable attributions for their performance and, therefore, the helplessness recurred in the new situation, thus producing the deficits. Subjects in the "unimportant" condition likely made more specific and less stable attributions for their performance, did not expect helplessness on the next task and, therefore, did not exhibit cognitive deficits.

In contrast, Ford and Neale (1985) could not find evidence for expected cognitive deficits in subjects exposed to uncontrollable outcomes. Similarly, the results of several studies have reported improved rather than the expected impaired performance by subjects exposed to uncontrollable events (Hanusa & Schultz, 1977; Roth & Kubal, 1975; Tennen & Eller, 1977; Wortman, Panciera, Shusterman, & Hibscher, 1976). To date, the learned helplessness model does not adequately account for these conflicting results.

Emotional deficits refer to the affective consequences of learned helplessness, primarily depression. An expectation of uncontrollability per se does not produce the emotional deficit associated with learned helplessness. Only situations in which the expectation of uncontrollability is related to the lack or loss of a highly desired outcome, or to the occurrence of an aversive one, are sufficient for depression (Abramson et al., 1978). Given that depression is viewed as outcome related, it can occur in situations

of both personal and universal helplessness (Abramson, Garber, &
Seligman, 1980). However, the depressed affect associated with
personal helplessness is hypothesized to be of greater intensity
than the depressed affect associated with universal helplessness
(Weiner, 1974).

One test of the attributional reformulation of learned
helplessness as it relates to depression was conducted by Seligman,
Abramson, Semmel, and Von Baeyer (1979) who attempted to isolate a
depressive attributional style. They found that individuals who
habitually construe the causes of bad events as internal (It's my
fault), stable (It's going to last forever), and global (It's going
to undermine everything I do) are more susceptible to depression
when they experience bad events than are those with the opposite
style. In short, individuals with a "pessimistic" explanatory
style are more likely to display helplessness deficits when
confronted with a bad event than individuals with an "optimistic"
explanatory style. Sweeney, Anderson, and Bailey (1986) in a
meta-analytic review of over 100 studies of the reformulated
learned helplessness model, found convincing evidence that
depressed persons tend to make internal, stable, and global
attributions for negative events.

Depressive deficits associated with a pessimistic explanatory
style have been found in a variety of populations, including

students, prisoners, children (Peterson & Seligman, 1984),

depressed psychiatric patients (Peterson & Seligman, 1984;

Seligman, Castellon, Cacciola, Schulman, Luborsky, Ollove, &

Downing, 1988; Sweeney, Anderson, & Bailey, 1986), and life

insurance sales agents (Seligman & Schulman, 1986). More recently,

Seligman has hypothesized that explanatory style can predict

achievement as well as psychological and physical health (Trotter,

1987). Overall, people who habitually provide stable, global, and

internal explanations, such as stupidity, for their failures are

less likely to persist, take chances, or rise above their potential

than those who explain failure in unstable, specific and external

terms, such as luck (Trotter, 1987).

The fourth deficit proposed by the reformulated learned

helplessness model is low self-esteem. The universal versus

personal helplessness distinction predicts that individuals who

attribute their helplessness to internal factors (personal

helplessness) will show lower self-esteem than will individuals who

make external attributions (universal helplessness). Ickes and

Layden (1978) found support for this hypothesis by demonstrating

that individuals with low self-esteem tended to attribute negative

outcomes to internal factors and positive outcomes to external

factors, whereas the opposite was true for high self-esteem

subjects. According to the model, universally and personally

helpless individuals will differ in terms of self-esteem deficits,
but both types will manifest the other three deficits
(i.e., motivational, cognitive, emotional) because they both expect
their responses and outcomes to be independent (Abramson et al.,
1980).

Seligman (1975) has proposed that learned helplessness plays a
part in a wide variety of human conditions, including child
development, stomach ulcers, depression, and death. Other
investigators have argued that learned helplessness is useful in
examining intellectual achievement (Dweck & Licht, 1980), crowding
(Rodin, 1976), victimization (Silver & Wortman, 1980), the coronary
prone personality (Glass & Carver, 1980), and aging (Schulz,
1980).

Implications for Therapy

The attributional reformulation of the learned helplessness
model suggests that individuals who differ in terms of their
attributional style will differ in their responses to
uncontrollability. According to the model, individuals with a
tendency to attribute negative outcomes to global, stable, and
internal factors are more prone to helplessness, depression, and
low self-esteem.

Based on these assumptions, four strategies of therapeutic
intervention are proposed by the reformulated model (Abramson et

al., 1978; Abramson et al., 1980). First, change the estimated probability of the outcome by changing the environment in such a way as to reduce the likelihood of aversive outcomes and to increase the likelihood of desired outcomes. Second, make the highly preferred outcomes less preferred by reducing the aversiveness of unavoidable outcomes or the desirability of unobtainable outcomes. Third, change the expectation from uncontrollability to controllability when the outcomes are attainable. In situations when the necessary responses are not within the individual's repertoire but could be, skill training would be appropriate. When the necessary responses are available but inaccessible due to distorted expectations of response-outcome independence, modify the distorted expectation. Fourth, change unrealistic attributions for failure toward external, unstable, specific factors, and change unrealistic attributions for success toward internal, stable, global factors.

There are no studies that directly test the therapeutic implications proposed by the reformulated model. Indirect support is cited from studies demonstrating the superior effectiveness of therapies aimed at teaching depressed people to alter their cognitive distortions as compared with other therapeutic interventions (Rush, Beck, Kovacs, & Hollon, 1977; Shaw, 1977).

Implications for Prevention

According to the original formulation of learned helplessness, an effective means of preventing learned helplessness is behavioural immunization. Prior experience at controlling outcomes immunizes subjects against the effects of procedures that would otherwise induce helplessness (Seligman, 1975). The reformulated model explains the effects of immunization with the attributional dimension "global-specific". An initial success experience is believed to make the attribution for a subsequent helplessness experience less global and, therefore, less likely to produce an expectation of helplessness in the new situation (Abramson et al., 1980). Results from studies examining the effects of immunization show support for the reformulated model (Klein & Seligman, 1976; Koller & Kaplan, 1978). In partial support of the new model is Teasdale's (1978) study in which he found that both real success experiences and recalling past successes equally effected a shift in attributions for initial failure from internal to external factors, but only real success reversed the helplessness deficits.

In contrast, Buchwald, Coyne, and Cole (1978) have stated that the immunizing effects of success do not necessarily provide support for the learned helplessness explanation that such manipulations affect the expectation of relationship between response and outcome. Hollon and Garber (1980) argued that the

documented changes in helplessness are the result of a change in expectation rather than a change in attribution.

The reformulated model of learned helplessness has also proposed implications for the prevention of helplessness. As noted earlier, the model states that individuals who consistently attribute negative outcomes to stable, global, internal factors are at higher risk for depression than those individuals who make unstable, specific, external attributions to negative outcomes. Preventive strategies, then, are aimed at altering the depression-prone individual's attributional style, producing environmental enrichment, and developing the individual's sense of personal control (Abramson et al., 1980).

4. <u>Kobasa's Hardiness</u>

<u>Introduction and Background</u>

The conceptual foundations of Suzanne Kobasa's formulation of hardiness are derived from Maddi's existential personality theory (Kobasa & Maddi, 1977; Maddi, 1988). Within this theoretical context, the movement of healthy growth is from being stuck in "facticity" (the fixed and unchangeable) to exploring and actualizing possibility (Maddi, 1988). Through the vigorous use of the cognitive processes of symbolization (drawing fine distinctions), imagination (imagining alternatives), and judgement (having a definite stance toward living that is individualistic), the developing person is better able to differentiate between what is possible from what is unchangeable.

A person who vigorously uses these cognitive processes (symbolization, imagination, and judgement) is thought to have personality hardiness. A hardy personality is defined as a person who has a strong "commitment to self, an attitude of vigorousness toward the environment, a sense of meaningfulness, and an internal locus of control" (Kobasa, 1979, p. 1). The hardy person is better able to realistically discern facticity from possibility. In contrast, a person low in hardiness feels a pervasive sense of inferiority and futility, is less able to use these cognitive

processes and, consequently, more likely to have difficulty differentiating between facticity and possibility.

There are three inextricably intertwined components of hardiness: control, commitment, and challenge. These components refer to the set of assumptions people make about themselves, their world, and the interaction between the two (Maddi, 1988). Control refers to the belief in one's ability to influence the course of events in one's life. It is emphasized that this belief "does not imply the naive expectation of complete determination of events and outcomes, so much as the perception of oneself as a definite influence through the exercise of imagination, knowledge, skill, and choice" (Kobasa, Maddi & Kahn, 1982, p. 169). A hardy person has (a) decisional control, or the capacity to independently choose among various courses of action; (b) cognitive control, or the ability to interpret, appraise, and incorporate a variety of events into an ongoing life plan; and (c) coping skill, or a greater range of suitable responses to life events motivated by a desire to achieve across all situations. Persons low in control think they are powerless and see themselves as passive victims of circumstances. Such individuals are described as fearful and lacking in initiative.

Commitment refers to the ability to feel deeply involved in or committed to the activities of one's life. A person with the commitment characteristic has an overall sense of purpose which

allows them to identify with, and find meaning in the events, things, and persons in their life. They are highly invested in themselves and others. As a result, they do not easily succumb to pressure or give up in the face of difficulties. Instead, they draw on their personal, social, and environmental resources. Their relationships to themselves, other people, and their environment are characterized by activeness and approach, rather than by passivity and avoidance. Kobasa (1979) stressed that while a commitment to all areas of life, that is, work, social institutions, interpersonal relationships, family, and self is important, a strong commitment to self is critical. A commitment to oneself involves recognizing one's unique values, goals, priorities, and valuing one's capacity to have purpose and to make decisions. This is essential for an accurate assessment of difficult life situations and for the competent handling of them. Persons low in commitment feel a sense of alienation. They feel that both they and their worlds are uninteresting and not worthwhile. Consequently, their involvement with, and participation in, the world is minimal.

Challenge refers to a belief system that views change as an opportunity for personal development rather than as a threat to security. Those individuals with the challenge characteristic are proactive, flexible, and highly adaptive. They value interesting

and different experiences through the open exploration of their environment and, as a result, build an awareness and confidence in their ability to access their own resources. Their flexibility allows them to effectively appraise and integrate new situations rather than be incapacitated by them. The core of the hardy person's search for novelty and challenge is a sense of purpose consistent with their fundamental life goals. Persons low in challenge think that change is a threat and seek to maintain stability, comfort, and security.

Research

Kobasa (1979) proposed that the constellation of personality characteristics that make up the concept of hardiness function as a resistance to the otherwise debilitating effects of stressful life events. She proposed that individuals who experience high levels of stress without falling ill have more of the personality characteristics of hardiness than do those individuals who become sick under stress. The focus of the research on personality hardiness has been on its role as a resource in stress resistance. Initial empirical support for hardiness as a stress-resistance resource came from a study of business executives conducted by Kobasa in 1979. She found that executives high in stressful events but low in illness showed greater control, commitment, and

challenge characteristics compared to executives in whom similar stressful event levels were associated with much illness. Two years later, further support was found in another study of business executives. Executives' hardiness and stressful life event scores were found to be significant predictors of change in executives' illness over time. Hardiness decreased illness, whereas stressful life events increased illness and they interacted with each other such that hardiness emerged as most effective in periods of high stress. Recent work with hardiness has demonstrated its relevance to the stress-resistance of lawyers (Kobasa, 1982a), management personnel of a large utility company (Kobasa & Puccetti, 1983), and gynecology outpatients (Kobasa, 1982b).

Other studies have demonstrated the joint influence of hardiness and other resistance resources such as constitutional strengths (Kobasa, Maddi, & Corrington, 1981), exercise (Kobasa, Maddi, & Puccetti, 1982), and social resources (Kobasa & Puccetti, 1983). One study highlighted the value of multiple resistance resources (Kobasa, Maddi, Puccetti, & Zola, 1985). Of the three resistance resources studied - hardiness, exercise, and social support - hardiness emerged as the most important.

In support of individual aspects of her hypothesis, Kobasa has relied on the research findings generated from investigations of personality concepts similar to hardiness. Control, for

example, has consistently emerged as a significant moderator of stress in the research literature. Recently, Lefcourt (1983) reviewed the experimental literature, the field studies, and the studies concerned with life events which have demonstrated the moderating effect of control on stress. The effectiveness of challenge has been demonstrated in a study by Smith, Johnson, and Sarason (1978) who found that sensation-seeking, or the tendency to seek out novel or intense experiences, was shown to decrease the relationship between stressful life events and illness. The commitment aspect of hardiness has received little empirical attention outside of Kobasa's studies.

Some initial work has been done to determine the relative contribution of the three components of hardiness. The challenge component, as indexed by security and cognitive structure, was found to be more influential as an illness-resistance resource than either commitment or control. Maddi and Kobasa (1981) concluded that "persons who are flexible, tolerant of uncertainty, and untroubled by the need for socioeconomic security are especially resistant to the debilitating effects of stressful life events" (p. 317).

Intrinsic Motivation

The hardiness composite (i.e., control, commitment, and challenge) has also been proposed as comprising those personality

characteristics that may predispose people to be intrinsically

motivated (Maddi & Kobasa, 1981). The concept of intrinsic

motivation refers to the ways in which animals and humans display

"an interest in and curiosity about objects and tasks in the

absence of any extrinsic reinforcements" (Maddi, Hoover, & Kobasa,

1982, p. 884). In addition to being a source of pleasure and

satisfaction with one's activities, intrinsically motivated

activities are hypothesized to have important functional

significance (Maddi et al., 1982). For example, intrinsic

motivation is thought to lead to activities which are useful in

future adaptation. Additionally, intrinsic motivation is

considered to be an important determinant of survival through

increasing the organism's pool of information about the

environment.

Maddi and Kobasa (1981) proposed that the three personality

characteristcs that make up the hardiness composite are implied in

the concept of intrinsic motivation. The more a person is

predisposed toward commitment (i.e., the ease with which they

commit themselves to or involve themselves in tasks), control

(i.e., the likelihood that they feel in control of or able to

influence what happens), and challenge (i.e., the vigor with which

they feel challenged or stimulated to strive and change in what

they do), the greater the likelihood that the person will show

signs of intrinsic motivation. Thus, "persons high on these

aspects of intrinsic motivation may well feel more satisfied as

they move through life's tasks, and gain more of the information

and skills marking competence" (Maddi & Kobasa, 1981, p. 304). In

terms of the survival value of their intrinsic motivation, these

people may well be able to handle more stress than others without

becoming ill (Maddi & Kobasa, 1981).

Developing Hardiness

Existential personality theory has suggested that the best

context for developing personality hardiness is one in which

people have:

> Experienced in early life considerable breadth and variety of
> events; stimulation and support for exercising the cognitive
> capabilities of symbolization, imagination, and judgement;
> approval and admiration for doing things themselves; and role
> models who advocate hardiness and show it in their own
> functioning. (Kobasa et al., 1982, p. 176)

Maddi (1988) suggested that the sense of commitment is developed in

children through feeling supported, encouraged, and accepted by

their parents. The sense of control is developed in children

through mastery experiences. The sense of challenge is developed

in children through conceiving experiences of change as enriching

rather than chaotic.

To instill hardiness in those persons without this context and

background, Maddi and Kobasa have developed counselling procedures

for encouraging personality hardiness (Maddi, 1985; Maddi & Kobasa,

1984). Essentially, the person is helped to learn to cope with

problems or stressful circumstances. The process starts with a

problem solving technique called situational reconstruction. The

person identifies a problem or a stressful circumstance. Through imaginative processes, the person is encouraged to imagine better circumstances and worse circumstances. The person is then encouraged to think about what would have to happen to make each of those possibilities occur. Through action processes, the person is encouraged to explore what she or he could personally do to bring about the better circumstance. If the exercise is successful, the feedback provided encourages growth of the three aspects of personality hardiness.

If the person encounters difficulty with the exercise, she or he is encouraged to use the technique of focusing (Gendlin, 1978) in order to discover the block. Basically, this technique encourages the person to focus inside the self to search for the individual meaning of the blockage. If this technique is successful, the person attempts situational reconstruction again. If it is not, the person concludes that she or he has confronted an aspect of facticity or the unchangeable. The technique of compensatory self-improvement is utilized in this case. The person is encouraged to identify and to work on a second problem which is ideally related to the first one. The aim is to increase the person's sense of possibility in other areas of life than those which seem unchangeable. Again, the person works through situational reconstruction and focusing. Throughout the exercise, the person is reflecting on the assumptions they have made about themselves, their world, and the interaction between the two.

5. <u>deCharms' Personal Causation</u>

<u>Introduction and Background</u>

According to Richard deCharms, the concept of personal

causation means "deliberate action to produce intended change"

(deCharms, 1987, p. 8). It is based on the following fundamental

assumption about human motivation:

> Man's [or woman's] primary motivational propensity is to be
> effective in producing changes in his [or her] environment.
> Man [or woman] strives to be a causal agent, to be the primary
> locus of causation for, or the origin of, his [or her]
> behavior; he [or she] strives for personal causation.
> (deCharms, 1968, p. 269)

Personal causation is not a motive per se, but rather it is the

"guiding principle upon which specific motives are built"

(deCharms, 1968, p. 270). More specifically, it is the feeling of

purpose and commitment that underlies each of the individuals'

chosen motives.

Personal causation is a type of "personal knowledge". Based

on Polanyi's (1958) work, personal knowledge is defined as the

source of knowledge that is available to each individual

personally, but that originates privately from one's own feelings

and behaviour (deCharms, 1968). Personal knowledge is not fixed.

Rather, it changes continuously. Personal causation, then, is the

personal knowledge of oneself as a causal agent of change in the

environment and is the result of both subjective and objective

experience.

Originally, the concept of personal causation was drawn out of

Heider's (1958) work on the "perceived locus of causality for

behavior". As deCharms refined the concept, he focused more on the

experience of personal causation and less on the **perception**

of personal causation.

> Personal causation is the **experience** of causing something
> yourself, of originating your own actions and controlling
> elements in your environment. The negative or pawn aspect is
> the **experience** of being pushed around, of not originating
> your own actions, of not being in control of elements in your
> environment. The stress is on the total experience of
> personal causation rather than on just the perception of it,
> or just the attribution of it to others, or just the
> behavioral correlates of it. (deCharms, 1979, p. 33)

DeCharms (1984) has proposed the concept of personal causation

as central in human agency. According to deCharms (1984), human

agency is defined as "the reasonable use of knowledge and habits

(learned responses) to produce desired changes" (p. 276). The

underlying assumption is that personal causation or the motivation

for being the cause of desired changes is a pervasive aim of

actions of agency (deCharms, 1984). This guiding conceptualization

has led deCharms to investigate those experiences that enhance

personal causation in order to evaluate its impact on human

behaviour.

The Origin-Pawn Concept

For the sake of brevity, deCharms (1968, 1976) created the terms "Origin" and "Pawn" to differentiate between those who feel a sense of personal causation from those who feel a lack of personal causation. Origins are people who feel, to a large extent, that they control their own fate. They feel that they direct the course of their own lives through the exercise of choice. They value the consequences of their choices, having considered all the possible outcomes. Origins take pride in their successes as well as responsibility for their failures. They feel that the locus for causation of intentions comes from within. This feeling is reinforced by changes in the environment that the individual experiences as the direct result of personal behaviour.

In contrast, Pawns are people who feel pushed around like puppets on strings. They feel that external forces beyond their control determine their behaviour. They experience what they do as forced upon them rather than as the result of choice. Thus, the outcomes of a Pawn's actions are not seen as their own and, as a result, no responsibility is taken for them. They do not plan their lives because they feel that external factors will determine their fate for them. Pawns feel that the locus for causation of intentions is external to oneself.

The main difference between Origins and Pawns is one of
outlook. Origins characteristically experience their actions as
meaningful within the context of what they want. Pawns
characteristically experience their actions as determined by others
and external circumstances (deCharms, 1977a). The core of the
Origin-Pawn experience is reflected in the following line of
reasoning presented by deCharms:

> In a nutshell, originating one's own actions implies choice;
> choice is experienced as freedom; choice imposes
> responsibility for choice-related actions and enhances the
> feeling that the action is 'mine' (ownership of action). Put
> in the negative, having actions imposed from without (pawn
> behaviors) abrogates choice; lack of choice is experienced as
> bondage, releases one from responsibility, and allows, even
> encourages, the feeling that the action is 'not mine'.
> (deCharms, 1984, p. 279)

DeCharms (1976) proposed that these two different motivational
states critically affect behaviour. That is, a person's behaviour
is characteristically different depending upon whether she or he
feels like a Pawn or like an Origin. He suggested that the Origin
is "positively motivated, optimistic, confident, accepting of
challenge", whereas the Pawn is "negatively motivated, defensive,
irresolute, avoidant of challenge" (deCharms, 1976, p. 5). In
short, feelings of potency are associated with being an Origin and
feelings of powerlessness are associated with being a Pawn.

DeCharms emphasized that the Origin-Pawn concept is a
continuum. Empirically, he has found that people are not one or

the other (deCharms, 1984) but instead, may feel or act more like one or the other depending upon the circumstances. He does argue, however, that some people characteristically feel and act like Origins more of the time than do others (deCharms, 1987).

Characteristics of Origin Behaviour

On the basis of direct, intensive observations of children in a classroom and personal causation theory, Plimptom (1976) developed a measure of the Origin-Pawn concept. For the purposes of understanding Origin behaviour as contrasted with Pawn behaviour, the six characteristics identified by Plimpton are presented.

1. Internal Control

As an operationalized definition of internal locus of causality for behaviour, internal control is defined as "the person's experience of being the cause of his [or her] decisions, choices, activities, and attempts to solve problems as well as of the solutions to problems" (deCharms, 1981, p. 344). The person "reacts to problems as a challenge to be overcome by positive personal action rather than as a threat to be reacted to by submission" (deCharms, 1987, p. 16).

2. Goal-Setting

Goal setting is a self-initiated decision to pursue a definite goal (deCharms, 1987). There are two types of goals. Idealistic goal-setting is the choice of a goal unrestrained by any external forces. Realistic goal-setting is the decision to pursue a goal that is partially externally controlled (deCharms, 1981).

3. Instrumental Activity

Instrumental activity is defined as "a self-initiated activity or plan that is instrumental to attainment of a goal" (deCharms, 1987, p. 15).

4. Reality Perception

Reality perception is defined as "the individual's ability to perceive correctly her or his (a) position vis-à-vis other persons or the environment, (b) possibilities, (c) strengths and weaknesses" (deCharms, 1987, p. 16). It is often expressed in the ability to "recognize cause and effect relationships, environmental problems, and motives of others, and to adjust to these factors" (deCharms, 1981, p. 343).

5. Personal Responsibility

Personal responsibility is defined as "the person's willingness to assume responsibility for the consequences of his or her action, the attainment of goals, the fulfillment of desires, or the solution of problems" (deCharms, 1981, p. 343).

6. Self-Confidence

Self-confidence is defined as "the person's confidence that he or she can effect changes in the environment" (deCharms, 1981, p. 344). It is a confidence in one's personal strength and capability (Plimpton, 1976). Self-confidence does not mean "a striving for power or superiority, but rather a striving for self-actualization and faith in succeeding" (Plimpton, 1976, p. 227).

Research

DeCharms' early research focused on the perception of personal causation. He and his colleagues conducted a study demonstrating that the Origin-Pawn distinction was important in the perception of others (deCharms, Carpenter, & Kuperman, 1965). The result of this study was a shift in focus from the perception of Origin-Pawn characteristics in others to the experience of oneself as an Origin or as a Pawn.

The next set of studies focused on the experience of experimentally induced personal causation and its impact on behaviour. Kuperman (cited in deCharms, 1968) and deCharms, Dougherty, and Wurtz (cited in deCharms, 1968) found that experiences of Origin or Pawn feelings induced in the laboratory setting had strong effects on subjects' feeling, behaviour, and memory of the experience in the direction predicted by personal causation theory.

The next shift in deCharms' research was away from laboratory settings toward the study of the experience of personal causation in a practical setting. DeCharms believed that studying personal causation intensively in a practical context would "reveal the complex interrelations between concepts that occur in the real setting" (deCharms, 1979, p. 39).

The setting deCharms chose was the elementary school classroom. The goal of this long-term study was to enhance the motivation of inner-city elementary school children through feelings of personal causation. Enhancing motivation in this way was hypothesized to positively affect school behaviours such as academic achievement and attendance. The experimental treatment involved training teachers to facilitate personal causation or Origin feelings in their students. In order to do this, teachers participated in a personal causation training course, and assisted

the researchers in designing origin-enhancing techniques to be used in their classrooms as part of the study. Essentially, the training of both teachers and children followed the same basic structure. There was an emphasis on self-study and the evaluation of personal motives, and specific aspects of Origin behaviour such as realistic goal-setting, planning concrete action, taking personal responsibility, and self-confidence.

The study compared the children of trained and untrained teachers over a period of 3 years from the end of the fifth grade to the end of the eighth grade. The data indicated that: (1) children's feelings of personal causation increased as indexed by an Origin measure designed for the study, (2) academic achievement was higher in the trained children as compared to the untrained children, and (3) school attendance and tardiness were positively affected in the trained children as compared to the untrained children. Follow-up studies have shown positive long-term effects of Origin training on career-related and responsible behaviours, and probability of high school graduation (deCharms, 1984).

DeCharms and his colleagues then shifted their focus from studying students to studying teachers and their interactions with the students. Specifically, they were interested in teacher

characteristics and behaviour that enhanced personal causation and academic achievement in students (Koenigs, Fiedler, & deCharms, 1977). In this study, they found that teachers who showed more flexibility, complexity and interpersonal sensitivity, who encouraged more pupil influence, and who were perceived as promoting more of an Origin climate in their classrooms had students with higher academic achievement scores. These results were thought to indicate that students who felt more personal causation were more motivated to learn. In a related study, it was hypothesized that both Origin teachers and teachers classified as "Internal" on the locus of control scale would have higher achieving students (cited in deCharms, 1981). They found that although there was no correlation between the two orientations (i.e., the Origin teachers and the Internal teachers), both orientations significantly contributed to the students' academic achievement.

DeCharms' most recent research on personal causation in schools has focused on teacher-administrator relationships rather than teacher-student relationships (cited in deCharms, 1984). A study was designed to investigate the relationship between evaluation procedures and teacher motivation. The results indicated that the more evaluation effort that was made by the

administrator (in this study the emphasis was on the school principal) the more the teachers felt effective and motivated.

The Revised Origin-Pawn Concept

As a result of the motivation enhancement research project, the Origin-Pawn concept was modified in three important ways (deCharms, 1976). First, the concept of freedom versus constraint was replaced by the concept of striving. Objectively, both the Pawn and the Origin experience external forces. The difference between them, however, is one of outlook and experience. Origins are aware of the external constraints, but do not allow these forces to determine personal goals. They determine their goals and within the meaningful context of these goals strive to mold the external forces to help them in their pursuits. As a result, Origins experience their actions as personally meaningful within the context of what they want. On the other hand, Pawns feel pushed around by external forces because they have not chosen their own goals nor have they developed strategies to move through the external forces. Thus, Pawns feel constrained and focus on these constraints. They experience their actions as determined by others and external circumstances. In summary, Origins are persons who are striving for goals within constraints rather than having complete freedom from them.

Second, the concept of personal responsibility was given a
stronger emphasis. As a first step, Origins must learn to take
responsibility for the consequences of their actions. Beyond this
and more importantly, Origins must strive to reach their goals in
such a way as to simultaneously promote the goal-seeking behaviour
of others. Origins recognize that the notion of personal
responsibility involves goals that are "promotively interdependent"
and, therefore, structure their world in a way that supports this
perspective. Simply put, true Origins treat others as Origins.
DeCharms (1976) argued that the notion that if some people are
Origins then others must be Pawns is a large misconception and, in
fact, misses the deeper level of meaning inherent in the concept of
personal responsibility.

Third, the Origin concept was clarified. Striving and
responsibility are viewed as more prominent features of Origin
behaviour. Additionally, the stage of development of the
self-concept is viewed as inextricably bound to the Origin concept.
That is, people will view the Origin concept differently depending
upon their developmental level.

Changing from a Pawn to an Origin

The focus of deCharms' later research was on inducing a change
in people from that of a Pawn to that of an Origin under

experimentally controlled conditions. There are two fundamental assumptions that underlie his work (deCharms, 1977b). The first is that being an Origin is better and more meaningful than being a Pawn. The second is that being an Origin or a Pawn is learned, not innate. These assumptions are generally supported by deCharms' research findings. For example, in the data reported in 1976, deCharms and his colleagues found that students were able to learn Origin behaviour, and these same students felt more motivated and gained more academically than their Pawn counterparts.

The theoretical underpinnings for this change process come from an integration of McClelland's (1965) work on motivation development and deCharms' (1968) own work on personal causation. DeCharms proposed four elements that facilitate the change toward the feelings and behaviour associated with being an Origin. The first element is self-study to identify meaningful personal motives. This necessitates the person seeing the change in terms of an improvement in her or his self-image. In other words, the proposed change must be meaningful and important to the person and it must be stimulated from within the person. The context within which the change occurs is also important. Lasting, genuine change is more likely to occur in a warm, interpersonal atmosphere that supports and accepts personal development. The second element that facilitates the change is the ability to translate these motives

into realistic short and long-term goals. The third element is the ability to plan realistic goals and concrete action in order to attain these goals. The fourth element is the capacity to accept personal responsibility for chosen goals and the successes or failures of any attempts to reach them. These four elements are believed to:

> Induce increased commitment and purpose, greater personal responsibility, and higher motivation, all within a context of meaning to the life of the individual. Finally, the aroused motivation should result in more effective behavior, greater success in goal-attainment and hence greater satisfaction. (deCharms, 1976, p. 6)

Limitations of the Existing Research

An adequate account of human agency must consider the individual in context. This perspective is based on the assumption that a comprehensive understanding of an individual cannot be attained without an understanding of the context, that is, the larger personal, social, and cultural realities within which the individual exists. Most importantly, a comprehensive understanding of the individual cannot be attained without an understanding of the way that context is perceived and experienced by the individual. The importance of context in the understanding of human behaviour has been stressed by numerous researchers (e.g., Bromley, 1986; Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Mishler, 1986; Rosenwald, 1988; Yin, 1984). The argument advanced by proponents of this view is that decontextualization ignores how individuals understand themselves and the world, and neglects the connection between how their understandings are related to their personal, social, and cultural circumstances. Decontextualization distorts meaning, leading to any number of errors and misjudgements, particularly in the interpretation of data (Mishler, 1986). Investigators have repeatedly shown by example and argument the importance of context and the negative consequences of decontextualization (Mishler, 1986; Rosenwald, 1988).

Most of the existing research on human agency has been confined to laboratory experiments. The deficits related to this type of methodology as applied to the study of agency fall under the larger category of ecological validity. The ecological validity of this body of research is limited in the following ways. The nature of a laboratory experiment is to deliberately simplify the topic of interest in order to focus on the relationship between a small number of relevant variables and a small number of distinct conditions (Bromley, 1986). In order to focus on a small number of variables, laboratory experiments intentionally divorce a phenomenon from its context. The context is presumed to be "controlled" by the laboratory environment (Yin, 1984).

By isolating one or two variables and "controlling" out all others, potentially important contextual factors are neglected and the variables being studied are decontextualized. As well, by isolating a small number of variables these approaches ignore the complexity or multifaceted nature of human agency that is so widely acknowledged by these very researchers (e.g., see Bandura, 1986). In so doing, possible variables and interactions among variables that might contribute to an understanding of agency are left untapped and unexplored. Thus, in the process of establishing control, the results may be so restricted to these experimentally defined variables and conditions that they do not reflect the

richness and complexity of people's actual experience in the real
world under real world conditions. As such, this body of research
may not be relevant to the counselling problems and practice to
which the results ultimately need to be generalized (Kazdin,
1980).

The case study approach was selected as the appropriate
methodology for this study because of its ability to address the
internal complexities and contextual factors that may be related to
human agency. In contrast to the laboratory experiment, the
holistic case study method attempts to "control in" as many
variables as possible. This approach can illuminate unique
features that may be seen only because the phenomenon of concern is
studied in its full complexity without interfering with the natural
situation (Kazdin, 1980). This can be accomplished because the
natural situation is not disrupted through artificially controlled
conditions, decontextualized variables, or other such constraints
of the laboratory paradigm (Kazdin, 1980). The intent of the case
study approach in this study is to portray the interplay of
different features and forces as they bear on the topic of agency.
In this way, a case study approach is able to provide concrete
information that is absent in the more abstract experimental work
by detailing whole events rather than by isolating one or two
decontextualized variables as the bulk of the current research
does.

In addition to neglecting contextual issues, most of the
current theories tend to focus on descriptions of each end of the
continuum or on measuring the presence or absence of agency rather
than on identifying the change processes involved in enhancing
human agency. The one exception, of the five theorists reviewed,
is Richard deCharms who has attempted to identify key features
involved in enhancing human agency. He has outlined the
theoretical aspects of the change and attempted to induce a change
in agency in people (deCharms, 1976). Despite each theorists'
clear statements of the value of one end of the continuum over the
other and the emphasis on the need to understand how to change
people toward the more valued end of the continuum, how to
accomplish this has largely been inferential rather than clearly
stated and demonstrated as in the case of deCharms.

While deCharms' research has much to contribute, it too has
its limitations. DeCharms (1979) has argued that the study of a
concept like personal causation is "best conducted in the complex
situations where it occurs in real life" (p. 29). He stressed the
need to "look for the beast in situ rather than try to produce it
under artificial conditions" (p. 29). According to deCharms
(1979), the value of the intensive study of real situations is its
ability to reveal the complex interrelations between concepts that
occur in the real setting.

On the basis of this line of reasoning, deCharms (1976) shifted his study of personal causation from a laboratory setting to a practical setting (i.e., the educational context). While the value of this shift is acknowledged and respected, deCharms has essentially gone from inducing Origin-Pawn conditions in subjects in the laboratory to inducing Origin-Pawn conditions in teachers and children in the educational setting. The point remains that both conditions in both settings are programmantically induced. In continuing to adhere to an experimental paradigm, his work is limited by the constraints inherent in this approach. If the goal is to really study "the beast in situ" in all its complexity, then one must strive to study the change process from Pawn to Origin as it occurs spontaneously in the lives of everyday people. This would constitute genuine self-initiated behaviour which would be more congruent with personal causation theory.

As a result of the aforementioned limitations, there is a major gap in the research literature related to human agency. How people are able to transform themselves from having a low sense of agency to having a higher sense of agency has not been investigated and the configuration or pattern of change remains unknown. The concern of this study is to investigate and to document transformations of human agency as they naturally occur in people's lives rather than as they occur under experimentally contrived

conditions. In this way, people's experiences will speak for themselves rather than be the result of externally imposed theory and experimentally controlled conditions. In so doing, the hope is to address the problem of "lack of relevance" of the current research to counselling theory and practice. The existing body of research on human agency tends to be somewhat oversimplified and thus misleading. Counsellors involved in helping people enhance personal agency are confronted with a "whole" person as well as the context within which that person exists. Therefore, there is a need for more concrete information and insight into the way in which agency is enhanced under natural conditions in order to more adequately serve the needs of clients.

Approach of the Present Investigation

The value and importance of the case study as a research
strategy has been emphasized by a number of investigators (Bromley,
1986; Campbell, 1979, 1984; Stake, 1980; Yin, 1984). The extensive
and pervasive use of the case study across a wide range of
disciplines is well documented (Hoaglin, Light, McPeek, Mosteller,
Stoto, 1982; Kazdin, 1980; McAdams, 1988; McAdams & Ochberg,
1988).

Case Study Method

The term "case study" refers to a distinctive form of
empirical inquiry. The noted research methodologist, Donald T.
Campbell (1984), has endorsed the case study approach as "a
research method for attempting valid inferences from events outside
the laboratory, while at the same time retaining the goals of
knowledge shared with laboratory science" (p. 7). Further, he has
pointed out the "crucial role of pattern and context in achieving
knowledge" (Campbell, 1984, p. 9) that is unavailable in laboratory
settings. Yin (1984) has suggested that the case study method is
the preferred strategy when "how" research questions are being
posed, as in the present study. This investigation is concerned
with how transformations of agency occur in natural contexts. In
its broadest sense, Yin (1984) has defined a case study as an

empirical inquiry that "investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used" (p. 23).

When the term case-study is used to refer to the psychological study of individual persons (as in the present case), it is called a psychological case study (Bromley, 1986). A psychological case study is defined as a "scientific reconstruction and interpretation, based on the best evidence available, of an episode (or set of related episodes) in the life of a person" (Bromley, 1986, p. 9). Episodes refer to important life-events that are usually of a formative, critical, or culminant nature. Thus, a psychological case study is "an account of how and why a person behaved as he or she did in a given situation" (Bromley, 1986, p. 3). The distinctive feature common to all case studies is that "they are singular, naturally occurring events in the real world. They are not experimentally contrived events or simulations" (Bromley, 1986, p. 2). Thus, a critical advantage of the case study approach is that it "allows an investigation to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events" (Yin, 1984, p. 14).

In order to conduct a rigorous and methodologically sound case study, Yin (1984) has proposed three guiding principles. These

principles are designed to address problems of construct validity

and reliability, and are incorporated into the present study. The

first principle involves the use of multiple sources of evidence.

The advantage of this principle is the development of convergent

lines of inquiry. Conclusions drawn from several sources of

evidence are more convincing and likely more accurate than those

drawn from a single source. Using multiple sources of evidence

increases the construct validity of a study (Yin, 1984). In terms

of this study, convergence between quantitative evidence from

Q-sorts and qualitative evidence from interviews form the basis for

case study accounts. As an additional source of construct

validity, case study accounts are validated by the person for whom

each was written as well as by an independent reviewer (Yin,

1984).

The second principle requires the creation of a case study

data base. This principle involves the organization and

documentation of the data collected for the study which is separate

and distinct from the case study account. The purpose of this

principle is to enable other investigators to access the data

directly through the development of a formal, retrievable data

base. Establishing a data base increases the reliability of the

case accounts and any conclusions drawn from them (Yin, 1984). The

data base for this study consists of the transcripts of

interviews which are separate and distinct from the case study accounts.

The third principle requires the maintenance of a chain of evidence. This principle involves the establishment of clear and explicit links between the initial research questions posed, the data collected, and the conclusions drawn. The purpose of this principle is to enable external observers to follow the derivation of any evidence from the question phase of the study to the conclusion phase of the study. Adhering to this principle establishes confidence in construct validity and increases the reliability of the information in the case study (Yin, 1984). For the purposes of the present study, transcripts provide the data base for the construction of case study accounts. On the basis of the case study accounts, a comparative analysis is conducted. Implications for theory and practice are drawn from the case study accounts and the comparative analysis of those cases.

In addition to addressing problems of construct validity and reliability, a case study investigation must also concern itself with the issue of external validity (Yin, 1984). External validity refers to the extent to which a study's findings can be generalized beyond the immediate case study. Yin (1984) has pointed out that:

> Case studies, like experiments, are generalizable to
> theoretical propositions and not to populations or universes.
> In this sense, the case study, like the experiment, does not

> represent a 'sample', and the investigator's goal is to expand
> and generalize theories (analytic generalization) and not to
> enumerate frequencies (statistical generalization). (p. 21)

In case study research, generalizing findings to theory is

established through a multiple case design that follows a

"replication" logic (Yin, 1984). A replication logic is analogous

to conducting multiple experiments. Each individual case study

consists of a "whole" study. This study involves ten cases or

replications of transformations of agency as a means of

establishing external validity. Through these ten replications,

the findings are to be generalized to five theories of agency.

This replication logic is distinctly different from a sampling

logic where the aim is to generalize findings from a smaller group

of persons who are thought to be representative of some larger pool

of people. A sampling logic is generally used to determine the

frequency of a particular phenomenon.

Just as evidence from multiple sources helps to support

conclusions drawn from a case study, evidence from different

methods serves the same purpose (Bromley, 1986). For this reason,

the case study design used in this study rests upon qualitative

information from interviews and quantitative information from

Q-sorts. Interviews provide a qualitative description of a

transformation in agency while Q-sorts provide a quantitative

description of a transformation in agency. Convergence between

these two methods of eliciting significant information provides the basis for the case study accounts of transformation. In the next sections, an overview of the approach to interviewing, the use of Q-sorts, and the construction of case study accounts is presented.

1. Research Interviewing

According to Yin (1984), "one of the most important sources of case study information is the interview" (p. 82). Mishler (1986) views interviewing as a central research method in the social and behavioural sciences. For the purposes of this study, interviewing provides one method through which significant information about transformations of agency is elicited.

The view and practice of interviewing for this study largely reflects the perspective set forth by Elliot Mishler (1986). According to Mishler, the standard approach to interviewing is severely limited because of its focus on problems of standardization. This preoccupation has led to the standardizing of questions in order to ensure that all respondents receive the same question and to the development of standardized ways of analyzing their responses, such as coding systems. Mishler's concern is that this approach neglects and disregards the interviewees' social and personal contexts of meaning.

Based on this critique of standard practice, Mishler (1986)
has proposed an alternative perspective and approach to research
interviewing which guides the interviews in this study. First,
interviews are viewed as forms of discourse between speakers. In
this study, the interview takes the form of a discourse or an
extended conversation about the individual's transformation
experience. Second, interviews are redefined as speech events
"whose structure and meaning is jointly produced by interviewers
and interviewees" (p. 105). Questioning and answering, then, are
viewed as forms of speech that reflect complex sets of linguistic
and social rules which serve to structure and shape the interchange
between interviewer and interviewee. The interviewer and
interviewee "through repeated reformulations of questions and
responses, strive to arrive together at meanings that both can
understand. The relevance and appropriateness of questions and
responses emerges through and is realized in the discourse itself"
(Mishler, 1986, p. 65).

Third, the analysis and interpretation of interviews is based
on a theory of discourse and meaning. That is, the "interpretation
of the organization and patterning of speech depends on a
theoretical framework that entails specifying the presuppositions
and rules that people use in speaking with one another" (Mishler,
1986, p. 66). The task is to make one's underlying theoretical

framework of interviewing explicit rather than allowing it to be implicit as in the case of standard interview research. Mishler's theoretical framework, and the one utilized for the purposes of this study, involves the use of narrative form. The assumption underlying this perspective is that "narratives are one of the natural cognitive and linguistic forms through which individuals attempt to order, organize, and express meaning" (p. 106). Interviewees in this study are encouraged to present their descriptions of transformation in a narrative form. That is, in the form of a story with a beginning, a middle, and an end.

Fourth, the meanings of questions and answers are contextually grounded. Here, Mishler is concerned with the broader sociocultural and sociopolitical contexts and their impact on interview practice and, in turn, interviewees. Mishler's focus is on how different interview methods facilitate or hinder interviewee's "efforts to construct coherent and reasonable worlds of meaning and to make sense of their experiences" (Mishler, 1986, p. 118). Traditional approaches are typically marked by asymmetric power relationships where the interviewer controls the aim, structures the shape and the flow of the interview, as well as defines the "meaning" of responses and findings. Interviewees are typically not given an opportunity to comment on the interpretations of their words (Mishler, 1986). Mishler calls for

a redistribution of that power in order to "restore control to
respondents over what they mean and what they say" (Mishler, 1986,
p. 122).

The redistribution of power in interviewing requires the
alteration of standard role definitions for interviewers and
interviewees. The type of role redefinition selected for use in
this study involves redefining interviewees as co-researchers.
This involves entering into a collaborative relationship with
people, encouraging them to speak in their own "voice" and to tell
their own story, and to be directly involved in the analysis and
interpretation of the findings.

2. Q-Technique

Q-sorting is a technique drawn from Q-methodology and it
provides the second method through which signficant information
about transformations of agency is elicited. Q-methodology is "a
set of statistical, philosophy-of-science, and psychological
principles" constructed by William Stephenson (1953) that provides
a sophisticated and powerful method for the intensive study of the
individual (Kerlinger, 1973). Stephenson developed Q-methodology
to explore and understand the richness of human subjectivity and
founded it on the premise that it is possible to study subjectivity
in an objective, scientific way. He stated that Q-technique, or

the set of procedures used to implement Q-methodology, provides "a

systematic way to handle a person's retrospections, his [or her]

reflections about himself [or herself] and others, his [or her]

introjections and projections, and much else of an apparent

'subjective' nature" (p. 86). Q-methodology "encompasses a

distinctive set of psychometric and operational principles that,

when combined with specialized statistical applications of

correlational and factor-analytic techniques, provide researchers

with a systematic and rigorously quantitative means for examining

human subjectivity" (McKeown & Thomas, 1988, p. 5). The most

unique and distinctive characteristic of Q-methodology, then, is

its attempt to combine phenomenological experience with an

objective approach to measurement.

Kerlinger (1972, 1973) stressed the role and the value of

Q-methodology in behavioural research. He stated that

Q-methodology is "an important and unique approach to the study of

psychological, sociological, and educational phenomena" (Kerlinger,

1973, p. 598). McKeown and Thomas (1988) have pointed out the

practical utility of Q-methodology and its relevance to diverse

disciplines such as psychology, social psychology, sociology, and

political science. For example, Dennis (1986) has examined its

relevance and application to nursing research, while others have

examined the application of Q-methodology to communication research

(Stephen, 1985), political science (Brown, 1980), educational psychology (Stephenson, 1980), and political psychology (McKeown, 1984). More recently, Q-methodology has been utilized in the study of work as a re-enactment of family drama (MacGregor & Cochran, 1988) and in the investigation of the meaning of career change (Chusid & Cochran, 1989).

The main form of instrumentation in Q-methodology is called the Q-sort. Essentially, the Q-sort is a sophisticated comparative rating method. Very briefly, the Q-sort procedure involves defining a "universe" or "concourse" (Stephenson, 1980) of stimuli on the basis of the topic being investigated. The individual sorts the stimuli (which may be written descriptions of behaviour, pictures, single adjectives, and so on) along a continuum of significance, such as "most like me" to "most unlike me". For theoretical reasons and to help subjects conceptualize the task, the individual sorts the stimuli into a specified number of piles. Numerical values are then assigned to the piles for statistical purposes.

In Q-methodology the issue of reliability is most often sort, re-sort reliability. Reported test-retest reliability has generally been found to be quite high. For example, Frank (1956) reported correlation coefficients of .93 and .97, and Kahle and Lee (1975) found correlations all over .95. Fairweather (1981) makes a

strong case for reliability of the Q-method with correlation coefficients all over .90 at a one to two year interval. Kerlinger (1973) reported test-retest reliability of .81 for an 11 month period. In terms of validity, evidence has been found to support a case for external and construct validity of the Q-method (Fairweather, 1981).

Q-methodology has a number of unique strengths which make it particularly suitable for an investigation of transformations of agency. First, individuals sort the Q-sort many times according to different frames of reference. This allows the researcher to make complex comparisons of sets of measures within the data of one individual. Consequently, the Q-sort yields data that better reflect the complexity of the individual (Kerlinger, 1972). Second, Q-sorts will be obtained from several individuals which allow the investigator to identify the dimensions of the subjective phenomenon in question (Dennis, 1986). Third, Q-methodology can perhaps point toward alternative theoretical views and open up possibilities for new areas of research (Kerlinger, 1972).

For a study involving Q-sorts, two types of samples are required. One sample is needed for the topics to be described and a second sample is needed for the items to be used in the description.

1. Q-sort topics

The topics to be described for this study are the significant events or landmarks connected with the transformation. Significant events are chosen because they provide the clearest moments of recollection and improve the chances of reliable retrospection.

2. Q-sort items

Constructing a Q-sort involves defining a universe or concourse (Stephenson, 1980) of items and selecting a representative sample of items from that concourse. The concourse of items for this Q-sort is composed of a representative sample of key theoretical propositions from five prominent psychological theories of human agency. The item sample is a comprehensive representation of the main theoretical propositions of each of these theories translated into common, understandable language. The Q-sort constructed for this study is made up of 52 items. The development of the Q-sort is presented in the next section.

Development of Q-sort items

In order to construct the Q-sort for this study, a rigorous development process was undertaken over a period of four months. The steps in this procedure are summarized below:

1. The first step involved extracting an exhaustive list of the key theoretical propositions from each of the theories of human agency identified in the literature review. For example, according to Bandura, successful performance accomplishments raise self-efficacy, and, therefore, this proposition was listed. This process resulted in a list of 126 theoretical propositions.

2. The second step involved translating each theoretical proposition into an item for the Q-sort. A number of decision rules made in collaboration with the research supervisor guided the form and structure of the items. Items were written: (a) as descriptive phrases rather than as adjectives to promote more discernment and to avoid stereotypic or pat responses, (b) in clear, ordinary language that could be understood by co-researchers, (c) in neutral, mildly negative, or positive forms to avoid social desirability bias, (d) in the past tense because subjects would be reflecting retrospectively about their experiences, and (e) to reflect one main focus or idea rather than many. Each item was noted for each theorist.

3. In collaboration with the research supervisor, the third step involved clustering the 126 items into provisional groups or categories on the basis of their similarity.

For example, items were clustered in categories such as "confidence", "control", or "goal-setting". The reason for grouping the items was to determine redundancy among items as it had become apparent that there was considerable overlap among the theories. This procedure also assisted in the clarification of the overall change process from the perspective of each theorist and in so doing, led to the observation that most of the theorists could fit within categories of deCharms' model. Consequently, deCharm's model was utilized to help organize the items into these provisional categories. The total number of categories that emerged from the items was 14.

4. The fourth step involved rechecking each theory to ensure that its range was adequately reflected in the items. This resulted in the expansion of some categories, which increased the total number of items to 198. This process also involved further focusing and sharpening of items to more accurately reflect their respective categories. A decision was made to include some proportion of negative items to ensure that no change in meaning occurred in the translation from theoretical proposition to item. For example, "felt depressed" is qualitatively different from

"felt happy" and so it was included despite its negative connotation.

5. In collaboration with the research supervisor, the fifth step involved organizing and refining the categories. In order to organize and to ensure coverage of all the information in each category, items were sorted into (1) beliefs and attitudes, (2) actions, and (3) feelings. While continuing to be sensitive to the range for each theory, representative items that adequately covered each category were extracted. The result of this refinement was a cut in the number of items to 72 and the number of categories to 12.

6. In order to determine applicability, the sixth step involved field testing the Q-sort (m = 72) with ten people who reported having undergone a transformation of agency. Based on the feedback provided, it became apparent that people did not differentiate between some of the finer theoretical distinctions such as control over reinforcements versus control over success. Consequently, some items were collapsed. As well, there were some alterations and adjustments made in the wording of certain items. The result of this step was a further reduction in the number of items to 52.

7. The seventh step involved conducting a theoretical validation of the Q-sort (m = 52). Two content experts were consulted in this regard. The director of the Student Counselling and Resource Centre for the University of British Columbia served as one content expert. The other expert was a person with a doctoral degree in a field outside of Counselling Psychology who had expert knowledge of the theories of agency upon which the Q-sort was constructed. Each was instructed to check that the Q-sort was a faithful and accurate representation of each of the respective theories of agency. The findings of both content experts were uniformly positive with minor concerns regarding wording on a few items. Adjustments to the items were made to accommodate the concerns. A final list of items (m = 52) and the corresponding theorist for each is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Master List of Q-sort Items and Corresponding Theorist

Item	Theorist
	Bandura = B
	deCharms = D
	Kobasa = K
	Rotter = R
	Seligman = S

1. Was successful. (B)
2. Overcame obstacles. (B, D)
3. Felt confident. (B, D, K)
4. Thought that my success would depend on the help of others. (D, K, R)
5. Thought that my success would depend on luck or fate. (D, K, R)
6. Thought that my success would depend on my abilities. (D, K, R)
7. Thought that my success would depend on my effort. (D, K, R)
8. Took an active approach to obstacles and difficulties, not a passive one. (B, D, K, R, S)
9. Felt energetic and enthusiastic. (D, K)
10. Was self-guided. (D)
11. Made good decisions independently. (D, K)
12. Felt free, not trapped. (D, K, S)
13. Learned from my problems and difficulties. (D)
14. Felt in control of my life, not pushed around. (D, K, S)
15. Was too easily influenced by others. (D, R)
16. Felt powerful, not helpless. (D, K, S)
17. Took responsibility for setting my own direction. (D)
18. Evaluated my performance in trying to reach goals. (D)
19. Monitored my progress (or its lack) toward goals. (D)
20. Had a strong sense of meaning, was not aimless. (D, K)
21. Felt a deep sense of commitment. (D, K)
22. Searched for personal meaning. (D)
23. Felt supported and encouraged by others. (D, K)
24. Was helped by the example set by other people. (B)
25. Set clear, definite goals for myself. (D)

Table 1

Master List of Q-sort Items and Corresponding Theorist

Item	Theorist
	Bandura = B
	deCharms = D
	Kobasa = K
	Rotter = R
	Seligman = S

26. Set challenging goals for myself. (B, D, K, R)
27. Set realistic goals for myself. (D)
28. Set excessively high goals for myself. (D)
29. Accepted goals that were not really mine, but came from situational demands or other people's expectations. (D)
30. Took specific steps to realize purposes. (D)
31. Took action to improve or develop myself. (D)
32. Took risks rather than playing it safe. (D, K)
33. Welcomed challenges. (D, K)
34. Felt depressed. (R, S)
35. Planned how to achieve goals. (D)
36. Anticipated obstacles that I would need to overcome. (D)
37. Responded constructively to unexpected difficulties. (D, K)
38. Foresaw how to adjust to possible problems. (D)
39. Felt optimistic and hopeful. (D, K, R, S)
40. Felt anxious. (B, R, S)
41. Felt competent. (B, D, K, S)
42. Felt like a worthy person. (K, R, S)
43. Persevered despite adversity. (B, D, K, R)
44. Felt that my self-esteem was tied to my achievements. (B)
45. Was resourceful. (D, K)
46. Saw change as an opportunity to grow or learn. (K)
47. Felt adequate to the task at hand. (B, S)
48. Felt a strong sense of involvement. (D, K)
49. Experienced a feeling of satisfaction. (D, K, R)
50. Saw failure as my own doing. (D)
51. Thought that my failure would be due to other people and/or circumstances. (D)
52. Experienced a sense of striving or of working hard. (D)

Item selection

As noted previously, there is considerable overlap among the five theories of agency reviewed for this study. However, in order to adequately represent these theories in the Q-sort, the items must comprehensively and accurately reflect the finer distinctions between them as well as what they have in common. For this purpose, comparisons between theories were made. DeCharms' (1968) concept of personal causation emerged as the most comprehensive and the broadest in scope. The following is a brief summary of this comparison process.

Bandura (1977) defines agency in terms of the attributions one makes about one's skill and ability to accomplish what a given situation demands. According to Bandura's version of agency, no distinction is made between goals that are self-initiated and goals that are directed by others. DeCharms, on the other hand, emphasizes that goals must be internally motivated by the individual and exist within a context of personal meaning.

Rotter's (1966) concept of locus of control essentially concerns itself with whether or not one can control the reinforcements one receives. Human agency, then, is defined with respect to the consequences of one's action. In contrast, deCharms' (1968) concept of personal causation emphasizes the actions themselves rather than their consequences. Human agency

for deCharms is concerned with the feeling that one has determined one's own actions, that one is a causal agent. Further, Rotter's locus of control does not differentiate between intrinsic and extrinsic reinforcements, whereas the crux of deCharms' position is that to have a sense of personal causation is to be intrinsically motivated.

For Seligman (1975) and his colleagues (Abramson, Seligman, & Teasdale, 1978), the concept of agency takes the form of the attributions people make in relation to aversive outcomes. His model does not, however, provide a way of accepting undesirable outcomes. Instead he advocates changes in the environment such as reducing the likelihood of aversive outcomes. DeCharms, on the other hand, emphasizes the individual's capacity to develop constructive, healthy responses to both positive and negative outcomes by realistically assessing how each came about and applying this learning to future situations. Such realistic appraisals of situations also include knowing when to give up, let go, and move on.

Unlike deCharms' (1968) concept of personal causation, the concepts of self-efficacy, locus of control, and learned helplessness all direct attention to the outcomes or consequences of behaviour rather than to the behaviour itself. There is also an emphasis on maximizing positive outcomes and minimizing negative

ones. For deCharms, being an agent has little to do with whether
or not the outcomes of one's behaviour are positive or negative.
He is more concerned with the capacity to realistically and
accurately assess all situations, choosing the best course of
action for that particular situation, and taking personal
responsibility for that choice. Moreover, the concepts of Bandura
(1977), Rotter (1966), and Seligman (1975) all indicate that the
individual's satisfaction is dependent upon attaining a positive
outcome. DeCharms, however, views the individuals' satisfaction as
largely dependent upon being a causal agent, on developing a sense
of purpose, forming personally meaningful goals, planning realistic
and concrete action to attain the goals, and accepting
responsibility for selected goals.

For Kobasa (1979), agency takes the form of a constellation of
three personality characteristics: control, commitment, and
challenge. Kobasa's theory appears to be more encompassing than
self-efficacy, locus of control, and learned helplessness, and is
consistent with several features of deCharms' theory.

3. Case Study Narratives

In this study, significant information about transformations
of agency is derived from two methods, interviewing and Q-sorting.
Convergence of this information serves as the basis for the case

study accounts. The case study accounts are presented in a narrative form. A narrative refers to "an organizational scheme expressed in story form" (Polkinghorne, 1988). Narratives organize phenomena into coherent wholes with beginnings, middles, and ends (Polkinghorne, 1988). The widespread use of narrative across disciplines is based on the general assumption that narratives are a natural and pervasive form through which individuals construct and express their understanding of events and experiences (Mishler, 1986; Polkinghorne, 1988; Sarbin, 1986). In short, narrative is one of the significant ways that experience is made meaningful.

Since the concern of this study is to understand the meaning of transformations of agency, the narrative form is utilized to organize individuals' accounts of their experience. Thus, on the basis of the qualitative information from interviews and the quantitative information from Q-sorts, narrative accounts of transformations of agency are constructed for each co-researcher.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The intent of this research is to construct narrative accounts
of the meaning of transformations of agency. Since persons are
privileged reporters of what occurred and privileged judges of what
was significant for them in such a transformation, the focus of the
research involves personal reports and interpretations.
Independent sources of evidence on the meaning of a transformation
in agency are not credible since the person is the central arbiter
of what was meaningful.

However, a personal account is not infallible. Rather, it is
a construction that can be "negotiated" (Spence, 1982) to clarify
connection, proportion, and richness. People can report
experiences out of order, appreciate significance in the telling
rather than in the actual experience, and infuse elements that
could not have been present into a report. Sometimes through later
discussions, the experience might be camouflaged by ideological
platitudes (Wiersma, 1988).

The major tasks of the researcher are to empower persons to
provide accounts that are rich, deep, and truth-like, to challenge
accounts with alternative perspectives to negotiate more sound and

trustworthy constructions, and to construct descriptions that are faithful to the accounts, yet open to theoretical examination. These characteristics of empowerment, challenge, and faithful description are central in the research design for this study and are addressed in three ways.

First, empowering persons involves building methods into the research design that enable people to "have more control of the processes through which their words are given meaning" (Mishler, 1986, p. 118). In this study, such methods include entering into a collaborative relationship, yielding control to co-researchers of the flow and content of interviews, and giving co-researchers a voice in the analysis of data and the interpretation of findings (Mishler, 1986).

Second, the basis for constructing narrative accounts rests upon three kinds of evidence. The first kind of evidence involves the narrative an individual produces to describe the transformation. The second kind involves Q-sorting the significant events or landmarks across the transformation. The third kind involves individual comments and elaborations given in response to Q-sort results. In short, subjects not only provide a personal description of the transformation and a theoretical description using Q-sorts, but are also given an opportunity to elaborate upon the meaning of the theoretical description. Each final narrative

account is based upon convergence among these three ways of eliciting significant information.

Third, the soundness and trustworthiness of each narrative account is assessed in three ways. In the first way, both the research supervisor and the researcher must reach agreement upon each account, given the evidence. In the second way, the final narrative account is returned to each co-researcher to evaluate its accuracy. In the third way, an independent reviewer evaluates each account to determine if it faithfully reflects the interview (that is, captures what is said without distortion or neglect). Thus, the narrative account of each transformation requires agreement from four different people with varying perspectives and varying kinds of involvement.

Given this design, there is a reasonable basis for claiming that each account is sound in the sense that each part of it can be traced to explicit sources of evidence. There is also a reasonable basis for claiming that each account is trustworthy in the sense that it accurately reflects evidence given without salient errors of omission or commission.

Studying the Individual Perspective

This research design focuses upon the individual's personal report of her or his experience. Focusing upon the individual's perspective is important for a number of reasons. First, the

person is the only one who knows what her or his experience was. No outside observer can say what happened for another person and cannot interpret what another person's experience of something was. For example, one person may experience a joke as extremely funny and entertaining, whereas another person may experience the same joke as utterly offensive.

Second, in order to fully understand the person's experience we need "to define correctly the interpretations of the agent" (Taylor, 1973). This is the central insight of hermeneutics, phenomenology, and numerous other approaches. The argument is that "to understand a person we must grasp the person's meanings and understandings, the agent's vision of the world, his or her plans, purposes, motivations, and interests" (Manicas & Secord, 1983, p.409). A person's understandings are seen as an intimate part of the experience and perhaps the most important part of what something ultimately is. For example, if an exam is a challenge to a person or a hoop to jump, it matters immensely as to what that experience comes to be for that person.

Third, the way in which people construe the experience of a transformation can be regarded as the crucial mediation of its significance. This is the central insight of constructivistic approaches in psychology such as George Kelly's (1955). The constructivists propose that it is the individual's construction of

her or his experience that mediates future behaviour. Although there are different phrases for this viewpoint, from personal myths (Bruner, 1960) to cognitive templates (Aronfreed, 1968), they all converge on the same thing. That is, the schema or pattern a person comes away with is of crucial significance later. Thus, what the person relates, even if it is not "factual" (Spence, 1982), is of extreme importance to that person.

Fourth, a transformation in agency is centrally a matter of individual perspective. A transformation of agency does not exist in any objective fashion. For example, someone who appears to be potent and powerful may in fact have very little of what it means to be a true agent. All the aspects of an individual perspective, that is, beliefs, feelings, and attitudes are crucial for agency. In fact, each of the theories of agency rests upon the person's beliefs and feelings such that there is no change apart from them.

Figure 1 provides an overview of the major steps of this study.

Step 1:   Identification of co-researchers.

Step 2:   Co-researcher screening interview.

Step 3:   Transformation interview to identify significant events

            or landmarks and to elicit detailed account of

            transformation from co-researcher's perspective.

Step 4:   Co-researcher Q-sorting of significant events/landmarks

            with a 52-item Q-sort.

Step 5:   Analysis of Q-sort data and development of probes for

            elaboration interview.

Step 6:   Elaboration interview to clarify personal meaning of

            Q-sort results.

Step 7:   Review, transcription, and analysis of interview

            audiotapes.

Step 8:   Synthesis of transformation interview data, Q-sort

            results, and elaboration interview data in order to

            construct narrative accounts.

Step 9:   Co-researcher self-review.

Step 10:   Independent review.

Step 11:   Comparative analysis.

Figure 1. Overview of Procedures

Co-researchers

Through a network of contacts, 25 people were referred to the study as potential participants. Ten individuals were identified for participation in the study. Five were women and five were men. They ranged in age from 28 to 64.

Criteria for Selection

The criteria for selection of co-researchers were based upon general phenomenological principles set forth by Colaizzi (1978), and Cochran and Claspell (1987). Co-researchers were selected on the basis of three major criteria. First, the person must have undergone the targeted transformation experience. That is, the person must have experienced a transformation from powerlessness to potency that strikingly affected their sense of agency. Second, the person had to be able to articulate the experience. Third, the person had to meet the screening criteria. That is, she or he must have demonstrated a rise in agency according to deCharms' (1976) system of content analysis of thought samples. The final selection of co-researchers was made on the basis of diversity of the targeted transformation experience. That is, the ten individuals that met the three major criteria and represented the most diverse cases of transformation were selected for participation in the study.

Screening Interview

The purpose of the screening interview was to verify that the person had the targeted transformation experience to warrant being included in the study. This interview took 20 to 45 minutes to complete. The method used to confirm people's appropriateness for the study was deCharms' (1976) system of content analysis of thought samples. Reliability and validity of this scoring system has been investigated extensively and is reported in deCharms (1976). In terms of coder reliability, the percentage of agreement between two scorers was 90% on 250 practice stories. The second scorer then coded a one-third random sample of 525 protocols and reached a 90.2% agreement on all categories with the first scorer. Split-half (odd-even stories) reliability was .80 on one sample and .79 on another sample. Test-retest reliability was .41 on one sample and .38 on another sample for a one year interval.

In order to obtain thought samples from people, the researcher asked each person to tell six brief stories about themselves based on actual experience; three short stories that described and characterized the way they were prior to the transformation and three short stories that described and characterized the way they are now. These stories were audiotaped and then content-analyzed by the researcher for a pawn score and an origin score using deCharm's scoring system. Stories were coded for the presence or absence of the six origin-pawn categories: (1) internal control,

(2) goal-setting, (3) instrumental activity, (4) reality
perception, (5) personal responsibility, and (6) self-confidence.

Of the possible 18 points for the "before" stories (6 points
per story), people scored between 1 and 6 points. Of the possible
18 points for the three "after" stories (6 points per story),
people scored between 13 and 18 points. The results indicated a
substantial difference between scores based on stories that
characterized people before their transformations and scores based
on stories that characterized people after their transformations.

Transformation Interview

After ten co-researchers were identified for participation in
the study, each person was contacted by telephone in order to
schedule the transformation interview. There were two immediate
aims of this interview. First, to elicit a changeline identifying
the significant events or landmarks associated with the
transformation. Second, to elicit a detailed description of the
transformation. Changelines took from 30-90 minutes to complete.
The length of the transformation interview varied from person to
person. The shortest interview was 2 hours and the longest
interview was 6 hours. The average length of the interview was 3.5
hours. The longer interviews were usually conducted over the
course of two meetings. All interviews were audiotaped to enable

the researcher to fully attend to the interview process and to provide a data base for intensive analysis.

Before each interview began, in almost every case, there was a necessary warm-up period where the researcher and the co-researcher engaged in "small talk" in order to help the co-researcher feel more comfortable and to allow some degree of rapport to be established. The researcher also self-disclosed background information about herself as well as the personal motivation behind the study. Co-researchers reported later that having the researcher self-disclose in this way helped them to feel more like "equals".

At the beginning of the interview, the co-researcher was oriented to the overall steps involved in the study. The main aim of this interview was to elicit a detailed description of the transformation from the co-researcher. In order to facilitate this description and to empower co-researchers to describe their experience coherently, each co-researcher was asked to construct a changeline (see Appendix B for an example). The co-researcher was oriented to the changeline exercise as a way to help her or him outline and organize her or his description. The changeline consisted of a line drawn on a sheet of paper representing the targeted transformation with points marking its beginning and its end. The co-researcher was then asked to chart the significant

events or landmarks connected with the transformation. The number
and the content of events were unique for each co-researcher. The
number of events ranged from 8 to 15. Most co-researchers found
this exercise useful in that it "ordered the sequence of events"
and they could "see how things were linked together and fit into
place". Some co-researchers found the exercise enjoyable, while
others were moved to tears and found it to be quite intense.

Using the changeline as a guide, the co-researchers were then
asked to describe their transformations in as much detail as
possible. Co-researchers were encouraged to present their
description in the form of a story. They were cued with questions
like: How did it begin? What happened in the middle? And how did
it end? This structure was intended to help the co-researcher
organize her or his experience and was not intended as something
the co-researcher had to adhere to. People were encouraged to
describe their experience in any way they could.

The transformation interview took the form of a meaningful
dialogue. Using basic counselling skills, specifically the
principles of active listening, the researcher at various points
throughout the interview paraphrased or summarized to check
understanding, asked questions for clarification, or requested
further elaboration. The researcher strove to be fully present to
the co-researcher in order to facilitate and to empower

co-researchers' sharing of their experiences and the telling of their stories.

After the transformation interview, in almost every case, the researcher engaged in a dialogue with the co-researcher about the interview experience. As some of the responses were stronger than anticipated, the researcher felt this to be an important and necessary step. Co-researchers had a variety of reactions and responses. They variously reported feeling good, peaceful, exhausted, drained, exposed, emotional, nostalgic, and a little shaky. One co-researcher was startled by her tearful responses to parts of the interview saying that "dredging up the old memories affected me more than I thought it would". Another co-researcher described her experience this way.

> I wondered if I would be able to look at you after that. It was intense. I felt exposed. I'm very aware of the trust I needed in you to tell you my story. I've never done this before. I've never told someone the whole story. It felt good, but I'm drained. I feel peaceful though.

Co-researchers' responses to the transformation interview suggest that it was a potent and meaningful experience for them. Another part of the dialogue after the interview involved checking the changeline in preparation for the next step of the study. Some co-researchers, after having gone through the interview experience, wanted to make additions or deletions to their changelines.

Q-sorting

After the transformation interview, each co-researcher was contacted again in order to schedule a time to conduct the Q-sort part of the study. The co-researchers were asked to Q-sort the significant events charted on their changelines. The number of events identified (between 8 and 15) guided the number of sessions required to complete this phase of the study. Each Q-sort took 15 to 40 minutes to complete. As co-researchers became accustomed to using the Q-sort, the time to sort events generally decreased.

Each of the 52 descriptive phases was typed on a small card. The instructions for sorting were as follows:

1. Take the deck of cards, read each card separately and put it down on the table in front of you. Spread out the cards and try to form a general impression of the attributes stated on the cards.

2. Now pick up the cards, make a deck and shuffle the cards in the deck.

3. Now (for example), sort these cards to describe significant event number one, retrospectively, according to your recall of the event, ranging from those that are most characteristic of your experience to those that are least characteristic of your experience.

4. Place the cards into roughly three equal piles as follows:
   1) most characteristic, 2) neutral or undecided, and
   3) least characteristic.

5. Sort the cards as follows:

   2   4   6   8   12   8   6   4   2

6. (a) Start with pile one (those most characteristic of
       your experience).

   (b) Place the two "most characteristic" cards to your far
       left.

   (c) Place the four next "most characteristic" cards next
       to it.

   (d) Place the next six "most characteristic" cards next
       to it.

   (e) Place the next eight "most characteristic" cards next
       to it.

   (f) Repeat with pile three (those least characteristic of
       your experience) and follow the same process, going
       from your far right toward the centre.

   (g) Place the "neutral or undecided" cards (12) in the
       middle. Note: If necessary, it is possible to draw
       cards from the middle pile.

7. Check the sorting and make any changes you wish but retain
   the required number in each category.

When the first sorting was completed and recorded, cards were shuffled and the next event for sorting was introduced.

Most co-researchers found Q-sorting to be enjoyable and illuminating. One co-researcher said that "each time I did one it was like disposing of some old garbage." Many co-researchers found that it was exhausting work because of the concentration and focus required. A number of co-researchers commented on the absence of cards in the Q-sort deck relating to feelings such as anger, fear, and courage.

Q-analysis

After the Q-sorting was completed, the Q-data was analyzed. A brief description of the procedures involved are presented in this section. In a Q-sort, each item is scored on the basis of the pile in which it is placed. The frequency distribution of scores for this study is illustrated below:

	Most Characteristic of Significant Event				Least Characteristic of Significant Event				
Q-score	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Frequency	2	4	6	8	12	8	6	4	2 (m=52)

To analyze the Q-sort data, the Alberta General Factor
Analysis Program (AGFAP) was utilized. The first step involved the
computation of a correlation matrix. That is, for each
co-researcher, the set of 52 ratings for each significant event was
correlated with the set of 52 ratings for every other significant
event. The second step involved submitting the correlation matrix
to a principal component analysis without varimax rotation.
Principal component analysis is a data-reduction technique that
reduces the data by clustering events into hypothetical components
based upon a similar pattern of description. The first principal
component accounts for the most variance in the data and, thus,
provides the best representation or most dominant meaning of the
data. The second component provides the next best representation
of the data.

The result of the principal component analysis on the
correlation matrix was an unrotated factor loading matrix for the
first and second principal components. The unrotated factor
loading matrices provided the factor loadings of events. When the
loadings of each component were plotted on a graph, they revealed
the first and second most dominant patterns associated with the
transformation. The third step involved taking the item factor
scores (derived from the data on which the principal component
analysis was performed) and converting them into Z scores. All Z
scores plus or minus 1.5 were extracted in order to define the

first and second principal components. The cluster of items

extracted for each component described what the transformation

meant to the co-researcher in terms of the theoretical items. The

factor loadings of events and the item factor scores were utilized

to provide an empirical basis from which to structure probes for an

elaboration interview. In this way, the Q-sort results were fed

back to co-researchers in order to stimulate and to elicit each

co-researcher's elaboration on the data and clarification of its

meaning.

Elaboration Interview

Once the data from the Q-sorts was analyzed, another interview

was scheduled for each co-researcher which was also audiotaped.

The purpose of this interview was to enable the co-researcher to

elaborate upon the meaning of the results drawn from the Q-sorts.

The intent of this interview was not to confirm or disconfirm the

Q-sort results, but rather to understand the subjective meanings of

the results for each co-researcher. Co-researchers were told at

the beginning of the interview that while the Q-sort results may

provide indications of how their transformation in agency occurred,

they required personal elaborations in order to be fully

understood. The elaboration interview lasted 20-45 minutes,

depending upon the co-researcher.

The Q-sort results were presented to the co-researchers in the form of probes developed from the Q-data. In order to ensure objectivity in interpreting the Q-data, the researcher and the research supervisor each took the Q-data for each co-researcher, and interpreted the results and formulated probes separately. The researcher's probes and the research supervisor's probes were highly similar with only minor differences in wording or phrasing.

Two kinds of probes were presented to each co-researcher for elaboration: a content probe and a pattern probe. The content probe represented the cluster of items that most stood out in that person's transformation. The researcher interpreted the essential meaning of the cluster and then framed a probe around it. For example, the content probe was presented to the co-researcher in this way.

> Let's take what seems to be the main component of change. You descended into a trap in which you accepted the influence and goals of others, holding them more or less responsible, yet felt anxious, depressed, worthless. It was not a satisfying situation. Toward the end, you achieved a freedom from others' influence, a sense of optimism, worth, and satisfaction as you became your own person rather than engulfed by others.

The researcher then paused and allowed the co-researcher to respond, and through the active listening techniques of reflection and empathic responding encouraged the co-researcher to elaborate upon the meaning of the results.

The pattern probe represented the pattern of the item descriptions across events. The researcher plotted the factor loadings of events on a graph, interpreted its essential meaning, and then framed a probe around it. For example, the pattern probe was presented to the co-researcher in this way.

> This movement of freedom from the engulfment of others shows extreme cycles of change, soaring improvement and devastating setbacks before you levelled off as a freer, more optimistic person.

The researcher then presented the co-researcher with the graphic representation of the pattern probe in order to provide a visual picture of the movement (see Appendix A). Again, co-researchers were invited to elaborate upon the personal meaning of the results.

This process was repeated for the second principal component. That is, a second content probe and the corresponding pattern probe were fed back to the co-researcher for elaboration. Finally, both content probes from the first and second principal components were integrated and offered to the co-researcher as an overall theme of change. For example, the overall theme of change was presented to the co-researcher in this way.

> The main theme of change, according to the Q-sort results, seems to be this. If a person can continue to act responsibly and determinedly, even when feeling trapped and dominated by others and when one is most weak (feeling worthless, depressed and lacking meaning), one will gain a sense of freedom and optimism, worth and satisfaction.

In most instances, co-researchers directly confirmed the results by stating that the description "really fits", "makes sense", "feels really right", "is consistent with how I see it", "is very true", and so on. Some co-researchers had nothing to add to the results. Others elaborated on the results or clarified their meaning. Many co-researchers made new insights or connections when given the Q-sort results, and repeatedly commented on how interesting the results were. One co-researcher was so impressed with the overall theme of change that she suggested that she have it mounted and hung on the wall. She acknowledged that it was a rather simplified version, but nonetheless found it to be highly meaningful. Another co-researcher, when charting his changeline, had spontaneously included the peaks and valleys as he experienced them. The graphic presentation of his pattern probe for the first principal component was strikingly similar to that of his own changeline (see Appendix B and compare with Appendix A, Case Study Two).

In two cases, co-researchers did not confirm the Q-sort results. In both instances, co-researchers initiated a dialogue with the researcher regarding the discrepancy. In Lee's case, we concluded that the events he had selected for Q-sorting had been too general, referring to general periods of time rather than concrete, specific events. A joint decision was made to amend the changeline and to re-do the Q-sorting. The new results were

directly confirmed by Lee with overt expressions of affirmation such as "Now, that's got it." In Margaret's case, we determined that the Q-sort language had been confusing and difficult for her to relate to. She explained that religious life had its own vocabulary and that she did not think in terms of achievements, goals, successes, or failures. A joint decision was made to re-do the Q-sorts, focusing only on the items that she could relate to and the personal meaning she attributed to them. According to Margaret, the new results "made sense" and "summarized things quite concisely", although they still required some translation.

Narrative Accounts

Audiotapes of all interviews were transcribed for each co-researcher. Interview transcripts and Q-sort results were analyzed and compared. The aim was to search for convergence among information in order to construct clear, exact statements of the person's experience and to organize these statements into a coherent whole. Thus, based upon a synthesis of the quantitative evidence from Q-sorts and the qualitative evidence from the transformation interview and the elaboration interview, a narrative account was constructed for each co-researcher.

Each narrative was constructed on the basis of the following three principles. First, the accounts were sectioned into a narrative form, that is, into a story with a beginning, a middle, and an end. Second, the sequence of events was chronologically ordered within each section (co-researchers did not necessarily tell their story in sequential order). Third, wherever possible the co-researcher's own words or phrases were used. Frequently, this amounted to merely shifting from a first person statement to a third person statement. Adherence to these principles was intended to give coherence to the person's descriptions of experience and to make the accounts more comprehensible. Both the research supervisor and the researcher had to reach agreement upon each account, given the evidence.

Co-researcher Self-review

According to Mishler (1986), part of empowering co-researchers involves including them in the analysis and the interpretation of data. To this end, and to lend further validation to the narrative accounts, each narrative was returned to the co-researcher for whom each was written. The aim of this review was to search for errors of omission and commission. Co-researchers were asked to read and to study their respective accounts in order to provide feedback to the researcher on two questions. First, did the account accurately

portray your experience? Second, did the account leave out

anything of central importance? The results of the co-researchers

self-reviews are reported at the end of Chapter IV.

Independent Review

The aim of this review was to have each narrative account

validated by an independent source. Nine people, either having a

doctorate or in the process of completing their doctorates in the

field of Counselling Psychology, agreed to serve as independent

reviewers. One person reviewed two cases. Eight people reviewed

one case each. Each reviewer was provided with the audiotapes of

the interviews and the written narrative account. Each independent

reviewer was given the following instructions.

1. First, listen to the audiotapes. Attend to and note any

    instances of leading questions, distortion, bias, and in

    general, any inappropriate influence on the interviewee by

    the interviewer.

2. While you listen, formulate an impression of the essence

    of what the interviewee was intending to communicate.

3. After you have assessed the audiotapes for interviewer

    objectivity, and formulated your own impression of the

interviewee, read the Case Study write-up with two

questions in mind.

1) Does the Case Study write-up accurately portray what

the interviewee intended to communicate?

2) Was anything of importance to the understanding of the

interviewee omitted or distorted in any way?

The results of the independent reviews are reported at the end of

Chapter IV.

Comparative Analysis

Comments and feedback from the co-researcher self-reviews and

the independent reviews were integrated into the final narrative

accounts. These final write-ups provided the basis for a

comparative analysis. The aim of the comparative analysis was to

attempt to describe the "common structure, system, or whole that

makes up a phenonemon" (Cochran & Claspell, 1987, p. 39). In this

case, the phenomenon in question was a transformation of human

agency. The comparative analysis involved searching for

commonality among the ten narrative accounts. The results of the

comparative analysis are presented in Chapter V.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS: CASE STUDIES

Based upon the quantitative evidence from Q-sorts and the

qualitative evidence from interviews, ten narrative accounts of

transformations of personal agency were constructed. These ten

accounts of transformation constitute the results of the study.

Each account was reviewed and validated by the person for whom each

was written and by an independent reviewer. The aim of this

chapter is to present the ten narrative accounts, and the results

of the co-researcher self-reviews and the independent reviews.

Case Study One: Fay

Fay is a 43-year old woman. Eldest of three daughters from an

upper middle class family, Fay attended Catholic private girls

schools while growing up. In 1980, she received an honours B.A. in

history and is currently working on her M.A. in history. For the

past nine years, she has earned a living through a variety of

part-time positions such as bookkeeping, ticket sales for

festivals, educational work in the area of violence against women,

and working as a teaching assistant at a university. Her career

presently lies outside of paid employment in feminist and lesbian

politics, including diverse projects, workshops, conferences, and committees.

Principal component analysis. The first principal component accounted for 41% of the variance in the Q-sorts. Since the factor loadings of events show clear improvement in personal agency, ranging from a beginning of -.44 to an ending of .70, this component describes what the change meant to her, using the theoretical items. To define this component, all item factor scores exceeding plus or minus 1.5 were extracted. In order of magnitude, these items are listed below, and phrased to characterize the positive outcome or ending. The negative beginning is the opposite of each item.

> Did not feel anxious (2.64)
>
> Felt in control of my life, not pushed around (2.41)
>
> Did not feel depressed (2.34)
>
> Felt free, not trapped (2.16)
>
> Felt optimistic and hopeful (2.02)
>
> Felt powerful, not helpless (1.73)
>
> Did not think my failure would be due to other people
>
> and/or circumstances (1.67)

The second component accounted for 13% of the variance in the Q-sorts. Since it did not show improvement, ranging from a beginning event loading of .68 to an ending event loading of .42,

it does not define the transformation. However, it reflects

potentially important items that accompanied and perhaps

contributed to the change. These items are listed below.

> Saw change as an opportunity to grow or learn (2.92)
>
> Did not foresee how to adjust to possible problems
>
> (2.52)
>
> Searched for personal meaning (2.14)
>
> Persevered despite adversity (2.13)
>
> Thought that my success would depend on my effort (1.91)
>
> Did not feel supported and encouraged by others (1.82)
>
> Was not helped by the example set by others (1.58)
>
> Experienced a sense of striving or of working hard
>
> (1.56)

The pattern of change on the first component manifested

extreme swings from very high self direction to very low

self-direction (see Appendix A, Case Study One). Improvement did

not appear to be gradual, but cyclic. Unstably, she rose and fell

before maintaining a high level of agency. On the second

component, there was also variation, although much less extreme.

Personal narrative. Fay's mother could not reliably care for

herself. From an early age, Fay had to try to care for her. At

age four, Fay was able to read, but also she was her mother's

confidante. She had had to be more adult-like, so much so that it

hardly seems to Fay that she really had a childhood, certainly not as a carefree, joyful little girl. Rather, she was the little girl with the broken heart.

At age 6 1/2, after taking her first Holy Communion, she was expected to attend weekly confession. She decided to see a priest who seemed like a particularly nice man. Trustingly, she believed that the priest would not know her or report her. As the sisters had told her, she was free to unburden herself and seek forgiveness. After her confession one Saturday, however, the priest said, "Fay, tell your mother I'll be down for coffee after confessions."

Fay felt uncovered, hurt, exposed now as a bad person. She was angry and devastated at the same time. Her trust was broken and she had been found out. Over the next two years, she conducted experiments on what the Sisters told her. They were so wrong about the priest and confession that she personally tested other ideas. For example, if you bit the host, it would bleed or you would be struck by lightning. She broke the rules and nothing happened just as they broke the rules and were still walking around. In particular, since they did not tell the truth, she did not have to tell the truth either. Fay stopped telling the truth since she felt she could not trust anyone.

By grade 3, Fay was a voracious reader. She loved the
library. One day while she was browsing through adult books, she
was captivated by passages on deviant, homosexual women in prison
and mental hospitals. She thought, "This is me. This is my life.
I've always liked girls better than boys. This is what's happening
to me." She now had a name and it was lesbian. Armed with this
name that described her, she began to search through indices in
other books. Finding out about herself was wonderful, exciting,
but it was also horrible. Lesbians were in prison and in mental
hospitals, and if she told anyone that she too was a lesbian, she
was afraid that she would be locked up. She could not tell anyone.
It was too dangerous.

She wanted to be a doctor and read of Pasteur and other
medical heroes. Doctors took care of people just as she took care
of her mother. Some things she could tell, but deeper reasons had
to be covered up. Who she really was had to be buried, never
revealed. Fay always felt a little weird, different from others,
perhaps because she was so much taller. Between age 11 and 12, she
grew seven inches and is now six feet and one inch. Because she
was different, and differences were dangerous, she had to try hard
to fit in.

Outwardly, Fay achieved considerable success. Although she
was never popular with boys, she earned good grades and was

involved in student politics. In the eighth grade, she was class

president. On parade with her mother, she always passed well

enough. However, it was all a fraud. Fay was quite conscious of

not fitting in, despite her efforts, not being a real girl. There

was always the public front and the dangerous, hidden reality.

In the summer of 1960, the family moved to Canada. For Fay,

it was another chance to fit in, to be a regular person, but as an

American, she was made to feel different again. It was but another

way she was not right. By this time Fay's mother had become an

alcoholic. In the private Catholic school for girls, she again

experienced crushes on other girls, but never revealed her

feelings. These crushes passed, but there was one that did not.

During high school, she loved her best friend, M, and fantasized

how they would go away and live together upon graduation. Her

feelings, desires, the reality she lived through high school were

dangerous and covered over by her attempts to be normal. Perhaps

for this reason, Fay feels that she did not actually have

experiences in high school. Rather, she read and imagined.

During this period of acute daily schism between the front and

the hidden reality, Fay continued a vigorous involvement in student

government and student clubs. She excelled in public speaking and

debates. Outwardly, she was a competent young woman on her way to

a successful career. Inwardly, she was torn. More and more had to

be covered over, even from herself.

Shortly before graduation, M suddenly announced that she was

going into a convent. Fay could not understand it. She thought

she knew M deeply, knew what was happening, but M turned into

someone she did not know. Feeling abandoned by her friend, Fay was

left to try to figure things out, to search for a way to live life

as herself. Although M came back after only six months in the

convent, it was never the same. Fay still loved her, but felt she

could no longer trust her.

Nearing graduation, Fay planned to become a doctor, a person

who rescues others. It was prestigious, rare for women in those

days, and required intelligence, making medicine a very attractive

option. Filling out this conventional picture of the future, Fay

thought she would have to get married, but did not dwell upon what

exactly that would mean. It was all part of fitting in, forming a

cover.

Fay's parents planned to send her to a university far from

home. It was all arranged; a university, a part-time job, and a

major in pre-med. The plan terrified Fay. She had never been away

from home. Indeed, she had been rather sheltered. What she knew

of the world was mostly through reading. When a prom date led from

her first sexual experience to a proposal, Fay welcomed the

engagement as a way out. She would gain freedom from her mother's restrictions, become a grown up, have a place in the world. She would fit in and not have to do anything terrifying like go away to school.

So unlike were Fay and her husband that she became very bored. After they moved to another city due to his job transfer, Fay gained sixty pounds. She knew that she was a lesbian, even though she had no experiences to really confirm it, and marriage came to seem like a great disguise. When a friend asked her when they would have a baby, Fay startled herself by her uncensored reply, "I'm either going to have a baby, or I'm going to leave my husband." She could never imagine having a baby with her husband and whatever penetrated her guard when replying to the friend seemed to know that. Over and over, she rehearsed the experience and resolved to tell her husband, and when she did after the Christmas season, they split on that very day with incredible suddenness. There were some half-hearted attempts to salvage the marriage, but there was really no relationship to save.

Fay's parents returned to the United States, but Fay decided not to go with them. It was another chance for freedom, another chance to struggle for personal survival in the face of restrictions that she cover up, never expose herself. She could not live with the front, nor could she live without it as yet. The

front was everything conventional and secure; it offered belonging. The buried self was unknown in implications for living, forbidding and dangerous. She struggled for a way to make life work.

Within one year, she was married again. Her new husband, B, was a drug dealer who dealt mainly in acid and marijuana. They travelled a lot over the next seven years and had exciting times, but in this relationship that she was determined to make work, she was utterly subservient, B's old lady. She did not want to be a loser again, as B often reminded her, but in trying to succeed, she had given herself up. She was B's caretaker and rescuer. She was defined largely by him and he continually told her that she was not attractive, not trustable, and not very smart. Underneath, she had become certain of living a front. She was stoned a lot of the time and her memories of these years are still fuzzy.

One day when she was stoned, required to pour forth another sex tale to quench B's pornographic fantasies, she told him that she was attracted to women. Initially, he used this to torment her, but then he invited D to live with them and more or less lived his fantasies. It was Fay's first sexual experience with another woman. D lived with them on and off for several years until Fay finally demanded that she leave. But B made her apologize and bring her back the next year, after they were arrested on drug charges.

Awaiting trial in a minimum security prison, Fay experienced
an amazing moment of clarity. On one hand, the experience was
thoroughly degrading. Yet on the other, she realized that there
were lesbians in prison. She was ecstatic, as if coming home. She
would meet some, talk to them, and her middle class trepidation was
overpowered by exhilaration. Ironically, Fay experienced an
incredible brief moment of liberation in jail.

Soon after, she was bailed out and ordered by the court to
live with B's parents. It was oppressive and she felt devastated
by isolation. She began drinking heavily, taking cocaine, and
seducing anyone she could find. When B got out of jail, she and B
and D lived together as before. To pay the bills, Fay found a job
as a secretary in a university department, and joined the union.

When Fay learned that D had lost her job again and that she
would be paying the bills all by herself, she was once more
startled by what she said before her guard suppressed it, "You
know, I think I'd rather just live alone." As long as thoughts
were inside, they were not quite real, but once expressed, they
could not be taken back. "Once a real thing is said, you can't
take it back." The thought takes on more substance as a pathway, a
viable option. While B exploded, Fay packed and was gone in twenty
minutes, another sudden closing of an enduring situation.

Fay had escaped, saved by what felt like a real self that popped out before she could check it. She felt free, huge, substantial. She felt like she could do anything, go anywhere, and be anybody. Sometimes she would remember herself in youth, so full of potential, and wonder where she went. Now, she felt reconnected, as though she had found her again. Outside of the relationship with B, she could see what it had been like, constrained, narrow, stagnant, and awful. Inside, she had not sensed the full scope of her confinement and incapacitation. Outside, the trap was vivid, standing in stark contrast to her renewed sense of possibility, the sheer authenticity of possibility.

At the time, there were many problems between the university and union members. While Fay was never allowed to be angry in her personal relations, she could be outraged over unfair practices. She soon became prominent in the union, a spokesperson who led two-thousand-large meetings and confronted authorities. She rediscovered that she had a mind, that she was a powerful and persuasive person, and that she could scare authorities. Bright, articulate, and assertive, she was a major figure in the strike, yet in relationships such as with B and D she felt trapped and powerless.

At work, she became the spokesperson representing the union during negotiations with university administrators. It seemed as though she were exercising her real self in union work and penetrating through her middle class myths. Idealistic and naive, she was ecstatic with what she was discovering, particularly about gender and class differences. She was convinced that administrators treated employees like dirt and thought of them like dirt. For once, Fay felt engaged with the world on behalf of something worthwhile. This sense of engagement led her into a variety of other activities.

Fay went on a women's weekend with a friend. In a Gestalt session, Fay heard a woman tell a story about the birth of her daughter who was born with a withered arm. Immediately after labour the male doctor said, "There, there dear, you'll do better next time." Fay was hurt and outraged. She identified with all women and all women's pain as never before. The doctor was not telling the truth (like the nuns); it was not the woman's fault. This time something "real" did not pop out of Fay, but rather penetrated in from the outside. It was a profound moment, never to be forgotten.

The next day, Fay attended a political rally. It was here that Fay encountered her first positive lesbian role model. Through E, Fay was inspired to feminism and the women's movement.

It was possibly a way to understand herself as a lesbian, herself as a woman, and her own history. It became clear that her work was with women. She decided to return to school.

In preparation for her return to school, Fay took a course in Women's Studies. It was a joy to learn in a supportive environment. It gave Fay the confidence to go forward into full time studies, as well as an intellectual direction. Around this time, Fay met K, her second positive lesbian role model. K freely shared her knowledge of the lesbian community and took Fay under her wing.

Fay began full time work on a B.A. in history and was later invited to join the honours program which she completed in 1980. She had quit her job as a secretary and worked at a rape crisis centre during the summer. She became involved with T, a man who had actively pursued her. Through T she became acquainted with what she called "the therapy language people". Beyond their strange vocabulary (giving permission to yourself, owning, etc.), she did learn useful things such as the importance of being able to say "no". She was introduced to women involved in the women's movement and left-wing politics, and their various activities. Through a variety of activities, Fay began to crystallize issues that concerned her deeply (e.g., violence to women, discrimination) and ways to address these issues, such as public speaking, doing

workshops, and developing organizations. In this vigorous

engagement with the world, Fay consciously tried to make contact

with her 6 year old self, to take apart the layers of cover and

somehow integrate that 6 year old with her adult self, and to

invest her current and more mature engagements with the unsullied

spirit of that lost little girl of youth.

As her activities grew, her relationships also grew and became

more complicated. The threat of being swallowed up in a

relationship was always there. However, this time she was able to

stand back and distance herself. More importantly, she was able to

say no to T, the man with whom she was involved. It had just

popped out, as other things had popped out at critical times in the

past, as if there were a real self who became so disturbed by her

practice in not being herself that it penetrated her defenses. Yet

once again, it was right and Fay felt freedom from entanglement and

pretense.

All those years, she had struggled to fit in with a front

personality. Now, she began to see a possibility of living more

authentically. Before she had thought that if she could but see a

way to live as a lesbian, she would do it. Now, she realized she

could not wait for a clear plan. One lives life as a lesbian by

just doing it, deciding and doing. Two women told her that she

must make up her mind to either come out and be a lesbian or to not

come out, but to make the decision. Fay dwelled on the decision,
mused in her journal, and after two weeks, the decision
crystallized, simplified. If you are going to be a lesbian, she
thought, you are going to be one. There would be no more fronts,
dodges, and hedges. It was really a decision to become undivided.

Feeling worn down by her work in the rape crisis centre and in
her group of friends, she was pursued by a woman who was funny and
who seemed to appreciate her intellect, articulateness, and sexual
aggressiveness. It was a welcome contrast and perhaps a chance to
realize the dream held long ago with M, to go away and live
together. When she moved in with H, she was required to give up
contact with others. Further, since H was still in the closet, Fay
had to share the closet with her after having just come out and
announcing her lesbianism to significant others. Fay had to give
up her political work and soon found herself striving to be the
person H wanted her to be. Fay was too fat. Her hair was not
right. Her clothes were all wrong. Fay wanted to be right, wanted
the relationship to work, but it was becoming more tempestuous
daily. H was possessive, demanding, and vulnerable, a binge
alcoholic who needed someone to care for her. Fay tried, but when
arguments escalated into outright violence, she left. It was too
frightening.

For the next 2 1/2 years, Fay lived alone. She had never lived alone before and it was wonderful, so uncomplicated. She re-entered the women's movement, did workshops on behalf of battered women, and worked in the anti-pornography movement. Her work in anti-pornography led her to re-examine her life and accept that her relationship with B had been sexually abusive. Fay felt like she was close to burning out, and quit her job in a shelter for battered women and their children. Fay even had another relationship with a woman in which she did not lose herself, but the relationship did not work out and they parted as friends. On the rebound, she briefly took up with another woman who was like a client, and it did not last. In relationships and in work, she had struggled to free others, to transform them from unhappy people into a happier version of herself. While her work tended to be constructive, her relationships tended to be destructive and Fay tried to evaluate her role in them. Always, it seemed, she had given herself up in relationships, become a front and denied herself. "I needed to have a decent relationship with myself if I was ever going to have a decent relationship with others." During this period of re-investments and withdrawals, Fay was trying to care for herself, to establish a stronger relationship with herself, both physically and emotionally.

As Fay was maintaining her political work and returning to university for graduate work, she became involved with P and moved in with her because she was afraid of losing her. For the first two years, it was fine, but then P began to withdraw. Fay tried to reach her, to do what she wanted, but was ignored and had to try harder. She was being lured once more into giving herself up, when she attended a Celebrate Sobriety meeting (a meeting for alcoholics or friends and families of alcoholics [Al-Anon]) for gay men and lesbians that was to have a decisive influence.

At the meeting, one of the main speakers described what it was like to be a child of alcoholic parents. In a piercing flash, Fay recognized that this indeed named her. She had been the eldest and responsible daughter, the first of the siblings to face the alcoholism of mother. When the speaker described in pointed detail how she had taken responsibility for everything, Fay was stunned. It was a major revelation that moved her to a point of no-turning back, much like the times when her real self had seemed to pop out to cut an entanglement. Once a real thing is said, it opens possibility and cannot be taken back. Fay knew she had to do something.

On the next day, she attended a workshop in which the leader instructed them to find the little girl with the broken heart and put her on your lap. Fay spent the session caring for this little

girl, getting to know her, and when the leader asked them to put the little girl back, Fay could not. It felt as though she had finally found her and she simply could not put her back. In tears, she told the leader she could not do it, and the leader asked her what she wanted to do. Fay wanted to take care of her life, a life that she was now seeing whole for the first time, coherently and without blinders.

For the next year, Fay attended weekly meetings of an Al-Anon group. It offered the support she needed and considerable insight. These statements are still vivid. You cannot play God in other people's lives. You cannot take total responsibility for others. You cannot depend on others to keep you busy care-taking. You must pursue your own life. It is an on-going struggle to remember one's own worth. Putting oneself first is not a matter of self-indulgence, but of becoming a moral person. From worth comes a moral outlook, the possibility of living with integrity.

Between meetings, Fay began to practice and experiment, striving to take back her life. She found that when she acted on her own emerging stance in life, she did not feel so tied up. For a while, her relationship with P seemed to improve. Then it became worse. A friend finally prompted Fay to save herself. "What are you going to do?" she asked. Fay went to P and when it became clear that there was no way to work things out, she left.

Since leaving P, Fay has lived alone. She does not ever want to be in a dependent relationship again. She has another enduring relationship, but it does not involve care-taking. There is no search for a wonderful person underneath to be brought forth through her care. She does not want another relationship with someone like her mother. That has been resolved. No more will she give herself up.

At present, Fay feels stronger and that she can count on her own decisions and judgments. There do not seem to be any more covers and secrets. Unclouded by the necessity of maintaining a fiction, she can see herself clearly and has more self-respect. It feels right and good. Her career in community politics seems very worthwhile and satisfying. She pursues worthwhile goals for her own reasons, not because someone else wants it.

For Fay, the change involved a discovery of "my own definition of myself and making that real in my life," a movement from "containment to liberty". We develop habits of seeing situations in certain ways, of acting, anticipating, and reacting. To break a habit requires consciousness of it and a decision to change it. Partially, this involved admitting that she was the adult-like child of an alcoholic and coming to know the little girl with the broken heart who never had a chance to be carefree. Breaking a habit also requires sustained vigilance to avoid traps of habit and

a capacity to exercise one's will, to be responsible for oneself and not blame everyone else. It was Fay who constructed the covers until she was lost in them and Fay who eventually had to penetrate through these barriers to understanding. In her life, Fay has learned that it is a "revolutionary act to be yourself". In the social world, there are endless temptations and coercions to live a fiction.

Convergence. The theme of liberation from entrapment, evident in the first component, is also prominent in the personal narrative. The cyclic movement of this component across events or periods of time parallels the ups and downs related in the story. For example, after Fay was arrested and spent a brief time in prison, she had to live with B's parents, who were extremely restrictive. They had the legal authority to regulate her life and did so. She described this period as awful and it is reflected on the first principal component as a downward swing. When she left B, she was exhilarated and involved herself with various kinds of constructive work. Escaping this entanglement and launching her own projects was described as wonderful and is reflected on the first component as an upward swing. The principal component analysis stands to the personal narrative much like abstract and general is to concrete and particular. Each reflects the other, but the narrative is much more precise and comprehensible.

The theme of the second component seems to be striving for meaningful opportunities to grow or change despite entanglement and adversity. This theme is also evident in the personal narrative. Roughly and not as extremely, movement on this component tends to contrast with movement on the first component. That is, she was apt to strive hard, search for meaning, and seek opportunities most when she was trapped and least when she was liberated from entanglement. Toward the end, however, there is at least a hint that the two components might be converging. That is, in the end, she shaped a situation of personal freedom in which striving, searching, and seeking were intensified rather than mildly relaxed.

Given the two components, the overall theme of change seems to be that if one can keep striving, searching for meaning, and seeking opportunities to grow, in spite of depression, lack of support, and adversity, then one will escape entrapment and gain freedom, control, power, and an optimistic approach to life. While this theme seems applicable to her transformation, it is also rather general, not as precise as her own thematic statements of the change. Fay could not sustain her freedom and potency until she discovered/constructed a meaningful and workable definition of herself to live. For her, it was indeed a revolutionary act to be herself amid the confining definitions of others that were held out as ways to fit in.

Case Study Two: Glen

Glen is a 28 year old man, the first born of a family of four children. He comes from an upper middle class background and his family is Jewish. Glen has a Bachelor of Science degree and is currently completing a Master's degree in Counselling Psychology. He works as a therapist in a centre that provides treatment for victims of incest and sexual abuse.

Principal component analysis. The first principal component accounted for 31% of the variance in the Q-sorts. Since the factor loadings of events show clear improvement in personal agency, ranging from a beginning of -.15 to end loadings of .85 and .66, this component describes what the change meant to him in terms of the theoretical items. To define this component, all item factor scores exceeding plus or minus 1.5 were extracted. In order of magnitude, these items are listed below, and phrased to characterize the positive outcome or ending. The negative beginning is the opposite of each item.

> Was not too easily influenced by others (2.26)
>
> Did not feel depressed (2.12)
>
> Felt powerful, not helpless (2.03)
>
> Was not helped by the example set by other people (1.79)

Did not think that my failure would be due to other

people and/or circumstances (1.61)

Had a strong sense of meaning, was not aimless (1.60)

Did not accept goals that were not really mine, but came

from situational demands or other people's

expectations (1.56)

Felt in control of my life, not pushed around (1.55)

Took responsibility for setting my own direction (1.53)

The second component accounted for 23% of the variance in the

Q-sorts. Since it did not show improvement, ranging from a

beginning event loading of .54 to an ending event loading of .44,

it does not define the transformation. However, it reflects

potentially important items that accompanied and perhaps

contributed to the change. These items are listed below.

Felt anxious (2.35)

Did not feel confident (2.27)

Did not feel competent (2.09)

Felt a deep sense of commitment (1.57)

Felt a strong sense of involvement (1.55)

Did not experience a feeling of satisfaction (1.55)

Persevered despite adversity (1.52)

The change reflected on the first component involves a

movement toward less depression through self-guidance, finding

personal meaning, and taking responsibility. The pattern of change

on the first component was cyclic with extreme swings up and down

before culminating in a higher level of self-guidance (see Appendix

A, Case Study Two). The second component concerns a willingness to

persevere, despite a host of difficult emotions (feeling anxious,

incompetent, dissatisfied, and lacking in confidence), for the sake

of a deep commitment. The pattern of movement on this component is

also cyclic with extreme ups and downs, but unlike the first

component, it shows no improvement. Roughly, movement on this

component tends to contrast with movement on the first component.

That is, he was apt to draw on his commitment and persevere most

when he was depressed, aimless, and dominated by others. Toward

the end, however, there is some indication that the two components

might be converging. That is, in the end, he was able to sustain

his feelings of self-guidance and meaning despite being in or out

of harsh circumstances.

Personal narrative. Glen was consistently belittled and

berated when he fell short of his father's expectations. One of

the ways his father would punish him was by laying him on a bed,

holding his hands behind his back and strapping his bare backside

with a belt. Although Glen felt hurt and humiliated by these

incidents, he also felt powerless to stop them. He was scared

silent by his father. Beneath this silence he was full of rage,

but instead of directing this rage outwardly toward his father, he directed it inwardly toward himself.

Glen was a depressed and anxious child. By the age of 8, he had gained a lot of weight and was the target of ridicule by his siblings and his schoolmates. He was convinced that if he lost weight, things would be better and he would get what he wanted out of life. Except for the odd friend outside of school, his friends were generally people like the grocery store owner or the school janitor. In junior high, the other kids would deride him and beat him up. He felt alone and lonely. By junior high, he had some inkling that life did not have to be this way, but he still felt powerless to change it.

Glen coped with life through fantasy. He would imagine being able to fly, being able to be invisible, or having all the money in the world. He chose fantasies that made him feel free and important. On the down side of the fantasies, he would imagine killing himself and what it would be like to be dead.

From an early age, Glen's father expected him to be a doctor in order to follow in his footsteps. Everything Glen did or did not do was measured in relationship to that expectation. At 17, Glen entered pre-med at university. Although he started out enthusiastically, he soon found that he had trouble concentrating. He was still caught in a fantasy world trying to escape.

Consequently, Glen did not do well that year and his father expressed strong disapproval. Glen felt guilty, like he had let his family and himself down. The following summer his mother got him a job in construction. Glen decided to try to lose some weight, and with hard work and effort he lost 35 pounds. He continued to lose weight after he returned to school and by the end of the year he had lost a total of 75 pounds. He felt good about this accomplishment, but it did not quite have the impact that he had fantasized it would.

What did have a substantial impact on him was meeting a girl who seemed to like him. He paraded her around the university demonstrating to people that he was indeed a lovable person. After a few weeks she had to go away. Glen directed all his efforts into bridging the gap between them with letters and telephone calls, and spent his time fantasizing about life with her, which did not help his grades. Around this time, one of his professors seemed to take an interest in him, which made him feel important. It also made him feel anxious and fearful because he was sure he would lose this "special status" once the professor found out what an "unacceptable" person he really was. Glen worked hard to anticipate what the professor wanted so as to get approval and avoid rejection.

Glen's grades improved in his second year of university, but they still were not good enough for medical school. By now, Glen had embraced the fantasy about becoming a doctor himself. He thought it would give him power and status. He would have his father's approval and, at the same time, his father would not be able to control him.

The summer following his second year of university, Glen got a job working at a Youth Detention Centre. Despite the fact that these young girls were imprisoned, Glen envied them. They had something he longed for. They had an ability to survive in harsh circumstances. Glen had always seen himself as kind of a wimp. After work, Glen hung out with some guys from the university who were hippies. To Glen, hippies symbolized freedom and acceptance, the things he yearned for most. As students of philosophy, they spent a good deal of time critiquing society and exchanging ideas about how to improve it. They also did drugs. Glen eagerly joined in, finding it easier to rebel against political institutions than his own situation at home.

A couple of the guys suggested going to Europe. After hesitating initially, Glen decided to go with them because he thought he may be able to discover his own survival capabilities like the girls at the Detention Centre. He also desperately wanted to escape the pressure of school and his father. A number of

people that Glen respected supported his decision to go. Having
this support gave him the strength he needed to go against his
father's wishes which were to stay in school. He arrived at the
airport with his backpack and gear; he was filled with excitement
and fear. His friends, however, never showed up. Despite feeling
shocked, unnerved, and disappointed with this radical change in
circumstances, he decided to go anyway.

Travelling taught Glen the things he wanted to learn. He was
on his own with no one telling him what to do or who to be.
Sometimes it was lonely. He read books that he was interested in
and wrote poetry. He met people from many different cultures who
he felt were interested in, and accepting of, him as he was, not as
the person he could or should be. Most importantly, he was
surviving on his own under harsh circumstances. He was taking care
of himself and able to get what he needed, which helped his
self-confidence. He was beginning to discover his own strength and
power. In Israel, he lived on a kibbutz. He met a woman that he
lived with for a couple of months. This was his first sexual
relationship. Having this woman be attracted to him was
exhilarating, almost too good to be true. After a few months, Glen
left the kibbutz and resumed travelling. He was eager to have new
experiences and to test his increased confidence.

After a year, Glen returned home for his brother's bar mitzvah. He felt different somehow, worldly. He felt special and unique because of his accomplishment and had started to accept some of his positive qualities like being friendly and easy to talk to. He was accepted by people in Europe, so he did not need the acceptance from people at home quite as much. He had survived on his own for a year which made him feel like he was was a real person, someone with substance and fortitude. A 76 year old woman living on the kibbutz had called him a "mench" (a Yittish term for a man with character) and told him never to forget it. Glen felt affirmed, he had substance and character, it was in him. People at home seemed to treat him differently. After 18 years of feeling insignificant, it gave him a new lease on life. Perhaps life was not so bad after all. When his father tried to minimize and deflate his experience, Glen was eager to leave again.

Instead of leaving, Glen went back to university to complete his third year of pre-med. This time he added some psychology and philosophy courses to his program of study. He became more interested and involved in the arts in general. The pressure from his father continued, "When are you going to be somebody?" Even though Glen hated his father and fought against his judgements, they still seemed to seep in. Glen had internalized the belief

that "making it" meant receiving his father's approval. After four

agonizing years, he completed his Bachelor of Science degree.

Despite doing better in the last two years of his degree, Glen

still needed to improve the grades from his first two years. He

could not repeat them at the same university, so he decided to go

to a university away from home. Despite feeling incompetent and

uninterested in his coursework, Glen worked painfully hard. To add

to the agony, Glen had left a relationship back home and was

feeling lonely. He completed two years in one and managed to pick

up his grades. When it came time to go home, Glen hesitated.

He decided to look for a job rather than to return home. His

plan was to work for the summer and to go to medical school in the

fall. He applied for a job as a family counsellor working with

sexually abused children. Many of his previous summer jobs had

involved working in a social service capacity. He enjoyed the job,

but very quickly felt like he was in over his head. Eventually, he

decided to put medical school on hold. He was beginning to feel

torn between social service work and medicine, despite the status,

power, and family approval associated with becoming a doctor.

Being away from home and away from his father's pressure made this

decision easier. Without the constant pressure, Glen was freed up

to focus on the task at hand without the nagging feeling that he

was not doing what he was supposed to be doing.

While working, Glen became painfully aware of how unaware he
was of himself. For instance, when he was working with a family
where the father reminded him of his own, he would become paralyzed
and be unable to help. He also felt unsure of what he was doing
and was afraid that he might hurt someone he was working with.
After pursuing some training in play therapy, he realized that it
still was not enough. His own feelings were still getting in the
way. He decided to get some counselling for himself in order to
protect his clients.

At first, Glen focused on the doubts he had about being a good
counsellor. As counselling progressed, the focus shifted to Glen's
relationship with his father. Glen felt guilty about not living up
to his father's expectations and angry at having been abused by
him. He had a hard time identifying his feelings. One of the ways
he was able to identify them was through painting. Even after
these feelings were identified, he had a hard time sharing them
with his counsellor. He did not trust her and was sure she would
reject him if she discovered who he really was. Who he really was,
was a son filled with rage. All the anger he felt toward his
father was turned inward on himself and came out in the form of
depression, worthlessness, powerlessness and the feeling that he
was bad and deserved the beatings he got. "There is something
wrong with me, not with him", he thought. He did not need his

father around anymore to punish him; he was doing it all by himself. When his counsellor responded to him by saying, "You were really abused," Glen was shocked. She said it like he had a right to be angry. He thought it was normal for father's to strap their children. He wondered why others were able to accept it and he had not been able to. There were so many things coming up that he was not aware of that he began to lose trust in himself. He wondered who he was and what was to happen next. Despite the uncertainty and the foreboding feeling he had, he persevered rather than giving up. Somehow, he knew he had to.

While in counselling, Glen read a book by Alice Miller entitled, Thou Shalt Not Be Aware, which was to be a pivotal point in his transformation, a point of no turning back. The book was about how parents can abuse their children and how much of it comes from trying to meet their own needs. As Glen read the book, it seemed to strike every nerve in his body. Someone else had put words to his experience, right down to selecting the exact words he would have chosen. Although he felt very validated reading the book, he felt a complete and overwhelming sense of aloneness. He sobbed to his counsellor, "They betrayed me, they were using me." He hit his all time low. Glen knew that his counsellor was not using him and that she cared for him despite knowing who he really was. Glen desperately wanted to lose control and not be

responsible for himself. His counsellor sensed this and set some clear limits for him. Further devastated by this apparent rejection, Glen became angry and then depressed.

Over a period of 6 weeks, Glen began to put into practice the things he had learned in therapy. He began to take responsibility for himself, acting on his own behalf by attending to his own emotional needs. He provided for himself the nurturance he felt he had missed as a young boy. He did things like paint, spend time in nature, take hot baths, drink hot tea, and sleep with a hot water bottle near his stomach. Eventually, he emerged from this dark, lifeless pit of depression. He was filled with an enormous sense of well-being and joy. After what felt like a metamorphosis, Glen was able to relate to himself as well as to others, differently. He had found something in himself he had never known before: the capacity to provide for himself the things he needed emotionally. He felt comforted, more connected to other people, and not so alone. He felt able to develop honest and meaningful relationships with others without fear of rejection. He lost the fear that he might hurt his clients and knew that social services were more in line with his true self. Becoming a doctor had only been a means to secure his father's approval and acceptance.

He had walked, or perhaps stumbled, through the darkness into the light. Now he felt he could seek out what he needed and

deserved what he got. He had learned to take care of himself physically (through travelling) and now he had learned to take care of himself emotionally. He could be responsible for his own feelings of anger, depression, and aloneness. No one else would or could do it for him anyway. By taking responsibility he felt stronger, more powerful and in control, and his depression lifted. Even though he knew he was alone in the world, he did not feel lonely.

Having had this experience and having completed 2 1/2 years of counselling, Glen felt he had come to the end of what he could do with this counsellor. It was not the end of counselling; it had become an important tool for self-understanding in Glen's life. For now, it was time to not be in counselling. It was time to explore the things he had discovered about himself and to live with them. He had learned to accept more of himself, both the positive and the negative. If there was something he did not like about himself, he learned that he must first accept it as a part of himself before he could change it. He learned that having negative feelings does not make him a bad or worthless person. Discovering these things helped Glen to relieve the guilt he felt about the person he was and, in turn, freed him from being focused on others' opinions of him. He continued painting as a way to understand and to express himself.

Shortly after Glen ended counselling, his grandfather died. Glen was to be a pallbearer at the funeral, but he could not get a flight home no matter how hard he tried. He would be the only one in the entire family that was not there. He felt alone and separated from his family. The old cloud of depression kicked in and Glen grieved his loss alone. He returned to talk with his counsellor. In a relatively short period of time, compared to earlier days, Glen was able to snap out of his depression. He was able to realize that having tried hard and failed did not mean that he was a failure as a person. He did not berate himself as if there was something wrong with him. He was able to accept the situation and himself without being overwhelmed by negative feelings.

Soon after this experience, Glen had a clear, vivid dream. He dreamt he was in a canoe paddling down a river on a peaceful, sunny day. There were other people in canoes around him. They were coming up to a fork in the river. The other people floated down one of the forks. Glen noticed something splashing in the water. It was a baby. As Glen drew closer, the baby lifted its hands up toward him. Glen bent over and picked up the baby, tucking it in his windbreaker. They floated off down the other fork in the river, both looking out at the world together. He felt very secure and contented. After Glen woke up, he knew with complete clarity

that he had done the right thing by ending counselling. He had

thought that perhaps after his grandfather's death he may have been

slipping back into old patterns, but this dream confirmed for him

that he was ready to fully rely on himself.

As a result of receiving positive feedback at work and

considerable personal validation, Glen decided to do a Master's

degree in Counselling Psychology. When Glen was not accepted to

the program, he was shocked and surprised. He became angry, but it

was appropriate anger for a change, anger which gave him the

strength and courage to act on behalf of himself. Before, he would

have directed the anger inwardly with self-talk like, "You stupid

idiot, you're just not good enough." This time he said things

like, "No, you're wrong, I'm going to help you see why I'm right

for this program." After successfully arguing his case, Glen was

admitted to the program. Acceptance validated his action. The

future began to look exciting.

Life is different for Glen now. He does not experience those

heavy depressions where he feels hopeless and that life is not

worth living. It is no longer a big, bad, dark world. Life is

fair. Life is not secure, but it does not need to be anymore.

Glen is confident that he can handle whatever life puts in front of

him. He understands and accepts more of himself. He is more aware

of his feelings and is no longer at the mercy of those seemingly

uncontrollable forces within him. There are choices to be made.

He can influence what happens by the actions he takes. He knows

what he needs to do to look after himself. He is able to take

responsibility for himself which has allowed him to discover his

own capabilities. He sets goals that are meaningful to him, and

not governed by a fear of disapproval from his father or anybody

else. He is deeply committed to an ongoing process of

self-understanding and self-acceptance. Glen's relationship with

his father has also dramatically improved. He is no longer fearful

or angry when his father attempts to control him. He is confident

enough to be himself, which has enabled him to have loving feelings

toward his father.

A series of 200 watercolour paintings completed in and out of

the course of counselling provided a compelling documentation of

Glen's transformation. A summary of these paintings provides an

overview of Glen's change. The paintings at the beginning of the

change were colourless, dark, and very bleak. They were pictures

of things like open wounds in trees (pain) and large pillars

cracking (tension). Overall, they symbolized Glen's anger,

powerlessness, depression, anxiety, and fear. Paintings around the

middle phase of Glen's change were a little more alive with heavy

colors like black and blue (pain). These paintings were of things

like the difference in size between he and his father (insignificance),

a gory scene of blowing his head off (worthlessness), being behind bars or caught in a spider web (feeling trapped and powerless), colors outside the lines (being out of control), and volcanoes exploding (releasing anger). Overall, the paintings in the middle phase symbolized the discovery and expression of his feelings, the release of anger, and the anguish of the pain and hurt underneath. By the end of Glen's transformation the paintings were filled with a myriad of vibrant, bright colours. Examples of paintings in this phase were of his counsellor falling off her pedestal and breaking her crown (independence), a tree of many colors (acceptance of all parts of himself), standing up (not lying down) in the presence of his father (power), sailing (freedom), and entering a dark forest and coming out into the light (clarity, healing). The paintings at the end were symbolic of Glen's newfound strength, freedom, and hope.

Convergence. The movement from depression to self-guidance and personal meaning is prominent in the personal narrative. The cyclic movement of this component across events or periods of time parallels the ups and downs related in the story. For example, after he read the Alice Miller book, he felt betrayed by his parents and very alone in the world. He described this event as his "all time low" and it is reflected on the first principal component as a downward swing. When his counsellor refused to take

care of him and he was forced to learn to do it for himself, he felt empowered and this is reflected on the first component as an upward swing. The theme of the second component is persevering for the sake of a deep commitment despite feeling anxious and inadequate. This theme is also evident in the personal narrative. Going to Europe after having been abandoned by his friends, and staying in counselling despite his wanting to leave, are two potent examples.

Given the two components, the main theme of change seems to be that in order to become self-guided with a strong sense of meaning, a person must act on her or his own sense of commitment and persevere, despite feeling anxious, not confident, incompetent and dissatisfied. Overall, there is clear convergence of principal components, personal narrative, and paintings, with the narrative portraying the change more elaborately and sharply.

Case Study Three: Margaret

Margaret is a 64 year old woman, the youngest of a family of two children. She was raised during the Depression in the United States. For 42 years, Margaret lived as a nun in various forms of religious life. At the present time, Margaret does not attend church and describes herself as a Christian with a universalist perspective. She works as a home support worker for people who are elderly or disabled.

Principal component analysis. The first principal component accounted for 34% of the variance in the Q-sorts. Since the factor loadings of events show clear improvement in personal agency, ranging from a beginning of -.49 to an ending of .74, this component describes what the change meant to her, using the theoretical items. In order of magnitude, these items are listed below, and phrased to characterize the positive outcome or ending. The negative beginning is the opposite of each item.

> Did not accept goals that were not really mine, but came
>
> > from situational demands or other people's
> >
> > expectations (3.14)
>
> Took responsibility for setting my own direction (2.87)
>
> Was not too easily influenced by others (2.57)
>
> Took risks rather than playing it safe (2.23)
>
> Took specific steps to realize purposes (1.74)

Did not feel depressed (1.66)

Made good decisions independently (1.63)

The second component accounted for 20% of the variance in the Q-sorts. The factor loadings of events range from -.40 at the beginning to .50 at the end. The second component also shows clear improvement in personal agency. Using the same extraction procedure, the defining items are listed below and phrased to characterize the positive outcome.

Was helped by the example set by other people (3.32)

Felt anxious (2.73)

Persevered despite adversity (1.99)

Searched for personal meaning (1.93)

Felt confident (1.61)

Felt in control of my life, not pushed around (1.55)

Took specific steps to realize purposes (1.54)

The first component concerns extricating oneself from the influence of others. Through taking risks, making decisions, setting goals, and taking steps, she was able to take responsibility for charting her own course. The pattern of change on the first component cycles up at the beginning, followed by a series of cycles up and down in the middle which gradually improve, ending with a higher level of agency (see Appendix A, Case Study Three). The second component involves a sense of empowerment. In

the beginning, Margaret felt anxious, lacked confidence, and felt pushed around. Through persevering, searching for personal meaning, and observing the example set by other people, she took steps and was able to feel more in control of her life. The movement on the second component starts out low in the beginning, is followed by a dramatic peak in the middle which plummets back down again, and rises dramatically by the end of the change.

Personal narrative. When Margaret was growing up, there was disharmony between her mother and father. Margaret's father was a frustrated and angry man. While Margaret felt loved by him, she was frightened of his angry moods. Consequently, Margaret was a nervous child. She attended a Catholic grammar school. When Margaret was 8 her parents separated, and she remained living with her mother and brother. Her father was a sickly man and died of cancer when Margaret was 12. The discord in Margaret's family deeply influenced her own view of life. She never wanted to get serious with men. She was afraid of marriage and hated conflict. She did not feel good about herself and was ashamed of her family's poverty.

By 14, Margaret knew she wanted to enter religious life and become a nun. Religious life was an escape. It offered her security and peace, two important things she felt she did not have while she was growing up. She was dissuaded by a priest who

suggested she wait until after high school before entering a
monastery. By the end of high school, Margaret's brother was in
the service and she had to remain at home to care for her mother.
When her brother returned home and secured a job, Margaret felt
free to leave and pursue her own life.

At 22, Margaret entered a cloistered religious community (a
closed community where life was restricted to the monastery).
Margaret's family strongly opposed this decision because Margaret
would not be allowed to go out for visits, and secular people
were not allowed into the community and could only visit from
behind a double set of bars. They were not objecting to religious
life per se, only to the form of religious life Margaret has chosen
for herself. To Margaret, however, it was a noble gesture. Giving
herself totally was the ultimate gift to God. Her beliefs were so
strong that she was able to maintain her decision despite the
opposition from her family. When she entered the monastery, she
did not really feel a loss of her family. Instead, she felt rather
detached. It was hard though to see the effects of her decision on
her mother and brother.

Margaret lived in the cloistered community for 25 years. She
took vows of obedience, poverty, and chastity. Life in the
monastery was penitential which was based on the idea that one is a
prisoner of love and through one's deprivation one is saving

souls. Margaret lived in a small cell with a washstand and basin, and a wooden bed with a thin cotton mattress. She ate a plain diet with no meat, and wore a habit. It was an austere life. Aside from religious practices, each person had different work responsibilities. Margaret baked the alter bread for 10 years and later had other responsibilities such as helping new people entering the community.

There were instances where Margaret was asked to do something she did not want to do. She would submit despite her reluctance because of her vow of obedience. She cooperated through outward performance, but inwardly she rebelled and felt angry. She was angry at herself for not being able to stand up to the Superior and tell her how she really felt, and angry at her Superior for asking her to do these things. You were not supposed to feel angry; you were supposed to be obedient joyfully.

Near the end of her 25 years in the monastery, Margaret had a profound dream of a spiritual nature. Margaret did not and still does not believe in mystical experiences or visions, nor did she ever remember her dreams except for this one, which is as clear today as it was then. She dreamt she was in the chapel kneeling at the base of a statue which was on a pedestal, and she was looking up. The figure of Christ appeared before her. Even though his face was unclear, Margaret knew with complete certainty that it was

Christ. He looked at her and said nothing. He turned to go.
Margaret called after him and asked if he would take her with him.
He turned, looked at her and said, "Not for a while yet, I have
work for you to do." Margaret did not ask him what work he was
referring to, but said instead, "If I can't come now, would you
grant me one favour?" He asked her what the favour was and she
asked if she could rest her head on his heart. Suddenly, the image
disappeared and she felt engulfed by him. She woke up sobbing to
the sound of the rising bell filled with joy and wonderment. The
dream became a source of great strength and courage for Margaret to
draw on in the coming years.

Although the reading material available to Margaret was
restricted to those books acceptable to the church, Margaret read a
book called Seven Story Mountain that was to have a profound effect
upon her life. Through reading about Thomas Merton's experiences,
Margaret became more and more drawn to eremitical life (living as a
hermit in solitude). She lived with these feelings for the better
part of a year without expressing them to anyone. The desire grew
to the point where she had to say something. She had to learn how
she could fulfill this desire. Nervously, Margaret told the
Superior of her longings. The Superior did not understand
Margaret's desire, perhaps because it was so uncommon, but nor did
she oppose it. In fact, she applied for special permission to

leave the monastery in order to take Margaret to visit a monastery in another state that had eremitical leanings. Their visit lasted for about a week. Margaret discovered that other than one day a month of solitude, they were a full community living structure. Disappointed, Margaret knew it was not enough for her.

However, during the visit Margaret found out about another proposed community that was opening up. When she returned back to her own monastery, she wrote and inquired about it. Margaret was invited to come and join the community. After 6 months, a Superior came from Rome and disbanded the project because there was too much turmoil between a priest who wanted to determine how it should be organized and the nuns. Margaret returned to her community. She was somewhat disappointed that it did not work out, but relieved to be away from the dissension.

Within a year or two of being back, one of the nuns told Margaret about a place in Canada where they allowed women to live as hermits. There were two hermitages for men in the United States, but women were not allowed to live as hermits. Margaret began written communication with the Abbot of the Canadian Abbey, and eventually was accepted to go there and to live as a hermit. She lived in a two room small house which had been previously used as a storehouse for equipment. It was located in a wooded area, seven minutes from the Abbey, but still on the Abbey grounds. The

house had no running water and no refridgerator. It was equipped

with a bed and a hot plate for cooking. Margaret was very happy

and fulfilled living there. It was just the kind of life she had

wanted. In addition to her religious practices, she read, did the

sewing for the rest of the community, and worked in the fields.

The main difference between living at her original community and

the Abbey was that she lived alone.

Within about a year, Margaret received some distressing news.

She was told that she could not remain out of her cloister any

longer and that she had to make a choice. She could return to her

cloister or remain living as a hermit. To remain living as a

hermit meant that she could have to relinquish her vows taken at

her previous community. It was a hard, painful decision, but she

knew she must stay. In order for Margaret to be dispensed from her

vows, it had to be approved through Rome. When the Abbot informed

Margaret that the process had been completed, she wept in his arms.

Margaret also took a form of consecration before the new community,

and became an oblate (a person in "lay status" according to the

church). The Abbot became her new Superior and she wore a habit

and a veil in recognition of her new affiliation. She remained

living as a hermit at the Abbey for 11 years.

During that time, and with each passing year, Margaret made a

New Year's resolution to seek out and to understand the mystery of

Christ. The mystery of Christ was a phrase that had always

intrigued Margaret. One day, after having received permission to

go to the community's library, Margaret saw a book entitled, The

Mystery of Christ. She was amazed and stunned at having come

across this title. She took it off the shelf and looked at whose

ideas the book was based on, namely, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin.

She immediately recognized him as someone who had been blacklisted

by the church for his controversial ideas. She told herself, "I

cannot read this," and put it back. She was still at the point of

obeying and submitting to the Church's rules. It kept bothering

her and coming back into her consciousness. "I was seeking it, he

was writing it." The obstacle was the church's attitude, she

thought. She kept wondering why he, amongst others, were being

condemned by the Church. Finally, she decided to read a book by

Henri deLubac, an author who upheld Teilhard de Chardin's ideas.

It was a little safer to begin with, she thought.

Reading deLubac was a shocking experience. It felt like

blinder's falling off her eyes. She could not understand what he

was being condemned for. What was he saying that was so wrong?

Then she read The Mystery of Christ. It marked the beginning of a

radical change of perspective. These books, among others, inspired

an opening up and a broadening of what Margaret now realized was a

very narrow perspective. Before, Margaret was a very staunch and

traditional Catholic, a diehard. She was angered by people who did not uphold the views of the church. She did everything precisely the way the church said she should.

As she continued her reading, Margaret began to re-think and to question things she had once swallowed whole. Gradually, she was beginning to think for herself rather than blindly accepting what the church said. As she read various authors, it became clear to Margaret that the church was frequently saying one thing and doing another. She began to question fundamental doctrines of the church such as the Immaculate Conception, the Trinity, and the controversial issue of women becoming priests. She found that as she broadened her perspective, she began to embrace views that were condemned by the church, such as reincarnation.

Over time, Margaret came to feel that there are many different manifestations of truth or God. She came to realize the validity of all religions, of all perspectives. There was not one right religion (Catholicism) or one right people (Catholics). It was not right to condemn others for what they believed or to burn them at the stake which is essentially what has been and continues to be done. In her readings, she encountered stories about people's experiences of living in India. After reading about them, she felt compelled to go to India herself. She yearned to open a dialogue

with another religion (Buddhism) and for a more meaningful
perspective on life.

Over a period of months, she got up enough nerve to ask the
Abbot for permission to go to India. Once again, she made a
radical request. She was nervous about it, but knew without
question that she must make the request or she would never be at
peace. Buddhists were considered Pagans by the Catholic church.
She did not know how the Abbot would respond. Despite not
understanding Margaret's desire, the Abbot approved financing for
her trip to India and did not stand in her way.

At 58, Margaret went to India. Upon arrival at the airport,
Margaret was overcome by the feeling that something very ancient in
herself related to the Indian people and the Indian environment.
She had never experienced anything like this before in the West.
As she drove from the airport, she was struck by the poverty and
primitivity. Images of families sleeping in the streets, handmade
shacks, little children naked or dressed only in loin cloths were
seared into Margaret's mind. Margaret stayed in India for just
over a year. Her experiences gave her the sense of a relationship,
a feeling of unity with all people in all cultures. It gave her a
whole new perspective on her life. She knew with absolute
certainty that she would never again allow herself to be shut off
from reality, from the human condition.

Margaret returned to the Abbey. Over a period of about two years, she began to realize that she could no longer live life as a hermit. It was not the most perfect way of life after all. It was beautiful, but sheltered. Despite having lived a spartan life, and having made considerable sacrifices, all the necessities of life were provided for her. Anything she needed was made available to her from three meals a day to medical attention. There was nothing to worry about, everything was always taken care of. While it was a secure environment, it was not one based on reality. She felt it sheltered her from taking responsibility for her own life. People involved in the church were exalted and Margaret did not want to be exalted anymore. This lifestyle was now unacceptable to her. She no longer wore her habit. She wanted to claim her place in humanity.

Margaret left the Abbey, found her own apartment, and secured a job. She finds her job very rewarding and meaningful. She enjoys helping and relating to others. It gives her a whole new dimension of life. Now, Margaret earns her own living, handles her own finances, and takes care of the everyday responsibilities herself. There is not enough time to focus directly on her spirituality all the time. She has come to realize how compartmentalized her thinking about spirituality had been. She neglected to realize the holiness of all things, that spirituality

embraces all things. She reads writers like Matthew Fox who offer

a universal perspective of spirituality rather than a myopic one.

Margaret does not attend church and feels no scruples about it. To

Margaret, spirituality is within her, in her heart.

In small ways, Margaret rebelled right from the beginning.

Her rebellion was internal, in her mind. Her rebellion continued

in the form of making decisions and setting goals that were

extremely radical in her eyes and the eyes of her Superiors. She

directs her own thinking and, consequently, her own life. It took

a great deal of strength and courage for Margaret to go against

what was expected of her. She did it alone and often in the face

of ridicule from others. To Margaret, the strength of her

convictions was fueled by the spiritual presence she felt. The

dream simply provided a confirmation of that presence. Despite

having the conviction to follow her inspirations, there was

obscurity, an uncertainty of how and where it would lead her, but

that did not stop her and nor did it bother her.

To Margaret, religion was an infringement on her freedom.

Now, she is true to her own self, makes her own decisions, and

assumes responsibility for those decisions. To Margaret, the whole

purpose of life is to take responsibility for it. While reading a

newspaper, she came across a personal philosophy that seemed to

accurately capture her own. "Let's not be afraid to do what we

must. It's a risky life, but at least we will be making our own

mistakes." Even today, Margaret has a friend who tries to dominate

her. Margaret does things her own way despite her friend's

insistence. No longer will she let anyone superimpose their ideas

onto her's.

"I'll never be closed again to any idea no matter how bizzare

it may seem." It is important to Margaret to explore new ideas and

to be open to change. She does not plan too much in her life as

she finds it too confining. To Margaret, the uncertainty of the

future is part of the adventure and the wonder of living. She

refuses to permanently commit herself to any one thing or one idea,

like she did to various forms of religious life, because it cuts

her off from new possibilities. She is a free agent now, in charge

of her own life and the author of her own story.

Spontaneously, at several points during the telling of her

story, Margaret presented related materials such as records of

ceremonies, dated declarations, photographs, books, and various

documents. Some of this material was valuable in refreshing

Margaret's recall of certain dates, as her transformation spanned

over 40 years.

Convergence. The movement from engulfment by others to

self-direction, evident in the first principal component, is also

prominent in the personal narrative. For instance, a major turning

point was when Margaret began to read books that had been condemned by the Church. She described this point as the time she began to think for herself rather than to blindly accept what the Church said. According to the first principal component, by extricating herself from the influence of others, she was able to take responsibility for setting her own direction. In the narrative, the culmination of her change is described as the point at which she decided to take responsibility for her own life. The theme of empowerment evident in the second component is also featured prominently in the personal narrative. Despite her history of total submission to the Church, she persevered and searched for personal meaning, taking steps to realize her purposes. By the end of her transformation, she was directing her own life.

Given the two components, the overall theme of change seems to be that in order to become self-directed one must take risks and persevere while pursuing a meaningful direction. One must also be open to the examples set by other people, but not be too easily influenced by them. Overall, the principal component analysis and the personal narrative appear to converge, with the personal narrative being more precise and comprehensive.

Case Study Four: Ray

Ray is a 32 year old man from a middle class family in which he was the oldest of four children. During childhood, the family moved several times before settling in a small town. At age 15, he was regarded as a promising athlete. He loved sport and outdoor recreation. His life was changed by a car accident that left him paralyzed in both legs. After rehabilitation, he completed high school and earned a Bachelor's degree in physical education. Ray is now working on behalf of disabled persons in universities. He is married with one child.

Principal component analysis. The first principal component accounted for 44% of the variance in the Q-sorts. Since the factor loadings of events show clear improvement in personal agency, ranging from a beginning of -.86 to end loadings of .63 and .44, this component describes what the change meant to him in terms of the theoretical items. To define this component, all item factor scores exceeding plus or minus 1.5 were extracted. In order of magnitude, these items are listed below, and phrased to characterize the positive outcome or ending. The negative beginning is the opposite of each item.

Did not feel anxious (2.36)

Felt free, not trapped (1.90)

Felt in control of my life, not pushed around (1.81)

Felt competent (1.71)

Did not think my success would depend on the help of

others (1.61)

Felt powerful, not helpless (1.59)

Felt confident (1.57)

The second component accounted for 16% of the variance in the Q-sorts. The factor loadings of events range from -.05, .03, and .06 at the beginning to .77, .46, and .75 at the end. There is clear improvement described by the second component, although it is not as striking as that shown on the first component. Using the same extraction procedure, the defining items are listed below and phrased to characterize the positive outcome.

Took risks rather than playing it safe (2.16)

Set challenging goals for myself (2.08)

Felt a strong sense of involvement (1.84)

Was not easily influenced by others (1.75)

Did not accept goals that were not really mine, but came

from situational demands or other people's expectations

(1.59)

Was resourceful (1.55)

Was not helped by the example set by other people (1.50)

The nature of the change reflected on the first component
involves feelings of empowerment (of po{er, confidence, control,
competence, freedom). In contrast, the change reflected on the
second component involves more specific features of action. For
example, he set goals, took risks, resisted influence from others,
was resourceful, and rejected extraneous goals. He was affected by
the example of others more at the beginning and less so toward the
end. These changes in action preceded and accompanied changes in
feeling. The pattern of change on the first component did not seem
to involve major cycles, but instead reflects a rather stable
period of feeling trapped followed by dramatic progress and
culminating in a dramatically higher level of agency (See Appendix
A, Case Study Four). The movement on the second component suggests
a fledging effort followed by a setback with gradual progress
levelling off at a higher level of activity.

Personal narrative. Ray's memory of the accident is vivid,
like a slow motion action sequence in a movie. Shortly before on
that beautiful summer day, life had seemed so precious. He loved
outdoor recreation, was devoted to sport, and was becoming
interested in girls. He had control of his life and that life
seemed very good, even though his parents had difficulty in getting
along with one another. After the accident, he felt as though he
had lost control. His legs would not work. One physician said he

would never walk again. Another said that there was hope. Pain
kept him centered on the immediate moment, struggling to stay on
top of it. He was unable or perhaps unprepared to think too far
ahead.

When the operation on his back was finally done, he had plenty
of time. For one and a half months, he could not move. Every
three hours if the nurses remembered, he was rotated from front to
back or vice versa. As each day of inactivity passed with no
improvement, Ray settled into despair and felt depressed a lot of
the time. He hung on, hoping for recovery, resolving himself to
uncertainty, focusing on one day at a time. Every day for hours,
he willed his legs to move, but they never did.

There was no control over the paralysis. It controlled him,
but within limitations, Ray could set goals. He set goals to eat
on his own without tubes, to be able to sit up and see outside, to
be able to grab drinks from the stand, to build up his arms while
enduring the pain in his hips from lying so much, and to be home in
his own bed by his 16th birthday. The goals allowed him to gain
some sense of control, to preserve his mental well-being, and to
feel more active. It was a great feeling to beat the odds and as
goals were reached, new and higher goals were formed.

By day, Ray projected toughness and optimism. Partially it
was a front, but never completely so. It was very important to

maintain toughness and positivity, particularly as he was allowed
to sit up and become more physically active. However, by night, he
sometimes gave in to despair and cried. When his parents visited,
he expressed his anger, bitterness, and frustration. Yet when his
coach visited, he told him that he would return after Christmas.
He just needed a little time to get back on his feet. Ray was
working toward a more stable attitude, but it was difficult to
achieve. Perhaps inadvertently, a physiotherapist cultivated a
false hope that Ray might walk without crutches and braces, yet his
legs never showed movement, no matter how much he willed them to.
There was nothing certain in his situation, no solid ground for
firm expectation, and the prospect of being a paraplegic for life
was hard to accept all at once.

While Ray wavered emotionally, he remained steady in striving
to achieve reachable goals. Being able to use braces to stand,
walking with a walker, using the wheelchair, self-care,
transferring from wheelchair to bed, there was a lot to learn. He
had to build up his upper body, develop coordination, and learn how
things were done. Whether he felt upbeat or down, he maintained a
discipline of striving toward goals.

Ray was scheduled to move to a rehabilitation center, but he
would have to wait two months. Instead of waiting, he wanted to go
home. A physician tried to change his mind. "If you were my son,

I would recommend to you that you stay in the hospital another month and a half where they can help you with basic care and at least some rehabilitation." This fatherly advice cut through Ray's resistance and he stayed. Looking back, Ray regards this decision as pivotal. Going home without total rehabilitation would have been overwhelming, leading to defeat, depression, and dependence. It would have been too much to manage while retaining a spirited effort to rehabilitate himself. At least in retrospect, readiness seemed crucial to maintain progress.

Ray was moved to a geriatric ward to wait, but it was too depressing and he requested a private room. There was an older paraplegic on the ward who had been admitted for bed sores. He drank all the time, a broken man who seemed to make it through life by staying drunk. For Ray, this was the first model of a paraplegic that he had an opportunity to observe, and he was repulsed. "No way," he thought, "I'm not going to be like this guy." Ray kept an image of this man in the back of his mind as he practiced, a negative model of his future that he must strive to avoid at all costs.

Throughout his stay in the hospital, Ray was supported by good relations with student nurses. They were like big sisters and one became an enduring friend. Sometimes he flirted, but not seriously. Romance, he thought, was just not going to happen. He

could dream, but that was all. Nevertheless, as his leg muscles
atrophied, became thin and ugly in his view, he covered them up.
He did not want to face his disability just yet, nor did he want
others to see. It made him feel more shy than usual, embarrassed.

Toward the end as he was getting ready to move to the
Rehabilitation Center, Ray became upset. He was nervous. The
hospital routine had become comfortable and familiar. It was no
longer very challenging, but it was known territory. He knew what
to expect and had some degree of control. At the Rehabilitation
Center, he was not sure what to expect. He felt quite vulnerable
again, not at all confident.

The Rehabilitation Center was housed in an old barracks. It
was musty smelling, depressing, and generally felt like a dungeon.
From 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., it offered excellent technical help, and Ray
concentrated on tangible, physical goals that would allow him to
get home. Whether it was self-care (work on bowel and bladder) or
standing on braces, Ray tended to pursue everything to the limit.
He felt a tremendous sense of accomplishment in physical progress,
standing briefly on braces or moving a short distance with the
walker. Sometimes he tried to visualize what life would be like,
how he would deal with dependency and his fear of dependency.
Occasionally, he glimpsed fears hovering on the border of
awareness, but avoided dwelling on them. As yet, they were too

overwhelming. Instead he focused upon "attainable, real issues of disability."

From 4 p.m. to bedtime, the Rehabilitation Center was less than ideal. It was boring and potentially depressing. Ray was confronted with many different attitudes, none of which seemed appealing or provided guidance. There was no model to follow, no one with whom he could identify. The majority of other patients seemed depressed and passive. Some complained all the time. Others were just passing time, waiting for a disability check to pay off luxury items such as stereo sets. Many drank a lot or took drugs.

Ray avoided other patients. He was not ready to sit back and accept his disability as just a fixed condition. For Ray, it was a fact that his legs were paralyzed and might never improve. However, his situation was not fixed; it had borders or frontiers that he could explore and push toward, if he were not dragged down by pessimism. What he could and could not do in the future was partially an open question that depended significantly upon his own efforts. Rather than socialize with other patients or just relax for lengthy periods of time each day, Ray felt challenged to work independently toward his goals, particularly practicing with braces.

Largely alone, Ray became lonely. There were few visitors. Sometimes as the emptiness built up, he made long distance calls just to make meaningful contact with someone. Even if it was after curfew, he would insist upon making a call. When institutional rules conflicted with him own sense of priority, Ray had no doubt which was to prevail.

His ventures into open environments were both exciting and sobering. In a public restaurant, he embarrassed himself by falling out a door into a garbage can. His brief visit home for Christmas was not a good experience. He was not yet proficient in brace walking and other skills, which left him much more dependent than he could accept. However, setbacks were simply the price of testing the frontiers of his disability. There is a fine line between shaping one's life and being shaped by conditions beyond one's control. This line changes over time with increased skill and maturity, yet would never be known without testing the limits of one's capacity. The rewards of testing are increased freedom, more control, and the utter exhilaration of striving against obstacles and occasionally winning. Ventures in open environments were confrontations with the real world through which he could guage his progress and appreciate the significance of his practice.

After three months at the Rehabilitation Center, Ray was ready
to go home. Administration was resistant because they expected he
would need six months. To get out, he had to have his lawyer talk
with them. Throughout his stay in the hospital and Rehabilitation
Center, Ray had tried to interact with people who could help,
support, and guide him toward a normal life. He depended on them
largely for technical help. However, he was never compliant. He
was selective, as capable of resisting influence as accepting it.
He refused some recommended forms of therapy and ignored
discouraging advice about braces, among other things. Each refusal
involved a battle with administration. Perhaps because Ray had a
clear view of what he wanted, he took partial responsibility for
what was to happen in his rehabilitation. While administration was
apparently used to passive obedience, Ray treated everything as a
matter for negotiation. He judged orders, rules, requests, and
activities in relation to his goals, fighting to maintain control
of the various influences from others on his life. While these
battles were prominent in his stay, they were secondary to the
pursuit of goals. Striving, a spirited effort to reach goals, was
the dominant theme of his rehabilitation.

In going home, Ray had insisted upon a car and a room in the
basement with his own washroom, two important aids toward
independence. After a crash course in driving, his father picked

him up. Once again, Ray was upset and nervous about leaving a secure environment for the unknown, but it had to be done. He drove home with his father. He drove very slowly and once spun off the road into a snow bank where they were stuck for a few hours. When they were finally helped out, Ray drove the rest of the way home, with forceful encouragement from his father.

Ray was apprehensive about returning to school and being with old friends. He had been a star athlete; now he was a cripple. Worried about his status, he wanted to appear as normal as possible. Rejecting the wheelchair as a symbol of disability, he used braces. It seemed important to greet others standing up. At the time, braces seemed as close to normality as he could get and he regarded a wheelchair with scorn.

While Ray yearned for normality, life was anything but normal. The house seemed specially designed to obstruct a paraplegic and the school presented its own difficulties. For Ray, this period of adjusting to open environments was extremely frustrating. Everything was such a challenge, and because of the cold weather and ice, even the spaces he should have been able to negotiate were treacherous. On his first day at school, he had fallen in the snow before he had even reached the door. Being self-conscious, these public accidents were certainly embarrassing for Ray, but in a way, they were acceptable, as familiar as sport. The challenge was a

physical one, and Ray knew that, through practice, he would improve. He would have to endure the frustration and continue the discipline of practice.

More difficult, however, were other problems. Ray thought that he would be too unattractive for dating. Who would want to go out with him? And he thought that he would not have much of a social life. Who would want to be a friend of a paraplegic? How could he participate in normal activities of friends such as dancing or swimming? To these problems, he had no answers, nothing he could practice. He would just have to wait and see.

The worst part of the day at school was gym. He both longed to be there and hated it. So few months before, he had virtually lived for sport. He had been a part of the gym activities. Now, he could not take part and he felt devastated. In gym, all the sparkle of his old life confronted the bleakness of his current situation.

This conflict between old aspirations and present realities began to change when his coach asked him to be an assistant coach for the team. It took awhile to feel comfortable and then he began to enjoy coaching. It was a new role in sport, one he had not envisioned before, but it felt good. It offered its own satisfactions and allowed him to participate in a different way, like a door opening when they had all seemed to be locked shut.

Other opportunities arose. After only moments, his friends turned out to still be friends and they continued to do things together. A stranger, S, got him involved in wheelchair sport. For the first time, Ray was exposed to disabled persons with whom he could identify, who could serve as role models. A girl in class began smiling at him and finally she asked Ray out. They went out for about three months. Ray became interested in another girl, P, and ended up going steady with her for three years.

Within a few months, Ray was busy with several spheres of life. While he trained for competitions in wheelchair sport, he coached individuals and teams. He dated, hung out with friends, and concentrated on school work. He even began to dance with his wheelchair. Life expanded rapidly and Ray began to consider what he could bring back. What would he have to adapt to? He took advantage of what he could, and as he did, questions began to arise. Do I like myself? Do I like my life?

Ray had to readjust his thinking. The barriers to involvement in something like a full life were not so much external as internal. What held him back was himself. While he was very vocal and firm about speaking up for things he believed in, he did not yet believe in himself. Ray was insecure, did not believe he was worthwhile, lacked confidence as a human being, and had a poor body image. Ray tended to guage himself by physical attributes,

over-emphasizing his weaknesses and failing to recognize his strengths.

Little things would set him off, put him in a sour mood that could last a short time or a few days. Being helped to a cabin might trigger an exaggerated view of his dependence. If someone looked at P, Ray might feel deflated by comparison. Later, he regretted his reactions. It did not make sense to feel such pain. Ray began to question his reactions, to relive these scenarios and try to understand them.

P helped Ray throughout this turmoil of adjustment. Initially, Ray had difficulty participating in some activities such as swimming and it took a long time to swim without sweatpants covering his legs. Sitting on the sidelines, he questioned his fears and yearned. As he grew in trust and assurance, he learned to accept help in order to do what he wanted to do. Still later, he learned to value activities in themselves without spoiling them by reference to the past and how it used to be. None of the activities he loved would be the same, he recognized, but they still have value.

Through his relationship with P, Ray gained confidence and a sense of fulfillment. He felt complete, not as if he were always lacking. The relationship shifted his rather narrow emphasis upon the physical to other qualities. Ray learned that he was fun to be

with and sensitive, that he had many good qualities. Perhaps of even more importance, he learned that he could have a meaningful relationship with a woman. Later, Ray came to view a relationship as a mirror that reflects oneself. One's qualities, problems, strengths and weaknesses are shined right back.

Ray was also successful in other areas of life. In wheelchair sport, he won some competitions and became more deeply involved in the possibilities of athletic participation. His coaching was rewarded when one of the athletes he personally helped, a friend, was selected for an exclusive team. Ray felt like he was part of this person's success. After graduation, he worked for a year at two different jobs and took college preparatory courses. Over a period of about 2 1/2 years, from when he returned home to a year after graduation, Ray recovered his life. He had found meaningful activities in which he could participate, meaningful relationships, and good qualities in himself. Gradually, gains had been consolidated amid the setbacks and difficulties of striving. Even when he scalded his foot and re-experienced all the horrors of dependency, he was still able to appreciate what had been accomplished, how far he had come. He was now ready to venture further and entered a university away from home.

Ray experienced university as a wonderful expansion and development. There were so many opportunities and different

people. On the wheelchair basketball team, he got to know other

disabled persons and how they dealt with their lives, the different

philosophies of people, many of whom were worthy models. In

classes, he had to overcome his shyness and give talks. He was

finally accepted into the School of Physical Education, which was

like a dream come true. Over the summer, he continued in

wheelchair sport.

Ray had been living with a friend from his home town. He now

asked that friend to move out. Ray wanted to be by himself, to try

living independently. He was ready, and in a way, had outgrown the

past. His friend was part of the old world of his home town and

might cramp the way he now wanted to shape his life.

Living independently, Ray was high on life. He was getting to

do what it seemed he had always wanted to do and was confident in

how he wanted to shape his life further. His legs were not like an

anchor holding him down. He could talk about his disability and no

longer felt bad about it. All the good things in his life

crystallized with perfect clarity, and he did not ruin these things

by comparison with what used to be or by unrealistic values. It

had taken a re-definition of life, acceptance of what he could not

control and disciplined striving for what he could attain, but his

life finally emerged with incredible force as something that was

precious. Ray had always felt that life was valuable, and believes

that this sense supported his efforts from the beginning, but now it was as if a potential had become actual and enduring.

One day, Ray tried to get friends to go with him on a fishing trip. No one wanted to go. Finally, Ray caught himself depending on others and wondered why he could not go by himself. He packed up and drove over an hour to a fishing spot he had known in youth. Where he stopped, there was a fence between him and the river. "Why should I let this deter me," he thought. He struggled over the fence with his wheelchair and gear. To get to the river, he had to go up hill, through a ditch, over a barbed wire fence, through a meadow, and down a hill. It was a good feeling being able to do it as he had before. As he sat beside the river and fished, he appreciated his accomplishment. It was a good day.

The fishing was not very good and Ray decided to try his luck on another plateau lower down. He went too fast and tipped over the embankment into the river. Quickly reaching, he caught a hold on the side and then grabbed his wheelchair before it sunk. Through the mud and vegetation on the embankment, Ray pulled himself and his wheelchair up. When he reached the top and settled back into the wheelchair, he did so not just with relief, but with an exhilarating sense of independence and accomplishment. There was something deeply symbolic about the fishing trip and it remains

as the culmination of his struggle to regain potency as the agent or main character of his own life story.

Convergence. The personal narrative clearly reflects the changes described by the Q-sorts. Ray moved from trapped helplessness to a sense of freedom, control, and power. He also moved toward increasing challenge, involvement, and risk. Given the two components, the overall theme of change seems to be that in order to move from trapped helplessness to freedom and self-reliance, a person must set personal goals that are challenging and involving, must be willing to take these risks and resist others' expectations, and then one opens up to one's own worth and that of others.

While parallels between the personal narrative and the Q-sort results seem evident, there is one complication worth noting. Ray appears to have been a strong agent who was devastated by an accident. He lost a strong sense of agency and had to regain it. This change is different from cases in which a person had an enduring low sense of agency and eventually gained a sense of strong agency. Perhaps a major difference is memory. On one hand, recall of how things were was often deflating, a devaluing of experience by reference to an unrealistic norm. On the other hand, it was highly motivating. At the time Ray had the accident, he was virtually enchanted by life. It was so good that his driving

purpose in goal setting was to recapture this goodness, right from the beginning. Progress comes from "swinging between what has to be and what might be to find the most." For Ray, the value of life was and is central. Suicide never entered his thoughts. With this central value, life seemed worth fighting for, and his story of rehabilitation exemplifies both the nature of his fight and the purpose.

Case Study Five: Brenda

Brenda is a 42 year old woman from a working class family. She has a younger brother and an older sister. She has enjoyed a colourful work history and at the present time is a lawyer. She is married with a 2 year old daughter. Brenda has not worked outside the home for the last 3 years. She is not religious in a traditional sense and sees herself as a socialist.

Principal component analysis. The first principal component accounted for 25% of the variance in the Q-sorts. Since the factor loadings of events show clear improvement in personal agency, ranging from a beginning of .03 to an ending of .76, this component describes what the change meant to her, using the theoretical items. To define this component, all item factor scores exceeding plus or minus 1.5 were extracted. In order of magnitude, these items are listed below, and phrased to characterize the positive outcome or ending. The negative beginning is the opposite of each item.

> Did not feel depressed (2.27)
>
> Saw failure as my own doing (1.99)
>
> Experienced a feeling of satisfaction (1.95)
>
> Felt optimistic and hopeful (1.93)
>
> Did not feel anxious (1.91)
>
> Felt like a worthy person (1.74)

Was not too influenced by others (1.65)

Felt free, not trapped (1.57)

Did not accept goals that were not really mine, but came

from situational demands or other people's

expectations (1.57)

The second component accounted for 16% of the variance in the

Q-sorts. The factor loadings of events range from -.18 at the

beginning to .36 at the end. While the second component shows

improvement, it is not as dramatic as that shown on the first

component. Using the same extraction procedure, the defining items

are listed below and phrased to characterize the positive outcome.

Persevered despite adversity (2.24)

Took an active approach to obstacles and difficulties,

not a passive one (1.99)

Did not think that my success would depend on luck or

fate (1.96)

Did not have a strong sense of meaning, was aimless

(1.16)

Took responsibility for setting my own direction (1.73)

Felt depressed (1.65)

Did not feel a deep sense of commitment (1.63)

Took specific steps to realize purposes (1.59)

The nature of the change reflected on the first component concerns freedom from entrapment. Escaping entrapment involved a more positive emotional context (lack of depression, anxiety, satisfaction, optimism, self-worth) and taking personal responsibility. The pattern of change on the first component manifested extreme swings (peaks and valleys) before levelling off with a higher level of freedom (see Appendix A, Case Study Five). Improvement did not appear to be gradual, but cyclical. The second component concerns being active, responsible, and persevering despite feeling depressed, and lacking a sense of meaning and commitment. This movement is also cyclical although in a much less extreme form.

Personal narrative. Brenda grew up in a traditional, conservative, working class family. Brenda's parents wanted a boy child. Finally, after two daughters they got one. Brenda always felt that her brother was the preferred child. She did not want to be a boy, she just knew that as a girl, she was not worth as much. She felt like defective goods. She had no control over her sex, so she felt helpless to change her situation. She was a depressed and anxious child with low self-esteem. Her whole childhood was spent desperately trying to get her parents' approval and acceptance.

Money was important to Brenda's family, perhaps because there was not much of it. Brenda's parents pushed her to work and

charged her room and board. At 14, Brenda ran a babysitting service and in no time had other girls working for her. She soon became the local babysitting broker. She made a lot of money, which gave her a sense of independence. Independence was important because it meant that her parents had less control over her and she did not have to bow to their authority. She adopted an "I'll show them" attitude and became an overachiever. By the summer of her 15th year, Brenda was juggling 3 jobs, working night and day. The harder she worked, the more money she made, and the less dependent she felt.

She met an exotic 23 year old fellow who spent all his time at the racetrack. When Brenda told her father that she was going to the racetrack with him, he told her that she could not go. When she asked him why not, his response was, "Because I said so." This was no answer to Brenda. She thought that if he could not give her a good reason not to go, she would go despite his objections. It was at this moment that she realized that there was really not much he could do to stop her. Defiantly, she spent the summer at the racetrack and made a lot of money. Defying her parents helped Brenda to feel more in control.

At this point, Brenda began to realize that getting her parents' approval and acceptance was not a possibility. Instead of just accepting the situation, she fought back by spending time with

people who did accept her, like this 23 year old. They frequented restaurants together where they drank alot and Brenda began drinking heavily this year. She felt old and sophisticated when she was drinking, and it helped to numb her unbearable feelings of despair and worthlessness.

Brenda announced to her parents that she was going to Europe in 2 years when she was 17. She worked as a waitress at night while attending school during the day, earning enough money to pay for the trip. Despite her parents' threats and objections, they were not going to stop her. Off she went with her five suitcases, two hat boxes, and $400.00, reminiscent of the Doris Day movies she had seen. She was proud of her accomplishment.

In Europe, Brenda acted like a person who was older than she was. She smoked, she drank, she was very sophisticated. She acted very grown-up on the outside, but on the inside she was just a child starved for approval and acceptance. She was miserably lonely and drank too much. She wrote to her parents every day pouring her heart out. She desperately wanted them to tell her that she was worth something. They did not respond to any of her letters over the 5 months in Europe, which devastated Brenda.

After her return from Europe, she wrote a paper for her high school English teacher entitled "What is art?" The teacher picked her paper out of the whole class and said, "You've written

something really special here; you ought to go to University." It had never occurred to Brenda to go to university. Nobody in her family had even finished high school. This comment made her feel important; somebody actually thought she was good enough for university. With this encouragement in hand, Brenda decided to pursue a university education. University broadened her horizons and helped her to see the options that were available to her. On the other hand, she felt very isolated from her classmates who, unlike her, had parents supporting them emotionally and financially.

Brenda continued working as a waitress in order to pay her way through university. At work, Brenda met N who was a very wealthy older man. N was impressed with how Brenda was working and going to school at the same time. He claimed he was going to help her get a job. They began to go out together and eventually became engaged. She did not love him, but because life had to be endured she thought it would be better endured with lots of money. One day, they were driving along in a limousine shopping for clothes. Brenda saw a suit she liked. N saw a suit he liked. In the end, the only suit N was going to buy for Brenda was the one he liked. At that moment, it became abundantly clear to Brenda that she had no control whatsoever over his money, which was his most attractive feature. Money had always represented independence to Brenda and

not having to depend on other people. It was clear now that it was not just having money that was important; it had to be her money. She ended the relationship.

Brenda flunked her second year of university. Around this time, she was feeling more and more depressed and desperate. She had started a new relationship with E, who later became her husband. E was emotionally inexpressive toward her much like her parents had been. On one occasion, they were driving along the freeway in the midst of an argument. He was being icy cold and she was crying. In a hysterical rage, Brenda threw herself out of the car. In retrospect, she knows that she did not want to die as much as she wanted to get his attention through doing something spectacular.

There were times when Brenda was so miserable that she pounded her head against a wall hoping to knock herself out. She could feel herself on the edge of a cliff wanting to step off, perhaps into insanity. Part of her wanted to have a complete breakdown, to be taken away and taken care of. She could not stand to feel anything. The problem was that she felt everything so intensely and no one ever seemed to respond to her. What she wanted was to stop feeling so miserable, not to die.

By this point, Brenda never went anywhere without a bottle of scotch. Not a day went by without consuming a significant amount

of alcohol. She used it as tranquilizer, to stop feeling. An employer asked her to babysit his 3 month old baby for the weekend. She agreed on the condition that she could have a party. Brenda got drunk at the party and passed out. She woke up to the sound of the baby crying. She could hear it, but she could not find it because she was so drunk. Finally, after stumbling around, she located the baby. She had trouble getting the baby's bottle organized and had a terrible time trying to feed it, as she slowly sobered up.

Something snapped that night. Brenda was utterly horrified at herself. She had seen herself as worthless, begging for approval and acceptance, but she had not seen herself as irresponsible. She was embarrassed and ashamed of what she now saw so clearly. "It was one thing to ruin my life, but not this baby's life too." That night she made a conscious decision to stop drinking because she knew she was out of control with it.

In contrast to her disastrous personal life, Brenda was now receiving positive feedback in her school and work life. She eventually received two degrees, an honours Bachelor of Arts degree and a Bachelor of Education degree, while simultaneously completing Teacher's College. People saw Brenda as someone who was bright and competent, and by now she knew that she was. Knowing this gave her

a kind of arrogant power which she sometimes flaunted.

Emotionally, however, Brenda continued to live on the edge.

Happiness was always temporary in the form of a great party or a

good meal; something to pass the time, something to amuse her.

Brenda decided to marry E. To Brenda, to be a successful

woman, you had to have a successful marriage. She thought that

marriage would be the answer to all her problems. As Brenda was

riding to the church on her wedding day, she looked out the window

only to see one of her professors in his car next to her. This

professor had been quite smitten with Brenda, and had made a habit

of following her around. For some reason when she saw this man,

she suddenly realized that getting married was crazy and that she

was doing it for all the wrong reasons. She decided it would be

easier to get a divorce later rather than to stop the wedding now.

"Every instinct in me was telling me that this ride was the ride to

doom."

Brenda had always fantasized that a husband would fill all her

emotional needs. The reality of marriage was quite different;

Brenda had found a whole new level of misery. E was very

domineering in the relationship and Brenda willingly submitted even

to the most ridiculous demands, like never having her hair in

rollers in his presence. She thought that by giving him what he

wanted, he would give her what she wanted in return, which was

approval and acceptance. Much to Brenda's disappointment, E ignored her unless he needed her for something. Brenda became more and more distressed and angry. She did not know how to express her anger directly so she usually ended up directing it inwardly toward herself. During one argument, she consumed a whole bottle of valium in front of E.

For Brenda, being married was like living somebody else's life. What she wanted did not matter to E. She did not feel liked, let alone loved. Instead, she felt emotionally abused. He was always criticizing her, like being too fat at 108 pounds. She felt like she was always on her knees begging for his attention. He would manipulate her by doling out little tiny bits of affection. Brenda stayed in the marriage because she did not know how to get out. She was immobilized and just did not know what else to do except to keep trying.

At a dinner party one evening, E gave a drunken guest his car keys to drive home. Brenda refused to sleep in the same bed as E that night because she was so shocked and disgusted with his irresponsible behaviour. Irresponsibility was one thing she would not tolerate in herself, nor would she tolerate it in anyone else. Brenda had never taken a stand like this before. The next day E was ashamed of himself and looked to Brenda for forgiveness. For the first time, she saw clearly what a lost cause E was, just

as she had seen herself more clearly after her irresponsible act. She deserved more than what E had to offer her. It was the beginning of the end of their stormy marriage.

They moved to another city and Brenda began teaching at a community college. The college went on strike and Brenda was required to do picket duty. This was Brenda's first brush with politics. On picket duty she met J. J talked with Brenda about women's rights. As a woman, Brenda had never felt like she was worthwhile or of much value. It was intriguing to talk to someone who did not see things that way. He seemed to talk to her differently than any other man she had ever known, as if she were just another person, not a woman.

One evening, after a particularly trying day and receiving absolutely no sympathy from her husband, Brenda said to E, "You know there are plenty of people out there who would want to care about me if I let them and you don't seem to want to." This was Brenda's warning shot. Having met J, Brenda saw another possibility. While E was away, Brenda expressed to J her feelings toward him and they began an affair. When she told her husband she was leaving, and after he finally realized she was serious, he begged her to stay. She felt torn, but knew with absolute clarity that it was over. She insisted that they not see each other for a minimum of 6 months because she knew it would be a vulnerable time

for her. It had taken her so much to finally make this decision that she knew she just had to go "cold turkey". Otherwise, it would be too easy to go back to the security of her old ways. It was important for Brenda to set this boundary; she was beginning to take some control.

Brenda thought that all she had to do was to exchange the wrong man for the right man and her life would instantly be wonderful. She never considered being alone or independent. Brenda had planned on J moving in with her after right her split from E. J, however, was not interested in living together. It was hard to resist E's pleading letters and telephone calls in light of J's rejection and the difficult adjustment to living alone. She was 27 years old with no husband on the horizon and no children. These realities seemed like more evidence of her worthlessness.

Over the next year J and Brenda continued to go out together. Eventually, it became evident to Brenda that J was not the man of her dreams. She always felt second best to J, particularly because he always compared her to his ex-girlfriend. Despite these disappointments and doubts, she stayed in the relationship. It was better than being alone. During this time she met A, a man from another country. Brenda was intrigued with his emotional intensity and his openness.

The next summer, Brenda planned a trip to visit A and began
the affair of her life. Starting the affair with A meant leaving J
behind, but Brenda always ended her relationships by starting a new
one. The affair was her fantasy come true. It was romantic, fun,
and adventurous. Most importantly, somebody that she cared about
unmistakably cared back. He showered her with attention. Having
to leave A was very painful, but the enormity of a decision to stay
was too overwhelming at the time. She explained to A that she
would return in 6 months, after she had made all the arrangements
at home.

Upon her return, Brenda told J about her affair with A.
Surprisingly, J was quite upset. This marked the beginning of a
long conflict over which man to choose. At the same time, Brenda
was promoted into administration in the college where she was
teaching. She had adopted a tough, authoritative persona at work
and was feeling increasingly powerful in her job as a result of all
the positive feedback she had received.

In sharp contrast, her personal life remained a disaster. She
was working 13-14 hours a day to avoid making a decision and was
wearing herself out. She used her new promotion as an excuse not
to return to A within the 6 month time line. She had doubts and
concerns about the change in the standard of living that a move to
A's country would entail. She had tried to talk to A about her

doubts and was frightened away by his inability to handle her feelings. Brenda felt she needed a stronger, more stable personality than what A had to offer; she needed someone to lean on. Finally, she decided not to go and A cut off contact with her completely. Brenda was both devastated and relieved. Meanwhile, things were not working out with J quite the way Brenda had planned, but it was convenient to continue seeing him and better than being alone.

While J was away Brenda met another man, T. They lived together almost immediately. Brenda's anxiety and desperation about the state of her life were increasing. She wanted to settle down, get married, have children, and live happily ever after with her fantasy husband. Instead, Brenda got pregnant and 3 months into the pregnancy, changed her mind. She had only known this man a few months and she was about to change her whole life. She would be tied to this man forever if she had this baby. A friend suggested an abortion.

Against T's wishes, Brenda went ahead with the abortion. She took matters into her own hands. Even wheeling down to surgery Brenda was not sure if she was doing the right thing, but it felt too late to stop it. She felt intensely guilty about the abortion and it took many years for Brenda to feel that it was the right decision. T and Brenda continued their relationship for another

year. During this time, Brenda constantly compared the three men with whom she had been involved. She was always wishing she was with one when she was with the other. It took her 9 years to get over making that decision. Brenda was convinced that if she just had the right man, all her problems would be over. By the end of two years, T had had enough and ended the relationship. It was almost as if Brenda had set it up for him to leave.

Brenda decided to enter law school. In younger years she had thought about being a lawyer, but had dismissed it because girls from her background were not lawyers. She carried on working and continued to receive a considerable amount of praise from both school and work. People at school and work viewed Brenda as a very strong person. What they were actually seeing was Brenda's anger which she had directed into issues and causes at work. She was driving herself really hard and it was killing her, but it was the only place where she felt good. After school or work, Brenda would go home, take off the mask, and cry. She was desperate and depressed. What she really wanted was for someone to hug her. Partially no one offered, and partially Brenda would not let anyone because she had to keep up her tough front. She went out with a few men just for the sake of going out; she did not want to be alone.

Brenda was convinced that she did not have the resources to find happiness. When she had the things that should make her happy

(like romance, marriage, or a baby) she seemed to push them away.
Everyone else seemed happy, but for Brenda happiness seemed only to
be fleeting. Something was terribly wrong. She now saw a pattern
of unhappy relationships with men, despite the fact that they were
all wonderful and interesting people. Her friends were tired of
the drama of her emotional swings and all her problems. She knew
she was a burden to them and would lose them too if something did
not change. She began to realize that she looked to others,
particularly men, to make her happy. The things she had done, she
had done to herself. "It wasn't that the rest of the world was
impinging on poor me, it was that I'm acting out something on the
rest of the world and I've got to do something about it. I am not
a victim."

Reluctantly, Brenda sought out professional help. She showed
up 45 minutes late for her first appointment. At least this person
was being paid to listen to her problems unlike her friends. Much
of the therapy focused on Brenda's early childhood experiences.
Brenda did not believe in the "unconscious" and was stunned when a
number of these early forgotten experiences were dredged up. While
recalling one incident, the psychiatrist said sympathetically,
"That must have been awful for you." Brenda was startled by this
response. Previously, friends had tried to console Brenda by
saying things like, "Everyone has had trouble with their parents."

This kind of response did not help Brenda to understand her own reaction to her experiences which was different from that of others. She felt comforted, relieved, and deeply validated by having someone acknowledge her pain as normal.

Brenda realized that it was those childhood experiences that were painful for her, not the adult experiences. She had had a hard time as a child and it took going through therapy to feel confident enough to acknowledge that. She never felt valued by her parents. She did not get the approval or acceptance from her parents that she so desperately wanted, and that would never change. Up to now, Brenda had never been willing to look at her own behaviour. It was too intimidating, so instead she blamed her parents and other people for her unhappiness. The hardest part of therapy was stopping to look at herself, to look in the mirror and see what was really motivating her. The motivation behind all of Brenda's goals was the need to gain respect from others in order to gain respect for herself. All of her hard work and overachievement was motivated by this need; she was trapped by her own emotions. Unknowingly, by honestly looking at herself, she was validating what had happened to her and enabling herself to loosen the grip of the past. She was able to honestly appraise what was her responsibility and what was not. As a child, she felt she had no choices, but as an adult she did.

During a visit to her parents, Brenda was able to test out
some of her newly developed strategies, and was successful in
alleviating the anger and disappointment which usually accompanied
such visits. For the first time, Brenda shed tears upon leaving
her parents. It was like the weight of the world was lifted off
her shoulders. She felt like a different person. Perhaps she
really could leave the past behind and get on with her life.

During the 2 years that Brenda was in therapy she also started
to read about feminism. She began to understand her own personal
experience in the larger social context of patriarchy. She
realized that the devaluing of women was part of the social
structure and that her experiences were not unique. She now
understood that much of her anger was related to her reaction to
the way she was treated as a woman. On the one hand, it was very
freeing to discover this, but on the other, she became so angry
that she rejected men altogether for a period of time. Eventually,
she was able to see that while she could not change men, she could
change herself and her reactions to them.

Also during this time, Brenda and J re-established their
friendship. At dinner one evening, J told Brenda that he thought
that she meant more to him than he to her. She let the comment go,
but brought it up in therapy. At this point, she decided that she
was ready for marriage and children for the right reasons, and told

J she was interested in getting involved again. J was not overly happy about the prospect. Brenda invited J to come to therapy with her to discuss their situation. In therapy, J told the psychiatrist that he thought Brenda was trying to pressure him. Brenda was furious because she felt that was not true. He had chased her for years and the moment she made herself available to him, he felt pressured. Brenda yelled at J for what seemed like 6 months and eventually came to realize that J only wanted her when no one else did. Dating was alright, but a serious commitment was not.

Brenda and J again parted company, but remained friends. She stopped therapy and began to date a jock. The jock ran off with Brenda's friend. She was devastated by her friend's betrayal. She turned to J who was by now her closest friend. Over a period of 5 or 6 months, she began to see how loving, supportive, and attentive J could be on his terms, rather than under the cloud of all her expectations. He was never going to be a romantic man who would sweep her off her feet, but he was a decent, kind human being.

After spending a weekend together and successfully re-establishing their sexual relationship, J and Brenda decided to live together. This was a serious step. Brenda was making a commitment to somebody she had doubts about. This was real life, not a fantasy. This started a 3 year period of adjustment from

living with the fantasy of Prince Charming to living with a
wonderful, but flawed human being. Then she got pregnant. Living
together was one thing, but having a baby meant connecting with J
forever, "warts" and all. This time she felt confident and ready.
She could handle whatever the future held for her. Brenda had a
miscarriage, but one year later had a baby girl. Finally, Brenda
had found some sustaining happiness and peace in her life, alone
and in her relationships.

Emotionally, things have levelled off for Brenda. There are
no more the cycles of highs and lows anymore. Even in the worst of
times Brenda never slumped into a disabling depression. To Brenda,
to be properly depressed required inactivity. Brenda was always
driven by a strong, restless energy. What was behind the activity
was anger. She was always fighting for what she thought she
deserved. She just refused to take life as it seemed to be. One
way or the other, she was going to change it. Without this anger
as a motivating force, she likely would have adopted a more passive
approach and probably would have gone over the edge.

The change for Brenda involved freeing herself from the trap
of her own emotions. She felt free to set her own goals in life,
but was trapped by the emotions that motivated these goals. The
driving motivation was always to gain other people's acceptance.
She had to take off the mask she had constructed, look in the

mirror and honestly face what she saw. She had to see what part she played in this drama. Once she saw this clearly, she no longer felt powerless or at the emotional mercy of others. She could not change their behaviour, but she could understand it differently and make adjustments to her reactions to it. Even though Brenda lives her life very differently now, her constant awareness and effort are required in order to avoid the emotional traps of the past.

Convergence. The theme of liberation from entrapment, evident in the first component, is also prominent in the personal narrative. The cyclic movement of this component across events or periods of time parallels the peaks and valleys related in the story. For example, as she was riding to her first wedding she knew instinctively that it was wrong, but felt trapped by people and circumstances. She described it as "a ride to doom" and it is reflected on the first principal component as a downward swing. When she and J re-established their relationship and started living together, Brenda felt like she was finally living real life and not a fantasy. Escaping the tyranny of her past patterns in relationships was described as freeing and is reflected on the first component as an upward swing.

The theme of the second component concerns persevering and taking an active approach despite feeling depressed and lacking meaning. This theme is also evident in the personal narrative.

Roughly and not as dramatically, movement on this component tends
to contrast with movement on the first component. That is, she was
apt to persevere and act most when she was trapped and least when
she was liberated from entrapment.

Given the two components, the overall theme of change seems to
be that if one can continue to act responsibly and determinedly,
even when trapped and dominated, when one is most weak (depressed,
worthless, lacking meaning), then one will escape entrapment and
gain freedom, optimism, worth, and satisfaction. While this theme
seems applicable to her transformation, it is also rather general,
not as precise as her own thematic statements of the change.
Brenda could not sustain her freedom and optimism until she was
able to honestly appraise herself and identify her role in her own
imprisonment.

Case Study Six: Lee

Lee is a 38 year old man of Ukranian descent, the third eldest
of six children. His parents were refugees after the war, and Lee
was born in a refugee camp in Germany. The family was shuffled
from one camp to another until they received immigration
sponsorship by a Lutheran Church to come to Canada when Lee was 3.
Lee's family was very poor. Lee attended churches of various
Christian denominations. He has a Bachelor of Arts degree with a
major in psychology. At the present time, he works full time as a
child and family counsellor, and part time as a residential care
worker with mentally handicapped adults. He plans to return to
university to complete a Master's degree in transpersonal
psychotherapy.

Principal component analysis. The first principal component
accounted for 45% of the variance in the Q-sorts. Since the factor
loadings of events show clear improvement in personal agency,
ranging from a beginning of -.31 to end loadings of .93 and .62,
this component describes what the change meant to him in terms of
the theoretical items. To define this component, all item factor
scores exceeding plus or minus 1.5 were extracted. In order of
magnitude, these items are listed below, and phrased to
characterize the positive outcome or ending. The negative
beginning is the opposite of each item.

Did not feel anxious (2.46)

Felt free, not trapped (2.03)

Persevered despite adversity (1.91)

Felt powerful, not helpless (1.77)

Felt like a worthy person (1.74)

Did not feel depressed (1.74)

Felt adequate to the task at hand (1.73)

Felt confident (1.64)

Felt in control of my life, not pushed around (1.59)

The second component accounted for 27% of the variance in the Q-sorts. The factor loadings of events range from -.14 at the beginning to .86 and .75 at the end. The second component also shows a clear improvement in personal agency. Using the same extraction procedure, the defining items are listed below and phrased to characterize the positive outcome.

Felt supported and encouraged by others (2.34)

Did not think that my success was dependent on luck or
    fate (2.31)

Did not feel depressed (2.26)

Did not think that my failure would be due to other
    people and/or circumstances (2.24)

Did not set excessively high goals for myself (1.93)

Made good decisions independently (1.64)

Experienced a feeling of satisfaction (1.63)

Did not accept goals that were not really mine, but came

from situational demands or other people's

expectations (1.57)

Felt like a worthy person (1.56)

The first component involves a change in feelings through persevering. In the beginning, he felt anxious, trapped, helpless, worthless, depressed, and inadequate. By the end, he felt free, powerful, and in control. The pattern of change on the first component was cyclic with extreme swings up and down before culminating in a dramatically higher level of agency (see Appendix A, Case Study Six). The change reflected on the second component concerns being able to make decisions, and to set goals through feeling supported by others and taking personal responsibility for his successes and failures. By acting and taking responsibility for his actions, he was able to feel less depressed and gained a sense of worth and satisfaction. The pattern of movement on the second component was also cyclic with large swings up and down gradually elevating to a higher level of agency. Roughly, movement on the second component tends to mirror movement on the first component. That is, he was apt to feel the best (less anxious and depressed, more worthy and confident), when he felt the most supported and encouraged by others.

Personal narrative. To Lee, his family life was highly

dysfunctional. His parents argued and yelled at each other

constantly. Partly, this was because his father rarely contributed

to the financial support of the family. The money he made, he hid

away for himself. Lee's mother ended up supporting and raising the

six children and feeling very bitter and resentful about it. As

she was uneducated, she worked mainly in factories and as a house

cleaner. The family was very poor.

In addition to being very poor, Lee's family were the only

Ukranians in the small town in which they lived. In this town,

there was a low tolerance for ethnic differences . Consequently,

both the poverty and ethnicity of Lee's home-life became a source

of ridicule and embarrassment for him, so he kept as much of it a

secret from others as he could.

Lee's father was brutally violent and unbeknownst to Lee at

the time, mentally ill. He always seemed to be angry and was prone

to explosive outbursts. He constantly belittled Lee. Nothing Lee

said or did was good enough. Lee was punished by his father in

cruel ways, such as making him kneel in the corner when friends

were present, or threatening to flush his head down the toilet. He

would hit Lee with various objects, punch, slap, and kick him.

Sometimes Lee would not know why he was being punished. He

expected to be punished when he did something wrong, but was

occasionally punished for no reason at all. For Lee, his father's cruel and sometimes erratic behaviour left him in a state of almost constant anxiety.

Growing up, Lee was consumed with rage, frustration, and hatred toward his father. He wanted to kill him and kept a knife under his pillow at night waiting for an opportunity. To express any of these feelings directly toward his father was too dangerous. Not expressing feelings for Lee was simply safer, an important survival strategy. Unable to express his feelings directly, Lee found indirect ways to express them. He found sneaky, devious ways to express himself, like stealing from his father. Since his father was so explosive and objected to everything, from the kind of friends Lee had to the kind of activities he enjoyed, Lee avoided confrontations by never telling his father the truth. Lee learned to lie about who he was to survive.

The world was a frightening place to Lee. It was always confronting him, in one way or another, to be himself and to express his feelings. Being himself was not a possibility because he felt he was unacceptable and worthless. His childhood pattern of lying became firmly established in adulthood as a way to present an acceptable face to others. He fabricated stories about himself that were more consistent with the person he wanted to be. As a

result, people were unable to get close to Lee because they were not given accurate information about who he was. Maintaining this distance from people was important because it protected Lee from the shame and embarrassment of someone finding out about his lies, but it also isolated him from others.

As the years went by, Lee became accustomed to misrepresenting himself. He no longer felt guilty about lying to others; it had become a way of life. However, he did feel trapped in his lies, which was a source of constant frustration and disappointment. He envied other people for doing things in their lives that he wanted to do, but felt he could not. Life seemed unfair. He expressed his feelings of frustration and disappointment through thievery, just as he had done in childhood. By the time he was 33, he had a criminal record with three convictions of theft.

Over the years, Lee had gravitated toward situations that supported his emotionally repressed way of being in the world. At 20, he joined a monastic order (a group of people who took a vow of poverty, chastity, and obedience with a commitment to the same spiritual practice) where the fundamental philosophy was to focus solely on the spiritual dimension in a concentrated way. The lifestyle supported being passive, accepting, uncritical of one's superiors, and detached from one's emotions. Lee fit right in because he was already very good at the philosophies espoused by

the group. After 6 years, Lee left the order because of a change in policy handed down by the spiritual teacher. Over the next 7 years, Lee worked at a variety of short term jobs, earning just enough money to travel to see his spiritual teacher.

By 33, Lee was on welfare for the second time. He was unable to find a job and had no career direction or purpose in his life. He hoped his luck would change. His career pathway was hazy because if he did what he really wanted to do, he would have to own up to his lies. Even though he felt imprisoned by his web of lies, honesty was too threatening and intimidating.

In 1985, Lee met H. Lee was attracted to H because she had achieved the kind of things he had wanted to achieve. She was going in a direction in life that she wanted to go, whereas he was not. The contrast of H's life was both attractive and threatening. Lee told H the same package of lies he had told his friends. He told her that he was self-employed and that he had a Bachelor's degree in social work. The relationship was fraught with conflict right from the beginning. H's approach to a relationship involved confronting, expressing her feelings, getting her needs met, and going after what she wanted, whereas Lee's style was to avoid confrontations, to be indirect, and to withdraw emotionally. H constantly complained that she did not know Lee, did not understand

him, could not get close to him, and that he seemed detached and unreachable.

Nine months into the relationship, H had had enough. During a telephone conversation after a conflict, H delivered an ultimatum: "Unless you take some measures to open up and do something about your feelings, I don't want any part of the relationship." Lee knew he had suppressed his feelings and did not want to go on living this way, but he was not ready nor was he willing to confront all of his lies and deceptions at this point. He knew that if something did not happen, the relationship was going to end. Usually in relationships, after a certain degree of intimacy was reached, Lee would end them to avoid discovery or exposure. Lee was sick of this pattern and felt he had found someone with whom he wanted to go further. He knew that in order for this relationship to work, he was going to have to make some effort. It was not going to happen magically. He was sure that if it did not work out this time, it would be because of his inadequacies and for no other reason. He agreed there was a problem and that he would do something, but he was not sure what.

Lee started to do some reading and some self-help exercises on his own. H suggested he get professional help, and offered him some suggestions. Within a month Lee saw Dr. B, a psychiatrist. During the first appointment, they talked about options. Lee

could do one-to-one therapy, group therapy, or attend a 6-week intensive group psychotherapy program. Lee decided to investigate the intensive 6-week program because he thought he might be able to get results faster.

In order for Lee to get into the program, he had to stand up in front of the group (approximately 20 people), and state what his problem was, what his expectations were, and why he thought he would be a good candidate for the program. Lee told the group that he had two problems. The first one was stealing (his criminal record of theft charges was mandatory for him to disclose). The second problem was that he was having difficulty with intimacy in his relationship and he felt kind of dead emotionally. Immediately, Lee was told he had to make a commitment not to steal. In some ways it felt good to comply. Having revealed to all these strangers the extent of his criminal record seemed to break the wall of secrecy. At this point, he was sure he would never steal again, and he never did.

Lee was accepted into the program, which ran eight hours a day for six weeks. Early on, Lee told the therapists and other patients that he had a problem with lying. He was asked to disclose his lies and warned that lying was grounds for immediate dismissal from the program. They also told him that he must own up to these lies to significant people in his life.

Filled with fear and anxiety, Lee disclosed to H that he did not have a Bachelor's degree, and later that he was on welfare and had a criminal record. The fact that H was doing graduate work made it even more intimidating and embarrassing. Each disclosure was utterly humiliating. Lee then disclosed the same lies to two of his friends. Coincidentally, Lee's brother was in town vacationing. Lee took this opportunity to disclose to his brother as well. Since leaving home at 20, Lee had had very little contact with his family, and over the years had fabricated various stories about what he was doing. To admit to his brother that he had been lying to him all these years was very painful. The reactions and responses from each person were all very positive. They each offered their support and encouragement, reassuring him that they would not reject him. Surprisingly, each disclosure turned out to be a kind of a bonding experience.

The group therapy program was valuable in many ways. It set into motion the disclosures about lying and broke the barrier of secrecy. It also helped Lee to learn about his role in the lying problem. After one incident, he and his therapist dissected a lie to the point at which the decision was made to do it. This exercise was very valuable to Lee because he was able to clearly see that it was his, and only his, decision to lie. He also saw

for the first time how complex a system he had set up to cover up that responsibility.

The program was also valuable in helping Lee to recognize and accept some of the rage he felt toward his father. There were specific exercises designed to facilitate the recall of these feelings. He dreaded these exercises because the feelings were so intense. Part of what helped him get through was watching another man express his vulnerability. Lee was inspired by him and was provided with a concrete model to follow. Lee was touched by what he saw and he felt very close to this man as a result. He could see that showing vulnerability fostered a feeling of closeness.

The program also assisted Lee in being more direct with his feelings. There were two breakthrough incidents where he shared his anger and frustration in open, honest, and direct ways despite feeling afraid of hurting the other person and, in one case, actually having strong visible evidence that he was hurting the other person. It was not until Lee did it, that he realized he could do it without being overwhelmed by anxiety. Even if what he expressed was unreasonable or irrational, they were his feelings and that was as valid as it needed to be. It gave him a sense of satisfaction and pride to be able to express these difficult feelings.

The program also offered Lee a fresh start with H. H began to see a vulnerable side of Lee with which he was very uncomfortable. He was not this competent, stable person that he wanted H and others to think he was. He felt like an emotional cripple. To adjust to not being the person he had been pretending to be for all these years was incredibly difficult. Going through the program was like going through a war for Lee. Without the support and encouragement of H, Lee does not believe he would ever have been able to take the frequent confrontations and the difficult explorations of feelings that the program demanded. He is convinced that he would have chosen a much easier route for himself.

When Lee finished the program, he realized that it was only a beginning, with much more to be uncovered. Unlike the stealing problem, he still felt vulnerable to lying. It seemed like lying was at the root of his other problems, like his suppressed feelings and his inability to be emotionally intimate. He was still unable to be honest with himself, let alone other people. He still rationalized lies to himself and he knew there was still a backlog of lies to be reconciled with H.

To confront his lying problem, he returned to the psychiatrist (Dr. B) who originally referred him to the program. He started attending weekly one-to-one therapy sessions. In the second week,

an incident occurred where Lee told H that Dr. B said something about the director of the group therapy program that he had not really said. H helped Lee unravel the lie, and urged him to discuss it directly and honestly with Dr. B. Despite feeling anxious and uncomfortable, Lee brought it up in therapy. Through exploring it, Lee was able to see that even though he had not been aware of it, he had orchestrated the whole scenario with a very specific purpose in mind. The purpose was to create a gulf between Dr. B and H, and the director of the group therapy program. It was a stunning revelation. He realized that he was not aware of sneaky, hurtful schemes that were going on in his mind. Not being aware he could conveniently say, "That's not me, I'm not that kind of person, I wouldn't do that." He realized that he needed to increase his own self-awareness and to take responsibility for his lies, whether he was aware of them or not.

As well as seeing Dr. B weekly, Lee decided to go back to school. Now that everyone knew he did not have a university education, there was no obstacle in his way. He could finally go back to school and do what he really wanted to do. After being accepted at a community college, Lee applied for a student loan. Within the first week of school, Lee was told that he was ineligible for a student loan because of criminal charges related to an earlier loan. H encouraged Lee to challenge the decision and

he did. As it turned out, he did not get the loan, but it felt

good to stand up for himself and to express his feelings, right or

wrong. In light of the change in his financial circumstances, Lee

had to adjust his plans accordingly. He arranged to go to school

part time and began looking for a full time job.

H's emotional support and encouragement, day in and day out,

were indispensible to Lee in his return to college. She also

provided an important model for him. Lee observed H's

self-discipline and watched her concentrated, focused school and

work habits. Lee could clearly see that in order to be successful,

one had to apply oneself in a wholehearted way. Previously in high

school, Lee had only done the bare minimum to get through. H also

helped Lee by editing his papers. Through her help, he was able to

learn how to write better academic papers and get better results

faster.

One of the required courses for Lee was French. French was

pure torture. He was not good at it, and each time he went to

class he had to confront that fact. He dreaded each class. It

did not matter how many hours he invested, or how hard he studied,

he did not do well. Frustrated and anxious, he persevered with the

help of H's support. There was one time when he started preparing

for an exam and the more he studied, the more he realized he did

not know. It meant staying up for over 48 hours if he was to pass.
At the same time, part of Lee's tooth fell out and he had a
toothache. As he was still on welfare, he could not afford to go
to a dentist. He called his welfare worker and asked for
assistance. She told him that the only expenditure she could
authorize was an extraction. Lose the tooth or endure the pain;
these were the options. He decided to endure.

To cope, Lee developed a strategy. He made a commitment to
himself to write the exam. Even if he did not finish school, but
wrote this exam, he would consider it a victory. For 3 days and 2
nights Lee stayed up despite the fatigue and the throbbing tooth.
He broke down the hours into minutes and kept telling himself, "I
just got through 5 minutes, I can get through 5 more." He wrote
the exam and got a "C". Normally, a "C" would have been a
devastating failure for Lee, but under these conditions he
considered it a major victory. He was filled with a sense of pride
at having persevered through the obstacles, accomplishing his
goal.

One of the courses that was very meaningful and enjoyable to
Lee was Religious Studies. The course involved looking at Eastern
and Western philosophies which was Lee's academic area of interest.
The instructor, J.R., was a very scholarly, articulate man with a
wealth of personal experience. Lee greatly admired and respected
him. Lee wrote his first paper for J.R. and received an A+ for

it. Lee was ecstatic, partially because of the grade and also because J.R. said that it was as good as he could have possibly expected. J.R. also gave him positive feedback for the specific content of the paper and Lee's particular thoughts on the topic. It was wonderful to be good at something he was interested in. J.R.'s comments inspired Lee to work harder. Lee's next paper was a repeat performance. He thrived on the positive attention and validation he received in return. Hard work was paying off. It was energizing and exciting to get this feedback, particularly because it was the result of something real he had done, not something he had fabricated.

Sharing his achievements with H, and receiving her enthusiastic responses was almost as important as the accomplishment itself. H's support had played such a critical role in the whole experience of going back to school. For instance, early on, H had expressed a real admiration for Lee's creative writing ability. This kind of input from H was very pleasurable and helped him to feel a sense of worth, inspiring him to go on.

The summer after completing his first year of college, Lee finally found a job working with mentally handicapped adults. Finding a job had been a real struggle despite Lee's hearty efforts and strong motivation. Trying to get a job after being on welfare for 1 1/2 years was like trying to get a job as an ex-convict. The

other part of the problem was Lee's work history which primarily consisted of non-mainstream jobs. Securing a job was important to Lee for several reasons. It meant he could go to college full time, go off welfare, and pay his own way (H had loaned him money for school). It also meant that he was a working, contributing member of society again.

Lee's job was a live-in position weekends and part of each week. At the same time, Lee now carried a full course load at school. The time constraints put upon Lee to manage the demands of work and school simultaneously were a major challenge. Essentially, all Lee had time to do was to work and to go to school, and it frequently meant all-nighters. Despite these demands, it was deeply fulfilling and satisfying. It was a challenge he seemed to need at this point in his life. He needed to prove to himself that he was not the kind of person he felt like he was when on welfare. He had to rid himself of that self-image and this challenge helped him to do it.

By the end of Lee's second year of college, he was seeing Dr. B three times a week. Seeing him was stressful and created a lot of anxiety. He likely would have quit except that he felt like he owed it to H for standing by him. Without her, he probably would have pursued easier options. The focus of therapy was still on lying. No matter how hard Lee tried, he could not stop. It felt

like it was just out of his control. He felt helpless, frustrated,
and anxious. His internal system for denying the problem was so
well crafted that often he would not realize he had lied until some
time after the fact. In trying to help Lee, Dr. B suggested that
if he lied to someone, he should admit the lie to that person, no
matter what the consequences. Lee thought it was a good suggestion
and agreed to do it. This decision really turned the corner on
lying.

The next few months were highly stressful and demanding. He
had to admit to a prospective employer that he had lied on his
resumé. He had to admit to one instructor that he had plagiarized,
and to another that he had taken a "cheat sheet" into an exam.
While people generally responded favourably to Lee's honesty, they
did not shelter him from the consequences of his actions. For
example, the employer had said, "Thanks for telling me, but I can't
hire you." During this time, H provided a consistent source of
support which inspired him not to give up. When it was H that he
lied to, however, the pain became almost unbearable because there
was no one to support him. It was such an awful thing to be doing
to someone that he loved and it made him feel utterly worthless.
Lee disclosed to H as many of the outstanding lies from the past
and present that he was aware of. Some of these disclosures
involved deeply intimate revelations which were painful for Lee to

say and he knew they would be painful for H to hear. Others were simply embarrassing, like having repeatedly driven her car with no driver's license or having asked her for a character reference for a job when it was really for a court appearance. As painful as it was for both of them, Lee knew that H would not stay in the relationship if he did not disclose lies as soon as he became aware of them, as well as continue his work on eliminating them. She was willing to support his efforts only under these conditions.

For Lee, it was the first time in his life that he had taken responsibility for his lying. It was painful and humiliating to have to face his lies, but somehow it felt right. It was freeing to disclose them and not be so imprisoned by fear. "Being honest was liberating." Lee got to the point where he could not live with himself if he did not disclose a lie. Before, he would have numbed his feelings and said nothing. By opening himself up to his feelings, he could no longer ignore his lies. Numbing his feelings meant that he would be the person he was before, who was repulsive now. That was a person who was caught in a web of lies, who was isolated from himself and others, and who was unhappy about the direction and the lack of direction in his life. As the disclosures continued, the implications of the decision to admit them became clearer, and the lies became fewer and fewer.

Seeing Dr. B had been helpful in certain ways - such as taking responsibility for his lies, becoming more aware of himself, and expressing more of his feelings. Anger was still a difficult emotion for Lee to express. For instance, he was frustrated and angry at Dr. B's style of therapy, but unable to express it. Dr. B practiced traditional psychoanalysis which involved Lee lying on a couch talking about himself while Dr. B sat behind him in silence. Lee wanted a more interactive type of therapy. Lee did not feel he had the resources to just say, "I don't like the way you do therapy, I'm leaving." Instead, he would passively accept the situation and seethe inside. Part of him was just waiting to get thrown out rather than to speak his mind. How do you tell someone who has been sitting there month after month listening to your problems that you don't like what he's doing? After enduring several frustrating months, Lee told Dr. B how he felt despite feeling fearful and anxious. It was a powerful accomplishment to express such difficult feelings to someone he cared about. Over the following months, it seemed that Lee always got back to expressing the same grievances toward Dr. B and eventually, after 1 1/2 years, he stopped seeing him and began to search for a new psychiatrist.

By this time, Lee had finished 2 years of college. He had to decide on one of two universities to attend for the remaining 2 years of his degree. After consulting several people, he selected

the larger university because he felt it may be a safer bet in case

he decided to go to graduate school in the future. The

disadvantage of this choice, however, was having to take more

French, which was a terrifying thought. Lee decided to talk to the

Faculty Advisor to see if there was any other option available to

him. The Faculty Advisor was very rigid and mechanical in the way

he responded to Lee's request. Lee did not feel like he was being

treated as an adult and felt he should not support a system that

was so inflexible. Lee thought, "This is who I am, this is what I

think, and I'm going to do something about it!" He decided to go

to the other university. It was liberating to make this decision

based on a principle that was important to him. H's opinion had

always played an important role in decisions he had made, and it

seemed to Lee that H too had thought that the larger university was

the safer bet. Consequently, his decision to attend the other

university caused him some anxiety. To go ahead, based on what he

wanted, felt like the honest choice and it felt good.

Within a few months of entering university, Lee was finally

able to see another psychiatrist (Dr. M), who he had been waiting

to see for over 6 months. He turned out to be as nice as Lee had

expected. Somehow, he was able to make Lee feel like he was the

only person he had been listening to all week. He was attentive,

warm, involved, and never gave Lee the feeling that he was off

somewhere else or asleep (like Dr. B). Immediately, Lee developed an admiration, respect, and love for Dr. M. Part of him wished he had had a father like this and he wondered how his life would have been different. Even though he felt vulnerable and embarrassed, Lee eventually expressed his loving feelings toward Dr. M. It was extremely difficult for Lee to express to another male such deep, intense, positive feelings. Dr. M encouraged Lee to express his feelings whatever they happened to be. Freely expressing his feelings helped Lee to feel more connected to Dr. M, and more able to express his real self.

At university, Lee consistently received positive feedback and good grades. He discovered one professor who was focused on the exact area of interest that he was interested in. To Lee, this professor was a solid, scholarly, well published man with high standards. Getting a good grade from him was a hard-earned honor. His feedback also inspired Lee to work harder and to strive for higher standards. Dr. P told Lee he should consider publishing some of his papers. Getting this kind of input from Dr. P helped Lee to feel even better about himself. He knew unquestioningly that he was not that worthless person on welfare. He could do something important; he mattered.

In addition to stealing and lying, Lee had developed other patterns, such as the use of fantasy, to cope with difficult

feelings. He had tried to resolve them in therapy, but had been unsuccessful. By now, Lee had had lots of evidence that if he put his effort into something, he could be successful at it. He was not going to give up. Lee decided to design and implement a behavioural program to address these outstanding issues himself. H participated in the design of meaningful reinforcements and consequences for the program. In a matter of months, the program worked. It required the same kinds of personal resources that school had required, such as commitment, consistency, a serious attitude, hard work, and immediate feedback. The most important aspect of the behavioural program was that it had been his effort alone and it had been successful. It solidified the feeling that he could do whatever he set his mind to despite any anxiety. He had proven that to himself time after time in the 6 week psychotherapy program, in his French course, in school, and in therapy. If it is important and meaningful, it can be done. This experience was very satisfying and rewarding, the culmination of 4 years of hard work.

In retrospect, Lee is aware of how depressed he was during the first 2 years of his change. His skillful numbing had cut this awareness off completely. The depression he felt was mainly characterized by his feelings of worthlessness and impotence. As his sense of worthlessness and impotence decreased, his sense of depression lessened.

Today, Lee is living life more authentically. He is not
trapped in a web of deceptions. He is free to be himself because
he sees himself as a worthwhile and deserving person, and can
express himself more freely because he is no longer held hostage by
a fear of the consequences. He is still working on being more
emotionally expressive and sees this as an ongoing process in his
life. Being honest with himself and others has eliminated the fear
and anxiety that once ruled his life. It has also helped him to
develop more meaningful relationships with others. He takes an
active approach to difficulties, and knows that if he takes
responsibility and works hard enough, he can achieve just about
anything. He is "no longer a leaf in the wind; he is directing his
own course". He is satisfied with and excited about the direction
he is taking his life.

Convergence. The change in feelings as a result of
perseverance evident in the first principal component is also
prominent in the personal narrative. Lee moved from feeling
trapped, anxious, and worthless to feeling free, potent, and worthy
by striving hard and not giving up despite the hardship. The theme
of the second component is also featured prominently in the
personal narrative. Through the support and encouragement of
others, he was able to actively set his own goals, to take personal
responsibility, and to achieve a sense of satisfaction and worth.

The cyclic movement of this component across events or periods of time parallels the ups and downs related in the story. For example, each time he received support and encouragement from significant people in his life, he felt empowered and this is reflected on the second component as an upward swing.

Given the two components, the overall theme of change seems to be that if one feels supported by others, takes responsibility for one's own actions and perseveres despite feeling anxious, worthless, depressed, and inadequate, one will gain a sense of freedom, power, and control. Although there is clear convergence between the principal components and the personal narrative, his own thematic statements revealed in the narrative offer a more complete and precise understanding of his transformation.

Case Study Seven: Carol

Carol is a 45 year old woman, the only child of a working class family in England. Her childhood was essentially peaceful and she enjoyed a particularly close relationship with her father. As a child, she was a tom-boy and played happily with her seven male cousins. Carol occasionally attended the Church of England. She moved to Canada when she was 24 years old and was married 4 years later. After divorcing her husband of 8 years, Carol returned to school and completed her Bachelor's degree in history. Carol is a lesbian and a feminist, and is currently completing her Master's of Divinity in order to become ordained as a priest in the Anglican church.

Principal Component Analysis. The first principal component accounted for 37% of the variance in the Q-sorts. The factor loadings of events show little improvement in personal agency, ranging from a beginning of .24 and .63 to end loadings of .48 and .07. This component describes the most dominant meaning of the Q-sort results, using the theoretical items. In order of magnitude, these items are listed below, and phrased to characterize her customary experience over this period of time.

Did not feel adequate to the task at hand (2.15)

Did not feel powerful, felt helpless (1.94)

Persevered despite adversity (1.83)

Did not feel competent (1.83)

Did not welcome challenges (1.65)

Did not think that my success would depend on luck or

fate (1.51)

The second component accounted for 20% of the variance in the

Q-sorts. The factor loadings of events range from -.67 at the

beginning to .84 at the end. The second component shows a dramatic

improvement in personal agency. Using the same extraction

procedure, the defining items are listed below and phrased to

characterize the positive outcome.

Did not feel depressed (2.49)

Felt free, not trapped (2.31)

Felt in control of my life, not pushed around (1.98)

Did not feel anxious (1.94)

Experienced a feeling of satisfaction (1.89)

Felt optimistic and hopeful (1.83)

Felt powerful, not helpless (1.72)

Was not too easily influenced by others (1.52)

The first component concerns persevering through adversity

despite negative feelings (a sense of inadequacy, helplessness,

incompetence), not welcoming challenges, and thinking that success

is dependent upon luck or fate. Throughout this period she rather

steadily persevered without really feeling up to what she faced, perhaps because she continued to accept new challenges (see Appendix A, Case Study Seven). The second component involves a sense of empowerment (of power, freedom, control), a positive emotional state (not depressed or anxious, satisfied and optimistic), and a sense of independence from others. The movement on the second component manifested extreme swings up and down with a cycle of setbacks and progress finally culminating in a dramatically higher level of agency.

Personal narrative. As far back as Carol can remember she felt like an outsider. She was shy, introverted, and lacked confidence. She saw herself as an incompetent. She felt powerless and had no purpose or direction in life. Carol used to picture herself "on a boat going down a river with nothing to steer it with, adrift on the ocean of life."

Growing up, Carol experienced sexual feelings toward girls, but never acted on them. She thought that mother nature had somehow gone wrong, and that she should have been born a boy. At one point, she actually considered changing her sex. After moving to Canada at the age of 24, she discovered "lesbians" through watching a movie. The two women in the film went to a gay bar. Carol followed suit and went to a gay bar to see for herself. She was not impressed. The gay bar scene was just like the straight

bar scene, a meat market. She ended up meeting two women and went

out with one of them for a few months. This was her first sexual

encounter with a woman. The other one beat her up, and left her

with a broken nose and two black eyes. Later, Carol found out that

this woman was a violent alcoholic. She concluded that all

lesbians must be crazy.

Carol felt she had to get out of this "phase" she was going

through and decided to get married. She was 28 when she married K

and, while she loved him, she found sex with him disappointing,

something to be endured. On the other hand, being married was like

a great weight lifted off her shoulders. It helped Carol to feel

more normal, like an "insider", not an "outsider". Being married

also provided Carol with a new identity, an acceptable social mask.

She was now K's wife, a part of the "straight" world. Unknowingly,

the more she acted the role, the better she got at it and the more

distant she felt from her real self. When the marriage started to

go downhill, she was convinced that it was all her fault. That's

what K said and she believed him. Since she did not know what the

problem was, she concluded that it must be because of her lack of

sexual interest toward her husband.

A year into the marriage Carol discovered that K had a

drinking problem. Suddenly all of his rather bizarre behaviour

began to make sense. She thought perhaps that she was the cause of

his drinking. After all, she did not enjoy sex with him. He would

tell her things like she was no good in bed and should go down to
where the prostitutes congregate and get some experience. They
would argue regularly, and K would manipulate and twist the
conversation until Carol was convinced that it was all her fault.
Then he would slam out of the house and go drinking, blaming it all
on his nagging wife. Eventually, it got to the point where K would
pick fights in order to have an excuse to go out and drink. Carol
became more and more withdrawn and depressed. She felt like she
had lost herself somehow. She lost her feelings too; they were too
painful to feel. She prayed to God for deliverance; God would save
her. It never occurred to her to do anything herself; she just
felt stuck.

Carol regularly made excuses for her husband and told friends
not to come around. She eventually lost all her friends and became
very lonely and isolated. She gained a lot of weight and wore dark
clothes. Her hair started to fall out in patches and she developed
rashes on her body. She told no one about her situation, not even
her parents. She was too ashamed to admit that her husband drank.
On the outside, she had created this false sense of having no
problems, of being invulnerable, but underneath she was in a great
deal of emotional pain. She endured for 6 years. During this
time, she worked as a secretary in an office.

One day, a new neighbour told Carol that she thought K was an alcoholic. This was the first time this word had ever been used in reference to her husband. Once he was "named" Carol felt cleared of responsibility. This same neighbour also suggested that Carol go to Al-Anon (a support group for spouses and families of alcoholics). Carol refused, insisting that she should not have to get help since it was not her problem.

One Sunday morning when she was out walking, she heard familiar music coming from an Anglican church. The inner doors to the church were open so she went in and sat quietly in the back. As she joined in the singing, she was filled with a sense of well-being. The music brought back all the positive memories of her childhood. She started to go to church every Sunday, sitting quietly in the back so as not to attract attention. She did not want the priest or anyone else to know she had problems. Eventually, the priest caught up with her one day. He invited her to talk because she looked so unhappy. She denied that there was anything wrong. The second time the priest approached Carol, he asked her if she wanted to carry the cross in the procession because the regular person was sick. She was terrified at the very thought and refused.

The third contact was to have a very significant influence on Carol. They sat and talked in his office, and Carol revealed the

basics of her situation to him. During the conversation he kept focusing on her saying things like, "What are you going to do?" Carol had wanted this priest to tell her how she could help her husband. He offered her a book to take home and read. The book was about people with self-esteem and self-confidence problems. Carol was incensed as she read the book. It had nothing at all to do with K or how to help him. Suddenly, she realized that she was reading all about herself; it was like looking in a mirror. Carol was shaken to the core.

Carol mulled it over the next week and by Sunday she had calmed down. She knew he was right. Somewhere in the book it said, "The only one you can change is yourself." She was beginning to realize that she had to work on herself, not on K. After thanking the priest the following Sunday, she asked him what she should do next. He did not give her an answer, but again suggested that she try carrying the cross in the procession. Carol had begun to realize that if she wanted to change, she was going to have to do something about it rather than to passively wait for God to take care of it for her.

The next Sunday, despite being absolutely terrified, she carried the cross in the procession. While it was not a perfect job, she did survive. She began to carry the cross regularly and after a few Sundays there was nothing to it. ·That job led to other

serving duties. Participating in the serving duties helped to build Carol's self-confidence. Even her posture improved. The church became a place where she felt happy and at peace; it was an escape. She felt a sense of belonging in church and could be herself there. In her marriage, she never felt like she was being her true self. She always felt like she was acting a role.

When the same neighbour reminded her a second time of Al-Anon, Carol felt like she finally had enough courage to face all those people. She would go to try to find a cure for K. Since he would not go to AA, she would go to Al-Anon. She hated it and said very little. Each person in the group was expected to take turns chairing the meetings. Carol panicked at the very thought. After all, she was only a housewife and a secretary who had nothing to say of any importance. They suggested that new people attend five consecutive meetings before making a decision about whether or not to stay. Carol thought she could manage five meetings, and then she would tell them that they were all a bunch of jerks and leave. She did not belong there.

However, as people started sharing their experiences during those five meetings, Carol had that same experience of looking in a mirror. She recognized that her reactions and responses to her alcoholic spouse were the same as everyone else's. For example, people all seemed to talk about things like not wanting to leave

the marriage because the person is sick, staying for better or for worse, and the like. By the fifth meeting, she knew she needed to be there. She received the same message that was in the book the priest had given her; the only person you can change is yourself. She knew that she needed to change. She had to accept K for the person that he was or leave because she could not change him. The choices were clear.

Over the next 2 years, as new people joined the group, it became apparent to Carol how much she had changed. She recognized in them the person she used to be. At first when she chaired meetings, she was terrified. As she continued to do them, she gained more and more confidence. It felt good to be helpful to others. She felt supported by this group of people and felt like she belonged, just like at church.

Carol began to think about leaving K and discussed it with a friend from Al-Anon. She knew that she could not change him and he certainly was not going to change himself. There was nothing else that she could do in the relationship. If she wanted to develop herself, she was going to have to leave. K knew it was coming; he could see that she had changed. She was starting to stand up to him when he got drunk. However, as Carol became more assertive, K became angrier. He started to become physically violent. One time, he threw her across the room. Despite knowing she had to leave, Carol did not know how to go about doing it.

By this time, Carol had joined a women's outdoor club and decided to go away on a women's weekend despite her husband's strong objections. Unexpectedly, most of the women who attended were lesbians. Over the course of the weekend each woman shared their personal stories. The stories were remarkably similar. Growing up and not fitting in, but not knowing why. Discovering the attraction to one's own sex, but not knowing what to do. Trying to cope by getting married, but not being happy. Carol realized that she was not alone with her sexuality, but this time it was different. These women were professional women (doctors, lawyers, psychologists) who were healthy and active. They were not crazy like the women she had met previously. "Perhaps it's not so weird," she thought.

Carol also started running that weekend and made arrangements to run on a regular basis with one of the women in the group. It was a weekend full of activities and lots of laughs. There was also much discussion about how women are devalued in our society. It was an awakening for Carol. There was a whole other life out there if she wanted it, which gave her hope. Anxiously, she went home to face a confrontation with her drunken husband. By now, she was just itching to leave.

Not long after that weekend, they had an argument about something trivial and K flew into a rage. Carol knew that she

needed to do something because he was becoming violent. She stood

there thinking, "Should I kill myself or kill him?" She did not

know how to get out of it. It seemed like she had to kill somebody

to do it. Suddenly, a voice came into her head and said very

clearly, "Pick up your purse and leave now." She immediately made

a connection with an old scripture from the bible. God had spoken

and now it was up to her to decide and to take action. She picked

up her purse and left. As she walked down the street wondering

where to go, she was elated despite the uncertainty. She felt

free. She knew she would never go back. She stayed with friends

for the next three months. It was a tough transition. She lost 20

pounds and patches of her hair fell out. K was eventually admitted

to a psychiatric hospital and begged her to come back. After

seeing him once for lunch, she was sure that she had done the right

thing.

After a short relationship with a woman right after she left

her husband, Carol knew with complete clarity that she had been

living a lie. The very secrecy that she had created to protect

herself was destroying her. It showed her just how much she did

not fit in the "straight" world. She began looking for her own

place to live. She met J and moved in with her, and they quickly

became lovers. Carol was feeling wounded, lonely, and lost, and in

retrospect knows that it was the worst possible time to start a new

relationship. Carol was very impressed with and attracted to J's strength and fitness level. J ran marathons and soon got Carol involved in weight training and distance running.

J encouraged Carol to train for a marathon. Carol had always thought that you had to be a top athlete to run a marathon, not just an ordinary person. J spoke of the importance of making a commitment. Part of making a commitment was overcoming obstacles. Carol trained for months and months, rain or shine, despite serious problems with her feet. Eventually, Carol did run two marathons (26 miles each). She had come a long way from being winded running around the block. Carol discovered that anyone can run a marathon if one trains for it. If she could do something like this in the physical arena, surely she could apply the same principles to the intellectual arena, which was an area in which Carol felt highly incompetent. Running marathons boosted Carol's self-confidence. She felt stronger, physically and emotionally. Now when she attended social engagements she had something to talk about. Before, she was only a secretary or K's wife. She felt like a nobody. Now she was a runner. She had something to talk about that was all her own, something that she had achieved all by herself.

During this time, Carol switched to another church where she was asked to be the head server, which involved many new responsibilities. Immediately Carol thought to herself, "I can't

do it". This time she caught herself. Through her experiences at
the other church, at Al-Anon, and with running, she knew now that
challenges were scary at first, but ultimately they helped you grow
and develop. You had to do things to change. It was no good
passively sitting there waiting for God to change you. Each little
thing seemed to lead to something bigger. For instance, being the
head server led Carol into taking on the duties of subdeacon.
While it was intimidating at first because the duties included
assisting the priest during communion service, it felt good to
stand next to the priest and be a part of it all. It felt good not
to be nervous anymore. The whole experience gave her a tremendous
sense of well-being, potency, and peace.

On Easter morning Carol woke up, sat bolt upright in her bed,
and blurted out "I want to be a priest." Then she burst into
tears. Somehow by saying it out loud it became real, undeniable.
"It's like a wagon lurching forward, it starts to move and there is
no going back." Carol did not know what to do next. She knew you
had to be fairly well educated and she did not even have grade 11.
She was 40 years old and had not been to school for 25 years. She
talked to various people including a priest, gathering information
about the necessary educational qualifications and the possible
routes she could take. She received a lot of unsolicited

encouragement. Other people seemed to know the direction she was going before she did.

Carol went to a community college to find out about attending. Having no official transcripts, she was required to write the English entrance exam. Part of the entrance exam required Carol to write a personally meaningful story. She wrote about being a lesbian. She no longer wanted to hide that part of herself. She expected to be rejected. Instead, when she picked up her exam, she was complimented on her courage and received a high mark. She decided to go to school in the evenings for a year to see how she did, while maintaining her job as a secretary. The transition back to school was not an easy one. The same physical symptoms (loss of hair, bowel problems, skin rashes) that had plagued her after she left her husband, reappeared. However, over the following months, Carol felt very empowered by the positive feedback and the high marks that she received.

Going back to school gave Carol an opportunity to develop and improve her verbal and written communication skills. Communication had always been difficult for Carol. She hated social engagements because she had no social skills. She would just head for the food table. J had once remarked to Carol, "You stuff food in your mouth so you don't have to talk." The truth stung. Being in school forced her to learn to articulate her thoughts and feelings. She

would have to do things like read out her papers or speak in groups. Learning to communicate allowed Carol to feel more equal to her peers rather than feeling intimidated and powerless around them. Instead of having no opinion, she was starting to have one of her own, as if her increased capability for communicating required more definite content to communicate about.

One day at work, her boss screamed at her and it was clearly unfounded. She responded by saying, "Don't talk to me that way!" He was incredulous at Carol's assertiveness. She walked out and stayed home for 3 days. The other partner of the firm convinced her to come back and not a word was said about it. Carol was proud of herself. She had not realized that you could stand up for yourself, say what you want, and not lose something. She thought she would be fired, but instead she was invited back.

Carol's new-found assertiveness had ramifications in her personal life as well as her work life. After 5 years, the relationship with J had become very strained. J was articulate, controlling, and aggressive. The way J dealt with conflict was to seek confrontation, whereas Carol's way was to withdraw. Even though J encouraged Carol to stand up for herself, she did not like Carol's new assertive stance because it meant that she was no longer pulling all the strings. By this time, Carol had seen J's violent temper, and her destructive way of dealing with frustration

and anger. After asserting herself once, J had shoved her and
Carol, frightened by her violent action, had fled. Carol wanted to
end the relationship, but J suggested they go for therapy instead.

J and the therapist ended up not seeing eye to eye, so after a
few sessions J stopped going. Carol decided to continue because
she sensed it was important for her own emotional development. She
found that it helped her to learn to express her feelings,
particularly anger, more directly. She also found, after
successfully resolving feelings about her father's death and a
series of other healing experiences, a new awareness of her own
inner resourcefulness and strength. No matter how stuck she was
emotionally, she knew she had all the personal resources she needed
to find a resolution. She continued therapy for 8 months. By this
time, she was feeling so good about college that she decided to go
back full time and quit her secretarial job.

One weekend, Carol attended a workshop for women sponsored by
the church. Carol saw it as another new challenge, another
opportunity to grow. One particular experience during the weekend
was pivotal. The leaders showed several short segments of film
directed at guilt and forgiveness. Many people were emotionally
triggered off by these films. Carol was not. After the films,
people were herded into the chapel to "come forward for
confession." People started to go down to the alter rail where

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they were met by a team of priests. As people confessed, they were

weeping and wailing. Carol was extremely uncomfortable around all

this emotionalism. She was certainly not going to cry and be

vulnerable in front of all these people. After all, she had

nothing to confess. One woman grabbed her arm and urged her to go

forward. Carol snarled at her, warning her to let go. She was

angry and was not going to get sucked into all this psychological

nonsense.

Carol fled from the chapel, put on her running gear, and went

jogging in the nearby woods. After awhile she stopped running,

stood in the woods and cried. As she cried, she prayed to God. By

now she felt like she belonged in the church and suddenly she felt

like an outsider again. As she was muttering away to herself that

she had nothing to confess, she realized that she was carrying

around an enormous amount of guilt about two things, leaving her

husband and being a lesbian. She still had not fully come to terms

with either one. Few people in the church knew about her being a

lesbian despite the fact that her own priest was gay. She knew

that she had to get rid of this guilt and wondered what to do.

She rejoined the group and saw that people had moved on

somehow and felt that she had been left behind. She decided to go

through the confession experience in order to remedy the situation.

After approaching one of the priests with whom she felt

comfortable, she questioned the validity of confession. He
reassured her and she decided to go ahead with it right away. They
went down to the chapel. She kneeled at the alter and asked him
what to do next. He told her to tell God what was bothering her
and what it was she wanted to get rid of.

She told God what she felt. She let it all out. Carol had
never been so emotional in all her life. She cried and wailed like
never before. As she sobbed, she told the priest she felt guilty
about leaving her alcoholic husband. After all, it was a disease
and she should have stayed to care for him. As the priest was
comforting her, he reminded her that her husband's alcoholism was
not her fault. She went on to tell him that she felt guilty about
being a lesbian. She told him that she knew it was socially
unacceptable and that God found it unacceptable. The priest said
things like, "God accepts you the way you are now. You don't have
to change anything. You have to accept yourself the way you are
because God does". After awhile, Carol was filled with a
tremendous sense of joy and peace. She related these feelings to
the passage in the bible that said, "The peace that passeth all
understanding." Eventually they both stood up and started to
laugh. They both stood there laughing and hugging. Carol felt a
lightness, like two heavy weights had been lifted off her
shoulders.

She returned to the group and joined in, no longer feeling like an outsider. After that weekend, Carol lost any lingering fears about taking on new challenges. She had lost her fear of failure which was at the bottom of it all. She still felt nervous about a new challenge, but she would not avoid it or be overcome by a fear of failing. She would say things to herself like, "How can I be perfect at it if I've never done it before."

Also after that weekend, Carol became interested in the healing of psychic wounds and attended a healing workshop. The speaker, a priest, began to talk about the healing of homosexuals. He explained that homosexuality was a blocked channel. Carol was outraged, and sat there clenching her teeth and hands. After being told by one priest that she was acceptable as she was, being told by another that she was unacceptable was too much to bear. She said nothing during the lecture, but afterwards she thundered after him and demanded that they talk. She proceeded to lecture him for an hour, despite the fact that she was trembling from head to foot. They could not change each others minds, but they were able to part friends. This was the first time Carol had been angry and had acted on it right away. Normally, she would have "stuffed it down" and it would have erupted later in one form or another. It felt good.

Later while out jogging by herself, Carol talked to God. She asked God who was right and who was wrong. An inner voice spoke to

her and said, "Nobody is right or wrong; I am the spirit of reconciliation." Carol was shocked. Not only did she not know where this came from, she did not even know what the word "reconciliation" meant and had to look it up. She came to understand that no one is right or wrong, and that all God wants is for us to be reconciled.

Meanwhile, at the community college, Carol took a Women's Studies course on family violence and abuse. During one class, they watched a film. The instructor warned the students of its potential impact. Carol thought it would not mean much to her personally as she had never experienced any family violence. Later on in the film, a woman was being verbally abused by her husband. Carol quickly recognized this experience as one of her own. This was exactly what K had done to her, manipulating, twisting words, and blaming. There it was. Carol was trembling all over; she thought she had worked it all out. The shock of this sudden awareness was overwhelming and she had to leave the classroom. Over the next week she realized what had happened and calmed down.

Not having explained her departure from the class, the instructor was somewhat annoyed with Carol. Once Carol explained her situation the instructor understood completely. It made Carol aware of how easily people can misinterpret you if you do not share yourself. Before, Carol had been completely focused on and absorbed in her own experience and was very unaware of what was

happening with other people. This course expanded her awareness to other women, and she realized that she was not alone and not unique. What happened to her could be placed meaningfully in the social context of a patriarchal society in which women were downgraded and often abused. Carol was shocked at the situation, and angry at herself for having been so blind and so unaware for so many years.

Carol finally ended her relationship with J after 7 years. It had been coming for a long time. To Carol, J was just too dangerous to be around. She was tired of people controlling her and always pulling the strings. Carol completed her 2 years of college and was required to transfer to a university. She was terrified that her old physical symptoms would plague her. Surprisingly, they did not. Her marks, however, dropped from A's to C's. Previously, Carol would have been devastated, done nothing about it, and probably aggravated those physical symptoms into reappearing. This time, she went directly to a counsellor. The counsellor reassured her that this was normal coming from a community college to a university, and that by the end of her 2 years at the university, she would be getting A's again. And she did. Once again, it had it paid off to do something.

While at university, Carol took another Women's Studies course. This one focused on women in religion. There were two men

in the class. In one exercise, people were encouraged to share

their life stories or spiritual journeys. Carol shared her

experiences of being a lesbian in the church. One man talked about

a subject that was completely devoid of any personal experience.

Carol thought that this was typical of men, not sharing anything

personal of themselves. The other man, however, did get personal.

He shared his experience of abuse at the hands of his father. He

talked about his reactions to the abuse and how he became violent

and abusive as a result of it. To Carol, it became clear that both

men and women can be victims of patriarchy (although women are

victims more so than men), and that it is the system that is

destructive, not men per se. Men and women simply have different

ways of responding to abuse. Men seem to get violent and act out

while women seem to get passive and feel powerless, she concluded.

Coming to this understanding diffused much of the anger she felt

toward men.

Overall, the women's studies courses helped Carol to feel

better about being a woman. For such a long time, she had wanted

to be a man. For the first time, she felt content to be a woman as

long as she was a potent one. She had had her fill of being

passive and powerless. She also gained a sense of equality from

these courses. She does not feel less than or better than men; she

just feels equal to them. Realizing this helped her to feel more optimistic about the future.

After completing her Bachelor of Arts in history, Carol enrolled in theology school to complete a Master's degree in the hopes of eventually becoming ordained. Once again, she experienced no physical symptoms in this transition. In her introductory biography, she proclaimed herself as a lesbian which was a considerable risk given the church's views on homosexuality. If she was going to become a priest there would be no more hiding. She had accepted herself and so must they. The fear was gone. The coursework required a lot of sharing in groups. Carol felt free to share her experiences. She was able to be vulnerable and open about herself despite feeling somewhat self-conscious about her verbal skills.

As part of the program at the theology school, each student was expected to conduct and to audiotape their own 10 minute sermon. Carol was reluctant to do this in her first year. Friends reminded her that if she could run a marathon she could certainly do the sermon. Quickly, she reframed the assignment as a new challenge. She was less concerned about the content of the sermon and more concerned about standing up in front of 60 people. She did all the preparatory reading and then just left it to simmer in her mind. She would write it when she was ready; she was not going to force it. She had faith in her own inner resources, it would come on its own.

As the time drew near, she became a little nervous and started to imagine blanking out. Suddenly, she realized that she was totally focused on herself when she should be focused on what kind of spiritual food she could offer these people. Once that shift was made, she wrote the sermon in 1/2 hour. She took the assigned theme, "the end of the world", and related it to personal end times, when you think your world is coming to an end. She drew on her own experience of divorce and wrote about how leaving her husband felt like the end of the world.

Upon arrival at the designated church, she felt uncharacteristically relaxed. In previous times, as soon as she would get up to speak her heart would start to pound, her knees would shake, and her voice would tremble. This time she was waiting for these physical symptoms to appear, but they did not. She put her notes down, waited for the music to end, switched on her microphone, and began, maintaining eye contact with the audience. She forgot to tell people to sit down and when someone in the audience reminded her, she smiled, and asked them to be seated. She did not get rattled by her oversight. As she gave the sermon, her prime concern was whether she was helping anyone.

After it was over, the priest offered Carol some very positive feedback. He pointed out two individuals that he thought would have particularly benefited from her sermon. Carol thought that

perhaps he was being kind, but when one of these individuals came up and said, "Thank you, you've really given me hope. Suicide is not my only option", Carol was very moved. She also received three written evaluations which were all very complimentary. Carol had never wanted to be a parish priest before because of having to give sermons. She had always wanted to do chaplaincy work. Now she was not so sure. Finally, Carol had found her own voice. Now there were many options open to her.

At some point during her transformation, Carol remembered having to go through a period where she needed to humble herself. Although she had low self-confidence and low self-esteem, she did not recognize that for a long time. Instead, she had elevated herself to the point where she saw herself as superior to everyone else. Being superior meant that she could not ask anyone for help. She had to be perfect. Humbling herself had involved learning to laugh at herself and to accept herself as an imperfect person. It meant letting go of the mask of invulnerability that she had created.

Convergence. The personal narrative clearly reflects the first and second components of the Q-sort data. The theme of the first component concerns persevering through adversity despite feeling inadequate and powerless. Being married to an alcoholic and running marathons are potent examples. The pattern of change

on the second component indicates a dramatic movement toward more power, freedom, and optimism. Movement on the first component tends to contrast with movement on the second component. That is, she was apt to persevere most when she felt the worst (powerless, trapped, and depressed) and least when she felt optimistic and in control. Toward the end, however, there is at least a hint that the two components might be converging. That is, in the end, she was able to sustain her feelings of potency and optimism in and out of adversity.

Given the two components, the overall theme of change seems to be that if one can keep persevering and not be overcome by feelings of inadequacy, then one will gain a sense of power, optimism and freedom. While this theme appears to be consistent with her transformation, it is also rather general, lacking the fullness and precision of her own thematic statements of the change.

Case Study Eight: Tom

Tom is a 38 year old man, the second eldest of five children from a middle class family. He was raised in a small town where his life revolved around sports. He was being scouted by a team to play professional hockey. In 1968, when Tom was 17 years old, he broke his neck in a diving accident. He sustained a spinal cord injury at the C3 level which meant that both his arms and both his legs were paralyzed (quadriplegia). He was unable to breathe on his own without the use of a ventilator. At the present time, Tom is a rehabilitation counsellor and is involved in a variety of activities, such as sitting on committees, giving workshops and presentations, helping to organize conferences, and public speaking for a variety of organizations. He is also enrolled in a clinical counselling training program. Recently, Tom was married.

Principal component analysis. The first principal component accounted for 38% of the variance in the Q-sorts. Since the factor loadings of events show clear improvement in personal agency, ranging from a beginning of -.54 to an ending of .74 and .37, this component describes what the change meant to him, using the theoretical items. To define this component, all item factors scores exceeding plus or minus 1.5 were extracted. In order of magnitude, these items are listed below, and phrased to

characterize the positive outcome or ending. The negative

beginning is the opposite of each item.

Did not feel depressed (2.90)

Felt supported and encouraged by others (2.07)

Was not too easily influenced by others (2.04)

Did not think that my success would depend on luck or

fate (1.87)

Felt optimistic and hopeful (1.79)

Experienced a feeling of satisfaction (1.72)

Felt energetic and enthusiastic (1.65)

The second component accounted for 23% of the variance in the

Q-sorts. Since the improvement is minimal, ranging from a

beginning event loading of .59 to an ending event loading of .70,

it does not define the transformation. However, it reflects

potentially important items that accompanied and perhaps

contributed to the change. These items are listed below.

Did not feel anxious (2.71)

Felt confident (2.17)

Did not take risks, played it safe (2.12)

Felt in control of my life, not pushed around (2.10)

Felt powerful, not helpless (1.90)

Felt free, not trapped (1.85)

Felt competent (1.71)

Felt like a worthy person (1.52)

The change reflected on the first component primarily concerns a shift in feelings (less depression, more optimism, satisfaction, and energy). Along with this change in feeling was a change in the belief that feeling this way was not dependent upon luck or fate. He felt supported by others, but not too easily influenced by them. The pattern of the change on the first component was cyclic with extreme swings at the beginning, gradually elevating and levelling off to a higher level of positive feeling with less dramatic swings (see Appendix A, Case Study Eight). The second component concerns taking risks despite a negative emotional context (feeling trapped and helpless, anxious and out of control with no sense of self-worth, confidence or competence). The movement on this component was also cyclic with extreme swings up and down, but it never stabilized. As he continues to take risks and meet new challenges his feelings of confidence, power, and control do not stabilize.

Personal narrative. Tom accidentally dove into a lake where the water was only 3 feet deep. After a friend pulled him out of the water and onto the beach, Tom thought he had had the wind knocked out of him, which was a familiar feeling as an athlete. He felt desperate when it did not pass. He was struggling for all

he was worth to breathe. It felt like coming up from the bottom of a pool for air and having somebody push you back down again. When his friend lifted him up, at his request, and he saw his foot go off to the side, he knew that he had no control over his body. Whatever was wrong was serious, perhaps a broken back. After an ambulance transported him to a hospital, and having passed out more than once, Tom experienced a beautiful sensation, a gust of air. They had performed a tracheotomy on him and he was finally able to breathe. From that point on, it was the beginning of a new life that was downhill for a long time.

The first thoughts Tom had when he became aware of the severity of his injury were very depressing ones. "I'll never be married. I'll never be able to contribute. I have no purpose or value. Nobody can help me, I can't help myself; this is my lot in life. I am a total leech." Eventually, one of the few things Tom looked forward to were points of progress in his physical development. However, these points were usually not as exciting as he anticipated them to be. For instance, after being in traction for 5 or 6 months to keep his neck straight, Tom could not wait to get the tongs off his head so he could sit up and look around. He did not anticipate how weak his neck would be. The nurse would wind up the head of his bed one crank and he would feel like passing out. He would ask the nurse to put him back down, but she

would not, insisting that it was good for him. Tom was frustrated

and angry because he felt the nurse was unable to understand the

pain he was in and was refusing to respond to his wishes. It was

probably one of the first times that Tom knew that other people

were in control of his life. It felt like they were making all the

decisions, and it seemed like he had no input into what was being

done to his own body.

After seeing himself in a mirror for the first time, 5 months

after the accident, Tom was devastated and wanted to go back to bed

immediately because he looked so disabled. He just wanted to stay

in bed with the sheet up to his neck so that he could just look

like he was sick in bed; his disability would be hidden. For

months, Tom resisted getting out of bed because he was so ashamed

of the body that had been a point of pride before the accident.

Before his injury, Tom related to himself as a physical specimen

that could score x number of goals a year. His status as a hockey

player afforded him a kind of small town idol worship. His value

was as a hockey player and now that those physical attributes were

gone, his value seemed gone.

Tom was totally ventilator-dependent. That is, an air pump

was hooked into a trache (a fitting in his neck) which allowed him

to breathe. He was told by doctors that he would never breathe on

his own again. Tom was frightened to think of being totally

dependent on a machine for each breath he took. A year after the injury, one doctor said to Tom, "I think you might be able to breathe a little bit on your own." The doctor took the ventilator off and there was some movement of air. Tom was excited and hopeful. He knew that his paralysis would never change. Being paralyzed was one thing, but being ventilator-dependent was quite another. If he could somehow overcome his dependence on the ventilator it would feel like he had lost 50% of his dependence. He also thought that if he could breathe on his own for even 5 minutes, he would be able to provide himself with emergency back-up in case of a machine break-down. Breathing for 5 minutes on his own became his goal.

At first, it was the toughest thing in the world to go for 2 minutes of breathing on his own. He used to be able to hold his breath for that long. Now it felt like running a marathon without ever having trained for it. At the same time, it felt good because it provided him with at least some indication of physical development. Physical ability was the only frame of reference Tom had known. Tom's enthusiasm, however, was not shared by all his doctors. They felt that his practice would be futile and dangerous for his heart. It was also inconvenient for them because it meant that a staff member had to be present during practice times for safety reasons. This discouragement and opposition did not stop

Tom. Instead, he solicited the help of his sister. She would take off the ventilator, monitor him as he practiced, and just before he passed out, put it back on. He trusted his sister with his life. Ironically, it was Tom's sister who became the target for much of his anger and frustration. He criticized and belittled her relentlessly.

Breathing without the ventilator was difficult and exhausting work. It felt good though to push himself and to discipline himself as he had done in sports. It gave him something to strive for. Having a goal represented having some control over his life. He could measure and monitor his day to day progress and project ahead to future improvement.

Two months later, after attaining his goal of 5 minutes, he set himself a new challenge of 10 minutes. He wanted to achieve this goal as a Christmas gift to his parents. When Christmas came, however, he had a negative reaction to a drug he had been given and almost died. He was disappointed at not having met the time line and at not being able to give this gift to his parents. After he recovered, he continued practicing despite the setback. At this point, the goal was to increase the time off the ventilator, but there was no specific time line to strive for, which made it harder. He was also uncertain as to whether or not he could even increase his time. The lack of a specific goal coupled with the

uncertainty frequently led Tom to become lazy about his practice.
For instance, despite the fact that damage to the heart was a
legitimate concern, Tom often used it as an excuse to avoid
practice. Although his practice was not steady and regular, he
eventually worked himself up to 1/2 hour after a year. With 1/2
hour under his belt, he imagined going a little longer and perhaps
being able to get away from the hospital.

At one point, Tom's father responded to his efforts by saying,
"Son, only you know how really tough it is. Don't let other people
influence your goals; don't push yourself to meet others'
expectations." Tom knew that his father thought he may have been
overdoing it and it may be too hard for him. For Tom, it was a
moment of clarity, but not in the way his father had intended it to
be. To Tom, part of being institutionalized had involved giving up
his control. Having others do everything for him became a way of
life. He had come to expect it. Suddenly in that moment, Tom
realized that it was indeed totally up to him to breathe on his own
for longer periods of time. No one else could do it for him.
Despite his father's intent to ease his struggle, it had just the
opposite effect; it spurred him on.

After about two years, Tom was able to go for 2 1/2 hours on
his own without the use of a ventilator. A friend with whom Tom
felt comfortable invited him to go on a 2-hour car trip to a nearby

town. This was the first time that there would not be a ventilator available to Tom for back-up purposes. He knew he could do it, but he was not sure if he could do it with any composure. He was afraid to put F in an uncomfortable position and he did not want to put himself in the position of having to depend on F. As the trip took longer than anticipated, the last 1/2 hour was a real struggle, but he made it. Tom felt a new sense of independence and freedom having made the trip. It left him wondering what he could accomplish next.

The doctor who had told Tom that he would never breathe on his own again was amazed upon hearing of Tom's breathing achievements. Tom felt satisfied to have proven him wrong. For the next 7 years, Tom continued his arduous practice. At the present time, Tom can breathe on his own all day and uses a ventilator at night while he is sleeping. Each breath remains a conscious effort.

To Tom, the hospital felt like a prison with endless restrictions and regulations, and a total lack of privacy. He felt helpless there. Tom rebelled against the system, and when the other patients would remind him that if he did not cooperate he would lose his "privileges", Tom was amused because he did not feel he had any to lose. Hospital staff disciplined Tom's non-compliant behavior (such as drinking or being late) with lectures or by taking his wheelchair and clothes away. On one occasion, the

supervisor threatened to ship him off to another facility 2000

miles away. She said, "You're a bad influence on the whole ward!

You're causing a lot of disturbances." It was at this moment that

Tom was struck by the influence he had on the system. He was

having an impact. Regardless of whether it was positive or

negative, it was an effect. It helped him to feel some sense of

potency. Tom replied to the supervisor's threat by saying, "Great,

go ahead. I have friends there." His sarcastic retort was to show

her that she did not have as much power over him as she thought.

He did not care what she said and called her bluff. Once again,

someone had made a comment to Tom and the effect had been the

opposite of what was intended.

In addition to being told that he would never breathe on his

own again, Tom was told that he would never leave the hospital. He

desperately wanted to go home for a visit; it was safe there. He

was told that no one outside the hospital was capable of looking

after him. To Tom, it was apparent that this was not the case. He

had been out of the hospital for periods of time, so it did not

make sense that he could not go for several days at a time.

Despite their intent to help, the attitudes of people in authority

created endless roadblocks and obstacles which only served to

restrict and to limit Tom. Tom soon learned that the people in

authority did not know everything, let alone what was best for
him.

After two years of recovery and against the advice of hospital
staff, Tom began visits home despite his fear about leaving the
security of the hospital and travelling 750 miles by air. Tom was
deeply affected by his father's response to the doctor's stern
warning, "If you take him home, you'll kill him." "Well," his
father said, "Then we'll bring him back dead." People in charge at
the hospital had an attitude of, "You can't do that!" Tom's
family, and in time Tom, had an attitude of "Why not?"

Tom did survive his visits home and over time began to
increase the length of his stay. There was a ceiling on how long
the hospital would hold the bed in his absence. Tom disregarded
these rules, which created many power struggles with hospital
staff. Instead of making him conform, these incidents energized
Tom. Through the support of his family, which Tom considers vital
to his rehabilitation and transformation, Tom felt safe enough to
risk challenging the hospital system rather than to passively
accept their definition of how he was to live his life. Tom's
family responded to what he wanted, not in a senseless way, but in
a way that respected his decisions about his own body and the
direction he wanted to go. Through supporting his decisions, they

empowered him. Through risking with him, they helped him to begin to see an alternative way of living beyond the hospital walls.

Even though the hospital felt like a prison to Tom, it also offered security; it was a safe haven from the real world. Tom would never leave the hospital except with a family member. Going out with other people meant facing his dependence and feeling vulnerable. It meant asking others for help: to wipe his nose, to feed him, to take care of the basics. At least in the hospital someone was paid to do it. For instance, if he was with someone and there was something in his eye he would tolerate the discomfort to avoid asking for help. The ultimate in humiliation was asking someone to empty his urinary leg bag.

For Tom, not being able to manage bodily functions on his own was like being an infant again. Unlike an infant, however, as an adult this inability was embarrassing. To avoid embarrassing situations, it was best to stay in the hospital. At least in the hospital Tom could function and not look like an incompetent. To be away from the hospital and the people that understood his needs was a real risk which made Tom feel vulnerable. In order to deal with his feelings of vulnerability and dependence, Tom always tried to present an attitude of having no needs related to his disability. He was determined right from the beginning to never put anyone in the position of having to do anything that they were

uncomfortable with. Consequently, Tom chose to stay in the hospital as much as possible as a means of self-protection.

One of the first times Tom went out of the hospital with friends rather than with family was very difficult. A woman friend who had known Tom through hockey invited him to a birthday celebration. Tom grew more apprehensive and anxious as the date of the party approached. Despite wanting to go to the party, it meant that this woman friend would see how physically powerless he was in contrast to his previous physical powerfulness. He knew he should go, but he did not want to feel vulnerable. In female company, Tom was even more aware of his feelings of incompetence. His fear was making people uncomfortable if he needed to ask for help. To ease his anxiety and to take the edge off, Tom invited another male friend to accompany him. Tom probably would not have gone if his friend had been unable to go with him.

Most often, friends would come to visit Tom in the hospital. Tom soon discovered that under those smiling, supportive faces, and able bodies was a lot of pain. Through talking with them, he began to understand that he was fulfilling some of their needs. Being able to give to others helped him to begin to feel a sense of worth. It was a potent feeling to give where he never thought he could give again. Eventually, things snowballed and there were great demands on Tom's time and he had to begin scheduling it. He

had never imagined this in his wildest dreams. He had wondered how he was going to occupy even a few minutes in his life let alone 12-14 hours of each day. It became apparent to Tom that he could contribute, in what he felt was a significant way, to other people's lives.

Five years after the injury, Tom began to receive a number of requests from doctors and nurses to talk to incoming patients with similar injuries. He discovered that he was able to help ease their pain and exert a positive effect by helping them to mature in their injury. He helped them to see that there really was life after quadriplegia. Tom again felt like he was contributing, giving rather than just receiving. It was very fulfilling and enhanced his growing sense of self-worth. Before long, Tom was being asked to travel farther and farther afield in order to provide counselling to people with physical disabilities.

The accident forced Tom to confront some very fundamental questions. Where is my value? Who am I now? What is my purpose? Through becoming a Christian, answers to these questions became clearer. After the accident Tom had seen himself as a mere shadow of his former self because he had no physical ability. He realized now that his value did not only lie in his physical attributes. He was the same person, just with a different set of limitations and a different set of open horizons. He chose to focus on what he could

do, not what he could not do. Christianity gave him an
understanding of his existence just as he was rather than as he had
been; a framework within which to make sense out of his disability.
It gave him direction and helped him to define his purpose. It
provided important insight into the pain and suffering, and the
peace and joy that existed within him and within the world.

Around this time, Tom travelled to Asia and Europe with
members of his family. Although he was apprehensive about
travelling to such far away countries, he went ahead anyway. Tom
had many trying but exciting experiences which filled him with a
sense of being able to do anything he wanted to do with the right
attitude and the right approach. The right attitude was that
nothing is impossible and anything is possible. The right approach
was to not let yourself or anyone around you become overwhelmed.

Tom was able to apply these learnings to many situations. For
instance, one time Tom needed to get home and there was no one
available to accompany him. He knew the airlines would not allow
him to travel alone. It was one of those opportunities where he
had to take control because he knew best what he was capable of.
He got a friend to put him on the airplane and arranged for someone
to meet him at the other end. When the flight attendant asked him
who was riding with him, Tom replied in a rather general way that
his escort was behind him. There really were 80 other people on

the plane sitting behind him, so Tom did not really feel like he was lying. With that obstacle out of the way, Tom knew he was going to have to deal with three stops on the flight. Each stop meant that he would fall forward in his seat because of the momentum. Each time the airplane landed a new person would board. In flight, Tom would initiate some casual conversation until the comfort level increased a bit. Then as they approached landing Tom would say in a very casual, calm, matter of fact voice, "Oh, just when we land here, if you wouldn't mind putting your arm across my chest so I don't lean forward."

The main thing for Tom was to project to others that he was confident and in control in order to disarm their anxiety and to get them to work with him, not against him. The minute he showed that he was not in control, people would panic and try to take control (which was not usually the best thing for Tom). Tom also learned that it was up to him as to how other people saw him. He knew that he was the "unknown" with the wheelchair, the disability, the trache, and the ventilator. He could do nothing and allow people to feel threatened or he could reach out and make people feel comfortable. Being able to affect his relationships with other people gave him a sense of control.

In 1979, Tom and a friend from the hospital got together and approached an organization that dealt with disability issues to

discuss the possibility of moving out of the hospital into an independent living setting within the community. Tom wondered why the institution had to be his only option for a home. The idea was well received, and one particular individual became very active in developing the project. Together, they launched an investigation of the various issues involved in such an undertaking (e.g., cost, staffing, safety). They discovered that the cost to the government would be 50% less than for them to stay in the hospital. For Tom, and others involved in the project, the main task ended up being one of finding ways to circumvent the fears of the hospital administration and to pacify government officials of potential libel suits should anything happen to any of them. These attitudes were the biggest barriers Tom and the others had to face, not the project itself or their disabilities.

Over the next 5 years there were many ups and downs, triumphs and defeats. Tom's main focus throughout was on the goal, which was to escape from the dependency of the hospital. He would do whatever it took to get the job done. In 1984, 16 years after his injury, Tom and five other men with quadriplegia moved out of the hospital into their new home. Nothing like this had ever been done before so the project attracted a lot of international attention. People from around the world came to visit because there was an interest in implementing the same kind of project in other

countries such as Scotland, Australia, and New Zealand. A documentary was also made.

To Tom, independent living represented taking back his life. It provided the basics such as privacy, the freedom to come and go as he pleased, and responsibilities such as hiring and firing staff. Living in the community enabled Tom to better see where he could contribute. He got more involved in various ways, such as doing workshops, presentations, speeches and lectures. He began a clinical counselling training program. Tom knew that while it might not have been apparent to others, the quality of life and living had vastly improved for him.

Two years after moving out of the hospital, Tom received a call from a local political representative inviting him to sit on the board of directors for a committee on disability issues. Up to this point, Tom had not been directly involved in disability issues in any larger political sense. He felt completely inadequate for the job and was convinced that he would not have much to contribute. He agreed to participate despite these feelings. Over time, Tom gained an understanding of the issues and the process involved in getting things done. Later, he was asked to chair the committee. Again, despite his feeling that others were more qualified for the job, he accepted. The job required making a lot of major decisions. Tom was able to see that he could have a

profound influence on a larger scale, and not just in one on one

situations. He could make a difference and have an impact. The

whole thing was frightening and intimidating, but it was also

highly meaningful. It also provided Tom with an opportunity to

discover what other skills he had aside from his counselling

abilities.

Tom was now living independently. He was actively

contributing in a variety of ways. He had many friends. He had

not yet tackled anything beyond friendship; that was still too

intimidating. Women had expressed a romantic interest in him, but

Tom would quickly distance himself. He did not want to be that

vulnerable. Surely once they saw him for who he was with all his

limitations they would reject him. He was no longer Tom the hockey

player; he was Tom the quadriplegic. He was especially amazed that

women who did not know him before the accident were attracted to

him. When it happened repeatedly he could not dismiss it. It was

very flattering.

Tom had refused several marriage proposals and in each case

felt that he was doing the loving thing for the other person. Then

Tom met W. They began a friendship in 1985 and when the subject of

marriage eventually came up, it was dismissed immediately as it had

been in the past. This time, however, W posed some questions to

Tom that were to have a decisive influence on him. "What do you

need to work on and what do you need to feel good about before you

could marry?" Tom knew that it was because he still did not feel good about himself and did not think anyone else should be saddled with him for a lifetime in marriage. At this point, Tom made a decision. He was going to expose to W his real self, with all of his shortcomings and all of his limitations. He would become transparent and tear down the facade that was always in place. It would be a test. It was a difficult time for both Tom and W, but it did not change W's desire to marry him.

Tom was still not ready. There were more walls to tear down. Tom felt uncomfortable with not earning an income. How would he support himself and a wife? Tom had adopted an attitude of not needing anyone or not being dependent on anyone. He guarded against becoming attached and was doubtful about whether he could tear down that 20 year old wall. Intellectually, he knew that a healthy relationship involved both independence and dependence, but questioned whether he could show his needs and be dependent because it meant being vulnerable.

In time, Tom realized that it was simply not fair to another person to not show your need for them because you are not letting them see their real value. Tom knew how it felt not to be valued. By now, Tom had developed a style of taking risks despite his fear. He felt able to risk for three reasons. One, he felt totally supported by his family. Two, his belief in God facilitated his

sense of worth and purpose. Three, intellectually he believed that nothing would change and he would stay forever where he was in his fear if he did not risk. He did not like where he was, even though it was usually more comfortable, so he chose to face the fear instead. Frequently, Tom would discover that the vulnerability he so desperately feared was not as bad as he anticipated it to be. In 1989, Tom and W were married.

Convergence. The shift in feeling tone evident in the first component is also evident in the personal narrative. Tom moved from feeling depressed and in the hands of fate, so to speak, to feeling optimistic and energetic, not dependent upon luck or fate. The role of external support (primarily from family) is a prominent feature of the narrative as is his resistance to the influence of others (the hospital administration). The risk-taking theme of the second component is also clear in the narrative. While the interview data indicate a strong improvement in terms of feelings of potency in general, within the context of risk-taking there is a temporary loss of these feelings followed by a gain after the challenge is met. Without the interview data the second component of the Q-sort results would have been difficult to interpret.

In light of the two components, the overall theme of change seems to be that if one can continue to take risks, even when one feels anxious, and lacking in confidence and competence, then one

will sustain a greater sense of optimism, satisfaction, and energy. One has to act through or in spite of one's negative feelings. While this theme seems to apply to Tom's transformation, it is also rather general, not as accurate and complete as his own thematic statements of the change.

Case Study Nine: Beth

Beth is a 46 year old woman, the second eldest of a family of

6 children. She comes from a working class background and was

raised as an Anglican. At 17, Beth became pregnant. She married

and had a miscarriage. She later had two sons. The marriage

lasted 18 years. She has a Master's degree in School Psychology

and is currently completing her doctorate in Educational

Psychology. She works as a school psychologist for a School Board

and as a counsellor at a university counselling centre.

Principal component analysis. The first principal component

accounted for 34% of the variance in the Q-sorts. Since the factor

loadings of events show clear improvement in personal agency,

ranging from a beginning of -.46 to an ending of .68, this

component describes what the change meant to her, using the

theoretical items. To define this component, all item factor

scores exceeding plus or minus 1.5 were extracted. In order of

magnitude, these items are listed below, and phrased to

characterize the positive outcome or ending. The negative

beginning is the opposite of each item.

> Did not accept goals that were not really mine, but came
>
> from situational demands or other people's
>
> expectations (2.39)

Had a strong sense of meaning, was not aimless (2.34)

Did not think that my success would depend on the help of

others (2.14)

Was not too easily influenced by others (2.03)

Was not helped by the example set by other people (1.94)

Did not think that my success would depend on luck or

fate (1.80)

Was self-guided (1.53)

The second component accounted for 24% of the variance in the

Q-sorts. Since it did not show improvement, ranging from a

beginning event loading of .25 to an ending event loading of .12,

it does not define the transformation. However, it reflects

potentially important items that accompanied and perhaps

contributed to the change. These items are listed below.

Felt optimistic and hopeful (2.41)

Did not feel anxious (2.17)

Did not feel depressed (2.12)

Felt supported and encouraged by others (2.05)

Felt confident (1.68)

Welcomed challenges (1.66)

Took specific steps to realize purposes (1.54)

The first component concerns a movement from being influenced

by others to being self-guided with personally meaningful goals.

The movement on the first component was cyclic with swings up and down before leveling off with a higher level of self-guidance (see Appendix A, Case Study Nine). The second component concerns taking steps to realize purposes despite no support, feeling anxious and depressed, and lacking confidence. By the end, she felt more optimistic and hopeful, welcoming new challenges. The movement on the second component was gradual, and only after her marriage ended was she able to feel less anxious and more confident about charting her own course.

Personal narrative. Beth's father was an alcoholic. He was authoritarian, rigid, and domineering. He was physically abusive toward Beth and would beat her for just about any reason, like being 10 minutes late or showing any kind of independent behaviour. Beth's father was also emotionally abusive. The only emotion he ever showed was anger. He belittled and berated her, making sure she understood that females were of no value whatsoever, and that she had no right to ever question or disagree with his authority. Beth lived in constant fear and anxiety. Like her mother, she tried harder and harder to please her father in order to gain his acceptance and approval. It did not seem to matter what she said or did, nothing made any difference.

Beth's father told her that until she was 21, she had to do exactly what he said. At 21, she would be free to do as she liked,

but not before. At 8 years old, 21 was more than twice her

lifetime away. She felt hopeless and part of her wanted to die.

The other part of her wanted to live because someday she would be

free. She vowed that once freed from her father's tyranny, she

would never allow anyone to tell her what to do again. Until she

was free, she had to develop ways to survive. She learned to never

disagree with him and to never fight back. She also learned to lie

fluently about what she thought, what she felt, and what she did.

She lived life as a kind of impostor, never showing her real self

to her father.

Beth's memories of her school years are sparce. One memory

that stands out clearly was an interaction with a math teacher. In

class one day, Mr. H told Beth that she was special and had a lot

of potential. He encouraged her to do something important with it.

His words were very important because she had never received any

support or encouragement from any other man. The fact that Mr. H

reminded Beth of her father and was telling her that she was worth

something made it even more significant. Beth felt empowered by

his words. For many years to come, those words would keep coming

back to Beth. As it turned out, Beth's father would not allow her

to leave home to go away to university, so she lost interest in

school, quit grade 13, and went to work in a bank. She focused her

attention on her boyfriend, R, who was dynamic and exciting. Beth got pregnant at 17, married R, and later had a miscarriage.

Getting married at 17 was an early escape from her father's prison, or so Beth thought. In her job at the bank, Beth perceived her work environment as unfair and unjust. She soon became aware that men in the bank were paid more, started in higher positions, and were promoted more quickly than women. Beth was an experienced teller, and she would train and supervise men starting out. Within months, they would be supervising her. She began talking about her perceptions to other women in the bank, and was soon called into the boss' office. He told her that she was misguided to believe that women deserved the same rights as men. Beth was both afraid and angered by this man's attitude. He was talking just like her father, but at least she knew that he could not hit her. With this knowledge, part of her wanted to fight back. She refused to stay silent about the injustice she saw. For so many years, she had been forced to stay silent. She might lose her job, but it would be worth it to fight back and say how she really felt. After speaking her mind, she felt strong and proud.

Beth told R about the incident and instead of offering his support, he called her "an impudent little punk". He demanded to know who she thought she was talking to her boss in that way. Beth was horrified by what she heard. She realized that she had married

a man with views not unlike her father's. At the time, she chose

to deny the significance of this realization. Part of her denial

was related to the circumstances she found herself in; she was

pregnant and married to a man she was deeply in love with. She

felt trapped, devastated, and alone. Eventually, after being

passed over for promotion after promotion, she left the bank and

the workforce to become a full time mother. By this time, she had

had two sons. Later, she returned to work as a bookkeeper for her

husband.

As the years went on, R seemed to become more emotionally

abusive like Beth's father, and Beth became more depressed and

anxious. R also neglected Beth and the children emotionally and

financially. The whole marriage seemed to consist of him doing and

having what he wanted, which angered and frustrated Beth. Beth

worked hard to please him, but it did not matter what she said or

did, nothing changed. To Beth, as long as R did not hit her and

she was physically safe, it was tolerable. In her mind, things

were so much better for her compared to her mother's marriage. She

had no idea that things could be any better. It also became

increasingly clear that R saw himself as the "boss" in the marriage

and that Beth was expected to go along with all his decisions and

plans. He was the important one. She was insignificant. Any

contribution she tried to make was discounted or downgraded. She

continued to feel devalued and worthless, just as she had in her

relationship with her father. Instead of backing down, however,

Beth continued to offer her input and opinion. As a result, the

marriage was very stormy.

Beth received a lot of disapproval from R and from both his

and her families for her non-compliant behaviour. R would punish

her by doing things like giving her the silent treatment for days

on end, which was very upsetting to Beth. For Beth though, in

those moments of non-compliance, it felt like something real was

forcing its way out. It was the part of Beth that was fighting to

be real and not the impostor. She desperately wanted R to accept

and to value her real self.

While one part of Beth seemed to be fighting to be real, the

other part was living a lie as the impostor. Beth had learned that

there was only so much of her real self that was acceptable to show

to others. Being the impostor occurred in and out of the marriage.

Part of being the impostor in the marriage involved suppressing the

anger she felt toward R for the way he devalued her. Instead of

expressing her anger, she put all her energy into playing the role

of the traditional wife as she saw it. For example, she focused

her efforts on making herself, her children, and her home as

attractive as possible. Outside the marriage, she concentrated on

being nice and pleasing others. She learned how to say what people

wanted and needed to hear. She was guarded about expressing any contrary opinions. She created a veneer of strength by being a "superwoman" who was good at everything she did - the best mom, the best homemaker, the best hostess, the best P.T.A. member, the best sorority member, and so on. She thrived on other people's admiration and approval.

One morning, Beth woke up to a shockingly clear realization. "I'm not living my own life. I've been had. This isn't me." Suddenly, she was painfully aware that she had not consciously chosen to be a housewife, a mother, or a bookkeeper for that matter. She had been shaped to pursue the roles of wife and mother, and to do anything she could to support her husband's career. She had participated in something that was now intolerable and unacceptable. Without Mr. H's encouraging words, Beth feels she may not have reached this point of awareness.

By the time this realization crystallized, Beth was 29 years old and she had more than a decade to look back over. She had to make a change or she knew that she would be destined to continue living this lie. As she was getting older, she felt it would soon be too late to make a change, which was a depressing thought. On the outside Beth had it all - a husband, well-behaved children, and a nice home. On the inside, however, she was dying. She knew with an unquestionable certainty that if she did not start living her

own life, she would not have one to live. She would die
emotionally and just give up. This new awareness was frightening
because she knew that it may mean the end of her marriage, but it
was so strong that it was simply undeniable. She had to do
something.

What she decided to do was to go back to college. She was
going to make a plan for her life and set her own goals. Up to
this point, her life had been largely determined by her father and
then her husband. Beth also sensed that she needed to develop a
career through which she could support herself and her two
children, should the marriage end. Beth announced to R her
intention to start college. He was outraged. Again, R asked her
who she thought she was to think that she could go to college. He
accused her of betraying him and letting the whole company down.
No matter what kind of guilt he tried to foster, Beth's mind was
made up; it felt like her life was on the line. Making this
decision helped Beth to finally have a sense of the future.

For Beth, college was both a nightmare and her salvation. The
nightmare part was tying to straddle both worlds: the world of
college and her needs and the world of home and her family's needs.
Desperately, she tried to take care of everyone's needs. R was
completely unsupportive and frequently antagonistic towards Beth's
efforts at college. To cope, she consciously changed the direction
and focus of her efforts. Instead of trying to convince R that she

was valuable and worthy of his support, she channeled her efforts

into realizing her own personal goals and fighting for herself.

She simply refused to get depressed about R's behaviour toward her.

The salvation part of college for Beth was learning and growing.

It was exciting to discuss and exchange new ideas with others.

Beth also met new people who were to become life-long friends.

In a Canadian History course, Beth's professor, Mr. L,

announced to the class that 20% of the grade would be based on

class participation. Beth was very troubled by this and nervously

approached him at the end of class. She asked if she could write

another paper or exam in lieu of the class participation

requirement. When Mr. L asked why, Beth replied, "I have nothing

to say." Mr. L responded emphatically, "Yes you do, Beth!" Beth's

thoughts and opinions had always been worthless to her father and

to her husband, so she did not think she had anything valuable to

say. Mr. L's encouragement was critical to Beth. Like the

encouragement she received from Mr. H, it helped her to keep going

in the face of no other support.

Beth completed 2 years of college and decided to do one more

year to become a teacher. Becoming a teacher was a practical

choice based on the job market in the town in which she lived. She

applied to a teaching program which ran out of a university in a

city 600 miles away. Two thirds of the program could be completed
at home. The other third of the program had to be completed at the
university. After a positive interview, Beth was sure she was
going to be accepted, but did not hear back from them. Eventually,
she found out that they had lost her application. Despite her
discouragement, Beth decided to pack up her kids and travel to the
university to secure her admission to the program. When she
arrived at the university, Beth demanded to see someone about her
application. She was not going to leave without an answer. By the
time she left, she had been accepted. It was an accomplishment
that gave her a potent feeling of her own ability to make something
happen. It was a glorious feeling.

Beth successfully completed the first two terms of the
program. Leaving home to complete her final term at the university
was extremely difficult because it meant leaving her children
behind, which she hated to do. On a visit home two weeks later,
she was horrified to see that R had been seriously neglecting them.
After a major confrontation and a near physical encounter with R,
Beth returned to the university. She would not go home again until
she was finished because it was just too painful and too dangerous.
She had to stay and finish the program. Finishing meant freedom.
After Beth's return home, she started teaching immediately. She
had not decided to leave R just yet, but was now equipped to do so

when she wanted. Part of her still wanted the marriage to work. About the time that Beth started earning an income, R stopped bringing one home claiming that his business was in financial trouble. Beth began paying all the bills.

R spent more and more time away from home. Beth pushed for more time together as a family. To appease her, R suggested a camping trip. A week before the trip, R announced that he could not go, making the same old excuses for himself. Beth planned to go on the trip anyway because she had promised the children. The night before Beth and the kids were about to leave, R announced that he was going to the South Seas for 3 weeks with a business associate who was going to pay the tab. She knew he was lying about who would be paying for the trip. She was not going to be treated like this anymore. An ultimatum just popped out of her mouth. She said, "If you go, don't come back". Having said it, she felt sick. It felt like she had been tricked into ending the relationship. At the same time, she felt a strength at having delivered this bottom line to him.

R went on the holiday anyway and Beth knew the marriage was over. While he was away things shifted dramatically for Beth. A lingering depression, there throughout the marriage, lifted. Everything was lighter and brighter. The anxiety that had plagued her was gone. She was free to be herself. She did not have to

live divisively anymore, wavering between her real self and the impostor. Beth found renewed energy for herself and her children. So much effort had gone into playing the role of wife and trying to make the marriage work. Now she had all that energy to make plans for her own life without having to accommodate R. She was also able to be less guarded with her sons. Before, she had been playing the role of mother and had to do it perfectly. Now, she could just relax and be herself. It marked a new beginning for Beth, and an optimism for the future. R called Beth to announce his arrival home. Instead of rushing to make arrangements to pick him up, she quipped, "What do you want me to do about it?" R hung up. For once, Beth had expressed her real feelings and did not compromise them. She felt a sense of control.

The end of the marriage marked the beginning of a 3 year struggle in the courts and a series of crises. For instance, Beth found out that R was a millionaire. He had cleverly hidden his money so that Beth had no access to it. Even after being awarded a $100,000.00 settlement in court, she never saw a penny of it. She literally lost everything. Eventually, she decided that she could not tie up her energy fighting him anymore. If she did, it would prevent her from moving forward and that would give him power over her life. She forced herself to keep going, to not get

depressed, and to not be overwhelmed by all the sadness and loss
that filled her life.

Beth decided to leave town, enter university, and complete her
Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology. She had always wanted to be
a psychologist. Now that there was no one else to consider, she
could finally steer her own ship. She also applied for a job at
the university to support herself. There were 500 applicants for
the position. During the interview, Beth expressed her need for
the job in a sincere and honest manner. She was herself,
expressing both her strength and her vulnerability. Before, she
would have only expressed her strength. She would have said
whatever she knew they wanted to hear in order to gain their
approval and acceptance. When she saw her name on the list of
successful applicants, she was ecstatic. She did not think she had
a chance, but went ahead anyway and succeeded against the odds.
She felt a sense of accomplishment, and a big boost in confidence.
Beth knew it was no accident or fluke that she got the job; it was
something that she said or did. Knowing this made her feel valued
for her real self. It gave her a sense of potency, of being able
to go out and get what she wanted in her life.

In a psychology course, Beth did a research project on child
abuse. She discovered that physical discipline was the norm in our
society. This knowledge helped Beth to understand her father's

behaviour a little better, but it in no way made it acceptable. When it came time to write up her findings, Beth experienced a "writer's block". She was overcome with anger. She was unable to produce an objective piece of work because she was being swallowed up by her own abuse experiences. She saw the block as a signal to come to terms with her own abuse. Beth decided to contact her father. She wanted and needed to confront him. She had had minimal contact with him over the years and during the visits she did have, she was focused on trying to gain his approval. Sometimes she had been so desperate that she did things like go out drinking with him.

She made three visits to her father, two weeks apart. With each visit, she felt stronger, revealing more and more of her real self to him. She was building up to the confrontation. The week after her last visit, Beth's father was killed in a car accident. At his funeral, Beth wept uncontrollably. Her body shook with anger and relief. Anger at not being able to confront him and relief that he was gone. The fact that he was gone meant that she did not have to fight for his approval and acceptance anymore. Whatever she did after that was for herself, and not for him.

Beth completed her Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology, a year after her divorce. At the graduation ceremony, she felt a tremendous sense of pride in her accomplishment. She felt more

confident in herself, and was feeling good about achieving a goal of her own. For one fleeting moment, Beth thought that maybe if her father had been there to see this achievement, he may have valued her. Having completed her Bachelor's degree, Beth decided to pursue a Master's degree, which she went on to complete in two years. She was able to focus completely on her own needs, as her two sons had both moved out on their own by this time. By now, her self-worth had developed through her academic achievements.

The summer after finishing her Master's degree, Beth went on a camping trip with a woman friend. As they lay in silence on a beach one clear, starry night, Beth was utterly euphoric. She felt so free. Her childhood fantasy was finally realized. She had made it happen. She had taken risks and had worked hard to make a life for herself that was better than her mother's. As Beth lay there reviewing her accomplishments, she felt pleased with the direction she was taking her life. As she gazed up at the stars, she wondered what the future would hold for her.

At her Master's graduation ceremony, Beth was exhilarated. It seemed like the main speaker was speaking to her personally. The speaker spoke about the struggle to achieve and how important it was to do something with your achievements. Mr. H's words echoed in Beth's mind. Mr. H's and Mr. L's encouragement had been critical in helping Beth to move forward and to take action on

behalf of herself. As Beth's eyes drifted to the rows in front where the doctoral graduates sat, she knew that this was not the end for her. In time, she would be back in this room sitting in that row.

Beth applied for and was accepted into, a doctoral program in Educational Psychology. She had achieved academically and professionally, but had done little work to rebuild her social relationships with men. On an outing with a group of men from work, Beth had a new and powerful experience. She felt valued and respected by these men by just being herself. She did not feel like she had to be nice to them or to please them, and she was able to express her own views even when they were contrary to their perspectives.

Back in 1980, near the end of her Bachelor's degree, Beth had started a relationship with G. The relationship had progressed to a point where G proposed to Beth. Beth could not make a decision about whether or not to marry him. She decided to see a counsellor in the hopes of finding out what was stopping her from making this decision. While in counselling, Beth had a profound experience during a visualization. The image was of her father, not as a big, strong, evil monster, but as a young, gangly, awkward youth. He looked vulnerable and unsure of himself in this image, rather than fierce and violent. Re-experiencing him this way diffused the fear that Beth still felt toward her father. By seeing him as less

powerful, he felt less powerful. Beth realized that she was in control of the power her father had over her; it was inside her. She did not have to keep letting him block her. As a result of this visualization, Beth came to understand that her fear of marriage was related to her fear of losing herself again. Beth was able to connect the visualization with her current dilemma, and realized that she did not have to give herself up to G at all. She was in control of that and did not have to let it happen. After 7 months, Beth decided to get engaged to G and ended counselling.

As part of her interest in getting to know and understand herself better, Beth attended an intensive week-long therapy workshop. She had two critical experiences during that week. The first one involved Beth witnessing men working on their own problems. This was the first time she had ever known men who were comfortable showing their vulnerability. She was surprised and comforted to see that their feelings were not much different from her own. It helped her to feel more connected to them. The second one involved an exercise with four therapists who each took different roles as members of her family. Beth's goal was to confront her father and to finish what she had started those weeks before he died. Painfully, Beth finally told her father how she felt. Through doing the exercise, Beth realized that she had been fighting her father in every man she met, including her two

sons. She had been living in reaction to one-half of the population. Somehow through realizing this, she was set free. Soon, she began to laugh uncontrollably. She experienced a sense of wholeness or completion. It was exhilarating. She had finally escaped her father's grasp, and was free to live her own life in any way she pleased.

Today, Beth actively resists the influence of others. She refuses to do things to please others. She no longer needs their approval and acceptance. She provides that for herself. For instance, Beth decided to take a one year leave of absence from her doctoral program for health reasons. As she saw it, she got herself overloaded, so she would have to get herself un-overloaded. Before, she would have felt pressured to keep going because others may have seen it as a sign of failure or a lack of strength. Now, Beth makes decisions which feel right for her. Right or wrong, she gladly accepts the consequences because at least she is at the helm. As a result, Beth feels more alive, more optimistic, and more fully herself.

Now, nothing stops Beth. Her focus is different. As soon as she knows what she wants, she starts thinking about the ways that she can go about getting it, not about the ways that she cannot get it. No obstacle seems too great to overcome. Obstacles are viewed as challenges, not struggles to be endured. Maintaining her real

self requires a conscious effort. She has to actively fight off temptations to respond to others and to herself as the impostor. Beth sees her change as an ongoing process that does not end here. She is involved in exploring and knowing, growing and changing. She is committed to wellness both emotionally and physically, and shapes her life around these priorities.

Convergence. The movement from engulfment by others to self-guidance, evident in the first component, is also prominent in the personal narrative. The pattern of movement on the first component consists of cycles up and down, followed by a levelling off period. Each cycle up involved a confrontation where Beth was fighting for her real self. Each cycle up is followed by a dip down which involved an awareness or realization of being engulfed by others and not living her life authentically. Self-guidance and the setting of one's own personally meaningful goals happened only after Beth's marriage ended, which is reflected on the first component as the period of levelling off.

The theme of the second component involves taking steps to realize purposes despite feeling a host of negative emotions and receiving no support. This theme is also evident in the personal narrative, for example, returning to college at 29 after having been a housewife for 12 years and with a husband who was in complete opposition to the idea. It was only after her father's

death that she began to feel more confident and optimistic about
charting her own course, which is shown on the second component as
an upward swing.

Given the two components, the overall theme of change seems to
be that in order to become self-guided one must act on one's own
meaning, even when support is withdrawn and one feels anxious,
depressed, and has no confidence. Overall, there is clear
convergence between the two principal components and the personal
narrative, with the narrative portraying the transformation more
completely and precisely.

Case Study Ten: Don

Don is a 38 year old man, the second born of a family of four children. He comes from a middle class, Catholic background. Don is a recovering alcoholic and attends AA meetings on a regular basis. He has 6 years of sobriety. Don is divorced with a 10 year old son. He works as a substance abuse counsellor in a residential treatment program for adolescents, and occasionally as a musician.

Principal component analysis. The first principal component accounted for 34% of the variance in the Q-sorts. Since the factor loadings of events show clear improvement in personal agency, ranging from beginning loadings of -.30 and .09 to end loadings of .69 and .45, this component describes what the change meant to him in terms of the theoretical items. To define this component, all item factor scores exceeding plus or minus 1.5 were extracted. In order of magnitude, these items are listed below, and phrased to characterize the positive outcome or ending. The negative beginning is the opposite of each item.

Did not feel anxious (2.51)

Did not feel depressed (2.30)

Felt powerful, not helpless (2.17)

Felt confident (2.08)

Felt like a worthy person (1.98)

Saw failure as my own doing (1.73)

Felt in control of my life, not pushed around (1.58)

The second component accounted for 14% of the variance in the Q-sorts. The factor loadings of events range from -.32 at the beginning of .64 at the end. The second component shows an even more dramatic improvement in personal agency than the first component. Using the same extraction procedure, the defining items are listed below and phrased to characterize the positive outcome.

Took an active approach to improve or develop myself

(2.13)

Was helped by the example set by other people (1.97)

Did not think that my failure would be due to other

people and/or circumstances (1.96)

Was not too easily influenced by others (1.89)

Took specific steps to realize purposes (1.89)

Took an active approach to obstacles and difficulties,

not a passive one (1.60)

The change reflected on the first component primarily concerns a shift in feelings (less anxiety and depression, more power, confidence, self-worth and control). It also reflects a change in thinking, that is, believing that one's failure is one's own responsibility. In contrast, the change reflected on the second component involves more specific features of action. For example, he took steps to improve himself, to realize purposes, and to overcome difficulties. While he resisted the influence of others,

he was open to the examples set by other people, and did not blame them or his circumstances for his failure. These changes in action preceded and accompanied changes in feeling. The pattern of change on the first component cycles up near the beginning, is followed by an extended period of lows in the middle, and ends with a steady upward climb toward a dramatically higher level of agency (see Appendix A, Case Study Ten). The pattern of change on the second component also shows a cycle of ups and downs with one sustained relapse, and then a gradual but steady improvement toward a stronger sense of agency.

Personal narrative. Don's father died suddenly when he was 7 years old. Shortly after his father's death, his mother had a nervous breakdown and the four children were split up and sent to live with various relatives. Don was not told of his father's death and remembers this time as chaotic, and filled with uncertainty. Eventually, his older brother told him what had happened. Upon hearing the news of his father's death, Don remembers holding back his feelings, being numb and feeling confused. Throughout this whole period of time no adult ever offered any guidance or support to Don. Eventually, the children returned home to live with their mother and she remarried. In high school, Don got involved in alcohol and drugs, and was suspended from school in grade 11 for a drug-related incident. He never went back.

When Don was 18, he hitchhiked across Canada and settled in a new city. Three years later, he met J and they started to go out together. During this year, Don began to drink quite heavily. By 1975, he had had several offenses related to alcohol and was facing his first conviction. In 1976, Don and J were married. For the first couple of years of their marriage, Don was on his best behaviour. He was drinking and doing drugs, but he was having long periods of "clean" time as well.

In 1977, Don and J attended a Christmas party. After getting drunk, Don wanted to give a ride home to one of the guests who also had had too much to drink. J said "no", and told the guest to take a taxi instead. While J was driving home, Don started arguing with her about what she had done. Don flew into a rage and punched J in the face as she was trying to drive. He started to grab at the steering wheel and she had to pull over. She got out of the car and ran as fast as she could to get away from him. Don chased her and knocked her to the ground.

A young fellow drove up, saw what was going on, stopped and got out of his car. He put himself between Don and J which was a courageous thing to do considering how drunk and violent Don was. He offered to drive J home, but she wanted to drive herself home and quickly left. Then he offered Don a ride despite being very upset by what he had seen. As they drove home, something inside Don was very touched by the genuine concern and the non-judgemental

stance taken by this young guy. The next day, Don felt very guilty

about the incident and was filled with shame and remorse. J

accused Don of being unable to stop drinking. They talked about

getting help, but did not follow through and the whole thing seemed

to fade away into the background. Over the next year, there were

no major incidents within the marriage, although Don's drinking had

had some serious ramifications at work.

In 1980, Don and J moved 3,000 miles away to live on a farm

owned by J and her family. J's brother also lived with them. J

was 8 months pregnant at the time. On the morning of his son's

birth, Don felt terribly inadequate because he had no driver's

license and J had to drive herself to the hospital while in labour.

During labour, she asked Don to leave the hospital room in order to

get some food. Don felt rejected and left out. During the

delivery, Don was asked to return. Much to his disappointment, he

was asked to stand by J's head. He felt distant and uninvolved.

He wondered why he wasn't feeling more and asked himself, "Is this

all there is?" He didn't feel in control. J was at the steering

wheel; it was her baby. He felt ineffectual and inadequate. After

the baby was born and put in the nursery, Don went out to the car

and drank some more beer to calm himself down.

Things were not working out on the farm, so they moved to a

cottage also owned by J and her family. Don tried to put some

distance between J and her family in order to gain some control; he

felt outnumbered and overpowered by them. When J's uncle cut off the only road access available to the cottage, it led to a physical confrontation which involved the police. After the access road Don built was blocked by both the city and J's brothers, Don was convinced that there was a conspiracy against him and he felt more and more threatened and anxious. He drank to numb these difficult feelings and the marriage became even more strained.

One night after drinking, Don came home and started bullying J and throwing pots and pans around. J became frightened and took the baby to her father's house. The police were called. Having the police involved intimidated Don and he was very threatened by J and the baby being at his father-in-law's. The overriding fear was of losing his son. After that evening, Don tried desperately to convince J that he was going to do something about his drinking. Don was enraged when J's father blocked her return home. He felt that his father-in-law was in control of his wife and his son. He had no control. "I am a victim and it's all being done to me. There's nothing I can do about it." Don felt completely helpless.

To impress J and to get her family off his back, Don went to an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting. It was intensely humiliating and degrading to stand up in front of all those people and reveal this part of himself. This was the first time he had ever identified himself as an alcoholic. Drinking, for Don, had always been associated with his masculinity, and he felt emasculated and

beaten, like he was giving up all his power and control. He trembled and felt sick to his stomach. Once it was said, there was some sense of relief. "That's it, I've said it. It's out in the open." At the same time though, he felt vulnerable and exposed. It was like J and her family finally had him where they wanted him; there was no escaping responsibility now.

Eventually, J returned home. Don remained sober for 6 months, and was on his best behaviour. He was convinced that his father-in-law was just waiting for him to make a mistake so that he could take away his son and his wife. He was filled with a sense of futility. It seemed that no matter what he did, he would never be good enough for J's father. The frustration and anxiety escalated. Unable to cope with the pressure and responsibility of sobriety and parenthood, Don retreated to a lounge to drink. The lounge represented a dark, cool, safe place where he could relax and hide from J and her father's watchful eyes.

Don's drinking led to another serious physical confrontation with J which left her with a black eye. There was a family reunion coming up and Don pleaded with J to tell everyone that she fell off a horse. At the reunion, family members suspiciously questioned both J and Don. J's family were all too aware of Don's history of drinking and violence, but Don's family was not. This was the first time that his behaviour had ever become public knowledge to

his own family. He felt ashamed and humiliated at having been found out, but not because of what he had done to J.

Six months after his son's birth, Don was drinking and driving with only a learner's license. He could not stop the car and drove right into a grocery store. There were lots of children around and, fortunately for Don, no one was hurt. This was the second time that Don was convicted of charges related to alcohol. The accident shook Don's wall of defenses. With each additional incident, it became harder to deny that he had a problem. Don felt like a worm on a hook struggling to get off; the harder he struggled, the more hooked he got.

Over the next couple of months, Don became more and more anxious and fearful that J was going to leave him, despite her assurances that she was not. Her leaving meant losing his son, which was an unbearable thought. One evening while Don was working at a group home overnight, he called J and asked her if she still loved him. She told him that she thought she did. The next morning when Don came home, she was gone. The house was empty and J and the baby were gone. His suspicions were confirmed; his worst fears had come true. She left a note which read: "I can't remain living this way, the tension, the fear, the hassles, the abuse. I've been thinking out my decision to leave for a long time. As long as alcohol is a part of your life I don't have the time or energy for you. This hurts so much. I'm not happy. There is a

separation agreement to sign at C.M.'s law office. Bye." Don

paced around the house like a trapped animal. He reread the note a

hundred times. He walked in and out of his son's bedroom over and

over again in disbelief. He wanted to scream, to cry, to throw up.

Despite having anticipated this scenario, he just could not believe

it had happened. He was enraged, out of control, wanting to strike

out.

For a long time Don did not know where J and his son were. He

searched everywhere for them to no avail. With no help from

anyone, he finally tracked them down. Eventually, they began a

dialogue again and arranged visits for Don with B (his son). On

one such visit, Don was so desperate that he decided to take

control and give himself some bargaining power. He took B to his

mother's home 4000 miles away. Soon the police were involved and B

was returned to J. Don felt defeated and beaten. He was sure now

that he had lost his son forever and there was nothing he could do

to prevent it. He was like a raw nerve, and soothed and comforted

himself with booze.

Several months passed by and Don and J started having some

contact again. There were periods of heavy drinking and sobriety.

J became the target for all of Don's rage and frustration. He did

destructive things like putting sugar in her gas tank. He held her

responsible for everything that had happened. He could accept

losing J, but not his son. This was not how he had envisioned

himself as a father. He felt completely inadequate and out of

control. Events were happening just as he had predicted. B was becoming less and less available to him. It was all being done to him; they were hitting him when he was down. Don was at a breaking point; he was in emotional chaos.

Don ended up in a detox centre. When he was released, J had moved away and no one would tell him where. He felt completely isolated and alone. There was nothing he could do. After months of searching for her, he finally located them in a town 2,500 miles away. He sold what he could and moved to this town to be near his son. After contacting J, and threatening to show up at the door with a gun, J gave him a real shock. She told him that the only way he was going to be able to visit with B was at the police station. It was a sad and pathetic scene, one he has never forgotten to this day. He held B in his arms and wept. He was so ashamed that it had come to this. It was the ultimate degradation to have to see his son under these conditions.

Over the following months, Don and J once again tried to repair their relationship. Don still thought the marriage had potential. They even lived together for a few months. Don continued drinking and J knew about it. It seemed like he was sabotaging the relationship. He had essentially given up on himself; he felt he just could not stop himself. J decided to move to another city and return to university to try to put her life

together. She wanted to do this alone. Don followed her once

again to be near his son. Another physical confrontation ensued

between Don and J's father and the police were called. After this

incident, Don knew that the marriage was over. He continued to

blame J and others for his problems and make excuses for himself.

Part of him did not really see himself as an alcoholic. Somehow,

he thought he was going to stop drinking magically, effortlessly.

He was emotionally drained, just barely hanging on. He felt like

giving up. Perhaps the anger toward J helped to keep him going.

After losing another job, Don got one at his son's day care

facility as a janitor. While it was difficult to be around

children, somehow it compensated for the loss of his own. He was

drinking heavily every day now. He felt worthless and inadequate.

He was trying so hard to be a part of a healthy world, but he felt

incapable. It was a bleak, black, lonely time. He had lost hope.

He resented that J had put her life back together and that his

family and friends were still in her life and not in his. Don

expressed his resentment by doing things like breaking into her

apartment and stealing things to pawn. One night, he waited for

her to come home and planned to cut her throat. He did not follow

through because he got tired after several hours of waiting and ran

out of beer. He wanted to destroy J. At one point, he actually

thought about destroying all of them, J, B, and himself. Don was

consumed with self-pity, self-loathing, rage, and hatred.

Don remembers feeling a kind of internal war. Part of him thought that the only way he could overcome the part of him that drank was to beat him down, get him to give up. "It was like I was doing everything I could to humiliate and degrade myself." Another part of him felt he could rebuild and just could not believe that he was doing all these horrendous things. By now, Don had been arrested and charged with at least 10 alcohol related incidents. He was spending most of his days shoplifting cigarettes and selling them in bars for money to support his drinking habit. He was just doing whatever he had to on a daily basis to support himself and his habit, and to numb the agony of losing his son.

One morning, the symptoms from his hangover (i.e., shakiness and nausea) were particularly bad and he knew he should not go out shoplifting in this physical state or he would get caught. He went ahead anyway and did get caught. He realized that he was pushing his luck and that he needed to shape up. He knew things were not going to get any better. He was emotionally exhausted, afraid, and desperate to get things back on track. His pattern had always been to quit drinking and to seek out help after an incident like this had occurred.

In 1983, Don contacted an alcohol and drug counselling service. A counsellor put Don on antabuse (a drug that acts as a deterrent by blocking the liver's ability to metabolize alcohol and inducing a violent physical reactions after 12 hours). After 6

months, Don stopped taking the antabuse, stopped seeing his
counsellor, and began drinking again. He wanted to stop, but the
need seemed too great. He was very isolated. One evening while
drinking, he called the crisis line spewing out hatred toward his
wife. He wanted J to hurt as much as he did. The crisis worker
became alarmed because she knew that Don's wife was scheduled to
drop off B for a visit. The call was traced and the police
arrived. They handcuffed Don and took him to the hospital for a
psychiatric evaluation. For Don, it was frightening to lose his
freedom like this because it interfered with his drinking. The
next day after his release, he headed straight to the bar. He was
proud of how he had managed to get things under control at the
hospital just in the nick of time. That was always the way,
pushing things right to the edge and then backing off just in time
to avoid losing it completely.

Don had lost all his friends by this time and his family
wanted nothing to do with him. He had few visitors apart from
drinking companions. One evening, an old high school buddy, M,
stopped by. He felt M was perhaps his only ally. Don started
talking about how he had messed up his life and began to cry. Soon
his crying turned into heavy sobbing and weeping. He trembled and
shook all over. This was the first time he had ever shared his
pain with anyone and it was hard to trust someone. It hurt so
much. M did the best possible thing he could have. He told Don

that he had no answers, but that he was willing to share his pain at that moment. It was a powerful experience to have someone listen and not turn away. Don felt exposed and vulnerable, but relieved. He seemed to have broken the cycle of numbing that had been there since his father's death. It felt like a war had ended. There was no more denial after this point, just the raw, naked truth to face.

On July 1, 1984, Don began going to AA again, which marked the beginning of his real commitment to sobriety. However, it was not all smooth sailing from there. Shortly after giving up alcohol, he took large doses of valium to reduce his anxiety about living life without liquor. After 6 months, Don went to see a doctor who specialized in chemical dependence. His withdrawal from valium felt far more severe than his withdrawal from alcohol. He was anxious, confused, and afraid, but at least he was allowing himself to feel something real. He had lost trust in himself a long time ago and was scared he would go back to drinking, but this time he did not. It was a major turning point to experience life without the aid of any substances.

AA was, and continues to be, instrumental in Don's recovery. Members of AA provide support, guidance, and adhere to a life philosophy that Don has found very useful in his recovery. The "Serenity Prayer" is AA's fundamental philosophy which states:

> God grant me the serenity to accept
> the things I cannot change,
> the courage to change the things I can,
> and the wisdom to know the difference.

Over time, and with the help of his AA sponser, Don began work on the "acceptance" part of the prayer. Eventually, he was able to realize things like having no control over his alcoholism. He was also able to realize that he was powerless to affect J's life or anyone else's for that matter. Through this process of acceptance, Don felt empowered. He also began work on the "courage" part of the prayer which involved beginning to change the things he had the power to change. Don had always been preoccupied with the illusion of control and was unaware of what he really had control over. He could change his drinking behaviour. He could change his substance abuse. He could change the way he expressed his anger. He worked hard on the last part of the prayer, and tried to improve his ability to tell the difference between the things he could change and the things he could not.

Another philosophy espoused by AA that served an important role in Don's recovery was to "fake it till you make it." Essentially, it means going through the motions of something long enough to eventually internalize it as a part of you. For instance, Don adopted a positive attitude on the outside, but inside he felt anything but positive. Over time, feeling positive became a natural state of being.

Don had originally attended AA in order to please his wife and to get her family off his back. By this time, he was doing it for himself. It was not to win back his wife or to get back his son. It was not something imposed on him from the outside, but came from inside him. In 1986, Don celebrated his first "clean and sober" year.

Before and sometimes after AA meetings, Don would play his guitar on the street, usually outside a liquor store. In his earlier days, he was a street musician to earn money to buy booze. Now, its purpose was completely different. It was for enjoyment. He felt good about singing for people, took pride in his music, and gained respect from others through doing it. After 5 years, he had built up quite a following. It helped to boost his confidence and self-esteem. Being a street musician also provided Don with an opportunity to practice talking to people while he was clean and sober. It took him two years before he was able to relax around others. Another thing that helped to reduce his anxiety was eliminating the contradictions in his life, like believing in non-violence yet beating his wife or loving his son yet drinking and driving with him in the car. When these beliefs became more in line with his behaviour, he felt less anxious.

Don decided to contact his brother who had refused to have anything to do with him for 6 years. Don was scared and awkward over dinner as they re-acquainted. After that evening, they

re-established their relationship and started doing things together again. One of those things was to celebrate each year of Don's sobriety at his AA meeting. Each year a person is given a cake as a marker of the year's accomplishment. Slowly, Don began to re-connect with family and friends. By the end of his third year of sobriety, he was having people over to his home for dinners and visits. He was regaining credibility not only with others, but with himself.

It had been hard for Don to hold down a job. At this point, he was unemployed and collecting welfare. He was given an opportunity to take a job training program. Three years of "clean" time were required in order to qualify. The program was a 9 month basic counselling course focused on substance abuse. While completing the course, Don became aware of a residential treatment centre for adolescents (P.H.) that he thought would be an ideal place to work. One of the requirements of his substance abuse course was to complete an agency assessment. Don selected P.H. to complete his agency assessment requirement as a way of introducing himself. He eventually applied for a night position and got the job. Don finished the 9 month training program. It was the first time he had ever completed anything. He felt a real sense of accomplishment. Upon completion, he applied for a day position as a substance abuse youth counsellor and got it. He had planned out, step by step, how to reach his goal and followed through on each

step, and it had paid off. He has been with this agency for two years. Although he enjoys his work, he wants more autonomy and more responsibility. He is ready now for a new challenge and intends on pursuing a graduate degree in Counselling Psychology.

Photographs of Don before the change reveal him as a sloppy, overweight, swollen-faced man with a mottled complexion. Today, Don exudes vitality. He is slim, well-groomed with clear, bright eyes and a healthy glow. On the inside, Don feels a zest and a gratitude for life. He is acting on the world, not solely being acted upon. He feels more in charge of his reactions and responses; they are no longer in charge of him. He is not at the emotional mercy of other people. Consequently, he does not have to hide or avoid his feelings. He can open up because he likes himself. Don is no longer completely focused on himself, so he has more emotional energy for others, particularly his son. Don used to blame others like J or her father for his lot in life. Now, he is able to take responsibility for the person he is. Part of taking responsibility for Don has been to deepen his understanding of the ways in which the events of his childhood relate to his adult life.

Don sets goals for himself and tackles them one step at a time, never letting himself get overwhelmed. This strategy has provided him with important "pay-offs" (e.g., sense of accomplishment, completion, credibility, respect) which, in turn,

have encouraged him to continue in the same direction. Don embraces change and sees it as a challenge, rather than as a threat - an opportunity to learn something. Don strives hard on a daily basis to fight off the allure of his old patterns; he can never take his sobriety for granted. Don feels that since he has been in recovery, he is starting to discover who he really is and life is finally being lived. To Don, it is a personal evolution that has only just begun.

For Don, the time sequence of events in the story was somewhat hazy. His account was refreshed and supported through charting his changeline and by reviewing an extensive set of documents he had kept over the years. Maintaining this extensive documentation is related to Don's desire to create a history for himself in order to compensate for having lost one with his father. Examples of this documentation include records of his criminal charges and court appearances, newspaper clippings related to his criminal activities, correspondence with lawyers, dates and times of appointments with counsellors and doctors, reports from counsellors, receipts and records from hospitals and detox centres, notes from his wife and others, and photographs.

Convergence. The change in feelings reflected on the first component is clearly evident in the personal narrative. At the beginning of the change, Don was depressed, anxious, and fearful. By the end, he felt more potent and in control, with more

self-confidence and a sense of self-worth. The change from being passive to being active reflected on the second component is also prominent in the personal narrative. Instead of just waiting for his alcoholism to magically disappear, he took specific steps to overcome it. A clear theme evident in both components and the personal narrative, is the belief that failure is one's own responsibility and is not to be blamed on someone else or one's circumstances. It appears that this change in thinking facilitated Don's taking charge of and responsibility for his own situation, and ultimately his own life.

Given the two components, the overall theme of change seems to be this. If one takes an active approach to problems, not blaming failure on people and circumstances, but rather just taking definite steps one by one, a person will gain a sense of worth, confidence, and control, and overcome depression and anxiety. While this theme of change seems to correspond with his transformation, it is also rather general, lacking the precision and completeness of the personal narrative.

Validation

1. Co-researcher Self-reviews

Each co-researcher was asked to read and to study their narrative accounts with two questions in mind. First, did the account accurately portray your experience? Second, did the account leave out anything of central importance? Some co-researchers chose to read their narratives alone while others requested that the researcher be present. The overall tenor of the co-researchers' self-reviews was uniformly positive. Most co-researchers offered a variety of direct statements affirming the accuracy of the narratives, such as "It really fits," "It makes sense," "It characterizes me well," "I'm seeing my thoughts and saying 'yes' to them". One co-researcher reported amazement at not having to change anything.

Some co-researchers had objections on minor points and offered clarifications. Some requested small and subtle adjustments. Any point that was questioned, however slight, was checked and, if necessary, the narrative was modified to incorporate the concern. Several co-researchers initiated further contact with the researcher by telephone over the following days and weeks in order to offer further suggestions or comments. In every case, there was

a strong and enthusiastic effort on the part of the co-researcher
to strive for exactitude in description.

In addition to direct statements of agreement, there were many
non-verbal confirming reactions. Most co-researchers appeared to
be visibly moved when reading their narratives. Some looked a
little shocked or overwhelmed, some cried, some nodded over and
over again in agreement, and some sighed heavily throughout the
reading. Of the co-researchers that read their narratives alone,
some reported feeling moved to tears and pointed out the parts that
were particularly touching.

These reactions, both verbal and non-verbal, suggest that the
narratives were highly meaningful for co-researchers. Many
co-researchers reported that seeing their experience from a
different perspective (i.e., in written form using a pseudonym) was
illuminating, provided clarity, and acted as a stimulant for new
insights in the form of making new connections or identifying
patterns that were previously unseen. One co-researcher captured
many of the others' sentiments when she said, "You know, it's like
reading about somebody you don't even know anymore. That person is
nothing like me now." Another co-researcher described it as "an
important marker of change and progress."

While some co-researchers were inspired through reading their
own stories of change, others felt pain as they relived old

experiences. One co-researcher said "It was like a near death experience, my life passed before my eyes." Later she said, "there was a lot of sadness; I felt like throwing up as I read it." Another co-researcher said, "seeing how I used to be, so docile, is quite unsettling." Another co-researcher summarized his experience this way.

> Reading this was painful, and mostly sad recalling these events. At times I felt tears. It was more painful to read this story than telling the story. To see the story in black and white is more concrete and triggers my feelings more intensely than when I told the story orally.

Unsolicited Comments

Many co-researchers expressed comments regarding their participation in the study that were unsolicited by the researcher. Since there were too many comments to include, two were selected and are presented below. One co-researcher described his experience in this way, "I felt comfortable sharing with you. I felt important with you. I've never done this before. It wasn't clinical, mechanical. We shared a very human relationship. I like that." Another co-researcher requested copies of all her audiotapes because she felt it would be beneficial to listen to them on her own and to have them for future reference. She described her involvement in the study this way.

> I think I've probably been saying this alot, but I want to say it again. Whatever the usefulness of this to your study and to others, I want to emphasize that it has probably been of

more value to me. It has been immensely useful for me to do
this; to tell the story of my life, in a concentrated way, to
someone who I never saw before and who had no investment in
how it was I was telling it or what it was I was saying beyond
the basic 'fit' that you were looking for at the beginning. I
didn't have to impress you; there was no need that I had to
meet of yours. It was simply an opportunity and a privilege
to take this many hours to tell my whole story and be able to
see how it all fit together. It has given me an opportunity
to make sure that all the doors and windows in all those rooms
are open, not all hidden or secret even from me. It's been an
inestimably large gift and I am very grateful for it, both to
you and to S who put you onto me.

Comments such as these were interpreted by the researcher as

evidence of co-researchers' experience of empowerment in

participating in the study, and of the meaningfulness of the

results for them.

2. <u>Independent Reviews</u>

<u>Independent Review #1</u>

You didn't ask leading questions. You just used good
listening, summary, and clarification techniques. I think
your style was unbiased. It sounded like you had a nice blend
of humour and sensitivity which relaxed the subject. The Case
Study write-up and the audiotapes corresponded. The story was
written clearly and was free of any obvious distortion. All
the <u>important</u> things seemed to be included. Very impressive,
makes me want to do this kind of research! But, what an
incredible amount of work.

<u>Independent Review #2</u>

PART I

The Case Study write-up appeared to me to accurately reflect
the person's story. In addition, I believe the write-up
conveys the nuances and the flavour intended to be conveyed in
the story by the subject. The subject talked freely. You did
not interfere with his ability to tell his story. Your
questions seemed to assist the subject in making connections
and in elaborating on his statements. You helped the subject
tease out the meanings he attributed to events in his story.

PART II

I was impressed by the lack of your involvement during the
interview. The client talked, unfolding his experience. Your
presence during the interview appeared to simply provide the
subject with forum in which to express himself. Your unbiased
listening style supported the subject's efforts to
self-disclose. I did not detect any distortions or omissions
in the Case Study that took away from understanding the Case
Subject and his story.

Independent Review #3

1. The experience of listening to the interview was one of
   listening to a story. The person told her story in her
   own unique way without interference from you. I did not
   detect any leading questions or instances of you trying to
   influence her story. Your responses seemed to encourage
   her and at times served to clarify her story.

2. The research subject was communicating her story of her
   movement from being a powerless insignificant person to
   one with confidence, purpose, and a strong sense of self.

3. (a) The case study write-up accurately portrays what the
       research subject intended to communicate. It captures
       in a written form the essence of her story.

   (b) Nothing of importance to the understanding of the Case
       Study seemed to be omitted or distorted.

Independent Review #4

The case study write-up accurately portrays what the subject
seemed to be communicating. The interviewer's comments were
empathic and clarifying; in no way were comments leading.
There are no major omissions, just colorful details which
portray this subject's zest for life are missing; there are no
distortions of the subject's story. Her story of moving from
an outward search for happiness to looking within herself was
exciting to hear and read!

    This reviewer emphasized that the co-researcher's

excitement about her change and the peacefulness of her

current state were not captured in the written account.

Independent Review #5

Your research subject was clearly into his story without any
interference from you. It is obvious he felt very comfortable
and relaxed because he was so open. Your responses show
reflection and empathy. Your questions do the same and are in
no way leading.

The case study writings were accurately done and covered the
key statements of the tapes. Your account of the tapes is
easy to read and understand. You are able to cut through the
superfluous material and capture the essence of what your
subject is saying. There does not appear to be any distortion
between the tapes and the case writing.

Independent Review #6

A. The case study write up accurately portrays the key
    content and meaning that significant aspects of her life
    and her inner work and process had for her.

    The interviewer is objective and asks no leading
    questions. Primarily, the interviewer role is one of
    encouragement and support. The "subject"/co-researcher
    actively relates her story with little need for the
    interviewer to interrupt.

    Interviewer simply brings subject back to previous issue
    when interrupted and occasionally summarizes feelings or
    content.

B. No distortions or omissions. Important content was
    included.

    This reviewer also mentioned in a conversation over the

telephone that the narrative account did not capture the

excitement the co-researcher had as she talked about her

change.

Independent Review #7

1. During the interview, you maintained a very neutral,
   unbiased stance. Your interjections were limited to
   questions seeking clarification, elaboration, connections
   or to minimal encouragers. I felt that you allowed
   Margaret to tell her own story at her own pace.

3a. The account is accurate in capturing the essence of
   Margaret's account on the audiotape. You have translated
   it into a narrative form which makes it more immediately
   accessible to a reader but you have not distorted it in
   any way. I especially like that in many instances you
   have used Margaret's own words and phrases.

3b. Nothing of importance was left out of the account, nor
   added to it, that could distort the reader's understanding
   of what Margaret is saying about her life.

Independent Review #8

You did a great job summarizing Don's story: the major
events, the turning points, and experiences. You just let the
story come out, allowing him the freedom to describe his
experience in his own words. You had a nonintrusive stance,
breaking in only to clarify certain points or clarify what the
link was between what you are being told now and what Don had
just finished telling you. I was impressed by how you
maintained this stance throughout the hours of interviewing.

I noticed that he commented several times how he could not
understand certain events at the time they happened. Only
later, looking back, did he find he could understand what had
been happening and the significance of it.

I know "Don". I have known him for twenty-three years. This
account accurately reflects what I know about his life. My
first impression was: amazement! I was amazed how well his
story had been captured.

Based on what I know of his life and comparing the written
summary to the taped interviews, I noticed only one slight
difference. Don's telling of his story emphasizes his
problems with alcohol. He mentions the other drugs but his
telling doesn't reflect the same degree of involvement in
other drugs that I recall. He was a walking drug store at
least in the '70s and early '80s. Similarly, the written
transcript doesn't really pick up on the significance of this
other drug use. The description of it being harder coming off
the valium than the alcohol is there, but somehow the
significance of this is not emphasized as much as it was in
the interview.

A great job distilling a very long set of interviews. I can
only imagine how hard it is to tell the story of a man who so
loves to tell stories!

Don's referral to the study came through a doctoral

student who later agreed, upon Don's suggestion, to serve as

the independent reviewer for his case. Don was consulted on

the point raised by the independent reviewer regarding his

drug use. Don reported that alcohol generally preceded taking

drugs. When intoxicated he would "throw caution to the wind"

and do crazy things like let strangers inject him with drugs.

He said "he would take anything into his body in order to feel

comfortable in his own skin". After his marriage in 1976,

alcohol was a more socially acceptable way to numb his pain

although he still took drugs. From his perspective, "a drug

is a drug is a drug," and given that it was usually alcohol

that primed him for the use of drugs, he chose to focus on

that.

Don also asked to have his ex-wife review the narrative. He felt that her input may provide another valuable perspective. The written notations offered by J were generally to clarify a minor point such as a date or to describe her own experience. For example, in describing the physical confrontation that led to her black eye, she wrote that it was the "most destructive moment of my life; you would have killed me if B (their son) hadn't woken up. There was no remorse the next morning. Our marriage ended at this point in time in my mind." At the end of the narrative J wrote, "Congratulations with your accomplishments. My comments throughout the text are quite insignificant as related to the paper's focus. It's quite upsetting to recall many of these events."

Independent Review #9

1. The interviews were open and non-judgmental. There was no obvious or blatant bias at all. Mostly, you just encouraged the person to clarify, elaborate, or make connections.

2. The account accurately reflects what the person said. You more or less smoothed out what was said into a readable narrative.

3. Nothing of importance seemed to be left out, just lengthy anecdotes of little direct relevance.

CHAPTER V

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

The narrative accounts presented in Chapter IV are based upon

a synthesis of the qualitative evidence from interviews and the

quantitative evidence from Q-sorts. These ten accounts of

transformation constitute the core research product of the study.

The aim of this chapter is to utilize these results as the basis

for a comparative analysis. This chapter attempts to take the

results one step further, perhaps more speculatively, to those

areas which appear to be common to everyone making this change.

Comparative Analysis

The comparative analysis is an attempt to extract commonality

from the ten individual accounts of transformation. The task is to

"work through particularity toward universality" (Cochran &

Claspell, 1987, p. 39). The aim is to formulate a beginning

description of the common pattern that makes up the phenomenon of a

transformation of human agency.

The challenge of the comparative analysis was to identify and

to extract commonality from such apparent diversity. Initially,

the narratives appeared to be full of a bewildering collection of

seemingly unconnected information. There were women and men of

varying ages, backgrounds, and personalities who had experienced

varying events and relationships in varying circumstances,

settings, and situations. In order to manage this diversity

systematically, the comparative analysis involved two main

strategies. First, a review of all the accounts as a whole.

Second, a review of individual accounts as parts of the whole.

When the accounts were viewed as a whole, a significant

commonality concerning the form or movement of the transformation

emerged. Based upon convergence between the quantitative evidence

from Q-sorts and the qualitative evidence from interviews, the data

suggested that a transformation of human agency tended to be

cyclic. That is, movement from the beginning of the transformation

to the end of the transformation tended to go in cycles, up and

down, up and down. Cycles up were described by co-researchers as

experiential highs, whereas cycles down were described as

experiential lows. As co-researchers reflected retrospectively on

these low cycles, they were felt to be critical to the

transformation experience. Each cycle, whether it was high or low

was described as vital in helping the co-researcher move forward in

the process of change. While the movement associated with each

co-researchers' transformation was unique and idiosyncratic, its

essential form was consistently cyclic. The variation between

co-researchers was either in the size of the cycles or the

position of the cycles on the change continuum (see Appendix A).

For some co-researchers, their transformations involved extreme cycles of change. There were big swings up indicating soaring improvement and huge plunges down indicating devastating setbacks. For others, cycles were less dramatic, with each cycle set at a progressively higher level. Some co-researchers had a mixture of smaller and larger cycles interlaced with periods of steady upward movement or periods of sustained relapses. In all cases, cycles culminated at a higher level marking the end of the transformation and indicating a dramatic increase in personal agency. Some people showed a period of levelling off following this culmination. Others showed periods of mild cycling which indicated continuing change, but at the higher level.

Another significant commonality emerged from the accounts when viewed as a whole. There appeared to be two dominant patterns across the ten individual accounts. A careful review of individual accounts or the parts uncovered a series of common themes associated with each of the two dominant patterns. In the next section, the two patterns and the series of themes associated with each pattern are presented along with the process by which each was discerned.

I. <u>Orientation of Encagement</u>

The first dominant pattern that emerged from the accounts concerned co-researchers' sense of encagement. All the co-researchers experienced feeling or perceiving themselves to be encaged or entrapped in some way. To be encaged was to be confined, imprisoned, limited, restricted, contained, or immobilized. One co-researcher described it as "being stuck in a box one size too small". An orientation of encagement refers to the framework for living co-researchers had adopted for themselves and the ways in which co-researchers experienced themselves as encaged in the world. Thoughts, feelings, and behaviour, as well as relationships and circumstances were affected by co-researchers' orientations.

Once the pattern of encagement was identified, an exhaustive list of the ways in which co-researchers experienced their encagement was formed. An effort was made to be sensitive to both internal and external experiences of encagement. Internal experiences were things like thoughts, feelings, or actions. External experiences were things like contexts or events. Both implicitly and explicitly stated experiences of encagement were also included on the list. The final step involved clustering the individual experiences of encagement into general themes based on their similarity or commonality. Each theme was then titled with a descriptive phrase that best captured the collective meaning across

experiences. Once the themes were identified, they were checked against the narratives to ensure that they faithfully reflected the co-researcher's descriptions of experience.

In order to fully understand the meaning of an orientation of encagement, one must look to the themes extracted from the co-researchers' descriptions of experience. There were nine common themes: (1) sense of worthlessness, (2) sense of incompetence, (3) trapped in circumstances, (4) trapped in relationships, (5) confined by emotions, (6) confined by beliefs and attitudes, (7) numbness, (8) sense of isolation from others, and (9) lack of authenticity. Before each theme is presented for individual elaboration, it is important to note two points. One, for the purposes of organization, themes are presented individually in a linear list form. This presentation is limited and somewhat misleading. While these themes emerged as natural clusters, they did not exist within the narrative accounts as individually separate and distinct, but rather as interwoven, overlapping aspects of a whole experience. No one theme stood in isolation from any of the others. Two, the emphasis placed on individual themes was not necessarily the same across the ten individual co-researchers. For example, while Fay experienced all the themes, the one that dominated her account was "lack of authenticity", whereas for Lee "numbness" dominated other themes.

1. Sense of Worthlessness

One of the common ways co-researchers experienced being encaged was through feeling a sense of worthlessness. Co-researchers' sense of worthlessness was variously described as feeling unacceptable, feeling insignificant, feeling devalued by others, feeling fundamentally flawed, feeling a lack of self-esteem or self-respect, having little or no value, and not believing in oneself.

Co-researchers' sense of worthlessness was experienced differently depending upon their circumstances or context. Some co-researchers, like Ray and Tom, felt a sense of worthlessness as a result of an incapacitating trauma. Both were faced with being unable to do the things that they used to be able to do. Valued physical attributes were gone, and so their sense of worth seemed gone. The essential experience was one of "I'm not able to have an impact and therefore, I'm of little or no value."

Other co-researchers experienced a more enduring sense of worthlessness rooted in childhood. For example, Glen and Lee both felt that they were worthless and unacceptable because they seemed to fall short of parental expectations. Their essential experience was one of "I'm not good enough, so I deserve whatever I get." Beth and Brenda felt devalued by their parents because they were females. Brenda described it as feeling like "defective goods".

Their essential experience was one of "I don't matter; I'm a nobody." Others like Carol and Fay felt different from other people and, therefore, socially unacceptable because of a sexual orientation that is disapproved of by society in general. Their experience of worthlessness took the form of "I don't belong."

Despite the variety of ways in which people experienced a lack of self-worth, the core experience common to all co-researchers was a deep yearning for acceptance either from parents, from significant others, or from society in general. In the cases of Ray and Tom, worthlessness was also experienced as a longing for self-acceptance in the sense of accepting a new physical reality. This lack of self-worth permeated virtually every aspect of co-researchers' lives, acting as a guiding principle that coloured their thoughts, feelings, and actions. It was like a kind of mental prison that co-researchers felt stuck in, where they favoured the familiar and feared change. They felt consumed by a sense of hopelessness. With this sense of hopelessness, they felt little or no sense of future.

2. Sense of Incompetence

Another common experience of encagement across the narratives was a sense of incompetence. While a sense of worthlessness refers to the way co-researchers felt about their value or worth, a sense

of incompetence refers to the way co-researchers felt about their skills or abilities to affect outcomes. Generally, co-researchers' sense of incompetence fueled their sense of worthlessness and vice versa. People variously described their experience of incompetence as feeling inadequate, incapable, ineffectual, impotent, and as having little or no confidence.

Some co-researchers, like Ray and Tom, experienced a diminished sense of capacity as a result of traumatic events. Stripped of their previous skills and abilities, they were left feeling a lack of self-competence. The resulting dependence created by their physical disabilities reinforced this sense of incompetence. For example, Tom felt even more like an incompetent because he was unable to manage basic bodily functions on his own without outside assistance.

Other co-researchers felt an enduring sense of incompetence. For some, this sense of incompetence was confined to specific domains such as achievements or relationships. In these instances, people felt that they lacked the requisite abilities, capacities, skills, resources, or qualities for effective action in their respective situations. For other co-researchers, a sense of incompetence was not confined to one or two domains, but was generalized to all aspects of their lives. These people felt an overall sense of being unable or incapable of getting what they

wanted or needed in the world. They also felt unable to handle
what life had to offer and at the same time, felt unable to change
it. Don described his sense of inadequacy in this way, "I am a
victim and it's all being done to me. There's nothing I can do
about it."

Whether co-researchers' experience of incompetence was induced
through circumstances or enduring, the net effect was to limit the
person. New opportunities and experiences were left untapped.
Risks and challenges were avoided. Skills and abilities remained
undeveloped. Co-researchers felt trapped by a sense of
helplessness that fed the existing sense of hopelessness.

3. Trapped in Circumstances

The two previous themes, sense of worthlessness and sense of
incompetence, were internal experiences of encagement. In addition
to internal experiences of encagement, there were also experiences
that were external and contextual in nature. For example,
co-researchers commonly felt trapped in their circumstances.
Whether these circumstances were actual or perceived, internally or
externally induced, the experience of entrapment was real for each
person.

For example, Ray and Tom were both victims of traumatic
circumstances. As well, beyond the very real physical limitations

imposed upon them by their physical disabilities, they also felt

trapped by other related circumstances. For instance, they both

felt imprisoned by the institutions to which they were confined.

Ray likened the institution to a "dungeon" and Tom described it as

"a prison with endless restrictions and regulations".

Other co-researchers like Glen yearned for freedom from living

under his father's rule. Since he could not physically leave home

because he was too young, he escaped mentally by creating a fantasy

world. Retrospectively, Margaret described life in a monastery as

an infringement upon her freedom. Everything was decided for her

from the time she rose in the morning to the time she retired in

the evening. The world, reality, was shut out.

Lee felt trapped by the system. Trying to secure employment

after having been on welfare for 18 months was like trying to find

a job as an ex-convict. Carol felt trapped by her lack of

education. She felt incapable of communicating to others and,

consequently, did not communicate with others. She chose jobs,

relationships, and experiences that were consistent with this

belief. Beth chose to deny her husband's emotional abuse and

neglect because she was 17 and pregnant, and needed an escape from

her physically abusive father. Despite the diversity in

circumstances, the common effect was clear. Co-researchers'

opportunities for growth, expansion, and development were limited

by their circumstances and, consequently, the range of options or choices available to them were narrower.

4. Trapped in Relationships

This theme is a subset of the previous theme, "trapped in circumstances". It was featured prominently in so many of the accounts that it seemed deserving of its own categorization. Whether it was an objective reality or a perceived reality, many co-researchers felt trapped in relationships. Co-researchers variously described these relationships as dominating, oppressive, controlling, destructive, narrow, stagnant, limiting, disappointing, unfulfilling, and dissatisfying. In each case, the relationship(s) was perceived as vital, essential, and, at the same time, unchangeable and inescapable. Co-researchers described their experience of entrapment in relationships in many ways. There was a sense of not living their own lives, of being defined by someone else, of denying themselves, of losing themselves, of giving themselves up, and of being swallowed up or engulfed.

For example, many of the female co-researchers felt trapped in their marriages by having internalized the partriarchal belief that their identities and their merit as women was achieved through a connection to a man. By having no identity separate from the man, a failed marriage was viewed as a reflection of a failure as a

person. In an effort to avoid failure, they kept trying to make

the relationship(s) work. In the narrative, Fay's experience of

her second marriage was described in this way.

> In this relationship that she was determined to make work, she
> was utterly subservient, B's old lady. She did not want to be
> a loser again, as B often reminded her, but in trying to
> succeed, she had given herself up. She was B's caretaker and
> rescuer. She was defined largely by him and he continually
> told her that she was not attractive, not trustable, and not
> very smart.

In addition to trying hard to avoid failure, co-researchers like

Beth were trapped by having no vision of marriage beyond what she

was used to, that is, her parent's marriage. As long as her

husband did not hit her, everything else was tolerable, including

his emotional abuse and neglect. Carol was trapped by her sense of

obligation and stayed married to an alcoholic man because she felt

she should not abandon him. Leaving him never occurred to her.

When co-researchers were trapped in relationships, they were

unhappy but unable to see a way out. They could see no

alternatives or options, so they endured. The result of enduring

varied among co-researchers. Co-researchers variously reported

being depressed and anxious, having a sense of helplessness and

hopelessness, feeling a sense of aloneness and loneliness,

suppressing feelings like anger or resentment, displacing anger

onto self, and gaining weight.

5. <u>Confined by Emotions</u>

Another common experience of encagement for co-researchers was feeling confined by their emotions. Some of the prominent confining emotions were fear, depression, anger, guilt, and anxiety. It is important to note that these emotions per se were not necessarily confining. Emotions can take many forms. For example, anger can be very functional if it is converted into determination. Guilt can inspire regret and feelings of responsibility that can push people into action. Depression can sometimes propel a person into a period of introspective self-examination which can lead to a major decision or a pronounced inner change. Clearly, there are constructive and destructive ways of handling emotions. Whether the emotion is constructive or destructive seems to depend upon the meaning we give to it. As a theme associated with the pattern of encagement, the focus is on how certain emotions configured to confine the person. For co-researchers, confinement was experienced as being so consumed or overwhelmed by an emotion that they were unable to be aware of, consider, or act in any other way.

For many co-researchers, fear was a confining emotion. Some people feared dependency or vulnerability, so they closed off certain thoughts or feelings. Other people experienced a fear of failing, and so they avoided taking risks or meeting new challenges. Some feared rejection and acted in inauthentic in ways

to avoid disapproval. Others feared exposure or discovery, and so they actively held their real selves back.

Depression immobilized some co-researchers. Carol's depression led her to withdraw and to isolate herself from family, friends, and other people in general. Carol's depression also had physical accompaniments. She gained weight, developed rashes on her body, lost patches of her hair, and wore dark clothes. For 6 years, she was immoblized and it never occurred to her to do anything about her situation except to pray to God to save her. Glen understood his depression as anger turned inward. His anger was characterized by intense feelings of helplessness and despair which he described as "a dark, lifeless pit". He, too, gained weight, isolated himself, and at times used fantasy as a means of escape.

Anger led Brenda to feel trapped by her emotions. She angrily fought for what she felt she deserved, but never received. She directed this "strong, restless energy" onto herself by doing things like throwing herself out of a moving car on a freeway and swallowing a whole bottle of valium. Guilt plagued both Carol and Glen. Carol felt guilty about being a lesbian and leaving her alcoholic husband, and so she stayed with him. Glen felt guilty about not living up to his father's expectations, and so he internalized his anger. Anxiety overwhelmed and consumed Don. He

felt like a "raw nerve" and turned to drugs and alcohol to soothe himself.

6. Confined by Beliefs and Attitudes

Another common way that co-researchers experienced encagement was through feeling confined by their beliefs and attitudes. They were confined by what they thought; limited and constrained by the sense they had of what was possible. Co-researchers' conceptions of what was possible limited awareness, acted as a barrier to understanding, limited or impeded action, and created a certain insensitivity to new input. For example, early exposure to members of the lesbian population convinced both Carol and Fay that being a lesbian meant being crazy or getting locked up. Acknowledging and acting upon their lesbian orientations were not real options because they had not encountered models whom they could respect and admire. Both women turned to marriages with men as a result of their beliefs.

Tom was told by doctors that he would never breathe on his own again without the use of a ventilator. Until another doctor, one year later, told him there was a chance he could breathe a little on his own, he perceived himself to be incapable of breathing on his own. Since he perceived himself to be incapable, he was incapable. Similarly, because Beth could not conceptualize a

better relationship with a man, it did not exist and she stayed
trapped in an emotionally abusive marriage. Brenda believed that
marriage would be the answer to all her problems and that the right
man would meet all her emotional needs. This belief kept her
trapped in a viscious cycle of destructive relationships. Don
thought that his problems were the fault of others. As long as Don
believed that the source or the solution to his problems was in
someone else, he felt powerless to change his situation.

Some imprisoning beliefs and attitudes were diffuse and
subterranean, escaping discovery and articulation until revealed by
an opportunity, a choice, or an outcome at odds with the unknown
but prevailing expectation. For example, Glen believed that
happiness and a feeling of worth would result only from securing
his father's acceptance and approval by becoming a doctor. Only
when he took his trip to Europe did he realize that there were
other routes to a feeling of value and satisfaction that had
nothing to do with his father. Margaret believed that Catholicism
was the only "right" spiritual perspective. Only when she was
re-oriented by another point of view did she realize how narrow and
constrained her belief had been.

Co-researchers' beliefs and attitudes became cages from which
there was no apparent escape. Being confined by beliefs and
attitudes for co-researchers meant not having options because they

remained unseen, not developing skills because they remained

unpracticed, and not understanding patterns because they could not

be apprehended from the present perspective. Finally, and most

profoundly, it meant not discovering the self because the person's

sense of self had been rigidly defined.

7. Numbness

Encagement was commonly experienced by co-researchers as a

numbness. Unlike being confined by emotions, numbing refers to a

closing off or a shutting down of emotions. Numbing involved the

active suppression of feelings that were perceived to be

unacceptable, dangerous, or toxic in some way. Co-researchers

decided, either consciously or unconsciously, that there were no

other options open to them except to not feel. Underneath the

numbness were painful feelings such as guilt, fear, anger, anxiety,

and worthlessness. The underlying threat of such feelings was of

being overwhelmed or of losing control. Numbing was a strategy

that provided co-researchers with protection and a way to escape

from these feelings that the person felt powerless to manage.

Co-researchers used a variety of external aids, consciously

and unconsciously, to numb the pain, such as alcohol, drugs, sex,

or relationships. Others used various mental strategies like

blocking, denying, or distancing themselves emotionally in order to

escape from their feelings. Brenda's search for relief from her

misery led to a variety of strategies, including the following

one.

> There were times when Brenda was so miserable that she pounded
> her head against a wall hoping to knock herself out. She
> could feel herself on the edge of a cliff wanting to step off,
> perhaps into insanity. Part of her wanted to have a complete
> breakdown, to be taken away, and taken care of. She could not
> stand to feel anything. The problem was that she felt
> everything so intensely and no one ever seemed to respond to
> her. What she wanted was to stop feeling so miserable, not to
> die.

For Lee, numbing became a way of life. As a child, he learned

to numb his feelings in order to survive. Eventually, he came to

believe that expressing his feelings was not possible because he

was unacceptable as the person he was. Instead, he lied about his

real self and used his strategy of numbing to relieve himself of

any guilt associated with this behaviour. Like some of the other

co-researchers, his numbing strategy was so well crafted that it

eventually generalized to all feelings, both positive and negative.

It became difficult, and at times impossible, to access any

feelings whatsoever. Lee described it as "feeling kind of dead

emotionally".

Although numbing acted as a pain-killer, it also tended to

distance co-researchers from important emotional information. By

numbing, co-researchers were unable to be aware, in a useful way,

of what was emotionally painful. Without this awareness, they

could not take steps to avoid the pain or to manage it

constructively. The result was that co-researchers who numbed
themselves tended to stay stuck in aversive situations or
situations that were not good for them. They were trapped because
they were unable to see or they remained unaware of options and
alternatives.

While numbing provided an escape hatch from painful feelings,
it also created a new trap. For instance, Don and Lee successfully
shut out certain feelings, but they also shut themselves in and
could not escape even when they wanted to. Numbing also set up
destructive cycles. For example, Don drank to numb his anxiety.
Afterwards, he would be so disgusted with his drunken behaviour
that he would turn to alcohol to deal with his disgust. Numbing
also seemed to provide only temporary relief. The denied feelings
either emerged later with more intensity or found other outlets for
expression. For instance, when Don stopped drinking, he turned to
valium as a substitution to ease his pain.

8. Sense of Isolation From Others

Feeling a sense of emotional, and, in some cases, physical
isolation from other people was another common experience of
encagement across the ten accounts. Frequently, this isolation was
a natural outgrowth of numbness. It follows that if people felt
isolated from themselves, they were likely to feel isolated from

others. As Fay stated, "I needed to have a decent relationship with myself if I was ever going to have a decent relationship with others". Isolation was variously experienced as a disconnectedness, a separateness, a detachment, a lack of belonging, a lack of intimacy, a loneliness, and an aloneness from others. "Others" included family members, significant others, friends, or society in general.

A sense of emotional isolation from others occurred for co-researchers both inside and outside a relational context. Isolation, as it was experienced within relationships, appeared to be related to role playing. As the person role played, what was shared in interactions with others became phony and unreal. Whether co-researchers misrepresented themselves, distanced themselves, held themselves back, or denied themselves, relationships stayed superficial and were meaningless, unfulfilling, and, in some cases, destructive. Role playing also had a tendency to sap energy from co-researchers. Since all the person's energy went into playing the role, there was little energy left for anyone else.

A sense of isolation also occurred for co-researchers outside a relational context. For example, some people chose to avoid relationships altogether. Tom actively avoided women who showed a romantic interest in him. Margaret actively avoided relationships in the most extreme form by choosing isolation as a lifestyle.

Some co-researchers drove other people away. For instance, Don alienated everyone in his life through his drinking behaviour. Brenda drove others away by her unrealistic expectations.

Whether co-researchers were playing a role in relationships, avoiding relationships, or driving them away, the person was striving to shield herself or himself from being vulnerable and, in some cases, to maintain a stance of invulnerability. The person was, either consciously or unconsciously, striving to protect the most "real" part of herself or himself by not sharing their "real" self, by not expressing her or his "real" feelings, and by not self-disclosing. The consequence of protecting themselves from being vulnerable, however, was a sense of isolation from other people.

Isolation insulated co-researchers from meaningful contact with others. It also insulated co-researchers from the positive impact or influence of others. Co-researchers were unable to receive support, validation, guidance, or assistance from others. Co-researchers could not relate to others, nor could they be related to. They were also blocked from exposure to alternative perspectives and alternative ways of being offered by other people. The net effect of isolation from others was that co-researchers felt a deep sense of loneliness and aloneness in their lives.

9. Lack of Authenticity

Another commonality among the ten accounts is that co-researchers were encaged by their lack of authenticity. This theme seems to reflect the cumulative outcome of all the other themes associated with the pattern of encagement. At the core of pretense for co-researchers was the feeling that their "real" selves were worthless, unacceptable, or dangerous in some way. Consequently, they believed that expressing or being their real selves was not possible or even an option to be considered. For some, this feeling was a conscious awareness while for others it was not. Inauthenticity took many forms for co-researchers. For some, it involved living a lie while for others it involved chronic lying. Some people acted a role and lived as impostors. Others denied or disowned essential aspects of themselves. Whatever the manifestation of pretense, the common feature in all these cases was that people did not act upon authentic, meaningful motives. What they felt was most meaningful about themselves, whether it was a feeling, a desire, or a thought was not divulged, but instead was hidden away. It was not acted upon and, consequently, was not made a reality in their lives.

The more people lived inauthentically, the better they seemed to get at it. For some, as time passed, more and more had to be covered over, not only from others, but from themselves and,

consequently, their self-awareness faded. Some even came to believe the fiction to be real. For many, living inauthentically became a way of life, a way of relating to the self, others, and the world. Initially, pretense provided an escape from their sense of worthlessness. Over time, it became like a trap from which they could not escape. Lee felt imprisoned by his lies. Fay described it as a loss of freedom, feeling trapped and lost in the covers she had constructed. "She could not live with the front, nor could she live without it as yet."

Attaining freedom from pretense was difficult because living inauthentically frequently caused co-researchers to see themselves less clearly, to lose sight of their "real" selves, and, at times, to render their "real" selves unknown. For Fay, "the buried self was unknown in implications for living, forbidding, and dangerous." Anxiety frequently plagued those who were inauthentic. To avoid discovery, co-researchers could never let their guards down, which curbed spontaneity and strained interactions with others. Alternatives and options became limited because each decision or choice was weighed against the threat of exposure.

II. <u>Paths Toward Liberation and the Re-orientation Toward</u>

<u>Possibility</u>

The second dominant pattern that emerged from the accounts

concerned co-researchers' extrication from encagement. Each

co-researcher managed to attain a freedom from their encagement and

a freedom to live a lifestyle of possibility. Essentially,

co-researchers' orientations of encagement were transformed through

experiences of liberation into re-orientations towards existence as

possibility.

As with the pattern of encagement, there was an exhaustive

listing of the ways in which co-researchers liberated themselves

from their encagement and created a world of possibility for

themselves. This list included changes in thoughts, feelings, and

actions as well as changes in contexts and events. Explicitly and

implicitly stated experiences were also included in the list.

Commonalities and similarities within the lists were grouped

together to form themes. Themes were then titled according to a

common meaning. Finally, the themes were checked against the

narrative descriptions.

There were thirteen common themes that portrayed this pattern:

(1) re-orienting moments, (2) being helped by role models, (3)

receiving support from others, (4) taking risks, (5) escaping an

old situation, (6) entering a new situation, (7) striving

determinedly, (8) experiencing success, (9) expressing feelings,

(10) engaging in meaningful activities/relationships, (11)

discovering personal meaning, (12) taking personal responsibility,

and (13) actively shaping life. Themes associated with this

pattern were phrased to reflect an active, process-oriented

becoming (for example, "expressing feelings") in contrast to the

inactive, static being (for example, "numbness") phrasing of the

themes associated with the pattern of encagement.

Before presenting each individual theme, it is again important

to be aware of the limitations of a linear format. In the

narrative descriptions of experience, themes did not exist separate

and apart from each other. They were interconnected elements of a

whole experience. In addition, themes did not necessarily have the

same emphasis for each co-researcher. For example, while Ray

experienced all of the themes, the most dominant one reflected in

his transformation was striving, a spirited effort to reach goals.

For others like Tom, receiving support from others was emphasized

more so than some other themes.

1. Re-orienting Moments

Liberation from encagement frequently began for co-researchers

with a re-orienting moment or series of moments. These moments

took many forms such as realizations, illuminations, insights, new

awarenesses, syntheses, clarifications, new understandings, and

uncensored expressions. To orient is to direct. The role or

contribution of re-orienting moments to co-researchers' liberation
was to provide the co-researcher with direction, often to a point
of no turning back. Direction frequently led co-researchers to
re-evaluate themselves, their values, priorities, and goals, which
often resulted in critical decisions.

For example, Beth woke up one morning to the shocking
realization, "I am not living my own life. I've been had. This
isn't me." Based on this revelation, she decided to start living
her own life by returning to college despite the anticipated
opposition from those around her. After reading a book condemned
by her church, Margaret felt like blinders were falling off her
eyes. This re-orienting moment marked the beginning of an opening
up and broadening of what Margaret was now realizing was a very
narrow perspective. Eventually, this led to a decision to leave
the church. When a doctor told Tom, a year after his injury, that
he may be able to breathe a little on his own, it opened options
and gave him a meaningful goal to focus on and to strive toward.

Re-orienting moments for some co-researchers involved overt
uncensored expressions. For Fay, her real self seemed to penetrate
her guard in the form of uncensored statements designed to cut an
entanglement and free her from pretense. "You know, I think I'd
just rather live alone" was the statement that brought a sudden
closing to an oppressive marriage. Carol woke up abruptly one

morning and blurted out "I want to be a priest," which led to a

decision to return to college. For Fay and Carol, once these

thoughts were expressed out loud, they became real, undeniable.

They took on more substance as a pathway, a viable option. They

opened possibilities and could not be taken back. Carol described

it "as a wagon lurching forward"; it starts to move and feels like

it cannot or should not be stopped.

Re-orienting moments did not just happen at the beginning of

co-researchers' transformations and then stop. In most cases, such

moments recurred over the course of the transformation. Regardless

of the point at which they occurred, the consistent feature was to

direct the co-researcher forward, often setting the stage for a

major decision. There was no going back after that point. It is

also important to note that such moments were only re-orienting

when the co-researcher was ready or open to them. Co-researchers

often reported that such moments had occurred in the past, but that

they were simply not ready for them. The timing appears to be

critical. In these instances, co-researchers were ready to be open

to the moment and to consider change.

2. <u>Being Helped by Role Models</u>

Being helped by role models was another common theme

concerning freedom from encagement that occurred relatively early

on in co-researchers' transformations. That is not to say that there were not important role models later on at different points in the transformations. In order to be helpful, role models had to meet certain criteria. For instance, models had to be deemed worthy of the co-researcher's respect and admiration. Models also had to represent something meaningful to the co-researcher, and in many cases the co-researcher had to identify with the model in some way. The role of a model was to demonstrate a new way of being to the co-researcher or to provide a new perspective that was previously unknown, unseen, or deemed impossible by the co-researcher. Role models provided inspiration that motivated co-researchers and, at times, helped to clarify goals and direction. In order to be helped by role models, co-researchers had to have cultivated some sense of readiness to change and an openness to the influence of specific others.

Fay encountered her first positive lesbian role model at a political rally. Through meeting this woman, Fay was inspired to feminism. "It was possibly a way to understand herself as a lesbian, herself as a woman, and her own history. It became clear that her work was with women." Through joining an outdoor club, Carol was exposed to healthy, active, professional women who were lesbians. Through meeting other like-minded women, she realized she was not alone. In contrast to her previous experience with

"crazy" lesbians, she now had models that she respected. "It was an awakening for Carol. There was a whole other life out there if she wanted it."

To Lee, the woman he was involved with had achieved the kind of things he had wanted to achieve for himself. She was going in a direction in her life that she wanted to go, whereas Lee felt stuck. She modeled for him a way of successfully achieving goals and of directing her own life that was inspiring and motivating. For Ray, disabled athletes were the first worthy role models since his accident with whom he could identify. Later, on a wheelchair basketball team, he was exposed to other disabled persons and how they dealt with their lives, and their different philosophies. Margaret encountered important role models through books. Through reading about others' spiritual experiences, she was able to clarify her own goals, which marked the beginning of a radical change of perspective and lifestyle.

3. Receiving Support From Others

Receiving support from others was another common theme featured prominently near the beginning of co-researchers' transformations, and played an important role in liberating co-researchers from their encagement throughout the change experience. Co-researchers used terms like "vital",

"indispensable", "critical", and "essential" when describing the support they received. Some examples of the kinds of support co-researchers received include: encouragement, validation, feedback, advice, direct resources, assistance, contacts, guidance, emotional and instrumental support. Support came from individuals such as friends, family members, teachers, significant others, counsellors, and doctors, and from groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous and Al-Anon. Sometimes support was unsolicited and sometimes co-researchers requested it. Whatever the context of the support, co-researchers had to be open to it and ready to receive it. Although support, in some cases, had been available previously, it had not been utilized because the co-researcher was simply not ready to receive it. Being open to receive support was a strong declaration of co-researchers' readiness to change.

Support from others was important to co-researchers' liberation in many ways. For some co-researchers, receiving validation from others helped them to feel accepted which promoted authenticity. For others, receiving encouragement and positive feedback enhanced co-researchers' sense of worth and competence. Receiving emotional support often provided comfort and counteracted difficult emotions such as sadness and anxiety. Lee felt that he would have been easily overcome by anxiety at many points in his

transformation without the emotional support he received through his relationship.

Sometimes co-researchers felt supported by being listened to by others. It helped them to feel understood and important. In other cases, co-researchers benefited from listening to others. For instance, many co-researchers experienced a sense of identification while in groups listening to others with similar experiences. Support received in this context helped co-researchers to reduce their sense of isolation and disconnectedness from others. Another example of being helped through listening to others was through receiving advice. Ray, for example, received some fatherly advice from a doctor that cut through his resistance and helped him to make a pivotal decision.

Other forms of support broadened co-researchers' direct informational resources or contacts. For example, through a relationship, Fay became acquainted with "the therapy language people" and learned the importance of how to say "no". She was also introduced to women involved in the women's movement and left-wing politics, thereby making some important new contacts.

Overall, receiving support from others helped co-researchers to feel better about themselves and more confident which promoted risk-taking behaviour. They began to risk leaving behind the safety and security of old ways of being and to consider new ways

of being beyond their existing limited scope. Tom's case provides

an illustration highlighting this point.

> Through the support of his family, which Tom considers vital
> to his rehabilitation and transformation, Tom felt safe enough
> to risk challenging the hospital system rather than to
> passively accept their definition of how he was to live his
> life. Tom's family responded to what he wanted, not in a
> senseless way, but in a way that respected his decisions about
> his own body and the direction he wanted to go. Through
> supporting his decisions, they empowered him. Through risking
> with him, they helped him to begin to see an alternative way
> of living beyond the hospital walls.

In addition to promoting risk-taking, encouragement from others

also helped support co-researchers' courage to change. As

co-researchers began to feel accepted and supported by others, they

felt a more clear sense of readiness and preparedness for change.

In order to contribute to co-researchers' liberation from

encagement, there had to be a context of readiness and openness for

these first three themes. Co-researchers had to be open to the

effects of re-orienting moments, ready to be helped by role models,

and ready to receive support from other people. This internal

state of readiness for change set the stage for a trend toward the

increasing role of decision and action. The remaining ten themes

reflect the various forms of decision and action taken by

co-researchers in order to liberate themselves from their

encagement and to re-orient themselves toward possibility.

4. Taking Risks

        One of the first forms of action taken by co-researchers was

risk-taking. When co-researchers were encaged, they did encaging

things. They wanted to maximize safety, security, and

predictability. Anything outside the cage was a risk. Taking a

risk was an expansive form of action which brought new

opportunities, new experiences, new learnings, new understandings,

and new meanings into play. Taking a risk broke the existing

pattern by helping co-researchers to move out of their small,

narrow, limited worlds of encagement into the larger, wider,

broader, unlimited world of possibility.

        Co-researchers began taking risks without necessarily feeling

up to what they faced and without having a high confidence level

regarding the outcome. Co-researchers frequently reported feeling

strong enough to take risks without any guarantees because they

felt supported by those around them. For example, despite Tom's

fear of leaving the security of the hospital environment, he went

on outings, began making visits home, and travelled to Asia and

Europe. These new experiences were freeing and gave him a sense of

accomplishment and wonder. They filled him with a sense of no

boundaries, that "nothing is impossible and anything is possible".

Taking risks helped Tom to expand his scope, to see new

possibilities for living that had previously been limited to the

hospital walls. Through taking risks, Tom realized that while it may be more comfortable to stay where he was, nothing changed. If he pushed through his fear he usually discovered that it was not as bad as he imagined it to be.

Despite feeling absolutely terrified, and having resisted for some time, Carol finally agreed to risk participating in a church activity. She had reached a point where she was beginning to realize that if she wanted to change, she was going to have to do something about it rather than to passively wait for God to take care of it for her. She had also received a lot of support from the priest who suggested the idea. Despite not doing a perfect job, she felt good about her accomplishment and it led to other duties and responsibilities. She learned that by taking small risks, despite her fear, she was able to feel better about herself, discover things about herself, and build on each result by taking progressively larger risks.

5. Escaping an Old Situation

When co-researchers were encaged, old situations often held few options for them and were frequently characterized by dominance and dependence. In escaping an old situation, there was usually a certain amount of accumulated desperation. It became a case of, "I don't care what's out there, I can't stay here, I've got to get

out". Escaping an old situation dramatically expanded the scope and range of options for the person by opening up opportunities that would otherwise be unavailable or unseen. This theme was not just a matter of leaving a situation that was oppressive, it was also a departure from a sense of self that was once able to tolerate the dynamics of that particular situation.

Some co-researchers escaped oppressive environments. For example, Glen moved away from his parents' home to go to university. Being away from home, and away from the feeling of his father's constant pressure and attempts to control him, helped him to clarify and to act on his true career interests. Margaret left the confinement of the Abbey to go to India. She was starting to think for herself rather than blindly accepting what the church said. She was beginning to act on her own emerging spiritual perspective and to search for a more meaningful perspective on life. Once outside the Abbey she could see that "while it was a secure environment, it was not one based on reality". That lifestyle was no longer acceptable to her.

To Ray and Tom, hospitals with their endless rules and regulations felt like prisons. Part of what they were trying to escape from was the influence of others. While the hospital administration was apparently used to passive obedience, they resisted. Tom became non-compliant while Ray "treated everything

as a matter for negotiation. He judged orders, rules, and

activities in relation to his goals, fighting to maintain control

of the various influences from others on his life." Escaping from

the dependence of the hospital environment and achieving

independence was critical to both Ray and Tom and represented

taking back their lives, and the opening up of a multitude of new

opportunities and possibilities.

Some co-researchers escaped from oppressive relationships that

were characterized by engulfment.

> Fay had escaped, saved by what felt like a real self that
> popped out before she could check it. She felt free, huge,
> substantial. She felt like she could do anything, go
> anywhere, and be anybody . . . . Outside of the relationship
> with B, she could see what it had been like, constrained,
> narrow, stagnant, and awful. Inside, she had not sensed the
> full scope of her confinement and incapacitation. Outside,
> the trap was vivid, standing in stark contrast to her renewed
> sense of possibility, the sheer authenticity of possibility.

6. Entering a New Situation

As well as escaping some old situations, co-researchers also

entered some new ones in their journeys toward liberation and

possibility. Examples of entering new situations were things like

going back to school, getting a new job, entering counselling,

participating in a workshop, a new activity, or a program, joining

a support group, taking on a challenge, starting a relationship,

and moving to a new environment. Whatever new situation the

co-researcher entered, the overall role it played was expansion and it represented an active search for new ways of being.

Entering new situations provided exposure to different people and different perspectives. New situations also made available opportunities for success that would have otherwise been inaccessible. At the same time, these new situations tended to detoxify failure. Co-researchers discovered that failing or making a mistake was not fatal, and often provided an important learning experience to build on. Entering new situations allowed co-researchers to discover and develop their skills and abilities, and to explore the range of their personal resources and capabilities. For example, taking on the challenge of managing the demands of work and school simultaneously was deeply fulfilling and satisfying for Lee. It helped him to feel better about himself and to discover his capabilities.

Glen's life dramatically expanded and developed when he travelled to Europe on his own for a year. He had many new experiences, met many new people, and was exposed to many different cultures. Through surviving on his own, he developed an awareness of his own inner strength and personal resourcefulness. He gained a new perspective on his life and a renewed sense of hope. For Carol, going back to school gave her an opportunity to develop better verbal and written communication skills, an area in which

she had always felt incompetent. Attending college helped her to
learn to articulate her thoughts and feelings, to feel better about
herself, and to be more assertive. For Don, joining AA provided
him with support, guidance, and exposure to a philosophy that he
felt was instrumental in his recovery and transformation.

For some, entering new situations opened up previously unseen
possibilities. For example, things began to open up for Ray when
his coach asked him to be an assistant coach.

> It took a while to feel comfortable and then he began to enjoy
> coaching. It was a new role in sport, one he had not
> envisioned before, but it felt good. It offered its own
> satisfactions and allowed him to participate in a different
> way, like a door opening when they all seemed to be locked
> shut.

7. Striving Determinedly

Part of co-researchers' freedom from encagement involved
striving hard with determination. Co-researchers consistently
reported discovering that exerting effort in a concentrated,
focused way was required in order to achieve what they needed or
wanted. Co-researchers came to realize that things did not happen
magically, effortlessly. They learned that they could not depend
on others to do things for them. They learned that they must
invest their own energy and effort, and that the results were

rewarding and satisfying. Striving, a spirited effort to reach

goals, was the dominant theme of Ray's rehabilitation.

> [Ray's] situation was not fixed; it had borders or frontiers
> that he could explore and push toward, if he were not dragged
> down by pessimism. What he could and could not do in the
> future was partially an open question that depended
> significantly on his own efforts. Rather than socialize with
> other patients or just relax for lengthy periods of time each
> day, Ray felt challenged to work independently toward his
> goals, particularly practicing with braces.

In addition to striving hard, co-researchers reported the need

for determined perseverance despite the obstacles. The range of

obstacles varied from person to person, but the theme of

perseverance remained consistent. Obstacles were things like

difficult feelings such as fear and anxiety, changes in

circumstances, failures, setbacks, and distractions. For example,

despite anxiety, fear of rejection, and humiliation, Lee disclosed

his lies to significant people in his life. When Glen's friends

failed to show up at the airport for their pre-planned trip to

Europe, Glen was confronted with a radical change in circumstances.

Despite feeling shocked, unnerved, and disappointed, he persevered

and went anyway. Tom invested seven years of effort and

perseverance to be able to breathe on his own all day without the

use of a ventilator, and five years of his life striving

determinedly to reach his goal of independence from the hospital,

despite the host of obstacles along the way.

Ray maintained a steady discipline of striving toward goals whether upbeat or down. Setbacks were simply the price of testing the frontiers of his disability. The rewards of testing are increased freedom, more control, and the utter exhilaration of striving against obstacles and occasionally winning.

Striving hard with determination and perseverance powerfully expanded co-researchers' sense of their own capacity and the scope of their own personal power. When co-researchers worked hard and discovered that getting what they wanted or needed was largely in their own hands and not external to themselves, they felt empowered. Co-researchers also consistently reported that support from others played an important role in being able to persevere and not give up. Striving determinedly was also self-reinforcing; it provided a sense of personal satisfaction and pride that co-researchers were motivated to repeat again. Perhaps most importantly, striving determinedly provided co-researchers with a strategy for getting what they needed or wanted that could be applied to other areas of life.

8. Experiencing Success

Experiencing success was another important theme in liberating co-researchers from encagement, and tended to occur later on in the transformations. At the beginning, co-researchers tended to take risks and to strive hard without expecting success. In taking those risks and persevering despite the outcome, co-researchers

eventually experienced success. One success tended to breed another success. There was a cumulative effect which reinforced the risk-taking. The main role of these success experiences was to enhance co-researchers' sense of self-worth and confidence, and to expand co-researchers' conceptions of their capabilities. Experiencing success also seemed to bring into question the limits co-researchers had set for themselves and to extend the boundaries of what they thought was possible. For example, after successfully running two marathons, Carol began to wonder if she could apply the same principles to the intellectual arena, the area in which she felt the most incompetent.

For co-researchers, it was not enough to simply achieve a success. There had to be a readiness to experience the success and to take responsibility for it, and not to attribute it to others, luck, or fate.

> She [Beth] thought she did not have a chance, but went ahead anyway, and succeeded against the odds. She felt a sense of accomplishment, and a big boost in her confidence. Beth knew it was no accident or fluke that she got the job; it was something that she said or did. Knowing this made her feel valued for who she really was. It gave her a sense of potency, of being able to go out and get what she wanted in her life.

The success also had to be meaningful to co-researchers. For example, both Beth and Brenda achieved considerable success outwardly, but the motivation behind all these achievements was to

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please others, and to gain approval and acceptance. Consequently, succeeding in these areas was meaningless to both of them. Their accomplishments and achievements were merely symbols of their encagement. Fay too, achieved outward success, but not in an area that mattered to her. In the area that mattered, relationships, she saw herself as a dismal failure. Similarly, believing that "to be a successful woman you had to have a successful marriage", Brenda saw herself as a failure after her divorce.

Success was also a very subjective experience that was very much dependent upon the meaning co-researchers gave to it. For example, when Lee received a "C" on a French exam, he considered it a major victory. He had made a commitment to persevere and to write the exam despite the obstacles, and he did. Under any other circumstances, a "C" would have been a devastating failure to him. When he did receive high grades, they were made more meaningful because he had achieved them honestly and without deception. Successfully getting a job after 1 1/2 years on welfare only mattered because of what it meant to Lee. It opened new options, and meant that he was becoming a contributing member of society again. Lee, like other co-researchers, did not have to achieve a success to experience a success. For example, despite challenging the government's rejection of his loan application and losing, he still felt good about standing up for himself and considered it to be a satisfying and successful experience.

Achieving a series of success experiences clarified for the co-researcher a formula for success that could be applied to other situations. Co-researchers internalized those principled attitudes and behaviours that led to the success. For example, Lee discovered that if he exerted a considerable effort toward something that was important and meaningful, and persevered despite the obstacles, he could be successful. In successfully applying his learnings to his own behavioural change program, a way to achieve success was consolidated.

9. Expressing Feelings

Expressing feelings was important to co-researchers' liberation in several ways. First, it represented "un-numbing". Un-numbing was necessary in order for co-researchers to develop self-awareness. Self-awareness was necessary in order for co-researchers to express themselves. Expressing feelings helped co-researchers to have better relationships with themselves and with others, thereby reducing loneliness and isolation. For Lee, the process of un-numbing was liberating.

> It was painful and humiliating to have to face them [his lies], but somehow it felt right. It was freeing to disclose these lies and not be so imprisoned by fear. 'Being honest was liberating'. Lee got to the point where he could not live with himself if he did not disclose a lie. Before, he would have numbed his feelings and said nothing. By opening himself up to his feelings, he could no longer ignore his lies.

Numbing his feelings meant that he would be the person he was
before, who was repulsive now. That was a person who was
caught in a web of lies, who was isolated from himself and
others, and who was unhappy about the direction and the lack
of direction in his life.

For Don, the experience of un-numbing and expressing himself

was a relief and marked a critical turning point in his

transformation.

Don started talking [to an old high school buddy] about how he
had messed up his life and began to cry. Soon his crying
turned into heavy sobbing and weeping. He trembled and shook
all over. This was the first time he had ever shared his pain
with anyone. It was hard to trust someone. It hurt so much.
. . . It was a powerful experience to have someone listen and
to not turn away. Don felt exposed and vulnerable, but
relieved.

Second, expressing feelings represented the conversion of

confining emotions to constructive action. For example, anger was

an emotion that consistently limited or confined co-researchers

until they learned to express it in constructive ways or to

transform it into a motivating energy. Through counselling, Glen

learned to stop internalizing the anger he felt toward his father

by expressing these feelings. Like many co-researchers, Glen

learned that he must first accept and express his feelings as they

were before he could change them. Glen eventually learned to

channel angry feelings into acting on his own behalf.

And third, expressing feelings represented freeing the "real"

self from pretense. It involved being vulnerable and expressing

the "real" self. For example, when Fay decided to "come out" as a

lesbian, it was really a decision to become undivided. Fay learned that it was a "revolutionary act to be yourself". In freeing themselves from pretense, the experience of living for co-researchers was revitalized. Co-researchers felt more fully alive, more capable of experiencing life. One co-researcher likened the experience to being able to smell or taste again after quitting smoking. Another felt that expressing herself was a declaration of self-worth that communicated to herself and others that "My feelings matter; I matter."

10. Engaging in Meaningful Activities/Relationships

As co-researchers' sense of worth grew and their real feelings were expressed, their authentic selves began to emerge and they were able to begin to engage in activities and relationships that were meaningful. Having lived inauthentically for so long, being able to experience meaning in an activity or a relationship inspired hope. Co-researchers felt the possibility of another way to live beyond pretense. In order to engage in meaningful activities and relationships, co-researchers had to become their own authority about what was meaningful to them and to resist the influence of others. Co-researchers described this shift as freeing, and as allowing them to live with more integrity, congruence, clarity, and passion. Engaging in meaningful

activities and relationships represented a deeper involvement with, and a more active participation in, the world. It involved doing rather than passively watching others do.

Many co-researchers finally decided to pursue worthwhile and satisfying activities for their own reasons despite what others wanted. For example, Glen refused to be governed anymore by a fear of disapproval and decided to choose a personally meaningful career which stood in stark contrast to his father's wishes. Beth decided to return to college and start living her own life. Up to that point, her life had been largely determined by her father and her husband. She decided to stop pleasing others, and to select a goal that was personally meaningful despite the opposition she received.

Engaging in activities and relationships that were meaningful was deeply fulfilling and satisfying to co-researchers. They also helped to enhance co-researchers' sense of self-worth.

> Through his relationship with P, Ray gained confidence and a sense of fulfillment. He felt complete, not as if he were always lacking. The relationship shifted his rather narrow emphasis upon the physical to other qualities. Ray learned that he was fun to be with and sensitive, that he had many good qualities. Perhaps of even more importance, he learned that he could have a meaningful relationship with a woman.

For Don, being a street musician was very satisfying. He took pride in his music and gained confidence, self-esteem, and respect from others through it. For Tom, finding meaningful activities

meant finding a way to contribute, to give rather than just to receive. Through providing counselling services to incoming patients with disabilities and helping others to discover life after quadriplegia, Tom was able to find fulfillment and enhance his own sense of worth.

Sometimes what made the activity meaningful had little to do with the subjective value of the activity, but rather with what the activity represented. For example, while running marathons helped Carol to feel stronger physically and emotionally, it also gave her a new identity and something to talk about when she attended social functions. "Before she was only a secretary or K's wife. She felt like a nobody. Now she was a runner. She had something to talk about that was her's, something that she had achieved all by herself."

Perhaps most importantly, engaging in meaningful activities and relationships provided the building blocks for discovering personal meaning. This active participation and deepening involvement in the world helped co-researchers to shore up, define, and refine their sense of what mattered to them.

> Through a variety of activities, Fay began to crystallize
> issues that concerned her deeply (e.g., violence to women,
> discrimination) and ways to address these issues, such as
> public speaking, doing workshops, and developing
> organizations. In this vigorous engagement with the world,
> Fay consciously tried to make contact with her six year old
> self, to take apart the layers of cover and somehow integrate

that six year old with her adult self, and to invest her
current and more mature engagements with the unsullied spirit
of that lost little girl of youth.

11. Discovering Personal Meaning

A common theme associated with co-researchers' transformations

which contributed to their liberation from encagement and their

re-orientation toward possibility was experiencing with a deeper

clarity and certainty what mattered to them. This theme evolved

over a period of time and was usually consolidated closer to the

end of co-researchers' transformations. For many co-researchers,

personal meaning began to be discovered through a greater

involvement in meaningful activities and relationships. For

others, it involved the discovery of purpose and direction.

Questions like, "What am I here for?" or "What am I doing with my

life?" were addressed and became clearer. Once purpose and

direction were clarified, co-researchers felt compelled to move

toward it and it seemed to shift things into a, "I can't not do it

frame". For some, it involved the discovery of a meaningful

framework for understanding and making sense of themselves in the

world. This involved finding answers to more philosophical

questions, like "Who am I?" Either way, co-researchers were

involved with discovering personal meaning, and simultaneously

creating personal meaning by the amount of energy and effort they

invested in what they were discovering. The more the effort
expended, and the more the determination and perseverance required,
the more meaningful the discovery seemed to be.

Margaret clarified her purpose and direction by travelling to
India. Upon arrival, she felt something very ancient come alive
within her. She felt "a relationship, a feeling of unity with all
people in all cultures" that was deeply profound. Her year in
India gave her "a whole new perspective on her life". After 42
years, she decided to leave religious life. She wanted to claim
her place in humanity, never to be shut off from reality or from
the human condition again. Her purpose in life crystallized and
she felt compelled to act on this new clarity and vision.

Through traumatic circumstances, Tom was confronted with some
very fundamental questions.

> Who am I now? What is my purpose? What is my value? Through
> becoming a Christian, answers to these questions became
> clearer. After the accident Tom had seen himself as a mere
> shadow of his former self because he had no physical ability.
> He realized now that his value did not only lie in his
> physical attributes. He was the same person, just with a
> different set of limitations and a different set of open
> horizons. He consciously chose to focus on what he could do,
> not what he could not do. Christianity gave him an
> understanding of his existence just as he was, rather than as
> he had been; a framework within which to make sense out of his
> disability. It gave him direction and helped him to define
> his purpose. It provided important insight into the pain and
> suffering, and the peace and joy that existed within him and
> within the world.

In discovering what mattered, hope was fostered and a new
orientation to co-researchers' lives began to take form. The
future began to matter and to take shape.

12. Taking Personal Responsibility

Taking personal responsibility was another theme that occurred
nearer the end of co-researchers' transformations. Part of taking
responsibility for co-researchers involved discovering their own
role in their encagement. For example, Ray realized that "the
barriers to involvement in something like a full life were not so
much external as internal. What held him back was himself."
Similarly, Brenda realized that "it wasn't that the rest of the
world was impinging on poor me; it was that I'm acting out
something on the rest of the world and I've got to do something
about it. I am not a victim." With this recognition came a
startling sense of personal potency. Co-researchers realized that
attaining freedom from encagement was largely within their own
power and that no one else could do it for them.

Discovering their own role in their encagement did not involve
taking responsibility in any absolute sense. Taking absolute
responsibility or absolutely avoiding responsibility were
destructive responses for co-researchers. For example, Carol had
to stop blaming herself and taking total responsibility for her

husband's alcoholism. Don had to stop blaming everyone else and

not taking any responsibility for his drinking behaviour. What was

critical for co-researchers was striving to exactly differentiate

what was their responsibility from what was not their

responsibility. They had to accurately assess how situations arose

and how consequences came about. In their active searching, they

were able to identify what to be responsible for and what to do

differently next time. For example, Brenda had to stop trying to

change others and stop blaming others for her unhappiness.

> She had to take off the mask she had constructed, look in the
> mirror and honestly face what she saw. She had to see what
> part she played in this drama. Once she saw this clearly, she
> no longer felt powerless or at the emotional mercy of others.
> She could not change their behaviour, but she could understand
> it differently, and make adjustments to her reactions to
> it.

The role of this theme was to move co-researchers toward

self-reliance. In moving toward self-reliance, co-researchers

stopped blaming others for their lot in life, stopped expecting

others to rescue them or to be responsible for their happiness, and

stopped believing that others were the experts, replacing them

instead as advisors and consultants. In moving toward

self-reliance, co-researchers began to take responsibility for

their thoughts, feelings, actions and their consequences. They

took responsibility for their needs and desires, successes and

failures, problems and solutions, and capabilities and limitations.
Self-reliance was also tempered with an ability to ask for help
when it was needed. Old authority figures were demoted as
co-researchers took responsibility for making decisions, attaining
goals, setting their own directions, and becoming the authors of
their own life stories. Through becoming self-reliant emerged a
clear sense of freedom from encagement.

13. Actively Shaping Life

Co-researchers' transformations were marked by a culminating
event or experience of some sort. These culminating events and
experiences were very diverse among co-researchers. For Glen, it
was a dream. For Carol, it was her first sermon. For Beth, it was
symbolically confronting her father. For Tom, it was getting
married. For Ray, it was a fishing trip. For Lee, it was
designing his own behavioral change program. Whatever the event,
it represented a kind of completion or resolution to the
transformation for the co-researcher. After this point, the
co-researcher felt and saw things differently, and was able to act
in accordance with this new understanding. There was an awareness
that they had gone through something that they were now on the
other side of. Fay "wanted to take care of her life, a life that
she was seeing whole for the first time, coherently and without

blinders." This is the point at which co-researchers reported experiencing a clear sense of freedom from their encagement and a freedom to live a lifestyle of possibility. Beth "had finally escaped her father's grasp and was free to live her own life, in any way she pleased." There was a clear sense of personal potency as the agent or main character of her or his own life story. Don felt that he was finally "acting on the world, not solely being acted upon". Lee saw himself differently, "no longer a leaf in the wind; he was directing his own course".

With this culminating event, a re-orientation to living, derived from the accumulated experiences of the 12 preceding themes, was consolidated. The co-researcher had cultivated an awareness and a faith in her or his ability to decide, to plan, and to act. With this knowledge, the co-researcher began to actively shape her or his life in a way that was meaningful and with a keen awareness of the fine line between shaping one's life and being shaped by conditions beyond one's control.

The co-researcher's re-orientation was guided by a motivating vision for the future, sometimes in the form of a compelling direction or purpose, and sometimes simply in recognizing a future rich with possibility. When people actively shaped their own lives in a meaningful way, there was an increased capacity or vitality

for living. Life was now viewed as something precious. Life was

lived with optimism and restored hope. In all these ways, being

active in shaping one's own life became self-motivating, its own

reward.

For co-researchers, actively shaping their own lives was a

re-orientation towards existence as possibility, but it was also an

approach to living. This new approach was described as flexible,

unbounded, and active, standing in stark contrast to the earlier

approach which was rigid, limited, and static. This approach

embraced change, movement, and development; features that are

critical to sustaining the existence of the new approach in a

constantly changing environment. Co-researchers emphasized that

they did not take this new approach for granted, but rather they

realized that sustaining it involved ongoing, continued effort in

order to avoid the "traps of the past".

Ray's description of the end of his transformation captured

some of the features of this theme.

> Living independently, Ray was high on life. He was getting to
> do what it seemed he had always wanted to do and was confident
> in how he wanted to shape his life further. His legs were not
> like an anchor holding him down. He could talk about his
> disability and no longer felt bad about it. All the good
> things in life crystallized with perfect clarity, and he did
> not ruin these things by comparison with what used to be or by
> unrealistic values. It had taken a re-definition of life,
> acceptance of what he could not control and disciplined
> striving for what he could attain, but his life finally
> emerged with incredible force as something that was precious.

The Structure of a Transformation of Human Agency

The two dominant patterns that emerged from the ten individual accounts suggest that there may be a fundamental sequential structure to a transformation of human agency. The beginning of the transformation seems to be marked by an experience of encagement. The middle of the transformation seems to be marked by an experience of liberation from the encagement. The end of the change seems to be marked by an experience of freedom to live a lifestyle of possibility. One precedes the other. One follows the other. One sets the stage for the other. However, while encagement clearly precedes liberation and liberation precedes possibility, there is no exact point at which one starts and the other ends. Rather, they overlap and blend together.

The themes associated with each pattern can be configured into a narrative flow. The nine themes associated with the pattern of encagement fall at the beginning of the transformation. The thirteen themes associated with the pattern of liberation and possibility fall more in the middle and toward the end. Several variations on the ordering of these two groups of themes were attempted before what appeared to be a natural configuration emerged. While there is no "right" configuration to the themes, there appeared to be some sequential necessity involved. That is,

there are gross discriminations to be made, but not fine ones in the organization of the themes.

For example, in terms of co-researchers' descriptions of experience, a "sense of worthlessness" seemed to naturally precede a "lack of authenticity" in the pattern of encagement. That is, a lack of self-worth generally set the stage for co-researchers' lack of authenticity. However, whether co-researchers were confined by their emotions first and then their beliefs and attitudes is a finer distinction that is arguable in both directions. With respect to the pattern of liberation and possibility, placing "discovering personal meaning" or "taking personal responsibility" at the beginning does not make sense, given that they were themes that co-researchers came to experience as a result of the cumulative effect of a collection of other kinds of thematic experiences. However, a theme such as "taking risks" was something co-researchers experienced near the beginning of their liberation, and in some cases, continued with throughout their liberation, to become an integrated part of their re-orientation toward possibility.

Once this natural configuration emerged, it became strikingly apparent that it closely matched the data. That is, it roughly captured the essence of the transformation experience for all ten co-researchers, and appeared to be integrated and unified thematically. The next section is a presentation of the

aforementioned themes in the form of a narrative. A narrative structure was chosen because it was consistent with the pattern that emerged from the data and with the theoretical underpinnings of this study. This narrative construction is an attempt to present an integrated description of the phenomenon of a transformation of human agency. It is presented as a kind of plot summary capable of extensive elaboration and refinement by future researchers. While this story could be organized in a number of different ways with varying sequences and groupings, this particular rendition seems to best capture the universal experience of all ten co-researchers.

A Plot Summary of a Transformation of Human Agency

A transformation of human agency begins with a person's sense of encagement. People who feel encaged do encaging things and act in encaging ways. They feel a sense of worthlessness and incompetence. People who feel worthless and incompetent frequently find themselves trapped in circumstances, and in some cases, trapped in relationships. They feel imprisoned and sometimes immobilized by their emotions. They are trapped and limited by their beliefs and attitudes. Since they feel emotionally isolated from self and others, they feel numb. Emotionally unaware and isolated, they live life inauthentically.

The path away from encagement toward liberation unfolds first through a series of re-orienting moments. At these points,

movement begins. Other people facilitate this movement either by providing models to aspire to or by providing emotional and instrumental support in a variety of ways. Fueled by inspiration and encouragement, people begin to take risks. For some, this involves leaving some old situations and, for others, it involves entering into some new situations. People strive hard and persevere despite the obstacles and the uncertainty they face. Risk, from time to time, is rewarded and people experience success. As people develop an awareness of their feelings, and a readiness to experience and express them, they are increasingly able to identify and to engage in meaningful activities and relationships. Their increased involvement and engagement with the world contributes to the discovery of personal meaning. As they increasingly learn to take personal responsibility, they discover the inherent satisfaction involved in actively shaping their own lives. There is a sense of liberation from encagement and a freedom to live a lifestyle of possibility.

The End? The end of a story of transformation of human agency is anything but clearcut, and requires some further elaboration. What is clear is that the end involved a re-orientation. The angle of the camera was directed away from encagement toward a new vision of what was possible. Co-researchers experienced the "sense of an ending" (Sarbin, 1986) rather than any definite, complete end. The end was described by co-researchers as a new beginning; the

beginning of the development of a new foundation upon which to build and to continue to move forward, a re-orientation to living.

The end of the transformation was not only a new beginning, it was also marked by the resolution of some old ways of feeling, thinking, and being that were encaging. For instance, there was a movement away from a sense of worthlessness toward a sense of self-worth, not in an absolute sense, but in a beginning sense. Co-researchers like Glen described their end as a deep commitment to an ongoing process of self-understanding and self-acceptance. Similarly, Fay recognized that it was an on-going struggle to remember her own worth. Co-researchers also moved from being passive to being active. Instead of passively waiting for God to save her, Carol actively searched for her own solutions to problems.

Co-researchers moved from pretense toward authenticity. Fay, among others, discovered that it was "a revolutionary act to be yourself" and learned that there are endless temptations and coercions to live a fiction. For Fay and others, the end involved a commitment to striving hard with constant awareness and effort in order to avoid the traps of the past. There are endless other examples of such shifts and movements which could legitimately be regarded as the end. Whatever the end was, it was not taken for granted. Co-researchers recognized that it required maintenance and fine tuning, and that it was by no means a state of perfection. Most co-researchers saw the end, not as end, but the start of a new life.

Summary

The aim of this chapter was to compare the ten cases in an effort to portray a meaningful understanding of a transformation of human agency. On the basis of the comparative analysis, it is clear that a transformation of human agency is not gradual or sudden, but instead is cyclic. There are cycles of peaks and valleys with varying degrees of intensity associated with each person's transformational experience. While there is diversity in the transformation experience, there also appears to be considerable commonality. Two overall patterns and twenty-two common themes were extracted from the ten cases. Figure 2 lists the results of the comparative analysis. The ten cases, and the common patterns and themes provide a rich basis for theory validation and theory development, and suggest implications for counselling practice which will be discussed in the next chapter.

I. ORIENTATION OF ENGAGEMENT	II. PATHS TOWARD LIBERATION AND THE RE-ORIENTATION TOWARD POSSIBILITY
1. Sense of Worthlessness	1. Re-orienting Moments
2. Sense of Incompetence	2. Being Helped by Role Models
3. Trapped in Circumstances	3. Receiving Support from Others
4. Trapped in Relationships	4. Taking Risks
5. Confined by Emotions	5. Escaping an Old Situation
6. Confined by Beliefs and Attitudes	6. Entering a New Situation
7. Numbness	7. Striving Determinedly
8. Sense of Isolation from Others	8. Experiencing Success
9. Lack of Authenticity	9. Expressing Feelings
	10. Engaging in Meaningful Activities/Relationships
	11. Discovering Personal Meaning
	12. Taking Personal Responsibility
	13. Actively Shaping Life

Figure 2. Results of the Comparative Analysis

CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION

A man who had studied at many metaphysical schools came to
Nasrudin. In order to show that he could be accepted for
discipleship he described in detail where he had been and what
he had studied. "I hope that you will accept me, or at least
tell me your ideas," he said, "because I have spent so much of
my time studying at these schools." "Alas! said Nasrudin,
"you have studied the teachers and their teachings. What
should have happened is that the teachers and the teachings
should have studied you. Then we would have something
worthwhile." (Shah, 1968, p. 140)

The general purpose of this study was to gain a meaningful

understanding of transformations of agency in natural contexts. A

multiple case study approach was selected as the appropriate

methodology for an investigation of this nature. In selecting this

approach, there were two immediate aims. The first aim was to

provide rich cases for theory building, and to compare the cases

with theories to assess if current theoretical formulations are

adequate. The second aim was to provide concrete information from

which to formulate a beginning holistic portrait for counsellors.

Based upon the convergence of evidence from two sources,

detailed interviews and Q-sorts, ten narrative accounts were

constructed to portray transformations of personal agency. Each

account was validated by the person for whom it was written and by

an independent reviewer. While each account carries its own

distinctive character, each is also similar to other accounts.
Through comparison, twenty-two common themes were identified in
these accounts. These themes seem to be the most dominant ones,
but surely there are others. On the basis of these themes, an
abstract story of the common pattern revealed in the transformation
was plotted.

Limitations

There are several limitations that might be considered in
evaluating this study. First, from a traditional statistical
viewpoint the results of this study are not generalizable to any
clear population because of the small number of participants.
These participants do not represent a sample drawn from some
population to which the results can be inferred. For example, the
results of this study cannot be extended to people who are
psychotic or severely mentally ill. However, the logic behind the
multiple case study design of this study suggests that replicating
a process over and over through ten cases establishes some degree
of generalizability, but without being able to put bounds on
exactly how generalizable. Therefore, the extensive commonality
among these ten diverse individuals suggests that what is found to
be true for one person or group is likely to be true for some
others (Chassan, 1979).

Second, a greater search for triangulating sources of information might be desirable in future studies as this study is based almost entirely upon first person reports. In order to ensure the soundness and trustworthiness of these first person reports, accounts were based upon the convergence of two different kinds of evidence (i.e., interviews and Q-sorts) and were validated by four different people (i.e., the co-researcher, the researcher, the research supervisor, and an independent reviewer). Eliciting third person reports on people's transformations may provide another source of information and also, at the same time, provide further validation of people's accounts.

Third, the study is limited to the information that the co-researchers reported. People can only report what they are capable of articulating, what they are conscious of, and what they are perhaps willing to reveal. While the nature of the interviews indicates clearly that these people were quite willing to reveal themselves, often in very unflattering terms, there may have been other strands of experience out of awareness that were not reported. Although each co-researcher was articulate, some were more articulate about some aspects of experience than others. Some co-researchers had examined their experiences prior to involvement in the study, whereas others told their stories for the first time.

Fourth, there is a limitation in depth. While this study emphasized a multiple case design in order to provide multiple replications of transformations of agency, it might be fruitful to take a single case and to study one person in considerable depth. Such an investigation might yield other salient features that would only be revealed through a series of interviews totalling perhaps 20-30 hours.

Fifth, the themes extracted from the accounts are by no means exhaustive. In the interests of rigor, those themes identified were carefully linked to the data, and for every theme selected there are exact places in all the accounts which provide validation. There may indeed be other themes in the accounts, but perhaps more tacit ones that are not as capable of being made salient and validated. An attempt was made to present each account in enough detail so that other researchers could assess the themes and perhaps draw out others.

Implications for Theory

Overall, the findings of this study validate, qualify, and extend the five theories of human agency presented in Chapter II. In this section, each of these five theories will be examined in light of the results of this study. According to Albert Bandura (1982, 1989), self-efficacy is the central mechanism in human

agency. Self-efficacy refers to people's judgements of their

personal capabilities to execute courses of action required to deal

with prospective situations (Bandura, 1982). Simply put, Bandura

is concerned with people's beliefs in being able to affect

outcomes. While a belief in self-efficacy was an important feature

in people's transformations of agency (as reflected in the themes,

sense of incompetence and **confined by beliefs and**

attitudes), it also appeared to be only one of many important

features of the transformation, and not necessarily the most

central one.

According to Bandura, the mark of an efficacious person is her

or his ability to persevere in the face of obstacles or resistance.

He argues that "when beset with difficulties, people who are

plagued by self-doubts about their capabilities slacken their

effort or give up altogether, whereas those who have a strong sense

of efficacy exert greater effort to master the challenge" (Bandura,

1986, p. 394). The findings of this study contradict Bandura's

theory and indicate that persevering despite obstacles, resistance,

or setbacks took place without the person having a sense of

self-efficacy. Perseverance was an important part of transforming

a person's sense of agency (as reflected in the theme, **striving**

determinedly), but was initiated when the person did not believe

that they were necessarily going to be successful. That is,

perseverance seemed most important when people did not feel
efficacious.

In order to enhance a person's self-efficacy, Bandura
maintains that success experiences provide the most influential
source of efficacy information. In general, successes raise
self-efficacy and repeated failures lower it (Bandura, 1982). The
findings of this study support the experience of success as an
important feature that contributes to a person's sense of agency
(as reflected in the theme, **experiencing success**). However,
the findings indicate that success experiences were primarily
important later on in people's transformations. In the beginning,
there were few experiences of success and, instead, many setbacks
and experiences of failure. Despite these unsuccessful outcomes,
people persevered and through their perseverance eventually
experienced success. Thus, at the start, people were not acting on
a belief that they could affect outcomes. They did not disbelieve
it either; it was just not the salient issue at the time. What was
salient was to strive and to persevere despite the uncertainty.
Persevering was what helped move people forward in their
transformations and eventually toward experiences of success.

Bandura stresses the importance of successfully achieving
goals in the enhancement of self-efficacy, and he further states
that the impact of the performance accomplishment on self-efficacy

depends upon a number of factors, such as the difficulty of the task, the amount of effort expended, the amount of external aid received, the circumstances under which the task is performed, and the temporal pattern of the person's successes and failures.

According to the results of this study, there are two critical factors that Bandura has not identified. First, the goals achieved must be based on authentic, meaningful motives. If not, they tended to be seen as symbols of the person's encagement, thereby undermining agency, not enhancing it. For example, Brenda set and achieved many goals, such as becoming a lawyer. The motivation behind the goals, however, was to achieve acceptance and approval. Successfully accomplishing these goals was therefore meaningless and in fact, served to lower, not enhance, her sense of agency. Second, Bandura does not differentiate between goals that are self-initiated and goals that are directed by others. In this study, for the successful achievement of a goal to enhance a person's sense of agency, it had to be internally motivated rather than dictated by other people or circumstances. Otherwise, the goal was viewed as a manifestation of the cage in which a person felt trapped and, consequently, undermined rather than enhanced the person's sense of agency.

The second most influential source of efficacy information, according to Bandura, is derived from vicarious experiences or

modeled performances. In general, modeled successes raise self-efficacy judgements while modeled failures lower self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986). The results of this study support the value of models in transformations of agency (as reflected in the theme, **being helped by models**). However, modeling success was not the only role that models played, nor was it necessarily the most central one. In this study, role models primarily contributed to people's transformations by providing inspiration, new perspectives, and by demonstrating new ways of being.

Julian Rotter's (1966) concept of locus of control refers to an expectation about the extent to which reinforcements are under internal or external control. People characterized as "internals" believe that reinforcements are determined largely by personal effort, ability, and initiative. People characterized as "externals" believe that reinforcements are determined largely by other people, social structures, luck, or fate. Essentially, Rotter's version of agency is concerned with people's beliefs about whether or not they can control the reinforcements they receive.

The findings of this study support the main import of Rotter's theory. That is, the belief that one can control the consequences of one's actions was an important contributor to a person's sense of agency. When people discovered that what they wanted was largely in their own hands (as reflected in the theme, **striving**

determinedly) and not external to themselves (as reflected in the themes, **sense of incompetence** and **confined by beliefs and attitudes**), they felt empowered. The results also indicated that this belief was only one of a configuration of features that was important in people's transformations of agency.

In his theoretical formulation of the locus of control concept, Rotter (1966) does not appear to differentiate between intrinsic reinforcements and extrinsic reinforcements. Examples of intrinsic reinforcements are things like personal satisfaction or personal improvement. Examples of extrinsic reinforcements are things like social recognition or a salary increase. In this study, this distinction appeared to be an important one. Generally speaking, intrinsic reinforcements appeared to be the most personally meaningful to people and, consequently, tended to have the most potent affect on their sense of agency. In many cases, extrinsic reinforcements were traps from which people had to escape before they could enhance their sense of agency. For example, Brenda's determined pursuit of money and Glen's decision to become a doctor in order to achieve status and power encaged them. Part of the process of transformation for Brenda and Glen was to replace these extrinsic reinforcements with intrinsic reinforcements that were personally meaningful.

Rotter (1966, 1975) has suggested that individuals falling at either extreme on the internal-external continuum may be more maladjusted than those individuals who are more moderate. Those at the internal end may not recognize their personal limits and may believe that they have more control than is warranted by reality. Those at the external end may underestimate the amount of control that they can realistically exert. Since most of the research has been on comparing internals and externals, little is known about the more moderate group which Rotter views as the most adjusted of the three (Wong & Sproule, 1984).

The results of this study suggest that in becoming more potent human agents, people strove to refine their ability to realistically assess all situations, and to differentiate between things they could control and things they could not control. Thus, being more moderate on the internal-external continuum may not be as important as the ability to realistically assess all situations and, on the basis of that assessment, choose the best course of action.

According to Martin Seligman (1975), the concept of learned helplessness refers to the expectation that one's responses and outcomes are independent. The importance of the belief that one can make a difference or that one can control the consequences of one's behaviour was supported in the findings of this study.

However, like the belief in affecting outcomes (self-efficacy) and
the belief in controlling reinforcements (locus of control), the
belief in controlling consequences was not enough, but just one of
many important features that enhanced people's sense of agency.

Seligman (1975) originally proposed three main debilitating
consequences of learned helplessness: (1) motivational deficits
which undermine people's incentive to respond, (2) cognitive
deficits which retard people's ability to learn that responding
works, and (3) emotional deficits, primarily depression. The
results of this study are reasonably consistent with Seligman's
findings, but also suggest some important qualifications and
extensions. The overall experience of encagement (as reflected in
all nine themes) blocked people's motivation to act and fostered an
overall sense of helplessness and hopelessness. Themes such as a
sense of incompetence, and being confined by beliefs and
attitudes tended to block people from learning that acting made a
difference. Being confined by emotions such as depression was
also evident in people's accounts of transformation. However, the
results suggested a wider range of emotional consequences,
including fear, anger, guilt, and anxiety.

In 1978, the learned helplessness model was reformulated in
response to criticisms that it was based on animal research and was
inadequate when applied to human helplessness (Abramson, Seligman,

& Teasdale, 1978). Essentially, the reformulation stated that, unlike animals, once people learn that their responses and outcomes are independent, they attribute their helplessness to a cause. As a result of the reformulation, a fourth debilitating consequence of learned helplessness was proposed which was self-esteem, a distinctly human concept. Low self-esteem was clearly reflected in the findings of this study in the form of a pervasive **sense of worthlessness**. This sense of worthlessness seemed to set the stage for many of the other aspects of encagement. As such, it brings into question whether worthlessness is the consequence of a low sense of agency or whether a low sense of agency is the consequence of feeling worthlessness.

According to the results of this study, there was another distinctly human consequence of a low sense of agency that Seligman and his colleagues have not identified. That is, people with a low sense of agency tended to **lack authenticity**. At the core of this inauthenticity for co-researchers was the feeling that their real selves were worthless. Inauthenticity took many forms, such as chronic lying or denying essential aspects of the self. Whatever form the inauthenticity took, it seemed to provide a means of escape from this pervasive sense of worthlessness. Ultimately, however, pretense became a trap from which there was no apparent escape, and through which feelings of helplessness and hopelessness

were intensified. A critical part of people's transformations of agency not only involved developing self-esteem, but also acting on that new sense of self-worth by being authentic.

One might speculate on why the issue of authenticity has not been addressed by Seligman and his colleagues (Abramson, Seligman, & Teasdale, 1978). Authenticity also appears to have been overlooked by Bandura and Rotter in their respective theories of agency. Perhaps this is because the concept of human agency tends to be focused upon action, and the planning and deciding that precedes the action. If not investigated carefully, the question may never occur as to whether or not the things one observes people doing and their effectiveness at getting those things done, are done with a richly aware sense of self. Inauthentic people are busy everyday with planning, deciding, and acting. One could study their effectiveness at getting things done and never pay attention to whether or not they are living authentically.

The reformulated model of learned helplessness focuses upon the attributions people make to aversive outcomes. The reformulation does not, however, provide a way of accepting aversive outcomes. Instead, Seligman and his colleagues (Abramson, Seligman, & Teasdale, 1978) advocate changes in the environment such as reducing the likelihood of aversive outcomes. There is an emphasis on maximizing positive outcomes and minimizing negative

ones, not unlike Bandura's (1977) concept of self-efficacy and Rotter's (1966) concept of locus of control.

In this study, the findings indicate that while positive outcomes were preferred, negative or aversive outcomes were not always debilitating as the learned helplessness model would predict. People's ability to find meaning or purpose in an aversive experience had an important effect on their reaction to it and on the consequences of it. For example, to Lee receiving a "C" in a course rather than an "A" would have been considered a major failure under ordinary conditions. However, receiving a "C" in his French course was considered a major victory given the obstacles he had to overcome to achieve it. Tom, once he placed his experience of becoming a quadriplegic within a broader philosophical context, was able to discover a sense of meaning and purpose which fostered hope and his sense of future.

Suzanne Kobasa's (1979) concept of hardiness is embedded within Maddi's (1988) existential theory of personality. Within this theoretical context, the movement of healthy growth is from being stuck in "facticity" (the fixed and unchangeable) to exploring and actualizing possibility. Through the cultivation of symbolization, imagination, and judgement, the central task of a developing person is to realistically discern what is possible from what is unchangeable. By assuming that oneself and the world are

worthwhile and interesting (commitment), that one can influence the world (control), and that change can be developmental, satisfying, and fulfilling (challenge), a hardy person is thought to be well-prepared to vigorously search for possibilities and to act on them. Such a person shows more involvement, more activeness (organizing, planning, doing), and venturesomeness about one's projects in life. Of particular importance in becoming more hardy are support from others, experiences of mastery, and experiences of changed environments as enriching rather than chaotic (Maddi, 1988).

As seems apparent, the major aspects of hardiness are amply reflected in the ten accounts of transformation and certainly the movement from a fixed situation to an experience of possibility directly captures the major movement evident in the accounts. Also, the importance of support, mastery experiences, and adaptation to changing circumstances are all apparent in the accounts.

The findings of this study appear to be most reflected in Richard deCharms' (1968) concept of personal causation. The main reason for this is that, unlike the four other theorists, deCharms has attempted to identify key components of the change process involved in enhancing human agency. He has outlined the theoretical aspects of the change and attempted to experimentally

induce this change in adults and children (deCharms, 1976). In contrast, the other theorists have generally focused on describing each end of the continuum or on measuring the presence or absence of their particular formulation of agency rather than on identifying the configuration of change involved in enhancing human agency. For the most part, how to actually accomplish a change in agency has largely been inferential rather than clearly stated and demonstrated as in the case of deCharms.

The essential premise of the concept of personal causation is that people strive to be causal agents of their own actions because of a fundamental motivation to be effective in producing change (deCharms, 1968). According to deCharms, when a person experiences being the author or cause of her or his own actions, the person feels potent (like an Origin). When a person experiences her or his own actions as dictated by others, the person feels powerless (like a Pawn). DeCharms emphasizes being the cause of action rather than the particular action itself or the consequence of the action. He also stresses the **experience** of causing something oneself rather than merely the **perception** of it.

The importance of the belief in one's capacity to affect outcomes (Bandura, 1977), to control consequences (Kobasa, 1979; Rotter, 1966; Seligman, 1975) or to affect change (deCharms, 1968) is a feature of agency that is common to all five theorists.

However, unlike the other four theorists, deCharms does not see this belief as something an individual merely perceives about her or himself, but rather as something she or he vividly experiences. In emphasizing experience, deCharms (1979) is referring to "personal experience of a kinesthetic sort - in short, a more general experience, not just a perception" (p. 33) and explains that "'experience' is intended to capture the whole of a complex phenomenon and not reduce it to partial descriptions like perception" (p. 33). This distinction is supported by the findings of this study. For example, when people first discovered that they could make something happen, it was not experienced as a dry, intellectual, objective belief. Rather, in accordance with deCharms' theory, this discovery was a vibrant, holistic, experience that empowered people.

DeCharms (1976) has proposed that there are four main elements involved in the change process from Pawn to Origin. The first element is that people must engage in self-study to identify authentic, meaningful motives. That is, the change must be meaningful to the person and stimulated from within the person. The context for the change must be supportive and accepting of personal development. The second element is that people must be able to translate these motives into realistic goals. The third element is that people must be able to plan concrete action to

reach these goals. The fourth element is that people must have the capacity to accept responsibility for chosen goals and the successes or failures of efforts to reach them.

Clearly, the four elements proposed by deCharms, and the context within which the elements must exist, are supported by the findings of the study and reflected in such themes as **receiving support from others, taking risks, engaging in meaningful activities,** and **actively shaping life.** In addition, much of what deCharms (1976) has described as the Pawn experience is parallel to people's experience of encagement and is reflected in themes such as **sense of worthlessness, sense of incompetence, confined by emotions, confined by beliefs and attitudes,** and **lack of authenticity.**

The concept of striving against constraint is emphasized in deCharms' (1976) concept of personal causation. He suggests that, objectively, both Pawns and Origins experience external forces or constraints. The difference appears to be that Pawns are immobilized by these constraints and focus on them whereas Origins are aware of the constraints, but strive to mold the external forces to help them in their pursuit of meaningful goals. Simply put, Origins experience being causal agents within a context of constraint, not complete freedom.

Essentially, deCharms (1976, 1987) is suggesting that personal causation requires agents to transcend a situation so that they are not inactive or reactive, but rather proactive in pursuing their own goals despite the situation. This conceptualization clearly depicts the path through which people in this study moved. The common experience of perseverance toward meaningful goals despite the obstacles powerfully expanded people's sense of agency and was reflected in the theme of **striving determinedly.**

While there is ample validation of deCharms' concept of

personal causation in this study, the findings also contribute to his theory as well. DeCharms (1968, 1976) does not appear to be explicit in tying the concept of meaning to this fundamental experience of being a causal agent. Rather, meaning is implied in the first stages of the change process from Pawn to Origin. That is, people are encouraged to engage in self-study to identify meaningful motives. Meaning appears to be largely implicit and unelaborated.

A contribution of this study to deCharms' personal causation theory is in bringing personal meaning to the foreground and making explicit its role in enabling a person to feel like a causal agent. The ten stories of transformation clarify how intricately involved a sense of meaningfulness is in feeling like a personal cause. For example, in this study people engaged in goal directed action and

experienced being the personal causal agent of goals, but because the goals were meaningless, being the cause of them had little significance or little impact on their sense of agency. Instead, goal directed action that lacked meaningfulness was frequently viewed by people as a symbol or external manifestation of their encagement and lowered their sense of agency. Thus, a person can engage in goal directed action and experience being the personal causal agent of the goal, but if the goal is meaningless, it does not seem to matter if the person has been the cause of the goal or not.

In addition to clarifying an aspect of personal causation theory, the findings of this study also extend deCharms' (1976) conceptualization of personal responsibility. DeCharms makes explicit the link between taking personal responsibility and experiencing personal causation. He has written that, "originating one's own actions implies choice; choice is experienced as freedom; choice imposes responsibility for choice-related actions and enhances the feeling that the action is 'mine' (ownership of action)" (deCharms, 1984, p. 279). Essentially, if people take responsibility for their action, they are acknowledging that they are the personal cause or the Origin of that action which, in turn, enhances the experience of personal causation.

DeCharms' (1976, 1984) conceptualization of personal responsibility is evident in people's transformations of agency.

People did experience feeling responsible through their acknowledgement of being the personal cause of a chosen course of action. However, another aspect of responsibility was emphasized by people that has not been addressed by deCharms. In learning to take personal responsibility, the process did not involve taking responsibility in any absolute sense. Rather, there was an emphasis upon an exact determination of responsibility. People actively searched for an accurate assessment of how situations arose and how consequences came about. When people accurately assessed personal responsibility, they were in a better position to know exactly what they were responsible for. In knowing exactly what to be responsible for, they could take steps toward change. In so doing, people were refining their discriminative capacity to affect results in the future, which is in keeping with what it means to be an Origin or an agent.

The preceding discussion has focused on individual aspects of each of the five theories of agency that were validated by the findings of this study. Additionally, some qualifications and extensions of particular theories were presented. In this next section, aspects of the study's findings are examined in light of the theories of agency as a whole.

People's descriptions of experience clearly indicated that a transformation of human agency is a complex phenomenon that does

not involve any one or two features, but rather a whole
configuration of features. This finding suggests that while
individual aspects of Bandura's (1977) concept of self-efficacy,
Rotter's (1966) concept of locus of control, and Seligman's (1975)
concept of learned helplessness are supported, these theories tend
to be somewhat limited in scope. They do not appear to be
comprehensive enough to account for the complexity of these
naturalistic accounts of transformation.

Kobasa's (1979) concept of hardiness and the constellation of
personality characteristics that define it (control, commitment,
and challenge) is more encompassing than the concepts of
self-efficacy, locus of control, and learned helplessness as
applied to the results of this study. However, Kobasa's focus has
been on identifying and describing the particular characteristics
that make up the hardy personality rather than on identifying the
key components of the change process involved in moving from a low
sense of hardiness to a higher sense of hardiness. DeCharms (1968,
1976), on the other hand, has identified a configuration of
features involved in enhancing personal causation or a sense of
agency and, consequently, applies to the ten cases more
adequately.

The findings of this study extend all five theories of agency
by generating a number of important themes or features involved in
the transformation of human agency that appear to have been missed

or overlooked by theorists of agency. Themes such as **trapped in circumstances**, **trapped in relationships**, **sense of isolation from others**, **escaping an old situation**, **entering a new situation**, and **engaging in meaningful relationships** are not aspects of agency apparent in most theories. Given the nature of this group of themes when viewed as a whole, one might speculate that the reason for the absence of such themes in current theoretical formulations is the general neglect of context in the study of human agency. The general approach has been to study the person out of context by isolating a small number of variables in the laboratory setting.

DeCharms (1976) has taken one step further and shifted his study of personal causation from a laboratory setting to a practical setting (i.e., an elementary school classroom). The comprehensiveness of his theory reflects that shift. However, in both settings personal causation was programmatically induced. This study extends deCharms' research by investigating the enhancement of agency in natural contexts in its full complexity without the constraints of externally imposed theory and experimentally controlled conditions. In studying naturalistic, holistic, accounts of transformation, it is clear that context plays a significant role in cultivating a person's sense of agency as well as in maintaining a person's low sense of agency. These

findings indicate that context represents an important missing

ingredient in current theoretical formulations and consequently, in

our understanding of human agency.

In addition to configuration and context, another important

finding of this study that extends current theory is the role of

powerful emotions in transformations of agency. The importance of

emotion in people's transformations was emphasized in two ways.

First, during Q-sorting co-researchers consistently provided

feedback that the 52 items that made up the Q-sort (which were

based on these five theories of agency) were not sufficient to

capture their experience. The noted deficit was the lack of

feeling words such as anger, fear, and courage. Second, themes

such as **confined by emotions, numbness,** and **expressing**

feelings were critical components of people's accounts of

transformation. That is, surrounding these movements of agency

were potent emotions. In some cases, certain feelings such as fear

were numbed and the transformation involved the development of

self-awareness and self-expression of such feelings. In other

cases, potent feelings such as anger were highly destructive and

the transformation process involved learning to give these feelings

more direct and constructive expression.

These five theories of agency do not appear to have considered

the kinds of emotions that move one towards a sense of agency.

Some theorists such as Seligman (1975) emphasize emotional

consequences like depression, but do not address emotion in the

sense of its contributing role in the movement toward a greater

sense of agency. The whole subject of human agency, if not

examined carefully, invites one to pay attention to the action

involved and how action unfolds, and to neglect the feelings that

precede, accompany, follow, or maintain that action. The general

trend in all the theories of agency has been to focus on cognitions

or shifts in beliefs and their relationship to action, and in so

doing, these theories appear to have ignored the importance of

emotion and its role in enhancing human agency.

Implications for Practice

A primary goal of counselling is to foster human agency. The

focus of this study concerned how agency is enhanced in natural

contexts. In taking naturalistic cases of transformation, one of

the aims has been to provide a beginning holistic portrait for

counsellors in order to facilitate an understanding of how agency

is enhanced. Existing theory generally does not translate well to

the practical realities most counsellors face. Counsellors work

with the whole person and not isolated variables. They work toward

facilitating change that is enduring across settings and not just

in the laboratory setting. The expanded conception of how agency

is enhanced in natural contexts provided by the results of this study has practical implications for counsellors in terms of what to do and how to help in facilitating such a change in clients.

The holistic portrait that has emerged from the results of this study suggests an overarching, if rudimentary, guide to the process of a transformation of agency. The nine themes that portray the pattern of encagement describe the place at which clients who are dealing with problems of agency are likely to begin. The thirteen themes that portray the pattern of liberation and possibility identify and begin to describe the dynamic components of the transformational process.

This thematic portrait offers counsellors a framework of transformational landmarks to assist clients who are dealing with problems of agency. Counsellors' grasp of the overall portrait would enable them to place the client's present position in a context as well as to provide them with a working knowledge of some paths which seem to have been successful in facilitating a transformation of agency. This is not to suggest that the beginning portrait offered by this study is a definitive sequential articulation of the process of transformation. Rather, it represents an early exploratory effort that, as stated earlier, invites unending refinement and elaboration.

This holistic, thematic portrait generates several more particular and specific implications for counselling practice. The nine themes that represent experiences of encagement suggest practical implications related to understanding and comprehending the components of the client's problem. Clients who are dealing with problems of agency are not likely to describe their concerns as being confined by emotions or being trapped in relationships. Instead, the client is likely to present experiencing themselves as "stuck". They are likely to describe being at their wit's end, having exhausted themselves by doing more of that which does not work.

The counsellor can begin a process of assisting the client in the identification and meaningful labelling of the components of encagement operating in the client's life. The counsellor can accomplish this in at least three ways. First, the counsellor can be sensitive to what the client is saying about her or his life. Second, in addition to being sensitive to clients' descriptions of themselves, it would also seem important for counsellors to be sensitive to how clients present themselves. For instance, do they seem overly self-deprecating, do they lack affect, or do they seem phony or artificial? Third, in conjunction with listening and observing, the counsellor can pose specific questions framed around the specific purpose of identifying the components of encagement

operating in the client's life. Whatever strategies are chosen, they must be implemented within a context of support and genuine concern for the client. The counsellor must communicate to the client that she or he genuinely wants to understand the problem. Identifying the specific components of encagement will facilitate counsellors' understanding of the client's problem and provide a way to conceptualize it. The way the counsellor conceptualizes the problem then creates implications for some important ways to assist in the intervention process.

For example, it is likely more useful for clients to understand that certain of their thoughts, feelings, and behaviours are rooted in a sense of worthlessness and incompetence than it is to understand and describe their experience as "No matter what I do, I never win." Understanding the existence of a **sense of worthlessness** or a **sense of incompetence** invites the counsellor to focus on and to explore those particular issues with the client in an effort to clarify what to do that would be helpful to that particular client. If the problem is understood as a sense of worthlessness and incompetence, the counsellor would do certain things that she or he thinks would be helpful, such as facilitating experiences for the client that promote self-worth or the experience of being competent. The counsellor might do very different things if she or he perceived the problem to be a **sense of isolation from others.** There is no question that these experiences are related in

some way, but one way of conceptualizing the problem implies things to do that are different from the other way of conceptualizing it.

Identifying the components of encagement in the client's life not only provides a guiding conceptualization of the client's problem, but can also be used to reframe the client's experience in an effort to alter the client's perspective on her or his situation. For example, people who experience themselves as **trapped in circumstances** or **trapped in relationships** often present with a mood and attitude of helplessness and hopelessness. Understanding this experience within the context of the thematic portrait, the counsellor is able to empathize accurately while simultaneously re-framing the despair as a natural emotional concomitant of the beginnings of a transformation. The counsellor would understand that the sense of being trapped in circumstances or a relationship is often the naturalistic beginning for a powerfully satisfying transformation in one's sense of self, and one's sense of one's power and options.

Persons whose options are circumscribed by their emotional responses and cognitive patterns do not generally understand their experience that way. People who are **confined by their emotions** or **confined by their beliefs and attitudes** generally understand the forces which constrict them to be outside of their control.

The reframings invited by an understanding of the thematic experiences of encagement redirect the client to the world of choice. Understanding confinement as being, in part, the consequence of emotions, beliefs, and attitudes invites the re-examination of values, priorities, and emotional and cognitive patterns. This understanding invites the process of counselling to be directed toward facilitating the client's awareness and understanding that there are numerous choices being made and a world of options being foresaken. It is not that the client "should" or "must" make any other choice, but that awareness of the fact that choices are being made in regard to emotional responses, belief systems, and operating attitudes is, itself, an important component in the enhancement of human agency.

Trapped people who experience themselves as optionless often suppress awareness of difficult emotions. This **numbness,** functional to those who are objectively helpless (prisoners, for example), can be extremely counter-productive for those who have options for movement and change, but whose lack of awareness of relevant affect undercuts motivational energy. The counsellor who is aware of the functional role of emotional numbness in the general picture of encagement can identify the numbness phenomenon, label and normalize it under the circumstances, and at the same

time, be alert to the need for the client's affective awareness to be exercised.

Clients often present with a pervasive sense of loneliness which does not necessarily relate to the number of social or familial relationships they have. Rather, it reflects a lack of real, genuine, emotionally intimate relationships and is accompanied by the sense that the self is somehow unacceptable and worthless. The thematic portrait invites facilitative interpretation. The **sense of isolation from others** is intertwined with **a lack of authenticity.** The client's presentation can be reframed as an inability to share the real self with others because of the "out of tune" quality of the other components of encagement. That is, the sense of worthlessness and incompetence, the feeling of being trapped in circumstances and relationships, the experience of being confined by emotions, and beliefs and attitudes, and the process of emotional numbing all add up to a person who is "out of tune" with the self and, consequently, unable to be authentic.

This frame sets the stage for a counselling relationship which addresses the agenda of helping the clients get better acquainted with themselves. This framework of encagement launches the counselling relationship into an exploration of the client's real self. Their vulnerabilities, hopes, fears, values, priorities, and

so on, all rise up for review within the context of a counselling relationship oriented to ameliorating a lack of authenticity.

In the thematic portrait offered by the results of this study, encagement describes the status quo - or the situation of being stuck, while liberation and possibility describes the process of movement and change - the dynamics of transformation. The thirteen themes associated with the experience of liberation from encagement toward possibility generate practical implications related to the process of transformation; what is to be done and how the counsellor can contribute to the change process.

For example, a counsellor could suggest to the client that an important part of the change process is openness and readiness, a kind of preparedness for change if you will. Counsellors could reasonably assume that, by the time a client has entered counselling, she or he has demonstrated at least some indication of a readiness to change. As such, it would be important for counsellors to provide support and encouragement for the client's action on her or his own behalf early on in the counselling relationship. The counsellor could also alert the client to potential events such as **re-orienting moments**. The concept of re-orienting moments can be explained to the client and the counsellor can indicate to the client that such moments frequently provide direction in the form of some important decision, and that

it is important in the change process to be aware of them, to pay attention to them, and to be open to the effects of them.

In keeping with this notion of openness and readiness for change, counsellors could also encourage clients to be open to the positive influence of other people. For example, clients can be alerted to the value of **being helped by role models** in providing exposure to new perspectives and new ways of being, and perhaps in clarifying their own goals and direction. Clients can also be alerted to the value of **receiving support from others** in their process of change. If the client has no established social support network, the counsellor could strategize with the client about how such help from others could be acquired.

While counsellors are encouraging clients to be open to and ready for these experiences, the counsellor can simultaneously be modeling new perspectives and new ways of being to the client, while providing ongoing support in a variety of ways, such as through empathic reflection, encouragement, validation, guidance, and direct resources. Encouraging and facilitating this internal state of readiness provides experiences for clients which are likely to help them to begin to feel better about themselves and somewhat more confident, setting the stage for clients to increasingly consider specific forms of action to forward the process of change.

An important form of action in the process of transformation
is **taking risks**. Risk-taking, large or small, is an expansive
form of action that breaks the client's existing pattern of
"stuckness" and brings new experiences into play. Counsellors can
work with clients to discover and prescribe certain activities that
are representative of risk-taking and that are meaningful to the
client. Risks could be anything from **escaping an old situation**
such as a job or a relationship to **entering a new situation**
such as participating in a workshop or going back to school. It
does not much matter what the risk is, but rather that the client
does something different. Major risks such as ending an oppressive
relationship may perhaps need to be processed by the client in the
imagination before being attempted in reality. Counsellors need to
be aware that, in the study, people took risks without necessarily
feeling up to what they faced. Given that, counsellors could
encourage the client to take some kind of risk, however small,
despite not feeling confident as to the outcome.

In taking risks and making changes, the client is likely to
undergo periods of considerable struggle. In the midst of such
strivings, the courage, endurance, and energy of the client may be
challenged. The counsellor with an understanding of the role of
striving determinedly can alert clients to the importance of

striving hard to make things happen despite the obstacles, difficult feelings, setbacks, or failures along the way. Counsellors can facilitate this process by validating and normalizing the periods of improvement and setback, and reminding clients that persevering and not giving up are critical to the process of change.

Another important theme in the process of transformation is **experiencing success**. Through striving determinedly, clients are likely to eventually achieve experiences of success. The benefit of these success experiences to the developing client-agent is self-evident. However if, after considerable effort and perseverance, the client is not able to achieve an experience of success, it would be important for the counsellor to build that objective into the therapeutic process by planning, constructing, and implementing success experiences for the client. Clients may have had difficulty achieving success as a result of errors in execution, expectation, design, or interpretation. The counsellor who understands the important role of success experiences in the overall pattern of transformation may be more motivated to support and assist the client in defining, designing, implementing, and experiencing success.

Clients who are dealing with problems of agency are likely to be either unaware of their feelings or confined and trapped by

them, or both. This reality seems to be powerfully related to

living with a lack of authenticity. The results of this study add

emphasis to the importance of affective self-awareness and

self-expression as a part of the counselling relationship, and as a

critical component of the transformational process. The counsellor

who understands the theme of **expressing feelings** and how

important it is for the client to experience, express, and

understand the meaning of her or his feelings can support and

encourage emotional self-awareness, self-disclosure, and

self-expression.

Awareness of one's feelings and the meaning of one's emotional

experience is importantly related to the process of **engaging in**

meaningful activities and relationships, and **discovering**

personal meaning. The results of this study should encourage

counsellors to orient the counselling process to enhancing the

articulation, comprehension, and valuing of the client's personal

meaning system. Much of the suffering clients seem to experience

and what tends to block or limit much of their movement appears to

be related to a lack of awareness of, or lack of respect for, their

own personal meaning system. This problem is ameliorated in the

counselling process by a focused, continued effort on the part of

the counsellor to help the client discover what their feelings,

thoughts, beliefs, values, priorities, preferences, and interests

are. In essence, the counsellor can help the client discover with a deeper clarity and certainty what matters to them. Counsellors can encourage clients to give expression to what matters and help them to develop ideas about the activities and people that they would therefore find meaningful.

A critical theme in the process of transformation is **taking personal responsibility.** Counsellors can assist clients in learning to take personal responsibility in a variety of ways. The counsellor can help the client identify her or his own tendencies, such as taking too little or too much responsibility in situations. The counsellor can help the client identify opportunities to take responsibility and examine those experiences retrospectively in order to assist clients in determining and clarifying issues of personal responsibility. By assessing how situations arose and how consequences came about with clients, the counsellor can facilitate the client's ability to determine exactly what to be responsible for and what to do differently next time. For example, a counsellor could pose questions that call attention to how to be personally responsible such as, "So, if a similar situation arises in the future, what would you do differently?" In essence, the counsellor can help the client to discover and to exercise her or his response-ability.

The counsellor can also model personally responsible behaviour by what she or he says or does, coupled with techniques that direct client's awareness toward issues of responsibility. For example, clients often make themselves the object in situations by saying things like, "You'll never believe what happened to me today", rather than making themselves the subject by saying, "You'll never believe what I got myself into today." Counsellors can alert clients to victim-oriented versus personally responsible language in order to enhance the client's awareness of how she or he is or is not taking responsibility.

Counsellors can anticipate some sort of culminating event to signal the beginning of the end of the client's transformation. This event marks the point at which clients feel a sense of integration and completion about being able to **actively shape life.** Counsellors can help consolidate this process by exploring with the client what she or he has gone through and how, and in what ways, it feels different from before. On the basis of the client's expanded awareness of the possibilities and of her or his ability to shape her or his life in a way that is meaningful, counsellors can explore with the client what happens next and encourage her or him to design her or his own life, to be the author of her or his own story. Finally, counsellors can help make explicit the re-orientation toward possibility by emphasizing the

critical features that are required to sustain it, such as flexibility, continued change and development, and ongoing effort to avoid the traps of the past.

For the thematic portrait generated by the results of this study to be of practical utility to counsellors, an important point must be emphasized. The twenty-two themes extracted from the ten accounts of transformation did not exist as distinct, separate features of the transformation, but rather as a configuration of significant features that made up a complex whole. Consequently, it is not enough for counsellors to simply be aware of the names of these themes and use them like a recipe from a cookbook. Counsellors must be familiar with the variations of experience that clustered together to form a particular theme, and be aware that there are likely more themes and more variations to be discerned. Counsellors must also be aware that each theme contributed to the transformational process in a distinctive way. Thus, it is not a matter of simply presenting one or another theme to the client. That may not be appropriate nor helpful for the client at that time. Rather, counsellors must understand the unique story in which the client is immersed and must be sensitive to what the client is saying about her or his life. In this way, counsellors would be better able to know what theme would play a role at the

right time in order to help the client forward the process of change. Utilizing the themes with this understanding would place counsellors in a better position to know how to facilitate transformations of agency in clients.

In addition to providing a beginning holistic portrait to facilitate transformations of agency in clients, the results of this study have also generated some overall principles that have implications for counselling practice. These general principles relate to the overall picture of transformation rather than the specific components of it. First, for those people who received counselling, it was only one of many activities and experiences that contributed to their transformations. Counsellors can utilize this knowledge by facilitating clients' awareness of the other things they can be doing to facilitate their own change, such as travelling, participating in workshops or new activities, or joining clubs or support groups.

Second, based on the study's findings, we know that a certain amount of change that contributes to a person's transformation is internal and occurs through changes in a person's thoughts, feelings, or behaviours, but we also know that a certain amount of change is external, such as changes in a person's circumstances, relationships, or contexts. Given this information, counsellors

should strive to be aware of and sensitive to the context within which the client's life is embedded. That is, the counsellor should be aware of the client's relationships or particular circumstances outside the therapeutic context. This awareness can help counsellors deepen their understanding of the client and the client's problem, and thereby better facilitate the process of change for the client.

Third, transformations of human agency appear to be cyclic. Counsellors can anticipate periods of highs and lows, improvements and setbacks, and may use this information to normalize and validate the experience of the client. And fourth, transformations of agency appear to be a matter of years, not weeks or months, at least in these ten cases. People's transformations spanned between 4 and 40 years. With this understanding, counsellors can ease clients' frustration and impatience by reframing the slow pace of change as part of the process of transformation.

Implications for Future Research

This study of agency, using a case study approach, has provided a holistic portrait of the process involved in a transformation of human agency. Most of the current theoretical formulations of human agency have chosen to isolate and to focus on a small number of variables. Each approach can inform the other. Each approach has different contributions to make to our

understanding of human agency. However, there is a sparcity of holistic investigations of agency. Therefore, additional holistic case studies would be valuable in confirming and extending the present account.

Further studies will be required to validate the themes uncovered in this study. Future studies might reveal new themes, refine the role of individual themes in the transformation, and assess thematic interrelationships. Overall, future research has the potential to deepen and expand our understanding of each theme and its relationship to each and every other theme. Any one theme could be the subject for an extensive study. For example, one could do an entire study on risk-taking and its role in transformations of human agency. One could also speculate that the study of any one theme is likely to involve some or many of the other themes. Gaining mastery of this thematic composition would be important for those who want to help others enhance a sense of agency. In this study, themes were configured in a narrative flow. Future researchers inclined toward the use of narrative form as a way to understand and to make meaning of experience (see Sarbin, 1986; Polkinghorne, 1988) may want to strive toward filling out the plot summary of the story of a transformation of human agency that was generated from this study.

Future researchers may want to study gender differences in agency given that, historically, a major difference between women

and men has been framed in terms of agency (Betz & Hackett, 1987; Block, 1973; Strickland & Haley, 1980). Despite the focus of this study being on the generic processes involved in becoming more of an agent and not on gender differences, one interesting trend related to gender was noted. The results indicated that women tended to be encaged more by relationships and liberated by leaving them behind and finding new ones that they perceived to be more mutually empowering. The opposite was true for men in general. That is, men tended to find entering relationships liberating rather than encaging. These results make a certain amount of intuitive sense given the realities of a patriarchal culture and may suggest a fruitful direction for future researchers interested in examining gender differences in agency.

It appears from the case studies that theory building on the topic of human agency could benefit from an investigation of its exact opposite, that is, from the study of persons who are completely lacking in agency, such as people that are investigated in studies of addiction. For example, Stanton Peele (1975) conceptualizes addiction as a form of encagement. To Peele, addiction is an attempt to numb oneself from a meaningful involvement in and participation with the world. The more successful the numbing is, the more incapable one is of venturing out. Peele's analysis seems consistent with co-researchers'

descriptions of experience, and capable of enriching the study of agency and how it is lost.

Summary

The general purpose of this study was to examine transformations of human agency in natural contexts. Existing theoretical formulations have primarily been confined to laboratory investigations. Moreover, the principles generated by such theories have not been validated beyond the laboratory setting. With this purpose in mind, there were two immediate aims of the study. The first aim was to contribute to counselling theory by assessing five prominent theories of human agency and providing a basis from which to potentially establish more adequate theoretical formulations. The second aim was to contribute to counselling practice by providing concrete information and a more informed basis through which to enhance agency in clients.

A multiple case study design integrating intensive interviewing and Q-methodology was utilized for the study. Ten individuals, five women and five men, ranging in age from 28 to 64, were identified through a network of contacts for participation in the study. Based upon convergence of qualitative evidence from interviews and quantitative evidence from Q-sorts, rich, detailed narrative accounts of transformation were constructed for each

individual. Each account was validated by the individual for whom each was written and by an independent reviewer. Through a comparative analysis of the ten diverse accounts of transformation, extensive commonality was identified. Twenty-two common themes were extracted from the accounts that portrayed significant features of the transformation. Based on these themes, an abstract story of the common pattern revealed in the transformation was plotted.

Individual aspects of each of the theories of agency were validated as well as qualified in some important ways. In addition, the results extended these theories in three main ways. First, the results indicated that transformations of human agency were complex wholes that involved a configuration of features rather than any one or two isolated features. Second, the findings indicated that context played a critical role in transformations of agency. And third, the results emphasized the important role of powerful emotions in the process of transformation. The results of this study also generated a beginning holistic portrait of transformation which has implications for counsellors in terms of understanding and facilitating transformations of agency in clients.

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APPENDIX A

GRAPHS FOR EVENT LOADINGS OF CASE STUDIES

Appendix A

Graph for Event Loadings of Case Study One: Fay
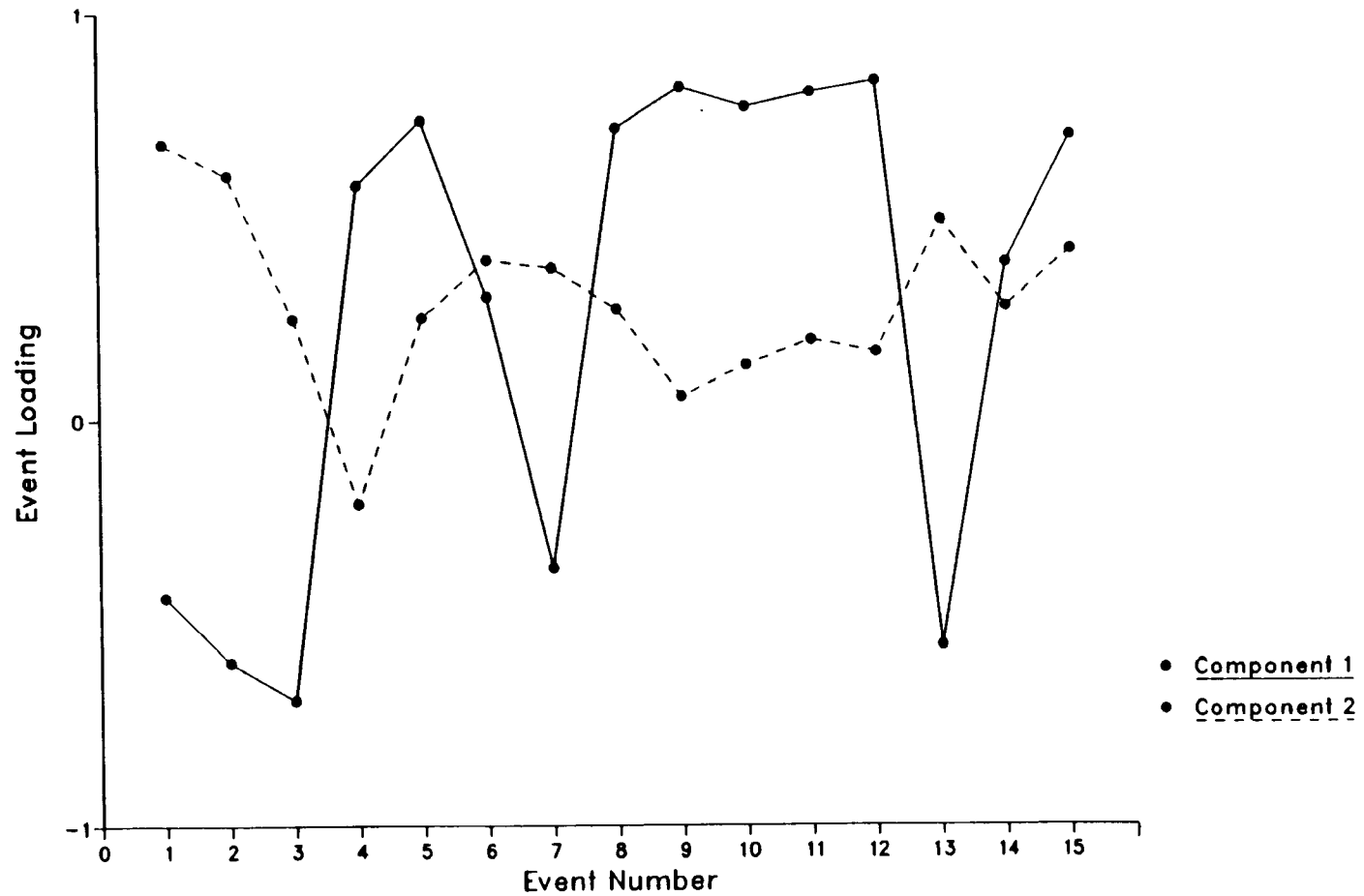
Appendix A

Graph for Event Loadings of Case Study Two: Glen
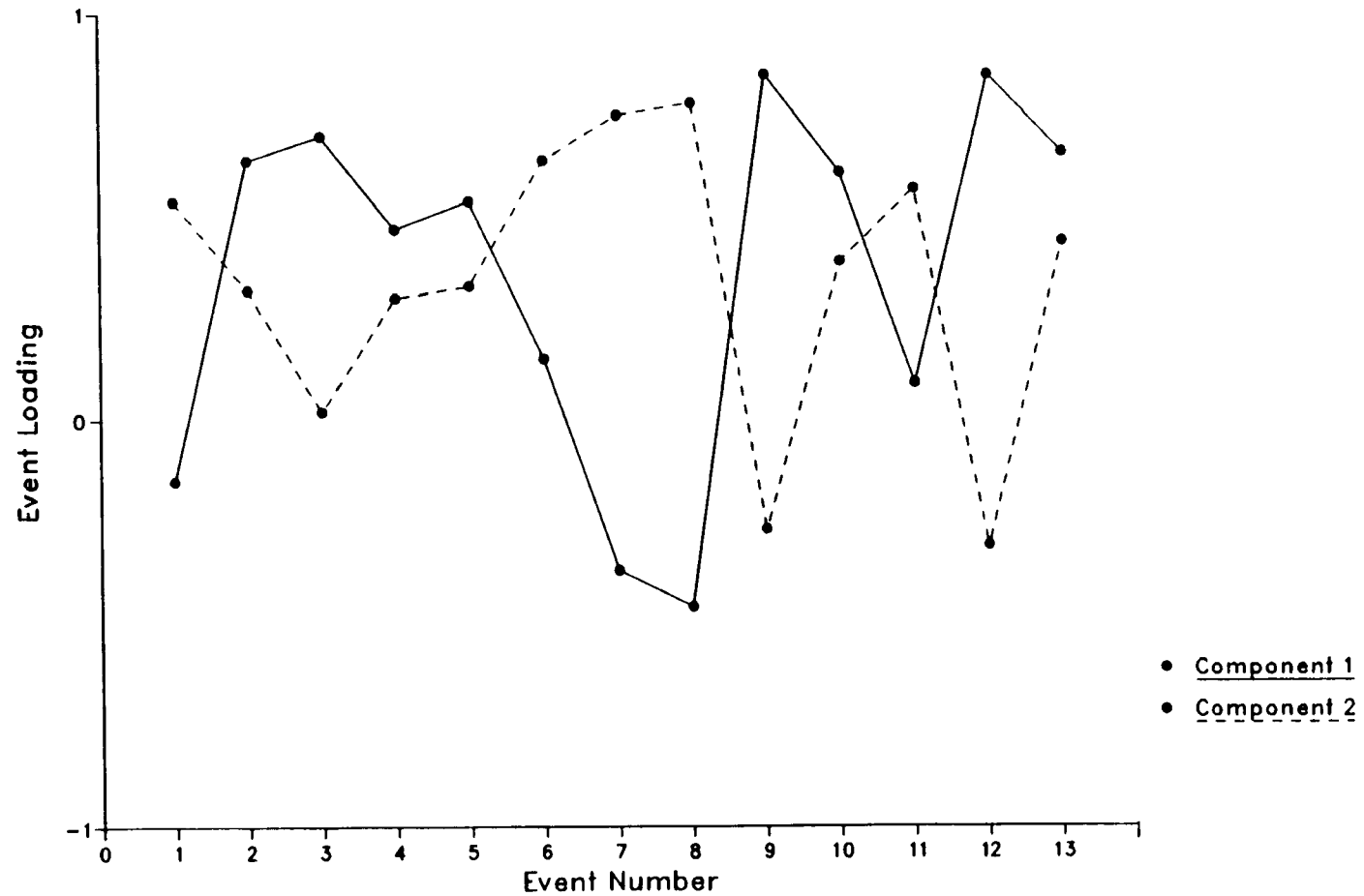
Appendix A

Graph for Event Loadings of Case Study Three: Margaret
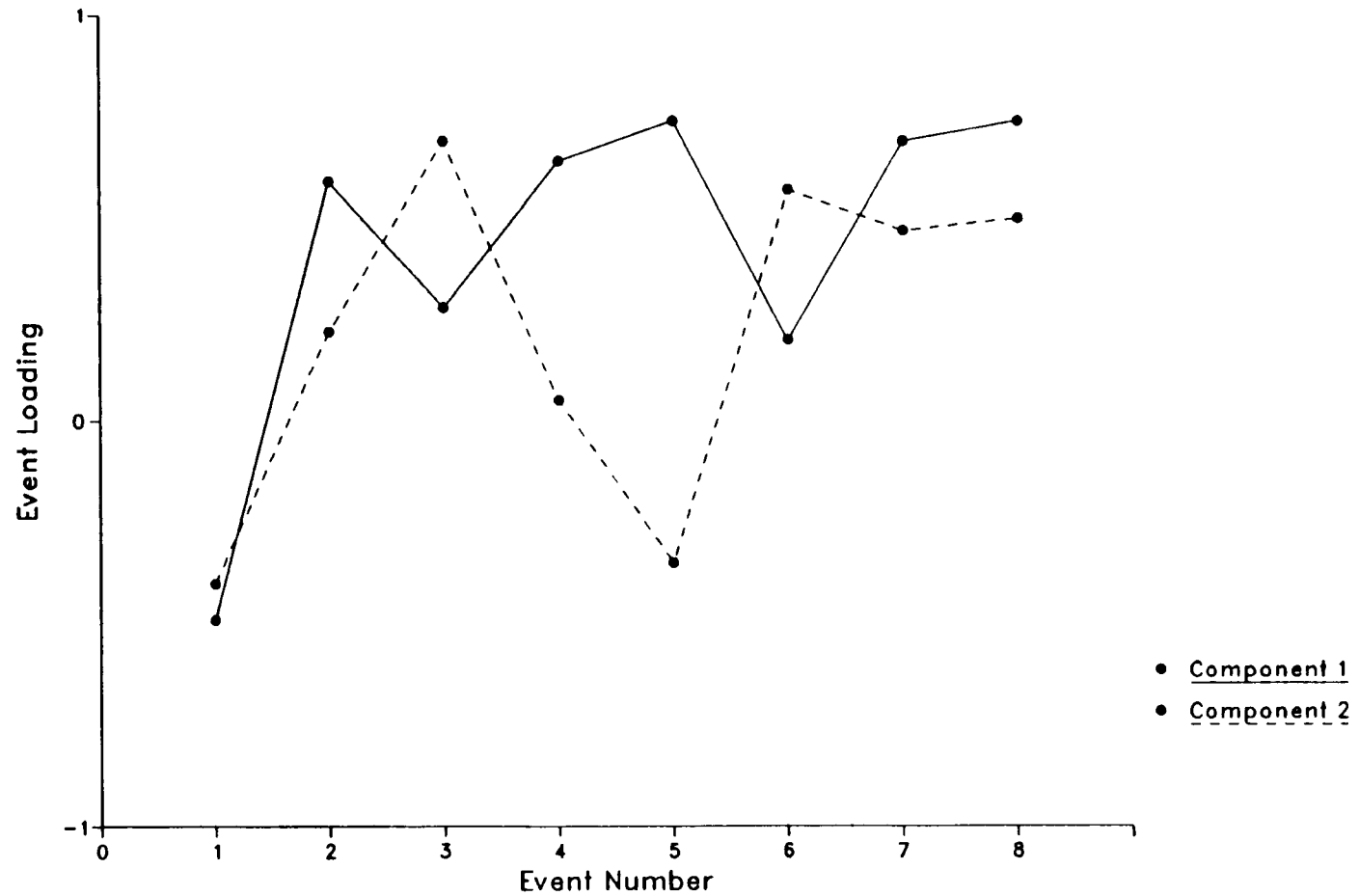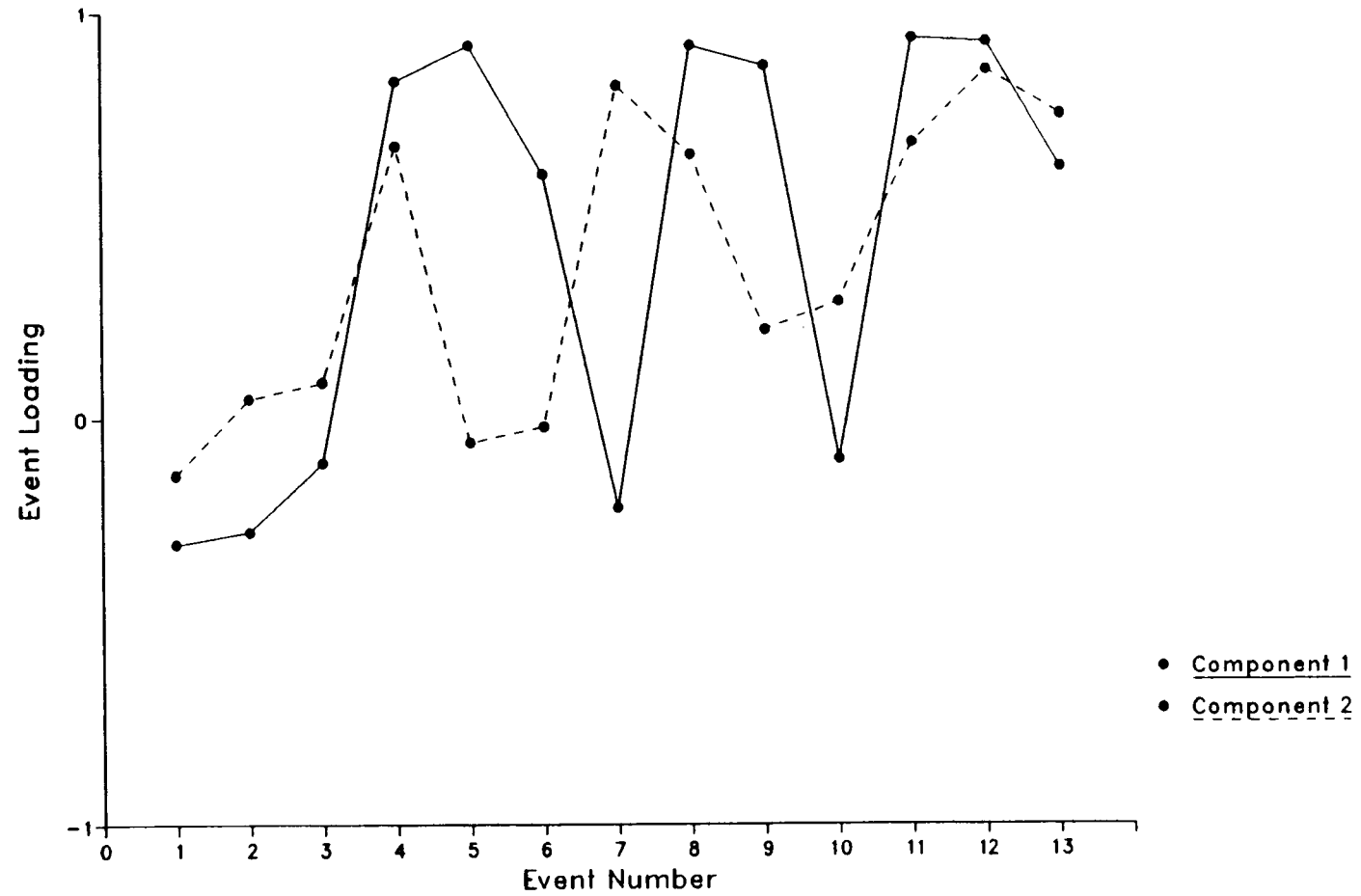
Graph for Event Loadings of Case Study Four: Ray
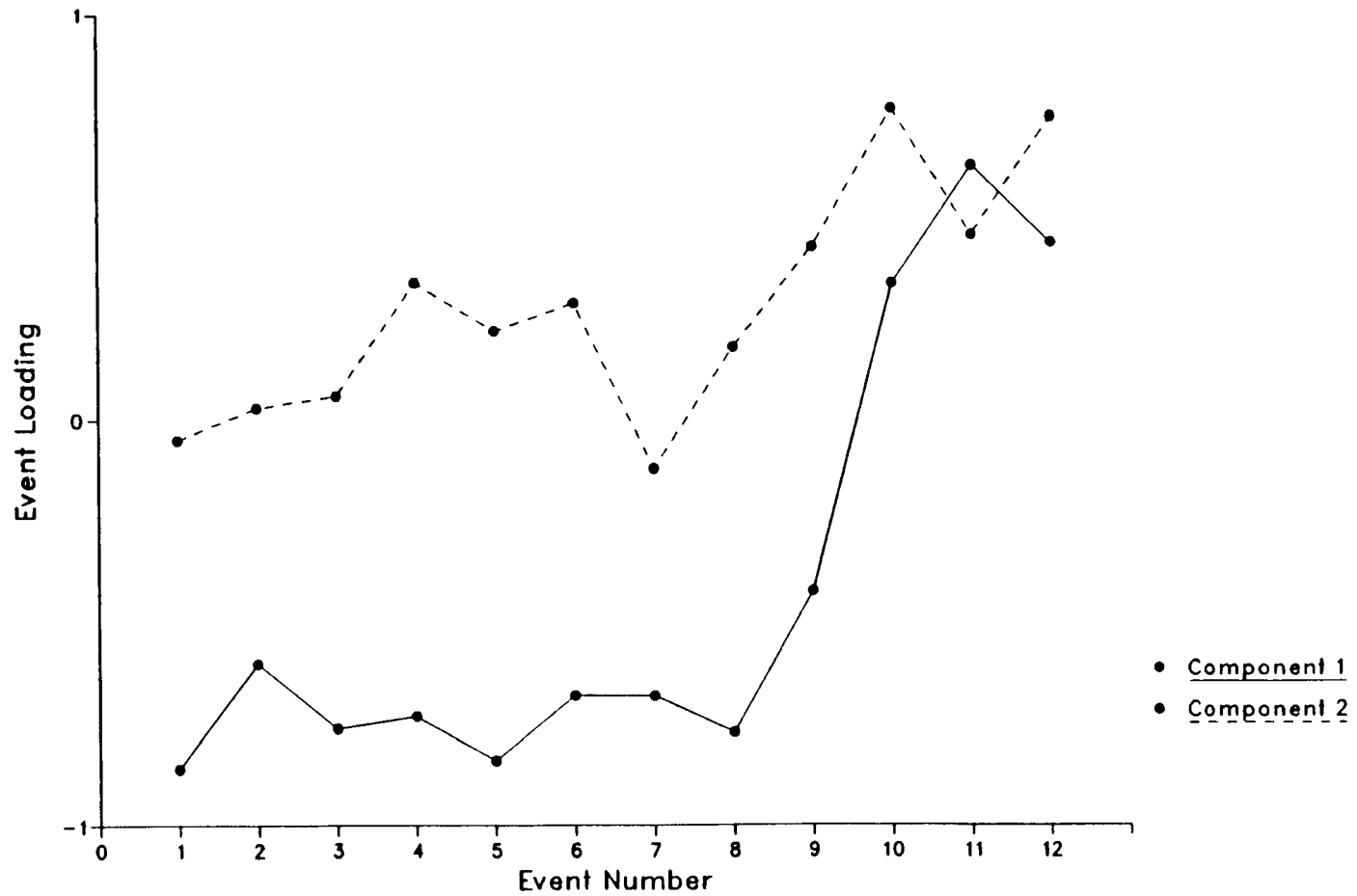
Appendix A
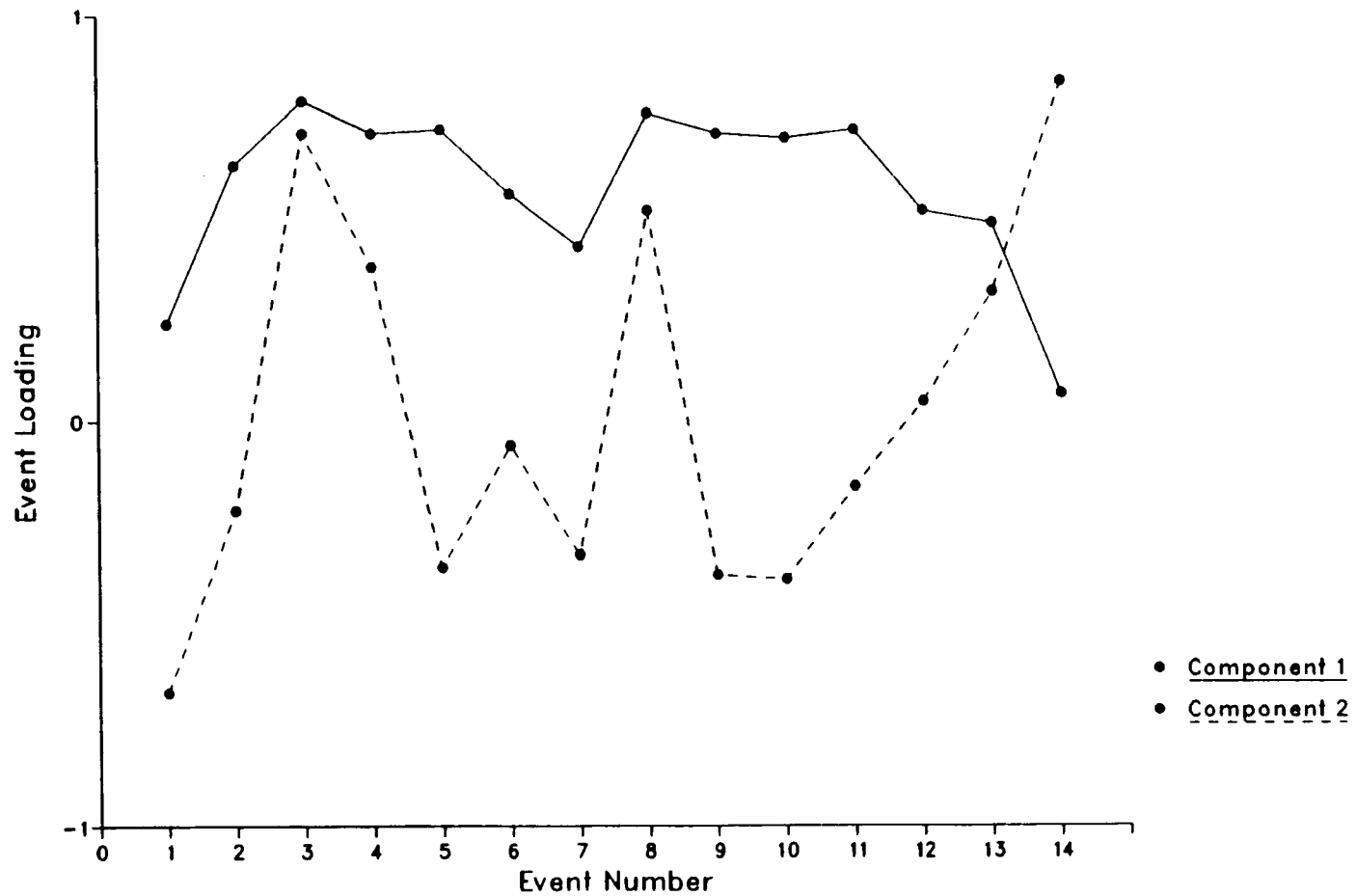
Graph for Event Loadings of Case Study Five: Brenda
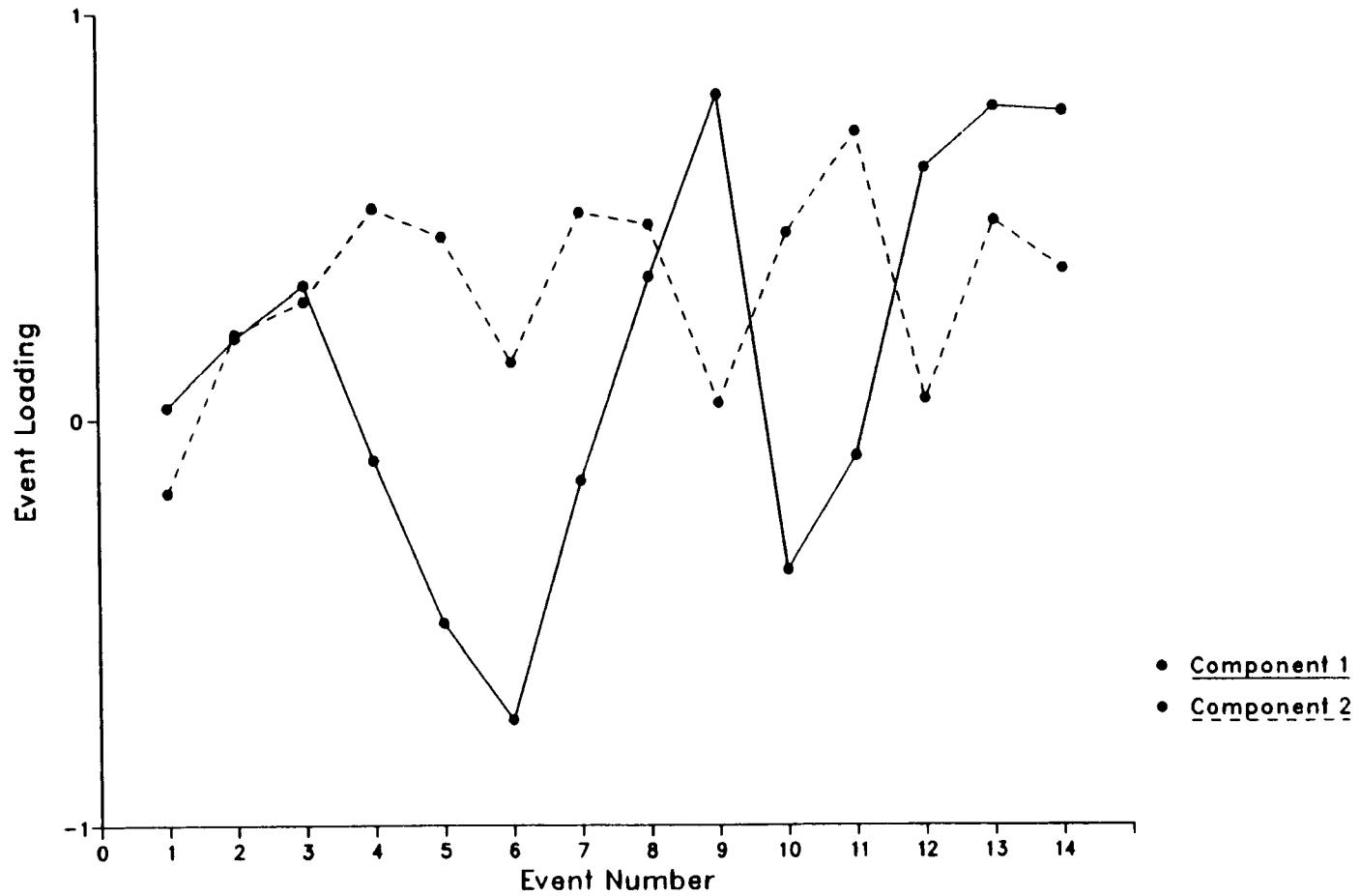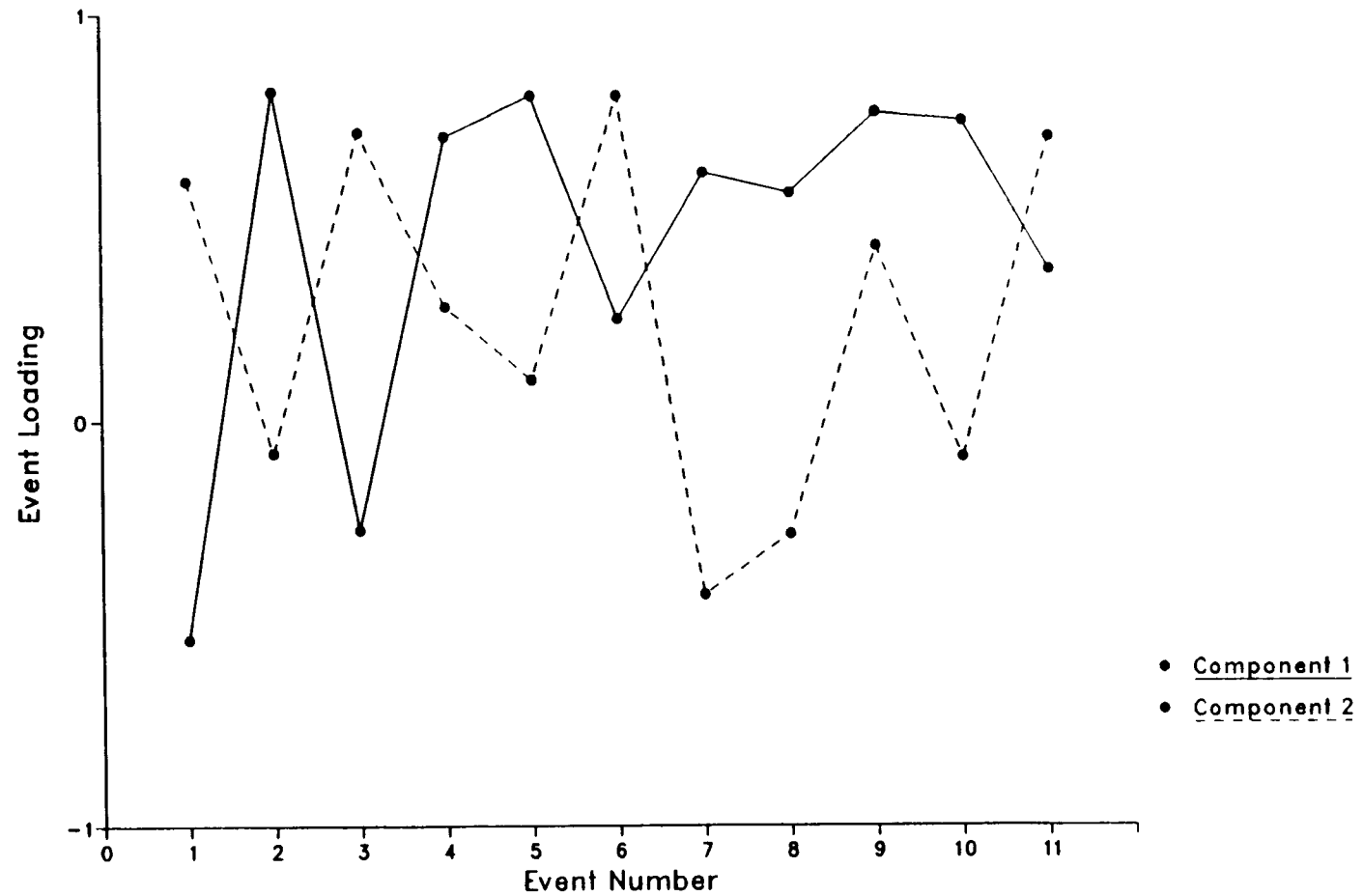
Appendix A

Graph for Event Loadings of Case Study Six: Lee
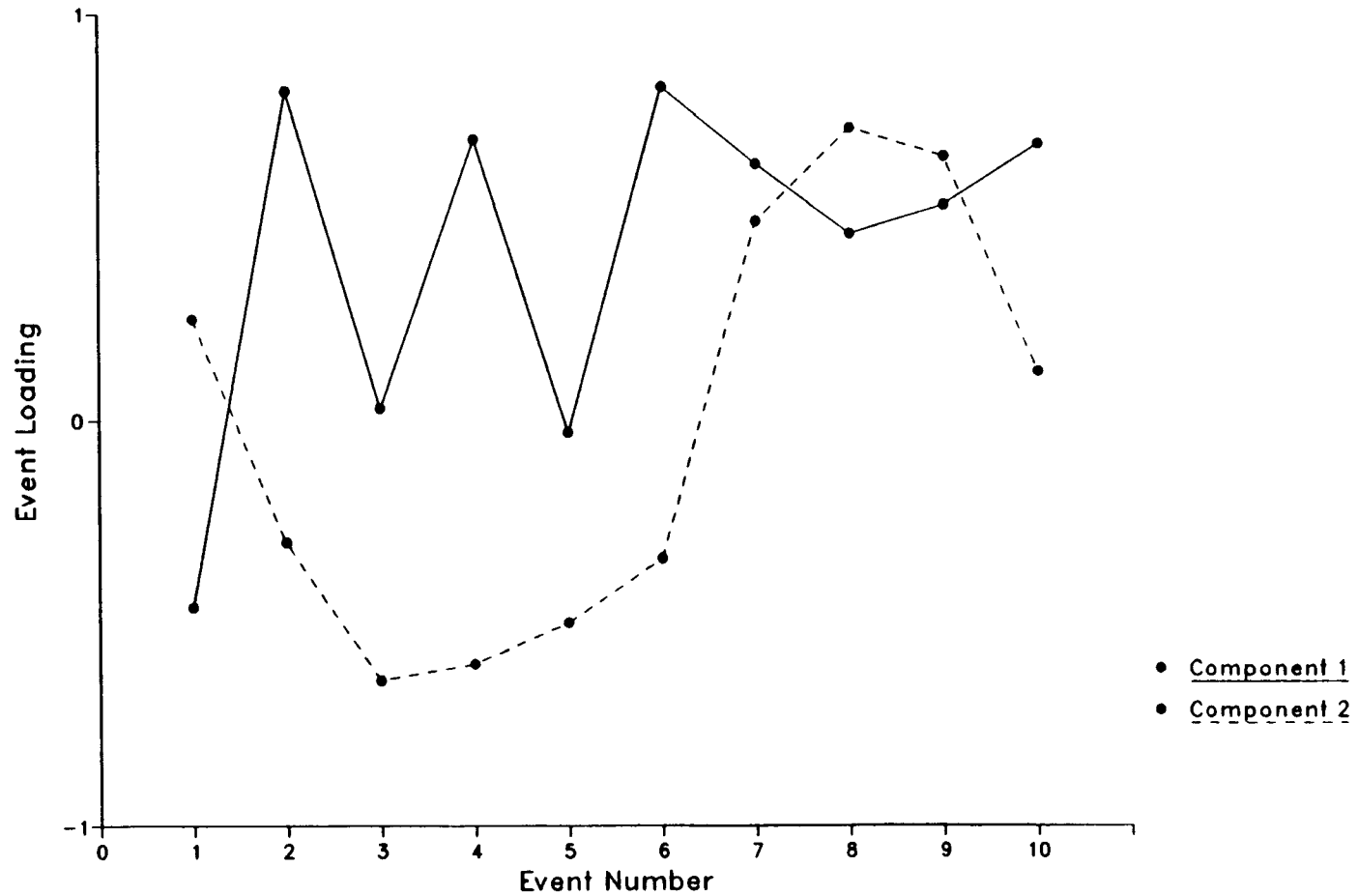
Appendix A

Graph for Event Loadings of Case Study Seven: Carol

Appendix A

Graph for Event Loadings of Case Study Eight: Tom

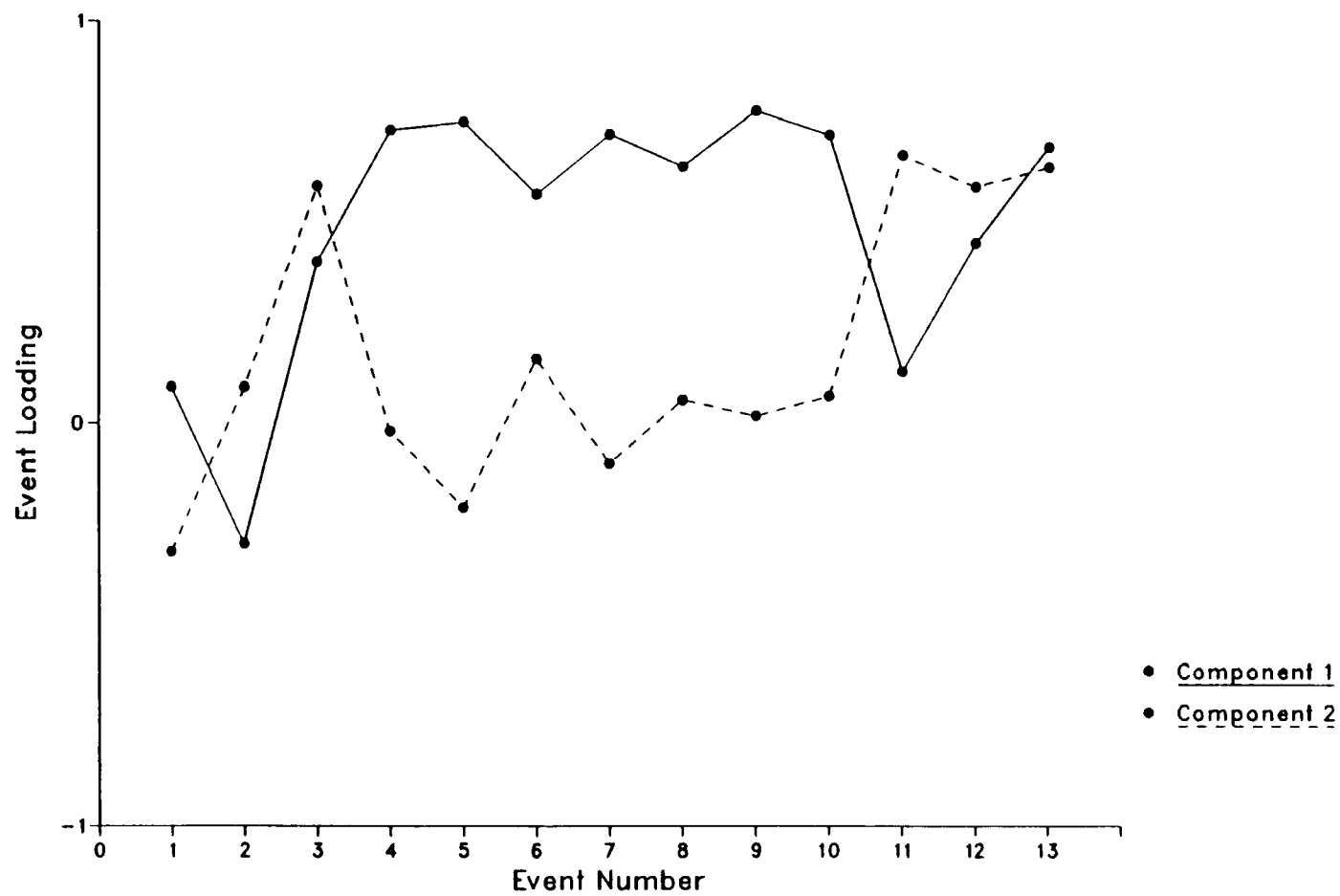# Appendix A

Graph for Event Loadings of Case Study Nine: Beth

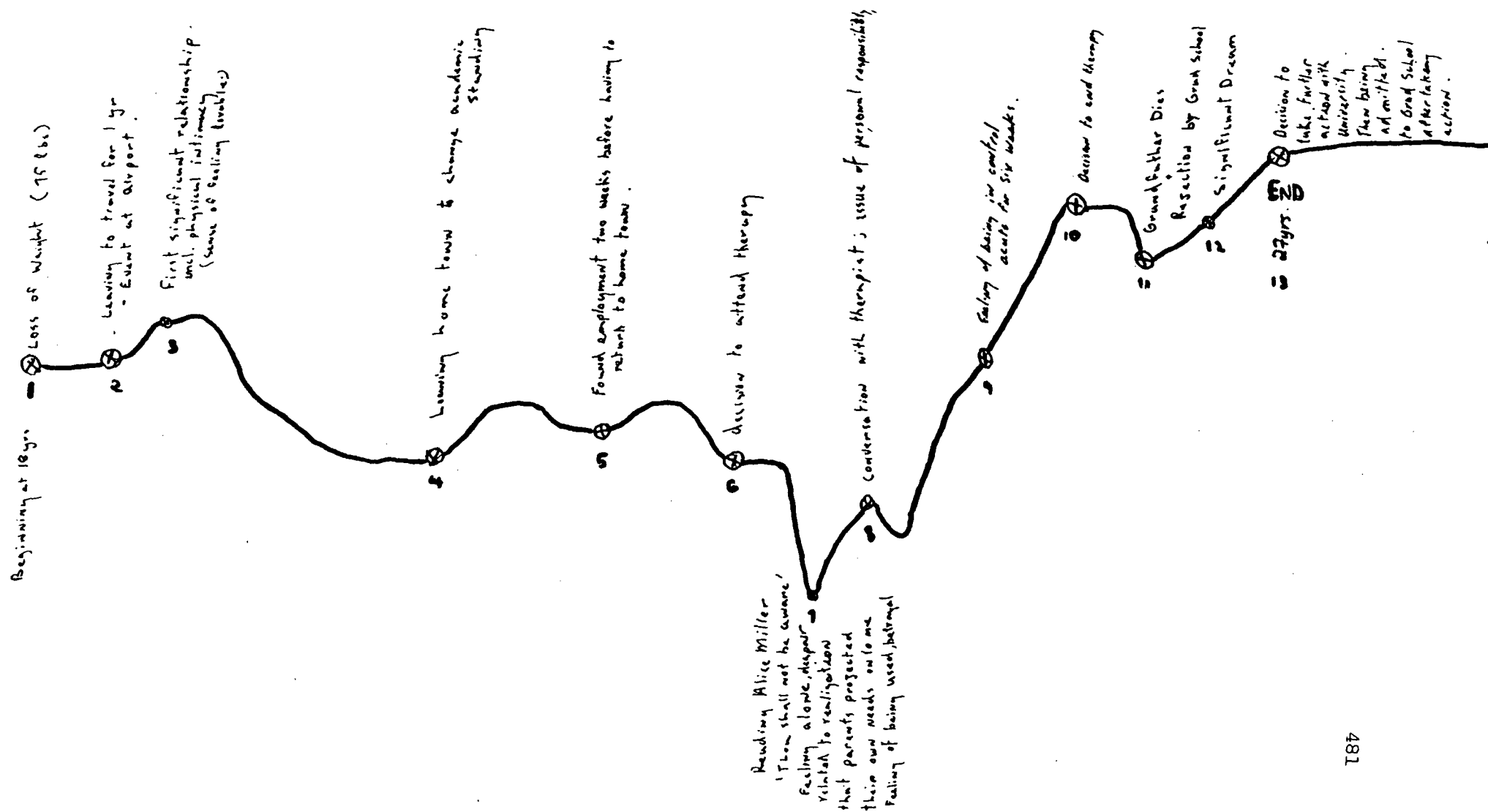Graph for Event Loadings of Case Study Ten: Don

APPENDIX B

EXAMPLE OF CHANGELINE

APPENDIX B

CHANGELINE FOR CASE STUDY TWO: GLEN

APPENDIX C

LETTER OF INFORMATION

Department of Counselling Psychology,
University of British Columbia,
5780 Toronto Road,
V6T 1L2   Date:

To:

    The study that I am conducting is an investigation of how
people have transformed themselves from being relatively powerless
and passive in their lives, to being relatively potent and active.
This project is being completed as a doctoral research study under
the supervision of Dr. L. Cochran in the Department of Counselling
Psychology at the University of British Columbia. The purpose of
the study is to obtain rich, detailed descriptions of how people
have enhanced their own sense of personal agency. That is, how
people have changed or transformed themselves from a position of
relative powerlessness to a position of relative potency. For this
reason, I am interested in finding individuals who have experienced
this transformation in their life, and who are willing to talk
about it in considerable depth.

    Participation in the study will involve interviews and a
sorting of items that describe the experience, and will require
approximately 6 to 8 hours to complete. Involvement in the study
will provide participants with an opportunity to reflect upon their
experience, and to examine it in greater detail. We hope that
being involved in the study will be both an interesting and a
useful experience.

    All identifying information will be deleted in order to ensure
confidentiality and to protect participants' privacy.
Participation in the study is completely voluntary and participants
are free to withdraw from the study at any time, without jeopardy
of any kind.

Sincerely,

Joan Laub (228-1958)   Dr. Larry Cochran (228-6139)
Doctoral Student   Professor
Dept. of Counselling Psychology   Dept. of Counselling Psychology
University of British Columbia   University of British Columbia

APPENDIX D

CONSENT FORM

Research Project: Transformation of Human Agency

This project is being completed as a doctoral research study by Joan Laub (228-1958) under the supervision of Dr. L. Cochran (228-6139) in the Department of Counselling Psychology at the University of British Columbia. The study concerns people's transformation or change from being relatively powerless and passive to being relatively potent and active. Participation will involve interviews and a sorting of items that describe the experience, and will require approximately 6 to 8 hours to complete. All sessions will be audiotaped and erased at the end of the project. Interview material will be transcribed and all identifying information will be deleted to ensure confidentiality and to protect participants' privacy. Participants are free to ask any questions concerning the project and may withdraw at any time, without jeopardy of any kind.

I acknowledge receipt of a copy of this consent form and agree to participate in the study.

_____   _____

Date   Signature of Participant

(Approved by U.B.C. Behavioural Sciences Screening Committee for Research Involving Human Subjects)