

BECOMING A SUBSTANTIAL SELF: A CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of becoming a more substantial self was investigated using the case study method. The co-researcher, Mary, was interviewed to elicit her experience of the phenomenon. Understanding was built up through collection of data from a variety of sources including early recollections, a diary, and interviews with friends and associates. The data were analyzed and Cochran's dramaturgical method was used to discover the coherent pattern of meaning. A rich, detailed description of the case was then written and summarized.

It was found that, for Mary, insubstantiality involved childhood experiences of powerlessness, incompetence, and lack of social acceptability. In response to these experiences she had formulated the position that she must defend against those painful vulnerabilities by presenting herself as strong person. Implicit in this was the assumption that she was powerless, incompetent and unacceptable and, as a result, dependent on external support.

At the age of 33, Mary reached a point where her life circumstances defeated the viability of this position. She felt humiliated and deafeated and could see no solution. It was then that she had a supportive spiritual experience and, at the same time, an experience of gentle confrontation from a supportive authority figure. This was the beginning of a 7-8 year transition period which involved two central processes. One process involved a kind of letting go or opening up, the other involved a movement forward involving risk, effort and action. Through many and various experiences Mary experienced that if she let go of her social mask of invulnerability and accepted herself as

she was, with painful feelings and imperfections, she arrived at an experience of harmony with herself, other people and the world in general. Profoundly interwoven with this was the process of risk, effort and action. In supportive contexts, Mary began to apply herself and to discover her capacities. She began to take larger and larger risks until she came to experience herself as a competent person capable of pursuing her goals.

The emergence of the substantial self was marked by the experience of the self as a capable social being and a harmonious spiritual, physical, and emotional being. Mary's life is no longer oriented around protecting vulnerabilities but around using her full capacities to accomplish social goals while staying in touch with her spiritual self.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	vii
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW	4
INTRODUCTION	4
PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORIES.....	5
Carl Jung	5
Eric Erikson	7
Carl Rogers	10
Murray Bowen	13
Stanton Peele.....	17
SUMMARY OF THEORIES.....	21
APPROACH TO RESEARCH	25
CHAPTER III: METHOD	28
SELECTION OF THE CO-RESEARCHER	28
PROCEDURES ADOPTED FROM THE DRAMATURGICAL METHOD	29
CASE STUDY PROCEDURE.....	31
EARLY RECOLLECTIONS	38
THE LIFELINE GRAPH	39
CHAPTER IV: RESULTS	40
A CASE OF BECOMING A SUBSTANTIAL SELF	40
ACT I	44
ACT II	64
ACT III	85

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION	91
STATEMENT OF FINDINGS	91
LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY	94
THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS	94
Jung	95
Erikson	96
Rogers.....	97
Bowen	99
Peele	101
PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS.....	102
The Individual.....	102
Therapeutic Practice.....	103
Society	104
IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH	104
SUMMARY	106
BIBLIOGRAPHY	108
APPENDIX I	
Interview with Mary	111
APPENDIX II	
Interview with Theresa	170
Interview with Donna	184
Reply from the Rector.....	197
APPENDIX III	
Early Recollections	199
APPENDIX IV	
Subject Consent Form	211

Letter to Friends	212
Response from Outside Expert	213
APPENDIX V	
Lifeline Graphs.....	214

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Some people experience a profound transformation in their experience of themselves. For a long period of time they feel insubstantial in relation to other people. They do not have a sense of themselves as individuals with full identity and autonomy. They are endlessly focused on the opinions of others and feel very affected and unbalanced in the presence of others. Then they begin to change. They develop identity and autonomy and come to experience a sense of themselves as substantial in relation to others.

For disciplines whose primary goal is helping people change, it seems obvious that efforts would be made to understand this important phenomenon in detail. Many, if not most, counselling theories propose explanations for the experience of insubstantiality as well as descriptions of the process involved in change. However, research has not attempted to rigorously describe this phenomenon or to inquire into the meaning of the experience in people's lives.

Unfortunately, research approaches have tended to exclude a description of experiential phenomena from the domain of study. In the search for causal explanations, only aspects of experience that can be duplicated and measured have been considered suitable subjects for research. Thus, complex experiential phenomena have been fragmented and reduced to variables and operational definitions. Instruments have been devised to measure the presence or absence of a phenomenon as defined. However, the question of the meaning has not arisen and experiences have been defined before they have

been described this study is to address the question of meaning by attempting
 Th detailed description of the process of becoming a substantial self
 to provide other people. Such a description is considered central for
 in relation to, disconfirming or broadening existing theory and for reflecting on
 cor existing models which are based on those theories.
 cr

The case study has been chosen as the method most sensitive to
 description of a complex phenomenon. Research is conducted by selecting a
 co-researcher who has had the target experience and then by collecting all
 available data which serves to illuminate the experience as it is lived. The
 co-researcher's account of the experienced is obtained. An effort to elucidate
 the underlying pattern of meaning and to substantiate conclusions leads to the
 search for additional data. Friends and associates might be interviewed;
 relevant documents might be obtained; other techniques might be used to elicit
 additional information from the co-researcher. When the researcher has
 completed a coherent account which strives to maintain fidelity to the data, it
 is given to the co-researcher for validation.

The boundaries of the case are considered to enclose all data that is
 relevant to the process of becoming a substantial self in relation to others.
 This is taken to be merely an entry topic. The evidence of the case is allowed
 to refine the appropriateness of the beginning conception.

Two approaches inform the case study method employed in this research.
 The existential-phenomenological approach guides the researcher to bracket
 presuppositions and allow the co-researcher to tell her own story (Colaizzi,
 1978). Cochran's (1987) dramaturgical approach guides the process of

synthesizing and finding meaning structures in the collected data.

The study begins with a review of the assumptions which have been made about the phenomenon in the theoretical literature. Upon completion of the case study, the findings are used to point to areas where theory is confirmed, disconfirmed or qualified. A model for counselling based on the findings is proposed.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

The central task addressed in this chapter is the uncovering of assumptions which have been made about the phenomenon of becoming a substantial self in relation to others in the theoretical literature. This review is restricted to the range of theories which have had a strong influence on psychological theory and practice. Religious and wisdom traditions are outside the scope of this study.

Becoming a substantial self in relation to others can be located within a larger theme of becoming a self. Three aspects seem to be central to this broader conception: a concern with the phenomenal experience of the self; a change process; and an implicit notion of a non-self. Exemplars have been chosen whose theories seem to bear most directly on the question according to these three aspects.

Each approach will be explicated by distinguishing important aspects of the philosophical approach to the question and then by discussing the assumptions made about the nature of the non-self and the steps involved in the change process. Theories are presented chronologically. Presentation of the exemplary theories will be followed by a summary of the salient assumptions of each theorist and a discussion of the proposed approach to research.

PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORIES

Carl Jung

For Jung (1940), becoming a self, or individuation, is the process of integration of the personality. It is not an automatic process of development but rather a challenging and difficult path which not everyone would wish to undertake.

The difficulty of individuation lies in the incongruity of the two halves of the personality which are to be integrated. The ego, which is the centre of the conscious mind, sees itself as the centre of the totality of psychic life. It defends against awareness of the unconscious mind. The conscious mind accepts only the favorable aspects of the personality and presents to the world a social mask or persona. The person is not aware that he or she contains within the unconscious mind the counterparts to all of the conscious aspects of the personality. The unconscious contains the dark side of life, the imperfection and opposing principles which the ego denies. The shadow represents all those less commendable aspects which we dislike in ourselves and which are masked by the persona we present to the outside world. The animus and anima are the counterparts to the feminine or masculine image we present.

At the beginning of the change process, the person thinks of himself or herself as only an ego who is responsible for everything and has to do everything alone. Eventually this belief becomes a burden that is unbearable. He or she reaches a kind of blind alley, and in defeat, turns towards the

unconscious and sees the face that was previously hidden from the world. This confrontation with the aspects of the self which were previously denied is a test of courage "sufficient to frighten off most people" (p.69). Wholeness and integration evolve if these aspects of the unconscious are reclaimed and integrated into the personality. The self that evolves has a sense of completion which comes from the integration of complementary principles--darkness and the light, perfection and imperfection. When the integration process is complete, the ego is no longer the centre of the personality. The new centre lies between the conscious and the unconscious mind. Dreams are considered valuable for guiding the change process as they contain the projected aspects of the unconscious.

Individuation is essentially a process of spiritual growth. The aspects of the unconscious only superficially derive from the individual's personal history. At a deeper level, the aspects of the unconscious are impersonal. They are universal meaning structures or archetypes. The spiritual experience begins when the individual integrates these unconscious archetypes and thereby experiences his or her connection with the whole of humanity. He or she becomes a part of the universe and no longer responsible for everything.

This conception is fundamentally different from the Freudian view. For Freud, the material in the unconscious is entirely a result of personal childhood history. Jung's conception protests against the Freudian conclusion that the highest achievements of mankind are nothing other than sublimated childhood wishes. For Jung they are expressions of universal meaning structures. Also, in the Freudian conception there is no teleology--no "becoming". For Jung, individuation is a universal process of becoming a

spiritual being. He found this same process described in such diverse wisdom traditions as cultural mythologies, medieval alchemy, Gnosticism, and Taoism.

Jung had three brief comments to make about the time and level of difficulty involved in this process. First, according to Jung, the process takes longer for a person who is neurotic. Second, the harder, the more disappointing the conditions of life, the larger the shadow grows. Third, the change can be completed in a short moment of experience or it can take months or years "according to the initial situation, the person involved in the process and the goal to be reached" (p. 90).

There has been no formal research on the individuation process. In "A Study of the Process of Individuation" (1940, pp. 30-51), Jung presented a case history of a female patient, 55 years of age. He described a series of paintings completed by the patient and thereby explained the stages of the individuation process. The case is less of an inquiry and more of an illustration.

Erik Erikson

For Erikson (1959), becoming a self involves developing a sense of ego identity. Identity formation is part of the normal process of ego development; however, such development is dependent on the support of the social environment.

Erikson's concept of identity demonstrates the relationship between the sense of self and the social context. Identity has a dual aspect. It refers to a

sense of oneself and also to a sense of what others take one to be. "The sense of ego identity is the accrued confidence that one's ability to maintain inner sameness and continuity is matched by the sameness and continuity of one's meaning for others" (p.89). In developing identity, one develops confidence that one's "individual way of mastering experience is a successful variant of the way other people master experience and recognize such mastery" (p.89).

The achievement of identity is the task of the fifth stage in a sequence of eight stages of ego development. This fifth stage is a central and pivotal stage because it occurs at the end of adolescence and marks the beginning of adulthood. Each of the eight stages is characterized by a crisis that is psychosocial in nature and each of these crises has a normal time of ascendancy from early childhood to old age. If a crisis in one stage is not adequately solved, the individual cannot adequately manage the next stage of development. How a child meets each of the crises of the early stages depends on the support available from the social environment. The attitudes and values of parents and teachers are seen as reflections of the larger culture.

The following is a brief summary of the stages of development:

1. Trust vs mistrust: first year

In this period the infant must learn to develop a sense of trust in himself and the world. This sense of trust becomes the basis for a sense of identity. Resolution of this problem depends on the mother-child relationship.

2. Autonomy vs shame and doubt: early childhood

After a basic faith in self and the world had been established the child moves on to the challenge of achieving autonomy. Success

involves establishing a sense of self-control without loss of esteem.

3. Initiative vs guilt: 4-5 years

In this stage the child must learn to initiate and follow through without feeling guilty.

4. Industry vs inferiority: pre-adolescence

The child must want to be shown how to do things and be able to do them.

5. Identity vs identity diffusion: adolescence

The task of the fifth stage is to find an acceptable social role. The person is preoccupied with how he or she appears to others. Does his or her way of mastering experience correlate with the ways other people master experience? Is mastery or achievement recognized by others? When identity is achieved it is experienced as a sense of psychosocial well-being and a sense of belonging.

6. Intimacy vs self-absorption: young adulthood

When identity has been achieved then real intimacy is possible. Real intimacy involves "twoness".

7. Generativity vs stagnation: middle age

The challenge of this stage is to learn to live creatively and productively.

8. Integrity vs despair: later life

Achieving integrity involves accepting responsibility for one's own life as lived, without regrets and without blaming others. Death is not feared but

is seen as part of the process of living.

There are four processes necessary to the achievement of the important fifth stage. First, the person must solve the crises of the first four stages of development and achieve a sense of trust, autonomy, initiative and industry. Second, the person must have successive experiences of "psychosocial fittedness", or belonging, beginning in early childhood. Third, as an extension of the second step, the person must find an acceptable social role. Fourth, in order to adequately accomplish all of the above processes, the person must experience support from his or her environment

There has been no direct descriptive research inquiry into the nature of Erickson's concepts of ego identity and ego development. Erikson (1963) made use of informal case studies of people from a variety of cultural settings to illustrate that the ego is bound up with social context. Marcia (1967) operationalized the ego identity stage into four "identity statuses": identity achievement, moratorium, foreclosure, and identity diffusion. The statuses were defined and a method was developed for establishing status category by means of a 30-minute semi-structured interview.

Carl Rogers

Rogers' theory exemplifies psychological theories which emphasize experiencing as a basis for personality description and personality change. Rogers (1951) describes his theory as basically phenomenological in character. It also contains features of organismic psychology and interpersonal theory

(Hall & Lindsay, 1970).

For Rogers, the inherent goal of all psychological growth is to become one's real or congruent self. When we are not real or congruent or authentic, we do not know who we are or what we want.

In On Becoming a Person, Rogers (1961, pp.108-124) explained what is involved in the process of growth towards a congruent self. Overall, the process involves healing the gap between the organism and the self. The gap is caused by experiences in childhood which are evaluated negatively by others and considered unworthy. These experiences are then excluded from the self-concept and a social mask is gradually developed which is out of line with organismic experience. The process of healing the gap is evoked by a therapeutic relationship with another person. Within the safety and support of the relationship, the mask or false front begins to dissolve. There is first an awareness of having no self of one's own, of having guided one's life in response to the demands of others. Then there is a decision: a choice is made to become one's real self. The next important step is the organismic experiencing of the previously denied feelings such as pity, hatred, or love. "Thus to an increasing degree he becomes himself - not a facade of conformity to others, not a cynical denial of all feeling, nor a front of intellectual rationality, but a living, breathing, feeling, fluctuating process - in short he becomes a person" (Pg. 114).

Eventually, Rogers came to see the therapeutic relationship as one instance of all possible interpersonal relationships (Hall & Lindzey, 1970). He still felt that a safe relationship was required to integrate the previously threatening feelings but felt that any congruent or genuine person could fill

the role.

Actualized people, according to Rogers, have a number of distinct characteristics (1961, pp.115-124). They are more aware of their own feelings and attitudes at an organic level and they experience an increased range of feelings from pain to love. They are less defensive and more aware of the external world. They can tolerate ambiguity and their beliefs are not rigid. They look less and less to others for their standards and values and they develop more and more trust in their own organism as a guide for action. They become content to be a process rather than a product.

Although Rogers made extensive use of transcripts of sessions with clients to illustrate his theory, there has been no research which seeks to describe the process of becoming a person. In "The Case of Mrs. Oak" (Rogers & Dymond, 1954), the aim of the case study is not to investigate the nature of the personality change in the client but to substantiate that a change had taken place as a result of the Rogerian approach.

Murray Bowen

Bowen described a process of individual change from the perspective of family theory. His theory is described as integrative because it combines an individual with a relational systems perspective (Kuchenmuller, 1984). The development of thinking about family relationship systems began in the 1950's when, for the first time, whole families were seen as clients (Bowen, 1966). Theorists within the integrative model used the concept of self from Object

Relations Theory and combined it with new thinking about the functioning of relationship systems (Kuchenmuller, 1984). In systems thinking, the individual is understood in terms of his or her role in perpetuating the circular causality of system's interaction.

Bowen's concept of differentiation of self is not a formal theory of personality development, neither is it a teleological conception such as becoming a person or individuation. It is a strategy for dealing with a problem maintaining autonomy in relationship systems. The individual's problem with autonomy or differentiation is seen to have originated in the family of origin.

Kuchenmuller (1984) explained the roots of the differentiation construct. According to Object Relations theorists, the self develops in relation to others; in particular, it develops in childhood in relation to the mother. For healthy development of the self, the child must have the two relational experiences of attachment and autonomy. In the beginning, the child needs to experience attachment or bonding with the mother. Later, the child needs to experience being a potent and separate individual in relation to mother without losing the constancy of the positive bond. If the child is deprived of the experience of autonomy with support, this lays down a pattern of relating to others which continues into adulthood and creates an irresolvable need for clinging. The child or adult then looks outside rather than inside itself for support and is prone to feeling either smothered or abandoned. Also within Object Relations Theory, there is a concept of generational transmission. Adults who were dependently attached, seek out others for intimate relations in order to recapture lost parts of themselves. They are attracted to the

pseudo-characteristics in each other which they were not able to develop in themselves. When these dependent adults become parents they are not able to support their own children's moves toward autonomy.

From this theoretical base, integrative family theories conceive of a family system which is enmeshed. Ego boundaries are diffuse and individuals have roles in maintaining the dependent system. Bowen added the concept of triangling: that is, unexpressed conflict between two people results in a third person being drawn in to balance the relationship system. Unexpressed conflict between marriage partners could result in a child (or children) being brought in to balance the functioning of the group. For Bowen, differentiation of self is the process of the individual's gaining autonomy from an enmeshed system.

When individuals have differentiated, a number of characteristics can be discerned. They can be identified by "...such 'I' position stances as: 'These are my beliefs and convictions. This is what I am, and who I am, and what I will do, or not do' " (Anonymous, p.118). They can be in contact with others and maintain objectivity if they wish. They can also choose to lose themselves in intimate relations--the important aspect being the capacity for choice. Differentiated people also have more energy available for goal-directed activities and their relationships have a different quality : they are calmer and have more room for individuality.

In 1967, Bowen gave an account of his own process of differentiation to a national conference of family therapists. This account was later revised and published anonymously under the title, "Toward the differentiation of a self in one's own family" (Anonymous, 1972).

The following is the account Bowen gave of his personal process of differentiation of self. As a young adult, he felt that his relationships with his family of origin were ideal. When psychoanalysis revealed to him previously hidden conflicts, he tried to deal with these new feelings by expressing the conflicts openly. When this tactic did not work, he gave up for a time. He concluded that his parents would never change. During this period, he tried to keep a detached emotional distance from his family but whenever he went to visit he found that he quickly developed uncomfortable feelings. He noticed that the same pattern occurred in relation to his "family" of colleagues at work. He described his experience in various ways. He said at one point, "It was as if the emotional system 'closed in' as I entered the building" (p.130). At another point, he said that he felt unable to be in contact with either group of people without becoming "fused into the system" (pg. 131). Being in contact seemed to automatically involve a certain "loss of objectivity" (pg.130).

It was through the conscious application of a principle he had been developing that he felt he was able to successfully differentiate himself from his family of professional colleagues. He was later to call this process detriangling. He decided that he would define where he stood in relation to others--his role as leader, his goals and his intentions. As a result of this defining move, almost immediately there was less gossiping and complaining and the staff began a similar process of defining their own responsibilities. He realized that he had previously infantilized his staff by functioning for them in some areas and not functioning appropriately in other areas.

After the success with his professional colleagues and after he had further

developed his concepts about the functioning of interactional systems, he began a systematic effort to differentiate from his family of origin. He basically applied two concepts--the concept of a person-to-person relationship and the concept of detriangling. First, he set about establishing person-to-person relationships with his family members as individuals; for example, he worked on building a relationship with his mother and father separately rather than relating to them as a fused couple. Second, as in his differentiating tactic at work, he decided to define his position on important family issues and to avoid being drawn into the old patterns of family triangling. He chose the opportunity of a family dispute to further his differentiation. At this time, he went to considerable effort to define his own position in the dispute and to see that other family members would not be drawn into an alliance with him against other members. The result was that there was an immediate reduction of tension in the group and his relationships with all individual members improved. "The end of that Sunday afternoon was one of the most satisfying periods of my entire life. I had actively participated in the most intense family emotion possible and had stayed completely out of the 'ego mass' of my very own family" (pg.159).

Generalizing from his own experience, Bowen concluded that the following steps are involved in becoming a more autonomous or differentiated self. In the beginning, one feels discomfort in relationships, a certain loss of objectivity and a sensation of being drawn or fused into relationships. System's thinking allows one to see one's own role in perpetuating repetitive interaction patterns. One is then able to take personal responsibility for change and act from this responsible position to define beliefs, feelings, and

roles in relation to others and to avoid alliances. Gradually, one is able to relate closely to others and maintain emotional autonomy if one chooses. Although there are many relationship systems in which a person can be enmeshed, it is most important to differentiate from one's family of origin. Changes in one's family of origin translate almost immediately into parallel changes in other relationship systems. Children who have been triangled in to stabilize an underlying marital conflict will have a lower degree of differentiation. Bowen reports that it took him 7-8 years of active effort to differentiate from his family, however he was able to coach others to do it in 2-3 years.

Recently there have been attempts made to operationalize the differentiation of self concept (Bray, Willianson & Malone, 1984; Green, Hamilton, & Rolling, 1986). In both cases, instruments have been designed to measure the extent of a person's achieved level of differentiation. Bowen's description of his own process stands as the only account of the nature of the process of differentiation of self.

Stanton Peele

For social psychologist Stanton Peele (1975), the process of becoming a self involves growing out of dependent relationships. He refers to these relationships as addictive because they follow the same pattern as drug and alcohol addiction.

Peele's prescription for change becomes clear in the light of his

conception of the initial problem. In the beginning, the person is addicted to or dependent on a relationship. He or she has a diminished sense of self and depends on the other person in the relationship as an external or outside source of assurance. Over time, this dependency or over-reliance isolates the person from new, potentially growth-enhancing experiences, and the relationship becomes a closed system preventing further growth of the self. The relationship can't be given up because identity and security depend on it and because no other avenues have been cultivated. In such cases, both members of the relationship are equally dependent and act to prevent the growth of autonomy and self-reliance in the other.

Peele's explanation of the cause of addiction is framed within a model of human behavior and motivation which is a blend of cognitive and existential perspectives. The problem underlying addiction is a diminished experience of self and the causes of this experience are the unhealthy cultural attitudes and beliefs which we have learned. Peele described his theory as a cross between Carl Rogers and Albert Ellis.

According to Peele, parents all too frequently hinder the development of a sense of self-confidence and internal direction. They tend to over direct children, to squash independent judgement and to teach reliance on external authority. Out of a concern to do the best thing for their children, the standards of the general culture are applied to their children without an appreciation of the importance for psychic growth of a sense of independence, competence and joy.

The source of the problem is the larger culture and not the families which are mere instruments of cultural values. The social structure is not sensitive

to people's need for influence. Schools teach reliance on authority rather than encouraging and supporting individual thought. Positive reinforcement is given for memorizing and following directions. Romantic love is idealized: we are trained from an early age to look for one special person as the answer to our happiness. Women are taught to rely on men. Men are taught that they have to be strong and independent so that they are forced into dependent relationships to resolve the contradictions created by this one-sided ideal. Also, Peele suggests that television promotes passivity and teaches us that normal existence is not exciting.

Peele's description of the change process is also a blend of cognitive and existential or humanist perspectives. We can set about encouraging change in our lives by actively examining our attitudes, adopting some new attitudes and by taking action. With the combination of our active involvement, and a slow passage of time, a new experience of self begins to build and grow. Since, in Peele's view, the underlying process is the same for all forms of addiction, the cure is a general one and does not apply specifically to interpersonal addiction.

The following is a summary of the steps involved in becoming non-addicted:

1. To begin, responsibility for change has to be assumed by the individual who recognizes the need for change.
2. The next step is action. Using trial and error, persistent effort is applied to cope with real life situations and to build on strengths.
3. Eventually the non-addicted self emerges and there is less need for dependence on external support. There are a number of

feelings which constitute this new sense of self. Feelings of competence and confidence eventually emerge from taking responsibility and applying persistent effort. Pleasure results from being interested, engrossed, committed. A sense of stability results from caring about more than one thing.

4. The experience of accomplishing things once considered out of reach provides a model for making further changes and taking further risks.
5. Throughout the process one learns to accept imperfection and have less need of perfect solutions.

There has not been any research investigating the constituents of this process of becoming non-addicted. In Love and Addiction, Peele (1975) used informal case histories to illustrate his theory. These are not cases of specific individuals, rather they are composite cases drawn from the lives of people he had known.

SUMMARY OF THEORIES

Each of the theories will be summarized according to two categories: a) the dimensions of the self before change and b) the steps involved in the process of change. What prevents a person from being a self in relation to others and how does change come about?

Jung

- a) Prior to individuation or the achievement of the self, the conscious and unconscious minds are not integrated. The centre of the personality is the ego which is the centre of the conscious mind. The conscious mind accepts only the favorable aspects of the personality and presents to the world a social mask or persona. The person is not aware that he or she contains within the unconscious mind the counterparts to all of the conscious aspects of the personality. These counterparts are universal meaning structures or archetypes and in cutting off awareness of these archetypes, the person is without the experience of themselves as spiritual being.
- b) Individuation is a universal process of personality development but it does not happen automatically. It is difficult process which requires courage. Integration or individuation begins when the ego experiences a major defeat and without a solution turns to the unconscious. The counterparts to the conscious persona are one by one recognized and integrated. The self emerges when all the opposing characteristics are recognized as part of the whole. The process is recognized as impersonal rather than personal and the result is an

experience of oneself as a spiritual being.

Erikson

a) A person who lacks the experience of ego identity either has not solved the crises of the four foundational stages or has not yet solved the crisis of the identity stage of ego development. In the prior case, the person may be stuck at any of the foundational stages. If there was not support from the social context, the child may not have achieved a sense of trust, autonomy, initiative or industry. In the latter case, the person has not solved the crisis of adolescence which involves having achievements recognized by others and finding an acceptable social role. Without identity, the person lacks the sense of psycho-social well-being.

b) Identity achievement involves four processes: 1) solving the crises of the first four stages of development and achieving a sense of trust, autonomy, initiative and industry; 2) having accumulated experiences of belonging beginning in early childhood; 3) solving the identity crisis of adolescence and achieving an acceptable social role; 4) receiving support from the social environment throughout.

Rogers

a) Because of negative evaluation by others, unwanted feelings are excluded from the self-concept. The self concept which develops is a kind of social mask which is not congruent with the organismic experience.

b) Becoming a person involves healing the gap between the self-concept and the organismic experience of the self. Within a therapeutic relationship the false front begins to dissolve. People become aware that they have not been their real or congruent selves. They have been living their lives to please others. A decision is made to become congruent. This is followed by the expression of previously denied feelings. Gradually, organismic experience is trusted as a guide for living.

Bowen

a) Undifferentiated individuals experience a lack of autonomy in relationship systems. They do not state their beliefs and take separate stands. They get drawn into patterns of alliances. They unwittingly play a role in perpetuating enmeshed systems. They learned this pattern in their family of origin and play it out in other relationship systems. Children who were triangled in to stabilize an underlying marital conflict will be less differentiated.

b) In order to differentiate, individuals must see their role in perpetuating the system. They must then begin to define their beliefs, take stands, refuse to perpetuate alliances, and establish person-to-person relationships with others. It is most important to differentiate from one's family of origin as this will translate to other systems. Differentiation from one's family of origin can take many years of active effort.

Peele

- a) Individuals in addictive relationships have a diminished sense of self and therefore rely on their partner for external support. Continued over-reliance isolates the person from new experiences and prevents further growth of the self. The diminished sense of self is originally caused by cultural attitudes. Parents and schools overdirect children and inhibit their sense of internal control. The social structure generally is not sensitive to individuals' needs for influence. The social value placed on romantic love promotes dependency.
- b) In order to become non-addicted, individuals must make a decision to change and take responsibility for change. Will power, and persistent effort in areas of strength will eventually result in a new experience of self. The new sense of self is characterized by feelings of competence, confidence, joy and stability. As these feelings increase more risks can be taken. Gradually acceptance of imperfection is learned. With this new sense of self, over-reliance on an intimate partner becomes unnecessary.

APPROACH TO RESEARCH

What is really called for is a rigorous descriptive study of the process of becoming a substantial self in relation to others. The case study is considered appropriate because it is the method which provides the most sensitive treatment of an extremely complex phenomenon (Yin, 1984).

Stake (1979a) describes four salient aspects of the case study. First, although it is commonly used to study one individual, the case can be whatever bounded system is of interest. Boundaries are set by one's conceptualization of the problem. Second, the examination of a single case allows the researcher to deal with complexity, idiosyncrasy and richness of detail. Third, the detailed data from a variety of sources are analyzed inductively in order to find the pattern of meaning. Understanding is built up as in a TV documentary. Fourth, the case study is not limited to descriptive studies but descriptive and experiential understanding are its best uses. In this way, it is very compatible with the phenomenological approach.

The case study as developed in this research is heavily influenced by the existential-phenomenological approach to research (Colaizzi, 1978; Valle & King, 1978) and also by Cochran's (1987) dramaturgical method. Efforts have been made recently to elucidate procedures which introduce rigour to the case study method (Kazdin, 1981; Yin, 1984); however, these materials do not provide clear guidelines for case studies which are not concerned with causal analysis. Kazdin's (1981) recommendations, for instance, are useful for case studies which are designed to show that treatment procedures produce therapeutic change in a client. The existential-phenomenological approach is

employed in this study because it provides a clear approach to descriptive studies of experiential phenomena. Cochran's (1987) dramaturgical method is used to provide a more rigorous, systematic approach to the collection, and understanding of the research data.

In the existential-phenomenological approach to research, the concern is with understanding meaning rather than with establishing causal relationships (Colaizzi, 1978). The investigation of meaning requires a different goal and a different attitude on the part of the researcher. The goal is the investigation of phenomena as they are lived and research typically begins by richly describing lived experience and concrete situations rather than by abstracting a set of measurable variables. The researcher brackets his or her presuppositions and approaches the research with an attitude of questioning and inquiring. Objectivity is taken to be "fidelity to phenomena". It is a refusal to tell the phenomenon what it is, but a respectful listening to what the phenomenon speaks of itself" (p. 52). In this way, the existential-phenomenological approach serves as a valuable guide to the case study researcher. It reinforces the attitude of inquiry and assists the researcher in resisting what seems to be an all too human tendency to seek to validate presuppositions.

Also, in the existential-phenomenological view, experience is not merely an internal state (Colaizzi, 1978; Valle & King, 1978). "I am always already involved in the world because I am never locked up in myself" (Colaizzi, 1978, p. 52). In this way the objective and subjective are inseparable. "The person and his or her world co-constitute one another" (Valle & King, 1978, p. 14) and form an subject-object unity. In this study, observers are not used to validate

the account of the co-researcher. They are used to validate the conclusions of the researcher and also to add detail to the picture of the co-researcher's experience. Through the observations and interpretations of friends we see aspects of the outward manifestation of the co-researcher's experience.

In Cochran's (1984) dramaturgical approach there are two general principles informing the methods. First, according to Cochran, the patterns of meanings in our lives are organized into dramatic structures; that is, we live our lives in stories with beginnings, middles and ends. Second, we take positions or stances in relation to our life contexts. A position is a blend of cognition and feeling. It is a "dramatically integrated complex of judgements about how things matter" (p. 24). Position follows from context and is supported by context. Further, it implies a direction--it points towards that which would offer completion. "A story is an enactment of position, the working out of position in actual circumstances" (p. 24). In the present study, the pattern of meaning of the data is synthesized using the concepts of dramatic structure and position.

CHAPTER III: METHOD

SELECTION OF THE CO-RESEARCHER

Two procedures from the existential-phenomenological approach to research were employed (Colaizzi, 1978). First, the subject involved in the study is referred to as a co-researcher. The term establishes that the researcher is not the expert. Both are equals in a search for the truth of the co-researcher's lived experience. Second, the co-researcher was selected according to two main criteria: 1) the person must have had the experience in question; and 2) the person must be able to articulate the experience.

Three people were referred to the researcher from her network of personal contacts. Letters were sent to each person and were followed up with a phone call. After discussion and clarification, all three people said that they had had the target experience.

The experience was described in a variety of ways. An initial description was given followed by a series of alternate descriptions. The initial description was as follows:

I am interested in how a person changes so that they experience a more definite or substantial sense of self in relationship to others. In the beginning, the person feels indefinite, insubstantial and very affected and unbalanced by other people. In the end, others do not have such a great impact and the person feels more substantial in relation to others.

In the process of expanding and clarifying this description, two alternate phrases were used: 1) feeling inferior or superior but not equal, and 2) lacking a sense of one's own identity.

A decision was made to exclude one person from the study because the investigator had regular social contact with this person. A short visit was held with the remaining two people to ensure that they understood the research question and had had the experience in question. Mary was selected because she appeared to most completely model the target experience. Mary said that in the past she had been married to an alcoholic and felt she lacked an identity. She talked about going through an important change process which led to a new sense of herself in relation to others. She said that she was presently attending university and intending to enter theology school to become a priest. She demonstrated openness and self-confidence and appeared to be in a good position to articulate the experience because she was not immersed in a period of intense change.

PROCEDURES ADOPTED FROM THE DRAMATURGICAL METHOD

The following procedures were employed from Cochran's (1987) dramaturgical method.

1. The co-researcher was requested to give the account of her experience of becoming a substantial self in the form of a story with a definite beginning, middle and end. The beginning of the story was understood to be the point at which the process of change began. The middle was the account of the factors

and turning points which accounted for the change. The end was considered to be the present time.

2. The concepts of dramatic structure and position were used in synthesizing the meaning of the co-researcher's account. Both concepts were used to help the researcher to find the pattern of meaning--to find the coherent sense of the whole that is necessary for interpreting the parts.

a) Dramatic Structure

After the initial reading and reflection on the transcript, the researcher began a dialectical process of inquiring about the beginning, middle, and end of the story. Questions were asked such as: What constitutes the beginning? What are the dimensions of the beginning and the end? What themes characterize the beginning, middle and end? What are the turning points that constitute the middle? When does the change process end? These questions were reflected on throughout the case study procedure and guided the search for converging sources of information to illuminate the coherent pattern of the case.

b) Position

The concept of position was used to understand what constituted the beginning and end of the story. As the researcher reflected on the transcript the question was asked, "What is the co-researcher's position or stance in relation to others and to her context?" The attempt to answer this question guided the search for new information. The data collection process was considered to be complete when the researcher had gained a coherent sense of the whole account and notions about position and dramatic structure were substantiated.

3. In the written description of the case, material from diverse sources was integrated using the aspects of dramatic structure to provide structure. Beginning, middle and end were referred to as Act I, Act II, and Act III.

CASE STUDY PROCEDURE

After the initial contact by letter, telephone and in person, a meeting was held at Mary's home to explain the case study procedure and to obtain her consent to participate in writing. A time was set for a taped interview in which Mary would give the account of her process of becoming a substantial person in relation to others. She was asked to consider what other avenues might be useful for illuminating her change process such as, letters, journals, observations of longtime friends and requested to contact the researcher with any suggestions.

The taped interview was held in a private and quiet setting in Mary's home. Her account was elicited in dramaturgical form and the phenomenological method for interviewing was used. The researcher "bracketed" her own presuppositions about the phenomenon and allowed Mary to tell her own story (Appendix I). Empathetic listening was used in order to be present to Mary's experience and to assist her in reliving it. Paraphrasing was useful for gaining clarity. Mary's account covered the last ten years of her life and took 3 1/2 hours to complete.

The tape was transcribed deleting identifying information and selecting pseudonyms or initials for the names all people mentioned in the account.

After reading the transcript and becoming familiar with it, Cochran's dramaturgical method was used to begin a process of trying to grasp the meaning of the story. The transcript was studied in detail and extensive notes written in an initial effort to discover what constituted the beginning and end of the story. What was Mary's position at the beginning and the end? What were the turning points in the change process? What themes characterized each section? This process was conducted in a tentative and questioning mode. The researcher engaged in a dialectical process with questions posed and possible solutions generated. Prominent areas of uncertainty were considered to be areas which needed more illumination through further research. Notes were kept systematically in a logbook with two sections--one section to record notes, comments, questions about methods and procedures, the other to record all notes about the substance of the case.

Turning points in the change process were readily identified, however the meaning of insubstantiality and the coherent pattern of the story remained more difficult to grasp. A decision was made to interview some of Mary's longtime friends and associates in order to discover what Mary was like when they first knew her and what changes they had seen. A consultation was held with Mary and a plan was worked out to contact those people who lived in Vancouver and had known her the longest. Mary agreed not to discuss the study with these people. Just prior to contact from the researcher, Mary telephoned them to give her consent to their participation in a study of "the adult change process".

Various strategies were used for obtaining information from three different people. A decision was made to use a questionnaire or a taped

interview as it seemed appropriate. The questionnaire asked for a written response to the following:

What are the most significant personality changes you have noticed in Mary since you have known her? It will be most helpful if you can give specific examples of situations to illustrate and make your points more vivid--giving examples of situations which typify Mary's stance in the present and when you first knew her.

A friend who had known Mary for 17 years was asked to fill out the questionnaire. When her written answer turned out to be somewhat abstract, a taped interview was conducted. The interview was found to be more satisfactory in eliciting rich, concrete detail. This interviewee commented that the task of answering the questionnaire before the interview had allowed her the opportunity for reflection and enabled her to be more focused in the interview. A second friend who had known Mary for 7-8 years preferred not to complete a written response and asked to be interviewed in person. The rector of Mary's church who had also known her for 7-8 years kept the questionnaire for two weeks and returned it with an obviously well-considered response. He commented that the question required "a fair amount of time in reflection in order to answer with some degree of accuracy".

After the tapes of the two interviews were transcribed, they were studied to discover what information they contained regarding the change in Mary. All contained valuable detail which served to enrich the portraits of insubstantiality and substantiality; however, the researcher still lacked an understanding of the coherent pattern of meaning in the story.

As the dialectical process continued concerning the pattern of meaning in

the data, a question was raised about the appropriateness of the original research question. The original question referred to an experience of the self in relation to others and it was apparent that Mary felt insubstantial much more globally: in relation to others, to herself and to the world in general. Mary was consulted on this point and she said that her experience of herself in relation to others could not be separated from her reflexive experience of self or her experience of herself in relation to the physical world. In her words, "If you drew it as colours . . . they would all blend into each other . . . and you'd get a different colour where they overlap." In order to maintain fidelity to her account, the focus was enlarged to the more global experience of becoming a substantial self.

The process of reflection then continued regarding the meaning of insubstantiality. Questions were asked such as: What was Mary's orientation to living before she began the change process? What was her stance in relation to the context in which she found herself? What was the direction or goal implied in her position? Extensive note taking and questioning led to some tentative conclusions which, if substantiated, would lead to a coherent picture of the whole change process. It appeared that in the beginning Mary felt that control was not in her hands. She felt dependent on others for support and lived in fear of not being acceptable. A continuation of the inquiry process led the researcher to the idea of obtaining information about Mary's childhood. Questions were asked such as: What were her childhood circumstances? What stance did she develop in relation to her circumstances? How could this information be accessed--considering that her family was in England?

A decision was made to use early recollections and a lifeline graph. Mary was consulted and a date was set for a convenient time when she would be able to relax and give her full attention to the procedure. The instructions for the lifeline graph were left with her to be completed at her leisure. She was requested to draw a graph depicting the successes and obstacles of her childhood (Appendix V). As this graph turned out to be a simple and useful tool for substantiating conclusions about major turning points and for organizing the report chronologically, Mary was later asked to complete a similar graph of her adult life.

The early recollections were found to be very fruitful in penetrating the meaning of Mary's experience of insubstantiality and substantiating earlier conclusions. In a relaxed and trusting atmosphere, Mary vividly re-experienced and recounted nine significant incidents from her childhood. The process was a moving experience for both Mary and the researcher. Time was taken to process feelings after each memory. No attempt was made to interpret the memories, with the exception of spontaneous interpretations offered by Mary. After the tape was transcribed, the transcript was analyzed by trying to grasp the stance or position illustrated by the memory. Key words were underlined which captured the statement of position. At times a key phrase or word was retained that represented the whole. At other times, the researcher used her own words to formulate a general statement of meaning from the key words. What resulted was a clear conception of position. This conception fit with the pattern which had emerged from the other data and Mary's story took on a new coherence in terms of the unfolding of her childhood position. Her insubstantiality made sense in the light of her childhood context

and the position she took in relation to it. With this sense of the whole it was possible to return again to the other data.

A systematic analysis was then conducted on all of the data collected, including a diary which Mary had delivered to the researcher some time earlier. All statements significant to the process of becoming a substantial person were extracted from all transcripts and written on index cards. These cards facilitated the organization and integration of the material. Cards were labelled according to the source of the data and whether it belonged to the beginning, middle or end of the account. The cards were then sorted into three groups--beginning, middle and end. The cards in the middle section were labelled and subdivided into the major turning points and experiences influencing change. The cards in the beginning and end sections were grouped according to themes.

The method used for the early recollections was found useful for deriving the general meaning from the individual statements. Key words signifying underlying meaning were underlined. Either a word or a phrase was retained to represent the meaning of the whole or the researcher used her own words to formulate a theme.

The integrated description was then written. The grouping of the cards according to the dramatic structure provided the necessary organization. Themes, turning points and experiences influencing change provided subcategories. As the variety of sources were grouped together according to theme, divergent sources were readily available to demonstrate and substantiate conclusions. Quotations were used to illustrate and substantiate points. The middle section of the account consisted of a narrative description

which was essentially an explanation of how the change process occurred. It was found useful, before writing, to draw a diagram of the middle section to visualize the overlapping and intersecting of the turning points. The beginning and end sections were static descriptions.

When the written account was complete, a copy was given to Mary for validation. She was asked to consider it at her leisure and to make written amendments, clarifications, elaborations. The finished copy of the case study incorporated all of Mary's changes.

As a final step, the completed case study and all supporting documents were given to an outside expert for validation. A registered psychologist with nine years counselling experience was asked to reply to the following questions:

1. Is the case study an accurate summary of the supporting documents. Are there instances of exaggeration or misinterpretation of data?
2. Is there any important information in the supporting documents which has been omitted from the case study (with special reference to Mary's journal which was not included in the thesis appendix for reasons of confidentiality)?
3. Was the co-researcher allowed to tell her own story in the initial interview? Did the interviewer bias the account by means of leading questions?

The outside expert's response is included in Appendix IV.

EARLY RECOLLECTIONS

The goal was to obtain six significant childhood memories starting from as early as the co-researcher could remember. There was no effort to press for especially early memories or glimpses. The session was arranged at a time when the co-researcher could relax and give her full attention. The intention was to obtain the stories on tape not to interpret them with the co-researcher. However, as the memories aroused potent feelings, it was found necessary to spend time after each memory allowing time for debriefing and support. The following were the instructions used to elicit the memories:

It would be very helpful to the study if you were able to provide a collection of your important childhood memories. I'm going to give you a brief relaxation exercise then ask you to start as early as you can remember and work forward in time telling me the memories that come to the surface for you. I would like you to tell them in the present tense in as much detail as you can. We will record them one at a time and then stop for a few moments before continuing with the next. We will not be discussing them at any length. The purpose is to obtain the memories.

Make yourself comfortable. Allow yourself to relax--letting go of any tensions and allowing your breathing to deepen. Notice your breathing slow down and deepen. Imagine yourself at the top of some stairs. In a moment you will go down the stairs. When you have reached the bottom you will be back in time as early as you can remember. Take your time. Notice the detail with all your senses.

When you are ready, tell what is happening in the present tense.

THE LIFELINE GRAPH

The co-researcher was given a sheet of paper on which to complete the graph. The X and Y axes had been previously drawn in and labelled in black ink. The X axis was labelled "+" at the top and "-" at the bottom. The Y axis was labelled "Age" (Appendix V).

The co-researcher was given a pen with suitably reproducible ink and the following instructions:

Using the attached graph format, draw a lifeline which depicts your experience of growing up until the time you left home. Label the peaks, valleys and plateaus, the successes and the key obstacles.

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

The case study which follows was reviewed by an outside expert who concluded that the researcher

. . . simply related what was told to her and summarized it chronologically. I could find no evidence of . . . misinterpreting or exaggerating the data. Nothing from the supporting documents was omitted from the summary.

A CASE OF BECOMING A SUBSTANTIAL SELF

It's so neat to be able to go out and visit people and talk with people and not feel self-conscious! Just to feel perfectly at ease and interested in who they are . . . and exchange stories It just makes such a difference! It's less stressful. It just makes life worth living. (long pause) What a struggle! They say, 'Life begins at forty,' and it did for me! [Mary, 43 years]

It was clear in the initial interview that Mary had gone through a profound change process. She was an attractive, self-possessed woman who conveyed a sense of purpose and direction. She was completing an undergraduate degree at university and was planning to enter theology school to become a priest in the Anglican Church. She said that ten years previously she had been a shy, withdrawn person who had great difficulty relating to others. At that time,

she worked as a secretary and was married to a man who was an alcoholic. Also, there was a certainty and conviction in Mary's response to the research question. She said that becoming a substantial self was a matter of deep significance in her life. It had made the difference between a life that was "worth living" and one that was not.

Once the research began, Mary became a true co-researcher. She demonstrated an attitude of questioning--an eagerness to draw out the meaning of her experience--to turn it over like a stone in the palm, examining all its surfaces. She participated in discovering a variety of methods and sources of information to illuminate not only the well-known but the less familiar and darker places in her life. She made herself available for three intensive interviews as well as for on-going consultation throughout the research process. She arranged for interviews with her friends and associates. She provided a diary. She completed lifeline graphs. And finally, she permitted the investigator, and the reader, to have access to the challenges and fears of her childhood by re-experiencing, and recounting on tape, her potent childhood memories.

Although the initial aim was to investigate the process of becoming a substantial self in relation to others, it became obvious during the interviews that the original research question was not feasible. Mary did not feel insubstantial only in relation to others. She felt insubstantial much more generally: in relation to others, to herself and to the world in general. To present a story which focused narrowly on her social experience would have been an undue distortion of the way her life was lived--holistically rather than in neatly categorized topics. Thus, in order to maintain fidelity to her

account, the focus had to be enlarged. The story as it will be presented is the story of a change from feeling insubstantial as a person to feeling substantial as a person.

Mary said the story of her change from insubstantiality to substantiality began when she was 33. It was then that she became aware, for the first time, that she was "nothing"--"an appendix" of her alcoholic husband, powerless to get him to stop drinking. It is interesting that she did not have this insight until after she had taken the first step out of her state of non-personhood. It was only after she had committed herself to an Alanon group, where she discovered that she was not alone, that she admitted to herself that she was "nothing". But more of that later. The point is that Mary's description of the meaning of her experience is a dynamic one: insubstantiality assumes its meaning and significance in contrast with substantiality. In her account, meaning evolves through the fabric of her life as lived. Her account is an account of events, experiences, relationships, and insights that enabled growth. And through her narrative she reveals the meaning of the change process in her life.

Before turning to Mary's account of how the change process began and evolved, how much detail can be filled in on the portrait of Mary prior to the change? What did it mean to feel insubstantial in relation to others? What were her life circumstances? What feelings, fears and ambitions constituted her orientation to these life circumstances? What was she like and how did she behave in the world? Understanding the change process involves understanding not only the "change to" but the "change from". Appreciating the significance of the end of the story involves understanding the beginning.

Mary's early recollections are a particularly moving testimony to the fears and dilemmas of her childhood. In addition to data from other sources, extensive sections of her memories have been included here because they speak more clearly than any interpretations or third person reports. They allow empathy with the child and appreciation of the meaning of feeling incompetent, of feeling powerless, of feeling "like I didn't fit in". These memories also provide an invaluable sense of continuity between Mary the child and Mary the adult. They depict the child's developing stance in relation to others, the orientation to living which is later acted out in her adult life. We don't tune in on the last act of the play and expect to understand it: we find out what has gone before.

Without further explanation, let us proceed with Mary's story in three acts: the beginning portrait of the insubstantial self forms Act I, the transition period Act II, and the closing portrait of the substantial self, Act III.

ACT I

Mary was born in England, the only child of a working class family. Neither parent had the opportunity to advance educationally. Mother went to grade 6 in school and father completed several more grades before going to work at age 15. When Mary was growing up, there were difficulties in the marriage. It seems likely that both mother and father looked to each other for their primary support and found it lacking. Mother seems to have expressed her frustration primarily aggressively and father passively. Mary was fond of her father and experienced her mother as overly controlling. Mother was asthmatic and her health was not good generally. Father's recommendation to Mary was to avoid "upsetting" her mother.

When Mary was asked to recall her most prominent or significant childhood memories, she recounted nine different scenes or stories which were tape recorded and later transcribed (Appendix III). Two of the memories were happy scenes, the remainder were more difficult experiences. The transcript of these memories will be used, along with two lifeline graphs which Mary completed (Appendix V), to reconstruct the chronology and drama of her early years. The memories will be presented and discussed in terms of the themes which carry on throughout her later adult life.

The happy experiences occurred during the first six years of Mary's life. In the first scene, she is four years old and the family is on one of their frequent holidays at the seaside. Mary is digging in the sand by the ocean making sandcastles with her father and her uncle. She can hear the ocean, feel the wind and experience the warmth and laughter. The second scene, a frequent

memory between the ages of four and six, is of a peaceful time of security and solitude playing alone in the secluded garden at the back of her house. Mary is making little villages in the sandbox and ingeniously constructing miniature hedgerows and roadways that she drives along with Dinkey toys.

The first of the difficult experiences occurred at age ten. In her early years, Mary often played with boys. She had seven cousins--all of whom were boys and some of whom usually went with her family for seaside holidays. On one occasion, Mary was kicking a football around with a group of these boys when she suddenly found herself confronted with an uncomfortable situation. A group of girls arrived on the scene and the boys decided it would be great sport to chase the girls and try to kiss them. As a result of this escapade, Mary discovered first the first time that she was "an outsider". She felt like she belonged neither with the boys nor with the girls.

I just joined in the chase. It was like I was one of the boys. It never occurred to me that I was a girl! (nervous laugh) And I remember chasing these girls--with the boys--and we sort of caught up with them and we grabbed one each. And the one that was closest to me, I remember grabbing her and pulling her down to the ground and trying to kiss her. And she was laughing. They were all laughing. And all of a sudden she just screamed and said, "Ugh! . . . You're a girl!" And pushed me off. (nervous laugh) And I just remember it was an awful shock. I was just being one of the boys and all of a sudden I wasn't a boy. . . . I remember it was kind of a rude awakening. It has always stuck in my mind. I felt most peculiar! . . I think that's where I began to feel sort of a bit strange and alienated. I suddenly didn't fit in anywhere. I didn't fit in to the boys' world and I

didn't fit in the girls' world either because I didn't feel like I was one of them. . . .

This theme of not fitting in, of being an outsider, with its implied isolation and loneliness continues and becomes more prominent during early adolescence when she entered an all girls' secondary modern school. She missed her easy camaraderie with boys. "I had to learn piano and dance while I would have preferred football and scouts."

It was at the secondary modern school, age 13-14, that the next significant experience occurred. The boys' school shared the same athletic field with the girls' school and Mary wanted to play soccer with the boys instead of netball--the designated girls' game. She went to some effort to speak to both the boys' and the girls' P.E. teachers and only succeeded in causing a row between the two and incurring the wrath of the male teacher.

So I stand on the sidelines there and watch the boys playing . . . soccer. I'm feeling really just left out. Just confused and sad . . . and disappointed. I just don't understand this. It just doesn't make sense. Why can't girls play soccer? Nobody will tell me why! Everybody just says, "Girls play field hockey and netball and boys play soccer." But why! If I ask why, I just get yelled at So what's the point of asking about anything! If you ask why, you get yelled at. So you might as well just keep your mouth shut and just listen. Just keep all your thoughts and feelings to yourself.

Later, when she was around 15, Mary suspected that she was more sexually attracted to women than to men. It complicates but also clarifies the picture to keep the larger social context in mind. Here, as in the later school

memories, behind the actions of individuals are the social systems and social values which are perhaps the more formidable obstacles. Mary's sexual preference was socially unacceptable.

The "keeping your feelings to yourself" theme continues in another memory around age 11-12. After suffering an experience which frightened her and seriously endangered her life, she pretended that everything was just fine to avoid incurring her mother's anger. She was in the ocean, taking a surfboard back to a rental booth a long distance down the beach from her parents' blanket when a man exposed himself and then proceed to follow her. In frantically paddling to get away from him, she fell off the board and became trapped under it.

I'm trying to get up and I keep banging my head on the paddle board . . . and so I try to get around the side of it to come up for air . . but the way the waves are going, it keeps . . every time I try to come up, the paddle board is over me I can hardly breathe and I'm running out of air . . . and I start to cry. . . . and I suddenly realize I'm going to die! (soft voice) This is it! And then I have no more air left . . . so I just sit down on the sand, under the water . . . and I know I'm going to die. I feel upset, 'cause my mom and dad will be really upset and then I just give up. I just open my mouth and let the water come in. And it feels really peaceful. All of a sudden it doesn't matter anymore. I know it's okay. It's okay to die like that. It's not going to hurt or anything. . . . And then everything's black. And now I'm on the beach. And there's a man . . . I don't know, just a man . . and he's hitting me in the middle of the back and I'm coughing. And then I'm breathing. And then I look

around and . . . I'm still alive. I'm surprised. I don't know how I got there. I guess somebody pulled me out. . . and the other man has vanished. And I feel really . . uh . . scared . . and I thank the man that pulled me out. I get the paddle board . . . it's up on shore now . . and I get the paddle board and I take it to the rental place and I walk back to Mom and Dad. (clears throat) And I have to pretend that everything's okay and smile and be happy. I daren't tell them because I think my mom'll be angry at me . . and so . . and so I don't say anything.

The frightened child's heroic and lonely stance comes so painfully alive in her decision to "pretend that everything's okay"--to maintain an invulnerable facade and to deny her feelings. Also, the powerlessness and submission themes which are in all the remaining memories are most poignantly in this one. Mary has had the experience of desperate struggle and ultimate submission.

After this painful experience, at age 12, Mary remembers bursting out in impotent rage against her mother and later receiving some degree of validation from her long-suffering father. (She cannot remember a specific precipitating incident.) Her father advised her to follow a course of action of "being nice" so as not to upset her mother who was prone to being "easily upset".

Okay, I'm in my room and . . . I'm just shaking. I'm so angry, I'm just shaking with rage! . . . I keep walking back and forth. And . . . I'm shouting at her, 'Why don't you leave me alone! Why are you always bugging me!' I want to hit something! I punch the pillows . . . and I pull all the drawers out. (nervous laugh) Oh that was it! I pull all the

drawers out of my dresser. It has five drawers and I yank them all out! I'm taking all the clothes out of the drawers and I'm throwing them around the room. I'm shouting. And then I finally . . . feel calmer now. I'm calming down and I feel kind of . . . a little bit embarrassed and . . . a little bit scared because I've never been out of control before and it's such a strange feeling. It kind of scared me. I could easily have killed her! I feel kind of silly. I'm putting everything back in the drawers . . . My Mom is shouting up the stairs, 'Wait 'til your father comes home!' And I just tidy up the room and sit on the bed and just wait for my dad My dad comes home. He comes in the room and . . he just looks really sad and he says, 'What's up then? Why did you upset your mom?' 'She's always bugging me. . . She's always nagging at me. She won't leave me alone!' And my dad . . . he doesn't get angry! He surprised me, 'cause he said, 'She . . um . . she's not very well. You have to understand. Your mom's not very well . . and so she doesn't have much patience. So we have to just try and be nice to her and get along with her.' I just remember being surprised that he didn't stick up for her and tell me off. . . . He just looks kind of sad and tired. He just patted me on the head . . and said . . . I can't remember now . . . just . . he was okay about it.

The powerlessness in this memory is continued in other comments Mary made about her mother:

[She made] all the decisions for me. I remember as a kid wanting to choose my own clothes and she wouldn't let me. She was buying the clothes and so she would choose what I wore! I never learned early on . . . to find out what suited me. She'd just tell me what to wear! And

it seemed to me everybody all my life was telling me what to do and I never had a chance to find out what I was capable of.

The final three memories are school experiences. It is significant that this is an English school system. Mary was working class and a university education was neither an expectation nor a financial possibility. "The upper class kids were the kids that went to university. Working class only went if they got a scholarship. And I knew I was not bright enough to get a scholarship." At age 11, she wrote the national exam which sorted children into academic and technical streams. She entered the technical stream--the secondary modern school.

I really thought I was a dummy! I really did! I mean I just went to a secondary modern school and they more or less told you--well not straight to your face--but between the lines, they told you that the only thing you were good for was to get married. So you better learn to sew and cook! (laughs) Both things didn't interest me too much!

The first of the three school memories occurred at age 15, the latter two at 18. On her lifeline graph (Appendix V), Mary indicated that the period of her life between 15 and 17 was one of the most unhappy periods of her life. As was mentioned, this was also the time she became aware of her socially unacceptable sexual preference. During this time her hair fell out. She started getting bald patches and she put on weight. She did have two happier periods after she left secondary school, at business college and in the airforce although both were short lived. The second and third memories occurred at age 18-19 after she left the airforce and was in nursing school. In each of the three memories, there is an experience of public humiliation at the hands of a

powerful authority figure. In the second two there is a clear and strong theme of incompetence.

In the first memory, Mary was repeating her final year at the secondary modern school because she had failed her college entrance exams. She found herself assigned to the class of Miss Spaulding. She had never had this teacher before; however, the previous year an unfortunate incident had occurred. One day Mary's teacher was called out of the room and after awhile the class began to get noisy. Miss Spaulding, who was passing by in the hall, came in to settle the group. Although Mary had been reading quietly, for some reason Miss Spaulding selected Mary as the one to get a detention. Mary had never had a detention before and when she went to Miss Spaulding's classroom after school she was too frightened to go in. Miss Spaulding didn't speak to Mary later about the incident but she apparently didn't forget.

So it's the first day of that term and she [Miss Spaulding] gets down at the end of the register. She gets to the end--Mary S. And I put my hand up, 'Here Miss'. And . . . (sighs) 'I'm not having you in my class! Get out!' . . . 'But I'm supposed to be in your class! There isn't anyother class for me to go in.' . . . 'Get out of my classroom!' she said. My heart's thumping really fast. I'm going red and everybody in the class is looking around at me and I'm feeling really trapped and embarrassed I'm so horrified that I'm sort of stuck in my seat. (nervous laugh) I'm afraid . . . I'm just paralyzed with embarrassment. People are snickering and looking at me and finally I get out of my desk and go towards the front of the classroom. I was sitting at the back because I knew there was going to be trouble anyway. So I'm

getting towards the front of the class and she's just as mad as hell and I . . . finally (clears throat) . . look at her and say, 'You have no right . . to make me leave!' . . and then she grabs a hold of me . . by the back of my sweater. She's very tall. And she opens the door and throws me out . . across the hall . . right across the corridor . . and I hit the wall of the other side . . and I start to cry.

Age 18:

When I went into nursing school . . . I was there for a year. I couldn't hack it for the same reason. There was another old bat there . . just the same! Another Miss Spaulding! Tall, skinny . . . black . . . they always wear black! Old bitch spinster! (laughs) Caricatures! You only see them in movies! In England they exist! this old bitch . . . used to perch on a high stool I was terrified of her! She asks me a question . . that I can't answer. I'm feeling really embarrassed because I should know the answer . . and I'm trying to look at Sue. Sue's my friend . . . who's also in nursing school and she's really bright. I'm not as bright as her. I remember wishing I was as bright and as fast as her with answers. Everybody liked her . . because she was quick with her answers . . . where I always had to think. . . . I'm trying to think of the answer to the question . . and I know it but I'm getting panicked. Stupid damn woman! She's yelling at me, 'You should know the answer to this. Come now child. Think! Think! Where are your brains!' And I just feel like saying, 'Will you shut up and let me think!' But I try to sort of drown out her yelling while I try to think of the answer. I know the answer to the question . . . if she'd just shut up and

give me a minute to think but she doesn't. She keeps putting me down all the time . . . telling me I'm stupid and slow and what the hell am I doing in nursing school! And now I've forgotten what the question is and I'm just feeling totally depressed and I want to cry . . . and I just want to get out of there.

Age 18:

It was a lab . . . where we had a piece of tubing. A piece of rubber tube . . . a catheter, I suppose! (sounds surprised) It would be a catheter . . . something like that . . . that we had to insert in something . . . I can't remember . . . but I had to put it into something and it wouldn't go in . . . So I've got this stupid catheter in my hand and he's bellowing at me, (nervous laugh) 'Well, what would you do to put it in? What would you do!' And I'm frantically looking around because I know I need to wet it. I also know it has to be sterile . . . so I just can't stick it under the tap . . . and I'm trying to think, . . . 'What the hell . . . what am I supposed to do with this thing?' I'm trying to remember what it said in the book. I know I've read it and I should know it. And again, everybody is staring at me. I'm feeling very hot and my face is going red and my heart's thumping . . . and I'm getting . . . my mind's going blank! . . . 'Cause he's badgering me with words. He's going on and on . . . about how stupid I am and . . . 'Think! Use your brains! You haven't got any brains!' . . . And I know I have to wet the damn thing. I have to wet it. (nervous laugh) And I want to stick it in my mouth and wet it . . . and I know if I stick it in my mouth and wet it . . . that's not the thing to do! He's going to go berserk! And in all the panic and in the . . . I don't know what to do! So

in the end I wet my fingers . . . (nervous laugh) . . . (gestures putting fingers in mouth and moistening imaginary tube) . . . like that . . and wet the end of the damn thing! Of course the whole class cracked up laughing. I laughed too. (laughs) I didn't know what else to do so I laughed. Boy was he mad! (soft voice) He was so angry! He was so angry! 'Cause the stupid thing's supposed to be sterile and I wetted it with spit worse than if I'd gone to the tap and wetted it! (sniffs) . . . Anyway, he ordered me out of the classroom (loud voice) 'Get out of the classroom! Get out of my classroom you stupid girl! You're not fit to be a nurse. Get out! (strong emotion) How did you get in here in the first place!' (derogatory laugh) (sniffs)

Immediately after this painful incident, Mary quit nursing school. Her friend Sue, who was in the same class, quit with her. Not long after, she had a more positive experience working at a gas station but she didn't stay at it for long. Her mother didn't like the idea. "I think my mother made all my decisions. So I never really decided anything. I just seemed to drift."

Mary characterizes the whole of her early adulthood in terms of drifting. "I was just blown about by winds of chance. I never had a goal. . . any direction . . . nothing! So it didn't matter, I would go anywhere." At 20, Mary travelled to Germany, and then Spain, working as a mother's help. It was in Germany that she met a lesbian woman and discovered for the first time that she wasn't alone. When she was 25, she emigrated to Montreal but didn't stay there long before she moved to Ottawa.

In one sense Mary wasn't entirely without a goal. She appeared to be looking for love. And yet even her search for love had a drifting quality about

it. Love came gratuitously from outside and was not something she could control. Love "happened"--or it didn't.

I'd be in a relationship with somebody and it would be finished and so I would just sort of move on. I remember being in Montreal . . . I can't remember who I was with there . . . somebody . . . anyway . . . and that ended so I just sort of left town and went to Ottawa. . . . Why not!

Theresa, a longtime friend of Mary's, who has known her since she lived in Montreal, confirmed Mary's singular orientation around intimate relationships and the passive mode of her search for love. "Mary . . . was going to drop into some relationship and that was going to solve . . . her whole life just by being in love." "[Instead of approaching people she was attracted to] . . . she would just sort of sit around and fantasize, like we all did when we were kids about movie stars."

Such observations from outside observers add a new dimension to the picture. The early memories allowed access to the experience of the child. They demonstrated that Mary had experiences in which she felt powerless, unacceptable and incompetent. It seems clear, that in the face of these experiences, she took the position that she could do nothing to improve her situation except deny her feelings, assume a mask of invulnerability and wait for redemption. Interviews with friends provide details of the external manifestation of this stance as it developed in young adulthood.

Theresa saw a quiet, polite, inoffensive and solitary Mary.

Mary is not offensive . . . Everybody likes Mary, you know, But no one would necessarily phone her up and say, 'Listen, we're all going to _____, why don't you [come]?' . . . And so Mary sort of did things--like she went

skiing--but on her own.

I recall her . . . as being someone who was always quiet. We loved having her . . . because she certainly didn't, what can I say, create any negative anything. She was just always quiet and polite. But, for example, if . . . friends would come over, Mary would not necessarily join. It was not what she was interested in. She was quite isolated in her behavior with other people.

Another friend of Mary's, highlighted her shyness and discomfort in relating. Donna has known Mary for about eight years--from the time, just at the end of her marriage, when she joined a women's outdoor club.

I can remember her walking into the first meeting . . . and being very shy and not really participating. Mary's way of communicating was . . . laughing at things, smiling a lot . . . which was a nervous laugh. I think she really . . . for a long, long time felt she wasn't good enough you know.

The rector in Mary's church filled out a questionnaire which asked for his observations of Mary. In describing the person he first knew, 7-8 years ago, he highlighted her "hesitancy". He said that he "found her to be somewhat tentative and even shy in her personal relationships".

Theresa said that "she was very good one-to-one . . . if you could draw her and talk with her and do something with her. Mary is a very doing person." It makes intuitive sense that one-to-one relationships provided more security and comfort and it makes sense also that she was more at ease "doing" than talking. She wasn't going to talk about her feelings and she didn't feel she had anything worth talking about. She felt inadequate and incompetent. "There

was nothing happening in my life! What the hell did I have to talk about? I didn't do anything. What did do? I mean I worked in an office typing. It was a boring job."

It seems likely that some people meeting Mary might have encountered, in addition to the shyness and niceness, a certain diffidence or aloofness. The following comments imply a defensive strategy of rejecting others before they reject her. "I liked cats and dogs better than I liked people."

Oh, I couldn't communicate! I mean I only had basically grade 11 education . . . to start with. I was very unsociable so I didn't really talk to people very much . . . anymore than I had to.

. . . in Britain . . . where I was working class . . . the working class, middle class and the upper class never mixed . . . and all the professional people are in the upper class . . . and it was very difficult for me to have anything to do with them. I would think, 'They're a bunch of snobs!'

Also, Mary was self-focused. It didn't occur to her to find out about other people's experience.

I didn't talk to people. I just said yes and no and that was it. I had no social skills. I couldn't go anywhere. I wouldn't go to parties or anything. I didn't go anywhere because all I could sort of say was yes and no and if people asked me questions I would answer but I would never make a conversation. It would never occur to me to say to somebody, 'What do you do? Where do you work?'

[I was feeling] . . . terrified! Obsessed with self . . . I was too busy thinking about myself. . . . I think I was so busy worrying how I looked and what I was doing that I couldn't enjoy myself.

Niceness, diffidence and avoiding others may have been partially successful strategies but they apparently didn't produce feelings of well-being. As in the above quotation, words such as "terrified" and "worried" feature prominently in Mary's retrospective description of her experience at that time. In the presence of others she was afraid and self-conscious.

There are themes of safety, security and hiding running through Theresa's description of Mary. Theresa used the gesture of sucking her thumb and twirling her hair to indicate Mary's stance in the past. When I asked her to clarify, she said, "That's a baby . . . you know, twist the hair . . . and this [the thumb] comforts you It's just too much out there!" "She lived with me and hid [after she was rejected by a woman she was in love with]." "Her reaction to things that didn't go her way . . . was that she would simply withdraw." "She's always been a safe person. She doesn't take risks." "She sat in a job downtown for far too long! She was perfectly happy with what she was doing! Totally underpaid! Year after year after year."

It is significant that it was only in retrospect that Mary was able to recognize that her life had been governed by fear. She said that, at the time, she thought of herself as a strong person. In the same manner that the child denied her fear after the drowning experience, she denied her fears and vulnerabilities generally in her life. "I had this wrong . . . this misconception . . . that I was kind of okay and strong. I don't know where I got that from because I wasn't. I really needed help. It's almost like . . . I was wearing a mask. And the mask was all I could see." Mary's defensive social behavior makes sense in the light of this contradiction. If she was going to be successful in validating her mask of strength, she had to act in such a manner that she avoided any

threat to her underlying vulnerability.

Let's pause for a moment here to clarify what seem to be the significant aspects of this portrait of insubstantiality as it now stands. In her family, school and larger social environment, Mary has had painful experiences in which she has felt powerless, incompetent and unacceptable. Her response to these experiences has had several aspects. At a deep level, she has assumed that she is indeed powerless, incompetent and unacceptable. Superficially, she has denied this and assumed a stance of invulnerability. She thinks of herself as a strong person and yet her actions indicate her deeper assumptions. She lives in fear of being rejected and organizes her life around the need for protection, safety and external support. She fantasizes about ideal love relationships. She doesn't set goals and try to achieve them. She shows a pattern of passivity and drifting in relation to her environment. Apart from certain one-to-one relationships, she avoids people generally and is shy and nervous in their presence. She is self-focused and doesn't initiate conversations with others. Friends see her as nice, polite and inoffensive. She rejects others to whom she feels inferior.

It is a tragic portrait. And it is the ground against which the emerging growth and change assumes its shape and meaning.

But to return to the story, what was it that happened in Mary's life to initiate a change?

When Mary was 28, she married L. It seems likely that a socially sanctioned relationship with a man was an effort to secure the acceptability she so desperately needed. Mary did not say a great deal about this relationship. She did say that she felt sexually inadequate, that she tried

everything she could think of to get him to stop drinking and that she did not consider it an option to leave her husband. Theresa said that they both appeared to be in hiding:

I was very reluctant to be with them Mary was always nervous with this man. And although the man was friendly, he would sort of stand back . . . you always felt you were intruding somehow.

Mary said she made excuses and told friends not to come around. "I didn't want anybody to know that I was married to an alcoholic--that I had this problem in my life."

As her efforts to improve her situation failed, she became progressively more depressed until, after five years of marriage, she could see no future.

He was drinking and I was getting more and more emotionally upset . . . didn't know what to do about it . . . didn't even have the sense to, or didn't even know how to reach out for help. And . . . I just became really emotionally sick. I mean to the point where I can remember thinking, ' Shall I kill him or shall I kill myself?' And that's pretty much at the bottom of the heap. I never thought, 'Why don't I just walk away!'

It was when she was at the bottom that the first transforming experience came.

She was walking down the street when she heard familiar music coming from a church and went in. Much to her surprise, she found that she felt immediately at home. It was an Anglican Church--the Canadian version of the Church of England which she had attended regularly as a child. The prayer book and the music were the same. Mary found herself enjoying this familiarity and experiencing a spiritual peacefulness which was to draw her back to church

from that time on.

It was the only place I was happy . . . there, on Sunday morning. It was, at that time, definitely a place to escape to. To get in there . . . and I felt at peace . . . and centered . . . as much as I could. I definitely always felt okay in there. I hated to leave. I would have been happy if the service went on for two hours instead of one hour. That's how I felt about that.

Then, against the background of this new found peace and spiritual affirmation, something else happened--this time a more social experience. A priest, whom she liked because of his kindness and concern, confronted her and challenged her to begin to take responsibility for her life.

She had been sitting at the back and bolting out the door after the service, deliberately avoiding the necessity of speaking to this priest. However, he chose to actively seek her out and to try to be of help. When he first spoke to her, he said he was concerned that she appeared unhappy and wondered if she wanted to talk. She denied any problems. The next time, he asked her if she would be willing to replace a woman who was ill and to carry the cross in the procession. She declined. "No way! I wasn't going to do that! . . . God I was just terrified doing such a thing!"

On the third try, he got through to her. He gave her a book to read about lack of confidence and low self-esteem. Her first response was anger, then a degree of acceptance and a readiness to attempt some action.

I thought, 'You son-of-bitch! How dare you say I have low self-esteem and lack of confidence!' Because I realized the book was not talking about L. [husband]. It was talking about me! I was mad as a hatter! I

just wanted to go and hit him over the head with it. And then I thought about it . . . and then I really started to think about my life and what was going on and all of a sudden I suddenly realized it was true! . . . 'It's not only all my husband's fault, right? What am I supposed to do?'

Later she said, "I can't say that I totally swallowed it, but I said, 'Well maybe!' " It wasn't total commitment, but it was the first time she considered that there might be some action she could take, independent of her husband, to improve her situation.

The first thing that came to mind was an Alanon group. A year earlier, a neighbour had confronted her as well. She had pointed out that L. was an alcoholic and suggested Mary try to get him to go to AA. Failing that, she suggested that Mary go to Alanon--a group organized for family members of alcoholics.

Alanon was to be a profoundly transforming experience. It was in Alanon that she became deeply aware--aware of her insubstantiality, aware that she was an "appendix" of her husband. Alanon was the beginning of the emergence of a new stance in relation to other people.

Before going on to Act II and the story of the transition period, let us take a moment to summarize the circumstances which brought Mary to the threshold of major change. She had reached a point of defeat and she could see no hope for a solution. Her orientation to life had led her into a dependent relationship with an alcoholic husband--a marriage which was incompatible with her sexual orientation. She felt powerless to stop her husband from drinking, powerless to improve the relationship and she had no conception of a life independent of the relationship. Then in that dark place two things

happened: she had a spiritual experience of peacefulness and affirmation and a supportive authority figure gently confronted her with taking responsibility.

The result was that for the first time, Mary became aware, however tentatively, of her low self-esteem and lack of confidence and of the possibility of improving her life by taking action on her own behalf.

Act II, which covers the next six years in Mary's life between the ages of 34 and 40 is the story of the transition period--the transformation of the old into the new, the emergence of the substantial self.

ACT II

Two documents are relied on for this section of the story: the transcript of the first interview with Mary and Mary's journal. It was in the first interview that Mary told the story of the transition period in her life. She told about the pivotal experiences, how they promoted change and what they meant in her life. The journal adds a close-up look at the process of change during a crucial eight-month period at the end of the transition period--just before she turned 40 and enrolled fulltime in community college. Although profound changes had occurred before this period, Mary had become temporarily stuck and had gone to a therapist for help in getting moving again. The journal records her progress through pain and confusion to action and control.

Before returning to the narrative, it should be mentioned that the image of the transition period is no longer a portrait. It sufficed to use the portrait metaphor as long as there was a static picture. During the transition, the image is more biological, more life-like, with movement growth and change. One can see old patterns and colours fading, new patterns emerging and colours deepening. Also, there is interpenetration, overlapping and intersecting. Different life experiences overlap and influence each other. One pivotal experience can't be extracted cleanly without having some of the coloration of the nearby designs--as the experience of going to church can't be cleanly separated from the experience of going to the Alanon group.

Now to return to Mary as she sets off for the Alanon group. Although she had glimpsed the possibility of taking action on her own behalf to improve her situation, this vision quickly faded. When faced with actually committing

herself to the Alanon group, her old pattern resurfaced. "It was L.'s damn fault anyway and why didn't he go to AA and what the hell was I doing here? I was doing it for him. I wasn't doing it for me!" "They're a bunch of jerks and I don't belong here. I'm not like them. I'm different."

When she found out that everyone had to take turns chairing the meeting, this gave her further reason to reject the situation.

I couldn't do anything like that. . . . I just . . . I just felt that I didn't have . . . I was too shy. I didn't have any skills. I couldn't do anything like that. I mean what was I? A housewife . . you know . . and a secretary.

The group had a well-considered rule that new members should attend five meetings before they decided whether or not to stay in the group. Mary's plan was to quit after the requisite five sessions but by then a change had occurred.

She discovered that she was not unusual! "I'd suddenly found all of these people with the same problem." "I was not unusual. I was very usual"

. . . All these couples in Alanon have the same problems. They all think about, 'Shall I kill myself or kill him!' They never think to leave. It just doesn't occur!

And in finding out that other people had the same problem, she became aware of herself.

I became aware that I didn't have any substantial self. That's where the awareness came that there wasn't any Mary. I was just nothing. I was just a physical body walking around.

They all go through that--spouses of alcoholics. They just lose themselves and they don't realize they can walk away. It's a real emotional entanglement. You don't have enough distance to look at

what's going on.

In achieving awareness of herself, and in realizing that other people had the same problems, for the first time she took a different stance in relation to other people. She began to remove the mask of invulnerability which she had fashioned so long ago.

I definitely learned to be humble That was one of the hardest things, I think . . . having to accept that I couldn't do it on my own! That I needed help from other people and that they could give it and that it would help . . . that it would help me to become . . myself. . . . I had to just take that mask off and come out and say, 'Help!'

Before, I always tried to do it myself. I didn't think I needed help from anywhere . . any outside help. . . . I mean I thought God was out there somewhere. And in Alanon I learned that God--or whatever you want to call the higher power--works through people . . . that if I needed help I had to reach out and ask for it from other human beings . . . and I guess I was too proud. Too proud to reach out and ask.

She experienced her admission of need in terms of a "coming down." "It felt like I had to come down off a pedestal that I'd built for myself. . . I had to sort of come down to where everybody else was . . . and it was a humbling experience."

And when she came down and joined the others, she began her journey from the position of "outsider" to "insider"--from loneliness to contact and belonging. She stayed in Alanon for two years and during that time, both in Alanon and in the church, she "started to really partake in the community".

I began to feel that I wasn't alone--an outsider, that I didn't fit in. I

always thought I didn't fit in any where. I always thought I was on the outside looking through a window in. And all of a sudden I was beginning to be part of the community--the Alanon community and the church community--which were very similar.

At the same time as she risked letting others know that she needed help, she started taking risks with her fear of incompetence and failure.

I had to be chairperson . . . scared myself half to death! But I was surprised that I managed. Also I felt that's where I grew a little bit . . . that I began to have a little bit of confidence in myself . . . 'Oh! I could do this! What a surprise!' . . . Made me feel good . . . and I felt confident to try something a little bit harder, a little bit more difficult.

. . . . I started low on the totem pole [in the church] . . . just being a server . . . and then one of the guys that was the head server said to me one day that he wanted me to be head server and I just about died! Me? . . . He felt I could do it and I just felt I couldn't. But anyway, he talked me into it. And so I did do it . . . and did fine!

Clearly some new patterns are beginning to emerge. Through beginning to admit her vulnerability in a supportive context, Mary is finding out that vulnerability is acceptable and, what is more, that it brings her into contact with other people. She has a new awareness of her dependence and lack of autonomy in her marriage. Her confidence is increasing as she takes action and discovers her capability and capacity--she sees the possibility of moving up "the totem pole" by her own efforts. Finally and importantly, she has the nurturance that she gets from her spiritual experience.

And yet the new patterns are, in a sense, still in nascent form. The fact of

their presence is profound but they do not yet dominate Mary's experience of herself. They co-exist with the old fears. In the metaphor Mary uses to depict her experience at that time note the juxtaposition of both hope and fear.

I knew . . . that I was beginning to slowly change . . sort of like a butterfly coming out of a crysalis I really had this vision that there was this really neat person that I was going to be . . and yet I dug my heels in. I was really scared about it.

And it is in the context of this fear that the courage of her next two actions can be appreciated. At age 36, two years after she had started Alanon, Mary left her husband and "came out" as a lesbian.

She says that she could not accept her lesbianism previously because it was simply unacceptable socially.

I'd always known I was gay but I didn't accept it. I couldn't accept that. To me it was, I don't know, I think I had been brought up to think it was a bit of mental illness really.

It [lesbianism] was socially not acceptable. It wasn't in England at that time or when I first came to Montreal. It was just not acceptable. It was wrong, dirty and all the rest of it! So that's why I just sort of pushed it out of my mind.

Vancouver in the 1980's was a more hospitable time and place and Mary had evolved to the point where she was ready for further unmasking--the unmasking of a crucial vulnerability.

When she joined an outdoor club for women and met other lesbian women, she knew immediately that she belonged.

As soon as I saw them and got talking to them . . I just had this

feeling of camaraderie . . . closeness . . . and I felt the same as them. I felt they were like my sisters. I felt that these were my people. I mean it would be like a black person who has always been in a white world and seeing another black person Suddenly there was all these women and I knew that I was exactly the same as they were!

These women were healthy successful people, unlike the women she had met in the Montreal bar scene. And to belong to this group of women offered the possibility of the long sought after prize of acceptability and normalcy. If they were acceptable, maybe she could accept herself.

The women in the club were sort of like me--they were outdoorsy. And they seemed perfectly normal. They had jobs. There were even some professional women in that group . . like psychologists, lawyers and doctors! So I thought, 'You can't be crazy and weird and [have] something mentally wrong with you if you're a psychologist, lawyer or doctor!'

[I felt] relief . . . absolute relief! . . . Maybe I'm normal! Maybe for me this is normal! Maybe I can be gay and have a normal life and feel okay about myself.

Mary didn't explain her thoughts and feelings about leaving her husband; however, a pivotal experience which happened within the year after she left him goes a long way towards filling in the picture of what it must have been like for her both to leave her husband and to come out as a lesbian.

She was at a women's weekend organized by the church. It was a warm, accepting environment and Mary felt happy and relaxed until the leaders began to prepare the group for a confession experience. When other members of the

group started going forward and, with a great release of emotion, confessing their guilt, Mary became highly threatened and angry. She donned her running gear and left the building to go for a run along the paths in the nearby wood. After awhile she stopped running and stood in the woods crying. She became aware of her fear of the emotionalism back inside. At the same time, she realized that she didn't want to be out there on her own. She wanted to be part of the group. So she returned to the group--only to find that her physical presence did not ensure her belonging. She had the feeling that the others who had gone through the confession experience were "on the inside" and she had been left out. This was enough to galvanize her into going into the chapel with one of the priests whom she particularly trusted.

As I knelt down to pray . . . I didn't really know what I was going to say but as soon as I got down there I suddenly realized what I wanted to say and that was that I had this tremendous burden of guilt that I was carrying around . . . about being gay still . . . I didn't realize it was still there in the back of my mind. Actually that was number two. Number one was definitely leaving L. [husband]. I felt terribly, terribly guilty about leaving this guy. He was sick. He was an alcoholic.

And then . . . I just started to sob and sob . . . oh . . . sob . . . right from down here. It was just coming up and up. I was just sobbing and this guy held me . . . and then there was sort of a silence. I will never forget it! It was just incredible! It was just this . . . I heard him saying, ' . . . and you're fine the way you are. God loves you the way you are.' . . . Then I just felt this tremendous peace. I thought of it in the Bible where it says, 'The peace that passeth all understanding.' And I

suddenly realized that it does exist. . . . and then it was just like something bubbled up inside me and I just started to laugh. . . . We stood up and we just stood there hugging each other laughing out heads off! And I felt about 20 pounds lighter.

When she returned to the group, she felt like she belonged. And after the weekend was over, it was obvious that the experience had profoundly affected her life.

That weekend really did something it just gave me so much confidence and strength that I would try . . . I would more or less just try anything. I mean . . . and I also knew that I might fail . . . but it didn't matter. . . that I didn't have to be perfect. I would just do the best job I could . . . I lost the fear on that weekend. I also realized on that weekend that my life had been ruled by fear. Fear of rejection. Fear of god knows what! I was just afraid of everything. Afraid of failure.

I just started to be more honest and more open. I shared my feelings more and discovered that people had feelings too . . . If you start sharing what's bothering you and you hear coming back that the other person basically has the same sort of problems . . it's quite a shock to you! I always thought everybody was different--different to the point where they didn't even have the same feelings . . or the same things happen to them.

This new stance in relation to others has a more substantial feel about it. The pattern begun in Alanon has assumed more form. Let's review the features of the pivotal experience that led to this change and growth. Mary deeply felt the unacceptability of her sexual orientation. She also apparently had a deep

sense of responsibility for her husband which made leaving him unacceptable. In a supportive context, when she felt completely acceptable, she allowed herself to become fully aware of her feelings and to fully express them. After this experience, acceptability no longer involved perfection and invulnerability. It was okay to be imperfect and vulnerable and this made for a different ground on which to stand in relation to others. She became less self-focused and aware of other people as "the same". Others became friendly rather than threatening. She could relax sometimes.

It is difficult to capture the complexity of her life during this period. There were profound changes happening but there were also areas where the old orientation was very much alive. Four months after she left her husband, Mary moved in with a new partner--this time a woman. B. was a serious athlete and a forceful personality. After the initial bloom of infatuation had faded, Mary was face to face with her old issues of powerlessness, and repression of feeling. Also, for many years now, she had been working as a secretary: in her view, this was nothing to be proud of. It seemed to symbolize her inadequacy and incompetence, especially in relation to B.'s professional friends. Later, it is these issues that bring her to a halt--as we will see in the journal--but in the meantime, she continued to grow and develop. Areas of difficulty coexisted with steady growth of new patterns.

There were two areas of growth and change which were on-going: running and religion.

Mary didn't talk a lot about running. She gave the impression this was not because it was unimportant but because it was a long and complex story in itself. The few comments she did make will be pieced together to convey a

sense of the meaning this activity had (and still has) in her life.

She spoke of the time when she was just beginning to run. This was at the very beginning of her relationship with B. and before the confession experience. She said running was important in terms of giving her a sense of personal competence and acceptability and of providing a bridge for communication with other people.

I didn't want to talk about the church at a party because I wasn't very confident about the church . . . because people laugh at you if you go to church! And at that time, I didn't have the self-confidence to accept being laughed at . . . but you could talk about running . . . that was acceptable! All of a sudden I had something to talk about!

It was one of the best things that ever happened to me. Because it gave me something that was mine! It was just something that belonged totally to me and it was also something that I could share and talk about. It gave me a communication bridge with other people.

Mary also said that, as a result of her running, she began to lose weight, to become healthier and to feel more attractive; that she built up her commitment to the point that she eventually ran two marathons; and that she discovered "through running that a spiritual harmony was possible, a oneness with the natural world of which I am a part."

The change in health and self-image, the remarkable accomplishment of running the marathons and the statement about spiritual harmony all suggest realms of meaning which need further illumination. Suffice it to say that running constituted another pattern which was interwoven throughout the whole of her change process and which permeated and coloured all other areas

of her life.

Religion had a similarly profound, enduring and complex influence. The church was the context for a growing sense of confidence as Mary took on increasing challenges and responsibilities. It was important also because it was a social context where she was developing a sense of community and belonging. But most importantly, the church was the context for the spiritual regeneration and renewal which became central to her growth process.

Maybe I've been really busy so all of a sudden, I start realizing that I'm not feeling very good! You know? And I'm depressed. And so I think, 'Well gee, yeah! I haven't prayed for about a week.' So maybe I'll sit and pray or put on a meditation tape . . or I'll just sit . . . and just . . . well, I guess meditate really There's stuff whirling around and I shove it out of the way and just think about nothing and just allow . . . God . . . well whatever it is . . that if you allow yourself that space . . . it gets filled with God and it's in that silence somewhere that . . . I can't even put it into words. It's really hard. (long silence) I don't know, things just sort of seem to get sorted out and begin to feel grounded again and centered . . and at peace . . . and I feel okay to go on again.

It's an inner cleansing hard to articulate just a terrific calming down sometimes I cry sometimes I'll laugh sometimes I speak in tongues. That's a bit weird but it sometimes happens.

A release of tension and my confidence comes back. If I'd been feeling scattered and upset and worried about something, it's all gone and I feel a sort of new strength.

I can go into church and maybe I'm all scattered . . . and I'm confused . . . and I get to church and sit down and it's such a beautiful, peaceful atmosphere the music . . . the prayers . . . wafting incense going by. It's all very calming down. For a whole hour I don't think about school or my financial problems or anything like that at all I'm just centered on the service and the music--the whole thing together somehow just settles me down. It centers me. I have this feeling of peace . . . contentment . . . joy . . . I can go in there feeling miserable and come out feeling on top of the world. Like all my problems are gone. I have this just abundant joy.

This powerful regenerative process, combined with all the other emerging new patterns, eventually brought Mary to the point of confronting her areas of greatest difficulty: relationship and career. The underlying issues appeared to be powerlessness and a lack of purpose or direction.

Mary's journal records the process of coming to terms with these issues of deep importance. She had apparently been grinding to a halt in the face of them. She was dissatisfied with her job as a secretary. She did not feel well physically and frequently had "flu-like" symptoms. In her intimate relationship, neither Mary nor her partner were able to deal effectively with conflict. B. was frequently angry and Mary retreated into a depression that neither her religious practice nor her running seemed ultimately to solve. Something additional seemed to be called for and Mary turned to her therapist, S., for support.

Mary said of S. that she played an important role in facilitating and supporting the emergence of her new sense of self. She said S. "grounded" her,

and helped her to be unafraid of growth and change. "There are two things that helped [me become less afraid.] One's the church and one's S." S. helped her to become aware of her feelings and to feel safe to communicate them. "When I got to S., S. would say, 'Well how are you feeling?' . . . And I suddenly realized . . . I hadn't a clue how I was feeling!" "I'd never talked to another human being about my deepest feelings . . . so it was difficult at first . . . for awhile I just was on the surface with her and feeling her out. And then I realized that she was safe and that I could talk to her about anything!"

The journal was kept during the eight-month period when Mary was seeing S. The entries begin in March and they indicate the powerlessness Mary was experiencing in her relationship.

March 7: B. came home very hostile . . . I went to bed and cried. Felt disappointed as I wanted to share my day with her.

March 9: I am angry and want to kick somebody. I'll just have to stuff it down until I see S. If I say anything tonight. B.'ll just get in a worse mood.

March 21: I feel lonely these last few days . . . Also putting on weight and have a bald patch-all warnings no doubt. Sometimes I feel like a pet dog.

Also during this period, the entries show the fear Mary experienced speaking in public, the difficulty she had in admitting her vulnerability to others, and her determination to change.

March 6: Was upset re having to chair meeting at outdoor club. Felt sick. Shared my feelings with B. and felt a bit better . . . The inner dialogue in my head seemed to quiet down and so felt more centered.

Must learn to share my feelings more. It's OK, not a sign of weakness.

March 11: Trying not to withdraw but failed at church. Had stuff to share at Healing Workshop but couldn't get it out. 18 people a bit much for me on good days.

Then there is one entry which indicates a change. She responded with care and concern to her partner's withdrawal.

March 18: Realized that before, when she closed up [because feeling physically unwell], I would ask for a hug as I felt rejected but wanted to be sure. When my request was ignored, I knew I was rejected. This time I just gave strokes and TLC and asked for nothing. Seemed better.

The rest of March and April are marked by depression and Mary seems to be searching for the reason: "Felt a bit lonely this week, not sure why." "Draggy week. Feel tired out." "I'm just blue." "Still bored and depressed at work, not sure why." "I'm not centered and not sure what I'm not doing"

Then, at Easter, she got quite sick. On Good Friday, she didn't go to church. She stayed home and performed her own church service, reading the priest's part herself. The following journal entry was written a few days later.

April 22: More and more now I feel the urge, push, nagging feeling.

Drawn towards being a priest half of me wants to pursue this and the other half wants to run away and hide.

The next few days were marked by a mixture of hope and fear--with hope finally winning out.

April 22: [After she told the Archdeacon that she wanted to be a priest] Oh god what can of worms have I opened. Or maybe the door to heaven, who knows. . . . I wonder if they think I'm a religious nut my pride

can't be hurt anymore it all went in Alanon. So what's the big deal really.

April 24: I'm crying very easily. Don't know if it's because of my cold or if I'm depressed or what.

The next entry is undated. It is not clear if it refers to the same night. She describes a dream in which she is being rejected by both B. and her husband. She is standing between two beds "like a child stands with toes turned inward and hanging head".

Immediately following the dream she writes:

Where I got the 'balls' from to ask to be a priest I don't know. I'm expecting rejection but also I'm filled with hope. What will I do if they reject me. I feel, in looking back, that all my past has brought me to this door! Surely it must open.

There is a new sense of identity, confidence and control. In choosing to pursue her dream of being a priest, it's as if she is dealing with all the major obstacles with one blow. She is dealing with her sense of incompetence, her powerlessness and with the previous absence of purpose and direction in her life.

After Mary took the risk of making contacts to get references and information and she began to develop a vision of the feasibility of her plan, she writes, "I've finally found my tongue." She had begun to be more assertive in her relationship with B. and she spoke up for herself in other contexts as well. One entry notes that she defended her sexual orientation in a church group.

May 27: [After two members of the group referred to "curing"

homosexuality] Spent an hour telling my experience. Don't think I changed their minds but I felt better. They thought I had great courage!

As her plans proceeded, her vision and sense of purpose gained substance. And with this, there was the beginning of some autonomy in her relationship, as well as a new social confidence.

June 4: Feel like there's been a shift in me. Like God and I were walking side by side and then we merged and became one.

June 16: B. is fed up with my 'Sunday School' obsession. I was surprised the only emotion that came up was warmth, understanding and sadness! True religion is the centre of my life I don't remember if this way chose me or I it but I'm on it and I cannot give it up or go back.

June 19: I led prayer session totally unselfconsciously.

July: Great weekend. I seem to be more popular than I thought I was. Since I got my head out of the sand.

The following entry suggests that she can feel herself changing and is a bit unsettled by it.

July: I feel like I'm in a transition period going from something to something and it feels a bit strange.

Then at the beginning of August (August 2), there was an episode in which B. had a outburst of rage and powerlessness. Mary handled it by retreating into depression for a couple weeks.

August 10: Feeling depressed Why won't I leave B.?

Then came a change, first marked by a dream in which there was a vicious animal threatening. Her place of refuge was a small shack where she was

"standing in corner holding the walls which were being pushed in by forces outside".

Her next and final entries (undated) in this journal show that her sense of internal control has returned.

August: Shared my confusion [with B.] over whether to stay or leave. She feels same way. We agreed to hang in and keep trying for a bit longer. It's not so bad being totally honest as I thought it might be. Langara-next week.

Ran, swam, helped at each eucharist, square danced, sang. Joined unselfconsciously in everything.

Mary discontinued with her therapist at this point. With an emerging sense of control and purpose, she no longer needed S. She had a plan to return to school in a year's time. In the meantime, she would stay with B. and see what evolved from her new found position of internal control and she would prepare herself for school by taking a night course.

Mary was coming near the end of the period of her life that had been dominated by fear. The year she turned 40, she quit the secretarial job she had been at for 10 years and began as a fulltime student at a community college. Through this courageous step, she was to confront the unacceptable student of long ago. "When I first went to Langara . . . Oh, I was so scared! I didn't think I could do it!" "I expected maybe to scrape through."

School was the place that she tested herself--and found out that she was capable afterall! "I'm not stupid." "I'm more intelligent than I thought I was." "I thought you had to be perfect but I realize now that people just do the best they can. You know, you have skills, and the skills are not something that

you're born with--they develop as you develop."

She began to develop the confidence that she really could accomplish her goal of becoming a priest and she found that it was her willingness to change that was going to get her there. "I've come this far and changed this much . . . I'm sure I can go on and change enough that I can do that job."

In taking on the challenge of proceeding with her goal and in losing her fear of change, it seemed that her developing sense of substantiality was brought to fruition. It was during the first two years in school that she had the sense that she had "emerged".

Mary is presently attending university and has one more year there before she applies for theology school. She left B. a year ago. She described that decision as a "tying off". It sounded as if it was a move that had been overdue for some time and one that she needed to take to concentrate on her chosen goal.

There were two other experiences that fell into this category of tying off. She established a good connection with her mother and she did some additional work with her therapist to resolve her feelings about the death of her father.

Just prior to leaving B., Mary travelled to England to visit with her mother. At that time, she initiated a conversation about her childhood feelings of being overly controlled. Her mother was open to talking and told Mary about her marriage and relationship difficulties. For the first time, Mary understood her mother's situation. The result was a new sense of equality and connection. "My Mom treated me like I was a human being, not like . . . a kid! And in the same respect, I treated her like she was another woman and not my mother. . . . We just had this wonderful time!"

Mary reconnected with her father as well. During a temporary period of loneliness, just after she left B. and moved from community college to university, she returned to her therapist for guidance and support. The end result was that she dealt with a restricted feeling she had had in relation to her father and her father's death.

When Mary's father was dying of cancer, 10 years earlier, she had not been able to connect with him and tell him how much she had appreciated the times they had together when she was a child. She said that her mother didn't want him to know he was dying and consequently Mary felt unable to talk to her father except in a superficial way. As it happened, she had to return to Canada before her father died and since that time she had had a peculiar feeling that he "was miles away"--although previously she had always felt very close to him.

During a guided imagery experience with S., Mary had an imaginal experience in which she regained that closeness to her father. She experienced that her father's love or essence was inside her and the sensation of "distance" disappeared.

During this whole period of emergence, Mary seems to have developed the position that if something isn't working and she isn't feeling herself, she will involve herself in some change that will bring about renewal and reorientation. It's as if she has started on a journey that requires a great deal of energy and if that energy becomes blocked she has to do something--to change--in order to continue on.

I just have this feeling that there are all these things that I'm neatly tying off and finishing off because I'm going somewhere . . . it's sort of

like putting all your armour on because you're going out to battle
 getting ready to move onward. Onward and upward . . . as I say . . . I'm
 aiming to be a priest, which is a long, long journey. And if I think about
 where I am right now, I realize I still have . . . a lot of growing to do
 because I mean right now I couldn't stand up in church and preach.
 Actually I wouldn't be afraid to do it anymore but I know I don't
 have the skills for that yet. It's going to be a lot of years of school and
 a lot more growth before I become the type of person who can do that.

We recognize in these words the kind of confidence that endures, that is
 substantial, that doesn't disappear in the face of obstruction and
 difficulty--and we appreciate what a long route she has travelled to get there.

In closing Act II, let us set out in summary fashion what seem to be the
 underlying patterns of the transition period of Mary's life. The process of
 change, taken as a whole, seems to consist of an interweaving of two central
 processes. One process involves a kind of letting go or opening up. Through
 many and various experiences, Mary discovers that she if she lets go of her
 social mask of invulnerability and accepts her painful feelings and
 imperfections, she achieves at a sense of harmony with herself, with other
 people and with the universe. In the beginning, and later in a time of crisis,
 this experience comes through the support of other people. Mary finds also
 that running and spiritual practice return her to this harmonious experience of
 self.

The second process involves action in the world. In supportive contexts
 Mary begins to take small steps to apply herself and discover her capacities.
 Each step involves a risk and each successful result involves an increasing

experience of competence and internal control. As she succeeds at one step, she takes on progressively larger tasks until eventually a new sense of self emerges.

The two processes seem to be profoundly interwoven. Letting go facilitates action and *vice versa*.. When Mary encounters obstacles, she finds a way to get moving again by returning to the experience of herself as a harmonious being. And this spiritual experience provides direction for the application of effort.

The pattern is complex and configurational rather than one dimensional and linear. Supporting experiences interpenetrate and overlap. Acceptance of self interacts with taking responsibility and action. Acceptance of self interacts with social acceptance. Also, there is variation in the rate at which the substantial self evolves. There are spurts forward, regressions and plateaus.

Act III

Act II was the account of how substantiality evolved. It remains for Act III to gather together what seem to be the really essential aspects of the substantial self and to consider the end of the story and how it relates to the beginning.

Perhaps the most notable aspect of the closing picture is that all the details seem to blend and inter-relate. Shift and movement are no longer the dominant aspects, however interpenetration of pattern remains. Aspects of experience blend one into the other like brush strokes on a canvas. The image of a portrait applies once again.

Since no one brush stroke has priority or is intelligible on it's own, let's start where we began and recall the opening quotation.

It's so neat to be able to go out and visit people and talk with people and not feel self-conscious! Just to feel perfectly at ease and interested in who they are . . . and exchange stories It just makes such a difference! It's less stressful. It just makes life worth living. What a struggle! They say, 'Life begins at forty,' and it did for me!

For Mary, feeling substantial involves feeling as if her life has just begun. It has finally become worthwhile. There is a sense of pleasure and enjoyment rather than struggle--of feeling at ease rather than stressed, anxious or fearful.

Substantiality also involves being interested in others rather than being self-conscious and self-focused. According to Theresa,

She even said to me . . . 'How do I come across to you?' You

know, taking my breath away! Before, she wouldn't dream about even thinking about asking, 'How do I come across? Do I come across like an army tank or do I look like a desirable person? Do I look like someone you want to be with?' This was what she wanted to know! I was loving this kind of communication from Mary because it just means that she's concerned about . . . being for other people . . . something.

Mary's position in relation to others has changed. She has moved "beside" rather than "on top of" or "underneath". In the past, her sense of herself seemed to be determined by other people. She was oriented towards finding acceptance and avoiding rejection. Now she is not so dependent on outside approval. She has sense of autonomy, inner control and, importantly, a sense of belonging. She is no longer concerned with seeking safety and protecting vulnerability. Her relationship to others has become more equal, more a matter of dialogue, of negotiation. Relating has become something other than an enterprise in seeking acceptability and approval. It has become a matter of greeting an equal partner.

I feel that more or less I've found myself I can still grow and change but I feel very comfortable with myself. And I feel that I have a lot to give and a lot to share. When I'm with people it's like give and take. I feel very equal to people now. I never felt equal before.

According to Theresa,

Now I believe that Mary could come into the house and chat with whoever the heck's here! 'Hi! What do you do? What's your name?' . . . She would initiate now . . where she wouldn't before.

You know, she's healthier. She includes herself. She doesn't

demand but she asks. If somebody says 'no', that's cool with her. At one time, it wouldn't have been cool. She would have hid. It hurt too much.

In fact, in a synopsis, that's what I've seen in her.

Mary seems to have acquired a new flexibility. She doesn't have to "hang on" to her mask of perfection. She can "let go", be imperfect, change, relax. She is perfect and imperfect--a human being.

Last week I had to give a seminar at school. I had to stand up in front of the class and talk and . . . I didn't even get anxious about it! It was such a shock! I mean, I just did it! And I thought, "Well, I'll just do the best I can. I mean, it's not going to be perfect. It's going to be . . . where I'm at right now! Obviously not going to be perfect."

Whereas hiding and a desire for security were significant aspects of the portrait of the insubstantial self, trust, courage, and an orientation to the future are characteristic of Mary in the present. And all of these seem to be related to feeling unafraid of obstacles and uncertainty. Perhaps this is what Mary meant when she said that she became unafraid of change. She had developed a trust in the process of growth and change, of risking in order to move forward.

Theresa speaks of her courage and independence:

She's taking what I consider a very large risk. I believe it's very courageous . . . to go to university. She doesn't have a mom and dad behind paying the bills . . . or lovers or husbands or anybody else. She's doing it all on her own!

The following excerpt is from a questionnaire filled out by the rector at Mary's church. It is an anecdote that reverberates with echoes of her

childhood experiences and speaks clearly of her courage.

Her first interview with the examining chaplains (a kind of selection committee) was disappointing in that the chaplains felt that she was not yet focused enough to pursue her vocation (to be a priest). I believe that she was intimidated by that committee and found it difficult to articulate the vision that she has. However, this has not deterred her and she has pursued her vocation further by approaching another bishop in the province. This shows resolve and strength of character that was hidden in her psyche until recently.

There are many characteristics that seem to be inter-related here:

Strength of character, resolve, capacity, courage, potency and an orientation toward a future goal. In the rector's anecdote, and in the following statement we can see the relationship between her sense of capacity and her orientation to the future. Because she feels capable of handling obstacles and uncertainty, she sees the future as a challenge. She is no longer dominated by fear, powerlessness and the need for protection and safety.

I feel so much stronger . . . and capable . . . I mean, I may need help from people certainly . . . but I feel that I really can . . sort of carry on towards my goal. And who knows what's going to happen. . . . I mean anything could happen and I might not get there but I certainly have the potential to get there.

And capacity seems also to be related to a sense of identity and a sense of wholeness rather than a feeling of fragmentation.

I really feel I know who I am now. And so I have a whole person
whereas before, I mean, I was just . . . what . . nothing. I was just

fragmented all over the place. . . . So yeah, it feels really good! I really feel excited about the future whereas before I was just always sort of fearful . . . and I hadn't even thought about the future.

Implicit in all of this is that Mary has chosen a goal. She has decided what matters to her, what she will work at, what she will strive to accomplish. Life has a direction, a meaning and a purpose.

And yet, for Mary, being substantial doesn't always involve feeling harmonious. In addition to the recurring states depression or confusion, she referred briefly to three other problems. At one point, she mentioned having "to be careful not to get too inflated. Too puffed up." At another point, she said that she has a problem dealing with her anger. Her friend Donna confirmed this. "She will try to avoid uncomfortable feelings and just not acknowledge it." "[She] still has problems sometimes in saying . . . I don't like this or that." Also, Mary said that she becomes afraid at times--afraid particularly of the hurdles which school presents.

Being substantial seems to involve an overarching approach to life--one that not only makes room for difficulties but considers them a part of the process of growth. Religious practice and running are strategies which Mary uses regularly to move through unresolved negative feeling and to recontact the experience of herself as a spiritual being. This experience of spiritual harmony is central to Mary's sense of purpose in life. And it is interwoven with her desire to successfully accomplish goals. In fact, it seems that her sense of purpose involves a dual movement. It involves both a reaching out to test abilities and capacities and a returning to the ground of her experience of spiritual harmony.

This portrait is a long way from the pain and confusion of the young girl watching the soccer game from the sidelines. Let us close Mary's story by reviewing the central aspects of her new sense of herself as a substantial person. Mary no longer assumes that she is dependent on external support or that she must present a mask of invulnerability. Her life is no longer oriented around self-protection but around using her full capacities to accomplish goals. She conceives of a dual movement in her life. At the same time that she strives to fulfill social goals she strives to stay in touch with her spiritual self. Obstacles are considered to be part of the process of growth and Mary has strategies which she uses for regeneration and renewal. Her life is no longer characterized by fear and anxiety. She feels a sense of equality with other people and takes new pleasure in living.

This portrait is the conclusion to a struggle for change which began in Alanon. And there is a symmetry to Mary's story. Powerlessness, incompetence and lack of acceptability have become potency, competence and belonging. The story is there. The end completes the beginning and is its opposite.

Under heaven all can see beauty as beauty only because there is ugliness.

All can know good as good only because there is evil.

Therefore having and not having arise together.

Difficult and easy complement each other.

Long and short contrast each other;

High and low rest upon each other;

Front and back follow one another. (Lao Tsu)

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

STATEMENT OF FINDINGS

The process of becoming a substantial self has been studied using the case study method of research. Disciplined analysis and synthesis of converging sources of evidence, resulted in a rich, detailed description of one case. The description was structured in three sections: Act I, Act II, and Act III. The underlying pattern of each section was discussed in a summary at the end of each act. What follows is a compilation of the summaries of each of the acts.

In her family, school and larger social environment, Mary had painful experiences in which she felt powerless, incompetent and unacceptable. Her response to these experiences had several aspects. At a deep level, she assumed that she was indeed powerless, incompetent and unacceptable. Superficially, she denied this and assumed a stance of invulnerability. She thought of herself as a strong person and yet her actions indicated her deeper assumptions. She lived in fear of being rejected and organized her life around the need for protection, safety and external support. She fantasized about ideal love relationships. She didn't set goals and try to achieve them. She showed a pattern of passivity and drifting in relation to her environment. Apart from certain one-to-one relationships, she avoided people generally and was shy and nervous in their presence. She was self-focused and didn't initiate conversations with others. Friends saw her as nice, polite and inoffensive. She rejected others to whom she felt inferior.

The change process began when she reached a point of defeat and humiliation and could see no way to proceed. She then had an experience of spiritual affirmation as well as an experience of gentle confrontation by a supportive authority figure. This person pointed out that she needed to become aware of her low self-esteem and begin to take responsibility for her life.

What followed was a 7-8 year period during which she gradually changed her orientation to living and evolved a sense of herself as substantial person. The overall pattern of the change process can be described in terms of the interweaving of two central processes. One process involves a kind of letting go or opening up. Through many and various experiences, Mary discovered that if she let go of her social mask of invulnerability and accepted her painful feelings and imperfections, she achieved a sense of harmony with herself, with other people and with the universe. In the beginning, and later in a time of crisis, this experience came through the support of other people. Spiritual practice and running were also important in returning her to this harmonious experience of self.

The second process involves action in the world. In supportive contexts Mary began to take small steps to apply herself and discover her capacities. Each step involved a risk and each successful result brought an increasing experience of competence and internal control. As she succeeded at one step, she took on progressively larger tasks until eventually a new sense of herself emerged.

The two processes seem to be profoundly interwoven. Letting go facilitates action and vice versa. When Mary encountered obstacles, she found a way to get moving again by returning to the experience of herself as a

harmonious being. And this spiritual experience provided direction for the application of effort.

The pattern of the change process is complex and configurational rather than one dimensional and linear. Supporting experiences interpenetrate and overlap. The experience of harmony interacts with the experience of the self as capable and socially acceptable. Also, there is variation in the rate at which the substantial self develops. There are spurts forward, regressions and plateaus.

The emergence of the substantial self is marked by a new orientation to living. Mary no longer assumes that she is dependent on external support or that she must present a mask of invulnerability. Her life is no longer oriented around self-protection but around using her full capacities to accomplish goals. She conceives of a dual movement in her life. At the same time that she strives to fulfill social goals she strives to stay in touch with her spiritual, emotional and physical self. Obstacles are considered part of the growth process and Mary has strategies which she uses for regeneration and renewal. Her life is no longer characterized by fear and anxiety. She feels a sense of equality with other people and her life is more pleasureable.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

It is not possible on the basis of this study to generalize the findings to a population. The findings apply to the case alone and we do not know which aspects of the case are purely idiosyncratic. We do not know that the dimensions of insubstantiality and substantiality are the same for other people or that change involves the same kinds of processes. The case raises many questions which remain unanswered. Do all experiences leading to an insubstantial sense of self fall into the three categories of powerlessness, incompetence and unacceptability? Do different kinds of negative experiences necessitate different kinds of change processes? Does insubstantiality always manifest itself in the same behaviors? These are all important questions and they must be answered by future investigations.

THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

The case study provides a vivid instance to which theories should be capable of applying. It can be used to generate questions about existing theory. Is the theory confirmed or disconfirmed? Does the case suggest areas where theory could be qualified or extended.

In general, the findings of this study present a picture which is more complex than any of the existing theoretical descriptions. No theory is completely disconfirmed by the case; however, there are themes and concepts present in the case which temper, broaden and extend each theory. The

discussion which follows will deal with each relevant theory in turn.

Discussion will begin by dealing with aspects of the theory which are confirmed or disconfirmed by the case. This will be followed by a discussion of important aspects of the case which are not covered by the theory.

Jung

Mary's case confirms the central Jungian concepts: the formation of the social mask or persona which cuts off the negative aspects of the self from awareness; the process of change beginning with an experience of defeat and humiliation; the emergence of the self through the acceptance of the previously denied aspects of the personality; the courage required in the process; and the experience of the integrated self as the experience of spiritual harmony with the universe.

There are, however, aspects to Mary's process of change which are not prominent in the Jungian account. Two aspects seem important. First, we do not get from Jung a clear sense of how the individuation process is worked through in the context of a person's life as lived. Spiritual experience in Mary's case interacted with her need to achieve a sense of herself as a capable person in society's terms. She grew spiritually as she accepted her own imperfection. She also grew as she took on challenges, learned new skills and discovered that she could compete successfully with others.

Second, for Mary, accepting imperfection and experiencing wholeness do not seem to be continuous experiences. The spiritual experience sustains, renews and gives meaning to her life but it is episodic rather than ongoing. It

seems that in the course of dealing with the normal challenges of her daily existence she routinely gets off track and has to use a variety of means of recontacting her spiritual self. She uses running, prayer and church ritual to return her to this place of centering and connection. Jung's description tends to give the impression that the spiritual self is more permanent and less fluctuating.

Erikson

Erikson's concept of the self evolving in the social context is confirmed by the case. It was lack of support from the social context that led to Mary's experiences of powerlessness, unacceptability and incompetence. And these experiences did have a formative influence in her developing sense of self. The failure to achieve a sense of autonomy and social acceptability were especially important.

There are several aspects of Mary's process of becoming a substantial person which are not accounted for in the Erikson theory. Three emerge as most significant.

First, Erikson's theory does not tell us how an adult who has failed to achieve ego identity goes back to solve the crisis of the earlier stages. His is an epigenetic conception: his stages are a kind of fixed sequential groundplan. There is no prominent role for individual intervention, control and action. There are no concepts of risk, courage, decision-making and action. We do not have a sense of how the identity-diffused adult can take control to move towards ego identity. In Mary's case, social recognition did not happen

automatically with external support. She had to take risks--make decisions, try things in the face of uncertainty and doubt. She had to be persistent in the face of obstacles.

Second, self-awareness is also without a prominent role. There is no notion of the formation of the social mask and how it prevents growth. There is no concept of inner healing or acceptance of imperfection that both preceeds and accompanies the action, effort and striving.

Third, in Mary's case, the crises of the earlier stages were not solved sequentially. Autonomy, initiative, industry, identity were all important in the evolution of the substantial self. However, the pattern of growth could not be called sequential. It was more configurational. Daily living required that all of the crises be dealt with and success in one area influenced another. For example, a sense of autonomy was accruing as Mary worked, applied herself and developed a social role for herself.

Rogers

Rogers concept of becoming a person is a centrally important part of Mary's change process. There are three clear examples of the process. First, with the support of the Alanon group, she became aware of her non-self and learned to accept and express painful feelings which had been previously out of awareness. Second, with the support of the priest in the confession experience, she allowed herself to fully experience the pain which she had previously been suppressing. Full organismic expression of the feelings in the supportive context brought her to an experience of peacefulness and

wholeness. Afterwards, she found she was more able to take on new challenges. She had less fear and didn't have to wear a mask of perfection. Third, in one-to-one therapy, Mary felt supported to confront painful feelings and to experience herself fully. It was in the context of this therapeutic relationship that she was able to confront her powerlessness both in her intimate relationship and her job.

However, Mary's change process is more complex than Roger's description and there are two aspects which emerge as particularly significant.

First, becoming a person doesn't account for the significance in Mary's case of achieving social acceptance and a sense of capacity. Negative feelings about her incompetence in the past continue in her adult life as she considers her job as a secretary. She has to take risks, apply herself and find out that she is capable of going to university. She has to find out that she is indeed in control of her life and she can make a difference by her own actions. Self-healing is centrally important. She does use her organism as a guide for living. If she is feeling depressed or out of sorts, she gets support from other people, goes for a run or meditates. However, accomplishing a social goal is also important.

Second, Roger's description gives the impression that healing the gap between the organism and the self happens more or less in one step and that a therapeutic relationship is essential. For Mary it is a much longer process. She has many healing experiences. In fact, at the end of her change process, she has not healed the gap once and for all. It's as if she has to repeat over and over a miniature version of the whole change pattern. It seems to be more a case of trusting that life has an alternating rhythm. Letting go and becoming

aware of imperfection and pain has become part of the rhythm of life. Finally, although therapeutic relationships were centrally important in Mary's case, particularly in the beginning, she achieves a similar healing process through the more solitary experiences of running and spiritual practice.

Bowen

Bowen's theory is in large part substantiated by the case. In the portrait of insubstantiality three things stand out. First, Mary's inability to take stands and find autonomy and distance was a repeating theme in her life--first in her relationship with her mother, and then later in the two major intimate relationships of her adult life. Second, there were suggestions that Bowen's concept of triangling applied to Mary's family. It appears likely that Mary functioned in her family of origin to stabilize a conflicted marital relationship. Third, when Mary says of her present relationship with her mother that they were finally able to treat each other as equal human beings, implicit in this is the picture of what went before. We understand that Mary and her mother did not have a person-to-person relationship.

In Bowen's description of the change process, important aspects are confirmed and one aspect is disconfirmed. According to Bowen one differentiates by first becoming aware of one's role in perpetuating the enmeshed system and then takes stands and states autonomous beliefs. In Alanon, Mary saw for the first time that she had a role in perpetuating the dependent relationship with her alcoholic husband. She realized that she would have to take responsibility for herself. Again, in her intimate

relationship with B., her journal testifies to the effort she made to become aware of her role in perpetuating negative interactions. She eventually came to realize that she must find her own solutions.

The case did not confirm the concept that one must undergo a process of differentiating from one's family of origin. Mary worked through her change process in other contexts and other relationships. She was able to have a person-to-person relationship with her mother after she had emerged as a substantial person.

There are two significant aspects of Mary's case which cannot be found in Bowen's account. First, the portrait of insubstantiality does not include the role of the larger social context. In Mary's case we see that powerlessness is an experience taught by the larger social system as well as the family. Mary learns powerlessness in her school and her school is a reflection of a larger class structure which locates her firmly at the bottom of the hierarchy. Second, Mary's change process is much more complex than Bowen's account. One gets the impression from Bowen that awareness of one's role comes in a full and complete fashion and that individual stances are taken in the same manner that one dons a cap. For Mary, awareness glimmered and receded and glimmered again. She saw that she had to take responsibility for herself, but the meaning of this was not fully formed. She didn't suddenly take a stand to define herself once and for all, she had to grow out of dependency and grow into a new stance. And centrally involved in this growth process were two processes which Bowen does not mention. Mary had to accept imperfection and negative feeling and she had to apply herself in the real world and develop and sense of her own competence and capacity in relation to others.

Peele

Most of Peele's concepts found strong confirmation in this case study. The social context was centrally important in the formation of Mary's diminished sense of self. Also, her insubstantiality did manifest itself in dependency. She seemed to need external support and this was especially prominent in her intimate relationships. Peele's conception of the change process was also confirmed. For Mary, the emerging sense of herself as competent, and capable was a major component of her experience of substantiality. It was important for her to take responsibility for herself, to make decisions, take risks in the face of uncertainty, to persevere and find out that she could succeed by her own efforts. Also, dependency subsided as competence and internal control emerged. There was less need for reliance on external support once Mary had a sense of her own potency and stability.

This case disconfirmed Peele's concept that a person seeking to change must avoid external support from other people. Peele discourages one-to-one therapy on the basis that it encourages dependency. He conceives of change solely in terms of individual initiative. The Alanon group, the church community, the priest and the therapist were all instrumental in Mary's change process.

There is missing from Peele's theory a conception of nonpossessive support from others as well a conception of the social mask or persona which prevents awareness of negative feelings. For Mary, it was important to remove her mask of invulnerability and to become aware of and accept painful

feelings. This process was facilitated by nonpossessive support from others. It was then easier for her to proceed to take risks and try new things because she did not have to be perfect. For Peele, an attitude of acceptance of imperfection evolves as one try to accomplish things in the world. This was confirmed in Mary's case, but it did not exclude the need for a nonpossessive support from others at key turning points and especially in the beginning.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The discussion of practical implications has been divided into three sections: the individual, therapeutic practice, and society.

The Individual

The case study provides a map for change for those who experience themselves as less than substantial. It can be used to reflect on and to derive meaning from one's own life experience--to discover similarities and differences. It can be used as a source of hope and inspiration, and more concretely, to point out possible directions for dealing with obstacles.

Also on an individual level, the case can be used to guide reflection about our impact on children. The case is an illustration of the manner and extent of adult influence on children. It encourages us to ask the important question, "How do our values and actions contribute to the child's feelings of power, competence and acceptability?"

Therapeutic Practice

The case provides a clear illustration of insubstantiality, what it means in a person's life and how change comes about. Therapists can use this illustration to reflect on the meaning of their clients' experience. The case guides the therapist to ask questions--questions which point to a direction for change. What is the client's position or orientation to living? What experiences have contributed to the formation of this position? Does the client's behavior substantiate conclusions about position? Where is the client in terms of the change process? At the beginning? In the middle? What needs does the client have with respect to deepening acceptance of self or increasing sense of capacity?

The case provides a model for change which the therapist can use in considering how to intervene. It implies a clear role for the therapist in supporting the integration of painful feelings. Further, it provides a model for understanding this role in relation to other needs of the client. According to this model, integration is important but experience of the self as a competent, capable, social being is also important.

Finally, the case provides perspective on the role of the therapist. The therapist is not responsible for "curing" the client but for facilitating a growth process which results in the client's experience of themselves as increasingly acceptable, competent and in control of their lives. The therapeutic experience is merely one of many facilitative experiences. The therapist can promote and encourage other experiences which lead to

self-acceptance and social achievement.

Society

The case has implications for social values and the institutions which embody them. It illustrates the way in which an individual's experience of self evolves from the social context. It clearly demonstrates how social values can lead to a person's diminished sense of self. In this way, the case promotes understanding of the necessity of working towards a society in which the values and institutions promote the individual's experience of potency, competence and acceptability.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study has demonstrated a rigorous case study method and its value in studying human experience. As such, it serves as a clear example which can be utilized in the research and study of other complex experiential phenomenon.

Also, the study suggests areas for further research into additional aspects of the phenomenon of becoming a substantial self. The following areas are possibilities for inquiry. One might

1. conduct other case studies to correct, elaborate and refine the findings of this case study.
2. investigate the common pattern across a number of different cases.
3. design a systematic method for deriving the common pattern across a

number of cases.

4. investigate variation in the dimensions of the experience of insubstantiality.
5. investigate variation and similarity in the early recollections of those people who have experienced the phenomenon.
6. investigate the effects of variation in the experience of insubstantiality on the process of change.
7. investigate variation in the kinds of experiences which facilitate change.
8. investigate variation in the overall pattern of the change process.
9. investigate whether this phenomenon occurs for all people or just some. If just some, what are the necessary pre-conditions?
10. investigate variation in the experience across cultural groups.
11. examine whether change is necessary in order to become aware of insubstantiality.
12. examine in more detail the phenomenon of the social mask.
13. examine in more detail the experience of capacity.

SUMMARY

The phenomenon of becoming a more substantial self was investigated using the case study method. The co-researcher, Mary, was interviewed to elicit her experience of the phenomenon. Understanding was built up through collection of data from a variety of sources including early recollections, a diary, and interviews with friends and associates. The data were analyzed and Cochran's dramaturgical method was used to discover the coherent pattern of meaning. After a rich, detailed description of the case was written and summarized, the findings were compared with the theoretical assumptions about the phenomenon found in the literature. It was concluded that, while most of the theoretical assumptions were confirmed by the case, the findings suggested a change process which was more complex than any of the existing theoretical descriptions.

It was found that, for Mary, insubstantiality involved childhood experiences of powerlessness, incompetence, and lack of social acceptability. In response to these experiences she formulated the position that she must defend against those painful vulnerabilities by presenting herself as strong person. Implicit in this was the assumption that she was powerless, incompetent and unacceptable and, as a result, dependent on external support.

At the age of 33, Mary reached a point where her life circumstances defeated the viability of this position. She felt humiliated and defeated and could see no solution. It was then that she had a supportive spiritual experience and, at the same time, an experience of gentle confrontation from a supportive authority figure. This was the beginning of a 7-8 year transition

period which involved two central processes. One process involved a kind of letting go or opening up, the other involved a movement forward involving risk, effort and action. Through many and various experiences Mary discovered that if she let go of her social mask of invulnerability and accepted herself as she was, with painful feelings and imperfections, she arrived at an experience of harmony with herself, other people and the world in general. Profoundly interwoven with this was the process of risk, effort and action. In supportive contexts, Mary began to apply herself and to discover her capacities. She began to take larger and larger risks until she came to experience herself as a competent person capable of pursuing her goals.

The emergence of the substantial self was marked by the experience of the self as a capable social being and a harmonious spiritual, physical, and emotional being. Mary's life is no longer oriented around protecting vulnerabilities but around using her full capacities to accomplish social goals while staying in touch with her spiritual self.

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APPENDIX I

INTERVIEW WITH MARY

Transcribed from audio-tape

(. in text is used to indicate pauses in the dialogue)

- I: I'm investigating people who have had the experience of changing from having an insubstantial or indefinite sense of themselves to having more of a substantial sense of themselves or more definite sense of themselves in relationship to other people. And I'm interested in knowing everything I can about how that change process happens and the meaning of that change process in people's lives. And . . . I'd like you to tell it to me in the form of a story--with a definite beginning and a middle and an end. The beginning would be when you first had a sense of yourself as less than a substantial person and the end would be the present time.
- M: Okay, going back to the beginning--that's the hardest part--to figure out where that started. I don't think I became aware of not having much of a self . . or substantial self . . . until I was in that marriage to L. I got married when I was twenty-eight. And I think prior to that, I was young, I was having a good time. You've got so much going on, you don't think about anything. You're just working and the weekends you're out having fun and you don't think too much about whether you've got a self apart from others or what. Then I got married and somewhere in that marriage whatever I did have, I lost whatever there was of me and I assume there was some self. I'd lost it totally . . . where I was really at the bottom. I was really emotionally . . . ill . . . I think, when I look back in retrospect.
- I: So do you mean that you had a sense of some substance to yourself but that when you were married you seemed to have lost it . . . that you had very

little self or an indefinite self.

M: I don't think I had much prior to that either. I really don't. I think my mother made all my decisions. So I really never decided anything. I just seemed to drift. I was just drifting through life and I never really thought much about anything . . . just going to work and having fun at the weekend . . . no I don't think I had much of a substantial self but it was in the marriage I certainly realized that what I did have, I lost.

I: So that in a sense is the beginning of awareness that . . .

M: Yeah, that's right. Before that I was not aware. Prior to the marriage, I don't think I was aware of anything very much. But in the marriage I became aware . . . that I was I was nothing. I was nothing--I was just an appendix to L. And he was drinking and I was getting more and more emotionally upset didn't know what to do about it didn't even have the sense to, or didn't even know how to reach out for help. And uh I just became really emotionally sick. I mean to the point where I can remember thinking, "Shall I kill him or shall I kill myself?" (laughs) And that's pretty much at the bottom of the heap. I never thought, "Why don't I just walk away!" I mean, all the answers to that came through being in Alanon and I found out what that was all about. So that's where I think I became aware that I didn't have any substantial self. That's where the awareness came that there wasn't any Mary. I just was nothing. I was just a physical body walking around.

I: So there was no Mary, but Mary was in this relationship with an alcoholic. And Mary didn't feel that she had the option of leaving . . .

M: That's pretty typical of an alcoholic spouse. From what I've learned in Alanon, they all go through that--spouses of alcoholics. They just lose themselves and they don't realize that they can walk away. It's a real emotional entanglement. You don't have enough distance to look at what's going on. It's only when you get in Alanon--I had two years in Alanon--that you get that emotional distance. That you can see that it's not just you and him but all these couples in Alanon are going through the same thing. They have the same problems. They all think about, " Shall I kill myself or kill

him?" (laughs) They never think to leave it! It just doesn't occur!

I: So Alanon was the turning point then?

M: It was prior to Alanon. I think I mentioned it when I went to St. Paul's Church. That was when I was really depressed. I was walking just up the street one day, one morning, and heard music coming out of St. Paul's Church and . . . I guess it reminded me of my childhood when I used to go to the Anglican Church in England that was the Church of England. This particular church said "Anglican Church". It meant nothing to me but the music was the same . . . and the same hymns. So I thought, "Well that sounds nice!" . . . So I just went in. I was depressed and I just sat at the back. I was overweight at the time. I wore dark clothes (laughs) I mean the whole thing! I just sat at the back and listened to the music . . . It was nice.

And I started going every Sunday and just sitting there quietly. I'd always avoid the priest if I saw him coming (laughs). I'd bolt out because I didn't want to talk to him. I didn't want anybody to know that I was married to an alcoholic--that I had this problem in my life. I didn't even tell my parents. Nobody knew . . . and I lost all my friends because they'd come around or he'd be drunk and I'd say to them, "Oh, don't come around right now." And I'd make excuses so all my friends disappeared. So I was pretty I was very very lonely. Eventually anyway, the priest caught me one day. As I was going out the door, he did catch me, and he said, "Ah, I wanted to talk to you because you don't look very happy. Do you want to talk to me?" And I said, "No." (laughs) He said, "Okay, well maybe if you want to next time." . . . So eventually I got to the point where I would say hello to him and it built up from there until one Sunday he said to me . . . um "The lady that carries the cross in the procession before the choir is sick, and could you do that?" I just about died ! (laughter) I said, "No way !" (laughs) I wasn't going to do that! I was just oh God I was just terrified doing such a thing! I mean I laugh now about it but then it just seemed like the worst thing in the world. But I really liked the guy and he looked so upset. I thought, " Oh, gee, he's been so nice to me!" But anyway I said, "No" and then he said, "Okay but I have this little book for you to read. I think you might find it helpful." And he gave me a little book. I can't

remember the title but it was to do with . . . uh . . . low self-esteem and lack of confidence. So I thought, "What the heck's this! It's not my problem! My problem is my husband!" (laughs)

I: Hm you didn't relate to the low self-esteem and lack of confidence.

M: No, not at first, not when I first looked at the preface to it. (laughing continues) So then I thought, "Oh well, I better read this thing anyway." It wasn't a very big book anyway so I started to read it and then I got really angry. I thought, "You son-of-a-bitch! How dare you say I have low self-esteem and lack of confidence!" Because I realized the book was not talking about L. (husband), it was talking about me!

I: It made you angry!

M: I was as mad as a hatter! I just wanted to go and hit him over the head with it. And then I thought about it and then I really started to think about my life and what was going on and all of a sudden I suddenly realized that it was true! It sort of finally penetrated my thick skull that this was true. Then it started to amuse me. I started to laugh. I thought, "Oh my god!" (laughs) So I gave it back to him and thanked him very much and said, "Yes you're right. So what do I do? What am I supposed to do? It's not only all my husband's fault, right?" So he said, "No, it's got nothing to do with your husband. You have to sort of let him get on with with life. If he wants to drink, let him drink. Let him do what he wants to do." He said, "You've got to find yourself and get on with your life. You have a life too". (laughs) I just said, "Yeah, sure." It didn't make much sense to me.

What was going on in my mind was that previous to this maybe even a year previous there was a woman living in the same apartment building--an ex-alcoholic who went to A.A.--and she had a couple of friends who went to Alanon. One day she had said to me, "You know your husband's an alcoholic." We were down at the swimming pool and she had been talking to him. Of course I said, "I know he drinks but not all that hard". She said he should be in A.A. and she said, "If he won't go, you should go to Alanon". I said, "What's that?" So she told me a bit about Alanon. I said, "Oh yeah fine, I'll go." And that was a year previous to this going to church. (coughs)

So I thought, "Well maybe I should go to this Alanon thing and try it out." "Not for me," I thought, "if I go to Alanon, that'll help L. (husband)." That was my primary reason for going. (laughs) Very stubborn! Nothing wrong with me!

I: Can I just ask you are you embarrassed about that or you were laughing at that

M: It kind of amuses me that I was so perfect and okay and he was the problem that if he would shape up and go to AA everything would be wonderful. Of course it wouldn't have been, I don't suppose.

I: So at this time you had the experience of feeling that the problem was not you--it was your husband and in fact you had some feelings of your being somewhat perfect?

M: Yes, in a way. Well it goes back and forth because yes, sometimes I would think he was the problem but then he would give me this feedback that it was me. I was the problem. I was never good in bed. I should get out on Davie St. and get myself some experience. (laughs) Things like that . . . when he was drunk. Then I would think, " Oh, it's me. It's my fault!" I can remember going and buying black lacey underwear and all sorts of things to try and make the sexual side of the marriage okay.

I: You were feeling sexually inadequate.

M: Yeah. Very.

I: And he was feeding into that.

M: I thought it was my fault.

I: So you you're saying you would alternate between feelings of

M: That there's nothing wrong with me that it's all his fault. Yes, it's all his fault.

I: And flipping over and feeling that it's all your fault.

M: Yeah. That it's all my fault. He would come onto me saying that it was all my fault. So then I started thinking well maybe he's right. I'll try and see his side of the story. Maybe he's right and there's something wrong with me! So I'd be back and forth between the two places. Where was I? Oh, so I eventually decided that I would go and try Alanon.

I: And before you went to Alanon you'd had the experience of enjoying the church experience and being moved by it and being reminded of your childhood and having a positive experience . . .

M: It was the only place I was happy . . . there, on Sunday morning. It was, at that time, definitely a place to escape to. To get in there . . and I felt at peace .. and centered . . . as much as I could. I definitely always felt okay in there. I hated to leave. I would have been happy if the service went on for two hours instead of one hour. (pause) That's how I felt about that.

I: And then being given the book . . . which was . . . the priest telling you that he thought you had to look at yourself and your own lack of self-esteem and self-confidence and at first you were angry and rejected that and then you saw . . .

M: I saw that he had a good point . . . that he might be right. I can't say I totally swallowed it, but I said, "Well maybe!"

I: And then you went to Alanon.

M: And then I went to Alanon. Um I didn't like it at first. There was a group of people around the table. They were all these spouses of alcoholics and they had a chairperson. You had to take turns being chairperson. I couldn't see me doing that! And then they said, "Please come to five consecutive meetings and then if you don't like it, fine. But at least give us a try." Well that's fair enough. I thought that I'd go to five and then tell them they're a bunch of twits! (laughter) Very hostile! I really was!

I: And so when you say, "I couldn't see me doing that," that's a hostile sort of

thing too ? Like, "This is foolish!" . . . or . .

M: Yeah, the fear behind it in retrospect. The thought of having to be a chairperson! To sit there and have to lead a group! (laughs) I couldn't do anything like that . . . I just I just felt that I didn't have that I was too shy. I didn't have any skills. I couldn't do anything like that. I mean what was I? A housewife . . . you know . . . and a secretary.

I: So feeling incapable of being chairperson.

M: Oh yeah! Yeah, I think fear. A lot of fear. No courage. And fear--not wanting to try anything in case I couldn't do it.

I: And sometimes feeling like they're all jerks? Like sometimes feeling that it's your problem because you're just a housewife and a secretary and sometimes feeling that those people are just jerks?

M: I thought they were. I remember thinking that. They are a bunch of jerks and I don't belong here. I'm not like them. I'm different. (laughs)

I: Better?

M: Um I don't know if "better" is the right word different. I felt I was different but not better or worse. No I wouldn't say I felt better. I just felt different--like I just didn't fit in there. I certainly did fit in there I found out later maybe not wanting to accept it, and still thinking it was L.'s damn fault anyway and why didn't he go to A.A. and what the hell was I doing here! I was doing it for him. I wasn't doing it for me--that's the truth! I was doing it for him. I thought this might help the marriage. So (laughs) . . . I went to the five consecutive meetings and sat there and said very little . . . as little as possible . . . and just listened and they gave me some reading material and at the end of the five weeks I had got to the point where I . . (laughs) . . sort of laughed and confessed to them that the first time I had met them, I just thought they were all a bunch of jerks and I was planning to tell them that on the fifth meeting . . . that they could all go to hell and I didn't need them! . . . (laughter) . . . And everybody cracked up! . . . (laughs) . . . I'd actually gotten brave enough to tell them. I

was feeling a lot better because I'd suddenly found all of these people with the same problem. I'd also discovered that the problem was not me, that alcoholism indeed was a disease and that my reactions were the same reactions that they had to having an alcoholic spouse--whether it was a man or a woman. That we all basically had the same response--the same fears, the same problems, the same "not wanting to leave the marriage because this person is sick and I must stay and look after them for better for worse". All my reactions and responses were the same as everybody else in the group so I suddenly realized that I was not unusual. I was very usual.

I: And not alone?

M: Yeah. Not alone. The feeling suddenly that there was support . . . sure! A support network all of a sudden! Because I felt terribly lonely. And even the dear old priest, I mean he was a great help to me but he did not understand alcoholism at all. I even found people later in that church that were spouses of alcoholics and I directed them to Alanon because they were getting no help in the church for that particular problem. They didn't seem to understand about it. It was something the church couldn't do anything about and you really needed something like Alanon or a psychologist or a psychiatrist or whatever . . . but what you really need is some sort of skilled help . . . professional help. (pause) So I stayed in Alanon for two years. And stayed in the church at the same time. And became crucifer, carried the cross (laughs) and eventually became the head server there and helped them with a lot of things. Helped them with their spring tea. And we had prayer groups--all sorts of things that I joined . . . and I started to really partake in the community. I began to feel that I wasn't alone--an outsider, that I didn't fit in. I always thought I didn't fit in anywhere. I always thought I was on the outside looking through a window in. And all of a sudden now I was on the inside. I was beginning to be part of the community--the Alanon community and the church community--which were very similar. I found that the church . . . okay, you've got the Holy Spirit in the church . . . well I found the same thing in Alanon. That same community spirit. The spirit of reconciliation.

I: Can you just tell me a bit more about what you mean by that?

M: Um . . . well I found in the church group that we did have some prayer groups where we sat and prayed together. Held hands. Did laying on of hands and prayed for each other. I had a feeling of well-being. A strength. It gave me strength to carry on through the week . . . and I found exactly the same thing in Alanon which is non-religious. You can go there--it doesn't matter what religion you belong to or if you belong to no religion. They only ask you to try and accept a higher power. But you can give it whatever name you want, it doesn't matter. It doesn't have to be a god or a goddess or a particular religion. But they do say there is a power outside of yourself. It may be that group power, that group spirit. You can even have that as your higher power which a lot of people do.

I: But in any case it's not that you're depending on yourself. You've got an outside . . .

M: Strength. The strength is coming from outside somewhere. Before, I always tried to do it myself. I didn't think I needed any help from anywhere . . . any outside help. I believed in God but I didn't really ask God for any help. It never occurred to me that God worked through people, I don't think. I mean I thought God was out there somewhere and you prayed to this God out there somewhere (laughs). And In Alanon I learned that God--or whatever you want to call the higher power--works through people. Actually it says that in the Bible--that we're all channels of God but I just hadn't clicked. That if I needed help I had to reach out and ask for it from other human beings and . . . I guess I was too proud. Too proud to reach out and ask.

I: So you found you were able to be less proud . . .

M: Yeah.

I: . . . or be more humble?

M: Humble. I definitely learned to be humble. I got humbled, definitely. And that was hard! That was one of the hardest things, I think--being humbled.

I: Can you tell be more about that?

M: Being humbled?

I: How it was hard?

M: How it was hard? (laughs) Um . . . having to accept that I couldn't do it on my own! That I needed help from other people and that they could give it and that it would help . . . and that it would help to become . . . myself. It would help me to grow. I had this wrong . . . this misconception . . . that I was kind of okay and strong. I don't know where I got that from because I wasn't. I really needed help. It's almost like . . . it's sort of like I had a mask . . . I was wearing a mask. And the mask was all I could see . . . and the mask looked okay but inside it was all crumbling (laughs), right! So I had to just take that mask off and come out and say, "Help! (laughs) . . . Help me grow."

I: To other people.

M: To other people, yeah . . . yep!

I: And the experience was . . . that it was hard to do that.

M: Very hard. Really hard . . . yeah! It felt like I had to come down off a pedestal . . . that I'd built for myself, I think. (laughs) I sort of had to come down to where everybody else was (laughs) and try and reach out and it was a humbling experience, sure! I'm not sure where I got this idea? Maybe I did think I was better than other people . . . or different . . . or better . . . or higher? It might go back to my childhood. I really don't know. (long pause)

I: But at the same time that it was a hard experience it sounds like it was a growing experience in that during this time you started to feeling a sense of belonging to the community of Alanon and the church and starting to feel better about yourself?

M: Yeah. It was funny too because in a way I knew it was working . . . that I was beginning to slowly change sort of like a butterfly coming out of a chrysalis. I knew something was starting to crack--that I was starting to come free I guess . . . so something was happening (laughs) in a way, I

was sort of scaird. I didn't want to come out. I'd always known myself the way I was--what there was to know (laughs)--it wasn't so great! I really had this vision that there was this really neat person that I was going to be . . . and yet I sort of dug my heels in. I was really scaird about it. Not wanting to lose my old identity. I really felt like a shell that was cracking and that I was going to emerge like a beautiful butterfly or something (laughs) and really afraid of it! Just not really knowing what was going to appear and is that when I went to see S.(therapist)? Let's see church and Alanon well Alanon gave me the strength to leave L.(husband). Because I eventually did leave him and then eventually got into the relationship with B. And also, at the same time had to come to terms with the fact that I was a lesbian. That was another thing. I'm sure that has a lot to do with it somewhere all mixed up . . . god knows where! Um . . . I'd always known I was gay but I didn't accept it. I couldn't accept that. To me it was I don't know, I think I had been brought up to think it was a bit of a mental illness really. There was something wrong with you and you're a bit crazy! (laughs) So mental illness and lesbianism went together for me so I didn't want to be one of those! Although, I had been before I was married--I'd had a couple relationships with women--very short term. And . . not very good relationships and I'd been really put off by it. One woman beat me up. So I thought, "I don't want this,"and then I'd gotten married. . . . and then that hadn't worked out . . . so then I left L.

I: So the experience of knowing that you were attracted to women . . but that you thought it was a form of mental illness meant . . that you thought you had a part of yourself that was mentally ill?

M: Um . . . I didn't accept the fact that it was a mental illness. A lot of people had told me that. I think my parents thought that people who were gay were a little bit mental. We used to sort of laugh about it and say they were a bit "tapped". (laughs) We used to all laugh at them . . . "poofs"! And I'd never . . . oh I suppose I'd met some, but I didn't think I'd met any. I was the only one who was like that anyway! And most gay women go through that--they think they're the only one. (pause) Um . . . no, I think that I knew that it was socially not acceptable. It wasn't in England at that time or when I first came to Montreal. It was just not acceptable. It was wrong,

dirty and all the rest of it! So that's why I just sort of pushed it out of my mind and everybody said, "Oh, it's a phase! You'll grow out of it!" That's another thing you get pushed into you, "It's a phase." I remember telling my Mom when I was about eleven that I liked women . . not women . . girls! I liked girls, although I used to fall in love with my women school teachers. And my Mom would say, "Oh, it's just a phase, sweetie. You're just going through a phase."

And so I accepted that and then I got older and I started going out with boys . . . but I never enjoyed going out on dates. I hated it! I just went because that was what everybody else was doing . . . so I'd go out on dates with couples . . . double-dating or whatever you call it. I always had a horrible time. I hated it! (laughs) But I did it because it seemed to be what everybody else was doing. I never felt comfortable. I never felt myself. It just was weird! And so eventually I got married and that didn't work out . . . and so I came out the other end of that and then had to look at . . . "Well maybe, am I gay?" (pause) At the same time I joined the Outdoor Club--just before I left L. Just toward the end of the relationship and I was really getting a little braver about reaching out . . . as I was saying and the other thing I did was I joined the Outdoor Club--somebody told me about that--and I joined that.

I: So you were getting braver and able to ask yourself the question, "Am I gay"?

M: Yeah.

I: You said just a moment ago that when you went out on dates that you were not yourself.

M: I never felt right. I felt like I was acting a part.

I: So just prior to leaving L. you were getting braver and able to ask yourself .

M: Yeah, because for eight years . . . well I didn't have any friends . . . but I certainly didn't have any gay friends. I kept right away from them. I told L.

about it. (pause) Yeah . . . especially when I joined the Outdoor Club. Actually I hadn't thought about it for eight years. I had put it out of my mind . . . but when I joined the Outdoor club . . . because it's a women-only club . . . there were lesbians in that club . . . and as soon as I saw them and got talking to them I just had this

I: Attraction or

M: Not. . . yeah well . . . a feeling of camaraderie . . . closeness . . .

I: Close emotional contact . . .

M: Yeah . . . yeah . . . and that I felt the same as them. I felt that these were like my sisters. I felt that these were my people. (laughs) I mean it would be like a black person who has always been in a white world and seeing another black person and thinking, "Oh my god, there's another one like me, right!" Suddenly there was all these women and I knew that I was exactly the same as they were! And I thought, "Well!" And then, of course, I'd met them in this Outdoor Club and that is different than the bars in Montreal. The only place I'd ever met women in Montreal was in the bars. I didn't know anywhere else to meet gay women. So I sort of anyway tried it there and it hadn't worked out. So the women in the Outdoor Club were sort of like me--they were outdoorsy. And they seemed perfectly normal. They had jobs. There were even some professional women in that group . . . like psychologists, lawyers and doctors! So I thought, "You can't be crazy and weird and something mentally wrong with you if you're a psychologist, lawyer or doctor!" (laughs)

I: So it was the first time you were seeing that you could be lesbian and be acceptable.

M: Yeah. It seemed better out here too. In Vancouver, it didn't seem such a problem. It didn't seem to be such a put-down. Um and this is a lot later too. I mean I was in Montreal in . . . '68 through '70 . . . and now when I got to Vancouver, this is like ten years later so we're now 1980 . . . somewhere around there. So it's ten years later. I mean things have changed a bit. Gay people are more acceptable. It's been accepted more

than it was then. Certainly when I was a kid it was just not accepted at all! So It was acceptable in some circles--you didn't really have to hide it as much. So I started talking to some of the women in the Outdoor Club and (laughs) eventually I had a fling with one of the women there and she'd been married too! It was nice to talk to these people. Quite a few of them had been married! And, "Oh yeah, my mother said it was a phase too." (laughs) And we'd be talking and I'd realize that they had been through the same sort of things that I had been through! I thought, "Oh goodness me!"

I: A feeling of . . .

M: Relief! Absolute relief! That, "Gee, maybe I am normal! Maybe for me this is normal! Maybe I can be gay and have a normal life and feel okay about myself. So it was kind of interesting . . . so I had a fling with N. . . . only about three weeks or so and realized also that sex with a woman, for me, is fine! It felt good. Sex with L. (husband) had always been a problem. I mean . . I put up with it and . . . pretended . . . acted.

I: So you felt inadequate . . . and worried about your sexual capacity or whether you were normal sexually or whether you could enjoy it . . .

M: Yeah, I didn't know with L. Yeah, with L. because he was an alcoholic and alcoholics have problems with being able to keep an erection and all the rest of it, I never could figure out whether it was him or me or what the heck it was. But also, I just didn't like it. The whole thing gave me the creeps. I felt dirty. I felt used. I always felt like a prostitute and yet with a woman I felt perfectly normal. I felt perfectly normal and natural for me. And I suddenly realized that . . . uh . . . I had to accept it, if I was ever going to get on with my life and get anywhere and be happy . . . then I was going to have to accept who I was . . and I was definitely gay! (long pause)

I: So by now it's easier to accept it because you have a group of women who seem socially acceptable. They're professional people . . . they're outdoor people . . they're not bar women. Also, it's a time you're getting a developing sense of yourself through Alanon and the church . . . uh . . not

depending on just yourself for strength but getting strength from your spirituality . . . and . . . is it more of a sense of meaning in life through contact with other people? It's not just a matter of being strong on your own but that it's a matter of . . .

M: Being part of the community. Yeah, I think well I think that we're all interconnected. What is it? . . . "No man is an island unto himself." Things like that began to make sense to me but yeah . . . that you couldn't do it on your own. I don't think anybody can. (pause) Uh . . . at the same time I changed churches. I started going to _____ Church where there is a lot of gay people.

I: So it's the sense of community that is an important support at this time ? . . or?

M: Um . . . let me think about it. (long pause) Yeah, being part of a community . . . that's the only word I can think of and beginning to feel much better about myself. I started to lose weight. I started to look better. I got into running. I decided to buy brighter clothes. (laughs) The black clothes went out the window. I started to take more of an interest in my personal looks.

I: Are you laughing because of remembering what you were like then?

M: Yeah. It just amuses me when I look back because I had changed so much. I mean I really changed. Like a 365-degree circle. When I look back I can hardly believe that person was who I am now! In fact, I was just talking to the old lady that I visit . . . who is not . . . well some days she's here and some days she's not, but today she was okay and I just mentioned to her about how much I thought I had changed. She started to laugh. She said, "How much! My goodness you forget that I've known you for so long." and I said, "That's true. I'd forgotten you've known me since I was married, right?" I said, "Do you see a change in me?" And she laughed like mad, (laughter) "Changed!" she said. "You're a totally different person!" . . . That was interesting. I didn't even realize that she had noticed how different I was. . . . I mean I couldn't communicate. I couldn't have just sat here and talked to you. I would have just . . . I didn't talk to people! I just said yes and no and that was it. (pause) I had no social skills. I couldn't go

anywhere. I wouldn't go to parties or anything. I didn't go anywhere because all I could sort of say was yes and no and if people asked me questions I would answer but I would never make a conversation. It would never occur to say to somebody, "What do you do? . . . Where do you work? What do you do?" (laughs) I just couldn't . . .

I: How . . . what would you be thinking . . or feeling?

M: Terrified! Obsessed with self . . . when you think about it. I was too busy thinking about myself. I got to the point where I . . . there's a bit in the Bible where it says, "You have to lose yourself to find yourself." (laughs) Which makes sense to me now. I think I was so busy worrying how I looked and what I was doing that I couldn't enjoy myself.

I: So you'd be worried about what other people would be saying?

M: Yeah.

I: What they'd be thinking about you . . whether they'd be liking you?

M: Um? I guess so. Yeah I guess so (sounds puzzled).

I: You can't remember what . . . say you went to a party . . .

M: I'd just eat! I'd go to the table where the food was and eat! And it was B. . . who by now . . I'd gotten involved with B. . . . who I was involved with for . . . seven years . . . who had fairly good social skills and I remember she said to me one day she had a lot of professional friends and so would drag me to these parties which would terrify me! A lot of this goes back to my childhood and the class conscious thing in Britain where I was working class. The working class, middle class and upper class never mixed. And all the professional people are in the upper class. So if I go to a party with B. where all of her friends are basically doctors, psychologists . . teachers . . . all professional people. . . . to me they were upper class. And it was very difficult for me to have anything to do with them. Um . . . I would think, "They're a bunch of snobs!" (laughs) Which of course they're not . . . not over here . . . they may have been in England, I can't remember.

But you just didn't cross into another class. You just kept in your class. There was a hierarchy in England going back to what . . . to the seventeenth century.

I: And they wouldn't accept you so that you would reject them. . . by saying "Oh they're a bunch of snobs"?

M: A bunch of snobs . . . actually, in retrospect I would say that the upper class in England are very nice and I'm sure they would have accepted me if I'd felt confident enough about myself but I didn't! It was lack of confidence that's all that is. 'Cause I had an experience since which I'll tell you about some time.

I: But what you're saying is that at the time it's not that you feel a lack of confidence. It's later looking back that you see . . .

M: Oh yeah!

I: But at the time . . .

M: I just felt they were a bunch of snobs!

I: So you're more likely to be rejecting them.

M: Absolutely. I didn't want to talk to them. They're all a bunch of snobs and they don't know anything anyway!

I: So when you're just saying yes or no to people at a party, it's not that you're feeling inadequate, it's that you're rejecting other people?

M: That's right, yeah. So I'd head for the food table and eat. L. said to me one day . . . I said, "I hate these parties. I don't really like going." (pause) She said, "Well why don't you talk to people?" And I said, "They got nothing to talk about! . . . Bunch of idiots!" (laughter) And she would say to me, "You know what you do, when we go to these parties? All you do is fill your mouth with food so you don't have to talk!" (laughter) I can't remember what I said. I was probably quite rude "Rubbish! . . . Don't talk such stupid .

" I didn't believe her anyway. But . . . it pushed a button somewhere. Something rang in my head. A bell rang somewhere and I thought, "Oh. Oh. (laughs) I hate this but she is right! She is absolutely right."

I: That you were eating instead of . . .

M: To avoid talking to people, yeah, because I felt inadequate. And I realized it at that time too. I suddenly realized it was because I had nothing to talk about. It wasn't them. It was me. There was nothing happening in my life! What the hell did I have to talk about? I didn't do anything. What did I do? I mean I worked in an office typing. It was a boring job. And what did I do? Nothing! I had just gotten in to running and B. was trying to push me into running the marathon . . . which is the best thing she ever did . . . cause when I got into running . . . this is another thing that comes in . . . apart from religion too. They all sort of mesh together and you have to sort of separate them out. But another thing was running! It was one of the best things that ever happened to me! Because it gave me something that was mine! I started running and then I got into marathon running and then . . . that was one thing, that when I went to a party . . . I didn't want to talk about the church at a party because I wasn't very confident about the church. I didn't feel confident in saying, "I'm a committed Christian." (laughs) Because people laugh at you if you go to church! And at that time I didn't have the self-confidence to accept being laughed at. That would have really . . . I would have felt rejected and hurt. . . . and so I never talked about the church. But you could talk about running! Everybody is into running, right! And sports and triathalons and all that stuff. So that was acceptable. All of a sudden I had something to talk about . . . training for a marathon (laughs) . . . so I could then go to these parties and if somebody wanted to talk, I could then manage to steer it in that direction and talk about marathon running. I had something to talk about all of a sudden. (pause) So that really helped me too . . . to become . . . well part of me was becoming an athlete . . . with this running . . . well I did two marathons and then I got into Fun Runs. Fun Runs are great because I started meeting all these people that were athletic and ran . . . and . . . were healthy . . . into health food and all this kind of stuff . . . which I had now gotten into with L. Because she ate properly. And taught me how to eat. I didn't really eat very well before then. So she was a great help. (pause) So now I was eating

properly. I was running. I'd always been a swimmer . . . but not much . . . so I was into swimming. And then she got me into weight training. So there I am pumping weights and running (laughs) . . . so now I can go to these socials and I have something to talk about all of a sudden! Plus I'm beginning physically to look better! I'm slimmer. I'm starting to get muscles. People even say to me, "Oh, you look like a runner!" So I didn't even have to initiate anything anymore. I'd say, "Oh yes, I'm training for a marathon." (laughs)

I: So it was important . . . so what I hear you saying is that it was important in terms of your acceptability to other people that you had something that other people admired . . . or . . . could relate to and . . . prior to that . . . the church . . . you didn't have enough confidence to be able to communicate or share with people . . .

M: People do not want to hear about the church! They weren't interested anyway or I felt they weren't interested actually that is incorrect because people are interested now that I do have the confidence to say, "Yes, I'm a committed Christian, ecetera, ecetera." People are interested, I've discovered. They're quite fascinated when they hear I'm interested in theology and being a priest ecetera. . . . yeah. So I was wrong. But I felt that people would laugh at me if I said I went to church so I kind of hid that. I'd be more likely to talk about my running than I would about church even though I found the church a great help to me um . . . it gave me a stability. It centered me. I'd go there each week. By now I'm at _____ Church. I'm head server there. (coughs) That's another thing that happened there . . . I mean I started sort of . . . low on the totem pole . . . just being a server . . . and then one of the guys, that was the head server, said to me one day that he wanted me to be a head server and I just about died! Me? (laughs) For some reason he saw that I had the potential. Something I didn't see. He did. He felt I could do it and I just felt I couldn't do it. But anyway, he talked me into it. And so I did do it . . . and did fine!

I: So . . . it was important to have the responsibility . . . are you saying . . . you're not used to having that?

M: Never had any responsibility in my life!

I: Is it status as well?

M: Um . . . it's responsibility and I've always avoided it. Always been afraid of responsibility . . . always avoided it and when I look back right to my childhood I see my Mom--who I love dearly now, but didn't at the time--who was a person that told me what to do. I mean she never gave me any responsibility. I was told what to wear, what to eat, what school to go to and then all of a sudden at sixteen . . . I was suddenly out in the work force . . . and . . . there's a boss telling me what to do. Then I go in the airforce and they tell me what to do. I went to nursing school. They tell you what to do. I never had any responsibility really! . . . Not until . . . well running you're responsible for yourself so there's no real responsibility there . . . so basically . . . a little bit of responsibility in Alanon--because I had to be chairperson . . . so I had the first little bit of responsibility there. Scared myself half to death! (laughs) But I was surprised that I managed. Also I felt that that's where I grew a little bit . . . that I began to have a little bit of confidence in myself that I could . . . "Oh! I could do this! What a surprise!" And yeah, I felt a little bit . . . puffed up (laughs) . . . a little bit good about myself . . . made me feel good! Whereas feeling good before had only really come from sports . . . swimming . . . and the running made me feel good . . . when I ran the marathon or went 10 k or whatever . . . it felt good. But it was interesting to do this little bit of responsibility thing and feel that same sort of, "Oh!" It felt good! And I felt confident to try something a little bit harder, a little bit more difficult.

I: Could I just check on something? It sounded for a minute there that you said you'd been running . . . you said you'd never felt the feeling of accomplishment before being chairman of Alanon except for running?

M: Well running was after.

I: That's what I thought. Running came later. You hadn't been an athlete all your life?

M: Just a swimmer. So yeah, I'd felt it from swimming.

I: You had had that sense of accomplishment. So being head server had that same . . . sense of accomplishment?

M: Yeah! . . . Yeah!

I: And responsibility when you hadn't been used to having responsibility.

M: And gave me confidence to try something else. So my confidence in myself was beginning to just grow . . . just a little bit . . it was coming up a little bit.

I: When you talked about running you said, "I had something that was mine!" Do you mean by that . . . this same question of responsibility . . . that you'd previously been somebody that didn't have any and now this was all yours? Or do you mean something else?

M: Not responsibility. I don't think the running has anything to do with responsibility. I think it was just . . . I had something that was really mine. It was nothing to do with work--it was really somebody else's act--I mean my boss has his business and I work for him. Running was mine. It was just something that belonged totally to me and it was also something that I could share and talk about. It gave me a communication bridge with other people. So it was very important in that respect. Yeah . . . um . . . I forgot where I was.

I: Well, maybe I could just summarize and you could tell me what I'm missing. So you're feeling acceptance of your sexuality and feeling that you have a community of sisters or . . . belonging . . . that is socially acceptable. You're learning to communicate with other people. You've got a relationship with a woman who is leading you in some healthy directions . . . like running . . diet . . . you're losing weight. You're not substituting food for contact with other people. You've now got a bridge to talk to people . . . um . . . you can talk about running although you still don't have enough confidence to talk about the importance of the church in your life. And you've started to feel that you have some responsibility and accomplishment . . . being chairperson at Alanon and being a server in the church. And . . . um . . I'm

missing the importance of the church. I think there's a missing piece . . . in the importance of the church there Well just a minute, maybe I could ask you whether there is some missing pieces there?

M: Yeah, there is now that you've reminded me. Quite a big piece. Okay, so I moved to _____ Church. Okay, I was in a relationship with B. B. got me to go to EST too--which was a very interesting weekend. (laughs) I can't say that EST had anything to do with my personal growth. It was an interesting weekend but I I don't think I really learned anything there it just affirmed to me that I had made a lot of changes and that I was definitely on the right track . . . that I was growing into who I was supposed to be. I began to see that there was a Mary S. But it was still 'out there' somewhere not 'out there' really . . . 'in here' because I hadn't come out. But I was emerging. I thought that I was definitely emerging . . . and that I was going to be maybe quite an interesting person (laughs) when I finally found myself . . when I came out.

I: I don't want to lose the thread of what you are saying but I want to say . . . so you had a sense of . . . you talked about that emerging before--the emerging butterfly--and before, you were afraid . . . you could feel yourself . . . you had the sense of the emerging butterfly . . . but you were digging in your heels too. So does it happen that you start to become less afraid? Like you have the sense of emerging, but it's not so frightening?

M: Yeah, there are two things that help. Okay one's the church and one's S. (therapist). . . before I forget. So I'm living with B. and I'm finished with Alanon. I'd just had enough of Alanon and alcoholism. I didn't want to hear anymore about it! (pause)

I was at _____ Church, as head server. Now I'd been to EST--which as I said was a helpful weekend. Now the church also has a similar thing to EST. It's called Cursillo Weekend . . . where it starts on a Friday night and finishes on a Sunday night and you stay there, you sleep there, you eat there with this group of women. It's just for women. Well, they have one for men but this one is just for women. And you have workshops and you work together on projects. . . . For my table I had to stand up and say this is what my table had talked about . . . so I mean (laughs) . . . I almost

frightened myself to death! But it was a very secure weekend--a very warm, accepting, secure situation that I did not feel afraid to stand up and if I made a fool of myself, so what--nobody cared. I mean it was just really . . . it didn't matter. It was such a warm caring weekend. And they had a spiritual team there. There were priests and also lay people and as well as doing these little workshop things, we had talks . . . it was a real mixture of religion and psychology. Like one of their little sneaky things they did that I picked up on . . . because by now I'm also going to Langara I had gone back to school another big step! I'd gone to night school for a year to see if I really could do it. And then I quit my job and started going full time to Langara. So that was another (laughs) . . . huge thing happening in my life!

So I go there to Cursillo . . . and there was one thing that happened that is very important. It's a real pivotal thing . . . and . . . that is . . . that they had something called confession. Well confession to me is something that they have in the Roman Catholic Church! I didn't even know the Anglican Church had confession--apart from the general service. And they did this sneaky psychological thing. They showed us some short films and one was where a guy in a car knocked a little girl down. Then he had to go to the hospital to see her. It sort of pushed buttons. I mean for some people. I mean for some people in that group that sort of thing had happened to some of them. . . . and these little films that they showed you . . . triggered you off emotionally . . . although none of them actually hit me particularly . . . but some of the people got quite upset! Then they kind of herded us down into the chapel and sort of announced this sort of confession. "Come forward for confession." They had a service . . . a communion service and "Come forward for confession if you wish." And all these people started going forward to the altar rail and they had a whole team of priests there and they were laying on hands . . . and people were crying all over the place! I thought, "What is this! It looks like a fundamentalist church or something!" It totally put me off! I thought, "I can't hack it! I hate this kind of emotionalism!" I'd also gotten involved . . . way back in fundamentalist churches briefly--Pentecostal and Worldwide Church of God . . . because I was searching for something. And I'd really gotten put off because as soon as they found out I was gay . . . this was way back in Montreal . . . as soon as they found out I was gay they would boot me out . . . so I had really had it

with the church! The Anglican Church was okay because it's okay with them if you're gay. So at least I was accepted there So . . . they were all going for confession and some woman (laughs) took a hold of my arm and said come on . . . come down to confession. I got really angry and I said, "No! I don't like this kind of thing!" And I just fled out of there and I put . . . I had my running stuff with me . . . it was over in North Van . . . and I put my running stuff on and I went running out in Cap Canyon there--over the bridge and whew! . . . Into the woods! (laughter)

I: Is that relief?

M: Relief! Yeah! And then I stood there in the woods and I started to cry and I started talking to God and saying, "I don't like that kind of thing. It scared me and I hate that!" And then I thought, "Oh, maybe I should have done it. You know, here I am again not wanting to be part of community. Wanting to go off on my own. And yet I'm beginning to learn that if I stick with community that's where I grow . . . that is where I grow and where I'm going to find myself . . . not running off! (laughs) . . . So I went back and they'd finished by then. So I went back to the next workshop . . . and I was sitting at the table . . . waiting for the next one to start . . . so I was sitting at my table with the group I was assigned to. And I suddenly realized it seemed to me that everybody else had moved uh . . . I don't even know how to describe it. Moved emotionally? It was like everybody had moved and I got left behind and I really felt it! And I thought, "Oh, oh! You have got left behind!" And several people had and I could have picked out the people in that room that had got left behind! The ones that had not gone through the experience! And I saw that in EST too--people that refused to go with the group through an experience got kind of left out in left field somewhere. Maybe you understand that . . . as a psychologist. So. I thought I'm going to have to do something about this because I got left behind and I don't want to get left behind! Now I was getting to the point where I wanted to grow! (laughs) I saw good things on the horizon . . . (laughs) . . . and I wanted to grow So I looked around and I thought, "Well the next priest that comes to that door . . . if it's there was one that I liked very much. He was really nice--they didn't have any women priests at that time . . . although they do now. And I thought, "If he comes to that door in the next couple of minutes, I'm going. I'm going to go and talk to him and see if

I can just do this confession thing on my own." Right?

I: Um-hm. Out of a sense of not being left behind.

M: Then I'd catch up. I thought I could catch up. (laughter) So I sort of looked and I thought, "If it's God's will, he will appear at that door." Right? I'll count to ten. (laughter) And I got to nine and he came. "Oh! He's there. Oh! No! (laughter) Oh dear!" So I thought, "I better do it." So I lept up and went over to him. It was really funny because I'm sure he knew too. There was just something--he looked just like he knew I was coming. It was really strange. I walked over to him and I said, "Does this confession-thing work? Does it really work?" He said, "Of course it works!" I said, "I didn't even know the Anglican Church did it." He said, "Well they do. And it works!" He said, "Why? Do you have something you want to confess?" I said, "Yeah." And he said, "Well come and talk to me when you are ready. And I said, "Oh I'm ready now!" (laughter) "Let's go! Quick!" (laughter) So he says, "Well where do you want to go? We can go just to the office or do you want to go down to the chapel?" And I said, "Let's go down to the chapel." So down to the chapel we go. . . . Pray at the altar. as I knelt down to pray I didn't really know what I was going to say but as soon as I got down there I suddenly realized what I wanted to say and that was that I had this tremendous burden of guilt that I was carrying around . . . about being gay still I didn't realize it was still there in the back of my mind. Actually that was number two. Number one was definitely leaving L. (husband). I felt terribly, terribly guilty about leaving this guy. He was sick! He was an alcoholic. I mean, alcoholism is a disease. And he had sort of said to me, "Would you leave me if I had cancer?" And I said to him, "Well no. If you've got cancer. You go for treatment. Okay, you've got a disease but you're not going for treatment." And I'd sort of gotten out of it like that and felt very self-righteous. (laughs) But I was carrying around this big burden of guilt.

I: Of responsibility for him.

M: Yeah! Yeah, and also the gay thing. I felt better about it but still had this guilt about it. It was like two heavy weights on my shoulders.

I: And so what was the nature of this experience?

M: So the priest put his he knelt down beside me and just put his hand on my shoulder. He sort of spoke for me. He said, "God, Mary is here to . . . confess." I can't remember the exact wording but he sort of spoke for me and he said, "Okay, just tell God what it's all about." And he put his arm around me and so I just started to tell God about L.--that I felt terrible about leaving him but I couldn't stay because I was getting sick. I was going down the tubes and I had to leave and, "Oh dear now I realize I'm gay. (laughs) Oh boo-hoo!" And then . . . I just started to sob and sob . . . oh . . . sob . . . right from down here. It just was coming up and up. I was just sobbing and this guy just held me. And then he I can't remember what he said . . . he prattled on there--priests know what to say so he was praying away and holding me. (pause) And then I stopped. And there was sort of a silence. I will never forget it! It was just incredible! It was just this . . . I heard him saying something about . . "Now put this burden of guilt on the altar. Look up at the altar. You put your burden up there and don't you ever go and get it back! It's gone. Forever. And God loves you just the way you are. You're gay. It's fine. There's nothing wrong with it whatsoever. And the church has been wrong in the past. They recognize that. And you're fine the way you are. God loves you the way you are." I mean he was rattling on like that while I'm still crying. . . . Then I just felt this tremendous peace. I thought of it in the Bible where it says, "The peace that passeth all understanding." And I suddenly realized that it does exist. You know it really does! That peace does exist! and then it was just like something bubbled up inside me and I just started to laugh. I started to laugh. We stood up and we just stood there hugging each other laughing our heads off! (laughs) and I felt about 20 pounds lighter!

I: Um-hm a tremendous burden gone!

M: Oh! Yeah! I was just totally overjoyed! My cup runneth over! . . . And we went back upstairs and I was . . . (deep breath) . . smiling all over my face and everybody smiled at me because they realized what had happened. (laughs) "Welcome back you joined us!" (laughs) . . . and then I sat down and the weekend went on.

- I: So you had what you wanted which was to belong . . . to catch up and to belong.
- M: Yeah! And interesting that other people that . . . hadn't gone through that experience . . . you could pick them out . . . you could see them because they didn't look happy. The rest of us were bubbling along and . . . community and we're sort of like a team! Going forward, right? There were these odd bods that had got left behind. So that's where I would have been if I hadn't have done that.
- I: And that's important to you to have that belonging . . . and team.
- M: Yeah, funny enough! And I never recognized it. I think being an only child . . . and . . . well, I was always part of the family (sounds puzzled). . . . Well maybe that has something to do with it . . . at home as a kid being part of the family . . . and then being out in the world . . . especially in a foreign country . . . and having no family! Yeah, maybe. Maybe that's something to do with it. It just comes to me now So I had this sudden sense of community or family. These people who belonged to each other and cared about each other. . . . yeah . . . yeah . . . and at the same time . . . okay, so that was that weekend . . . which was very important. Then I went back to my church and after that, anything they threw at me, I would do. Anything! They said, "Could you try this? Would you do Sunday School or could you look after this or could you chair this meeting." "Sure I'll try it. I might not be able to do it but yes, I'll try it!"
- I: You mean so suddenly at first I thought you meant because you were grateful for the experience they had provided but do you mean because you were unafraid, you were able to try to take new responsibilities . . . to take risks . .
- M: It was a tremendous change. That weekend really did something. . . . Yeah! . . . It really did something! It gave me . . . it just gave me so much confidence and strength that I would try . . . I would more or less just try anything. I mean . . . and I also knew that I might fail . . . but it didn't matter. That I didn't have to be perfect. I would just do the best job I could. I would do

the best I could. I might do really well. I might not do that great! It doesn't have to be perfect! Uh . . . I just lost the fear yeah, I lost the fear on that weekend. I also realized on that weekend that my life had been ruled by fear. Fear of rejection. Fear of . . . god knows what! I just was afraid of everything. Afraid of failure.

I: So you experienced it as a . . . forgiveness or loss of the burden of guilt about your sexuality and the burden of guilt about L. and the responsibility for him . . .

M: It was a big spurt a growth spurt.

I: But at the same time somehow it had a more general effect in that you lost your fear of being a failure . . . in a more general way, your fear of being unacceptable to other people . . . uh . . . your fear of not being capable . . .

M: Uh . . . I didn't worry about what people thought anymore. I think that's when I really started to tell people, "Yes, I'm a committed Christian. . . . It might not work for everybody, but it works for me!"

I: After that weekend you were able to do that?

M: Yep. Um-hm! Yeah, I had no more fear about people laughing about me going to church and also . . . it wasn't long after that that I decided that I wanted to be a priest. I mean it may have been in my subconscious, who knows. I think it was in my subconscious a long time before it emerged. It emerged one Easter. I can't remember how close it was to that weekend. I really can't remember. I think I went to Cursillo in '81? I was with B. then. It might have been within the next year. I decided I wanted to be a priest. Maybe around that time. I think they were both around the same time because I was going to Langara.

I: That's what you had said.

M: That's what I thought. '81? I'm trying to think of when I went to Langara. I might just have started night school in '81. We're in '88 now, right? I've been at Simon Fraser a year . . . and I went to Langara in '85. Oh, no. Okay,

so I wasn't in school at that time. I wasn't in school 'til '85. So '84 I was at night school. So this was in '81. So I'm wrong, I wasn't . . . hm . . . I was thinking I was, but no, I guess I was still working then. . . . Yeah . . . it also . . . it . . . um. . . it changed my relationship with my boss at work too. I remember I got on much better with him after that. I just started to be more honest and more open. I shared my feelings more and discovered that people had feelings too! They're just the same! . . . And that human beings are very much alike . . . in their feelings. If you start sharing what's bothering you and you hear coming back that the other person has basically the same sort of problems. It's quite a shock to you! I always thought everybody was different. Different to the point where they didn't even have the same feelings . . . or the same things didn't happen to them.

I: You felt alone and different.

M: Yeah! Really!

I: And so you were surprised to find out that other people . . .

M: Yeah . . . people are in relationships and they have arguments with their spouses about the same things that I did. (laughs) Whether they are gay or straight or whatever. Relationships have the same problems.

I: And laughing because it seemed like such a big deal when it's your burden but when you discover that other people have the same experience . . .

M: Yeah it doesn't seem like such a big burden. You realize it's just life. That's the way life is. Boy it was like I had this hard shell around myself before! Now, I've broken it. . . . (laughs) like a little bird peeking its head out of the shell. (laughs) It was great!

I: Is this . . . before you used the image of the butterfly. Is this the butterfly too? . . . or

M: Well yeah. Same thing.

I: A little bird . .

M: Yeah just peeking out.

I: Just beginning to peek out?

M: Yeah. So . . . '81 . . I think this was the same time that I went to S.
(therapist) It is around the same time. I think if you look in my book there.
I think it's '81 I was seeing S.

I: So you're in a relationship with B. at this time.

M: Yeah. . . . yeah which was . . . it had a lot of good, obviously . . . 'cause I've said that. But also on the other side, B. was a very difficult person to live with. I think it was a relationship I sort of lept into with out getting to know her. It was sexual to begin with and after about a year it burnt out more or less. . . But we enjoyed each other's company. We had a lot in common. We tried to make the relationship work and one thing to do was to go for therapy to see if that would help. . . . So we went together for a few weeks and B. just didn't like S. (the therapist) Plus B. was training for another marathon at the time. She said she just didn't have time andso I continued going because I got along well with S. I'd never been to a psychologist before. . . I was quite fascinated with this one-on-one. I'd never talked to another human being about my deepest feelings. Those sort of things I'd sort of kept to myself or hidden. Or I'd talk to God about them. (chuckles) But I'd never shared them with another human being, so it was difficult at first. I think I just talked . . . for awhile I just was on the surface with her and feeling her out. And then I realized that she was . . safe and that I could talk to her about anything! And she wasn't going to reject me or jump on me or sneer at me. She was totally nonthreatening. I felt very safe with her. Plus she tuned in really fast that I did not communicate well with words. She tuned in really fast. But that I worked well with symbols and visual imagery. So she did a lot of a . . . guided imagery.

I: Can I just ask you . . . are you more verbal now than then? . . . Because you seem quite verbal to me.

M: (laughs) More verbal. I've almost gone too far in the opposite direction. I have to watch my mouth. I talk too much sometimes.

I: But at that time you found it hard to talk.

M: Oh! I couldn't communicate! I mean I only had basically grade 11 education . . . to start with. I was very unsociable so I didn't really talk to people very much . . . anymore than I had to. . . . Uh . . . no . . . so I didn't have a very big vocabulary. It's better now because I've now had one . . . two . . . almost three years of school--where I had to write papers. I've learned a lot of new words and ways of communicating that I didn't have before. I'm much better now! But I can still see that I have a long, long way to go. . . . But it's definitely a lot easier to communicate now . . . verbally. So S. picked up on that.

I: That it was difficult and that was okay with her. . . she found other ways for you to communicate.

M: Yeah, through dreams . . . and also guided imagery. I would close my eyes and she would just guide me. If there was something I wanted to work on, she would get me to close my eyes and sort of go on an imaginary journey . . . all sorts of different things. She tried a lot things. A lot of touch therapy. She'd touch me a lot. She'd get me (laughs). . . She felt that . . . I said to her that I was beginning to feel so much better about myself, I felt like I was going to fly off into the air. That I was getting too hyped up . . . too happy . . . everything was too good (laughs). Like I was sort of flying off and she seemed to understand me and she made me stand in the room and she sort of droned on. I had my eyes closed and she droned on . . well no, she was standing behind me. (pause) And she was going on about these roots from my feet going down, down, down into the earth and that I was rooted firmly on the earth. And then she put my arms up and I had tendrils going from my fingers into the heavens. . . so that I was connected to heaven and to earth . . . and I wasn't going to fly away anywhere. (laughs) Stuff like that . . . that works for me!

I: You're laughing because it seems silly . . or. . .

M: No . . . no . . . I don't know why I laughed . . .

I: Anyway that was good.

M: Really good yeah . . .

I: Because you needed to have some rooting into the ground?

M: Yeah I can't remember what that was all about but I just . . I vaguely remember that particular session.

I: Was this feeling of flying off a bit unsettling or was it okay?

M: Yeah I felt that . . . well I felt that I'd been a sort of dull, boring, down-to-earth, stuck in the earth. I used to tell her I felt like an ostrich with my head stuck in the earth. So I was very earth-bound. Right? To use imagery . . . and now, all of a sudden, because I was coming out of my shell . . . like a butterfly . . . was becoming myself. It felt like I was lifting up. And that I was going to fly off somewhere. I was coming out almost too much the opposite! Maybe it was just all happening . . . It seemed to be happening too fast! I seemed to be suddenly . . . when I first started growing and changing it was like a slow train chugging along. And all of a sudden the train was picking up speed (laughs) and I was getting a bit nervous. It was running away with me! I felt like I was flying off somewhere. Especially when you do this kind of imagery work (indecipherable)

I: Um-hm, it stabilized you.

M: It stabilized me. Same basically as being in church . . . when I go to church on a Sunday.

I: It has that same . . .

M: It has that same I get centered.

I: That was the missing piece. I hadn't quite . . . I'd missed the sense of what

the church provides. It's the centering. The experience of centering.

M: It's the centering, yeah. I find it important to go . . . well I don't go every week but I always know when I missed a week. I always feel scattered. Whereas if I go every Sunday--the ritual, the liturgy, the music--the whole thing--seems to center me. . . . um . . .

I: Can you talk a little bit more about what that means? What that feels like . . or . .

M: Calming. It's a very calming I can go into church and maybe I'm all scattered because I've got papers here and no money . . . and I'm confused (laughs) . . . and I get to church and . . . sit down and it's such a beautiful, peaceful atmosphere. And we have a beautiful choir . . . so the music is very uplifting . . . makes your emotions . . . well music is very emotional. The music . . . the prayers. . . we use incense, so you get wafting incense going by . . . beautiful smells. It's all a very calming down. For a whole hour, I don't think about anything. I don't think about school or my financial problems or anything like that at all. I'm just totally centered. So probably for people who do meditation . . . it's the same as meditation. I'm just centered on the service that's going on . . . the priest . . . up there with his . . . waving his magic wand (chuckles) . . . doing the ritual bit. I'm totally focused on that and usually I'm usually I'm serving . . well, today I sat in the congregation but usually I'm up at the altar serving. . . busy, helping the priest. I don't have time to think about my problems. I'm too busy figuring out what the priest wants next. . . So I've got a job there. . . . and the music--the whole thing together somehow just settles me down. It centers me. I have this feeling of peace . . . contentment . . joy. I just feel absolutely . . . I can go in there feeling miserable and come out feeling on top of the world. Like all my problems have gone. I have this just abundant (laughs) joy.

I: It allows you to forget about your preoccupations.

M: Yeah. Yeah so I think it's basically the same as meditation.

I: And to . . like . . . going outside yourself . . .

M: Yeah Is it outside? Outside or inside yourself. I don't know if it's outside or inside. (sounds puzzled)

I: I'm just going back to your image of saying . . . of experiencing . . when you first went to the church and to Alanon that there was a power outside yourself. You didn't have to depend on yourself to solve all your problems. Is it that?

M: Hm . . . No, it's different to that. No that's a different thing. That's community . . . strength. . . . This is different. No, it's an inner cleansing. An inner peace. An inner joy. It's inside. It's not outside. Because I can go into church and be there for an hour and maybe not even speak to anyone else . . if I'm sitting in the congregation . . . so . . you know . . . I don't even care if there's anybody else there! (laughs) In the congregation, particularly! Sometimes, I don't even speak to anybody. . . . No . . . uh . . religious stuff's hard to . . hard to articulate. I do . . sometimes I . . I have a meditation tape. I sometimes sit here and just . . listen to a meditation tape and I get the same thing from that. Just a terrific calming down . . um everything slows down . . and sometimes I cry! I have cried in church a couple of times, but I'm not too comfortable doing that. But I'll do that with meditation tapes. I'll sit here. Everything sort of relaxes . . . and sometimes I'll cry . . . sometimes I'll laugh . . I don't know, it just depends what needs to be released, I guess. We have tensions, right? My tapes talk about chakras. Chakras? In your spine . . . releasing tension. So sometimes as the tension releases, I'll laugh or cry. Sometimes I speak in tongues. That's a bit weird (laughs) but it sometimes happens. I don't know what that is but you know it's psychological too! Psychology, religion and philosophy are all so mixed up. I can never separate them! They seemed to be linked together some way.

I: But the main experience is a centering . . .

M: Peaceful . .

I: Peaceful and centering . . and forgetting about problems and . . . a release of tension and a . . .

M: A release of tension and a . . . uh my confidence comes back. If I'd been feeling scattered and upset and worried about something, it's all gone and I feel sort of a . . . new strength (indecipherable) . . . I guess it's psychological but something definitely happens. I definitely come out of there feeling . . . refreshed and ready to face the week. It gives me tremendous strength.

I: So . . . is this the substantial self?

M: Yeah! Yeah, the substantial self in relationship to others . . . yeah . . . is really now . . . yeah, starting . . . to come--to grow. Yeah, I didn't feel very substantial before, that's true. I sort of . . . (deep breath) . . . to imagine it, it was like I was bits. There was no Mary! I mean there was the outline there . . . but all bits. And it's now, like the bits are beginning to come together and fuse. Fuse together. So this person is beginning to turn into . . . a person. A substantial person. Before, I was always . . . sort of . . . bits.

I: And in this experience that you're describing, . . . is the centering like the fusion of the bits?

M: Yeah . . . yeah (doesn't sound very sure) . . . yeah, it's given me a lot of strength. (long pause) It's very hard to talk about. (long pause) Yeah, because it's not a thing that has happened suddenly. It's been a growth process . . . but certainly the religious side of it is the biggest side.

I: Is it!

M: Yeah. The religious experiences, yeah. Yeah . . . even . . . I don't have to be in church. I can be here . . . feeling . . . maybe I've been really busy at school. I've been working on a paper and I'm just . . . maybe I haven't thought about God or prayed for a whole week. I've been so absorbed and centered on my paper and what I'm doing. So all of a sudden, I start (laughs) realizing that I'm not feeling very good! You know? And I'm depressed. And so I think, "Well gee, yeah! I haven't prayed for about a week." So maybe I'll sit and pray or put on a meditation tape . . . or I'll just . . . sit . . . and just . . . well, I guess meditate really. I don't use that word a lot but I guess it is

meditation just to sit and stare blankly into space. And not think about anything. Or try not to. There's stuff whirling around (laughs) . . and I shove it out of the way and just . . think about nothing and just allow . . . God . . well I'm not quite . . well whatever it is that if you allow yourself that space . . . it gets filled with God. and I have to do that. I have to take time to do that. Sometimes I forget. Mostly, if I go to church every Sunday, I'm okay, but if . . say I don't go for a couple of weeks because I've been doing something else and I haven't . . it's hard to find the time to pray during the week. If I can, I do but if I don't, sometimes it will be two weeks and I haven't been to church. I haven't prayed. I haven't done anything. . . And all of a sudden I realize I'm just not feeling great . . really depressed. And so I'll put on a tape or just sit. And it's in that silence somewhere that . . uh . . that . . I can't even put it into words. It's really hard. (long silence) I don't know. Things just sort of seem to get . . sorted out and begin to feel . . grounded again and centered . . and at peace. . . . And I feel okay to go on again. (long silence) Yeah. Religion is very important. (long silence) I don't know what else to say about it.

I: Are we pretty much at the present time?

M: Um . . . did we talk about S. (therapist) much? Yeah we did. She was a really big help to me.

I: The main thing you said about S. was that you were feeling like you were changing too quickly and that you were going to take off and she grounded you.

M: Oh yeah, she helped to ground me. Also the journal that I gave you--I did with her. She asked me to do that. To just write down every day for . . I can't remember how long it was now . . what I was thinking of . . oh feelings! That's the problem. That's why I went to see S. Apart from the problem with B.--which she figured out was a power struggle--that couples go through phases and the number one phase is 'power struggle'. And because I had begun to find myself and . . was becoming more substantial . . or whole . . that's a good word! More whole. I'm becoming more whole. . . Um . . . that I wasn't going to take her trying to control me anymore. All of a sudden I was, "Hey! I'm a person with my own rights. I

don't want that! I want this! (laughs) These are what I want! This is what I want and I don't want that!" And so, we started to have arguments because all of a sudden . . . I wasn't doing it her way. I had my own ideas! And I was . . . I'd found my own person, I guess. I'd become more whole, more substantial. So suddenly she found she had something to reckon with! (laughs) And didn't like it! I mean she'd been probably been controlling the relationship for what . . . for five years. And all of a sudden I'm standing up and saying, "Hey! This is not . . . this is too much!" So we started having horrendous fights. And she'd always win because she's more articulate than I am. I wouldn't be able to find the words. I would splutter. (laughs) So . . . that's why we went to see S. . . but anyway, when I got to S., S. would say well how are you feeling? . . . And I suddenly realized . . . I hadn't a clue how I was feeling! I think I knew when I was happy and when I was sad but that was probably about the only two. I didn't understand anger. And I still have a problem with anger. I get angry now but then I don't know what to do with it. (pause) It takes a lot to get me angry. I don't get angry fast. B. does. She just boils up and then it's gone. Whereas I . . . uh . . . can stew for days! (laughs) And not say anything! . . . Um . . . so S. tried to help me with feelings. She'd ask me how I was feeling. . . . We'd go through all sorts of stuff about feelings. And for the first time I realized that somewhere I'd lost my feelings! . . . And I think I lost my feelings in that marriage too! Because I learned to sort of . . . not feel anything. It was too painful to feel. To feel anything was just too painful! And so I kind of shut down. I shut down sexually in that marriage. I'd no feelings . . . so . . . she helped me with feelings. Yeah, she helped me a lot with feelings.

I: So . . . to be aware more of them? To recognize them? To experience them more?

M: Yeah. Yeah. To know, "What are you feeling today?" I just was blank for ages before I began to understand! I can't remember exactly how she got it across to me but I know that I began to realize that, "Oh yes, today I'm angry or this is sad . . . this is happy . . . this is anger . . . this is discontent."

I: Through keeping a journal?

M: Um . . . yeah . . . a lot of it was keeping that journal. What else was in that

journal? Dreams--there's some dreams in there. She worked on dreams with me. . . . And with her, I remember when I first went to see her, I said, "You know, there's somebody in here trying to get out." (laughs) That's about all I could say to her. And she says, "Well . . . what's stopping the person getting out?" And I said, " Well for a long time I thought it was B.!" I kept thinking it was B. that's not letting me out. She's controlling me and I said, "All of a sudden it occurred to me that it's me that's not allowing me to come out!" There was a little smile there and she said, "Oh, hm-hm!" (pause) Uh, it's such a slow growth process when you see a psychologist that it's hard to track it but I remember that I finally said to her one day, "I think I'm out." (laughs)

I: Hm! . . . So you experienced coming out during the period of counselling with her.

M: Uh . . . I said it to her the second time. Yeah I was with her for about eight months. And there definitely was a lot of growth during that time too . . . feelings and oh . . . going right back to my childhood sometimes . . . with her. And I did a lot of work around my Dad. (pause) Um . . . it was the second time. I went to see her fairly recently. When I first went to Simon Fraser I had a period . . . I went through a period of feeling terribly lonely . . . and lost and isolated up there. I really felt like I was going back into my shell! That scared me! I was more scared to go back than to go forward! . . . It really scared me! . . . Um . . . and so I went to S. and I told her, "I'm really scared. I'm going backwards! Back into my shell. I'm terrified! I don't want to do that. I'm enjoying life now, for heaven sakes! I never enjoyed it before, I just sort of existed . . . um . . . and she was really helpful. . . . I forgot what I was going to say . . .

I: Are you trying to communicate to me how S. was useful in your change process?

M: Yeah, I was just going to answer the question and I forgot what the question was. (long silence)

I: Well you were talking about your sessions with her in the past--over eight months and then you jumped forward to a recent visit.

M: Oh, yeah that was right, because when I went to her the second time, that was when I said to her, "Remember I said to you that this person wanted to come out?" And she said, "Yeah." And I said, "She's out." (laughs) So it had happened between the first session and the second session. I can't remember why I finished that eight months--I think I'd just gotten to a point where it was kind of a plateau and I was feeling okay. I remember saying to her, "I think I'll probably be back." So it didn't surprise me that I did go back. But the second time I only saw her for a few weeks and I said, "Well I'm definitely out! (laughs) I really am me, now! And I really like myself! It's really neat. I'm having such a good time. I enjoy . . . people." . . . And I just . . . Before, I didn't give a damn about people. I didn't really care if I was alone or with people--it didn't really bother me. Now I . . . although I enjoy my own space and being alone sometimes and going for walks alone and things like that . . . I really like people! I enjoy people. I think they're fascinating and I used to just, "People!" I don't know . . . I was really down about them! (laughter) I liked cats and dogs and horses better than I liked people! And now I just think people are so neat! I'm so . . . I just love new people. I want to know who they are, where they're going, where they came from! Just so fascinated!

I: So you're curious about them.

M: Curious! Oh, that was another thing that happened with S. . . was curiosity. I remember I was saying to her one day . . . I said, "I just feel like I've been reborn! For the first time, I'm seeing trees! And houses and the sky! And flowers." I said, "I'm so damm curious about everything! I want to know what everything is!" I'm supposed to be in school and it's very hard for me to decide what to do because everything is so interesting . . . that I want to do everything. . . . Yeah! Tremendous curiosity--just like a kid.

I: So suddenly the world is out there. . . Before, you were rejecting the world . . . and not wanting to know about it?

M: Yeah! Yeah!

I: Now you're like a kid in a candy store--excited and curious about

everything. . .

M: Yeah, right! It's like I had my head stuck in the sand!

I: The ostrich with his head in the ground.

M: Yeah, with his head in the ground.

I: So is it a lot is happening to you, it isn't just S. that's responsible for your change but S. was listening . . . and supporting and understanding and . . encouraging and promoting what was already in progress.

M: And telling me it was okay. You're going in the right direction. You're fine. You're not going to fly off somewhere.

I: Whereas in your relationship . . . um . . you maybe didn't have you needed some support for that change. . . . Uh . . . your relationship maybe wasn't necessarily supporting the change because your relationship was based on your old self.

M: Yes, definitely. Yeah, when I started the change . . . although B., she saw the change and . . . encouraged it. . . . She thought it was great, although she also knew I was changing and going away from her. She could see that. She couldn't . . . uh (sigh) . . . in fact, she did say she wondered why she didn't change in the relationship much, but she felt maybe she didn't need to change. I don't know. She didn't feel that she changed very much and that I changed tremendously . . . And she liked the new person! She really thought I was a much more interesting person and she would have liked to stay in the relationship with me . . . Because she saw this new . . this new fascinating person emerging. Who was interesting! (laughs) But at the same time I lost interest in poor B.! I felt like . . . for a long time we were sort of together and then I just started to go like that (gestures) and she was still going there. And it just widened and widened and widened to the point where we were just getting on each others nerves. She wanted I would have been happy to have stayed with her as a friend . . . to live together as friends--just companions. But she wanted a full relationship--a sexual relationship. And I just didn't want that with her

anymore. It wasn't there.

I: You didn't have a sense of needing her.

M: Yeah, I guess if I'm honest I (indecipherable) And also, she was having a very hard time herself. She had become asthmatic and . . . was becoming incredibly moody and grumpy. Although, maybe some of that was to do with me--with me not responding much anymore. It was just . . it was going nowhere . . . our relationship. I couldn't see any . . . We tried! And we went to a psychiatrist together and B.'s still seeing her. . . . Because you have to pay for a psychologist and B. didn't want to come . . and I didn't have much money anyway . . . although I would have paid if she wanted to go to S. . . . but she didn't.

I: So you tried to work at it.

M: Yeah. We went to a psychiatrist for a couple of . . . for a few sessions--three or four sessions and then I went home to England--for a holiday for a month. The psychiatrist said to me, "Think about it while you're away." So I did. I went home for a month and I was really happy! It was the best trip I ever had home. The best time I ever had with my Mom.
(break to change tape)

Yeah I was just thinking as I was just sort of . . . trying to glance back over it. . . whereas before it was like I was just blown everywhere by the winds of chance. You know like . . . I'd be in a relationship with somebody and it would be finished and so I would just sort of move on. I remember being in Montreal (laughs) . . . I can't remember who I was with there . . . somebody anyway . . and that ended so I just sort of left town and went to Ottawa. . . . Why not? And that's where I met L. (husband) and we came out to Vancouver. But when that relationship ended . . .before I'd always moved somewhere . . .when that relationship ended I stayed in Vancouver and I've been here a long time. Now normally I'd have, "Why not just go somewhere else?" Just drifted off, right? But now because I have something--I know where I'm going and what I want to do. It's like I put down emotional roots down here and yeah, before I was just blown about by winds of chance. I never had any goal. Any direction. . . . Nothing!

So it didn't matter. I just would go anywhere. But now I . . . now I'm . . . more substantial. Yeah. Much stronger . . . substantial . . . have direction . . . know what I'm doing--I mean I might not get where I'm going (laughs) but I know where I'm going, basically. . . . when I decided to become a priest. Do you want to know about that?

I: Is that part of the picture of becoming . . .

M: Yeah, I just remembered I was going to talk about my Mom . . . going on that trip . . . maybe I should go back to that.

I: Sure!

M: Okay . . . so I went home in May and as I say it was the first time . . . I had this tremendous relationship with my Mom! Before . . . I really didn't like her! I found her too bossy and . . . controlled my life and . . . you know, didn't give me any responsibility. I spoke to her about it and she said that she had to because my Dad was very irresponsible. Like, he was a good Dad . . . but he didn't like responsibility. He didn't like making decisions. He had his own business and he had to do that there but in the home he . . . just was not very good at it. So Mom kind of had to do all that--or she felt she had to . . . whatever the reasons. And so I thought, "Well!" I hadn't even realized that. She'd never talked about her feelings before . . . and I realized . . . I don't know--maybe it's all English families! Because I remember C.(friend) said the same about her family. We don't discuss feelings! We talk about the weather. (laughs) But we never discuss how people are feeling or what's going on or anything. Don't talk about emotions or anything like that. So I was . . . so anyway, this was the first time that I went home and . . . my Mom treated me like I was a human being not like . . . a kid! And in the same respect, I treated her like she was another woman and not my mother. We had this . . . we just had this wonderful time! We laughed . . . had coffee and tea and . . . it was such a neat relationship. I didn't believe it could be like that . . . you know, with one's mother! Because everybody I talk to moans about their mom and here I had this wonderful relationship with mine! It was just terrific!

And another thing S. did for me . . . talking about my mom reminds me of my

dad . . . and she did a lot of work with me on my father. I told you that story. Do you want me to go into that one? Again? [In initial meeting to discover if Mary had experienced phenomenon under investigation, she told story of experience related to her Dad's death.]

I: Yes if it's significant. When you told me that before, I did not have a tape recorder.

M: It's just that in this change that's taking place . . . as I'm changing and becoming more substantial there just seem to be a lot of . . . little odd threads that needed tying off. And one of them was my mom . . . coming to terms with my mom and accepting her as a woman and her accepting me as a woman which was . . . really neat!

I: Can I just clarify my understanding of that . . . that previously you hadn't really liked your Mom . .

M: No, I didn't like her at all.

I: You experienced her as overly controlling.

M: Yeah. Authoritarian . . . overly controlling . . . making all the decisions for me. I remember as a kid wanting to choose my own clothes and she wouldn't let me. She was buying the clothes and so she would choose what I wore! To the point that even today, I have difficulty in choosing clothes because I don't really know what suits me or what to look for and I hate shopping! Because I never learned . . . early on to . . . find out what suited me. She'd just tell me what to wear! And it seemed to me everybody all my life was telling me what to do and I never had a chance to . . . find out what I was capable of.

I: So in part of your change process, it felt like something you had to . . . a loose end to be tied off, you had to go again--now that you've changed--and spend some time with your mother . . . uh . . . maybe I shouldn't be asking the question . . . anyway, just to summarize what you said . . . that you found that as a changed person you could relate to her as a separate person and she could relate to you and there was a sense of equality.

M: Definitely! A sense of equality, yeah.

I: And that felt really good.

M: It felt really good! It was terrific! That was the best holiday I ever had. . . But also at the same time I realized that what I had with B. had come to an end. It really had! I just could see no further . . choice . . no further growth there . . nothing! I just . . it just seemed to come to an end and I thought, "I'm going to just have to end this relationship." Which was a pity! It was a real pity! I didn't want to . . . I just couldn't see any other way out of it . . . and to hang on and hang on was just making it worse for B. So when I came back I . . uh when we went to see the psychiatrist together, I just . . . told her basically what I just told you . . . that it seemed to be going nowhere I seemed to have to finish. We decided there and then it was finished. . . . which really upset B. because she was . . all of a sudden she was . . she wanted to work on the relationship . . whereas, before, she never did. She was always too busy with the marathon, this, that and the other. And all of a sudden she wanted the relationship to be the main thing in her life and was ready to work on it. And I had had it! I had no more energy for it. My energy was for school . . and the church . . . and the future--my future goal of being a minister eventually.

I: So there was sense of completion, and ending there--of the relationship.

M: Yeah, I felt okay about it. I had no regrets . . . and I don't feel guilty. I feel fine about it. And . . I think B. is getting over it now. I've seen her a few times and the first few times were pretty difficult. She was still having a hard time. And then I saw her a few weeks ago and she seemed pretty good. So I think she'll be alright. . . .(long pause) . . Okay . . so I was going to tell you about my dad, right?

I: Which was another loose end?

M: Yeah, another loose end . . was . . . funny enough because I'd been home when my dad was dying. I'd gone home. He was in the hospital dying of cancer

and I had to go along with my mother who . . . didn't want him to know he was dying. Which for me, I found difficult! Because . . . I had read a lot of Kubler-Ross and I felt that I wanted to talk to my dad and tell him what a neat guy he was . . . and how much I'd loved the times we had together . . . when I was a child. (coughs) And . . . I couldn't do that! All I could say to him was, "Oh you'll soon be better. . . Pat, pat." You know? . . . And it just drove me crazy! But my mother was . . . uh . . . pretty emotionally upset, obviously, at the time. She was just sort of steeling herself everyday to go to the hospital. It was a real effort for her and she's not well. I mean she's elderly. She's in her late seventies. . . . So it was a real stressful time, and I came back here my dad was still alive. They'd sent him home finally but he had only a few weeks to go . . . but I had to come back because you can only go for so long. And . . . uh . . . a couple of weeks after I got back, he died.

And at the time I thought, "Well gee, you know, I can't go back to the funeral but I should do something." And when did this happen? . . . '76? . . . I think it was '77 or '78. I can't remember. But I remember at the time feeling that I should do something but not being . . . not being in the church long enough at that time to think of doing something in there. . . It didn't occur to me. . . So at home I just got a chair and I put some flowers on a chair and a photograph of my dad . . and I had my . . . I found a Common Prayer Book or something or other (laughs) . . and I did this little funeral thing myself . . and read the priest's part. And I thought, "Okay, that will complete it!" . . And . . to myself, I thought, "Well it's completed now." . . . But I'd experienced over the years after that . . . that . . sometimes I'd . . . um . . . I still had the feeling that my dad was miles away! Instead of being close, he was miles away! And yet he was dead. I mean, before I'd always thought, "Oh well that's because he's in England. He is far away." But now he'd died! Why did he still feel far away? (laughs) I mean he wasn't in England but he felt like he was way out there somewhere! It didn't feel right. It felt most peculiar because I'd always been very close to him. And it came and went and I didn't think a lot about it. And sometimes I'd see people on the street. Oh everybody experiences this! You see somebody on the street that looks like your dead father so you have to just walk past them and have a look just to make sure, right! . . . I think a lot of people experience that. . . . But things like that! And then that would

trigger it off again . . about him being so far away. . . . I felt most odd about it! Anyway eventually when I . . . the second time when I went back to S. (therapist) . . . we were working on loneliness actually . . . that I was being very lonely . . and isolated up at Simon Fraser. And I just didn't have time to sort of socialize up there and make friends. And it was really difficult. It was a really difficult period! And I'd left B. and I was living in this new situation here on _____ Avenue. (sighs) New school, new home, new people all around me and I was really feeling isolated! I felt like I might . . . I felt like I might go back into my shell. . . . Really scared! And that's why I went to see her. . .

Anyway, one day we just got talking about . . childhood I think . . and my dad and I said to her, "He just feels so far away!" And she said, "Oh! Well. . ." As I said before, we'd done guided imagery . . . and so she decided to do something like that with me. She just said, "Well just close your eyes . . and think about your dad in the hospital. And I closed my eyes and I said, "No I don't want to think about him in the hospital." . . Actually prior to that we'd gone down this tunnel or something . . I can't remember now . . it doesn't have much to do with my dad. . . but eventually anyway, I ended up talking about my dad. . . And so she said, "Well visualize the living room." So I closed my eyes and I could see the living room. I could see the chair I couldn't see my dad. He wasn't in the chair but I could hear him tapping his pipe out. . . which was kind of interesting. She thinks I'm a more . . . auditory I hear more than I see. . . . So there were a lot of sounds that I remembered about my dad. So she said, "Well if he's not in the chair then . . go to the hospital." So I went to the hospital and . . . I could see the hospital and I walked in and up the ward and . . . as the bed sort of got closer, I said, " Oh I don't want to go any closer because I know I'm going to see him . . and he looks horrible! I just want to remember my dad the way he was when he was healthy! I don't like the way he was in the hospital bed . . which was horrible! He looked so thin . . . I didn't recognize him!" And she said, "Well . . just keep walking . . . walking up to him." And so I did. I started walking towards the bed . . . and as I got closer to him . . he suddenly sat up . . or I mean I hadn't gotten close enough to see who it was but anyway . . he suddenly sat up. And instead of seeing my dad, it was just this dazzling . . . ball of yellow--like the sun. It was like the sun shining. It was just incredible. It sort of blinded me!

Um . . . and at the same time . . . actually prior to that . . . there was . . . there'd been a white light. . . Oh yeah, I forgot about that. Yeah prior to that . . . I was having problems getting to the bed. (laughs) I didn't want to walk to the bed and so S. had gotten down in front of me . . . I think. She put her hand on my chest. Oh, and then she put a crystal in my hand, that was it! So she was holding my hand with this crystal, then she put her other hand on my chest. . . . So she was helping me. . . . and when she did that . . . that's right, everything went white. There was this beautiful white light! And then I did . . . this white light sort of helped me towards the bed and as I went towards the bed, that's when my dad sat up and there was this blinding yellow light. . . which was quite incredible! Um and it felt really it was quite an emotional experience. I felt very uh . . . uplifted . . . for want of a better word.

And then . . . I sort of withdrew from it all. I sort of flew. . . . actually I think I was flying at the time. I sort of flew from there back to . . . I guess back to the room because I sort of suddenly sat up and opened my eyes and (laughs) . . . I sort of looked at S. and we both started to laugh like mad. I just . . . a little bit like that confession thing. The same thing . . . this sudden laughter. I was all upset about my dad and all of a sudden I was sitting there laughing like mad. And I said, "You know it feels just like my dad is right in here now!" [gestures to chest] Most peculiar! And she sort of smiled . . . and didn't say too much. But anyway, since then . . . it was quite awhile ago now . . . I guess September [five months ago]. . . . ever since then, he has felt really really close. In here and not way out there somewhere. . . . So that was another end . . . tied off.

I: Hm . . . so the meaning of that yellow light . . . that white light and that yellow light . . . was that . . . your dad . . . came to be inside you?

M: Yeah. Spiritually speaking.

I: You mean his love or . . . ?

M: His essence. . . his spirit, his essence. Yeah, but also, I said to S., "When you think about it on a physical level, I carry his genes, right? So in a way

he does live in me!" (laughs) So yeah . . . spiritually. . . I don't think I'll have that problem with my mom. Because we seem to have made some sort of . . . connection . . . equal sort of on a level . . . on the same level. I think when she dies, it will be okay somehow. I don't know but I don't think I'll have that feeling.

I: Of her being at a distance.

M: Being a long way off. Because she feels really close. Really close. All the time . . . and yet she's living in England.

I: Is that new? Since you visited?

M: Yeah. Yeah, before, she felt far away. When she was in England, she just felt far away. And now she feels really close. Yeah, so I don't think I'll have that problem that I did with my dad. So that's been really really neat.

I: So that's another tying off . . . a loose end.

M: Yeah. Yeah. And then ending the relationship with B.

I: Finishing that.

M: Finishing that. It's almost as if I sort of have to get all these things (laughs) . . . finished off, tied off neatly before I can sort of go on with wherever I'm going . . . or grow . . . I don't know what it is. I just have this feeling that there are all these things that I'm neatly tying off and finishing off because I'm going somewhere. (laughs) It's strange. I'm not quite sure what that's all about. (long pause) . . . but in terms of being more substantial . . . I definitely feel much more substantial than in the past.

I: Is your sense of going somewhere part of that?

M: Yeah! Yeah . . . it's sort of like putting all your armour on because you're going out to battle. (laughs) I'm not going to a battle but . . . yeah, the tying off and the neat . . . all that sort of thing is . . . to use church imagery . . . sort

of like putting your . . sword on and your belt on . . getting ready to move onward. Onward and upward. (pause) . . . as I say . . . I'm aiming towards being a priest, which is a long, long journey. And if I think about where I am right now, I realize that I still have a lot of growth . . a lot of growing to do to become a priest. Because I mean right now I couldn't stand up in the church and preach. . . . Actually I wouldn't be afraid to do it anymore. If they told me to do it, I'd probably go and do it! But I know I don't have the skills for that yet. It's going to be a lot of years of school and a lot more growth . . before I become the type of person who can do that!

I: So you have a sense of yourself on a journey . . that isn't finished yet and that involves more learning and growth.

M: Yeah. But I can see now . . because I've come this far . . from where I came from and the sort of person I am now and how . . different I am now and how . . stable . . and strong I am now . . that I realize I can do it. Before . . what was it? Six . . seven years ago, when I first . . . had this horrible (laughs) feeling that I wanted to be a priest. My immediate reaction was, "I can't be a priest! It's impossible! You have to go to university and you have to do this and that." And I cried! Because I thought, "I know now what I want to do and I can't do it!" It just really upset me and I cried. But then I eventually . . . because I was getting to the point where I was beginning to reach out. . . I did reach out to some people in the church and talked to them about it. . . whereas before, I just would have stuffed it down and forgot about it . . . well, tried to! I talked to people about it and found out that you can do it! You could go to Langara and then university and so on. (laughs)

I: So first it came to you that you did want to be a priest . . . so the "how" wasn't immediately apparent . . how you would do it . . in fact you thought at first that it was impossible. . . but you first had the realization and you were certain that you wanted to do it and then thought . . .

M: Yeah. I think it had been in my subconscious for a long time, actually. Probably right from when I first went to _____ Church and saw the priest up there and when I first became a server . . so I was up at the altar. I felt incredibly comfortable there. Like I'd come home. And yet I didn't really

understand it. I didn't really think about being a priest. I didn't even realize they had women priests to be quite honest! But . . . about . . . seven years ago now I guess . . . right at the beginning of the relationship with B. . . I remember I just suddenly woke up one morning. I woke up and I said, "I want to be a priest!" And I thought, "Oh no! You've said it! You've said it now!" When you say something, it's like it puts it into motion. (laughs) You've either got to do it . . . I felt, "I've either got to do it and God will be happy and I'll be happy . . . or I can ignore the whole thing and not do it. God's not going to be angry. That's no problem there but . . . I might be angry with myself later on! (laughs) I might always regret that I never even tried!" So I thought, "Why don't I try! Why don't I just go and find out . . . if it is possible!" At least I can say, "Well I tried but, you know, I failed. So what! Is it so bad to fail!"

And that's when I went up to V.S.T., Vancouver School of Theology, and I talked to some of the students. In fact, one came over for coffee and she talked to me and told me . . . at that time, actually you could do two years at Langara and go straight to Vancouver School of Theology and do their Master's. You could do that but they've stopped people doing that because they're finding that to go from two years community college into a Master's program is too much of a jump and they were losing a lot of people. It was just a waste of money. (coughs) And especially for people like me that only had grade 11 . . . years and years ago. So I did my two years at Langara. And luckily I didn't know about that, I just thought I had to do two years at Langara and then go to V.S.T. So after my two years at Langara, I went to talk to the Bishop . . . and he dropped this one on me . . . that you had to have a degree! (laughs) It's a good job I didn't know about that two years ago. If they had told me I had four years of degree and then four years of a Master's program . . . to do eight years! (laughter) I would have thought twice about it. . . . but I didn't realize that! Because I had no money or anything . . . except my student loan. . . . So . . . so I did my two years at Langara and then I discovered I had to go to Simon Fraser. That's where I am now. And when I finish there (laughs) I have four years to do at Vancouver School of Theolgy.

But, as I say, I mean when I look at myself now . . . I mean last week I had to give a seminar at school. I had to stand up in front of the class and talk and . . . I didn't even get anxious about it! It was such a shock! I mean, I

just did it! And I thought, "Well, I'll just do the best I can. I mean, it's not going to be perfect. It's going to be . . . where I'm at right now! Obviously not going to be perfect." And I did fine--I got an A. (laughs)

I: So part of being a substantial self is not expecting yourself to be perfect?

M: Yeah, definitely! I think . . . well I wouldn't say I was a perfectionist yeah, I guess I thought you had to be perfect . . if you did something . . . my mom used to say, "If a thing's worth doing, it's worth doing well." She didn't exactly say you had to be perfect. (laughs) I'm not quite sure where I got that one! But I realize now that people just do the best they can! You know, you have skills--and the skills are not something that you're born with--they develop as you develop. That's just something I've had to learn. And I know that when I first went to Langara . . . Oh, I was so scared! I didn't think I could do it . . . but I did! And I got through that and I learned a lot. And I realized that . . if I've come that far it's been three years . . . if I've come that far in three years, where I can stand up in front of the class and give a little presentation . . that at the end of my B.A. . .that's four years . . and another four years at V.S.T. . . which is eight years. . . . By the end of all that great long . . . span of teaching and learning . . . I probably will be capable of standing up in front of a congregation and preaching for an hour or so and . . . visiting the sick and all the things that a priest does . . like teaching . .

I: So you've felt yourself change and grow so much . . and developed confidence . . . from where you started to where you are now . . that you can see that growth continuing.

M: Yes, I can see that it's possible now. Definitely! I've come this far and changed this much and, yeah, (laughs) I'm sure I can go on and change enough that I can do that job. Yeah.

I: So right now . . are you saying you're still in process . . like it's a growth process, it's not like a . . . finished . .

M: No, I don't feel that I'm finished. Definitely don't feel that I'm finished! I feel that uh . . . I've come a long way. There's been a lot of change! Radical

change! Just a . . . complete turnabout . . from what I was to what I am now. . . . and I don't think it will be as much change. I don't think it will be as radical. It will just be a steady growth--a steady development. And that, I'm sure, goes on for the rest of my life . . if I keep reaching out and wanting to grow. I'm sure people get stuck. I was stuck there . . . way back . . for a long, long time but it's amazing that when I decided that . . I had to change . . . and accepted the fact that I had to change. I changed so fast . . . that it almost scared me!

I: So accepting that you had to change was an important . .

M: Yes. Yes, I think so because . . yeah, because, as I say, at first the change was slow. It was like a slow train chugging along because I was sort of . . . very nervous! (laughs) I was keeping an eye on it. I was not sure. And then I suddenly realized that . . I had to change or I was not going to be happy. I was going to be miserable and stuck and boring . . and that this change was good for me because I was feeling so much better, so much happier. I was feeling more content, more peaceful. I was living, instead of just existing. And so I realized that change was good and then I sort of accepted that I had to change and that change was good. . . . Not that everything that happens is good! There's some scary things to go through . . but on the whole that change was good . . . and that's the thing I had to do . . . and once I accepted that . . . yeah, it was like an express train. It just took off. (laughs)

I: Hm that was when you were seeing S.(therapist) so that you didn't . . take off into the air.

M: Yeah, yeah, yeah! (laughs) I felt like I was taking off! Too fast! (laughs) (pause)

I: So do you think there's anything missing from that picture? It's hard to think of everything. . .

M: Yeah I know! (long pause) Maybe just school. School's been a big tool for change. Definitely! Um . . . in fact, it's been really exciting! I really . . . I really thought I was a dummy! I really did! I mean I just went to a

secondary modern school and they more or less told you--well not straight to your face--but between the lines, they told you that the only thing you were good for was to get married. So you'd better learn to sew and cook! (laughs) Both things didn't interest me too much! (coughs) So . . . by the time I left school at fif. . . at sixteen . . . and then I went to business college for a year . . . because my mom thought I should learn typing . . . that was a handy thing to have . . . which it is, actually, right now because I can type my own papers . . . so . . . so I left feeling that I wasn't very bright! And it was a real shock when I went to Langara--just to night school--and took English . . . that the first term I got a B on the first thing I ever did . . . and I just about passed out! My English was . . . was pretty good! It was creative. Apparently I'm very creative which was a big surprise to me. Although when I think back to . . . even my teachers in that silly school always said that I had potential, that I was creative, that I should have been an artist . . . stuff like that . . . and they wanted me to go to art school. I just used to laugh! But now when I think back I guess I did have potential! You know, to do something with my life! They saw it--I didn't!

I: You didn't feel that you had potential. You felt dumb.

M: No! No, I felt really dumb and stupid . . . that the only thing I should do is get married .. and be a housewife and work in an office. (laughs) There wasn't much choice in those days--you worked in an office or you worked in a store. (coughs) That's what everybody else around me seemed to do.

I: So it was a sense of limited future and limited possibilities . . . and the possibilities that were being suggested to you weren't things you were interested in.

M: Yeah! No . . . no . . . office work, shop work . . . nursing. And I tried all three! And wasn't too thrilled with any of them! And again, that working class thing--the upper class were the kids that went to university. Working class only went to university if they got a scholarship. And I knew I was not bright enough to get a scholarship! I don't think I am that bright! But I'm certainly not stupid! I just thought I was dumb! . . . I couldn't do math very well, that's for sure! But I was good on the other side . . . the other things . . . English and art . . .

I: And so the class system fed into that . . uh . . in that . . .um . the class that you were from, you weren't expected to go on?

M: No . . not really! There was a few bright kids--working class kids--and they got scholarships.

I: Oh, I see what you're saying!

M: You had to be really, really bright! I mean . . genius! (laughs) So I may have been . . you know . . .just an average . . kid.

I: So is it like . . . when you talked about feeling . . that sense of responsibility and competence from being a server and leading in the Alanon group . . that school has . . more examples of your ability to be competent and responsible? Or is it not mainly responsibility . . but competence?

M: Yeah. Competence. And discovering that . . . like when I first went to Langara I expected to get C's. I expected to maybe scrape through . . . if I was lucky! And yet I didn't even get C's, I got B's . . . which really surprised me! And then when I started going full time . . . at the end of two years, I'd sort of got the hang of how to write an essay (laughs) . . . I was getting A's! And my teachers were telling me, "My God you have such a creative mind! Where are you coming out with these things!"

I: So finding a sense of . . ability . . the experience of your capability . . . your intellectual and creative capability . . and talent . . and getting feedback . .

M: Yeah! It was like a whole other side to me . . that I'd . . been missing! I didn't even know I had anything like that! So that made me more substantial! (laughs) It certainly did! And school too . . . I mean . . because you have to communicate. You're in relationship . . you know, the community in the school. . . all the time , you can't just go through school . . well you could go through school and not speak to anybody (laughs) . . but it would be a bit difficult! But it's the whole . . school atmosphere . . has really helped. Because I'm really thrown into a group of people where I have to

communicate . . .

I: Where you are having to communicate . .

M: Having to get up in front of a class and talk . .

I: Hm . . test yourself!

M: Yeah! Incredible testing ground! It's been so positive!

I: Finding that you succeed.

M: Yeah! That I'm not stupid! I'm not even average! I'm above average in terms of academic performance. (laughs) That was what was a real shock! I mean, I remember sitting one day and thinking, "Well . . gee, that's funny . . . I mean my mom . . she's just an ordinary mom. She had only about grade six or something. There's nobody on her side of the family that's got any brains (laughs) . . that I could think of!" I mean maybe they do . . way back. Who knows! Then I thought about my dad and . . . "Dad was pretty average!" And then I suddenly remembered that Dad had a brother who was a lawyer; his sister was a teacher. All of a sudden I remember thinking, "Well gee, maybe it's come from that side of the family. There is some brains in the family somewhere!" And in fact, all that side of the family--like my dad's sister's son, who is my cousin, is incredibly bright! That whole side of my dad's family is bright! I'd never even thought about it before!

I: So there's a sense of surprise!

M: Yeah! Yeah! Complete surprise!

I: You thought you were not intelligent . . and that your mom wasn't . .

M: No I didn't think I was.

I: And you kind of just accepted that that was the way things were . . . and you were shocked to find out . .

- M: Yeah. . . . that I'm more intelligent than I thought I was. And then of course I kept thinking, "Well, where's it coming from?" You know what I mean . . . I mean I know about genetics! (laughs) There's no way I could be intelligent if both my parents were dumb! Or maybe you go back to grandparents . . . I don't know enough about it. But I remember sitting there thinking, "Where are the brains coming from in the family?" And then realizing that my dad's side . . . actually is quite intelligent! I know he's got cousins that are all doctor's and . . . and teachers. It sort of gave me an understanding that it was coming from somewhere. (long pause) . . So that's been an eye opener. School's been a real help! (long pause) . . Scarey sometimes! And challenging! And sometimes I think I can't do it! And then I think, "Yes you can. You've come this far. You've done everything so far. You can do it!" (laughter)
- I: So it's not like you've emerged . . I don't know . . as the butterfly, but it's not that you're invincible.
- M: Um-hm (Laughs) Yeah, sometimes . . I remember telling S. this . . sometimes I sort of think, "Gee, I'm going to have to really be . . careful . . not to get too . . inflated. Too puffed up. Because it's been so exciting in coming this far . . and realizing that I am fairly intelligent . . . and a pretty neat person and I even physically look good! I mean I never thought of myself as good-looking! I was always overweight. And I had greasy hair. (laughs) I always thought I was ugly! And now I have people telling me, "You're so attractive!" And I think, "What do you mean attractive?" I'd go look in a mirror and think, "Attractive? (laughter) What are you talking about? Attractive?" But I realize that . . it's almost . . . a butterfly . . coming out of a crysalis! Really! Sometimes . . in fact sometimes I've gotten dressed up to go to a dance or something . . . J. (friend) and I went out to a dance and I remember I went to the washroom just to wash my hands or get a drink of water or something . . and I . . there was a big mirror . . and I . . I didn't realize it was me! I just sort of looked and I saw this person (laughs) . . I was wearing some new clothes that I bought. (laughter) . . I remember looking and I thought, "Jesus she's good looking!" (laughter) I was looking at my self? (laughter) . . I just stood there and laughed my head off! I thought it was so funny! Because I put make-up on and I don't often wear make-up. So it wasn't unusual that I didn't recognize myself for a second,

but I stood and looked and I thought, "Good god! You know you're so completely different!" I passed my ex-husband in the street and he didn't know me! He never recognized me at all.

Yeah . . people used to tell me that I always had this sad countenance. Depressed I guess. But now I'm sort of bubbling . . and I always thought I was introverted. Now I discover I'm much more extroverted. Which . . S. (therapist) said, "Oh, I knew you were an extrovert! You just needed to come out!" (laughter) So I feel that . . um that more or less I've found myself. That I am this is the real me! (laughs) And that . . sure, I can still grow and change! It's like a diamond that needs polishing it needs polishing more but uh I feel very comfortable with myself. And I feel that I have a lot to give and a lot to share. When I'm with people it's like . . give and take.

I feel very equal to people now. I never felt equal before . . and I remember saying to you that . . when I . . in England there was all this upper class and lower class, right? (laughs) When I went home in May, I went to visit one of my cousins in this little village and I had to wait for my cousin for something or other, I can't remember . . and so I just wandered around the village . . very tiny . . and I saw this ad in the window for afternoon tea at Lady so-and-so's . . and it was open to anybody. And I thought, "Well that'll be fun! I like those big mansion houses!" I was on my bike. Just in my shorts. (laughs) Not dressed to go to afternoon tea or anything. I thought I'll just tell them that I'm visiting from Canada. So I trundled off to this huge mansion house . . a big gravel drive . . cars going up and I come up on my bicycle! And . . . to cut a long story short, I knocked on the door and Lady so-and-so . . all dripping in gems . . in her afternoon dress . . comes to the door. And I just said, "Is this where the afternoon tea is?" "Oh yes my dear, come in!" She sort of looked at my bike, "Good heavens, where have you come from?" (imitating upper class accent) . . (laughter) . . . Imagine me going in there . . I mean, years ago! I just walked in . . and I didn't feel above her or below her. I felt totally equal to her! That I was just as good as she was . . even though I didn't have the money she had . . . that's for sure! The only difference between us was money and education. And . . . introduced myself . . and was ushered into the living room and all the ladies were sitting around the fire having tea . . and I parked myself . .

and had tea and . . . for heaven sakes! . . . Half of them had been to Vancouver! "Was the Sylvia Hotel still there?" . . . And . . . I tell you, I was the center of attention! (laughter) It was so funny because, I mean, because before if I'd been the center of anything, I would have died . . . and here I was quite enjoying it! It was quite . . . it was fun! I didn't feel over-inflated or anything, I just felt I was having a really interesting afternoon. I was contributing to the afternoon and they were contributing and whole thing was really neat!

And then for heaven sakes! I bought a raffle ticket and . . . I had to leave early to go meet my cousin and apparently I won this huge box of biscuits. You know in a small village, news travels fast, right? I was walking along the road with my cousin and this car stopped. This lady stuck her head out and said, "You're the lady from Canada!" She said, "You've won the biscuits!" (laughter) Then we went home to my cousin's to make tea and in five minutes there was a knock at the door and Lady so-and-so arrived with the biscuits . . . and presented them . . . and it must have gone all around the village in ten minutes because later on that evening we went to the pub . . . and we just walked through the door and immediately everybody turned 'round and said, "Oh that's the lady from Canada that won the biscuits!" (laughter) It was a riot! . . . But anyway . . . the purpose of that story was that . . . all of a sudden here's the upper class and I'm working class and I still have . . . I certainly don't have an upper class accent! Which is a difference in England and yet these people just totally accepted me . . . and I think they probably always did. It was just me that felt uncomfortable. And they're really neat people! So I haven't had that problem anymore . . . and that's really nice. Because at my church there's a real mixture and we do have some upper class British there . . . with a fancy accent that used to put me off. And I just feel perfectly fine although you do have less of a problem here anyway. (long pause) .

So it's neat . . . it's so neat to be able to go out . . . and visit people and talk with people and not feel self-conscious! Just to feel perfectly at ease and interested in who they are . . . and exchange stories . . . and, I don't know, it just makes such a difference! It's less stressful. It just makes life worth living. (long pause) What a struggle! They say, "Life

begins at forty," and it did for me! . . . Well before . . . but certainly when I turned forty I began to really take off. I'm 43 now. (long pause) . . .

I: So this particular change process is pretty important.

M: Oh yeah, really! (laughs) Yeah, I feel like I'm going . . . I mean . . . mid-life, . . . if I should live to be eighty-odd, I'm only half way through my life! The first half has been such a struggle! It feels like the second half, although it's not going to be easy, it's not going to be such a struggle. Because I really feel I know who I am now. And so I have a whole person . . . that's going forward through the next forty years. Whereas before I mean I was just . . . what . . . nothing. I was just fragmented all over the place. . . . so yeah, it feels really good! I really sort of feel excited about the future. . . . whereas before I was just always sort of . . . fearful . . . and I hadn't even thought about the future. I just sort of . . . I didn't think about anything! (laughs)

I: So the fact that you're a more substantial self affects your view towards the future.

M: Definitely! Yeah, Yeah because being a substantial person is . . . hm . . . it's a strength! I feel so much stronger . . . and capable. . . . I mean, I may need help from people certainly . . . but I feel that I really can . . . sort of carry on towards my goal. And who knows what's going to happen! I mean anything can happen . . . you could get ill . . . I mean anything could happen and I might not get there but I certainly have the potential to get there . . . which is what I didn't have before.

APPENDIX II

INTERVIEW WITH THERESA

Transcript of taped interview

(Mary and Theresa have been friends for 17 years--ever since Mary moved to Montreal from England. They first met when Theresa came to Mary's rescue after a car accident. They do not see each other frequently but have maintained a long friendship with periodic visits.)

- I: Okay, so what I'm wanting especially from friends is . . . really two things . . . one is to validate what I had heard Mary say. I interviewed Mary and I formed some opinions from thinking about the interview--about what the significant changes were. So number one is to interview the friends and to validate, from the friends' point of view, that this change really happened. And the other thing you can do is to . . . fill in the details of Mary's life . . . to not just make the point that she's shy but to tell me since you knew her . . . in what situations was she shy. What obstacles and challenges did she have in her life? And how did she handle them? . . . And how did the way she handled them change? . . . By talking about specific things that you did together, by making a richer picture and showing how a person's life is actually lived in the context of the life rather than just an abstract notion--she's shy. Well how did you see this? How did she behave? So if you want to elaborate . . . like I'm sure if you wrote thirty pages and condensed this, that what you've given me are the really essential differences because you've obviously sifted through and come up with what you think is really essential. If there is anything you want to say by way of amplifying, though example, that would be terrific.
- T: We can start with the word shy if you like. Um . . . I lived in the town of Mount Royal, Montreal . . . that means like West Van in Vancouver. It means we had . . . there was my dad and there was money . . . there was opportunity. Mary came to live with us from time to time . . . between jobs . . . whatever.

And I recall her in the home as being someone who was always quiet. We loved having her there because she certainly didn't . . . what can I say . . . create any negative anything. She was just always quiet and always polite. But, for example, if my brother would visit or my dad would come up to chat . . . friends would come over . . . Mary would not necessarily join. It was not what she was interested in. She was quite . . . um . . . isolated in her behavior with other people. Um . . . she was very good one-to-one . . . you know . . . if you could draw her and talk with her and do something with her. Mary is a very 'doing' person.

We're two entirely different people. I like to know motivation. I'm interested in why things work. Um . . . I like to know the many points of view of any one thing. I know there's no one truth, you know, that kind of thing. But when I used to know Mary . . . to her, a rose is a rose is a rose. She has no problem with that . . . you see. And so she wouldn't . . . me and my friends would nit pick a piece of grass until it was all over the place and nobody could remember what the question was. But Mary would never join that--that's foolishness to her and she would rather go play a good game of tennis, go skiing, climb a mountain . . . to do something! That was much more attractive to her. And so I used to often wonder if she was missing opportunities to enjoy people . . . by being so . . . small about what it is she would do with them. However, you know, I was busy living my life--I'm not going to worry or try to do . . . in fact I don't ever believe that you can do anything . . . for someone else. They either do or they don't.

Now that was a long time ago . . . but then rather than use the thing in the house . . . because that's one thing, and then there's in the bar and then there's in the various different homes of our friends, and some of the social things we were going through, some of the thought and feeling things we were going through. Um . . . Mary had a terrific crush on a girl--a long long time ago, and her name was J. She was a really nice girl but J. was older. She was not into wanting to have any singular relationship. J. seemed to be another pleasant woman. But I think she was just in a stage of her life where she didn't want a relationship. . . . Mary really liked this girl. But she didn't know what to do about being attractive, creating excitement . . . um . . . creating an imaginative and fantasy tension. That's very important . . . make the other person excited and create a situation

that they'll be Well she didn't know how to do any of that, and so J. really . . . wasn't interested. And I watched Mary feel all the feelings one feels when one feels rejected. She withdrew and she was very unhappy. . . .

This from the same girl that can ride a horse and play with children . . and I would call it she's a 'natural' person. She's good in nature. She's very simple but not in a I'm using perhaps the wrong word. Mary is not complicated. Not to me she's not. And when an emotional thing would happen in Mary's life, it would cripple her. She would just . . . she would go to do her job but (gestures) . . . you know, with a long face. Um . . . I found that talking to Mary about how to alter feelings and thoughts . . . didn't work! You know, she seemed to have to go through all of her feelings, at her own pace and choose what was safe for her. And Mary is not offensive. All her friends respected her. They liked her. Everybody likes Mary, you know. And that's a safe atmosphere for her to have a beer in--for her to be with the group. But . . . no one would necessarily phone her up and say, "Listen we're all going to . . why don't you . . ." You know, and so Mary sort of did her things, like she went skiing--but on her own. She joined other people . . . she went to her activity things. They were weekend things. And she went to her job. . . . I'd hire her any day! She's very . . . she's totally faithful and good at what she does. But as an . . exciting person. Mary was not at that time.

And her reaction to things that didn't go her way . . . in my observation . . . was that she would simply withdraw. And uh . . . I just had no skills at the time. Very little perception at the time either. I just let her withdraw. I was too busy. Um . . and then as time went by I moved to Ottawa . . Mary moved to Ottawa. We didn't even know each other was moving to Ottawa. We ended up in Ottawa. I drove down the street one day and there she was. Well, "Hi! Hi!" We went for a beer. Then she gave me a call and said, "I just got married. Do you want to move us?" And I said, "Sure!" And (laughs) I met that guy . . for the first time. And . . um . . I drove them to their apartment and then . . . I lived even in the same building with her for awhile. There happened to be a room there that I rented for awhile. And . . . I noticed that . . I was very reluctant to be with them because they weren't like other people. Most people I know I can bash on the door and

say, "Hi! I made too much lasagna. Do you want to come over?" Or . . . "I'm lonesome. You guys mind if I come in and have some coffee?" You don't do that with them. Um . . . Mary was always . . . nervous with this man. And although the man was friendly, he sort of would stand back. His body language was . . . with this hand in his pocket, (gestures) he sort of would stand back. He was never . . . hostile . . . but neither did he come up and say (gestures), "Get in here!" (laughter) You know . . . you always felt you were intruding somehow. . .

And I really kind of was lonesome at that time. I used to just listen for people walking around so that I could feel I was in the world of people. It was a stage of my life. But . . . and then . . . she confided to me one day and said, "He hides bottles of liquor." Um I said, "Oh, no!" . . . And she said, "I'm trying everything I can but he's doing a lot of drinking." He was still working at the time. . . . Well then time goes by and I'm in my adventures and I came to Vancouver. And uh Mary was in Vancouver. Actually I was in Vancouver before her. I came to Vancouver, went back to Ottawa, came to Vancouver. And in the interim, she had moved out to Vancouver. Gave her a buzz and said, "Well you're out here now?" She said, "Yeah." And I said, "What's happening?" And she said, "Oh brother!" You know, and I said, "Now what's happening?" She said, "Same damn thing, only" she said, "you know Theresa, I've tried everything from Fredrick's of Hollywood to god knows what. He's not interested in me sexually. I feel really sorry for him." Uh . . . I think she had a sense that she should be doing something to make . . . this . . . thing . . . work! Something I understand now but didn't at the time. I didn't know enough to say, "Why don't you just dump the jerk and get going. Your life's important." I didn't have those skills then either. . . . That's a very fast synopsis. (laughs)

So all I could say was, "Gee that's too bad. Hope you work it out" in so many . . . actions. Eventually time goes by and . . . Mary gave me another call, "Hi! Guess what's happening now?" I said, "What?" She said, "Have you got space on your floor?" I said, "Oh yeah." (laughs) "Here we go again!" And yeah, she's leaving L. (husband) "Fine," says I and went out and bought a foamy and put it on my floor and over she came. And I got a real heavy dose of a whole new kind of Mary! That's why it's easy for me to write this in three segments because it's been three heavy relationship

segments that I've known . . . her most intimate communication with me. And the rest is just tennis games and walking and having dinner once in awhile. . . but not a terrific intimate communication of any depth.

But when she slept on my floor and was with me for . . I don't know . . one, two, three months . . . she started talking to me about alcoholism. . . She taught me a lot . . . what she had been doing within the relationship with her husband . . . how she now saw what alcoholism was. She had contacted feelings . . her own feelings . . realized they were important . . . that if she was going to have any kind of a life at all that she would be totally responsible for it. And most important of all--she was not responsible for anybody else! And she really clearly hung on to that concept--to give her the courage to step away from all the stuff she'd always been connected to before. And all the value systems about it. Um . . she didn't necessarily have to be polite just so other people would leave her alone. She could be polite because it was nice for other people! You know, not just do it because she was told to and never bother questioning why!

Um she learned . . . she's very good by nature with what makes her happy . . children always make her happy. She's marvellous with children. There was a girl upstairs . . a single mom . . . very good with this child! Um . . . in fact, she's better than anyone else I've ever known with children. She's got a whole . . she has an adult communication with children. She doesn't baby talk them. Um . . they talk about serious things. Kids just love her because she doesn't baby-talk them. She does things with them. She has a communication with them that is amusing to listen to. But it just knocks me out because I wouldn't think of that . . . She gets right down where they are ! But more than that, she's not doing it to show off. It's just who she is. You can be in one room and listen to her in the other room and that's who Mary is! A wonderful communicator with children!

Uh . . . but I was realizing that she was going through um . . her blocks. She was going through them! She was . . she was . . number one, she would support L. if he would go to Alcoholics Anonymous. She would go with him, sit with him. She would go to dinner with him afterwards or before but she would not get involved with him socially anymore! And all of the stuff . . the pulling and pushing things . . she didn't want the games anymore. As a

person . . . whether it was L., you or I, she would have been that loyal to us . . . because it's who she is. She's willing to help us. She's a helper--that's her nature. Um . . . but L. had no holds on her anymore. She had no value system saying, "You have to do something for this man. He is your husband . . . Your mother will . . ." None of those things. She said, "No. I've had it! I want something in life and all I can do is get away from what doesn't work and I'm standing out here in the shallow water and I don't know what's next but anything's got to be better than that!" And that was a terrific big step for Mary! Um . . . she'd had a real load and she got herself out from underneath it.

And she did what was easy and natural for her. She started swimming, walking the seawall with Donna Um . . . Mary always likes to feel a little bit in love with people. It makes it easy for her. She loved Donna for a long time. Donna was like the blond goddess there for awhile. It was lovely to watch. It's like a little girl having a big crush. In a way it's very healthy . . . and they walked that wall every . . . whatever . . . day. And she was off skiing and she expanded her relationships with people. And um . . . when she felt really good . . . she needed place of her own . . . she got a place with a lady who ended up being a lover of hers for a very long time. But . . . I saw her going into that knowing that this was a very attractive woman . . . she was feeling happy about it. Um . . . I don't think she was concerning herself about . . . the differentiating between gay and straight. I don't think that's a big thing with Mary I think just being in love is all she's really concerned about. And she likes good feelings from whatever's involved in loving someone. Um . . . I never up until that time . . . 'til B., I never really considered her . . . a person that isolates herself sexually. She just loved who she loved.

But when she was with B. . . . Mary developed something else . . . with her husband, she hid with him . . . and tried to make it better . . . with B., she was expanding herself with B. and with other people . . . I think she just wanted to be with B. She wanted it to work. They went for psychiatric help. She certainly tried--very hard. And I met her in the middle of that--with a bicycle in my living room and a cup of tea saying, "Well we're trying it again. Here we go again! We're past the 'struggle' stage." You know, she started even knowing . . . by words . . . relationships and where the

power comes in and where the romantic part is. She started getting some smarts about how these things work. And she was trying! I mean, damn, that's a Mary that's so different from the first Mary I knew! (gestures sucking her thumb and curling her hair) You know . . . (laughs) . . . a very different Mary!

I: What is that gesture? In words?

t: This one? That's a baby! You know . . twist the hair . . something to do. And this (the thumb) comforts you.

I: Because the world is . . .

T: It's just too much out there! You know, that just really is personal and it's . . .

I: Hiding and comforting yourself.

T: Hiding and just, just . . . you know. Yeah! That's the gesture to me anyway. I know 'cause I used to do it . . . as a child, I used to suck my thumb and twirl my hair. (indecipherable) . . don't talk to me. You know, and you couldn't get past that, I was in there.

But then one day she comes to work and she says, "Well kiddo, I went home, I came back and I realized I don't like her and I don't want to live with her!" I said, "Oh really, what are you going to do now?" I mean, she'd already blown my mind by saying, "Well, I think I'm going to be a priest." I said, "You're . . . oh that's fine. I mean who is going to pay for this?" She said, "Oh, who cares!" "What!" (laughs) That's not at all like Mary I mean she sat in a job downtown for . . . far too long! They tried to promote her . . . she didn't want anything to do with promotion! She was perfectly happy with what she was doing! Totally underpaid! Year after year after year after year. And I've never ever . . . I haven't even desired to try to change Mary Anybody else, I'd say, "Are you nuts! You can't live on five hundred bucks a month! Get your ass in gear . . . go to school. Do something." But you can't . . . there's no point in telling Mary She's stubborn and she sets her mind. And here's where the privacy thing comes in. She does think . . . of

course she does . . . and she feels . . . but it takes Mary a long time before she makes a move. You almost . . . up until now . . . you've almost had to push her into making a change in her life. So that the tragedy . . . or the thing that doesn't work . . . it would take a long time until Mary finally says, "I'm throwing up on this thing that isn't working! I have got to do something!" And then she finally does something.

But not now. She seems to be moving . . . she came over to visit me not long ago and we had dinner and she said, "Well I'd like to be in love but I don't have a whole lot of time anymore. I've got to go to school. I've got to study. I've got to do this and I've got to do that." And she said, "It would be nice . . . to have a love affair . . . not too serious . . . I don't think I'm ready yet. I got all this work to do." I thought, "This is Mary talking!" Mary who was going to drop into some relationship and that was going to solve . . . I mean we all did that at eighteen . . . was going to solve her whole life just by being in love. She's now realizing that is just part of life. And there's lots of other things! She has to develop herself to be attractive to other people. She even said to me . . . me! It's astounding that I've known her this long and she said, "How do I come across to you? Do you think that I'm . . . or I'm . . .?" "Well gee Mary, I think um . . ." You know, . . . taking my breath away! As I was explaining . . . she's asking now! Before she wouldn't dream about even thinking about asking, "How do I come across? Do I come across like an army tank or do I look like a desirable person? Do I look like someone you want to be with?" This was what she wanted to know! I don't know what's going on recently but I was loving this kind of communication from Mary . . . because it just means now that she's concerned about . . . being for other people something. . . . You know, and how she's going to go about doing that. I mean Mary isn't the kind of person to do something to get you to be hooked up to her. That's a manipulation and that's not who she is! But she is desiring now to know . . . how does she come across? Did I think she was rude when she states her facts, "Hi! I like you and I want you to be my love relationship"? And . . . "If she doesn't want to, that's fine with me." "It's fine with you Mary?" That's a big step for her! There was a time when she wouldn't be that bold. She would just sort of sit around and fantasize . . . like we all did when we were kids about movie stars . . . you know! She's way past that now!

And so that's, briefly, what I was trying to tell you. There was J. There was L. And there was B. The three love relationships that I've seen her in and out of. And where I've experienced her was in her communication to me about them. I mean with J., she lived with me and hid. With L., she just had me move physical things around while she told me what was going to happen. With B., she told me after the fact. I think that's . . . I mean she's becoming so responsible about so much . . . and now her communication with me is more satisfying for me because I've always been the curious person. She has not been. And now, we can talk together perhaps about why and there's humour now! There never was humour before. We now can laugh at stuff! She was saying, "Gee you're getting gray!" And I said, "Yeah, you too! It doesn't make us attractive." She says, "It does so! I earned every one of them!" (laughter) You know, so we're getting some humour happening in our lives now . . about the things that we do, the people we know. Nothing is as serious as it used to be. We certainly don't take ourselves nearly as seriously as we realize how big things really are. And there is no need for all this pain in our lives. There is just no need for it. I mean, okay, to work something out . . but don't drag it out because it hurts and it brings on bad health.

Especially L. (husband) I think L. was a real milestone! That really . . she had to find out who she was, what made her tick. Was she allowed to be free? Was she allowed to be happy and if she was . . how could she possibly do it with all these other value systems? "I really have to stay with L. because because because because." You know, and I just think it's marvellous that she just chopped it off! Now she didn't, obviously, just chop it off. It took a long time to get there! You know, and then she stayed with it until it was comfortably ready . . for them to split. And he was totally on his own . . to be responsible.

Now, Mary . . . my personal . . . there's a lot of stuff that goes in the middle too, that's the standard deviation that doesn't change in Mary with me . . . um . . . she's loyal. And she does a lot of nice things. But the behavior thing is what I was trying to address. Now I believe that Mary could come into the house and chat with whoever the heck's here! "Hi! What do you do? What's your name?" And she would ask. She would initiate now . . where she wouldn't before. Um . . in fact, she came in here and said, "Where's

Rick?" "Well, he's gone skiing." "Oh, okay." Pulls up a chair. She didn't think he left because she came. You know, she's healthier. She includes herself. She doesn't demand but she asks. If somebody says no that's cool with her. At one time, it wouldn't have been cool. She would have hid. It hurt too much. In fact, in a synopsis, that's what I've seen in her.

Now, as far as she and I go. We're strange kind of friends. It's almost because of accident and not because of desire. What I mean by that is . . . I don't phone Mary for something to do. And she doesn't phone me. Athletically . . . we're two different people. She's always phoning and saying, "Walk run walk run. You're going to die. You're going to get a stroke." So she's concerned about my health. But I don't phone Mary to invite her when I'm having a party because . . . she's not musical. Um . . . she separates herself slightly because she . . . wants to be gay now . . . and she wants gay friends. And that's fine . . . she wouldn't have the same thrill . . . with all of our friends . . . that are three quarters male! You know, she would be happy enough to spend an evening but it wouldn't fulfill her the same way. Um . . . she's an athletic woman, as I say, and she likes to be with athletic women. But more than that she's starting to be aware of other kinds of persons. If they're in female bodies that's fine but . . . And she talks about, "Oh that nice Mike down the street." Or Bill or Paul or whatever. So she sees people, she always has. She's never said, "Oh, men!" She's never ever done that. But Mary has not knocked herself to be . . . um . . . I don't know quite how to put this but I can flirt with a two year-old or a ninety year-old. It's common to me to . . . and I flirt with women too. I don't know what it is about Mary and myself but we're different in some ways. So Mary wouldn't necessarily phone me up and say, "Look Theresa, let's go for a walk." She wouldn't necessarily express herself to me, unless it was a crisis. You know, crisis is different. She phones me up. But on the everyday situation, I don't find Mary calling me up. Oh we touch base--having lunch, having dinner, shoot the breeze, but we don't get down to what I would call a satisfying communication. We're not falling on the floor laughing and we're not crying in each other's soup about some tragedy of some sort. So um the basis of my observation has been . . . very objective rather than subjective--as maybe some of her other friends would be--had they been either in love with her or done things with her and saw another aspect of Mary that I can't see. I see pictures of her

climbing mountains and it scares the hell out of me! She's climbing cliffs with gear on. You know, other people experience her that way and how tremendous she can be. I mean . . . running that Hawaiian Marathon at thirty-some years old! She knocks me out! But I'm not running with her . . . and I'm not preparing with her and I'm not in any of that stuff so I don't have anything to do with that part of her life.

- I: I really appreciate your objectivity actually. It's been really valuable. Actually this written format (refers to questionnaire) didn't suit you at all . . . to try and condense it . . . I'm really glad that we taped this. There's so much richness in what you've just told me now that this is probably what we should have done to start but perhaps trying to do this tuned you in.
- T: It helped to focus. I had to really focus on Mary and think about the years. She's been a great companion under certain circumstances. She has a dry sense of humour and a very strong . . . loyalty. It's interesting about Mary, I've noticed this, when she doesn't like you, she'll never like you. And when she likes you, you can hold up the bank and kill your father. "That's fine. You must have had a reason." (laughter) You know, this is how Mary is! And knowing that about her, truly if you had a crisis and she liked you . . . she's a brick! If she doesn't like you though . . . don't come near her! (laughs) Because she just . . . she's not there! (laughs) She's not rude, she's just not there. You know, I love it in her. I really love it in her. It's just my sense of humour--she's delightful!
- I: Well maybe we'll end it there unless you think there's something . . .
- T: Can't think of anything unless you've honed in on something you want to expand on . . .
- I: No it feels like you tried to give a condensed version or a summary of the things that were important.
- T: See I had to choose . . . what was I going to use for you? Was it going to be jobs we've had, places we've lived, people we've known? Nah! I had to get what was important to Mary . . . and where I saw the changes. And it was in relationships that I saw her changing. I saw her change. Somebody else

might have seen her changing . . . on the ski hill. I don't know that! So that's all I can do for you, I think. (Tape was turned off but turned on again to pick up the following segment of conversation.)

- T: (talking about Mary deciding to become a priest) I just don't believe it! The effect that she's had on me . . . is that she would give up her safe job. I mean she could do it forever and they'd pay her! To give it up and go to school and be a priest! I mean of all the . . . I think that's really courageous! I mean we all know that it costs a fortune . . . living in Vancouver . . . never mind the lifestyle down in Vancouver! And for her to just say, "Well we're just going to play it a day at a time and . . ." And she is! I mean we go out to dinner--I pay for dinner because she's a student this time 'round--and I just say, "Well what are starving students doing these days? Let's go out for dinner." She tells me it's tight from time to time but it does not get her down. I send her home with meatballs and that's a big laugh for the next few weeks. Um . . . I see it as almost like a TV program. Like people do this . . . they meet each other in a bar or out to dinner or on the street or something and um . . . she gives me the fast synopsis. But as I say . . . we don't spend a lot of time together.
- I: But your point was that I said that you must enjoy watching the changes she's going through. You were saying that's very courageous for her to be doing . .
- T: I think it's very courageous . . . for Mary, it's very courageous!
- I: Why do you say "for Mary"?
- T: Because she's always been a very safe person. She doesn't take risks. I mean I think climbing a cliff of a mountain is taking a risk but Mary doesn't consider that a risk. Perhaps it's my observation of what I think is very risky. Um . . . for her to give up her safe job and actually try to do something to fulfill herself . . . beyond food, clothing, rent, doctors and dentists. She has given all that consideration to the far left field and has decided to focus her attention on doing something and preparing herself for something that will give her satisfaction. And she's willing to take a risk!

I: So that's really a change.

T: Oh my gosh that's a change for her! Because I can go right back to the beginning . . . where she didn't come here like some people travel and say, "Oh I like it here. I think I'll get a job." She was given the job before she got here. And when she came, she lived with me until she got another job at another place. And when she was working at, where ever it was, she was there a very long time . . . longer than anybody would have been at any one job. So underpaid and so boring! Because . . . I believe . . . of her relationship changes . . . she became aware that she needs much more in life. Much more than money can buy. And so she's got another look at money, I think. And she's taking what I consider a very large risk. I believe it's very courageous . . . to go to university. She doesn't have a mom and dad behind paying the bills . . . or lovers or husbands or anybody else. She's doing it all on her own! And I think that's something else! I really do! And she'll succeed because, as I say, she's totally reliable, totally dependable, she'll do it! You know . . . unlike me, she won't go around in seven thousand circles all wasting energy. She'll go right down the middle and she'll be fine. And she'll get that part out of the way and she'll be very useful! She already is a useful member of the community. She'll be much more effective on the other end . . . because people recognize the key. That's what she's in there doing . . . getting the degree. And hopefully it will . . . bang open doors for her. Because she's not religious. We went through that in our twenties. She's an optimistic community worker . . . if I can say that. She's quietly always doing good deeds. And she doesn't tell you about it. She just does them. I think she's a tremendous member of the society that we live in . . . now. Because she's not hooked on material things so she's not going to waste time accumulating them. She'll spend a lot more time with people than some people do. She's not a TV-watcher. She's an outdoor person. She's with people. And she's learning skills now . . . more and more skills to deal with the different kinds of people. And that's what I'm seeing in Mary . . . where she had a narrow little group of people she related with . . .

I: Mainly doing physical activity.

T: Physical activity and a lot of gay situations. Pretty well that was where she spent her social situation. I don't see that now. I see her expanding her

horizons. And enjoying herself! She's not just getting away from something to get into something else. She's including it all. She's getting more and more into her experience. But this latest move of hers to get a degree is something else! I'm just holding my breath for this one . . but I know she'll do it. We're watching her from afar. Twenty-five thousand . . . she says, "It's going to cost me about twenty-five thousand." I just grinned because it's going to cost her a lot more than that! She just doesn't know it yet! (laughs)

INTERVIEW WITH DONNA

Transcript of taped interview

(Donna has been a close friend for 8 years. In 1980, Mary joined an outdoor club for women and met Donna who was the organizer of the club. Donna is very athletic and a successful business woman in the community.)

- I: I'm trying to find out from somebody else's perspective . . . Mary gave me a long, three hour story of how she feels she's changed. She started about the time she was in that marriage and was going to Alanon . . . and starting into the church. She started there and ended in the present and told me the process of the ways in which she's changed . . . and the different experiences and people that have made a difference. It will really add a lot to the picture to have a third person . . . outsider's . . . point of view. The specific question that I would ask your help with is and it's personality change that I'm interested in . . . what I'm wondering from you is . . . what do you think is the really essential difference between Mary when you first knew her and Mary now? What are the really important and most significant things that are different about her personality?
- D: Basically I think . . . Mary herself hasn't changed that much! I think it was already there but it didn't surface. When I met her she was overweight--quite a bit overweight. And her going to the Womens' Weekend was a revelation in a way of . . . her being with other women and feeling safe to . . . to say, "Hey, this feels quite nice!" And that the world is not that scarey out there without a husband. So that's one thing and I think she really became aware at Alanon that she wasn't crazy. Because I can remember that her husband went to the point of having of having alcohol in the toilet--behind the toilet--and I can remember her a long time ago telling me that she had discovered that these bottles were in there and lifted the lid and said to him, "What's that?" And he said, "What do you mean?" "Well those bottles of alcohol." "Well," he said, "I don't see anything." And she started close to believing him . . that she was the one who was nuts and not him! And I think her going to Alanon . . . really she started thinking, "Hey, it's not me. It is him and I'm alright. I

can't help him." You know she couldn't play the rescuer or anything.

I also feel that she probably got married . . . many lesbians do that . . . our lifestyle is not easy! And I think she went through a rough period and decided, "Hey, it's easier to get married and I don't have all these hassles." And . . . I've thought of it too sometimes myself. It's hard, you know. Society is hard. When you get emotionally involved with a woman it's hard and I think she got a few hits in the stomach. A few women hadn't treated her very well. And she thought, "Well, fuck it! I'm just going to get married. This is much easier. . . . Because then I'm not as attached to the person. It doesn't hurt as much." It's true! So . . . and then on top of that she thought that perhaps she could save him. That he was going to stop drinking. But then realized through Alanon that she couldn't do anything about it and she wasn't crazy!

And then she learned from me . . . I was running at the time . . . She got really excited by hearing that I was running. I said, "Well, Why don't you come?" "Oh no, she said, "I can't keep up with the pace!" I said, "I don't care how fast you run anyway . . . even if we have to walk. It's just for the company." So me working at the Y. and her working just around the corner . . . we started meeting at twelve o'clock. I would leave at five to twelve and Mary would be downstairs and we'd go. . . . And . . . we started running. What I did notice was that right away . . . with the running . . . Mary started talking . . . and talking and talking and talking. You know, and as soon as the running was over she closed right up. . . . So we would do that every day . . . you know . . . 'go for it!' So we walked and we ran and I can remember the first time we ran around Stanley Park. That was quite something! I mean that was a goal that she thought she could never do. But she did it! And we did it! And . . . we kept running and she started losing weight. And the combination of her going to Alanon and her being with me . . . you know . . . a healthier lifestyle. . . . She was doing things out there with women. And I think at the beginning she looked up to me and thought, "Hey, there's a strong woman . . . doing all these things!" And slowly becoming part of it. Though the running . . . the, "Oh, I can do it too!"

And becoming a member of the outdoor club. I can remember her walking into the first meetings, you know, and being very shy and um . . . not really

participating. Mary's way of communicating was, you know, laughing at things . . . smiling a lot . . . which was a nervous laugh, right? And um . . . I think she really . . . for a long, long time felt she wasn't good enough, you know. She wasn't good enough . . . and then . . . a combination of her going to church I've always supported her going to church even though I'm not a very religious person at all. But I could see what it did to Mary I don't agree with what she says but I really do support her. I accept it and I respect it and it's wonderful that it does things . . . that it does help.

Then, unfortunately, she got into a relationship with B. . . .who has . . . her own problems . . . And Mary just. . . . was impressed with B. . . B. was quite a strong woman . . . and Mary would just shut up! And I told her right at the beginning. I said, "Mary if this relationship is ever going to last you'll have to start fighting back. Otherwise it's never going to last." And amazingly it lasted quite a long time! But . . . I don't think it was a healthy relationship. I'm sure when she looks back she will admit that she was stuck in there and didn't know how to get out. But I mean there was so much for her to learn at that same time. You can't do everything at the same time! She was running, she was doing this and doing that, going to Alanon and getting rid of this guy, who had a hard time leaving her and having little money . . . living in the house with B.

But Mary is also the kind of person that will keep searching . . . you know . . . little by little and when the time is right she will do it. And then nothing will stop her! Like, you know, she's going to school . . . we talked about it quite a bit and um I think that somehow our friendship that's perhaps why we are friends . . I'm not quite sure . . . is that . . . she has watched me going through a lot of changes myself . . . like getting a business. She has been incredibly supportive! I mean Mary has typed my stuff for two years. I would go to her office and cry my heart out . . . when things were not going right and Mary just kept saying, "Just keep going." And I would walk in and go out again and then she would type it again. She was really wonderful!

But I think she's a bright woman. She learns and is open to what is out there. . . . and I think she has that going for her . . . and I have that too. And in a way sometimes I think we're lucky that we have that thing, you know,

that other people often don't have. When I left my counselling, my counsellor said keep in mind that you can do certain things but it doesn't mean everybody else can.

I: Do you mean intelligence?

D: I don't know if it's intelligence. I think it's . . . well in a way it is . . . if that's what you want to call it. It's being receptive to what's around you and saying, "Hey, you know, there is a better life out there! There's better quality out there and . . . what is it, how do I get there?" . . . And keep going at it. . . . So she's taking risks. I think she more and more has been taking risks . . . and it has been paying off! It has been paying off and she sees it's paying off and then she's ready to do the next one. . . . And I think she's also realistic enough and can say, "Okay, there's a hurdle right there but if I get through that one, I'm going to go on anyway!" And I think that's . . . somehow . . . I don't know if we're born with it . . . or it's a certain kind of intelligence . . . of being more receptive . . .

I: Have you seen her doing that all along or is that something . . .

D: Yeah, little by little. Yeah . . . we'd talk about things . . . and she would ask me this and ask me that. I knew whatever I was going to say, Mary would need her own time to do it whenever she was going to do it. . . . But, at the same time, she would listen. She would be receptive.

I: I wonder if you would when I listened to the tape with Mary I tried to analyze what were the central things that changed . . . and I wonder if I told you what I thought was the kernal . . . I wonder if you could tell me if I've got it right.

D: Hm-hm.

I: I thought there were three main themes. She seemed at the beginning--which would be at the end of the '70's when she still hadn't left her husband--really governed by fear of not being acceptable to other people . . . and that her interactions with other people were governed by this fear about whether or not she was acceptable. And the other aspect

was that she didn't really feel that she was in control of her life that some how other people would determine whether or not she was okay. And then the third point would be . . . these are all at the beginning and the end would show some change in each of these three . . . or a lot of change in each of these three . . . and the third one would be that she had quite a protective shell around herself and she found it really difficult to share her feelings or say . . . negative feelings especially . . . to let other people know about them. Can you just comment on whether those are accurate or not accurate?

D: What comes to my mind . . . when you say "the end" Mary still has problems sometimes in saying bad things . . . or saying I don't like this or that. Sometimes I'm talking about things and she will brush it off . . . and that has angered me a little bit in the last . . . year. She will try to avoid uncomfortable feelings and just not acknowledge it . . . that it's there. To give an example, when she was going to move in to share the house with A., I told her that I was very uncomfortable with that [interviewee had just recently split up with A.]. She really didn't acknowledge it. She didn't want to talk about it. She was going to do it anyway. So . . . she still has trouble talking about those things. I can't sit her down . . . I approached it several times and she has trouble with that. She'll brush it off or say something like, "Oh well . . . it's your problem. . . I need to do this. I need to do that." I think because of the direction she's going, she's going to learn that better and better. You can't just avoid the bad things in life and I think she has been hiding a little bit behind it that's why . . . B. was such a strong character B. would be the person that she could hide behind too. And on the other hand also allow herself to breath a little bit and to explore her own ways to get out of it. Um I definitely think she's done an enormous amount of growing. Um . . . but I think . . . as I said at the beginning . . . a lot of things were there but were not out. She's learned to bring them to the surface.

I: Could you say what you mean by that?

D: She has strong values but I've known that right from the beginning. Um . . . the changes she's done in her life . . . I could see them happening. Because she's not the kind of person that would stand still, she would go

her own pace, but will continue to grow. Her religion, you know, really has given her an enormous amount of confidence.

I: So when I said that I saw her at the beginning as having a lot of fear about her own acceptability

D: She just felt that she was not good enough. . . . Not bright enough, not educated enough. No, especially not educated enough!

I: Could you give me an example of some situation that would be typical of her then that would show that she lacked confidence?

D: In a group for instance, she would agree with people rather than . . . like in a group situation such as the outdoor club . . . she would agree with them rather than having to come up with her own point of view . . and saying, "Well I'm sorry that you all think this and it's very interesting but this is how I feel!" There was no way Mary would do that! Now she would be a lot better! She would speak up. She has still trouble with it, you know, and also the way she expresses herself . . . but she will now . . . say it! I mean she far better communicates.

I: So . . she has more confidence in that she might still have some anxiety about giving her own point of view but she will do it.

D: Yeah. She will do it better. Yeah. Definitely!

I: And so were you saying that you thought that the church was part of this increasing confidence . . . making her feel better about herself.

D: Oh I think that what the church has done for her . . . nobody else in her life has done more than the church for her!

I: Specifically with the confidence issue, do you think?

D: Now she's capable . . . if she has no money at all . . . that um . . . somehow it will get there . . . and the goal she's going to go after, she's going to do it! I'm absolutely confident that she's going to do it!

I: So she has the confidence that she can go after a goal.

D: That's what she did not have when she was with her husband!

I: This confidence.

D: Uh-hm. I mean she now has become her own person . . . good or bad . . . um . . . she's far more joyful than before. She feels more comfortable being a lesbian. Stands up for it. I mean she stood up for her being a lesbian in the church at times . . . in very tricky situations. If she would have shut up she would have gone a little further ahead. She said, "No, that's how I feel." . . . Standing up for her beliefs as a lesbian and also with the church.

I: With telling other people that the church is important and not hiding it.

D: She's very open about that and . . . if people like it or not that's just too bad, that's what she's going to do and . . . that's what she's going to do!

I: And would she have done that in the beginning when you first knew her or has she grown into that?

D: She wouldn't say a thing. She wouldn't even stand up to B.

I: So you see that as gaining confidence and becoming her own person?

D: Hm-hm. (pause) But a combination of things . . . I think there's whole combinations where . . . becoming physically fit . . . being surrounded . . . and being receptive . . . becoming involved in the church . . . finally letting this man go . . . um yeah, I think those are three important ones.

I: The running, the church and letting the man go and . . . becoming confident as a lesbian.

D: Hm-hm. I think she's even grown to the point that she's proud being a lesbian--there's no way she's going to hide it.

- I: So, before she felt like she wasn't good enough. She wasn't acceptable and her sexuality was part of that.
- D: Hm-hm. Oh yeah. And also, she feels more attractive. Women are more attracted to her, she thinks. At that time she didn't think anyone could be attracted to her. And now she feels physically good. There is quite a difference between her physically now! I mean she's run several marathons! And I think that physical feeling--no matter who--will bring big changes!
- I: And you said that she thought that she wasn't bright enough Has that changed.
- D: Yeah, I mean for her going back to school . . . I think one of her main fears was . . . am I going to be passing exams to even get in there . . . and we had long conversations about it . . because . . you know, I feel a lack of that in my own thing. I kept saying to Mary, "Well when I went to Cap College . . . there are courses to show you how you do those things . . . how to write essays and how to look in the library and how to do this and you can prepare it! You know, you don't have to just jump into school like that! They can help you with it. And what have you got to lose anyway!" I somehow think that all this pushing around . . . you know, that I do for myself . . . that she's somehow picked up on that . . . and seeing that when you keep hammering at things, you can become successful.
- I: So you've been a kind of model.
- D: I think if you would ask her if I've been a model, I think in certain ways, she would probably respond, "Yes".
- I: And what you're saying too is that um . . . what you've been modelling is not to be defeated by obstacles but to keep trying . . .
- D: To keep going.
- I: And that she has taken risks. She would try something and succeed at it and then try something more.

D: Hm-hm. I think, you know, a very basic example would be her saying, "I could never run around Stanley Park. There's no way I could ever do that. It's just out of the question." And me saying, "Well why not. We'll walk for awhile and then we'll just jog." And finally, I will never forget the day that she did run around. I mean she just hugged me and danced around. And for her that was, "Yeah, I can do that too!" You know, "She can do it but I can do it too!"

I: So that's the feeling when she didn't feel good enough compared to other people . . . suddenly she felt 'as good as'.

D: Hm-hm!

I: So then her sexuality was okay and then . . . going to school . . that's when she found out that her . . .

D: At school she started getting "A's". I mean, I think she was flabbergasted! She was getting good marks!

I: So she became more confident about her ability.

D: Hm-hm. Hm-hm. Also seeing . . . I mean we've been very close friends for years and seeing that . . . that you have to work for things. You can be successful and that you have to keep going at it. I mean sometimes she'd say, "Jesus Christ I don't know how you do it!" I'd say, "I don't know how either but I'm just going to do it!" You know, and the next day I'd say, "Okay I've got another idea." "Jesus Christ," she'd say, "another idea! Well if you're not going to succeed, I don't know who is going to succeed!"

And somehow . . . she has been receptive around--and not only me--to saying, "That person is doing that and growing." For instance when I went for therapy and . . . she even came . . . but she . . . hardly said a word! She thought I was just wonderful . . in the family session. She didn't realize at that time that I didn't want her to say I was just wonderful. I wanted her to say, "She has problems with this and she has problems with that." (laughs) So . . . the therapist said, "Well what are you doing here anyway. You think your friend is wonderful!" (laughs) You know, and seeing

that I was picking up things from that . . . and when she was finally getting problems with B. . . . saying, "Hey! Go for counselling!" And slowly thinking, "Yeah, why shouldn't I go for counselling! Well I'm not going to go. B. is never going to go with me." "So well then you go by yourself!" And then her finally going . . . and here again being perceptive in what S. (therapist) was all about. And S. was the right therapist for her too! And I think that shows that she's a bright woman! And I think that's one of the key things. Being able to pick those things up and . . . go! I mean, I know another person who's quite an intelligent woman . . who has more education than Mary . . and knows everything really well . . could be your therapist sitting there . . but does fuck-all herself! Nothing! It's very safe to say, "Oh well, you do this and you do that and this is how it's supposed to be." But then doing it yourself is something else.

I: So Mary has been the one to take the risks.

D: Yeah. On shakey ground, but she would continue. (long pause)

I: Can I just check one other thing? I said that I thought there was this aspect at the beginning where she didn't think that she had control in her life . . that it was just up to other people and circumstances to let her know whether she was okay or not . . . and part of her change process is to take the control into her own hands . . and for her to take the risks and for her to see that there is something she can do to make her situation different. Can you say . . .

D: Hm-hm. I also think that she came from a very protected family. . . . An only child. Uh . . her Dad meant very much to her. And they were very, very protective. I mean she didn't miss out on anything . . when she was a child. I mean perhaps they didn't have a very rich life--moneywise--but I think she did get attention and was . . . protected . . felt protected. And probably also . . when she finally did go away . . it was not that easy. It's a hard world out there! And then she got hit in the stomach by a few women . . that didn't treat her that fairly and when that happens at the beginning you're vulnerable at that time! And I can understand very well why she got married. There are lots of lesbians that do that. You know, it's too hard out there!

- I: I think you've really given me a lot. Can I summarize and see if I can capture the main points of what you're saying. So . . . okay . . . you're saying that . . . (laughs) . . . if I can capture it! She started off in a marriage to a man that was kind of an escape from some previous bad experiences with women and what she needed to do was find a women's community and accept her lesbianism and she did that. And that made a big difference to finding herself an acceptable person. And at the same time she started running and she learned that she could . . . run around Stanley Park and she could accomplish things too.
- D: She accomplished a marathon!
- I: She accomplished a marathon and at the same time changed her appearance . . . and she began to feel even more acceptable to herself . . . that she could accomplish a marathon. And then she was in a difficult relationship with a dominant partner who she tended to hide behind but gradually she was able to stand up more to that person . . . and eventually left that relationship. And that she went back to school and . . . um . . . developed more confidence in her ability to succeed. Um . . . and that she had . . . perhaps you're saying most importantly . . . she had an attitude that she wanted to grow, she wanted to take risks and she wouldn't quit. And that in some way you were a role model for her there to try for a better life for herself . . . to try to grow, move forward and if she encountered obstacles not to be defeated but to find ways around . . . and to . . . have courage, I guess, that even though she was anxious that she would--with heart in hand--go ahead and try something. And then as she accomplished more things, she began to grow in confidence.
- D: And I think the church. You know she said one day she was lying in bed and God told her to do this and just to go and do it. And she's absolutely convinced that she has to do it! And that will pull her through her studies. It will pull her through being broke. It will pull her through a lot of things.
- I: So there's a lot of strength there.

D: Oh absolutely! The strength that she has in her religion um . . . more than from anything else!

I: And the main effect is to give her confidence?

D: Hm-hm.

I: So we've seen mainly a change from somebody who was not confident to somebody who is confident. And what you said about this business of having a shell around herself and not wanting to show her bad feelings . . . that's still true of her. She's shown improvement there. She'll defend her sexuality in places where it's difficult.

D: Where she feels attacked.

I: Where she feels attacked. . . . particularly. But it remains an area of difficulty for her to speak up when she has some negative feelings in a situation.

D: Hm-hm. Hm-hm.

I: But that there has been progress there too?

D: Yeah. There has been progress but still I sometimes feel a little bit frustrated. I would like her sometimes to say, "Yeah, I hear what you're saying and I can understand it's uncomfortable for you, but" And instead of getting that um . . . she throws out things that cut off the conversation. You know how you can just have short sentences that . . you know . . . your conversation's finished. And I just think, "Oh well, she's probably just going to leave. But I think perhaps she going to learn more of that when she's going to go to the School of Theology . . or something . . I don't know. Um . . as being one of her closest friends, I think she that . . that's a pity. Perhaps I'm not very good at it myself either. I really try! And um . . . moving in there was um I think her stubbornness is sometimes well placed but sometimes isn't either. Probably we all have that also. But . . um . . she's a very loyal person. Very loyal . . . and Mary is the kind of person . . . she would say, "Okay, I need this or I

need that." There's no question about it! We are always there . . no matter what happens. We've grown so much . . . over the last ten years. Yeah . . . there's a strong loyalty there. Friendship. And those situations . . . her living there those are uncomfortable things . . . but will not influence our friendship.

I: I feel like we've got a pretty complete picture . . . do you think there's any major thing missing?

D: Um . . . no . . . actually it's exciting for me to have seen her grow . . . because I've done a lot of growing myself and a friend of mine has grown also in her own way. And I think that's very exciting!

QUESTIONNAIRE: REPLY FROM THE RECTOR

Transcribed from original document received from the rector at Mary's church.

What are the most significant personality changes you have noticed in Mary since you have known her? It will be most helpful if you can give specific examples of situations to illustrate and make your points more vivid--giving examples of situations which typify Mary's stance in the present and when you first knew her.

I have delayed in answering this questionnaire, because I found that I had to spend a fair amount of time in reflection in order to answer this with some degree of accuracy.

I have known Mary as a parishoner for a number of years (7-8?) and have seen her on regular occasions in a social setting. I think that I can address two areas of growth in her life.

When I first met Mary I found her to be somewhat tentative and even shy in her personal relationships. Over the years this hesitancy has been significantly replaced by a much stronger sense of who she is as a person; this has enabled her to interact with others in a much more positive and creative manner. She has taken charge of the Servers' Guild in the parish - no small task - and has related well to all of them (ranging in age from 10-25+). She is admired by the servers for her organizational skills, her clarity and fairness in dealing with them.

Secondly, I have watched with interest her growing awareness of what she ought to be doing with her life. She has shown strong

initiative in going back to school (where she has done exceptionally well in her academic work). There has been a growing understanding that she is called upon to serve people, to teach, to be an enabler, to be caring and supportive. This has led Mary to believe that she is being called upon to be a priest of the Church. Her first interview with the examining chaplains (a kind of selection committee) was disappointing in that the chaplains felt that she was not yet focused enough to pursue her vocation. I believe that she was intimidated by that committee and found it difficult to articulate the vision that she has. However, this has not deterred her and she has pursued her vocation further by approaching another bishop in the province. This shows resolve and strength of character that was hidden in her psyche until recently.

If I can be of any further help, please feel free to contact me.

APPENDIX III

EARLY RECOLLECTIONS

1) (age 4 years)

My earliest childhood memories are holidays with my parents and my aunt and uncle--the five of us. It just was a happy time . . . um . . . being an only child. And my father and my uncle--the three of us would go to the beach and just spend hours there digging . . . and making sandcastles. I can see the wind. It was always windy. Lincolnshire is very windy. And the sand would be blowing so you would get a wind tan rather than a suntan. I'd probably be about four or five years old. That was before I went to school so it may may be a little bit earlier than that actually because I went to school about 4 1/2 . . . years old.

(soft voice) It was a very happy time. A time of warmth. We're laughing, warm . . . and having ice-cream. We had a good time. And the ocean I can hear the ocean.

2) (age 4,5,6)

I used to spend a lot of time I can see it now . . . the backyard. . . . We had a backyard that was enclosed with a hedge--down each side and across the bottom so it was very private. And I had a sandbox. I used to spend hours there. (in a soft voice) It was really peaceful . . . and quiet in the back garden. And I would make little roadways in the sand. And I liked Dinkey toys. So I'd make little roads and I had a lot of little plastic houses--the kind that you stick together and paint--like model airplanes. I used to make those and put them in the sand box in little rows and then break little bits off the hedges--privet hedges--and use them for trees. I used to spend hours doing that--perfectly happy just to be by myself playing in the garden. My little garden and my sandbox.

It's a lot like meditation except when you're a child you don't think you're meditating--you're only playing. When I did pottery in my late twenties, I had that same feeling of peacefulness, and sort of relaxation and meditation.

I know that I played with other children when I was little. I remember children in the garden but when I look at the garden now, there's nobody in it. It's just me . . . playing peacefully in my sandbox there. There's a tree at the end with a swing. I used to sit on the swing. In the shed at the end I had a rabbit--a white rabbit.

I was just thinking that it's a very safe secure little world . . . that I had there. Now I can see some children there. There were some children that came and played. I remember now. I can see . . . Gill. . . and there was some boys down there . . . that lived down the back lane . . . they used to come into . . . but not very often. There was a girl next door too . . . Janet. I used to look through the hedge. We used to talk through the hedge to each other. Sometimes she'd come and play.

I don't know. It seems I spent a lot of time by myself.

It was a really secure place thinking about it now . . . those were high hedges but for a little kid they must have been high! I know that the hedges down one side were six foot! And on the other side they were about four foot, I think . . . and then there was a fence at the end . . . where the shed was.

Hm yeah . . . a really secure place. And I spent all my childhood there because we didn't move until I was twenty years old. So all my childhood was spent . . . basically in that back yard . . . because it was a safe place. Hm! (soft smile)

3) (age ten)

I had seven cousins who were about my age--and they were all boys . . . and when we did go to the seaside, we usually went with some of them. So a lot of my time was spent playing with boys--early on. And I don't think I

felt that I was different from them. It was like we were all together. We were all the same. We all played together. We played hide and seek or kick the football around or whatever. It's not that I was a girl and they were boys, we were just family, just friends.

(after being asked to recount a specific scene)

Yeah . . . We're in the field. . . It's called the Ironstone. Actually it's an old quarry. It's all grassed over. We used to play there a lot. I can see it now. There's long grass. Lots of nice smells from the blossoms on the trees. And I'm with probably some of my cousins or some boys . . . I can't remember now . . maybe boys from school but there was about . . . four or five boys and myself. I think I was about eleven. No, ten! I was about ten. I remember we were out . . . just kicking the ball around. And some girls were coming across the field too. And all of a sudden the boys that I was with, they all said, "Oh look! Girls! Let's grab them . . . and kiss them or something! (nervous laugh) And they started to chase after them. And I just joined in the chase. It was like I was one of the boys. It never occurred to me that I was a girl! (nervous laugh) And I remember chasing these girls--with the boys--and we sort of caught up with them and we grabbed one each. And the one that was closest to me, I remember grabbing her and pulling her down to the ground and trying to kiss her. And she was laughing. They were all laughing. And all of a sudden she just screamed and said, "Ugh, you know, you're a girl!" And pushed me off. (nervous laugh) And I just remember it was an awful shock. I suddenly thought, "Well!" (laughs) I was just being one of the boys and all of a sudden I realized I wasn't a boy! Or she made me realize I wasn't.

I remember it was kind of a rude awakening. It has always stuck in my mind. I felt most peculiar! She just ran away and everybody just sat up and looked a bit sort of stupid! (nervous laugh) I think that's where I began to feel sort of a bit strange and alienated. I suddenly didn't sort of fit in anywhere. I didn't fit in the boys' world and I didn't fit in the girls' world either because I didn't feel like I was one of them and all of a sudden I wasn't one of the boys!

4) (age 12 approximately)

I remember my mom . . . she was very controlling . . and I seem to remember finally just reaching the end of my tether, I guess. I just blew up at her one day. It must have been . . my mom's very short . . she's only about 4'11" . . so I finally was taller than her . . . I remember that because I remember that I was looking down at her . . and I just really blew up! I just went absolutely totally out of control. I can't remember what it was that she said. It just seemed that she was always trying to control me. She sent me to my room which was fine because I was going there anyway. I remember going to my room and being so damn angry!

(after being asked to try to describe it in the present tense) Okay, I'm in my room and I was . . I'm just shaking. I'm so angry I'm just shaking with rage! I keep walking back and forth. And I shout . . I'm shouting at her. Why don't you leave me alone. Why are you always bugging me! I want to hit something! I punch the pillows and I pull all the drawers out. (nervous laugh) Oh that was it! I pull all the drawers out of my dresser. It has five drawers and I yank them all out! I'm taking all the clothes out of the drawers and I'm throwing them around the room. . . I'm shouting.

And then I finally felt . . . I feel calmer now. I'm calming down and I feel kind of . . . a little bit embarrassed and a little bit scared because I've never been out of control before and it's such a strange feeling. It kind of scared me. I could easily have killed her! I feel kind of silly. I'm putting everything back in the drawers . . and I put the drawers back in again. My mom is shouting up the stairs, "Wait 'til your father comes home!" And I just tidy up the room and I sit on the bed. . . . and just wait for my dad.

My dad comes home. . . . He comes in the room and . . . he just looks really sad and he says, "What's up then! Why did you upset your mom?" And I said, "Well she's always nagging at me She's always . . bugging me . . She's always . . . nagging at me. She won't leave me alone!" And my dad . . he doesn't get angry! He surprised me, 'cause he said . . "She . . uh . . she's not very well. You have to understand, your mom's not very well . . and so she doesn't have much patience. So we have to just

try and be nice to her and get along with her." That's all I remember. I just remember being surprised that he didn't stick up for her and tell me off. He just looks kind of sad and tired. He just patted me on the head and said . . . I can't remember now . . . just, he was okay about it.

I just remember that was the first time I'd ever been out of control and it really scared me. I think I sort of realized that if you get that out of control, you could kill somebody or do something really stupid. That's all I can remember about that.

5) (age 11-12 years)

(whole memory told in a soft voice) I don't like this one. It kind of makes me uncomfortable. It always comes up so I probably should tell you about it. And that is . . when I was I think about 11 or 12 . . . and it's at the seaside . . . which for me has always been a good time . . . holidays at the seaside. And I'd got a . . . it was like a surfboard-thing. So I'm on this surfboard, paddling in about . . probably 3 foot of water . . . along the water's edge. I'm taking the paddle board back to where I rented it from. . . . And my mom and dad are waiting. They are further down the beach. So I'm paddling away from them . . up to where I rented the paddle board. And there's a guy standing in the water! And I remember looking at him. He had this weird look on his face. . . . And I'm thinking, "He looks a bit weird!" And then . . . he exposes himself. And I just remember . . . ugh . . . I feel really sick! And I'm not quite sure what I'm looking at because I'd never seen anything like that before except . . . I just know by the look on his face that what he is doing is something weird! And I'm really scared! (soft voice) I'm really scared of this man. And I'm paddling fast to get away from him. And he's walking behind me in the water and I keep looking around and he's still there and he's still exposing himself. And there doesn't seem . . . there's nobody around! It's a huge, huge beach. And there's not many people there. So I keep paddling fast to get away from him . . . and I fall off the board.

I'm not quite sure what happened in all the panic but I remember being under the water and the board's over my head . . . and I can't get out! And I'm trying to get up and I keep banging my head on the paddle board . . and so I

try to get around the side of it to come up for air . . but the way the waves are going, it keeps every time I try to come up, the paddle board is over me. I don't know where the man is. I can't see him anymore but I'm trapped under the paddle board and I can't breathe. And . . uh . . . I just remember being . . I'm really panic-stricken. I can hardly breathe and I'm running out of air. . . . And I start to cry. And I suddenly realize I realize I'm going to die! (soft voice) This is it! And I keep trying. I keep trying to get out but I can't. And then I have no more air left. . . . so I just sit down on the sand, under the water and I know I'm going to die. I feel upset, 'cause my mom and dad will be really upset. And then I just give up. I just open my mouth and let the water come in. And it feels really peaceful. All of a sudden it doesn't matter anymore. I know it's okay. It's okay to die like that. It's not going to hurt or anything. And then everything's black.

And now I'm on the beach. And there's a man . . I don't know . . just a man . . and he's hitting me in the middle of the back and I'm coughing. And then I'm breathing. And then I look around and I'm still alive. I'm surprised. I don't know how I got there. I guess somebody pulled me out. And the other man has vanished. And I feel really uh . . scared. And I thank the man that pulled me out. I get the paddle board . . it's up on the shore now . . and I get the paddle board and I take it to the rental place and I walk back to my mom and dad. (clears throat) And I have to pretend that everything's okay and smile and be happy. I daren't tell them because I think my mom'll be angry. She'll be angry and . . she'll be angry at me . . . and so . . . and so I don't say anything.

6) (15 years)

This was in the last year at that school so I would have been 15. In fact, I stayed for an extra year--that's what caused the fuss. Um . . . there was one teacher I didn't get along with--Miss Spaulding. I can remember her now--nasty old bitch!

(after being reminded to speak in the present) She's a real . . what you call a spinster bitch . . tall . . . she always wears black. . . God, she was horrible! She is horrible! I'm going back to school for an extra year because I failed

the college exams so I had to go back to school for a year. . . . and they put me in her class. So it's the first day of that term . . . and she's never liked me and I've never liked her. Anyway I'm going in the classroom and I sit down in her class and she comes in and starts to take the register. And she gets down at the end of the register--because I'm at S. She gets to the end--Mary S. And I put my hand up, "Here, Miss". And . . . (sighs) . . . "I'm not having you in my class! Get out!" . . . "But I'm supposed to be in your class! There isn't any other class for me to go in." . . . "Get out of my classroom!" she said. My heart's thumping really fast. I'm going red and everybody in the class is looking around at me and I'm feeling really trapped and embarrassed. There's no reason why she shouldn't want me there. It's just a personal thing! She, for some reason, just doesn't like me.

I'm so horrified that I'm sort of stuck in my seat. (nervous laugh) I'm afraid . . . I'm just paralyzed with embarrassment. People are snickering and looking at me. And finally I get out of my desk and get towards the front of the classroom. I was sitting at the back because I knew there was going to be trouble anyway. So I'm getting towards the front of the class and she's just mad as hell! And I finally get up to her and I . . . finally (clears throat) look at her and say, "You have no right . . . to make me leave!" And then she grabs me. She grabs ahold of me by the back of my sweater. She's very tall. And she opens the door and throws me out . . . across the hall . . . right across the corridor. And I hit the wall on the other side and I start to cry.

And then there's . . . Miss Saddler is coming along the corridor. She was my teacher from last term. She's really nice! And she says, "What's the matter Mary? Why are you crying?" And so I tell her and she's really angry! And she opens Miss Spaulding's door and tells her to come out. And the old bat comes out. (nervous laugh) And the two of them start screaming and yelling. It's just . . . it was terrible! I don't know what to do I'm so embarrassed. I'm really pleased Miss Saddler is sort of sticking up for me. She had me for a year and we got along really well. And the two of them are really screaming at each other and I don't know what to do. I want to run but I'm too paralyzed. And now Miss Saddler starts crying . . . so now I'm feeling really bad! She's crying, I'm crying. Nobody

ever makes Miss Spaulding cry! I think she's just a . . . towering rage there!

.....

And then Miss Spaulding goes back in her room and slams the door . . and Miss Saddler takes me to the Head Mistress's room . . . and she's crying and telling the Head Mistress about what was going on . . or something . . can't remember now. The Head Mistress . . I can't remember her name . . Miss Fenton! Yeah! She was kind of fat and short and kind of she was a fair person. She was okay. She didn't take sides. Anyway she listened and um then she sent me outside. I sat outside. Then she sent for Miss Spaulding and Miss Spaulding went in. Then there was more yelling. (nervous laugh) (sniff) I wondered who was winning! And then . . um . . . I was sent home for the rest of the day. And when I came back for the next day, I was sent to Miss Saddler's class. So I repeated my last year in the same class!

I never really understood why . . . why she hated me so much! What did I do? There just seems to be certain people that I upset . . . certain teachers . . like her. I don't what it is. I must push some buttons in them or something. God was she mad! (makes sound) And I met another one just like her when I was in nursing school.

7) (18 years)

When I went into nursing school . . . I was there for a year. I couldn't hack it. for the same reason. There was another old bat there . . just the same! Another Miss Spaulding! Tall, skinny . . . black . . . they always wear black! Old bitch spinster! (laughs) Caricatures! You only see them in movies! In England, they exist!

(asked if there was a particular scene) Well two that I remember from nursing school. One . . this old bitch who used to perch on a high stool . . she was a tutor. I don't remember what she tutored but I know I was terrified of her! Yeah, she asks me a question . . . that I can't answer. I'm feeling really embarrassed because I should know the answer . . and I'm trying to look to Sue. Sue's my friend . . . who's also in nursing school and

she's really bright. I'm not as bright as her. I remember wishing I was as bright and as fast as her with answers. Everybody liked . . . her because she was quick with her answers . . . where I always had to think.

I'm trying to think of the answer to the question . . . and I know it but I'm getting panicked. Stupid damn woman! She's yelling at me. She's yelling at me, "You should know the answer to this. Come now child. Think! Think! Where are your brains!" And I just feel like saying, "Will you shut up and let me think!" But I try to sort of drown out her yelling while I try to think of the answer. I know the answer to the question . . . if she'd just shut up and give me a minute to think but she doesn't. She keeps putting me down all the time . . . telling me I'm stupid and slow and what the hell am I doing in nursing school! And now I've forgotten what the question is and I'm just feeling totally depressed and I want to cry. and I just want to get out of there.

And the other students are starting to giggle. (sniffs) I wish somebody would just tell me the answer but uh I just feel like I'm shrinking and I want to hide under the desk somewhere. She's making me feel like a damn fool! and she just finally . . . she just keeps on and on and on and makes me feel so stupid and small and insignificant and inferior. (big sigh) Then she dismisses me like I'm not worth bothering with. and asks somebody else.

8) (18 years)

And another similar thing was . . . was a male tutor. He was a gay guy I suppose--although I didn't realize it at the time. . . . I don't know what his problem was. I always remember . . . this is quite funny. (laughs) . . . It was a lab . . . where we had a piece of tubing. A piece of rubber tube. a catheter, I suppose! (sounds surprised) It would be a catheter . . . something like that. . . . that we had to insert in something . . . I can't remember . . . but I had to put it into something and it wouldn't go in. . . . and so he was busy saying something about, "How would you what would you do to get it in?" or something. . . . And I knew the answer was to make it moist! I know I had to wet it. (nervous laugh) I knew that! Oh you want it in the present tense!

So I've got this stupid catheter in my hand and he's bellowing at me, (nervous laugh) "Well, what would you do to put it in? What would you do?" And I'm frantically looking around because I know I need to wet it. I also know it has to be sterile . . . so I can't just stick it under the tap. and I'm trying to think "What the hell . . . What am I supposed to do with this thing?" I'm trying to remember what it said in the book. I know I've read it and I should know it. . . . And again, everybody's staring at me. I'm feeling very hot and my face is going red and my heart's thumping and I'm getting my mind is going blank! 'Cause he's badgering me with words. He's going on and on . . . about how stupid I am and . . . "Think! Use your brains! You haven't got any brains!" . . . Same barrage of put downs! And I know I have to wet the damn thing. I have to wet it. (nervous laugh) And I want to stick it in my mouth and wet it . . and I know if I stick it in my mouth and wet it . . that's not the thing to do! He's going to go berserk! And in all the panic and in the I don't know what to do! So in the end I wet my fingers (nervous laugh) . . . (puts fingers in mouth and wets fingers and moistens imaginary tube) . . . like that . . and wet the end of the damn thing. Of course . . . the whole class cracked up laughing. I laughed too. (laughs) I didn't know what else to do so I laughed. Boy was he mad! (soft voice) He was so angry. He was so angry. 'Cause the stupid thing's supposed to be sterile and I wetted it with spit. Worse than if I'd gone to the tap and wetted it! (sniffs)

Anyway, he ordered me out of the classroom. (loud voice) "Get out of the classroom! Get out of my classroom you stupid . . girl!" I think he said "stupid girl". "Stupid student, you're not fit to be a nurse. Get out! (strong emotion) How did you get in here in the first place!" (derogatory laugh) (sniffs)

So I was sent out of his class. Sue was my best friend. She was furious. And I said when she came out, "That's it! I'm quitting! I'm quitting Sue. I've had it. Why do they keep picking on me?" Sue was really sympathetic. She said, "If you quit, I'm quitting." So we did . . the same day . . together. (tears) (sniffs) I'm going to cry! (sniffs) (laughs) Poor Sue. She shouldn't have quit. She would have been a good nurse. But she did. We both quit . . (soft laugh) . .

the same day . . because of that.

9) (age 12 or 13)

The boys' school played soccer and the girls' school played netball. . . . God knows why anyway! . . And we shared the same field. So I remember I went to ask this teacher I think it was a man teacher . . that took Ph.Ed. I can't remember him too well. I remember going to him and saying . . . that I didn't like "I don't like netball very much. I'd just . . I'd really rather play soccer and I was wondering if I could play soccer with the boys team?" (sniffs) And the usual response . . (cynical laugh) . . He just blew up and told me not to be so stupid! "You stupid little girl! Girls play netball, boys play soccer. Don't be so stupid! . . .

Anyway, I was a bit crestfallen I remember at the time (reminded to stay in the present) I'm wondering why. I don't understand why . . why I can't play soccer. Why do the boys play soccer and the girls play netball? What does it matter? I don't understand why . . . and I feel sort of crestfallen . . and sad. . . . disappointed. And I go home and I ask my mom . . and she agrees. . . . She agrees with me. I should be allowed to play soccer. .

. . . . So I have another try. We also have another woman P.E. teacher. I seemed to think she was fairly nice. . . . so I ask her if I can play soccer. She says, "You don't have the right boots to play soccer. You have to have soccer boots." "But I do have some boots! I have some little brown boots. They're not soccer boots but they would do." I can't remember what she said. She made some excuse and the next day I brought my boots to show her. and I asked the boys if I could play soccer with them. and they said, "Okay!" (sounds surprised) It was okay with them! (sniffs) So I went back to the teacher . . "I have my boots and the boys say it's okay. I can play soccer with them." She goes and talks to the male P.E. teacher (sniffs) He's mad! He's shouting at her. He points at me. I can't hear what they're on about . . . but they're shouting. Oh no! Now more trouble (nervous laugh) (sniffs) (soft voice) Now I'm going to get it! . . . He comes over to me and he starts yelling, "I told you before. You're a girl. Girls don't play soccer!" And I start

to cry. I just feel really beaten. (sighs) Just really low . . . and beaten! I just can't win. I don't want to play netball. It's a stupid game . . or field hockey . . . that's the other thing we're supposed to play. I hate field hockey! I always get wacked in the ankles with that stupid stick!

So I stand on the sidelines there and watch the boys playing football . . or soccer, I mean. I'm feeling really . . . just left out. Just . . . confused and sad . . . and disappointed. I just don't understand this. It just doesn't make any sense. Why can't girls play soccer? Nobody will tell me why! Everybody just says, "Girls play field hockey and netball and boys play soccer." But why? If I ask why, I just get yelled at. So what's the point of asking why! What's the point of asking about anything! If you ask why, you get yelled at. So you might as well just keep your mouth shut and just listen. Just keep all your thoughts and feelings to yourself. . .

(long pause) Hm! (soft smile) . . That's probably when I started to become rather withdrawn. I didn't bother to ask any questions. (soft voice) In class I wouldn't ask questions anymore. I just . . . it seemed when you asked a question, you got yelled at. Put down or and I started to learn just to keep my yap shut. (soft laugh) Just listened to what they said. Disagreed with them and didn't say anything. Hm! Yeah! . . That's what the soccer picture was about . . "on the outside looking in". (nervous laugh) (sniffs) Hm! (soft smile)

APPENDIX IV

SUBJECT CONSENT FORM

Project: A Description of the Process of Becoming a More Substantial Self in Relationship to Others

I hereby agree to participate in the investigation conducted by Kathy Brunton (phone number) under the supervision of Dr. L. Cochran concerning the process of becoming a more substantial self in relationship with others. I understand that I am free to ask any questions and that I am free to withdraw from participation at any time.

I understand that a variety of methods will be used to develop a detailed description of my own experience in becoming a more substantial self in relationship with others. I agree to taped interviews, use of relevant personal documents, testing and interviews with family and friends.

I understand that tapes will be erased upon completion of research and that published transcriptions of taped material and reproductions of personal documents will delete or alter identifying data to protect confidentiality.

I have received a copy of this consent form.

Date

Signature of Subject

INTRODUCTORY LETTER TO FRIENDS

Dear _____,

I am doing a case study for my Master's thesis at U.B.C on the process of change in adult life. Mary _____ has agreed to tell me about her life and to have me interview her friends to get their perspective. Mary will be contacting you to ask you if you feel comfortable contributing and to let you know that she has given her permission. Provided you do feel comfortable, I would appreciate it if you would complete an answer to the question I have attached to this letter.

Your perspective will make an invaluable contribution to this study. Don't hesitate to call if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Kathy Brunton

RESPONSE FROM OUTSIDE EXPERT

To whom it may concern,

Kathy Brunton asked me to act as an outside reader to critique her thesis. I am a registered psychologist and have been working at Kwantlen College for the past 9 years.

Kathy gave me her "results" section to read as well as all her supporting documents, including her subject's journal which is being eliminated from the thesis for reasons of confidentiality. The first document I read was Kathy's interview with her subject. I read the interview watching for areas where Kathy might have been leading her subject with questions. I could find none. Kathy conducted the interview in a professional manner and simply allowed her subject the freedom to relate her experience.

When I read Kathy's results section, I was observing her interpretation of the supporting documents and watching to see if her summary of her subject's history was accurate. It was. Kathy simply related what was told to her and summarized it chronologically. I could find no evidence of Kathy's misinterpreting or exaggerating the data. She included all the information written in the journal. Nothing from the supporting documents was omitted from the summary.

As an outside reader, I am happy to say that Kathy's interview with her subject was unbiased and that her summary of her data was accurate.

Yours sincerely,

Betsy Spaulding

APPENDIX V: LIFELINE GRAPHS



