

THE EXPERIENCE OF REWORKING SHAME
THROUGH PSYCHODRAMA

by

Raymond de Vries

B.A., Brock University, 1992

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

Department of Educational and Counselling Psychology and Special Education

We accept this thesis as conforming to
the required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

September, 1999

© Raymond de Vries, 1999

In presenting this thesis in partial fulfilment of the requirements for an advanced degree at the University of British Columbia, I agree that the Library shall make it freely available for reference and study. I further agree that permission for extensive copying of this thesis for scholarly purposes may be granted by the head of my department or by his or her representatives. It is understood that copying or publication of this thesis for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Department of Educational and Counselling Psychology and Special Education,
The University of British Columbia
Vancouver, Canada

Date Oct. 5/99

ABSTRACT

The focus of the present research study was to explore the experience of reworking shame through psychodrama. Using an existential-phenomenological multiple case study design, the stories of three people were articulated. In depth semi-structured interviews were tape recorded, transcribed, and analyzed for themes. In total 15 themes emerged and provided the basis for constructing first person narrative "stories" to summarize the findings for each individual. Themes were clustered into three categories and discussed in the final chapter. The three categories were: the experience of shame, the experience of the enactment and the experience of change following the enactment. Limitations of the study, implications for counselling and ideas for future research were also considered.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	ii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
ASSUMPTIONS	vi
 CHAPTER 1	
INTRODUCTION	1
Significance of the Study	4
 CHAPTER 2	
LITERATURE REVIEW	5
Introduction	5
Affect theory	6
Shame	9
Repair of shame	14
Psychodrama	16
Key terms	16
Key Concepts	18
Psychodrama research	23
Summary	25
 CHAPTER 3	
METHOD	27
Story overlap - Trustworthiness	30
Participant demographics	32
Sampling Procedure	32
Phenomenological interviews	33
Data analysis	34
Summary	36

		iv
CHAPTER 4	THE THREE STORIES	37
	Introduction	37
	Narrative summaries	38
	Josh	38
	Johnson	46
	Neil	63
	Summary	71
CHAPTER 5	DISCUSSION	72
	Introduction	72
	Discussion of themes	73
	Experience of shame	73
	Experience of the enactment	85
	Experience of change following the enactment	97
	Summary of themes	108
	Implications for theory	108
	Implications for counselling practice	110
	Limitations of the study	113
	Future research	114
	Conclusion	115
REFERENCES		118
APPENDIX A		123
APPENDIX B		125

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Writing this thesis has been a lengthy and arduous process. At times it has even been painful. Besides discovering more about shame and psychodrama, I have learned more about myself. This has come about through the writing process itself but especially through in depth self reflection made possible because of the stories of my coresearchers.

With this in mind I want to thank my three coresearchers who took the time to share a piece of their life's story with me. Their stories and the stories of many others who I have had contact with over the years reminds me both of the human condition and the strength with which people continue to face it each day.

I would also like to acknowledge my parents for the very important role they have played in my life. Without them I would not have learned shame in the first place and without their love I might not have had the courage to face it.

Additionally I would like to thank my psychodramatic community and particularly Marv and Patricia for "getting the ball rolling" as far as facing shame directly and actively. It has been through my own process of dealing with shame that this thesis has been possible. I especially want to acknowledge Marv Westwood for the supervisory role he has played for me while writing this thesis but even more importantly for the time he has taken to mentor me. In part, through his reflecting and mirroring I have been able to address my shame "face forward".

My wife Nancy has been extremely patient and supportive throughout this thesis process and it is with her that I presently start and finish each day. My friend Holly has been very helpful with regard to proofreading and editing as well as has been very supportive. I am grateful to Bill Borgen who as a member of my committee I always knew was willing to help and was ready with an encouraging word. Marla Arvay provided me with the idea of the narrative "tale" which helped shape the presentation of the findings.

Finally I want to acknowledge that in my most difficult times of processing and understanding shame, both for my coresearchers but particularly myself, my relationship with God grounded me in the present and helped me to remember my place here on earth. It is to God that I give the glory for my ability to write this document.

ASSUMPTIONS

INTRODUCTION

Within the framework of qualitative research is the notion of researcher bias. It has long been held that researcher bias impacts the nature of a qualitative study in a number of ways. First, the biases held by the researcher may interfere with the method of information gathering in such a way as to skew the data as it is reported. Second, researcher bias may interfere with the interpretation of such data.

Researcher bias is imbedded in the beliefs, attitudes and values the researcher holds. The assumptions a researcher has about the world necessarily colours the ways in which they see the world and hence make sense of it. Qualitative research has long held the tradition of (bracketing) assumptions (Holstein & Gubrium, 1994; Valle & King, 1978). The premise of bracketing is that the researcher set aside their assumptions (or make them explicit) in order to objectively assess the data as it is presented.

In this preamble to the main body of the present study, my goal is to share my own story in order to provide the reader with a reference point from which to gauge my assessment of the data. In doing so, my intention is that the reader have a better understanding of the meaning I make of my own experiences within a similar context in order to shed some light on my viewpoint.

This is my story about shame in my life. I make no pretensions about any of it. It is my truth and mine only. I write this story as a testimony of my life and the role shame has played in it as well as a testimony of the therapeutic work I have done around shame particularly in psychodrama.

My 'Bad' Feeling

I grew up in a family of five in a medium sized town in urban Ontario. From the outset of my life I have been indoctrinated and inculturated in a Christian community made up of immigrants from Europe who were interested in seeking a new life in the land of golden opportunity. I am the eldest child of three and the only boy and lived a life of fruits and suffering probably on par with most people who try to get by in life.

At age seven I suffered a major physical limitation which found me in a leg brace and using crutches to transport myself often times requiring the assistance of adults to make my way in the world. At 10 years old my family made a major move from my urban home to a rural setting, at 13 years old my father lost his company to his malicious business partner during economic hard times. At 16 my family was ostracized from my Christian community because of their beliefs. In addition to these critical incidents, a myriad of other big and small events took place in my life, all of which has shaped who I am today.

As early as my pre-teen years I can remember feeling "bad". Through much of high school I kept to myself and my small group of friends and didn't really excel at anything. In comparing myself to some of the leaders of my class, my grades were mediocre, I had little athletic prowess, I was shy with the girls, I had begun cigarette smoking, and was starting to experiment with drinking and soft street drugs.

Looking back on those years I often wonder what it was that made me get involved in the drug and alcohol subculture. My answer lies somewhere in my recollection that those years were fraught with feeling "bad" and the

pain of actually feeling it was easily numbed by the substances. When I look further at the "bad" feeling I realize that under it are all sorts of attributions about myself. Things like I'm no good, I'm unworthy, I'm not smart enough, working hard enough, sufficiently Christian enough, living my life the way I or others would expect of me. I'm not living up to the 'expectations', whatever they were.

I was left feeling alone, lost, adrift, unsure, lonely, scared, aimless, fuzzy, foggy, muddled, needy etc. I desperately yearned to connect with people but yet was stuck inside my own little world and at the same time I didn't know that that was my frame of reference. The ironic thing is that all the while that I was in this space, I continued to move forward in my life completing high school, university, having jobs and being quite successful at all of it. Even though I was successful, I wasn't integrated; I wasn't in touch with or taking ownership for my successes.

In the past few years I have been getting more and more in touch with the reality of my frame of reference and have been making efforts at directly and actively challenging it. Rather than allow myself to continue feeling "bad" about myself I am more and more choosing to feel good. And its a difficult journey. One that requires hard work and patience. And the realization that it is all part of a journey and not a one time deal.

Most recently I have come to an understanding that what I had previously named feeling "bad" is best described as feeling shame, or as Kaufman calls it internalized shame. The deep inner sense that "I am wrong". Two years ago, through my recollections of shame in my life, a critical incident kept surfacing as a sort of template of my experience of feeling "bad". This incident took place when I was about six years old and involved

an exchange between myself and my mother in which some things were said by her to me that never should have been said. As this painful memory continued to surface, I decided that I could deal directly with it therapeutically through psychodrama.

Prior to the psychodrama weekend I had met with the director a few times in order to build relationship and process the feelings I had about myself and the critical incident. When the weekend arrived and the director(s) indicated on the second day that I would have the opportunity to re-enact my story, I began to prepare myself. Up to this point I had been thinking alot about the critical incident, my mother, my feelings toward myself, my feelings toward doing an enactment about this incident publicly and I began to shape the enactment in a way that would work for me. When I was told I would actually be doing the enactment the next day, I began to respond emotionally in that I began to draw inward in a reflective manner. and began really facing up to my feelings toward myself and my mother and the incident. That night I bought a bottle of beer and a 5\$ cigar and went to the beach to just sit and reflect. As I did, images from the critical incident flashed before my eyes and I developed insight regarding the impact the incident has had on my life, what it symbolizes in terms of recurring themes of shame throughout my life.

For me, the time spent alone preparing for the enactment and the weeks leading up to the enactment was like positioning myself as close as possible to the feelings and thoughts around the incident without actually getting right into it all. I knew through that time that if the opportunity to do the enactment came I would be ready and willing, although perhaps a bit wary. When the time to do the enactment came the next day, I was

motivated and scared. Scared because here I would be putting a very personal part of myself into a public sphere for everyone to witness. I was going to show everyone an aspect of my life and how painful it was for me. During the enactment prior to mine, I began to withdraw into myself and "check out" from the enactment being done. I became protective and somewhat guarded or boundaried in order to take care of myself in the event that others wouldn't.

When, my turn came, I was nervous and yet ready to move forward and when the director and I began to walk around the room and I began to tell my story, I became quite clear about what I needed to do. Any self-consciousness left me. I became emotional in that I was "in my body" and had a heightened awareness. I was already at that point looking forward to and anticipating the critical moment of shaming, where those words were spoken to me by my mother that shouldn't have been. I was anticipating the cathartic moment. Unsure of what it would yield and unsure of what would result. In the setting up phase of the enactment I brought in a number of key players including family members extended over three generations to include my grandparents. I included also my immediate friends and loved ones.

The directors had someone stand in as my double; take my place in the enactment while those crucial words were delivered to me by my mother, as a boy of six. This was very important as a means of gaining an objective view of the situation. In the enactment I was clearly able to see the little boy in his moment of hurt and shame and I developed insights about his (my) feelings of confusion and hurt, sadness, loneliness, pain and abandonment. It became clear to me also that some of the biggest supports in my life through those years as a boy, in all the sadness and pain, were those who were closest to me,

particularly my sister. Another insight I developed was the importance of my father's relative absence in my life at that time. In part his absence meant he couldn't protect me but it also meant he didn't support my mother, who probably felt overwhelmed by the responsibility of raising children and managing a home.

At some point during the enactment I stepped in for my double, essentially retaking my place in the drama. I then personally took back my lost sense of power when those critical words were delivered. Rather than getting stuck in a downward spiral of internalizing shame, I was able to move through the confusion and hurt to a place of righteous indignation and rage. A place whereby I was able to summon strength and give back the judgement that had been placed on me and in doing so I was able to recapture a lost part of myself, represented by capability and strength. The magnitude of the rage I experienced, I believe, was equivalent to the hurt or injury done in the critical moment and it was with voluminous shouting that the internalized shame of many years was expunged and given back. Later in debriefing the experience, some of the witnesses claimed that the cry I made was one that reached to the 'very core of humanity'; that it even had an element of the divine or archetypal. For me, the cry opened up a pit of grief. Not only had the shame been expelled but now the real healing of the wounds would have to take place.

In the days and weeks to follow this heavy piece of work, I withdrew into myself and cocooned; often time lying on the couch under a blanket in order to restore and repair myself. On a couple of occasions I reached out to and was called upon by the director in order to process the experience. Primarily however, I spent time alone; approximately three months. During

this time I experienced more of a grieving process than feelings of shame. The grief was about the lost self, the missed opportunities, the lost relationships, the true pain. I think, in hindsight, that this process was one I needed to go alone, given my nature. Perhaps connecting and processing the experience with others may have helped some.

Had I been interviewed at that time, three or four weeks following the enactment, I might have said that I experience myself differently in the sense that I was more keenly aware of "my pain" and more aware of the importance of key relationships in my life. I might have said that I am more in touch with my grief and my sadness, again the pain. I might have said I realize that I'm not unlovable or unworthy because none of that incident was my fault nor were many of the other circumstances of my life within my direct control. What then is the utility in feeling shame if there is no control over the event. Ah! the examined life. Everything in hindsight is 20/20 vision.

At the time of this writing it has been one and a half years since the enactment. I can say that shame has not left me completely. I do not feel 100% worthy all the time. Much of life for me seems an effort and holding the feeling of worthiness is a chore and a responsibility that can easily fall away if attention is not paid to it. This aspect in particular has been an immense learning and one that I continue to struggle with.

For me the whole process of writing this story and writing this thesis is a journey of self discovery, one which had many turns and corners. It is not surprising to me that I undertook this study since the stories of my coresearchers so closely resemble mine. I have learned a great deal from them as I hope the reader will. For me, much of my experience is yet unknown; still unfolding. Nonetheless, as I travel forward I discover aspects

of myself and strengths I did not know existed, until truly examined. And I know and believe that as I continue forward in this journey, I am moving toward wholeness.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Within the language of affect theory, shame takes its place as one of nine core affects of the human experience (Nathanson, 1992). Apart from clinical vignettes and sporadic writings on the topic of shame in the literature, a paucity of research exists regarding shame (Gilbert & Andrews, 1996). Nathanson (1992) points out that attention to shame has been chronically insufficient. It is only in the past decade or so that shame has become the focus of in depth research as more interest on its primacy and import in the human experience is generated (Gilbert & Andrews, 1997; Nathanson, 1996, 1992). The focus of the present research project is to investigate people's experience of shame and their experience of reworking shame, primarily in terms of making meaning of their lived experience, through a group therapeutic intervention called psychodrama.

Shame is generally considered a hidden emotion in at least two ways. First, except for its manifestation in a blush or in shyness, shame is often kept out of the public eye by the person who experiences it (Scheff, 1988). The word shame itself, derived from the Germanic root 'skam or skem,' which has its roots in the Indo-European 'kam or kem', means "to cover oneself" (Wharton, 1990). Wharton (1990) states that shame involves the whole self, including the body;

a person in the grip of shame has a sense of shrinking, of collapse, an overwhelming impulse to hide. The impulse to hide seems related to a sense of inner deficiency or badness which has

to be kept hidden; if by chance it is exposed, the result is an intense crippling of shame (pp. 289).

Similarly, Banmen (1988) suggests shame has elements of a desire to hide that are similar to humiliation, embarrassment, and shyness. A second way in which shame is the hidden emotion is that it has rarely been the subject of research. Although theoretically shame does have historical antecedents, until the past decade, shame was seldom the focus of research.

Miller (1996) suggests that "although shame has a range of meanings, it always refers to a moment of felt experience or at least to the potential for such experience" (pp. 2). Shame is an emotional experience an individual has in particular critical moments, often experienced first in childhood and always experienced interpersonally with significant others. These critical moments shape the developmental experiences of the person across the lifespan.

Nathanson (1992, 1996) describes shame as the resultant affective experience that results whenever an impediment to the positive affects of interest and enjoyment is experienced. For Nathanson shame is a momentary felt experience that draws attention to the self resulting in increased self awareness and learning. Shame, therefore, has the effect of expanding the self in ways which assist the individual to understand himself or herself better within the context of daily living. Shame is the border guard of the self within relationship to others and the self (Nathanson, 1992).

Kaufman (1989) also discusses shame as an affective experience resulting from an impediment to the experience of positive affect. However Kaufman goes on to describe the internalization of shame that takes place through the process of identification which occurs between children and their

caregivers. It is the internalization of shame that ultimately affects identity development in ways that are potentially crippling to the individual (Kaufman, 1989), particularly in terms of how that person relates to their environment and the people around them.

Very little research has dealt specifically with the therapeutic value of treating shame within a group setting. Considering the issue of shame, where a feeling of vulnerability and wanting to "hide" is prevalent, group work may be inappropriate in some cases and is certainly challenging. Yet, it seems natural to address shame in group settings since the potential for experiencing shame exists thus making it immediate and possible to deal with directly (Brown-Shaw, Westwood & deVries, 1999). One group therapeutic intervention that can be used to deal directly with feelings of shame is psychodrama.

Psychodrama is a group-based therapeutic intervention that uses the creative medium of spontaneous dramatic role-playing. Participants have the opportunity to enact scenes or situations in their lives either from the past, the present, or anticipated of the future (Westwood, 1989). Developed by Jacob Levy Moreno (1889 - 1974), psychodrama places an emphasis on action and focuses on the immediate experiencing of strong emotions in an effort to promote catharsis among participants. In doing so, the actor of psychodrama is assisted "in reliving and reformulating their problems in order to face their concerns directly and immediately" (Westwood, 1989, pp. 98). Therefore the psychodrama method appears to be an appropriate model for working with shame.

To date no research has looked at the phenomenon of working with shame through a psychodrama. The focus of the present research will be to

investigate the shift or change in the experience of shame as a result of a psychodramatic intervention. Utilizing an existential-phenomenological methodology within the context of a multiple case study format, the coresearchers' stories are explicated to better understand the meaning people make of shame in their lives and the meaning they make of reworking shame in a psychodrama group therapeutic setting.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

As we are coming to understand, shame has recently been viewed as a core organizing principle, a primary affect around which much of human experience is centred and around which much of counselling is focused. Kaufman (1989) implicates shame in a wide variety of psychological dysfunction from eating disorders and addictive behaviours to schizoid and borderline personality disorders. He furthermore suggests that shame should be directly and actively pursued in psychological treatments. Gilbert (1998) states that "very little is known about how people try to repair themselves and their relationships where shame is involved" (pp. 25). This study will contribute both to the development of theory dealing with shame as well as the practice of counselling for issues related to shame.

The research questions for the present study are:

1. How do individuals describe shame and the role it plays in their lives?
2. How do individuals try to repair themselves and their relationships, where shame is concerned, within a psychodrama therapeutic group setting?
3. What are the consequences of the attempted reparation of shame?

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

The Concise Oxford dictionary (1982) defines shame as: "1. feeling of humiliation excited by consciousness of (especially one's own) guilt or shortcoming, of having made oneself or been made ridiculous, or of having offended against propriety, modesty, or decency, (*flushed with shame*). 2. restraint imposed by, desire to avoid, such humiliation. 3. state of disgrace or regret or ignominy or discredit." In this definition shame is defined both as a feeling and as state. This implies that shame has both momentary and longer lasting qualities. Both of these aspects of shame will be described in the ensuing literature review.

Gershen Kaufman (1980, 1989) and Donald Nathanson (1987a, 1992), two leading researchers in the development of affect theory and shame, have added to the seminal work of Silvan Tomkins (1963) and further enhanced our understanding of shame. In their theoretical works, Kaufman (1989) and Nathanson (1992) define shame using affect theory. In addition, Kaufman (1989), in particular, and Nathanson (1992) discuss internalization as the process by which the affect shame becomes integrated into the individual. Through internalization shame takes on a state-like quality that becomes an important part of identity development.

In this review of the literature, a presentation of affect theory will be summarized. Within the context of affect theory, shame will be described followed by a brief look at the repair of shame. Additionally, the key tenets of

psychodrama will be summarized and some key terms will be defined. Finally, research related to psychodrama and shame will be presented.

AFFECT THEORY

To understand shame more fully, it is essential to understand affect theory in some detail. Affect theory is best summarized by stating that affect, rather than cognition or unconscious drives, is the primary motivating force in daily living. Kaufman quotes Tomkins:

Rather, I see affect or feeling as the primary innate biological motivating mechanism, more urgent than drive deprivation and pleasure, and more urgent even than physical pain. Without its amplification, nothing else matters, and with its amplification anything can matter (Kaufman, 1989, pp. 12).

Affect is regarded primarily as facial behaviour and secondarily as bodily behaviour encompassing outer skeletal and inner visceral responses (Kaufman, 1989). Nine innate affects are distinguished, each with corresponding facial responses. These facial responses are found present in infants as young as four to seven months and are cross-culturally similar. The nine innate affects are divided into two positive, one neutral and six negative and are:

Positive:

1. Interest - Excitement: eyebrow down, tracking, listening
2. Enjoyment - Joy: smile, lips widened up and out

Neutral:

3. Surprise - Startle: eyebrows up, eyes blinking

Negative:

4. Distress - Anguish: cry, arched eyebrow, mouth down, tears

5. Fear - Terror: eyes frozen open, pale, cold, hair erect

6. Anger - Rage: frown, clenched jaw, red face

7. Shame - Humiliation: eyes down, head down

8. Dismissal: upper lip raised

9. Disgust: lower lip lowered and protruded

(Taken from Nathanson, 1992, pp. 136)

From the point of view of affect theory, the density of neural firing or stimulation accounts for the activation of affect. For example, interest is conceptualized as stimulation increase over time. An individual who looks at, tracks, or attends to something will experience an increase in neural firing and will exhibit eyebrows down and tracking behaviour. The affect associated with these behaviours we call interest. At the far extreme of the interest continuum, the individual will experience excitement. Another example is the experience of enjoyment. Enjoyment is a response to a decrease in neural firing. Moving from high to low levels of stimulation, enjoyment lends to relaxed and pleasant feelings. At the extreme end, a rapid decrease in stimulation produces joy and in some cases even laughter (Kaufman, 1989; Nathanson, 1992) as in the delivery of a punchline in a joke.

Each affect is analogic, that is, an affect is in some way similar to what triggered it (Nathanson, 1992). For example, in the case of the enjoyment that results from the soothing song sung by a mother to child, the enjoyment felt is analogous to the soothing quality of the mother's voice. It would be rare that anger be experienced in this situation. Another example might be the

startle one feels at the suddenness of a loud noise. The startle response is similar to the suddenness of the noise itself.

As a result of affect being analogous to its trigger, it also acts as an amplifier. In fact, Nathanson (1992) suggests the primary role of affect is to amplify the specific stimulus that set it in motion. "A stimulus involving an increase in brain activity will trigger an affect that increases brain activity" (Nathanson, 1992, pp. 59) while the converse is also true. "Affect makes good things better and bad things worse" (Nathanson, 1992, pp. 59). For example, a novel stimulus is attended to thus activating an increase in brain activity and triggering the affect interest. Interest in the novel stimulus heightens the attention paid to it which increases brain activity and our attending behaviour. The more interest is raised, the more the affective response will resemble excitement. This is affect amplification. The affect becomes "immediately coassembled with the activator, the stimulus, and conjointly simulates its activator in its particular profile of neural firing" (Kaufman, 1989, pp. 15).

The concept of neural density applies to six of the nine innate affects. These six are considered primary affects and are represented by the first six in the list above. While shame is distinguished as an affect auxiliary, dissmell and disgust are regarded as drive auxiliaries (Kaufman, 1989; Nathanson, 1992). To explain the notion of an auxiliary, consider first the drive auxiliaries. Dissmell and disgust are innate biological defense responses functioning in an auxiliary manner to oxygen, thirst and hunger drives. Noxious smelling substances activate dissmell causing the upper lip and head to be retracted backward. Disgust is triggered when foul tasting objects are

swallowed and then spit out. These two drive auxiliaries have developed to protect human beings from potentially harmful objects (Kaufman, 1989).

SHAME

Shame is considered an affect auxiliary because it functions in an auxiliary manner to the two positive primary affects; interest and enjoyment (Kaufman, 1989). Whenever an impediment to the expression of either positive affect occurs, shame is triggered. Nathanson (1992) suggests that shame is "the inherent, internally programmed innate attenuatory circuit for the positive affects" (pp. 134). Since interest-excitement and enjoyment-joy are the affects involved in sociality, shame affect is therefore an innate moderator of affective communication. (This is a very important concept as we will see later in this discussion when talking about empathic attunement between mother and child.)

Consider for example seeing an old friend from a distance and waving vigorously to get his or her attention, rewarded by his or her smiling face at the point of recognition. On the other hand, it may turn out that we have hailed a stranger and in that moment of exposure our head droops, our eyes become downcast and with mild discomfort we blush in embarrassment (this example is taken from Nathanson (1992) who credits Tomkins). This example may be seen as a manifestation of the innately programmed circuit called shame. Another way of saying this is that shame affect is as an inborn script (Nathanson, 1992) that once triggered must be played out in full until its natural completion.

As an innate attenuatory circuit, or script, according to Nathanson (1992), shame impedes what until that moment had been interesting or

enjoyable. Shame interrupts, halts, takes over, trips up and inconveniences the flow of positive affect. In doing so, shame calls attention to the stimulus that triggered it and thus heightens the experience of shame (Nathanson, 1992). Shame, therefore, is also an analog amplifier. For example, a curious child who is about to touch the element on a stove, is yelled at by a fearful parent. This child experiences an impediment to his or her interest and simultaneously the script for shame is triggered. The immediate effect will be that the child turns away from the stove, perhaps avert eye contact and drop their head, possibly even blush or even cry.

Since shame is an analog amplifier, attention is drawn to the stimulus. In the example, the child's attention might be drawn to his or her stove touching behaviour, the behaviour which was the source of the impediment (parent's yell) to his or her curiosity and interest. Upon becoming conscious, or self-conscious, of his or her behaviour and the interruption of such behaviour, shame, in the child, further amplifies 'turning away' or 'withdrawing' behaviour. In this way shame serves a functional purpose in that the child has 'learned' not to touch the stove.

Nathanson (1992) suggests that "very little in the life experience of the child call attention to the nature of the self as powerfully as does shame affect" (pp. 210). He goes onto to state that shame is a powerful mechanism for the elaboration of self. Shame forces the individual to consider himself or herself before shame hit and to what the individual returns once shame subsides. Through shame "we are forced to know and remember our failures" and "while it is clear that shame affect is triggered by experiences that have nothing to do with competence, shame produces awareness of an

incompetent self" (pp. 211). As a result, "every instance of shame is a moment of painful incapacity" (pp. 209).

In considering the notion of shame triggered by impediments to pleasure, the development of shame should be considered. It should be highlighted that for a young child, frustrations to meeting needs is undoubtedly an impediment to comfort, and possibly to pleasure as well. The impediment to basic needs being met might be interpreted by the infant as personal inefficiency or incapability. Broucek (1991) talks about the alterations in the sense of self that may occur when an infant is ineffective in his or her actions. He states:

... the sense of self long antedates the concept of self; the earliest sense of self grows out of the experience of efficacy, fulfilled intentionality and the joy and excitement attendant on that experience. The sense of self at the bodily level is grounded in patterns of kinesthetic "flows" that flesh out volitional activity (pp. 27).

It is quite possible that the development of shame precedes the development of language and representational systems. In this sense shame as an emotion reaches back into the memory of the early years of development of the personality where it is usually first felt. Because of its visceral nature, current experiences of shame unite the mind and the body in a powerful way to connect oneself with his or her inner core, the core self rooted in childhood (Schwartz, 1991).

Although shame can be felt in the absence of other people, shame is usually experienced within primary caregiving relationships. In child development, most of early identity formation takes place within the context

of significant primary relationships (Jacoby, 1994; Kaufman, 1989; Nathanson, 1992). Kaufman (1989), for example, highlights that shame originates interpersonally in significant relationships especially those relationships between parent and child in the formative years. When a parent, either intentionally or unintentionally, interrupts the interpersonal bridge, shame is generated. Kaufman is most concerned with the parent, or person in the power position, and suggests that it is the responsibility of that person to restore or repair the interpersonal bridge in order that the child not feel trapped in their shame.

Popular author John Bradshaw (1988) also stresses that shame often originates in interpersonal relationships especially with early caregivers. Bradshaw makes a distinction between healthy shame and toxic shame. Healthy shame is described as the emotional response to setbacks that allows us human beings to remember that we are not perfect, that in fact, we are naturally limited. It is healthy shame that helps to keep humans grounded by providing limits and boundaries in our lives. Bradshaw refers to the work of developmental psychologist Erik Erikson and his description of the challenge to balance autonomy with shame and doubt in early childhood. For Erikson, the successful resolution of this second stage will result in a child with a healthy balance between individuality and humility.

Toxic shame is described by Bradshaw (1988) as internalized shame, the shame that binds. Building on Kaufman's (1980, 1989) work, Bradshaw describes toxic shame as the internalized emotion of shame which stops functioning as an emotion and becomes trapped instead. It is experienced as the all pervasive sense that one is flawed and defective as a human being. Toxic shame goes beyond a healthy sense of limitations and is limiting in

itself. It is "like internal bleeding" (pp. 10), a sickness of the soul and very painful because it is exposure of the believed failure of the self to the self.

Researchers and theorists in the area of shame describe the internalization of shame that occurs later in childhood if not resolved (Bradshaw, 1988; Gilbert & Andrews, 1996; Jacoby, 1994; Kaufman, 1980, 1989). Through the process of identification, often with a significant other, an individual takes images and auditory voices inside himself or herself that then operate as a guiding force.

The very young child who has experienced excessive shame grows up and upon becoming objectively aware of himself or herself reinterprets the negative feelings about the self and is likely to add other negative ideas and concepts (Miller, 1996). In this way the child elaborates on negative feelings about the self. Even in the absence of the stimulus of an interpersonal event, shame can be activated through the representations the self carries, for example the voice of Mother. Miller (1996) states that as a child begins to establish memory for shame situations and is able to attach language to self aspects that evoke shame, that child becomes capable of his own shame-generating activity. The child may characterize himself or herself in a shame-laden fashion saying "you are boring" (because you don't interest Mother), for example. Thus internalized shame has standards, rules and goals that are made manifest through self directed shame. This contrasts with reactive shame which depends on an immediate interpersonal stimulus.

Kaufman (1989) talks about the "governing scenes" from childhood that underlie shame experienced as an adult. He builds on the notion that every current shame experience reflects a memory of an old experience (like a flashback). Nathanson (1996) refers to script theory when describing the

mechanism by which shame is triggered regarding internalized visual, auditory and kinesthetic memories. When in adulthood patterns of information come into the system, the potential exists for the associated affect to be triggered. The script for shame, according to Nathanson (1996), is the impediment of pleasurable affect. When the patterns match up, shame is activated.

Miller (1996) conceptualizes present-day experience (especially if occurring without a compelling external stimulus) as a construction or choice. For Miller, the question is that "if it is a choice to relive the past, one must look at why that choice is made" (pp. 152).

Repair of shame

Gilbert (1998) points out that "very little is known about how people try to repair themselves and their relationships where shame has been involved" (pp. 25). Repair, he states, is "partly based on the idea that one can restore one's social image (as desirable, attractive, trustworthy) and that the other will not harbour secret grudges or distrust" (Gilbert, 1998, pp. 25). This is similar to issues of reconciliation. Through things like helping behaviour and reparation, people may try to repair their self and social images. For example, the person who genuinely appears shamefaced, or regretful, may be seen more positively by the person to whom an apology is owed.

Gilbert (1998) states that the repair of shame may involve "forgiveness of self and belief in the forgiveness of others" (pp. 25). Moving through the processes of forgiveness, reconciliation and redemption seem highly important for the restoration of the relationship to oneself and to others. Reestablishing one's place in the world as a fully participating individual

provides the basis on which healing takes place. In fact, once shame is in the open, for example in a therapeutic context, to not move forward into processes of forgiveness and healing, in an attempt to repair one's self image, may be maladaptive and perhaps even detrimental (Gilbert, 1998).

Kaufman (1989) also discusses the reparation of shame. He stresses the importance of recovering governing scenes, which might be likened to recalling early memories particularly of painful events. Kaufman suggests the process of recovering scenes take place within a trusting therapeutic relationship. The therapeutic relationship provides the foundation of identification, in a safe and trusting atmosphere, through which the client is able to create new meanings and understandings of old governing scenes and replace these with new scenes. Making meaning of old governing scenes and substituting these with new, more adaptive modes of thinking and feeling is accomplished through the additional processes of reowning disowned parts of the self and disinternalizing internalized (parental) images of shame. This is also called reparenting (Kaufman, 1989).

For Kaufman (1989), reowning and reparenting need to be "experienced interpersonally through restoring the interpersonal bridge directly in the therapeutic relationship" (pp. 216). Reowning and reparenting must also be experienced from within in order to reconstruct the internal representation of the self and complete the healing process. This is accomplished through ownership and self-acceptance. Thus reowning and reparenting are both interpersonal and intrapersonal processes.

Regarding interpersonal restoration of the interpersonal bridge, group therapy provides an opportunity for individuals to address the reparation of

shame. One promising group based method of therapy for helping to reconstruct the sense of shame and work through it is psychodrama.

PSYCHODRAMA

Psychodrama is a creative and dramatic group-based therapeutic intervention based on the theory, philosophy and methodology of Jacob Levy Moreno (1946, 1947). With an emphasis on spontaneity and creativity, psychodrama aims at giving participants an opportunity to actively relive and reformulate their problems in dramatic form in order to face their concerns directly and immediately in a group setting. Past, present, or anticipated future situations are acted out to get in contact with unexpressed feelings, achieve catharsis, gain deeper understanding and develop insight, and practice behavioural skills.

In the section that follows, a list of key terms and key concepts related to psychodrama are presented.

A. Key Terms

Protagonist - The client of psychodrama. The protagonist is both author (playwright) and actor of the psychodrama enactment.

Enactment - The acted out situation including the warm-up phase and action phase.

Warm-up - The time spent just prior to the action phase in which the protagonist walks around in a circle explaining the situation to be enacted.

Through the warm-up the group forms a cohesiveness which enhances the feelings of safety thus allowing the protagonist to move into action.

Action phase - The main segment of the psychodrama enactment in which the protagonist moves from scene to scene acting out the various themes and situations.

Integration phase - The time period following the enactment. This includes a debrief of the enactment itself immediately following and the days, weeks and months to follow during which time the protagonist reflects on and makes meaning of their psychodrama enactment.

Director - The therapist(s) who assist the protagonist in acting out their psychodrama and address any relevant issues or concerns throughout.

Auxiliary roles - Members of the psychodrama group who play roles within the protagonist's psychodrama enactment.

Double - A technique of psychodrama whereby an auxiliary stands in for the protagonist in their enactment in order to promote reflection and objectivity.

Witnesses/ audience - The other members of the psychodrama group.

Soliloquy - A technique of psychodrama in which the protagonist spontaneously tells their story through a monologue.

B. Key Concepts

Action

In a concise summary of psychodrama, Westwood (1989) points out that action and acting are the "basic and central theoretical ideas of psychodrama" (pp. 104). Moreno (1946, 1964) developed the psychodrama model during a time in history in which psychoanalysis was the dominant paradigm. Moreno viewed psychoanalysis as constricting and uninspiring and advocated instead for an emphasis on action. In his view, action makes it possible for people to get in touch with parts of themselves in ways that verbal therapies do not (Westwood, 1989).

Moreno (1947) believed that a kind of 'action insight' accompanies effective psychodramatic procedures that is more powerful and enduring than verbal insights. He suggested that engaging with one's muscles in movement through the taking on of roles enhances awareness of one's thoughts, actions, and emotions and increases the intensity of memory and catharsis. Moreno postulated that psychodrama generates a "multimodal kinesthetic memory" that functions spontaneously to highlight new insights (Blatner, 1988; Fine, 1979).

Westwood (1989) suggests that because "memory is not only a cognitive but also a physiognomic phenomenon and as such is stored in the anatomy and physiology of the body, action precedes words in the development of individuals and in the universal method of catharsis" (pp. 195). It is for this reason that psychodrama is such a powerful medium that facilitates change in individuals because it accesses those memories stored in the body as well as those stored in memory. Psychodrama provides an optimal environment to promote catharsis in people who want to deal with issues that have strong

and powerful emotions rooted in early childhood. It seems logical to assume that psychodrama is a highly suitable means to promoting change in an individual's experience of long-term shame, that is, shame as an aspect of personality structure (Kaufman, 1989). This is particularly true in light of the notion that the experience of shame affect may precede the development of language (Broucek, 1991; Jacoby, 1994; Miller, 1985, 1996).

Creativity and Spontaneity

Creativity and spontaneity are two other key concepts in the psychodrama model. Early in his career Moreno observed that children are generally more creative in their fantasy play and more willing to spontaneously enter into role-playing situations than adults (Goldman & Morrison, 1984; Westwood, 1989). Creativity, Moreno felt, is concerned with the divine. God, the divine force, is continuously active as an archetypal energy functioning within the essence of all existence. Creativity is a central theme in the human existence (Goldman & Morrison, 1984). Spontaneity, Moreno believes, is the means to fostering creativity.

Moreno developed psychodrama in order to train people to meet new situations in fresh and novel ways rather than with antiquated and patterned behaviour. A sort of spontaneity training, psychodrama is a remedy to "free people from limiting 'scripts' and rigid and stereotyped responses" (Goldman & Morrison, 1984, pp. 208; Westwood, 1989). Westwood (1989) further suggests that an essential element of spontaneity in psychodrama seems to include the "ability to experience one's own state of being or feeling with minimal interference from external impediments or internal inhibitions" (pp. 106).

This language is very interesting. Although Moreno never mentions specifically and directly the notion of shame, in my opinion much of his work with psychodrama dealt with just that. Westwood (1989) points out that spontaneity includes the "ability to experience... with minimal interference from... impediments (or inhibitions)" (pp. 106). Recall the above discussion concerning shame where Nathanson (1992) describes shame as the affect which results because of an impediment to the positive affects. It seems logical to suggest that fostering spontaneity in psychodrama is a direct means to minimizing the experience of momentary shame. That is, spontaneity, or acting in the "here an now", another of Moreno's key concepts, is the direct antithesis of experiencing shame in the present.

Another interesting use of language is that Moreno developed psychodrama as a method for "freeing people from limiting 'scripts' and rigid and stereotyped responses" (Goldman & Morrison, 1984, pp. 208). Recall again, the above discussion in which Nathanson (1992) refers to 'the inborn script of shame' that once triggered must be played out in full until its natural completion. It seems that psychodrama would be an appropriate means for dealing directly with an affect like shame. Indeed, affect theory and psychodrama theory dovetail quite nicely.

Present Focus

Another key concept of psychodrama is a focus on the present moment, the "here and now" (Blatner, 1988; Goldman & Morrison, 1984; Westwood, 1989). Overlapping with the notions of action and spontaneity, participants of psychodrama enact conflict or crisis situations "as if" they were occurring in the present moment (Goldman & Morrison, 1984). In doing so,

the participant has the opportunity to experience and respond to the event in a new way 'now'. Furthermore, experiencing in the moment lends itself to develop new meanings around events (Blatner 1988; Goldman & Morrison, 1984; Westwood, 1989).

An added aspect of a present focus entails permitting the participant to experiment with different modes of behaving. Goldman and Morrison (1984) describe psychodrama as providing opportunity for reality testing. Through experimentation with a wide range of roles and behaviours, participants of psychodrama are given the opportunity to get in touch with aspects of themselves to which they are remotely aware or unaware.

Catharsis and Insight

Catharsis is the release or expression of pent up feelings (Kellerman, 1984). In psychodrama this might include anger, sadness, rage, despair or shame as well as joy, love, and happiness among any number of others. Catharsis is brought about through spontaneity and action. Through the use of action oriented methods, protagonists dealing with real life situations and concerns are prepared for, or set up to, spontaneously express and experience their emotions in a full and cathartic way. In addition to spontaneity and action, Westwood (1989) suggests, the "facilitative role of the director and the receptivity of the audience" creates a "readiness to respond" (pp. 107) which maximizes the cathartic experience.

According to Blatner (1985), the emotional release associated with catharsis is seen to reflect an expansion of the self in a number of ways. First, the abreaction and awareness of previously disowned feelings. Second, the integration of those feelings. Third, experiencing a sense of being a part of a

social network. Finally, participating meaningfully in the universe. It is through catharsis that the self expands in a way in which new insights about the self are developed. Through the emotional purging of feelings and subsequent process of making meaning of such, protagonists are given the opportunity to begin gaining control over, and developing better understanding of, feelings which may have been controlling them in the past (Goldman & Morrison, 1984).

Although catharsis is not a goal of psychodrama in itself, it is seen as a natural process of psychodrama and is an indicator of emotional expansion and integration (Blatner, 1985). It should also be noted that catharsis need not be only thought of in terms of dramatic emotional release since subtle and gentle release is also possible and conducive to healing (Goldman & Morrison, 1984).

Tele and the Role of the Audience

Tele is described by Moreno (1964) as the two way flow of feelings, or therapeutic love, between people. It is the "cement which holds groups together" (Goldman & Morrison, 1984, pp. 209) and fosters the likelihood of empathy. Unlike empathy, however, which is uni-directional, tele is bi-directional and encompasses the sum total of the feeling aspects of empathy, transference, and countertransference (Goldman & Morrison, 1984). With positive tele present in psychodrama groups, the possibility of spontaneous and creative action increases which promotes therapeutic change and healing.

Protagonists who willingly move forward into a psychodrama therapeutic climate necessarily require feelings of safety and trust in order to unselfconsciously express and experience strong emotion. It seems logical to

assume that a high degree of empathy on the part of the other group members would facilitate such safety and trust. To ask of protagonists that they move toward higher and higher degrees of spontaneity necessitates that these factors be established. This idea is consistent with various other group theories (Amundson, Borgen, Westwood & Pollard, 1989; Yalom, 1995).

Psychodrama research

Besides voluminous descriptions of the theory and strategies of psychodrama, and numerous case illustrations, very little actual research into psychodrama has been conducted (Kellerman, 1991; Kipper, 1978). It seems that practitioners of psychodrama point to their experiences as evidence of its effectiveness and at the same time have failed to recognize the importance of research (Kellerman, 1991).

With regard to the present study, no research was uncovered that investigates the meaning people make of reworking shame through psychodrama. Although some studies of psychodrama allude to the role of shame in people's lives (for example see Baum, 1994 or Buell, 1995), none address it directly. Only one study was found that came close however the construct shame was not mentioned even once. Instead the investigator framed the investigation in terms of self-esteem.

In a dissertation study conducted by Neuman (1990), an existential-phenomenological methodology was utilized to investigate the experience of changes in self-esteem following participation in psychodrama. Six coresearchers, all of whom were women, were interviewed on two occasions. Neuman reported that these women experienced positive changes in their felt sense of self-esteem and they experienced more control over what they

experience and over how they experienced themselves, other people, events, and situations in their lives. Neuman's research also found that the women experienced being more of an authority in their lives and felt that they had a better sense of who they were in the world. No explanation of the specific means by which this was accomplished was offered.

A close examination of Neuman's study reveals themes of shame. Shame permeates the experiences of these women both in their lives generally and in the psychodrama work specifically. Included in her study are verbatim transcripts which include statements like "going back to how withdrawn I was.. being in a psychodrama group (was really helpful).. (and I) kind of tried to repair some of the damage from my childhood" (Neuman, 1990) when talking about the meaning they made of working with their self-esteem (shame) issues in their psychodrama enactment. Additionally, statements like: "I was kind of embarrassed.. I really got into it but it was kind of embarrassing. It was a personal experience because it was so true.. like a deep part of me and I went public with (it).. that's why I was kind of embarrassed" (Neuman, 1990) highlight the momentary shame felt during the psychodrama enactment process itself.

These examples point to the overlap in the constructs shame and self-esteem. What Neuman misses in her study is reference to shame as useful means of explaining the self-esteem of her coresearchers. Jacoby (1994) writes "self-esteem is the basic value one attributes to his or her personality" (pp. 33). Value of self, or self-esteem, he says comes about through congruent parental mirroring. Accurate "affective attunement", the degree to which parent (mother) and child attune themselves to each other, provides the basis for empathy through which an infant is able to develop their sense of self.

Ideally, high degrees of attunement in the infant-parent bond lead to the healthy development of a sense of self. The sense of self internalized within the caregiving relationship provides the basis of self valuing, or self esteem. Conversely, where a break or interruption of such attunement occurs, the development of self may become fragmented in such a way that the child learns that being himself or herself is not enough to gain the love, care and approval of the parent (Jacoby, 1994). This line of thought is similar to Kaufman's (1989) discussion of the interrupted interpersonal bridge and fits in with Nathanson's (1992, 1996) discussion of shame resulting from impediments to the positive affects interest and enjoyment.

Although Neuman (1990) discusses the importance of parental love, approval and congruent mirroring, no mention of shame is made in her dissertation. Admittedly, her frame of reference is through the lens of the self-esteem literature and is the point of her study. It should be noted however, that self-esteem and shame are closely related constructs and perhaps necessarily need to be discussed in tandem.

SUMMARY

In this chapter a presentation of the literature concerning shame has been delineated. Shame is regarded from two points of view. Shame is regarded as a momentary affect occurring situationally as a result of an impediment to positive affects (Miller, 1996; Nathanson, 1992) arising out of the natural developmental process (Jacoby, 1994) as well as shaming incidents. Shame is also viewed as an internalized component of identity and personality (Kaufman, 1989; Miller, 1996). Additionally, a summary of the

psychodrama model and its key concepts has been put forth with a brief glimpse of research related to both psychodrama and shame.

The focus of the present study was to investigate the experience of three people who address issues of shame in a psychodrama therapeutic enactment. The purpose of this study was to describe those experiences and make meaning of them. In the next chapter the methodology used to achieve this purpose is articulated.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

In considering the construct shame and upon reflection of my own experience dealing with shame in psychodrama, the method of inquiry had to both illuminate the phenomenon and simultaneously honour the story of the coresearchers. My motivation for conducting this research included an anticipation of rich descriptions of shame and the phenomenon of reworking shame. Initially my goal was to understand the essential structure of the phenomenon (Colaizzi, 1978; Valle & King, 1978). However due to the inductive nature of this qualitative research, I became particularly interested in the individual stories of three people and considered them to be especially descriptive of reworking shame (Stake, 1994). Therefore an existential-phenomenological multiple case study approach was utilized as the method of investigation.

As its name implies, the existential-phenomenological methodology is one which combines the disciplines of existentialism and phenomenology. Existentialism "seeks to understand the human condition as it manifests itself in our concrete, lived situations" (Valle & King, 1978, pp. 6). It seeks to move beyond only the observable, physical aspects of a situation to include the subjective experiencing of a situation. In this respect, existentialism is concerned with the meanings people make of their experience.

Phenomenology is "a method which allows us to contact phenomena as we actually live them out and experience them" (Valle & King, 1978, pp. 7). Phenomenology is concerned with lived experience and the ways in which people access experience.

The existential-phenomenological method seeks to understand phenomena as people experience and make meaning of them. Through the use of rigorous descriptive techniques and disciplined reflection, the approach attempts to articulate the essential structure of lived experience (Colaizzi, 1978; Valle & King, 1978). Colaizzi (1978) states "human experience is an essential and indispensable constituent of human psychological phenomena" (pp. 57). He outlines a set of procedures designed to elucidate the lived experience of phenomena. These will be elaborated on later in this chapter.

A key element in the procedures outlined by Colaizzi (1978) is the notion of saturation or redundancy. The qualitative researcher interviews people based on their experience with the phenomenon and the ability to articulate it. Data analysis is conducted in an ongoing manner assessing interview transcripts or protocols looking for key statements and clusters of statements around themes. Interviews are completed when saturation or redundancy of themes is reached. The essential structure of the phenomenon is comprised of the common themes across cases.

In the present research study saturation was not aimed for. I decided that the cases had intrinsic interest value (Stake, 1994) and therefore would be pursued individually. Furthermore, the three cases chosen were clear descriptions of the phenomenon of reworking shame. Since my goal focused on understanding the individual stories of the coresearchers rather than the essential structure, a multiple case study design was considered a robust and compelling means of both investigating the phenomenon (Yin, 1994) and presenting the data. Stake (1994) suggests that case studies are undertaken not for the purpose of understanding a generic phenomenon or to build theory but rather because of intrinsic interest in the case itself. He goes on to state

that the case researcher may be interested in a number of cases in order to inquire into a phenomenon regardless of whether the cases are similar or dissimilar. In this way both "redundancy and variety are given a voice" (Stake, 1994, pp. 237).

The inductive nature of this research has led me to decide to keep intact the stories as presented to me by my coresearchers. Rather than distill these thick and rich descriptions (Stake, 1994) to themes I decided to maintain the integrity of the coresearchers' stories by presenting the findings as narrative "tales" (Altheide & Johnson, 1994). Using an evocative writing style to meet literary criteria of coherence and interest (Richardson, 1994), I have fashioned these narrative "tales" in the first person. In doing so my goal is to encourage reader resonance to the extent that the reader, through their own "interpretative and sense-making capacities, derive their own unique meanings of the text" (Altheide & Johnson, 1994, pp. 486).

Janesick (1994) states that qualitative research "depends on the presentation of solid descriptive data so that the researcher leads the reader to an understanding of the meaning of the experience" (pp. 215) as lived by the person. She goes on to say that "staying close to the data is the most powerful means of telling the story" (pp. 215). Stake (1994) suggests that readers learn more about a case from a direct description of it. He also states that illustration of a phenomenon in the circumstances of a particular example can be valuable and trustworthy knowledge.

In the final chapter of this paper a number of themes common across cases will be discussed. Additionally, themes not common across cases but which seem particularly meaningful will be also be discussed. Stake (1994) cautions against making comparative case study descriptions. He believes

where attention is focused on the bases of comparison, uniqueness and complexity are glossed over. He states "designed comparison substitutes the comparison for the case as the focus of the study" (pp. 242). In the present study an attempt to attend to both the commonalities and discrepancies among the cases will be made. It is important to note that this may also be a limitation of the study itself.

STORY OVERLAP - TRUSTWORTHINESS

The participants in this study were three people who taught me about myself. I want to recognize and honour them for what they taught me because in the telling of their stories, I have been impacted. We all live our lives in many and varied contexts and we all are constantly engaged in living, telling, reliving, and retelling our own stories (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994). All inquiry can be seen as the "interactions of the experiences of participants in a field and researchers' experiences as they come to that field" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994, pp. 418). This is certainly true of myself. As mentioned above in the section entitled assumptions and again in the introduction to this chapter, I also had a profound experience at a psychodrama weekend workshop dealing with the theme of shame in my life. As a result, the stories of my coresearchers are in part my own story.

This raises the important issues of bias and trustworthiness. Qualitative research methodology traditionally requires that the researcher (bracket) their assumptions, that is, set aside his or her "taken-for-granted orientation to the world" (Holstein & Gubrium, 1994, pp. 263). In the present paper I have attempted to set aside my assumptions by making clear the basis on which I have such assumptions (see 'Assumptions' located prior to the

first chapter). By doing so the reader has a glimpse of my point of view and as such may understand some of the conclusions I arrive at. However, I still wrestle with the idea of setting aside assumptions. In a postmodern paradigm, the philosophical principle is that reality is co-constructed (Stake, 1994). The possibility exists that through the interview process, the coresearchers' stories were co-constructed between myself and them. Furthermore, in the analysis of the protocols, my own reflective or interpretive (Stake, 1994) process may have influenced the meaning I ascribed to the data. Regardless, I am prepared to be up front about these processes as they unfold.

Concerning trustworthiness, that the stories of my coresearchers reflect in part my own experience of shame and psychodrama points to the validity of the phenomenon. Trustworthiness is considered foundational criteria for a good study (Patton, 1990). Triangulation is an important aspect of reducing the likelihood of misinterpretation in case studies (Stake, 1994).

Triangulation helps to promote trustworthiness. Generally considered a process of using multiple perceptions to clarify meaning, triangulation assists in verifying the repeatability of an observation or interpretation (Stake 1994).

In the present study triangulation occurs in several ways. As mentioned above, the stories of the coresearchers reflect in part my own experience of shame in psychodrama. This adds to the trustworthiness of the study. Additionally, each narrative was validated by the respective coresearcher as were the themes found in the discussion of this paper. Narratives were also independently validated by an independent research assistant who read portions of the protocols and was asked to comment on the 'goodness of fit' of the narrative story to the transcript. Finally, one of the

directors of the psychodrama weekend workshop in which the coresearchers participated read the narrative summaries and commented on the 'goodness of fit'.

PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

The participants in this study were three people who had an experience of working with the theme of shame in a psychodrama therapeutic enactment. Each participant was a graduate student in the field of counselling psychology, and all had an interest in psychodrama evidenced by their participation in the weekend workshop. There were two men and one woman. All were Caucasian. Age seems irrelevant to the ability to articulate their experience.

SAMPLING PROCEDURE

Following a psychodrama weekend workshop I attended in May 1998, the director announced that I was conducting a study investigating the experience of working with shame in psychodrama. Altogether four people approached me and indicated their interest in conducting an interview. Phone numbers were exchanged and several days later interviews were arranged.

Of the four people interviewed, three cases were utilized for the purpose of this study. This decision was made for two reasons. The three interviews used for this study were deemed particularly good examples of the phenomenon of reworking shame in psychodrama. They were clear, concise and highly descriptive. The fourth interview was not clear and was not a good example of reworking shame in psychodrama. Additionally, following

the fourth interview, the researcher decided that some boundary violation had taken place on the part of the interviewee and that this may have occurred due to issues of countertransference.

PHENOMENOLOGICAL INTERVIEWS

Participants were interviewed once approximately five weeks following their psychodrama experience. Interviews ranged in length from two to four hours. All interviews were both audio-taped and video-taped for the purpose of transcription. Informed consent was sought (see appendix A for an example of the consent form). Interviews were semi-structured using open-ended questions (see appendix B for a list of questions). Active listening techniques such as reflecting, restating, clarifying, and paraphrasing were used in order to keep the interview moving, to elaborate in depth on various topics and to enhance rapport.

Participants were asked to share their stories in as much detail as they could. Three broad areas were covered in the interview. First, the experience of shame. Second, the experience of the psychodrama enactment. Third, how, if at all, does the person experience themselves as different. These three areas were focused on in an attempt to cover the events leading up to the enactment, the enactment itself, and the events following the enactment. By structuring the interview this way, participants had some opportunity to tell their story as coherently as possible.

A second interview was conducted following the analysis of data and the construction of narrative "tales". Participants were presented with both the narrative summary and themes for the purpose of validation. Detailed notes were made of the second interview as it was not taped. In one person's

case, validation was done by means of email, regular mail, and telephone calls since the person had relocated during the course of the study.

DATA ANALYSIS

Following the procedure outlined by Colaizzi (1978) the data analysis proceeded. Of a total of seven steps described in this procedure, five were followed closely, one was modified and one eliminated. These steps are described here.

The first step is to read the coresearchers' transcripts or protocols in order to become familiar with the material; to "acquire a feeling for them" (Colaizzi, 1978, pp. 59). The next step is to extract significant statements which seem to reveal significant thoughts, feelings and behaviours while eliminating repetitions.

The third step is formulating meanings from the significant statements by using "creative insight" (Colaizzi, 1978, pp. 59). In this step the researcher must "leap from what the subject says to what they mean" (pp. 59) while at the same time formulating meanings which are still connected to the original data. This step and the previous ones were performed on each case separately before moving onto the fourth step.

The fourth step involves the formation of clusters of themes from the formulated meanings across participants. At this stage of the analysis it is very important to refer back to the original protocols in order to validate that theme clusters accurately encapsulate the formulated meanings of each coresearcher (Colaizzi, 1978). This is done so that data is not hastily overlooked or ignored for the purpose of neat categories. It became evident during this part of the analysis that the three cases were not identical. Subtle

differences between cases indicated divergence of some of the data and revealed the uniqueness of each coresearcher's experience. As a result, it was decided that the fifth step in the procedure (Colaizzi, 1978) would be modified.

The usual fifth step of the procedure outlined by Colaizzi (1978) is the presentation of an exhaustive description. The exhaustive description is essentially a written narrative that weaves together the themes of the coresearchers and makes use of direct quotations. This step was modified in the present study in order to preserve the richness and uniqueness of each coresearcher's story. Instead of collapsing the data across cases, each case was kept intact through the creative fashioning of a first person narrative story. Using the formulated meanings from step three, the significant statements from step two (in the form of direct quotations) and keeping to the language and style of speaking of each coresearcher, first person narrative stories were written. Effort was made to present the narrative stories in an interesting way by paying attention to time, sequence, theme, plot, and resolution or closure.

The sixth step of the procedure (Colaizzi, 1978) was eliminated. The sixth step is the formation of the essential structure which is a condensed version of the exhaustive description from step five. Since first person narrative stories were created for each case as a substitution for step five, step six was eliminated because it seemed redundant.

The seventh and final step is the validation of the findings by the coresearchers. Each narrative story was validated by its respective coresearcher. In two out of three cases a second interview was conducted for the purpose of validation while the third case was validated by means of mail, email and telephone since the person had moved out of town. In each case suggestions for changes were made to the initial writing of the story and

these were incorporated into the final written story. Each final story was validated by its corresponding coresearcher.

In one case, the coresearcher remarked that the story "fit well" for him. He stated that; "... these are all my words", and "... there really isn't any of you in this story". He also stated that writing in the first person lended to a high degree of engagement in the reading of the data. All three coresearchers appreciated the novel way in which the data was presented. They liked the fact that the integrity of the data was maintained in story form. Each coresearcher received a copy of their story.

Finally, a validation was conducted on the formulated themes for each individual. Once this had been done, those themes unique to only one or two people were introduced to the coresearcher to assess its applicability. Most of these later introduced unique themes were not validated and therefore remained unique. These are reflected in the narratives and will be discussed in the final chapter of this paper.

SUMMARY

This chapter described the existential-phenomenological multiple case study methodology to be used as the approach to addressing the research question of the present study. This methodology follows the method outlined by Colaizzi (1978) with a modification to the manner in which the findings are presented. In the next chapter, the findings of the research will be presented as three, first person narrative stories.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE THREE STORIES

INTRODUCTION

Analysis of the three transcripts resulted in a total of 15 themes. Ten of these themes were shared among the three coresearchers, four were shared among two, while only one theme was unique to one of the coresearchers. In order to maintain the integrity and richness of each coresearcher's story and in order to remain as faithful as possible to the experiences as lived by them, first person narrative summaries were utilized in order to present the findings.

In conducting this research it is my goal that readers benefit and learn from the experience of my coresearchers. In this sense I believe I have a responsibility to give voice to their lived experience. My opinion is that the first person narrative lends itself well to this goal. Additionally, the first person narrative lends itself to interesting and involved readability and maximizes the potential for reader resonance, one of my goals for using a qualitative research methodology. The degree to which the reader resonates with the experience of the coresearcher further adds to the credibility and trustworthiness of the study.

In this chapter three narrative summaries are presented. The narrative summaries were fashioned into stories and written in the first person. Each story was written by the researcher using direct quotations from interview material and was validated by each respective coresearcher. Pseudonyms supplied by the coresearchers are used to protect their anonymity.

NARRATIVE SUMMARIES

JOSH

Introduction

Following a psychodrama weekend workshop in which an enactment was done, Josh approached me and indicated an interest in meeting with me for an interview. What drew Josh to my study I will never know the way Josh does. However as you will see from Josh's story, my hunch is that Josh too has an interest in shame possibly borne out of a familiar knowledge and experience of shame. This is Josh's story:

Josh's Amulet

My story begins with a recounting of what shame has meant for me in my life. I can remember from way back in my early childhood, interesting that I would go to a child place when thinking about shame (you know I believe shame is something taught to us because I certainly don't believe we are born with it), I remember feeling that there was something just not right about me. There was always something kind of dark and not OK about me. Like something about me in my experience wasn't right. I was bad, I was terrible, I was a klutz, I wasn't to be trusted. Shame felt like an uncomfortable skin I wore. Or an amulet. A large amulet that I wore around my neck but it wasn't nice. It was ugly colours, and very badly put together. And everyone could see it and they would wonder 'what in God's name are they wearing it for - it's ugly'.

I'm not sure if that was always the case though. I think I was introduced to shame by other people. I believe it was being visited upon me

because I sure don't think I wanted it. My mother and I would often get into a dance of shame which for me was a cycle that pulled me down, down, down. Some incident might occur where, for example, I would spill the grape juice or something and my mother would spin off into a frenzy, getting extremely angry. I owned my mother's anger and frustration. I believed that I was responsible. That somehow I had caused all this and that if only I did something different, to change it, it might not be so bad. I kept holding out the belief that if I did it all right, like if I were sufficiently shamefaced and regretted what I had done, maybe I could activate her into not going there. I kept believing I could shift things. I kept believing, believing. I kept looking for the variables that might make a difference; maybe the timing, maybe saying sorry sooner or louder or with more drama. No matter what though, I knew I had to do something. It didn't matter what, just do something, anything. So I was always kind of on edge. This interplay between my mother and I were some of the ways my mother used shame as a disciplinary measure.

I learned at an early age that if I hung my head sufficiently and appeared sufficiently shame-faced, with no eye contact and looking down, that the ramifications of my "accident" wouldn't be so bad. I wasn't ever sure what made a difference. I just knew that I did something, she had a reaction, and then we got caught in a kind of death grip pull down except she never fully went down with me. In some cases my mother would ignore me; give me the cold shoulder for hours, even days. Literally it felt like I was "cut off" from her. I constantly had the sensation of being abandoned by her. And a part of me feels like it was a real injustice that I didn't get slapped more often because at least that would have been more honest. You know, a whack on

the backside, maybe a time out, and then let's get on with living together you know. Let's reconnect. But that wasn't the case.

Being cut off from my mother and feeling abandoned makes me think about the isolation of shame. Shame prevented me from fully participating with other people. Whether it was my mother or my peers at the playground, I kept myself apart from other people. I kept them back - because I felt I didn't deserve to be with them. And this was the language that I heard from my mom, 'You don't deserve everything I do for you, you don't deserve my being this kind to you'.

Eventually, I learned how to go to shame places on my own. It was like a portable hole that I took wherever I went. Whenever I felt shame I could climb down into my hole, knowing that there I belonged and deserved to be. It was almost like a rope ladder lay along the top of the hole and whenever I needed to go down there, I could just toss the ladder down and climb in. And it had a certain safety attached to it. No one could possibly discover me in there. I couldn't be seen, I couldn't be heard, I couldn't be felt. It's like "you can't touch me here". When I experienced shame I had sensations like a really cold stomach, a clutching or clenching so tight you can hardly breathe. My head would ache and my palms were sweaty. I would know not to make eye contact. When I experienced shame is when I felt most vulnerable, exposed. Everyone is looking, all eyes are on me. And its exposure in a not OK way. I've done something bad or wrong and having it communicated to me that I am bad is very shameful. So having a portable hole is kind of handy. It's a place to jump into and be protected. The upside of this is that I spent a lot of time alone and I was a pretty fanciful kid. So I'm thinking that shame has served some intra-psychic purpose.

It's interesting that even now I think of shame not as an enemy or as something that needs to be expelled but rather as a part of myself that could be a regular guest. A part of myself that I can leave the door open to and invite in once and a while at my choosing and say "come on in shame, have a seat, loosen your shoes". It's a funny thing shame. I'm not sure if it's a fully discardable piece. It's got real deep and twisty roots that are very tough to cut off, like a weed that requires specialists to remove it. And I think the structure has to be ready to have those roots fully removed because there's going to be a cost to the destruction. So it's mysterious. I think it's one thing to hold it up and take a look at it and inspect it thoroughly and another thing to totally cut yourself off from it.

What led me to do an enactment at the psychodrama weekend was that several months previous I was involved in a car accident. The experience of the accident brought my old traumas right smack in front of my face and it became very clear to me that I was still triggerable. So I decided to do a 'house cleaning' enactment in order to get out of my body whatever was left in terms of shame. This was important to me because I was getting married within a few months time and I wanted to enter that relationship as whole as possible

My enactment centered around a physical assault. I remember prior to the enactment feeling quite stuck and unsure about the whole thing because I struggled with the enactment's unfolding. I was also very ambivalent with myself because I didn't know how I would feel afterward. I even wondered whether I might be crazy to raise any of this, you know. Do I want to risk all these people in the psychodrama group knowing some of the really ugly aspects of my life. Maybe I shouldn't do it. They were going to see all these ugly things. They might even wonder what I did to deserve all these ugly

things. I was ultra-conscious of the group members and I thought, 'yet again Josh, you're gonna standout'. I was very aware of a lot of eyes watching me and that took me to a shame place. A part of me thought it was 'too heavy' to handle. Like, in the past I've been very careful with disclosing and here I was about to spill out all over the place and it was going to be messy. In hindsight I was regretting that I hadn't put out a rider - by saying for example, "there's going to be some difficult stuff in here, if you don't feel you can take good care of yourself then go and do that". I also felt badly for putting the director through it all. So I was feeling funny for the group and funny for the director.

Yet I felt compelled to meet with the directors to make contact and let them know that I wanted to do something. So I did and we talked. We came up with a system for doing the enactment that I could live with. It was going to be a soliloquy of sorts with the director walking me through my telling of the story. As an aside, the directors did not let me in on their process regarding who else might be interested in doing an enactment, at the time of our meeting. That was a good judgement call because if I had the prior knowledge that somebody else wanted to do an enactment, I might have stepped away from that. If somebody else had moved forward and said 'this is my space', I would have got in touch with 'I'm not supposed to be here' and part of me would've disappeared. I'm sure that's tied in with shame.

So, through the first part of my telling of the story, I maintained some of the feelings of 'all eyes are watching me', 'I shouldn't be putting people through this'. However that shifted. At some point I got to a place of power and I stopped worrying about anybody other than what was happening to me. What led up to that was very difficult, and painful.

The director and I walked around the circle while I told my story. And it felt like I was walking in a cloud. A part of me was aware that I was doing it and a part of me seemed to dissociate and step away. It was sort of real and unreal. And I had this sensation of being very light headed. I got dizzy at the intensity of the pain. Dizzy and weak. It felt like something collapsed. Something inside of me dropped. I could feel myself plummeting, downward. I felt helpless and immobile, my body simulating a victim's stance. I had the sense that I was lost. And these feelings coincided with my telling of three specific incidents. The physical attack. The experience in the hospital. And the clinical supervisor who judged me. In each of these particular moments I felt like I just wanted to plop down. And physically I actually needed support, needed to be held up by the director in those moments.

What is also important is that during the telling of my story and in those moments of collapse the director and I, from time to time, stopped walking. And in those pauses, when we stopped walking, I was able to get grounded and integrated. It was like I was telling the story of someone else; these things couldn't have happened to me. But they had. And when I stopped I became aware that it was me who had felt those things. It would hit me that it was my story. It was like when I came to a physical stop, I could temporarily spread out my toes and sink roots, feel the earth for a moment and then through me would flash whose story is this then 'my God', it's mine. So it seemed I needed to separate before I could come back together in an integrated place.

At the point where I had told the third incident and felt that collapsing, plummeting feeling, and had stopped walking long enough that my story

caught up with me, a shift began to take place. As we started to walk again and I experienced a total weight bearing shift. Mine and the director's arms began to raise in a victory march. We began walking a little faster, like a power walk, and I became aware that my chest was leading us in a forward direction. Where before that point I had almost been carried, now I was beginning to walk more on my own. Where before I had been lost, now I was found again. I felt as though I had been sufficiently supported to find me and now I was re-empowering myself. I felt amperage, like a light bulb lighting up.

That walking was a hugely powerful experience for me. As it was happening, I got into every image - news reels and magazine clippings - that's ever flashed across my cognitive screen of power and energy. And I went to that place. I think some of the shifting happened there because that was about relationship. Shame is about isolation and aloneness, the walking was connection with another. The walking was the direct antithesis of shame.

I have some hope now that shame isn't meant to hang around forever, even though I also recognize that I have the freedom to invite shame in as a guest. I don't believe that shame has left these shores forever but it does feel like a shift has taken place. I know this to be true in part because the incidents around which I told my story are less painful now than they used to be. It feels as though the amulet of shame I mentioned earlier has been discarded. Not thrown away completely but rather shed and flung off somewhere like during a tribal dance. Fallen and tamped down but not broken into smithereens. Available if I want, to pick it up, dust it off and place it on my shelf for another time.

One aspect of the enactment that is important for me to share is that once it was finished and the group reconvened I felt a slight dip in the joy I felt. A slight dip in the power I felt. My previous experience with psychodrama was such that after an enactment took place the group reconvenes and everyone gets an opportunity to share their experience. Like a processing time where people have the opportunity to give voice to their experience. For me this provides the opportunity to reconnect with the group. In my case I missed that contact because instead of an open process the directors chose to do a selective process. This was complicated by the fact that a few people needed to leave. Shortly afterward I heard someone say my enactment had taken a while and even though it wasn't negative feedback but rather an observation, it dampened my spirit a little bit. I took responsibility for it and felt ashamed my work had taken so long. So for me this is another piece of evidence that shame isn't easily rid of. It hasn't left these shores completely.

I think my work with shame was about rediscovering a part of myself that had been unavailable for a time. I think it was also about telling my story and about finding a way to move the inside out. At it's most painful it's like a regurgitation but yet I don't think it needs to be expelled with a massive level of force. I think there is a choice as to how it comes out. For me it was painful and at the same time gentle. I have felt changed, like I've rediscovered a part of myself that wasn't available to me before. Not a new part but rather it was like a reunion with a previously familiar but long forgotten part. Like I said before though, shame is a funny thing. I don't know that it can be fully expelled because of its deep twisty roots.

JOHNSON

Introduction

I met Johnson at the psychodrama weekend workshop. One of the first things I noticed about him was that he seemed somewhat socially awkward; shy and even nervous. I later learned that he felt out of place. He explained that this was because he was new to the university community and because it was his first time at a psychodrama weekend workshop.

Johnson's enactment was very powerful. It had a very powerful impact on me personally. Although he worked through a total of four 'aspects' of himself, it was the final one, the shame of speaking, which impacted me the most. I could identify with the shame he felt because of his disability because I too suffered from a physical disability at age eight.

Following the psychodrama weekend, Johnson approached me and indicated his interest in doing an interview. I think his interest in the interview lay somewhere in the fact that he had been so profoundly impacted by his experience of the psychodrama enactment that he wanted to make some sense of it. I also think he was genuinely excited about my topic since he was able to identify his enactment as having dealt directly with his feelings of shame. This is Johnson's story:

Johnson's Isolation - The Shame of Speaking

Alone. Lonely. Neglected. My parents did not connect with me - emotionally. They did not sit and talk with me. Did not communicate with me. Could not process with me. They had their own issues.

I was left alone a lot of the time as a child. Isolated. In my own private bubble. Just sitting quietly for long periods of time. Vegging out. Not connected to any feelings.

I understood my parents' withdrawal from me as 'they don't like me'. They don't like me for who I am. I'm not good enough to be with. I'm not worthy of the attention. These are the very painful, very sad and very deep roots of my shame.

Compounding my problem of having parents who didn't know how to connect with me is that I was born hard of hearing. I hardly spoke at all. Up until about grade two. Compared with other kids my language acquisition was delayed. I think this made it easier for my parents to leave me alone as much as they did. They simply didn't know what to do with me. What my hearing impairment meant for me is that I didn't develop the skills necessary to communicate with my family in a way that I could get my needs met. What it did was reinforce my aloneness. What it represented, metaphorically, was the isolation I experienced all my life growing up. On top of being overlooked, I was unable to reach out. I look at my hearing impairment and difficulty speaking as a metaphor representing the internal isolation I experienced growing up. It is the manifestation, the epitomization of all I felt and experienced with my parents through most of my childhood and youth.

My hearing impairment isn't the only reason I didn't learn to get my needs met. There also wasn't any role modeling for communication in my family. In fact, the interaction I did get with my parents was usually harsh. Both my parents were harsh and judgemental in their parenting. Particularly my mother. If I did something to displease my mother she would point it out to me in a sharp, harsh, and critical way. For example, I remember a situation where I entered my bedroom and was full of rage. I slammed my book down on the table and my mother came flying into the room soon afterward and said 'stop it', 'stop being angry', and then promptly walked out. I always experienced those judgements as holes being punctured through me. Like a hole puncher. Sharp, harsh words punctured through me very abruptly.

My mother was also impatient. All throughout my childhood I was in speech therapy which I both hated and resisted, partially because all the kids in my class knew exactly where I was going when I left the classroom, but also because of my mother. She was always correcting my speech. Either when we were alone or sometimes in front of other people. She wasn't very gentle about the whole process either. I remember on many occasions I would be telling a story, maybe in the car while driving somewhere, and she would interrupt me over and over telling me to pronounce my 's' sounds or enunciate my 'ed' endings. I got so frustrated and angry. I suppose her intention was to help me but she was so impatient. Impatient and abrupt.

My experience of situations like those was that I usually wasn't doing anything I thought was wrong. I wasn't doing anything to hurt anyone but I was judged for it anyway. I was judged for being me. What would happen is I'd be sitting there and then this sharp, harsh, judgement would be directed my way and I would get this stunned look in my face. I felt shocked like, 'I

can't believe this just happened'. It's like I'm breathing and all of a sudden I stop breathing. I stop showing expression in my face and all my muscles tense up. Like a bracing. To brace myself from the impact of those words. Probably because I knew those words were going to hurt. However I usually never stayed with the hurt feelings. I remember feeling bad and then feeling numb and shut down. Then I felt like I had done something wrong. I had done something to upset or hurt my parents and that was my worst crime. It was my fault.

Over time I learned how to shut myself down. Whenever something would happen and I had feelings I needed to express, I would stop those feelings up, not express them, and in turn feel ashamed for having them in the first place. It was like all those years of training with my mother helped me to do to myself what she always did to me; criticize and judge. It was like all that stuff she pushed onto me got internalized and then I did to myself what she did to me. It was like I internalized all that in such a way that later in life, whenever a situation arose where the potential existed for shame, or for shaming myself, I would fall into a DO loop* , a 'dance' of judgement where I would have feelings, shut them down, get upset, blame myself, and feel ashamed. This is the part of me I call the internal critic.

Sometimes during that 'dance of judgement' with my mom I would feel angry. Probably just after the point where I was criticized. If my mother left the room or left me alone I would sit in my anger for a while. Sometimes for hours. But if my mother didn't leave me, she would call me on my anger.

* A DO loop is a computer programming term that refers to a function which is carried out when a specific set of circumstances arise. In this case example, the coresearcher describes the resulting sequence of events that takes place WHEN a specific triggering set of circumstances arises.

She might say 'stop being that way', 'stop being angry'. Then that whole dance would start again. I felt judged for being angry, I felt shocked, I shut my anger down and felt numb.

What I know now is that the anger I felt in those moments is what I needed to block the judgement. I think shame results when I'm not able to stand up to the person; it results in the absence of a challenge. And all the anger and rage I had in me when I was a teenager was the buildup of all the times when I just took it. All that anger got bottled up and I think shame is what held it all in. Because I felt shame when I felt anger, I think shame became my emotional position. The position that held all those feelings in. Essentially I learned how not to have feelings, or at least how not to show my feelings.

When I was 16 years old I became very aware of how angry I was. At times the anger led to my being quite mean to other people. This was my way of pushing people away. With the exception of one friend I was alone most of my high school life. In fact, I was alone a lot of the time. There were long periods of time in my life where I was shut down. I didn't talk to people.

I already mentioned that as a child I hardly spoke. This was partially due to both being overlooked and to having a hearing impairment. I think in kindergarten my parents got a little bit more concerned about my disability and in about grade two I received my first hearing aid. What I really needed but never got was someone who could talk to me about how I felt in a gentle way. What would've been ideal was parents who could do this. But since they were hardly available to me and because I learned how to shut down my feelings, I essentially never learned how to process myself or my feelings with

anyone. So I coped by withdrawing. I did a lot of things to hide. Hide aspects of myself and not take risks.

I think this is the deeper level of shame. For me shame is about isolation and a lack of connection. What I yearned for so desperately and rarely got was the opportunity to connect with others and process my thoughts and feelings. I think the worst part of the sharp criticism leveled at me by my parents was that afterward there was no process. Like in the example I mentioned when my mother flew into the room, she just yelled at me and left. Or as in the example where we're driving down the road and she's correcting my speech while I'm trying to tell a story. Once the criticism starts, the story stops and the opportunity for connection is lost.

It was different with my sisters. I can remember one instance where my sister held me accountable for something I did and I felt guilty for it. Immediately I felt compelled to make restitution by apologizing. In this case she was willing to hear me out and even though she wasn't happy about my behaviour, she was forgiving and did not hold back her love for me. In those cases I might have felt guilty about my behaviour but not ashamed. It was like whatever rift had existed between us was restored through processing. So for me, there's a difference between feeling guilt and shame. Guilt is when I do something wrong and generally I try to make amends right away. I deal with it right away.

With my parents the connection wasn't there. There was a lack of processing around whatever took place and I felt shame because I believed that I wasn't good enough to be with. Not worthy for the attention. I believe this is the deepest level of shame. The emotional withdrawal; the neglect. I think on an unconscious level I interpreted their withdrawing from me as

they don't like me. They don't care enough to be with me and spend time with me, unless it's for correcting, judging, or criticizing. It's the shame that they don't like me for who I am. And that's very sad. Some of the anger work I've already done. Now I'm getting in touch with the sadness and it's very painful.

So one of the things I learned was that it wasn't good enough to be me. I became very concerned with what other people think. I adjusted myself in order to avoid disappointing people. The motivation being 'I can't give a reason for anybody to be critical or judgemental of me'. It was fear based. Like with my parents, I was just so fearful of them that I just knew not to do anything wrong around them. I felt like if I tried harder, worked harder, studied speech therapy harder or with more dedication, kept getting good grades or kept being a good boy doing all the right things nobody will have reason to be judgemental of me. Poke those holes through me.

So I became a very driven person. Based in the fear of being judged I pushed myself constantly. I have always been told I do a million and one things. I'm always busy. Just go, go, go, go, go. And when I finish a project or complete something I usually don't take the time to celebrate. I'm off and running to the next thing. So I wouldn't take care of myself emotionally. I told myself things like 'it's not good enough' or 'I'm not working hard enough' even though I was accomplishing things and being successful in the world. This is the part of me I call the internal pusher.

What led me to do the enactment at the psychodrama weekend was that these aspects of myself, namely the critic and the pusher, were no longer helping me. I realized it was time to give them back to my parents from whom I felt I had internalized them. This understanding came about in part

through a series of dreams I had had in which another aspect of myself I call the 'dead part' kept plopping out. The dead part represented my unhappiness with myself, my dislike of myself, my feelings of shame toward myself. This is the opposite of the spectrum from my life force which is what I'm trying to get in touch with. The yearning I feel to connect with people and be in a place of strength. I also wanted to get in touch with the sadness part of myself (because I knew it was OK to be angry and I had not yet learned how to be sad).

I met with the one director prior to the psychodrama weekend to process my dreams and to indicate to him my desire to do an enactment. When the psychodrama workshop began on the Friday night I was very aware of other people's enactments and noticed the similarities between theirs and my own. I was triggered a number of times because of this. The night before I was to do my enactment, I met with both directors. We talked about the themes I wanted to address in my enactment and one of the directors cut right through it all and said I needed to address my father because she knew I was trapped by the role I played in an alcoholic family. She also stated up front that I was dealing with issues related to shame.

That night as I drove home I knew she (the director) was right on and I started sobbing. The next day I was very nervous about doing my enactment and I was being aloof, pretending everything was fine and not really showing that part of myself. Just prior to my enactment I felt like I was going numb. I was afraid that by disclosing this part of myself, by showing and experiencing my shame, I would shut down completely and go inside myself. I didn't know if I could show my shame. If I could actually put it out into that space. But yet I had a yearning to do it too. I knew I was ready because I had been working on it for six months.

When I started walking around the circle with the director I felt detached from my feelings. I also felt very self-conscious about being in the centre of the circle. At the same time I trusted both directors a tremendous amount and so it seemed like I didn't have to worry about it. I also felt a tremendous amount of trust with the group.

I was very surprised with my reactions to the first three tableaux, or aspects of myself, in my enactment. The first tableau, the deadness part of myself, I was disconnected from. I thought it would be the prime focus of my enactment but it really wasn't. The critic, which was the second tableau, I expected to have a war with. I anticipated an all out yelling match but was shocked and pleased when the opposite happened. I became very gentle with that part of myself and I realized that criticism, whether from someone else directed at me or from within me directed at myself, is really a sign of insecurity and fear. I found a trick for diffusing the critic aspect of myself and that's gentleness. I was shocked also at my range of gentleness and it felt good to be that way. In the enactment I reshaped the critic from a position of standing upright with a stern face pointing a finger at me accusingly to sitting in a comfortable and calm position.

The third tableau was the pusher. The pusher was directly across from the critic because that part of myself was always so scared of the critic. In order to avoid being criticized or judged I worked really hard and pushed myself. I also got caught in the fallacy that if I keep doing good things, if I'm good enough, people will say nice things about me. What I realize now is that people who do really good things don't get noticed all that much anyway. Which for me is fine too because then nobody will see me or notice me. I won't stand out. The danger, however, in this kind of thinking is that in

taking risks to do good things I felt I had to do them perfectly. Otherwise don't risk at all. If I took the risk and failed, then my inner critic would go wild... "Look, now, you've disappointed all these people. You're no good..." So the pusher and the critic were opposing one another and working together at the same time.

In the enactment when I dealt with the pusher I was again surprised. I expected to yell 'get out of my life' and was shocked to discover that the pusher's energy could be transformed into a dancer. The pusher became the dancer and represented a playful part of myself. Instead of a constant one direction pushing motion the pusher energy was transformed into a multi-directional relaxing and loving energy that's a lot of fun to be with. I discovered that instead of being based in fear the pusher-transformed-into-dancer energy represented for me my life force. The part of me that yearns to connect with people. I'm still trying to get more in touch with that energy and it's difficult. It hasn't been fully internalized yet. I also realize now that it requires effort on my part to continue to hold that energy.

Through the first three tableaux of my enactment the directors had someone stand behind me with their arms locked around my waist. This represented the strength in me that I needed to face the tableaux. Strength was always behind me and always held me. And since the enactment I have been internalizing that strength. Strength and shame are opposite ends of the spectrum for me and shame prevents me from being in that place of strength. Shame is about hiding, withdrawal, holding in, bending over, pulling down, neediness, and avoiding commitment that would require me to take a risk. Strength is about sitting up straight, looking into people's eyes, being confident, taking ownership for my accomplishments, feeling pride, taking

care of myself and taking responsibility for my feelings instead of acting them out. Shame would pull me down, make me sad and needy. I wouldn't take ownership of my feelings and ask for things to meet my needs. In strength I take ownership so I don't have to feel needy.

I thought my enactment was finished but then someone mentioned that we have to move onto the next and final tableau. The shame of speaking. I became terrified. I knew I was about to reveal the most painful part of myself to the group and I didn't think I could do it. I didn't want to show my soul. I thought I was going to wimp out at that point. Not that I wanted to give up. I never once wanted to give up but I really felt I couldn't do it.

In the enactment when I faced the shame of speaking, the tableau was sculpted standing slightly bent over and covering his mouth and throat. I realized it was important to push the face right into the floor. I didn't know why but it just felt right. As soon as the shame of speaking was down on the ground, face into the floor, I was triggered right into my own shame. I had no choice. It was automatic. Like an extremely strong magnet had pulled me I was down on the floor beside my shame of speaking. And I realized that this was the energy I had been holding all my life up to that point. That shape, of shame on the floor, was a visual representation of my shame. I was showing everybody in the group my shame. That was the emotional position of shame that I had kept myself in all my life and the shape that kept strength at a distance. I curled up on the ground myself, right beside the shame of speaking. It was the epitome of the shameful boy just hiding from myself and the rest of the world. Enclosing myself; hiding and covering myself. It was at

that point that I didn't think I would ever get up. I was terrified and I felt stuck. I didn't think I could go on.

For several moments I was on the floor, beside my shame of speaking, and during that whole time I was vibrating. I was vibrating with sheer terror. I didn't think I could go on and yet I knew that I either had to move forward or else flee. During those moments on the floor I felt like I was at the very edge of my shame. I thought the more I try to look up, uncover my face, and face my shame, the more shame I would feel. In those moments I felt like the core of me was wailing - and I actually was wailing aloud. Something came out of me in those moments like the most intense purging feeling I've ever experienced. I'm not sure what the feeling was; it seems beyond words. It was like intense sadness and grief. I get the image of someone yelling at the top of their voice on a mountain "At last, you're finally hearing me. I've been so lonely". It felt like I was wailing "I am good enough, I am". What I yearned for so desperately was to tell people that I am good enough and there I was doing it through the wailing. And that yearning pushed me further into the wailing because it's what I've wanted for so long and then I knew it was time to let go of it. It was time to let go of the shape of shame that was on the floor and that for so many years has kept me bound up. Has kept me isolated and apart from people. Has kept me in a place where I continue to interpret other people as a threat. Has kept me judging and criticizing myself and pushing myself so relentlessly hard.

I was aware too that the wailing was necessary to get to a place of strength. The wailing was like a building up of strength to face the shame of speaking. The wailing was more than just a purge, it also felt like a struggle; like I was working through something. I use the metaphor of a birthing

experience. It felt like a pushing feeling in order to get to a place of strength. I knew I had to get out of the shape of shame, I had to break out of that emotional pattern of hiding myself. But it wasn't like breaking glass or eggshells. It was more like a working through. It was all on an emotional level. On a cellular level. A kinesthetic - cellular - emotional struggle through something. It was like I was building up strength and courage through the wailing while vibrating in fear and terror in order to face the fear and the shame. It was those moments where the true healing took place, especially on a cellular level. What I realized is that my strength lies in working kinesthetically. I literally had to change the shape of the shame.

I realize now that the shame of speaking wasn't just of speaking but was shame on many different levels. Speaking just happened to be the forefront of it. Speaking for me represents expressing my feelings, my worries, my thoughts. Speaking is the vehicle to expressing and externalizing all that I had kept in me. All the years that I yearned to connect with people, to connect with my parents, to express myself and process myself with others. All the years I believed I wasn't good enough, wasn't lovable, wasn't worthy of contact and relationship. It was not only the shame of speaking at a mechanic level but the shame of not having a voice, of not being heard, of not being seen. The shame of being me.

What eventually got me through that part of the enactment was being given the permission by the directors and the group to just sit with those feelings and in my own time and in my own way work through it. It was important for me to feel a sense of control - that I wasn't going to be pushed but rather empowered to do it on my own. That part of the enactment was the most critical. That part of the enactment was where the true repair work

was done. If the directors had pushed me at that moment they would have lost me and then I would have re-enacted the whole dance of shame and judgement. I would have felt like a failure which would have reinvoked feelings of shame and put me back in that DO loop. But they didn't push. I heard the director say 'just take your time'. And although I couldn't see the group members I could sense them and I felt very connected to everybody.

After some time, after the wailing, I was able to face my mirror. The shame of speaking. I stood up and got the shame of speaking to stand up and I was looking at him and I realized, "Oh, there you are, that's what you look like" and it didn't seem so shameful anymore. I realized I was looking at myself and I found myself being very gentle and loving to that aspect of myself. And then I felt a lot of sadness for him being in that shape which was me in that shape. And I realized that I don't need to be in that shape anymore.

At that point in the enactment I realized I had gone as far as I could emotionally handle. I had reached the point that I had contracted with myself to reach and I knew I would need more strength to go any further. Up until this point it had all been non-verbal. The next piece would have been to verbally interact with my shame of speaking, with myself, by affirming him and saying things like "I like you, you're O.K." I sort of remember taking his hands from his mouth and throat and standing him up a bit straighter. I think I looked him in the eyes. But for me it felt like my enactment was finished.

The last piece I did was I returned to the middle of the circle and symbolically 'gave back' to my parents the parts of myself I felt I got from them. The deadness, the critic, and the pusher. The shame of speaking, I

realized, was a part of myself that really did belong to me. It didn't feel like something I got from my parents and so it didn't feel right to give it back to them. I'm not sure if it was necessary to do this last piece because it felt like I just scratched the surface. Especially the part with my father. It felt like I wasn't ready emotionally to do it. I may have to do something around that part at a later date. So I gave back to my parents the parts of myself that belonged to them and pushed them out of the circle. But I didn't want to hurt them. I was very gentle and loving. But yet strong.

Following that piece the group circled around me and everyone placed a hand on either my chest, my throat, or my mouth and I went around the circle looking into everyones' eyes; one at a time, acknowledging them and them acknowledging me. It felt like a love massage and I just drank it all in. It literally felt like all those little holes that had been punctured through me before were healing up. Like all the little scars in the places where the holes had been were being massaged. And it felt like there was no shame or judgement for having those scars. It felt like I was truly being seen. Like I truly had the chance to connect with people the way I had for so many years yearned. After that the psychodrama was over and the group reconvened and processed the experience.

It's been about one month since my enactment at the psychodrama weekend and a number of things are different. I feel like a different person now. I feel like the emotional position of shame that held me for so long has literally been reshaped. That position has been reshaped and I'm in the process of internalizing strength. And that's very difficult for me. I have to work at holding the strength. At the end of the enactment there was a moment where I felt as though the strength feeling wouldn't last. The

director was quick to point out that what had happened was real and that I had to take some responsibility to hold on to it. And I agree. I believe I have to take responsibility for deciding that this new shape of strength is where I prefer to be. There's a choice in it. And sometimes I feel that the other shape, the shape of shame, is an easier place to be. It's easier to withdraw into that because it's safer. However, my impulse before was to turn and cover my face and I don't feel that way any longer.

I feel more ownership of my feelings and of my pain. These are my past experiences. They are a part of who I am and that's OK. But I do not have to be entrapped by them any longer. I no longer have to be enchained to this old pattern of interacting. I would say I have more ownership to take but I've taken a tremendous amount of ownership through my process of the enactment.

I feel like I can connect with people more now and can look them in the eyes. I feel like I can process with people my experience of things. Where shame was a lack of processing, now I feel like I'm able to take responsibility and state my need for verbal processing. For example if I feel uncomfortable with something, relationally, I believe I can check it out. I can ask to process that with the person. If someone judges me I feel like I can take care of myself. I can express myself and say "that doesn't feel good when you say that". Since the enactment I haven't fallen into that DO loop trap once. And I don't feel like I'm ever going to again because it's not a place I want to be. While I may have experiences in which I feel embarrassed or self-conscious, I feel like I can name it and work through it rather than let it hold me.

I feel less driven than before. The pusher has been transformed into the dancer. That's another thing I learned is that one of my strengths is that I

work kinesthetically and I was unaware of that before. I was able to transform the pusher energy into the dancer and that's begun to manifest itself in the real world. For example, lately I've been doing a lot of dancing at this club and it's very free and open. For me dancing is a way to celebrate myself, which I had a difficult time doing before. I feel like I'm taking the time to honor my experiences, celebrate them and reflect on them. I don't have to be so busy. I don't need to be driven based and that's a nice feeling. I can do things now because I want to accomplish something rather than because I think people aren't going to like me if I don't.

I feel like I'm getting more in touch with my life force. With my strength. And that too is a choice. It requires responsibility on my part to continually hold onto my life force and move forward with it, to balance everything. And that's the choice I want to make.

NEIL

Introduction

I first met Neil at an mini-workshop presentation on psychodrama in the community. To me he appeared keen and astute; very motivated and interested in understanding more about psychodrama. He also seemed somewhat stiff, interpersonally, in that his manner of speaking and body posture were somewhat brusque and tight. Neil attended the next psychodrama weekend workshop and had the opportunity to do an enactment. Afterward, he approached me and indicated his interest in doing an interview. Although I may never know all his reasons for wanting to do the interview, I think one them was that he felt it would be useful for his 'making meaning' of his experience and since the focus of my research was shame, he felt his story was relevant. This is Neil's story:

Neil - The Struggle to be a Good Boy

As an adult now I can distinguish that I am a good person who at times does bad things. But that hasn't always been the case. As a kid I don't think I was able to separate myself from my actions. Developmentally I don't think any kid can. For me growing up was always a struggle between being a good boy and a bad boy. Between doing the right thing and the wrong thing. Between following the rules and not following the rules. And anticipating the rules I didn't even know existed.

I don't think I felt shame for doing something I knew I shouldn't do. For example, if as a kid I took a cookie and I knew I shouldn't and then I got caught, I might feel guilty about it but I wouldn't feel shame. Another example is that once at school my buddy and I got caught throwing snowballs

and the teacher stood us in the schoolyard, face to the wall. I mean like nose to the wall. But that wasn't shaming for me because I knew I wasn't supposed to throw snowballs. In fact, my buddy and I looked at each other and laughed about it. So I make a distinction between shame and guilt. Guilt is something I experience when I violate my own standards or break a rule I know I shouldn't. Shame, on the other hand, is different.

As a kid, I experienced shame when I violated someone else's rule without knowing that the rule existed. What would have happened was that I would act as I normally acted and then someone would point out to me that what I did was wrong. Not just point it out or bring it up but say 'that was bad' or 'you're a bad kid'. It's like one moment this isn't in my awareness and the next it is. It's like a flip around. The mirror gets turned around and suddenly I'm looking outside myself thinking back to what I was doing and wondering how it was that what I did could be construed as bad. It's a sudden self-consciousness. A shocking self-consciousness. And it's confusing too. Like something gets upset, the balance gets upset. I remember feeling like 'this isn't happening', 'it's not real'. How is it that what I was doing could be seen as bad?

The thought process that goes along with this, which isn't even a conscious thought process to a child, is that if an adult who I care about and whose perception of me I value tells me I'm doing something bad, then it must be true. If my wrongdoing is construed as bad, then it must be bad. Which means I have the ability to do something bad. Which means that something bad is in me. Which means that I am bad. I displeased the teacher, or I displeased my mother and it reflects on me as a person. I am a

bad boy. It's like shame is put into you by other people. It felt like it was a part of me.

I think the shock and surprise are a big part of shame for me. There's a lack of control, a vulnerability or a powerlessness to prevent it that accompanies shame. Shame can come up out of nowhere. I can recall some of the times I felt shame. For instance on one occasion, in front of my classmates my teacher made a comment to the effect that instead of doing my work like I ought to have, I was flirting with the girls instead. Or, as in the case of the enactment I did at the psychodrama weekend, my mother made a critical remark to me in front of my family regarding my behaviour in church earlier that day. She was thoroughly upset and embarrassed because of me while I was unaware that I had done anything wrong. In fact, I had felt proud of myself for my actions.

I think for a shaming to occur it has to happen in the presence of other people, when other people are watching. I can remember another time when I got stage fright. In front of a whole auditorium full of people I felt self-conscious. I felt my face get hot. My ears get all red. I felt sweat or butterflies in my stomach and my speech stammered. Not only had I done something 'wrong' but everyone else had noticed it as well.

As a result of each of those shaming situations I experienced as a kid (particularly as a kid because I can't really recall too many shaming experiences as I got older), I became a little bit more vigilant about my actions. For example, since I had been shamed for flirting with the girls, I stopped doing that. In other areas of my life too, I cut back my behaviour. I stopped being spontaneous because in my spontaneity I had been caught up in doing something wrong and had been shamed for it. In order to not make the same

mistake twice, in order to not displease anyone, in order to avoid getting shocked by someone saying I was breaking rules I didn't know about, I stopped being free and easy. Instead of being free and easy I was drawing away and disappearing. Like drawing away from the world and isolating myself. Instead of being free and easy I was just like control, control, control. Hone it all down to the bare minimum of what I know to be true and what I know is a rule. As long as I do only the things I know for certain fall within the rubric of the limited rules I had knowledge of, I couldn't get punished.

And so I operated out of a deficit model. Instead of a production model, where I did things to get people's approval because it made me feel worthwhile, I was vigilant about my behaviour sticking to within the rules in order to avoid being crapped on. I worked hard; to be a good kid, to get the reinforcement that I was doing everything alright. When I got that reinforcement it felt like a relief. I didn't necessarily feel good about what I did. Instead I felt relief. Relief that I wasn't made to feel that shame again. Even now as an adult before my enactment at the psychodrama weekend it's sometimes hard for me to enjoy things. Like for example, the fact that I'm in a graduate program or that I am making new friends or whatever.

I think it was this realization that led me to do an enactment at the psychodrama weekend. The director had invited me to come talk to him if I thought of something I might want to enact in a psychodrama. So a few days prior to the weekend I went in to talk to him and as we talked the incident with the critical remark made by my mother surfaced. So we elaborated on that and it got my wheels turning. From that point onward I was somewhat anxious about doing the enactment. At the same time I didn't want to get 'into it' too much because there was no guarantee that I would be doing an

enactment. I didn't want to get myself all geared up to go only to be told that it wouldn't work out.

When I first arrived at the psychodrama workshop I was informed that I could do my enactment that evening. Initially I got really nervous. I was scared about doing it but at the same time I felt ready. Even though I felt somewhat self-conscious, knowing that I was standing in the midst of a whole group of strangers, it wasn't near enough self-conscious that it made me stop wanting to do it. I was internally motivated; propelled even. I didn't want to back out. There was a drive within me that had to do it despite the fact that I was in front of people. I also trusted the directors.

As we sat in the circle, just prior to my enactment, I was looking around the room and I started noticing people who could play roles in my enactment. One woman looked exactly like my mother. Her face almost became my mother's. Another person's voice reminded me of my brother. This other person, just the way he sat, reminded me of my buddy. So I started picking out people but I was also trying not to think too far ahead.

Then the director and I started walking around the circle setting up the enactment and as soon as we did, my apprehensions about doing the enactment disappeared but switched instead to the impending critical incident. I began to anticipate and get anxious for the moment when those words were spoken to me by my mother. I was feeling emotional, like I might break down and cry. I felt it all bubbling up inside me, realizing also that I still had some other things to attend to first. But I was also aware that the stage was being set. The context was being created for the channels to open and for all this 'stuff' to come gushing out. All the rules and codes of conduct that had been shoved down my throat all those years. How to be

good and how to be right. And not only the rules but also all the shitty feelings that I felt they had shoved into me by shaming me at various times in my life. All the confusion, the embarrassment, the self-consciousness. The shame basically. All that stuff. The physicality of it all, it was just underneath the surface and it kept pushing like a pump, building and building.

Several moments after I took my place as the main actor of my drama and began the enactment, I turned to walk back to the car where my mother would deliver the crucial words. At that moment I felt like it was too late to turn back. It literally felt like a turning point. And I knew what was waiting for me. I had a feeling of dread. Like 'I know what's coming and it's going to be awful'. I was remembering how it felt and sounded as a kid. It actually felt like I was going back there to be that kid. I felt like I wanted to be smaller even though I didn't feel smaller. And then my mother said those words and like, boom. I was gone. I was out. I was back. I was a little kid again. And I felt that same shock. The confusion, the self-consciousness. The hotness in my face. I had the awful realization that not only had I done this bad thing but I had done it in front of 300 people and had embarrassed myself immensely. And I remember in the enactment turning my head away and hanging it. Wanting to shrink away. Wanting to get smaller in the back seat of the car, but I couldn't. I wanted to disappear. Crawl away into a corner. Shrink; down, down, down into a deep hole.

At that moment in the enactment I was no longer self-conscious of being in the enactment. I mean my eyes were seeing it take place but process-wise my brain experienced me being in that car. And that's when it started, that purge. I didn't even need to think about what I was saying. The

floodgates opened and I just broke down and started to cry. I got to say to my parents all the things I never had the chance to say as a child. How they hurt me and how they let me down. It felt like where I had previously been blocked and powerless, now I was taking back the power. It felt like I did have a voice. From time to time the directors prompted me with these lines and every time they did, the gates got a little bit wider. More and more 'stuff' came out until there was a time where they didn't even have to prompt me anymore to get it out. It went from just coming out on its own because there was too much inside to where I took control of getting it all out. But I wasn't consciously in control of it. It's more like there was something inside of me that had to be done and it was going on it own.

It was like a pressure release, like a pressure cooker. At one point the top of the pot blows off but not everything inside blows out. The top half may blow out but not all of it. And then I unconsciously had the control, the ability to once again accept prompts from the directors. It was like scooping out the rest of the pot and getting every last drop of 'stuff' out and giving it back to who it belonged to. At some point in the drama I switched from a past focus to a present day focus and I was talking to my parents in the here and now. And together with the prompts of the director and myself I was able to take my parents to task. As an adult I was able to say to them the things that needed saying. To hold them accountable. And in doing so it felt like I was taking back control. At some point I didn't need to yell at them anymore. I didn't need for them to be hurt. There was a point at which I felt like I had gotten all of that 'stuff' out. I had said what I wanted to say, given back to them what was theirs' not mine. And at that point I felt a calmness in my body. In the core of my body. A deep sense of calm and serenity. It felt like

the pot was empty. Empty and clean. Clean and shiny. No stains, no crusty food. A clean, beautiful pot hanging on the wall.

It was at that point that I was finally again able to tell my parents that I did love them in fact. I wanted to connect with them again. On my terms. It was like now that I'd given them back what was theirs, not mine, I could connect with them and tell them I love them and mean it as opposed to saying it because I should. It was like, all those years of them shoving 'stuff' down my throat had resulted in me pulling further and further away but now that part of me could come out on its own and reconnect with them. Offer them a true and genuine part of myself.

The connecting was at the end of the enactment and since then its been about one month. I've had some time to process my experience and make sense of it. One thing I feel differently about for sure is that the incident I enacted has no power on my present existence. It doesn't trigger me anymore, emotionally. Another is that I still feel the calmness in my body. I used to feel like a soldier on a battlefield; constantly watching out for possible booby traps. In my vigilance I did everything to avoid having any shame put onto me. And that made me very weary. That's different now. I feel more relaxed. I don't have to worry anymore. I don't feel like I can be surprised again. No one can come out of left field and mess me up and shame me the way I was shamed when I was younger because now I'm more clear of my boundaries. If I break rules now that I didn't know existed, if I violate someone else's boundaries, I know it doesn't reflect on me personally. I might feel guilt if I break my own rules or someone else's that I have knowledge about, but I will not feel shame. I will not take that inside of me. I will no longer let anyone steam roll me and say I'm an awful person.

I feel like I am better able to take care of myself. To protect myself. To deal with issues and other people as they arise. I feel like I can defend myself without being defensive. I feel like I can relax around people and open myself up more to experiencing people without feeling like I'm opening myself up to the possibility of being shamed. I believe like I can interact with people and still be safe. And I'm enjoying things for myself more now. I mean truly enjoying them. I'm not trying to avoid the negatives anymore but instead I'm experiencing things as good and allowing the joy to come from the inside out. I can't say I've completely switched because I think it's a long process. But I'm not spending all my energy avoiding anymore.

What I know now at the core of my being is that I'm a good person... which I never knew before.

SUMMARY

In this chapter three first person narrative stories were presented as the research findings. This was done in accordance with the methodology of Colaizzi (1978) with a modification to step number five. Rather than present the findings as themes or as an essential structure, the integrity of each individual story was maintained for the purpose of thick rich description and for interest and readability. In the following chapter, a discussion of the elements common to all three stories and unique to only one or two stories will ensue. Aspects of the stories will be compared and contrasted with one another and with the literature relevant to shame and psychodrama.

Note. The story "Josh's Amulet" represents the experience of the one woman in this study. The coresearcher chose the pseudonym Josh because for her it represented an aspect of the child within.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter themes common to each narrative summary and unique to either one or two of the cases will be discussed. In total, 15 themes will be presented. Of these 15 themes, ten were shared among each of the three coresearchers. Four of the 15 themes were shared among two coresearchers while one theme was unique to only one coresearcher. Themes will be grouped into three broad categories: **the experience of shame, the experience of the enactment, and the experience of change following the enactment** and will be discussed broadly in terms of the transformation of shame.

The experience of shame as described by the coresearchers of this study confirms much of what is known about shame in the literature. The present research study contributes to the study of shame in that it further validates the construct of shame and adds a thick rich description to it. Additionally, since the literature on shame both validates and is validated by the findings of this study, a measure of confidence and credibility is added to these findings.

The experience of shame, as described by the coresearchers, establishes a context for understanding the findings of this research directly related to the concept of reworking shame in terms of psychodrama. Since this has been the focus of the present research project, the findings directly related to reworking shame in terms of psychodrama are considered the primary and significant findings. These processes are discussed in the section on the

experience of the enactment and the experience of change following the enactment.

Themes pertinent to the experience of the enactment and the experience of change following the enactment include elements that are unique and of importance to both the theory and practice of counselling, particularly within the field of psychodrama. The specific implications to practice will be discussed later in the chapter while the implications to theory will be interspersed throughout the discussion of the themes. In the final part of this chapter, limitations of the study and ideas for future research will be discussed.

DISCUSSION OF THEMES

A. The Experience of Shame

1. The phenomenological experience of shame

In the telling of their stories, each coresearcher talks about their experience of shame both at the psychological and somatic level. Many aspects of their experience converge with one another and with the literature on shame.

All three coresearchers describe their experience of shame phenomenologically. Josh describes the sensations of a really cold stomach, a clutching or clenching, sweaty palms, and the averting of eye contact. Johnson describes the bottled up feeling or emotional position shame kept him in. Neil states he felt his face and ears get all hot (Wurmser, 1981) and red. He felt sweat or butterflies in his stomach. The phenomenological experience of shame is described similarly by others (Nathanson, 1992; Kaufman, 1989).

In addition, all three coresearchers describe a feeling of exposure and vulnerability. Josh states that feeling shame is "when I felt most exposed, vulnerable. All eyes are (focused) on me". Johnson describes the mixed emotions of abruptness, shock and fear. Neil talks about the suddenness of exposure, a "shocking self-consciousness... I had the realization.. I had done it in front of 300 people". Sudden exposure leads to feelings of helplessness, powerlessness and a lack of control. Jane Middleton-Moz (1990) describes the powerlessness children feel at the hands of significant others who use shame as a means of disciplining children. Kaufman (1989) suggests that powerlessness is an activator of affect and therefore a guarantee of perpetual vulnerability to shame, which is likely to be experienced either singly or in conjunction with other negative affects. He states feelings of powerlessness transport a person back into the original governing scene of newborn infant powerlessness to the point where the person relives it in the present with all its affect reawakened.

In one case, that of Neil, an added aspect of the phenomenological experience of shame is confusion. This was not reported by the other two coresearchers, however, it bears mentioning. Nathanson (1992) states that in situations of shame, where a person is criticized, confronted or exposed, confusion is a normal cognitive-affective reaction to the situation. During this phase, whatever positive affect had been experienced is impeded painfully by a programmed mechanism that pulls our eyes away from whatever had been the object of our attention. In addition to causing our neck and shoulders to slump, it brings about a momentary lapse in our ability

to think (Nathanson, 1992). This finding is included because it is verified by the literature and may be a common element in shame experiences for some people even though it was not specifically mentioned by the others in this study.

The above phenomenological descriptions of shame are validated by the literature on shame and provide confidence that the coresearchers in this study are talking about the construct shame.

2. The severed interpersonal bridge and subsequent isolation

Kaufman (1989) describes shame as the severing of the interpersonal bridge, particularly in terms of the significant interpersonal relationships foundational to the early formative years of childhood. This view is held by others (Jacoby, 1994; Broucek, 1991).

In the present study, all three coresearchers reported the interpersonal nature of their feelings of shame. For Josh it was the experience of being "cut off" and "abandoned" by Mother. The hours and even days of the cold shoulder treatment. For Johnson it was the neglect, the aloneness and lack of connection. Neil remembers the painful self-consciousness that came with being exposed by an adult who was important to him.

Jacoby (1994) discusses the importance of affect attunement in infant and child development. Affect attunement is the "extent to which mother and child are able to attune themselves to each other's affects" (Jacoby, 1994, pp. 30). For Jacoby, attunement is primarily achieved emotionally through eye gazing and closeness in infancy. Attunement is the foundational basis of empathy. Nathanson (1992) suggests that empathic failure and lack of attunement are approximately the same thing. The caregiving adult is

proximally available but yet physically and emotionally does not make themselves available to the child. Jacoby (1994) further states that in childhood, the human need to express oneself, to be seen, heard, and understood are central and when attunement fails, large portions of the child's psyche are not heard and the child feels abandoned.

In each of these three cases the coresearchers report that one result of being cut off was feelings of isolation. Isolation led to diminished contact and connection with others; a lack of genuine intimacy. The severing of the interpersonal bridge leads to isolation and diminished contact. In effect, the degree to which a child experiences a lack of emotional connection determines the degree to which they feel alone in the world. Abandonment and rejection leave the child locked up in their own world to fend for themselves. This has many implications for the growing child, not all of them detrimental. For one, aloneness provides the child with the opportunity to learn something about himself or herself which may translate into independence and thus provide the basis for the development of personal resources. This will be discussed in greater detail below.

Another implication is that the extent to which the child feels and believes the rejection, abandonment and isolation is a reflection of who they are may significantly impact their developing beliefs (affective-cognitive) about their self. In turn, these beliefs affect feelings of self-worth and acceptance, among others, and impact behaviour in the real world.

It seems logical to think that connection and reversal of the severed interpersonal bridge provides a natural antidote to feelings of shame. Where an individual lives parts of their lives, large or small, feeling isolated,

connection with an other may serve the function of reversing the isolation that accompanies shame. This will be elaborated on later in this chapter.

3. Shame becomes internalized

All three coresearchers described the internalization of shame that took place at the hands of significant people in their lives. Josh recalls believing "... that I was responsible. That somehow I had caused all this... I kept believing I could shift things". Johnson shares his painful experience of believing his parents' withdrawal was a reflection of their not liking him. He says: "I understood my parents' withdrawal as... they don't like me for who I am. I'm not good enough to be with. I'm not worthy of the attention". He also says "It was like all that stuff she pushed onto me got internalized..." Neil talks about the internalization of 'badness' that takes place as a result of being told "you're a bad kid", particularly by an adult for whom he cared. He says: "... if an adult who I care about.. tells me I'm doing something bad, then it must be true... it must be bad... which means that I am bad... I am a bad boy".

The dilemma facing children is that either the parent is correct and therefore the child IS responsible and therefore 'bad', or the child is right and the parent is wrong. For children, who are naturally dependent on their parents for survival, the choice in believing the parent is wrong does not exist. The consequence for a child who believes a parent is wrong is that they are alone in the world. This option would leave the child defenseless and parentless; in effect, abandoned (Middleton-Moz, 1990). Instead, the child agrees the parent is correct and that something is wrong with themselves.

This process, however, does not take place at a cognitive level as the language of choice and option might lead one to believe. Quite the opposite

occurs. Young children, because they lack the ability to be objective and do not see the world from the same frame of reference as adults, simply believe they are responsible. Shame affect has the power to draw attention to the self in such a powerful way (Nathanson, 1992) that from the point of view of a child, there are no options but to understand that what happens is about them. This is part of the egocentrism of children.

Kaufman (1989) spends a significant portion of his writing dealing with the concept of internalization. Internalization results from identification with a significant person (caretaker). The processes of identification and internalization are important aspects of the development of self (Jacoby, 1994; Nathanson, 1992). Through identification and internalization, children learn about the boundaries of who they are as individuals and as functioning (little) people in the world. Identification and internalization assist growing individuals in trying on roles, adopting some and discarding others. It is through these processes that children become the people they become. In this way, identification and internalization are normal developmental processes and are helpful.

Where internalization becomes harmful is in the negative messages and negative schemas one incorporates into the self that are inaccurate. For example, as in the case of Neil, any child who is repeatedly told they are a bad child will eventually come to believe it. In my opinion, no child is a bad child. Undoubtedly there are some children who are more rambunctious than others or who display behaviour that is troublesome for parents or caregivers. However the negative messages people in power positions pass onto the children in their care say more about themselves and their discomfort with or inability to care for the child than any quality of the child. In cases of

severe abuse and trauma, children who internalize negative messages, either through the verbal or non-verbal messages caregivers project, are at an even greater disadvantage.

4. Shame serves some intra psychic purpose

In only one case it was mentioned that shame serves an intra psychic purpose. Josh mentioned that when exposed, "having a portable hole is kind of handy. It's a place to jump into and be protected". Josh goes on to state that ".. I spent a lot of time alone and (so) I was a pretty fanciful kid." In our interview, Josh speculated that through shame one learns about the self. Being capable of returning to a place of shame, the portable hole as Josh refers to it, allows the person to both protect himself or herself from further shame but also provides an opportunity to be alone - perhaps to reflect on what led up the shame, to reflect on the self either positively or negatively, and to recollect before moving out again into the world.

In my own recollections of feeling 'sorry for myself', feeling ashamed for a particular behaviour or set of circumstances or feeling down, unworthy, and unlovable, a vague set of feelings occur that parallel Josh's experience. I can remember through some of these moments making vows or promises to myself that I would take care of myself if no one else ever did. I can remember mustering up the internal strength to 'get on with things', 'pulling myself up by the bootstraps' and 'plugging away' despite what might have happened or how I felt about myself. In my opinion, these are important lessons to learn. They are life lessons. It is through these experiences that people acquire the personal resources to deal with life independently. It should be noted however, that not all people come through these experiences

unscathed. Quite the opposite occurs in some cases. Individuals possess varying levels of resiliency and trauma visits upon people in varying degrees. For some, life's lessons are too severe and they cripple rather than teach.

Whether an individual is broken or not, that is, life's lessons have left deep wounds which interfere with the person's ability to function or quality of life, experiences that produce shame have the potential to teach. The goal of therapies is to help the individual both make sense of the experiences and find ways to integrate these experiences and meanings into the fabric of who they are. On one hand it could be said that shame ought never take place since its pain is at times unbearable. The fact that shame teaches and that people are able to make sense of their lives, although apparently diametrically opposed, extraordinarily these processes actually work in tandem to assist the individual in learning about themselves. Nathanson (1992) points out that "...through shame much about the self is learned.. in no other way can the self develop..." (pp. 210). I think both Nathanson and Josh are right.

When asked about this theme, one of the other coresearchers could not identify with it. For Neil, the notion of shame serving some kind of purpose abhorred him. For him, the shame was like a cancer that he wanted to permanently cut off. He didn't see that it served any purpose. This may reflect a slight differences in the experience of shame for Neil compared to Josh as well as differences in the meaning each made of their psychodrama experience.

5. The potential for shaming the self emerges

Two of the three coresearchers reported that in their experience of shame, they learned how to shame themselves at some point early in their

lives. Josh states "eventually I learned how to go to shame places on my own". Johnson said "... and then I did to myself what she did to me.. whenever a situation arose where the potential existed for shame, or shaming myself, I would fall into a DO loop... This is the part I call the internal critic."

As stated earlier, Miller (1996) suggests that the young children who experience excessive shame grow up and upon becoming objectively aware of themselves reinterpret the negative feelings about the self and are likely to add other negative ideas and concepts. Even in the absence of the stimulus of an interpersonal event, shame can be activated through the internalized representations the self carries, for example the voice of Mother. As the child begins to establish memory for shame situations and is able to attach language to self aspects that evoke shame, the child becomes capable of his own shame-generating activity. The child may characterize himself/herself in a shame-laden fashion saying "you are boring" (because you don't interest Mother), for example.

Kaufman(1989) discusses the importance of identity scripts in the internalization of shaming events and the potential for subsequent shaming of the self. Identity scripts are "distinct patterns of actions for predicting and controlling a magnified set of scenes" (pp. 90). Scenes are the basic elements in life and are processes central to the shaping of the self and identity. They include at least one affect and one object of that affect. Through affect, imagery and language, scenes become interconnected and thus magnified into families of scenes. These families of scenes, in Kaufman's (1989) language, are called governing scenes. Governing scenes of shame become internalized and later reproduce themselves internally. In order to predict and control

governing scenes, identity scripts emerge to organize the self. Identity scripts are internally directed and look both backward and forward in time.

Kaufman (1989) describes three identity scripts common for self preservation, that serve to manage the self in terms of governing scenes of shame. They are self-blame, comparison making and self-contempt. A self-blame script is activated by some mishap or failure. Repeated self accusation coupled with anger forms the basis of the self-blame script and where self-blame takes place, the opportunity to maintain dignity and respect is diminished (Kaufman, 1989).

Comparison making scripts highlight differences between self and other. Awareness of differences triggers this identity script and through comparison, the self is devalued in relation to others. Comparison making is a way of relating to oneself and has the consequence of maintaining and spreading shame by reproducing and magnifying original scenes of shame.

A self-contempt script actually rejects the self. Contempt is experienced as rejection and blends the affects anger and dissmell. Total and permanent repudiation of the self takes place. Contempt takes the form of overt criticalness, judgementality, fault finding and a condescending attitude. When contempt is directed outward, it becomes a defending script. When directed inward, as an identity script, contempt, along with self-blame and comparison making, critically shape negative identity (Kaufman, 1989).

Through the processes of identification and internalization, negative messages about the self are reproduced. The emergence of identity scripts (Kaufman, 1989) exacerbates the reproduction of shame scenes. The individual, as a means of predicting and controlling their environment, organizes himself/herself in such a way that they become capable of

regenerating shame within their self. Unless these processes are revealed and actively attended to, self-shaming may continue to negatively impact the individual. This was the experience of two of the coresearchers in the present study.

6. The modification of self resulting from shame experiences

All three coresearchers talk about modifications made to the self as a way of preventing further encounters with shame. Josh says ".. if only I did something different.. if I were sufficiently shamefaced and regretted what I had done.. No matter what though, I knew I had to do something.. I was always kind of on edge.." In our interview together (although not directly reflected in the narrative), Josh stated "the being overly responsible is my shield in the world against having to rehook up with my shame". For Josh, the modification of self took the form of being on edge, separated from others and ready to take responsibility by changing or fixing aspects of self in order to better accommodate others. Josh worked diligently and responsibly to modify aspects of the self in order to not disappoint.

Johnson talks about hiding aspects of himself in order to avoid further contact with shame. Part of the hiding for him was a stillness; withdrawing in order to avoid being seen for who he was. Out of his hiding emerged a driven, hard working part of himself that relentlessly pushed in order to avoid criticism or judgement. He says ".. I became very concerned with what other people think. I adjusted myself in order to avoid disappointing people.. It was fear-based.. I became a driven person.." For Johnson, the pusher within occupied a place opposite from the critic. Working in tandem, the more the critic criticized, the harder Johnson worked in an effort to avoid feeling

criticized. One might suggest, recalling the above discussion on shame serving a purpose, that through his internal critic Johnson is learning how to work hard and is building skills. However, from his point of view, he wasn't taking care of himself emotionally. His driven work was motivated out of fear and as such was unhealthy.

Incidentally, during the process of validation, Johnson shared that he still finds he works hard but rather than being driven by fear of what others might think, he is now motivated by his "Life Force", the energy he claims as his internal sense of empowerment. It is because he is now having fun and enjoying his work that he works so hard rather than fear of being criticized by others or himself.

Neil describes becoming "vigilant about his actions". He says "...since I had been shamed for flirting with the girls, I stopped doing that... I cut back my behaviour... I stopped being spontaneous.. Instead of being free and easy I was drawing away.. hone it all down to the bare minimum... to avoid being crapped on.." For Neil, the struggle to be a good boy was immense. Constantly he was paying attention to his behaviour and acting in ways he was sure he wouldn't get in trouble for. He worked hard to get the reinforcement that came along with hard work and when he received it, he felt relief instead of accomplishment and success.

In each of these cases, the coresearchers describe withdrawing as defense against further shame. Kaufman (1989) describes internal withdrawal as a strategic defending script which serves to reduce exposure and avoid further shame. In place of the true self, only a superficial social mask remains visible to others. Kaufman (1989) describes eight defending scripts and discusses these in terms of a set of actions that are externally directed in order

to predict and control one's environment. Besides internal withdrawal, Kaufman (1989) lists the following: rage, contempt, striving for perfection, striving for power, transfer of blame, humour and denial. In the cases found in this study, each person could be described as striving for perfection to some extent as a means of avoiding contact with shame. In Johnson's case, his anger as a teen directed toward others might also be seen as evidence of rage and contempt.

B) The Experience of the Enactment

7. Anxiety about the potential for reshame at psychodrama

Each of the coresearchers shared that they felt a nervous anticipation toward doing the enactment and at the same time a compulsion or readiness. All three coresearchers also shared that once the enactment got underway, any self consciousness and apprehension diminished. Additionally, in all three cases the coresearchers stated that they experienced a feeling of dread toward experiencing the shame part of the enactment and were aware of the fact that it would be painful and messy. In one case, Josh felt the need to protect the group and the director.

In her masters thesis Marilyn Martens (1990) found protagonists reported that feeling safe is regarded as a prerequisite to doing a psychodrama. Trust in the group and trust in the director contributed to feelings of safety. Susan Baum (1994) reports similar findings in her masters thesis. Both Martens and Baum found protagonists reported a rising tension that is felt emotionally, physically and cognitively before the enactment begins. Additionally, Martens (1990) reports protagonists feel a readiness toward doing the enactment. Martens and Baum also learned that protagonists

experience a decrease in awareness of the group as the enactment gets underway. The findings of the present study are regarded as supportive of the Martens (1990) and Baum (1994) studies.

From the point of view of this author, the above findings may be seen as evidence of protagonists fear of, or at least awareness of, the potential for being reshamed in psychodrama. Protagonists who willingly risk putting themselves in front of 'the eyes of a psychodrama group' risk be reshamed. This sets up the potential for feeling shame in the psychodrama. Special care must be taken to ensure that safety factors are met. Inclusion in the group is an essential element of this process (Borgen et al., 1989; Yalom, 1995) and is achieved through the warm-up phase of the psychodrama. It is important that the protagonist feel a degree of control and choice in how the enactment proceeds in order that safety feelings be maximized.

In the present research, all three coresearchers discuss the importance of feeling some measure of personal control throughout the psychodrama enactment. Josh talks about the need to "get grounded" during the times in the enactment where the walking stopped. Implicit here is a measure of control in that when Josh stopped walking, the director stopped as well. Rather than push Josh to continue walking, with clinical judgement the director joined Josh in those moments of pause until Josh was ready to move forward. Johnson summarizes this experience most succinctly. He says "It was important for me to feel a sense of control - that I wasn't going to be pushed but rather empowered to do it on my own. That part of the enactment was the most crucial... where the true repair work was done... I heard the director say 'just take your time'". Neil reported a similar feeling of a measure of control. For Neil it wasn't a conscious control but rather

"something inside of me that had to be done... and (then) I unconsciously had the control".

For each of the coresearchers, the experience of having some control during the enactment assisted in the transformation process. Trust and safety with both the directors and the group along with a sense of control on the part of the protagonist help to diminish the potential for reshaming to occur.

8. Experiencing and reliving shame in the drama

In this study each of the three coresearchers described experiencing shame in their psychodrama. For Josh it was the dizzy, collapsing, downward plummeting feeling that accompanied the telling of three specific incidents. In each situation, Josh stopped walking and in those moments of not walking became aware that the story being told "was my story". It was through those moments that Josh was able to get "grounded and integrated". And then move forward.

For Johnson, the experience was getting into the shape of shame on the floor. Experientially he took on that shape of "curled up, on the floor... hiding from myself and the rest of the world". It was through those moments of experiencing shame, reliving shame, that eventually he was able to face 'himself' and move forward. Neil experienced shame in his enactment in the moment his mother delivered the critical statement. In his enactment he remembers 'turning his head away and hanging it', "wanting to get smaller in the back seat of the car... wanting to disappear.. crawl away into a corner. Shrink." From this point in his enactment he was able to release his feelings and face his 'parents' through a process of confrontation and accountability.

Potter-Efron and Potter-Efron (1989) state "we must have the courage to face our shame, rather than trying to give it away by blaming and attacking others" (pp. 14). Hopkins (1991) suggests facing shame means going deeper into oneself and ultimately establishing a firmer base of intimacy with oneself as well as with others.

In the present study all three coresearchers experienced shame in their psychodrama. Through the reliving of shame, both the mind and body were united in such a powerful way as to throw them back into their self with the potential for connection to the inner core of the self (Schwartz, 1991). Each coresearcher had the opportunity to face their shame in a new way. The process and techniques of psychodrama slow down the facing of shame. Within the climate of a trusting group, each coresearcher was able to experience their shame completely and develop new insights and perspectives on it. For example, Johnson describes sitting in his shame for several moments vibrating with terror. Through this he finds a strength and life force he previously was unaware of. It is this strength that empowers him to get up off the floor and 'face' the tableau shame of speaking. He realizes one of his strengths is working kinesthetically, which he never knew before. He recognizes that the shame of speaking is an aspect of himself that cannot be cut away but rather needs to be reintegrated.

The process of transformation requires directly facing one's shame and then integrating it into a more full understanding of the self. For Josh, the experience was one of collapsing and then getting grounded/integrated. Experiencing shame in the psychodrama closely corresponded to the moments of externalization, or catharsis. Brooks (1998) found insight based catharsis was a useful way of describing some people's experience of

externalization. Rather than a dramatic release of pent up emotion, insight based catharsis occurs more slowly over time and is accompanied by emerging insights. In Josh's case, the facing of shame was intermingled with the cathartic experience (to be discussed in more detail below).

In each case the facing of shame required great courage on the part of the protagonist. The terror experienced by Johnson attests to the sheer strength of will necessary to move forward through his facing of shame. For Josh, the experience of collapsing and plummeting, physically requiring support from the director, shows the weariness with which Josh faced shame. Neil described 'breaking down and crying' in front of the psychodrama group when facing the shame he felt when his mother delivered the crucial critical words to him in the car.

Kaufman (1989) suggests that self-forgiveness is an analog of that process vital to the restoration of wholeness. The self must be taught how to forgive the self. "When children do wrong and are given appropriate punishment, parents must further teach them to forgive themselves. In Western culture, atonement of wrongdoing is followed by forgiveness from an elder" (pp. 264). However where parental forgiveness is not possible, therapeutically it may be attainable through other means such as psychodrama, for example. In this way the protagonist has the opportunity to learn self-forgiveness through a process of looking at their most painful aspects of self.

It seems to me that the process of self-forgiveness takes place through enactment in psychodrama. In each of the cases found in this research, the protagonist, with great courage, faced their shame by reliving it. Through reliving, or re-experiencing, and catharsis (dramatic or gentle) within the

context of a supportive therapeutic relationship, with the director, and in the context of a caring community, the group, each protagonist had the opportunity to 'see' and experience their shame in a new way. Developing objectivity, gleaning new insights, and beginning the process of integrating an aspect of the self not previously fully understood before are the first steps toward self-forgiveness. This lays the groundwork for 'other' forgiveness and opens up the potential for reconciliation.

9. Externalizing the internal representations of the self

It has long been debated whether catharsis provides a curative function in psychotherapy, is incidental but not integral, or is counterproductive (Kosmicki & Glickauf-Hughes, 1997). Intense cathartic emotional expression was exalted by Moreno (1977) as a liberating experience that results in increased spontaneity and growth. He claimed that catharsis is essential to the final outcome of psychodrama. Moreno (1946) defined catharsis as "blocked energy being released" (pp. 16).

From my point of view, based in the findings of this research, the cathartic moment(s) include an element of externalization; specifically the externalization of shame. Externalization takes the forms of "purging" or "cleaning" to use the words of my coresearchers. In conjunction with the externalization blocked energy is released. Shame - internalized through the process of identification particularly with primary caregivers and through myriad experiences across the life-span, particularly in childhood - is expelled and "given back". In this research the coresearchers used language like "I had ingested it", "all that crap pushed into me", and in common usage people speak of 'swallowing your pride', 'suck it up', 'suck it in' or 'a heaping

spoonful of (guilt) shame'. The shame the coresearchers had internalized had become a part of who they were. It became part of their identity in very complex ways. Through reliving (discussed above) and externalization, they were able to put shame in its proper place. Whether that meant "giving it back" to their parents or simply putting shame in its proper place relative to the self, the externalization meant "getting it out".

All three coresearchers had the experience of "getting it out". Josh shares that what prompted the enactment was a desire "to get out of my body whatever was left in terms of shame". Afterward, Josh describes that the amulet of shame felt as though it had been discarded; "flung off somewhere like during a tribal dance". Johnson describes the wailing as a purge and a "working through something". He describes that on a cellular level he felt the wailing was a building up of energy necessary to struggle and "work through... flesh" (like a birthing experience), the shame he had lived with all his life. This shame literally took the form of a shape during his enactment. For Johnson, the kinesthetic experience of reworking the shame did not include "giving it back" to his parents. This would be his next step and would include verbal confrontation. His experience was one of putting shame into perspective; rediscovering his internal strength, his life force, and beginning the process of integrating strength into his sense of self rather than overwhelming shame. For Johnson, the strength or the life force is interwoven with his yearning to connect with people rather than live in a lonely isolation.

Neil's experience was similar in that he wanted to "give back" to his parents the shame he felt "was theirs, not mine". For Neil, cutting the shame out altogether was his goal. During the validation process Neil shared that in

his case, integration of shame was not his goal. Neil felt that the shame he had internalized never belonged to him. For him, cutting the shame out and keeping it out was the only alternative to maximize his healing.

Regardless of the different goals each coresearcher had and the various means by which they carried out the process of externalization, each of them experienced "getting it out". Along with the externalization came empowerment. With courage each of the coresearchers relived and faced their shame, externalized it through a process of catharsis, and experienced the empowerment, or release of energy, normally associated with catharsis. Josh describes empowerment as ".. a total weight bearing shift.." that occurred when ".. we started to walk again... It was "a victory march.. like a power walk... I felt amperage". Johnson talks about sitting in the shape of shame, taking his time and "feeling very connected to everybody". After the wailing, he was able to face his 'mirror', the shame of speaking and at the conclusion of his enactment, with the group encircling him, he felt acknowledged by each group member and "it felt like a love massage and I just drank it all in".

Empowerment is the polar opposite of shame. Where shame exposes the self, vulnerability and powerlessness result (Middleton-Moz, 1990). The experiences of the coresearchers in this study point to the powerfulness, or empowerment, that accompanies the release of shame. When an internalized shame, held onto for many years, is released or expunged, the previous feelings of vulnerability and susceptibility are replaced with a sense of ability and strength.

My hypothesis is that a similar process of externalizing shame may take place in psychodrama when other emotions are released through cathartic moments. Anger-rage, fear-terror, distress-anguish (grief) are other emotions

commonly experienced in psychodrama and released during cathartic moments. Kaufman (1989) and Nathanson (1992) suggest that shame binds with other affects when those affects are responded to with shame. Kaufman (1989) calls these affect-shame binds. For example, fear binds with shame when a child who is afraid of monsters under the bed is shamed for being "silly". Later in life when that child experiences fear they may believe something is wrong with them. Anger might bind with shame when a child is repeatedly shamed, either verbally or non-verbally, for expressing anger. This may be the case for Johnson who was repeatedly told "stop being that way... stop being angry". He recalls "feeling judged for being angry" and may have responded to his own anger later in life by feeling shame for his anger.

Since shame binds readily with other affects, Kaufman (1989) states that shame may be the most overlooked affect in psychotherapy. He suggests part of the reason for this may result from therapists own reluctance to acknowledge their feelings of shame and to understand it more fully. In therapy, emotions such as fear, anger, grief are frequently given permission for expression in the counselling environment but shame may be given less space. In psychodrama, fear associated with significant trauma, anger directed at significant others, or grief over important losses may in many cases be coupled with shame. This may result from affect-shame binds learned early in childhood or simply because the trauma or loss themselves include an element of shame. Further exploration of this notion is warranted.

10. Connection - Reestablishing the interpersonal bridge on multiple levels

Connection with people is the basis of human intimacy. Connection and intimacy are the opposite of shame. Where shame is about the severed

interpersonal bridge and subsequent isolation, connection is the groundwork of reestablishing interpersonal bridges. "Connection is the direct antithesis of the shame" Josh stated. Middleton-Moz (1990) states "developing a sense of belonging in the world again is the first part in the process of resolving debilitating shame" (pp. 49). Kaufman (1989) suggests the goals of psychotherapy are to establish a connection with the client in order to ameliorate the effects of shame, particularly the shame felt within the therapeutic relationship.

The findings of this research illuminate the importance of connection for all three coresearchers in several ways. Within the psychodrama therapeutic model, the role of the group, or witnesses, provide safety and containment of the protagonist's "story". Each of the coresearchers were keenly aware of how difficult it would be to show the most painful aspects of himself or herself. Yet each was willing to move forward with the knowledge and trust that they would be supported by a caring group community. Johnson says "it was like all that I had yearned for, to connect, was happening right there with all those people". Neil stated "the witnesses made real and grounded my experience by acknowledging it". In all three cases, connection with the group was essential.

An important piece of evidence that further points to the importance of connection, one that comes by way of an opposite, is in the case of Josh. Josh felt a shift take place during the enactment and then following the enactment that "joy was impeded because of some overheard negative statements made by group members". Josh states a "dip in the joy" took place because of the lacked connection.

Moreno's notion of tele is a good explanation of the connection felt between the protagonist and the group during the psychodrama enactment. Tele is described as the two way flow of feelings, or therapeutic love, between people; the cement which holds groups together (Moreno, 1964). By comparison, affective attunement is the "extent to which mother and child are able to attune themselves to each other's affects" (Jacoby, 1994, pp. 30). Attunement is the two way flow of feelings between a child and its primary caregiver through which the child, thus being mirrored, is provided the opportunity to begin developing a sense of self. In my opinion, a similar process is at play during enactment in the psychodrama group.

Connection with an other, whether a primary caregiver, trusted adult figure or friend and even a group, provides the basis for mirroring, empathy, intimacy and love necessary for human growth. Carl Rogers suggested already in 1957 that the necessary (and sufficient) conditions for human growth were empathy, genuineness and unconditional positive regard. Rogers (1957) was exceptionally accurate in this aspect of his theory, although some might argue with his notion that these factors are sufficient. The findings of this study reveal the truth of Rogers' claim and whether we call it tele, or empathy or attunement by the group, true intimate connection is a vital aspect of growth.

Another level to connection is the relationship with the director. Similar to individual therapies, trust in and relationship with the director (or therapist) lends to feelings of connection. In some cases this may outweigh the trust and relationship factor with the group members. In fact, Neil said, ".. it didn't matter, I was going ahead with it anyway". It might be inferred

that his trust with the directors was so high that any break in the group safety level may not have mattered too much to him.

A third level of connection is the notion of reconnection with self. In two cases, those of Josh and Johnson, a realization that aspects of the self are not to be rid of but rather to be reintegrated took place. Josh says "it was like my story was catching up to me" and Johnson states "I'm very gentle with that part of myself now, I didn't feel like I had to give it back." Here are examples of people who are in the process of reintegrating lost parts. Johnson states he is integrating "strength". Kaufman (1989) suggests that attending to how the self actively and currently relates to the self is a direct therapeutic task. One function of therapists is assisting individuals in reconnecting with lost or denied aspects of the self. Psychodrama is an effective means for accomplishing this task since the processes and techniques of psychodrama promote exploration of the self and the facilitation of developing insight on the part of the protagonist. Through a slowed down process of exploring, experiencing, naming and reowning thoughts, feelings, and behaviours, psychodrama is conducive to helping individuals integrate previously unknown aspects of the self.

Finally, connection with significant others in the drama is important. In one case, but not in the others, this was especially true. For example, Neil reconnects with his parents at the end of the drama and is able to tell them he loves them and forgives them, even though they messed it up. This experience in the drama has the effect of behavioural rehearsal (Westwood, 1989) and offers potential for real world transfer of learning. This will be discussed later in the implications for practice.

Kaufman (1989) talks about the importance of reestablishing the interpersonal bridge. It seems evident that this is possible through psychodrama at many levels. For example, with actors who play the role of significant relationships in the protagonists life, as well as providing a community with which to connect in a real and meaningful way.

C) The Experience of Change Following the Enactment

11. Releasing shame

Each of the three coresearchers in the present study describe releasing or 'letting go' of shame in a meaningful way. Josh describes how shedding the amulet of shame has resulted in a lighter feeling, more like the stance of a dancer. Lighter and flowing. Johnson talks about how the repair work has allowed him to "get out of the emotional shape of shame". For Johnson this transformation took place on "a cellular level". During the process of validation several months following his psychodrama enactment, Johnson maintained that the biggest change for him was still the transformation of the shape of shame at a cellular level. Rather than being contained by shame, he continues to experience freedom and flowing. Neil describes feeling "more relaxed; a calmness in his body". Where previously he felt like "a soldier on a battlefield, constantly watching out for booby traps", following the psychodrama enactment he felt relaxed, as though something had been released.

These findings are consistent with the findings of Marilyn Martens (1990) and Susan Baum (1994). In each of their masters thesis studies, protagonists described feeling "change in the way the physical body is experienced, a sensation that something has been dropped or released"

(Martens, 1990, pp. 78) and "a physical change... resulting in a sense of relief or lightness" (Baum, 1994, pp. 98).

12. Behaviour change

For two of the three coresearchers in the present study, changes in behaviour began to take place in the days and weeks to follow their psychodrama enactment.

Johnson describes feeling less driven than before. The energy of the pusher was transformed during the psychodrama enactment into a fun and gentle 'dancing' energy. Several months later, through the validation phase of this research, Johnson claims his 'dancer' energy continues to influence his daily living. He still finds himself very busy at work and in his personal life but rather than being motivated out of fear and worry for what other people will think of him, he is now working hard to accomplish things for his own satisfaction. Johnson calls this energy within him his 'Life Force'. The Life Force energy is the fun-loving, playful, wants-to-succeed-because-it-feels-good energy rather than a driving 'pusher' energy motivated by shame. In addition, he has noticed that the internal critic voice within has subsided. Rather than criticizing himself for mishaps and failures, he is developing the ability to put things into perspective, taking ownership for both his successes and mistakes.

Neil describes being less vigilant in the world as a result of his psychodrama enactment. Where previous to the enactment he acted vigilantly in the world to avoid being shamed by others, following his enactment he feels relaxed and more apt to be his spontaneous self. For Neil, the ability to feel relaxed and act spontaneously arises out of a newly

developed belief that he is capable of protecting himself by setting boundaries (to be discussed below). His ability to act more spontaneously in the world had translated into increased enjoyment. Rather than "trying to avoid negatives", Neil is now "experiencing things as good and allowing the joy to come from the inside out".

Part of the learning in psychodrama is the realization of aspects of the self not previously known. For both Johnson and Neil, insights developed through their psychodrama enactments allowed each to understand themselves in a new way. This translates into new ways of behaving in the real world because of a new sense of self. Another aspect of psychodrama that contributes to behaviour change in the real world is the notion of behavioural rehearsal. Psychodrama provides the protagonist with the opportunity to practice new behaviours not ordinarily lived out in their life. In Johnson's case, relating to his self within the psychodrama in novel ways imprinted on the self so that following the psychodrama, he has an affective-cognitive-kinesthetic memory of what that was like. The memory of practicing these new ways of behaving may stay with him over time and become internalized such that, with effort and patience, the new behaviours have the potential of becoming the mode d' operandi. Morrison (1998) suggests behaviour changes are the beginning steps of internalizing acceptance, which is an important and crucial element in overcoming shame. He goes on to say that taking action to overcome the self-doubts that lead to shame involves hard work and discipline. This will be discussed later in this chapter.

13. Self acceptance, choice and responsibility

All three coresearchers in the present study commented that a degree of choice and responsibility are involved in accepting and internalizing shame. Josh states "... I think of shame not as an enemy or as something that needs to be expelled but rather as a part of myself that could be a regular guest... I'm not sure if it's a fully discardable piece... I recognize that I have the freedom to invite shame in (as a guest)... if I want (I can) pick it up, dust it off and place it on my shelf for another time..."

In our interview together (although not reflected directly in the narrative) Josh shared, with regard to the amulet of shame, "... so the hope is that in its having fallen off, even if I pick it up again the lock's been broken, it isn't padlocked to me any longer, so I can at least learn to wear it occasionally if I feel like it but I don't have to wear it at all if I don't feel like it. So there's some empowerment, there's choice in it". For Josh, the reliving and releasing served the purpose of integrating the shamed aspects of self. Unlike Neil who's goal it was to 'cut it out' altogether, Josh views shame as an aspect of self that both serves purpose and at the same time is painful. In Josh's view, the shame externalized was "flung off" as in a "tribal dance" but yet access to it continues to exist. The choice in leaving shame "tamped down" under foot, in the dust or retrieving it by invitation "as a guest" will probably coincide with Josh's estimation of what purpose it might serve. This connects back to Josh's belief that shame serves a purpose (recall theme five).

During the validation process Josh shared that at one year following the enactment, shame felt less like a guest to be invited in and more like one of many parts of the self. For Josh, living away from the university community and the psychodrama group community has meant withdrawal

from the opportunities to continue processing the experience of the enactment. Under these conditions, Josh has experienced "fuzziness" with regard to the changes initially experienced through the psychodrama enactment and stated that "it feels as though not much has changed". As a result, Josh concluded that effort is required to continuously nurture oneself in terms of what is learned about oneself through psychodrama. Once again Josh was reminded that therapeutic change and self-awareness through learning is a dynamic process, one that ebbs and flows. In reading the narrative story, Josh reflected how it accurately portrays the process and experience felt at the time of the interview shortly following the enactment. As a result, through a reading of the narrative, Josh was forced to recollect and reflect on that time period and combined with Josh's present experience, find ways to integrate the two. This has implications for counselling practice and will be discussed later in this chapter.

Johnson also described the choice and responsibility associated with accepting and internalizing shame. For Johnson, taking responsibility is a choice. He says "I believe I have to take responsibility for deciding that this new shape of strength is where I prefer to be. It's a choice... I'm in the process of internalizing strength. And that's very difficult for me. I have to work at holding the strength". For Johnson, the reliving and reshaping of shame created the opportunity to begin internalizing strength. The effort associated with internalizing strength Johnson acknowledges as challenging and one that requires continuous responsibility taking and decision making.

Morrison (1998) states internalizing acceptance is a responsibility. In order for lasting alleviation of shame to occur:

the affirmation and acceptance must be taken inside and integrated as part of self-experience. Just as the negative judgements leading to shame were internalized during childhood, so too must the antidote of acceptance be internalized if the shame is to be healed. (pp. 112)

The antidote of "acceptance", in Morrison's language, is equated with the notion of connection in this study. Recall the above discussion of connection to the group, to the director/therapist and to oneself. Regarding choice and responsibility, the onus lies with the individual, the protagonist of psychodrama, to actively engage in a process of internalization of acceptance; acceptance from others and from oneself.

Responsibility can be abdicated. For various reasons known only to the individual, the taking up of responsibility can be avoided and new insights and learnings acquired through psychodrama (or any therapy for that matter) can be lost, either temporarily or forever. From my own experience I know this to be true. A number of years ago, following a psychodrama enactment I did, I spent a few months in a period of grieving during which time it was difficult to take responsibility for integrating new insights and learnings as well as internalize acceptance. Several months later, because I was willing and ready to engage in the process of active integration, I was able to "pick up" where I had left off, so to speak, at the psychodrama weekend workshop.

My theory is that people take up responsibility to varying degrees at various points throughout their lives. For some the impetus is strong to make changes, turn a corner and head in a new direction. For others, the motivation may not be as high or the patterns of behaviour are so ingrained

that making changes seems impossible. For some, the environment in which they regularly live does not lend itself to encouraging change or the battle for change seems too demanding. Often, life circumstances prevail in such a way as to make it challenging to implement dramatic change and instead minute adjustments are made to current living that serves to promote additional learning and growth.

One route to promoting the choice to take up responsibility for internalizing acceptance is through cognitive-behavioural restructuring. The protagonist of psychodrama who has dealt with a theme of shame and relived shame experientially while also externalizing that shame, is better prepared to deal with shame in future situations from a more conscious point of view. In situations where shame is evoked, the individual may be more apt to recognize the affect as shame, name it, and either own it or disown it and in so doing, develop cognitions around the event that are self-affirming. In terms of cognitive restructuring, individuals who take the time, and responsibility, to assess the situation, understand it and make accurate attributions will be challenging their negative beliefs about themselves and the world in which they live. This is an active process. It must be done with consciousness.

Kaufman (1989) discusses the importance of developing the capacity for self-affirmation. He states:

the capacity to affirm oneself has multiple sources and derives from actively embracing all of the disparate aspects of one's being. Owning these as inherent parts of an integrated self is the only route to self-acceptance. Nurturance of self and forgiveness of self walk hand in

hand with genuine pride in self; the forming of a new self-affirming identity. (pp. 225)

Kaufman suggests several cognitive-behavioural strategies to facilitate the internalization of self-acceptance. For example, developing a pride list by writing down events that occur throughout the day of which the client is genuinely proud and affirming oneself of pride is suggested as one strategy.

Psychodrama provides individuals with the opportunity to understand and make new meaning of the role of shame in their lives through the enactment of scenes and situations in their lives and the reliving and externalizing of shame. In the post psychodrama phase of integration, choice and responsibility present the protagonist of psychodrama both the freedom and challenge to continue on the journey of meaning making and internalization of self acceptance.

14. Ability to set boundaries

Two of the three coresearchers in the present research study talked about a stronger belief in their capacity to protect themselves and set boundaries. Johnson said "since the enactment I haven't fallen into that DO loop trap once... I don't feel like I'm going to ever again because it's not a place I want to be". In the weeks following the enactment when Johnson began making sense of his experience, through his efforts to understand his experience he developed new insights. He learned "... I feel like I'm able to take responsibility and state my need for verbal processing. For example, if I feel uncomfortable with something, relationally, I believe I can check it out. I can ask to process it with the person. If someone judges me I feel like I can

take care of myself. I can express myself and 'that doesn't feel good when you say that'".

Neil stated " I don't feel like I can be surprised again. No one can come out of left field and mess me up and shame me the way I was shamed when I was younger because now I'm more clear of my boundaries. If I break rules now that I didn't know existed, if I violate someone else's boundaries, I know it doesn't reflect on me personally... I will no longer let anyone steam roll me and say I'm an awful person".

The reliving and release of shame through the psychodrama enactment promotes the development of insight and a new understanding of the self. Through the responsible integration of insights into the self, the capacity for a more boundaried self results. Shame, once realized and owned, provides a more secure basis for self preservation in the future in that the individual is better prepared to know shame when it occurs, name it and either own it or protect against it. Protection occurs by setting boundaries thus reversing the direction in which shame is directed and externalizing it in such a way as to place it in its proper place rather than internalize it in an unconscious, habitual manner. This process is connected with choice and responsibility as discussed above. The responsibility lies with the individual to not allow unwarranted shame to be internalized but rather protected against. These processes require practice in the real world and the more often they occur, the stronger the reinforcement will be. Reinforcement of the self through the setting of boundaries further protects the self in ways that facilitate further growth and responsibility taking. These processes work together in tandem to support one another and are vital to the integration of newly acquired behaviours and insights.

Potter-Efron and Potter-Efron (1989) state that shame unchallenged works its way into the core of an individual's self-concept. Shame once challenged has to be defended against not in a defensive manner but rather as it comes up in daily living, it must be assessed and either accepted or rejected. In some cases, shame should be accepted because in a culture, where people were 'shameless' in their behaviour, anarchy would result. However, many cases involving shame are hurtful and damaging and have very little to do with the person experiencing shame and more to do with the other person involved or the introjected aspects of the self that are unduly self-critical. In these situations shame ought to be assessed carefully and probably rejected actively.

Whether shame arises from self-criticism or other criticism, and where it is unwarranted, an increased level of awareness around shame, its feelings, and ways to protect against it are useful. Kaufman (1989) proposes a structured time-limited psycho-educational group that combines experiential exercises with cognitive-behavioural homework to assist people who experience crippling shame to better cope with themselves and others in the world. Psychodrama also provides an opportunity for individuals to experience, understand, integrate and practice confronting shame and protecting against further exposure to it.

15. Desire to connect meaningfully and in different ways

The real world implications of therapeutic experience manifests in the relationships one has to his or her environment. In addition to greater self understanding, increased tolerance, understanding and even intimacy toward others seems a reasonable expected outcome of therapy, particularly when

therapy is of an interpersonal nature. Since shame is generally experienced first interpersonally and later has the potential to impact interpersonal relationships, it follows that working with shame therapeutically ought to impact relationships. Although this is not necessarily the goal of many therapies, including psychodrama, where the goal may be instead greater integration of the self, it is a logical by-product.

In the present research, two of the three coresearchers reported an increased desire to connect meaningfully with people in their lives. Johnson says "I feel like I can connect with people more now and can look them in the eyes. I feel like I can process with people my experience of things". For Johnson the yearning he experienced most of his life he now feels more apt to act on. Rather than sit in shame, Johnson feels better prepared and less fearful to interact and process with others. Neil states "I feel like I can relax around people and open myself up more to experiencing people without feeling like I'm opening myself up to the possibility of being shamed". For both Johnson and Neil, the belief in the ability to set boundaries and protect themselves works in conjunction with the desire to open up to people and experience more meaningful connection.

The desire to connect meaningfully with people in the real world is an example of transfer of learning. The notion of connection was discussed above in terms of connection with the group, the director and with the self. The desire to connect with people outside of the psychodrama context is an extension of the afore-mentioned connection. Experiential learning within the psychodrama group climate motivates real world transfer. A more integrated sense of self coupled with a belief in the ability to set boundaries and the decision (choice/taking up of responsibility) to integrate learning into

the self translates into risk taking with others. Through risk taking, in interpersonal relationships, the protagonist who consciously assesses social situations and makes healthy attributions or cognitions about the self will further integrate insights about the self learned at psychodrama. These processes work together simultaneously. Recall the above discussion about cognitive-behavioural strategies during the integration phase following psychodrama; risk taking in interpersonal relationships with a conscious exploration of the ramifications of such is like conducting behavioural experiments in the world. In the language of cognitive therapy this is akin to guided discovery and behavioural experimentation (Beck & Weishaar, 1995).

SUMMARY OF THEMES

Fifteen themes have been presented in this discussion. Of these, ten were common to all three coresearchers while four were common to only two of the coresearchers and one unique to one person. In the remainder of this chapter, the implications for theory and counselling practice will be discussed along with the limitations of this study and ideas for future research.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THEORY

This study has revealed the significance and importance of the cathartic moment in the reparation of shame. In partial answer to the question put forth by Gilbert (1996), "how do people repair themselves with regard to shame and broken relationships?", psychodrama, as a safe environment with trained professionals, offers one possible means to these ends. It is very important to highlight the significance of repair of shame in a group context.

Because the group context is one in which people often first experience shame, and because the potential for reshaping is tremendously high, it is especially significant that such work can take place in a group setting. In fact, given the right climate, with a high degree of safety and trust, I suggest the group setting may be more powerful a place to heal than simply in the individual therapist's office. This is because the group offers the potential for reestablishing interpersonal connections in a witnessed fashion which is vital to the process of healing and the integration of self acceptance and responsibility. To be understood and witnessed by a community lends naturally to acceptance and belongingness.

The hidden nature of shame affect and the complexity with which shame becomes fused with a person's identity make the tasks of uncovering shame, externalizing it and understanding it particularly elusive. Psychodrama, with its focus on action, dramatic role-playing and the immediate experiencing of strong emotions provides a useful entrance point into making more explicit and concrete shame affect. Reliving and externalizing shame through psychodrama facilitates the development of insight and understanding, the ability to name previously unknown parts of the self, and behaviour change in the real world. As a therapeutic tool, psychodrama, through the findings of this research, clearly has the potential for illuminating shame affect and offering transformative opportunities.

Shame can be viewed as a major organizing principle in people's lives. Nathanson (1992) suggests that shame calls attention to the self in very powerful ways and is a powerful mechanism for the elaboration of self. This is true both in positive and negative ways as the findings of this research have shown. For some, where shame has come to impact identity

development in a significantly negative fashion, feelings of shame internalized influence daily living both in terms of one's identity as well as the feeling states with which shame is bound. Reducing feelings of internalized shame can be achieved by means of psychodrama by helping the protagonist of psychodrama externalize shame and come to understand it and the self in new ways. This enables many other aspects of change to occur such as behaviour change, setting boundaries and the desire to connect meaningfully with others in new ways.

Finally, the findings of this research shed light on the importance of client responsibility taking. During the integration phase following psychodrama, as in any therapy, client willingness to take up responsibility for learning about the self and integrating new information into the self is a significant contributing factor to the successfulness of the therapy itself. This comes as no surprise. It has long been held that the techniques and interventions of counselling are simply tools and that similar to the medical field, patient compliance, willingness and perceptions account for a great part of the journey toward improved health.

IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNSELLING PRACTICE

When doing psychodramatic work therapeutically and dealing directly with shame, the protagonist is given the opportunity to develop insights about himself or herself and their shame. They are also given the opportunity to behaviourally practice saying to significant others the important words which need to be said for restoration of the self. This has the possibility of translating into real world application. In terms of counselling practice, people who deal with shame psychodramatically then

have the opportunity to go back into the family of origin or relationship of importance and do the necessary bridge repair.

Reconnection with significant others is an essential aspect of the healing and forgiveness processes. Psychodrama prepares the person for this real world activity, where appropriate, through behavioural rehearsal and group support. In some cases, however, the final steps of repair or reconciliation may not be appropriate or possible (i.e. - a violent person, an unforgivable act, evil, death of a parent etc.).

For counselling practice, the therapists engaged in processes of forgiveness and healing might consider not just role playing or psychodrama as an excellent therapeutic modality but might also encourage real world transfer of learning encouraging the client to return to significant relationships and do the work. Nothing occurs in a vacuum. No man is an island unto himself.

With regard to the psychodrama group interventions being conducted locally, my hope is that the findings from this research will be utilized in a form of bibliotherapy. As an example, consider Josh's case above. During the process of validation Josh commented that reading the narrative story precipitated reflection and recollection of the psychodrama experience forcing reconciliation between the differences of Josh's current experience and post psychodrama experience. This has the effect of keeping Josh "in process" around the work done at psychodrama.

Presenting future protagonists of psychodrama with their own stories would be potentially fruitful however practically improbable considering the time and energy required. Whole or condensed versions of the three narrative stories found in this study, however, could be offered to people who

undergo a psychodrama intervention, particularly centered around shame (but not necessarily exclusively). In doing so, the individual may learn of another's perspective on their own psychodrama as a means to making sense of theirs, as well as come to some understanding that they are not alone in the world. This effect alone, that of validation, or normalization, would have a huge impact on the person, particularly in cases where the protagonist does not follow up on invitations from the directors but rather isolates him/herself following their psychodrama work. This occurrence is not entirely uncommon.

When conducting therapy, either individually or in group settings, particularly psychodrama group settings, therapists would do well to watch for signs of shame. This may occur posturally through a hanged head, averted eyes, slumped shoulders etc. or through process such as watching for moments of impediment, either in the telling of a story or role-play or enactment or within the therapy session itself. When shame becomes manifest, the therapist should take some time, either in the moment or following during a debriefing period, to address directly feelings of shame. Naming shame and attaching a language to it is among some of the first steps in working through shame. Kaufman (1989) suggests the process of healing shame includes experiencing, naming and owning. Psychodrama, as seen above, provides a context for the protagonist to experience shame and through this experience begin to identify it more readily in order to set boundaries around it thus providing the opportunity to internalize acceptance.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study employed a one time interview to assess the meaning participants made of their psychodramatic experience. Meaning making, however, is an ongoing process rather than a single event experience. Goldman and Morrison (1984) suggest that the psychodrama experience may be enhanced by "placing more emphasis on the cognitive aspects of the psychodrama process and by a deeper investigation of the meaning of the cathartic experience" (pp. 229). Furthermore, Goldman and Morrison (1984) suggest it is critical to teach participants of psychodrama ways of maintaining positive emotional and behavioural changes in light of the frustrations the world presents and when participants regress by seeming to forget the lessons they have learned. Future research might do well to investigate the meaning making process around shame and psychodrama over the long term rather than short by making use of multiple interviews over time.

In this case study design, an analysis of video taped enactments may have illuminated additional qualities of shame present throughout the enactment and forgotten by the coresearcher. One way of assessing this important information would be to review the tape with the protagonist and ask for their reflections and feedback during or after. This approach would have contributed to triangulation of the data set and may have increased the trustworthiness of the study.

The number of participants chosen for inclusion in this study was determined in two ways. First, access to individuals who had participated in an enactment centred around a theme of shame during a psychodrama weekend workshop held in the spring of 1998 was limited. Second, the quality of the descriptions of shame and working with shame in psychodrama

presented at the time of the interview further limited the sample group. As a result, three rich descriptions were obtained and presented as case studies. Redundancy was not sought for the purpose of clustering around common themes. A more thorough approach would include a greater number of participants with the goal being redundancy. This may have increased the likelihood of generating common themes and increase the credibility of the study.

FUTURE RESEARCH

In this study the experience of reworking shame has been described consistently as a process of reliving or re-experiencing shame and subsequently externalizing the internalized shame. The reworking is described as a process of extracting the shame, seeing it from a new, objective, vantage point, and then reintegrating it in a new and meaningful way. Since Nathanson (1992) and others discuss shame as having the potential to bind with other affects, for example fear-shame binds and anxiety or rage shame binds, an interesting research question is: does working with other affects in psychodrama have qualitatively and phenomenologically different qualities to them different from shame or are the processes the same? Is it possible to think of shame as a unifying affective principle in trauma and if so will the process of trauma repair necessarily include an element of shame, regardless of the identified primary affect (i.e. - rage, fear, grief, etc.)?

In the literature on Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR; see Shapiro, 1995) and trauma, the clinician begins with negative cognitions held by the person about the self. Does the evidence implicating shame in all of trauma lie somewhere in the statements one makes about

themselves, as the cognitive theorists might postulate? It is possible that shame is inherent in all trauma and indeed in all ailments of mental health, though at times it is so deep no one even identifies it (i.e. - it goes overlooked because of its 'hidden' quality)? Or perhaps some people are just unaware of shame, their client's or their own as therapists? Future investigations of affect and affect/trauma repair might do well to consider shame a construct worthy of study, either as a central organizing principle or at least as a mediating factor.

Concerning the role of catharsis in psychodrama and its effect in the reworking of shame, another interesting line of thinking for future research would be to study the process of the cathartic moment as it relates to other affects and to affect-shame binds. Critical observation and analysis of the moments just prior to cathartic release might provide fertile ground for this kind of study.

Finally, measurements of internalized shame (Gilbert, 1996) and shame-proneness (Tangney, 1995) have been developed to assess the degree of shame with which people live. Future research might quantitatively investigate the impact of psychodrama on shame as experienced by the protagonist of psychodrama.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of the present research study was to investigate and describe the experience of reworking shame through psychodrama. More specifically, this research study has attempted to illuminate: a) how individuals describe shame and the role it plays in their lives, b) how individuals repair themselves and their relationships where shame is

concerned through psychodrama, and c) what the consequences of the attempted reparation of shame are.

From the point of view of affect theory, shame is an innate affect that results when an impediment to positive affect takes place. Shame affect is experienced phenomenologically usually within the context of a close interpersonal relationship. Shame is intricately interwoven with identity development and has its basis in the mirroring relationships with significant primary caregivers. Shame draws attention to the self in powerful ways through which people learn about themselves through the elaboration of the self. This occurs through the joint processes of identification and internalization. On some levels then, shame is important and provides purpose for individual development. However, shame has the potential to be internalized and to be regenerated by the self in a self deprecating manner. In this sense shame impacts the self destructively. As a result, the self becomes modified in order to cope with possible exposure to further shame and the risk of rejection and abandonment.

Therapeutic enactment through psychodrama offers one possible means to effect a significant shift in the internalized shame based identity script of the client. Gaining access to an identity script through a template of shame as perceived by the client provides the opportunity to rework shame therapeutically by addressing it actively and immediately. Through action based role playing of actual or templated governing scenes (or scripts) of shame, clients of psychodrama are able to behaviourally, cognitively and emotionally engage themselves in a process of facing shame directly. This is done by reliving shame in the enactment, externalizing shame through the

cathartic moment, and reestablishing the interpersonal bridge with lost parts of the self, significant others, the therapist and the community of witnesses.

As a result of this process, a nuclear shift takes place whereby the original power of the script is diminished. Shame becomes released or shed and the road toward other changes becoming possible is paved. Insight is developed, meaning making of the experience begins along with the cognitive restructuring of the self. This takes place through the difficult task of responsibility taking and the exercising of choice. Holding onto the strength and consciously integrating new understandings of the self becomes an important process otherwise responsibility may be abdicated. The opportunity for increased behaviour changes occur. An increased feeling of an ability to set boundaries arises and the desire to connect meaningfully in new ways with others takes place.

The reparation of shame in psychodrama appears to be largely a process of the self. It is about self forgiveness and self acceptance within the context of a supportive group setting with the added feature of key figures in one's life as represented by the auxiliary roles. But these roles are metaphoric, symbolic as opposed to real, despite the "realness" quality they take on for the protagonist of psychodrama. The atonement process of reworking shame through psychodrama reconciles the self to the self more than anything. With this process initiated, individuals may be better prepared to reconcile themselves to others in the real world as the basis for their acceptance is more apt to come from the self versus an other.

REFERENCES

- Altheide, D. L. & Johnson, J. M. (1994). Criteria for assessing interpretive validity in qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), Handbook of qualitative research (pp. 485-499). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Banmen, J. (1988). Guilt and shame: Theories and therapeutic possibilities. International journal for the advancement of counselling, 11, 79-91.
- Beck, A. T., & Weishaar, M. E. (1995). Cognitive therapy. In R. J. Corsini, & D. Wedding (Eds.), Current psychotherapies (5th ed., pp. 229-261). Itasca, Ill.: Peacock Publishers, Inc.
- Baum, S. (1994). Change processes in psychodrama. Unpublished master's thesis, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C., Canada.
- Blatner, A. (1985). The dynamics of catharsis. Journal of group psychotherapy, psychodrama and sociometry, 37, 157-166.
- Blatner, A. (1988). Foundations of psychodrama: History, theory and practice. New York: Springer Publishers.
- Borgen, W. A., Pollard, D., Amundson, N. E., & Westwood, M. J. (1989). Employment groups: The counselling connection. Ottawa: Lugus Press.
- Bradshaw, J. (1988). Healing the shame that binds you. Florida: Health Communications Inc.
- Brooks, D. T. (1998). The meaning of change through therapeutic enactment in psychodrama. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C., Canada.
- Broucek, F. (1991). Shame and the self. New York: Guilford.

Brown-Shaw, M., Westwood, M. J., & deVries, B. (1999). Integrating personal reflection and group-based enactments. Journal of aging studies, 13, 109-119.

Buell, S. G. (1995). Experience of significant change for psychodrama audience members. Unpublished master's thesis, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C., Canada.

Clandinin, D. J. & Connelly, F. M. (1994). Personal experience methods. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), Handbook of qualitative research (pp. 413-427). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Colaizzi, P. F. (1978). Psychological research as the phenomenologist views it. In R. S. Valle & M. King (Eds.), Existential phenomenological alternatives for psychology (pp. 48-71). New York: Oxford University Press.

Fine, L. (1979). Psychodrama. In R. Corsini (Ed.). Current Psychotherapies. Itasca, Ill.: Peacock Publications.

Gilbert, P. (1998). What is shame? Some core issues and controversies. In P. Gilbert, & B. Andrews (Ed.). Shame: Interpersonal behaviour, sychopathology, and culture (pp. 3-37). New York: Oxford University Press.

Goldman, E. & Morrison, D. S. (1984). Psychodrama: The experience and process. Dubuque, IO: Kendall and Hunt.

Holstein, J. A. & Gubrium, J. F. (1994). Phenomenology, ethnomethodology, and interpretive practice. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), Handbook of qualitative research (pp. 262-272). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Hopkins, L. (1991). The psychological aspects of shame and its influence on the personality. Dissertation Abstracts International, 52 (01), (University Microfilms No. AAC 9119949).

Jacoby, M. (1994). Shame and the origins of self-esteem: A Jungian approach. New York: Routledge.

Janesick, V. J. (1994). The dance of qualitative research design: Metaphor, methodolatry, and meaning. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), Handbook of qualitative research (pp. 209-219). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Kellerman, P. F. (1984). The place of catharsis in psychodrama. Journal of group psychotherapy, psychodrama and sociometry, 35, 1-13.

Kellerman, P. F. (1991). Closure in psychodrama. Journal of group psychotherapy, psychodrama, and sociometry, 41, 21-29.

Kipper, D. A. (1978). Trends in the research on the effectiveness of psychodrama: Retrospect and prospect. Journal of group psychotherapy, psychodrama, and sociometry, 22, 5-18.

Kosmicki, F. X., & Glickauf-Hughes, C. (1997). Catharsis in psychotherapy. Psychotherapy, 34, 154-159.

Martens, M. L. (1990). An investigation into the experience of being a protagonist in a psychodrama. Unpublished master's thesis, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C., Canada.

Middleton-Moz, J. (1990). Shame and guilt: Masters of disguise. Deerfield Beach, Florida: Health Communications.

Miller, S. B. (1985). The shame experience. New Jersey: The Analytic Press.

Miller, S. B. (1996). Shame in context. New Jersey: The Analytic Press.

Moreno, J. L. (1946). Psychodrama. New York: Beacon House.

Moreno, J. L. (1947). Theatre of spontaneity: An introduction to psychodrama. New York: Beacon House.

- Moreno, J. L. (1964). Psychodrama: Vol. 1. (3rd ed.). New York: Beacon House.
- Moreno, J. L. (1977). Psychodrama. New York: Beacon House.
- Morrison, A. P. (1998). The culture of shame. New Jersey: Jason Aronson Inc.
- Nathanson, D. L. (1987a). A timetable for shame. In D. L. Nathanson (Ed.), The many faces of shame (pp. 1-62). New York: Guilford Press.
- Nathanson, D. L. (1992). Shame and pride: Affect, sex, and the birth of the self. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.
- Nathanson, D. L. (1996). A conversation with Donald Nathanson. Behaviour Online Forum [On-line].
- Neuman, N. (1990). Women's experiences of changes in self-esteem following participation in psychodrama: A phenomenological investigation (Doctoral dissertation, The Union Institute, 1990). Dissertation abstracts international, 51(4), p.2116.
- Patton, M. Q. (1990). Qualitative evaluation and research methods. London, U.K.: Sage Publications.
- Potter-Efron, R., & Potter-Efron, P. (1989). Letting go of shame: Understanding how shame affects your life. Hazelton Education Materials.
- Richardson, L. (1994). Writing: A method of inquiry. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), Handbook of qualitative research (pp. 516-529). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Rogers, C. (1957). The necessary and sufficient conditions of therapeutic personality change. Journal of consulting psychology, 21, pp. 95-103.
- Scheff, T. (1988). Shame and conformity: The deference-emotion system. American sociological review, 53, 395-406.

Schwartz, S. (1991). The psychological aspects of shame and its influence on the personality (Doctoral dissertation, The Union Institute, 1991). Dissertation abstracts international, 52(2), p.1114.

Shapiro, F. (1995). Eye movement desensitization and reprocessing: Basic principles, protocols, and procedures. New York: The Guildford Press.

Stake, R. E. (1994). Case studies. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), Handbook of qualitative research (pp. 236-247). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Sykes, J. B. (1982). The concise oxford dictionary. (7th ed.). Oxford: The Oxford University Press.

Tangney, J. P. (1995). Recent advances in the empirical study of shame and guilt: Dimension of conscience questionnaire. American behavioural scientist, 38, 1132-1145.

Tomkins, D. (1963). Affect, imagery and consciousness; Vol.2. New York: Springer and Company.

Valle, R. S., & King, M. (1978). Existential-phenomenological alternatives for psychology. New York: Oxford University Press.

Westwood, M. (1989). Psychodrama. In J. Shaffer, & M. Galinsky (Eds.), Models of group therapy (pp. 98-117). New York: Prentice Hall.

Wharton, B. (1990). The hidden face of shame: The shadow, shame and separation. Journal of analytic psychology, 35, 279-299.

Wurmser, L. (1981). The mask of shame. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.

Yalom, I. D. (1995). The theory and practice of group psychotherapy. New York: Basic Books.

Yin, R. K. (1994). Case study research: Design and methods. London: Sage Publications.

Appendix B

List of Interview Questions

1. Have you ever experienced shame in your life and if so, could you describe that experience (or define it).
2. As a participant of psychodrama, describe for me your enactment that centred around shame. (just a description)
3. What was your experience/process during the enactment? Before/beginning/middle/end. (the experience)
4. People report feeling differently about their shame after they do an enactment. Did you/do you? and can you tell me about that?
 - Can you give examples of instances before and after the enactment that support what you've just said about a shift in your experience of shame?
5. What aspects of the enactment do you think account for the shift?
6. What impact, if any, does the audience have on the above?
7. Do you experience yourself differently and if so How?