THE INNER GUIDE: AN EXPLORATION OF BIOGRAPHICAL PATTERNS

by

MILES RODNEY LOZINSKY

B.A. The University of Saskatchewan, 1985

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

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

(Department of Counselling Psychology)

We accept this thesis as conforming to the required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

January, 1996

© Miles Rodney Lozinsky, 1996
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 Counselling Psychology

The University of British Columbia
Vancouver, Canada

Date  Feb. 8, 1996
ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore the pattern of experience with an inner guide within the context of biographical narrative. Despite numerous accounts of how to employ the inner guide as a tool in counselling and how beneficial it may be, there has been little research to inform practice. The aim of this study was to provide a holistic, contextual understanding of inner guidance which would serve as a basis for further understanding of these experiences by counsellors and researchers.

This was done by employing a multiple case study design and narrative methodology. Three women, two in their forties and one in her sixties with the appropriate inner guidance experience volunteered to participate. Intensive interviews were conducted, transcribed, analyzed, and presented as individual narratives. Each narrative was then validated by the respective participant and a general narrative pattern was constructed. In this way the meaning and experience of each participant's relationship to her inner guide and the influences between her inner guidance and her life was explored.

Findings indicate that the experience of an inner guide was intimate to the very lives as lived, making a holistic research approach indispensable for the investigation of meaning. An implication of this study is to offer clinicians using an inner guide technique a broader understanding of the experience as it relates to an individual's life in a holistic manner.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .................................................................................................................... ii

TABLE OF CONTENTS ............................................................................................... iii

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION ............................................................................ 1
   The problem .................................................................................................................. 1
   The question .................................................................................................................. 2
   The design ....................................................................................................................... 3

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW ................................................................ 4
   The Transpersonal Perspective .................................................................................... 4
      Inner awareness facilitates transpersonal growth ...................................................... 7
   Intuition .......................................................................................................................... 8
   Inner Voice/Inner Guidance ......................................................................................... 12
      Historical and cross-cultural ................................................................................... 12
      Physiological/medical perspectives .......................................................................... 14
      Psychological perspectives ......................................................................................... 17
   Research perspective .................................................................................................... 25
   Summary ....................................................................................................................... 28

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY ........................................................................... 30
   Design ........................................................................................................................... 30
   Research Procedures .................................................................................................... 30
      The literature review ................................................................................................. 30
      Personal perspective .................................................................................................. 30
   Participants .................................................................................................................... 32
   Interviews ..................................................................................................................... 33
   Narrative accounts ....................................................................................................... 35

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS ....................................................................................... 37
   Individual Narrative: Ann ............................................................................................ 37
   Individual Narrative: Janine ......................................................................................... 51
   Individual Narrative: Felicity ......................................................................................... 71
   General Narrative Pattern ............................................................................................ 85
      Beginning .................................................................................................................. 85
         Childhood ............................................................................................................... 85
         Adolescence and young adulthood ................................................................. 87
      Crisis point ............................................................................................................... 88
   Middle .......................................................................................................................... 91
      Turning point ........................................................................................................... 91
      Connection with inner guidance ............................................................................. 93
   End ................................................................................................................................. 98
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

The use of the imagination for health and healing is as old as human history (Achterberg, 1985). Modern applications of imagery in the helping professions span the fields of nursing, sports performance, education, medicine, and psychotherapy (Korn & Johnson, 1983). In reviewing the uses of imagery in counselling, Witmer and Young (1985) described imagery as the “silent partner” in human behaviour. They suggested that the human imaging capacity has the potential for “developing more adaptive behaviour, coping with stress, solving problems more creatively, and expanding human performance and achievement” (Witmer & Young, 1985, p. 187).

Research and literature concerning transpersonal psychology, as theory and therapy has increased markedly in recent years. As a new direction within psychology it reflects a movement away from a mechanistic approach to an integrated perception of mind, body, and soul being inter-related and moving toward spiritual aspirations. The study of transpersonal experiences is an important link in this evolution. Transpersonal interventions originate within a strong theoretical base and are utilized within the context of a broader therapeutic relationship and may serve to promote personal and or transpersonal development.

The Problem

The “inner guide” is a term used to describe an imagery technique that makes available to the client resources formerly inaccessible for individual development, understanding, and transpersonal growth. It involves the identification or personification of an inner guide or voice through which the client may seek consultation and receive advice.

In the literature there are numerous descriptions and explanations of phenomena similar or identical to the inner guide. These were obtained from experimental laboratory work, therapeutic experience, as well as being reported in biographical and historical works. There is the suggestion that the utilization of an inner guide technique may be beneficial to the physical,
psychological, and spiritual well being of individuals (Assagioli, 1971; Bresler, 1984; Dossey, 1988; Francuch, 1981; Hannah, 1981; Oye, 1979; Rossman, 1984). It is also suggested that the spontaneous occurrence of an inner voice may be a path to personal growth, change, healing and/or transpersonal development (Heery, 1989; Maslow, 1971).

The literature contains a focus on the benefits of using an inner guide, reflecting what appears to be a bias among authors who employ the technique as part of their therapeutic approach (Allison, 1974, 1980; Bresler, 1984; Emmons, 1978; Ferrucci, 1982; Miller, 1975; Rossman, 1984; Shore, 1992). A major contradiction in the literature is the conviction among practitioners that the inner guide is an extremely powerful process versus the absence of follow-up research on therapeutic effects. In the ups and downs of therapy it is difficult to gauge the impact of a specific intervention, but clients themselves are a relatively untapped source of information. The problem is that despite the varieties of conceptualization and application of the inner guide technique, there is not a thorough understanding of how it works. Research is needed to gain a holistic, contextual understanding of the long-term development use of the inner guide. Greater understanding of this process will clear up some of the confusion about what happens in therapy when an inner guide is used and what might be expected in the long term.

The Question

There is a need for holistic, contextual studies with clients to inform practice, and to begin identifying whether the long term effects of inner guide imagery is lasting and beneficial. Therapists need to know what forms such effects take, and how these impact upon the individual. The problem is knowing what actually happens with regard to the experience of the inner guide outside of the counsellor-client relationship or after it is terminated. This is important for all counsellors who might consider incorporating this technique into their practice.
The research questions proposed here are: How does the experience of the inner guide change over time? After six months, one year or several years? What does it mean to have an inner guide? How is it valuable in the development of one’s personal and transpersonal growth? In what ways does it lead to increased self-understanding? Why is the inner guide so subjectively meaningful? What are the aspects or qualities of the experience which are related to growth, understanding and transformation? Are there commonalities of experience across individuals? Are there identifiable stages, before, during and after one begins work with an inner guide?

This study intended to explore in a holistic and contextual manner the pattern of experience involved in the utilization of an inner guide or voice from the perspective of long term users. The literature to date does not contain such information.

The Design

The question proposed here involves complicated issues of meaning and purpose which possibly change over time. A method was required which could provide detailed descriptions of individual experience, together with an interpretive understanding of those descriptions. The multiple case study was chosen as the most suitable design. Yin (1994) suggests that a case study is capable of presenting a phenomenon as a dynamic totality, rather than as isolated fragments. It presents the lived experience of an individual and attempts to grasp the meaning of that experience for the individual. In this way it facilitates an understanding of the pattern of experience under investigation. Hence with a detailed description of the experience of working with inner guidance and consequently a more explicit and specific understanding of the transpersonal dimension involved, therapists will be better able to facilitate the healing transformation process of clients.
CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

The Transpersonal Perspective

It is important at the outset of this project to outline and define the assumptions with which the research began and within which the research was carried out. Essentially this study fits within the framework of what is commonly referred to as transpersonal psychology. Transpersonal theory in its broadest sense spans many disciplines and cultures including, spirituality, philosophy, anthropology and psychology. Generally speaking it sits outside of the mainstream of these areas and not entirely within any one of them. Therefore it is necessary at the outset to provide the reader with an outline of the assumptions of transpersonal psychology.

The transpersonal position with which most psychologists would accept includes the following metaphysical and psychological assumptions. This list is based on the positions of several (Assagioli, 1971; Grof, 1985; Huxley, 1944; Tart, 1975; Walsh & Vaughan, 1980; Wilber, 1980):

1. That a transcendent, transconceptual reality (i.e., an Absolute) binds together all apparently separate phenomena, whether these phenomena be physical, cognitive, emotional, intuitive, or spiritual. This transcendent reality is mysterious and inexplicable by ordinary rational means. Therefore, paradox is the necessary means of describing or symbolizing the ineffable; the mystic uses symbols, images, and poetic metaphors to convey the meaning and form of transpersonal experience to the extent that this is possible. On a somewhat intermediate level there exist higher forms or archetypes, which inform the material world we live in. These archetypes can be intuited in some transpersonal states.

2. That the ego or individualized self is not the ground of human awareness but, rather, only one relative reflection-manifestation of a greater trans-personal (as "beyond the personal") Self or One (i.e., pure consciousness without subject or object). Self-transcendence is not only a possibility but is the ultimate destination of human development (not the individual ego).
There is a hierarchy of levels of consciousness, culminating in a stage in which union with the Absolute has been fully realized. Thereafter ensues a sense of Ultimate Belonging, since the Absolute is our true “Self.” These intermediate levels of consciousness (parapsychological, visionary) are typically to be avoided as a subtle distraction from the true goal of mystical union.

3. That this experience of union with the Absolute is sublimely blissful, beyond the understanding of the lower mental and emotional faculties, as well as beyond time and space. This experience of union represents a qualitative shift in one’s mode of experiencing and involves the expansion of one’s self-identity beyond ordinary conceptual thinking and ego-self awareness (i.e., mind is not consciousness). The enlightened individual is a wholly dispassionate (detached) and compassionate being, free of cravings and desires; in a word, the enlightened individual can be called “selfless.”

4. That the path to the Absolute demands not only intellectual assent, but dedication of one’s entire being. Although the Absolute draws one towards union (through grace), generally arduous efforts, such as meditation, prayer, ritual, and related practices, are also required.

Certain ethical guidelines follow from these assumptions. For example, moderation, self-less love, compassion, charity, and service are emphasized in most transpersonal traditions (Huxley, 1944; Assagioli, 1971). Related claims which follow from the transpersonal view are: (a) mystical experiences are cross-culturally identical or nearly so, and (b) mystics can “transcend their own conceptual framework, as well as conditioned modes of knowing and being in general” (Rothberg, 1989, p. 5). The mystical experience is typically described as “unconditioned.”

More broadly, Walsh (1980) has summarized the characteristics of the ontology underlying transpersonal psychology as “dynamic, fluid, impermanent, holistic, interconnected, interdependent, foundationless, self-consistent, empty, paradoxical, probabilistic, infinitely over-determined, and inextricably linked to the consciousness of the observer” (p. 225).
Transpersonal psychology has historically grown out of the humanistic-existential perspective. Yet an existentialist, by way of contrast, would undoubtedly reject many of these assumptions, for example the existence of the Absolute and the importance of self-transcendence. Instead, self-determined choice in the face of an indifferent or hostile universe might be held to characterize the human condition. The majority of Western psychologists, even many of those concerned with adult development, tend to ignore the transpersonal view, although the situation has recently changed somewhat (Commons, Richards, & Armon 1984; Commons, Sinnott, Richards, & Armon, 1989).

There is not total agreement between all transpersonal theorists. Shapiro (1989) has examined the implicit and explicit assumptions held by transpersonal theorists and shown that there are at least five areas of disagreement: (a) whether the nature of reality is benign or not, (b) whether the existence of evil is addressed or not, (c) whether the orientation to the spiritual is theistic or nontheistic, (d) whether the human will is important as effort or grace, and (e) whether the choice of a spiritual path is universal or particular.

An important issue of difference has been the precise relationship between personal self-actualization and transpersonal self-transcendence. Those holding a roughly linear model of development, like Maslow (1970) and Wilber (1980), view self-transcendence as more or less a natural outgrowth of self-actualization. Russell (1986), in contrast conceptualizes self-actualization and self-transcendence as essentially distinct, even unrelated phenomena. One can grow personally (via psychotherapy) by making unconscious material conscious; or one can develop transpersonally (by meditation) by accessing higher states of consciousness. The two paths may be mutually facilitative, but remain separate. The proponents of psychosynthesis (Assagioli, 1971; Ferrucci, 1982) promote “self-realization,” which involves both actualization and transcendence, and are viewed as unrelated to each other, but existing in a subtle balance to each other.
Transpersonal psychology is not only concerned with a particular phase in the lives of a few select individuals. It is not just about a spiritual journey or non-ordinary (e.g., peak) experiences. The transpersonal is already familiar to us, it is very common and could be of interest to everyone. One such common experience is hearing a voice. Many people have had the experience of hearing a voice (perhaps coming from deep inside, or coming from somewhere outside of us), warning us, giving us hints or hunches, giving us information. We speak of “the still small voice of conscience.” Sometimes it may seem like a real voice and at other times it may seem like a vaguer felt sense of some inner communication.

The whole idea of a vocation or mission in life depends on hearing a calling. For example, Bogart (1994) wrote of his inner voice experiences as a factor in the process of discovering a sense of vocation for himself. In its original use it actually means to be addressed by a voice. Gandhi relied a great deal on his inner voice, both in his spiritual and in his political work (Chatterjee, 1983). Many others have reported similar experiences, Socrates, Joan of Arc, Charles Lindbergh and Martin Luther King (Ferrucci, 1990; Goldberg, 1983). The experience of an inner voice or of being guided from within is closely tied to intuition and the development of intuitive capacities (Goldberg, 1983; Vaughan, 1979).

Inner awareness facilitates transpersonal growth. According to transpersonal theory, the truth lies within, and discovering this truth comes by inner awareness. To turn attention inward or “self-ward” and become more fully aware of our inner realms is a natural human capacity transpersonal therapy makes use of. Learning to live directly from an inner center and from one’s internal sense of things can be in itself restorative and healing. As Bugental (1981) notes we have lost our inner sense of being. Our attention is dominated by external happenings or by the mental events of our analyzing, reasoning mind. Many people in our Western culture minimize the importance of inward awareness and are frightened by the depths of themselves. Consequently, they rarely pay attention to their internal sense of things.
As Perls (1969) noted, "awareness per se - by and of itself - can be curative." A number of psychotherapists with humanistic and/or phenomenological orientations (Bugental, 1978, 1981; Gendlin, 1978; Mahrer, 1983, 1986; Perls, 1969; Progoff, 1975, 1980; Welwood, 1982) have developed therapeutic techniques based on this principle. Each of these practitioners, in his own way, encourages clients to (a) center their attention on a genuine life concern, often as it is experienced in bodily felt sensations; (b) open their awareness as fully as possible to whatever they are inwardly experiencing in the here-and-now; and (c) describe what they discover as if experiencing it for the first time - from the vantage point that Suzuki (1970) called "beginner's mind." When clients allow themselves to be as fully as possible in their stream of awareness and give simple, unbiased, naive, primitive, nonexplanatory descriptions of whatever they find within their awareness, they make new discoveries in powerfully charged flashes of direct knowing. These flashes are more than mental insights. They are keenly felt with one's whole being, including the physical body and the emotions.

Any and all channels to the interior can be used - physical sensations, feelings, emotions, memories, thoughts, imagery, dreams, fantasies, visions. To the extent that these channels are blocked, constructive healing forces are also blocked. When awareness is trusted and our client's natural capacity for inner searching is freed, they discover intuitively - that is, by way of a direct bodily felt knowing from deep within themselves - greater possibilities and meanings. Clinical experience (Bugental, 1978; Gendlin, 1978; Mahrer, 1986) suggests that these intuitions, when experienced with one's whole organism, are themselves restorative and healing. Many, if not most, human beings can access deeper levels of inner wisdom and intuit within themselves whatever they need to make their lives more the way they really want them to be, if they will only turn inward.

Intuition. Many spiritual traditions teach us we can realize a greater reality through intuition, which is defined by Bailey (1932), a British exponent of the ageless wisdom in the theosophical tradition, as "the apprehension by the mind of reality directly as it is and not under
the form of a perception or conception, nor as an idea or object of the reason, all of which contrast our intellectual apprehension” (p. 26). However, to develop intuition and know the intrinsic wisdom of our deeper wellsprings, we must relinquish the dominance of our judging, analyzing mind and shift our attention away from its exclusive focus on the objective world. We must become more aware of our interiors.

Vaughan (1979) conducted several studies, workshops and classes on awakening intuition, including the widest range of possible experiences under the term of intuition: memory flashes, premonitions, attraction/aversion feelings, hunches, a knowing without the aid of the rational mind and the picking up of “vibes.” Often intuition is initially associated with a hunch or a strong feeling of knowing what is going to happen. These are frequently vague and not always verifiable. There are the common instances, for example, of picking up the phone and knowing who is calling. When the hunch comes true is when one begins to pay attention to these inner knowings.

Some people are afraid of their hunches, particularly those that forewarn accident or disaster, and will attempt to repress them. Vaughan suggested that one “must learn to distinguish presentiments from intuition” (Vaughan, 1979, p. 59). One’s fears can clutter up the channels through which intuition makes itself known. Another obstacle can be desire. For example, wanting something to happen, or even wanting desperately to be open to intuitive knowing, can interfere with the intuitive perception.

Vaughan (1979) writes that the greatest factor that promotes intuition is one’s belief in one’s own intuitive abilities. It seems that if one values and is open to one’s inner knowing, one expresses that knowing in action, and if the knowing is verified, trust in intuition is deepened . . . and the circle continues. Vaughan identified certain lifestyles and experiences that nurture and facilitate intuition. Vaughan described four distinct types of intuitive experience:
1. At the physical level, there is a strong bodily response where there is no evident reason for it. One can become more attuned to one’s body in different situations and learn to trust one’s body responses, a base for learning to trust one’s intuition.

2. On the emotional level, self-awareness comes through feelings. For example, immediate liking or disliking someone with no apparent justification. Vaughan suggested that the feelings for oneself, for others and the things one does relates to one’s willingness to trust emotional intuitive cues in making choices. “The more you act on your feelings and take the risk of checking out the validity of your intuition, the more reliable it can become” (Vaughan, 1979, p. 71).

3. The mental level operates in areas related to thinking and is associated with problem solving, mathematical and scientific study. “Seeing the big picture” is a common theme suggesting the holistic overall view of issues, that can often only be accessed intuitively.

4. Spiritual intuition is associated with mystical experience. Vaughan called this kind of intuition “pure” intuition, in that it is free of sensations, feelings and thought. Paradoxically, these cues on which the other levels depend are considered interference on this level. The practice of meditation assists to clear the mind and increases the observance of oneself.

The mystical experience is described as one in which one moves beyond the subject/object polarity and one feels at one with everything/everyone else. Various levels of mystical experience are described in both Eastern and Western mystical traditions. Vaughan asserted that these experiences affirm the human capacity to transcend the ego and the rational mind and that the essential truth of reality can only be apprehended intuitively. “It is this direct apprehension of truth that characterizes pure spiritual intuition” (Vaughan, 1979, p. 65). The mystical intuitive experience can have a profound effect on one’s life as it replaces doubt with joy and wonder, and provides a sense of unity with all things.

In her later work Vaughan (1985) explained in greater detail the nature of intuition as a path to “transpersonal vision” (p. 203). She suggested that intuition operates in the “domain of
spirit" and can function as one’s inner guide to the recognition of ever-present, everyday truth. “When intuition is used to envision possibilities, the process may activate both insight and imagination, giving form to formlessness in the mind, thereby creating something out of nothing” (Vaughan, 1985, p. 206). She proposed that the creative impulses of intuition can mobilize our inner perceptions to shaping discoveries within ourselves and in our outer world. Vaughan equated the nurturing of intuition with the development of self-awareness which can only lead to a fuller and more authentic life for an individual. One’s sense of who one is, what one wants, what is meaningful and what one’s reality is - essentially one’s truth - can be revealed through the intuitive process. She encouraged a regular meditative practice wherein the rational mind is quieted and inner silence prevails to allow intuition to flourish.

Goldberg (1983) outlines six variations of intuition: discovery (e.g., reveals provable facts), creative (e.g., solving practical problems or decision making), evaluative (e.g., yes or no), operative (e.g., urges action with no apparent reason), predicative (e.g., warning) and illuminative (e.g., self-realization or union with God). Goldberg suggested that the depth of intuitive knowing corresponds to one’s ability to be conscious of one’s consciousness, to be aware of one’s whole perceptual field - the observer of self and the observed self. He further states that the quality of intuition is related to the degree of access our awareness has to deep levels of the mind. One’s awareness is like a beam of light that must break through the levels of the mind to focus on the deeper recesses of knowledge. “The deeper one is capable of diving, the more coherent the beam, the wider the range of information available, and the more accuracy and clarity the intuition will have” (Goldberg, 1983, p. 139).

According to Goldberg (1983) striving towards intuition at its highest level of illumination, is a goal not only for itself, but as a way to cultivate all aspects of intuition. “Each added degree of illumination is synonymous with purity of consciousness, which means functioning with greater frequency and consistency from the deepest levels of the mind” (Goldberg, 1983, p. 151). It follows that the most direct way to develop intuition is to cultivate
a higher level of consciousness. His recommendations for raising our level of consciousness include yoga, guided imagery, meditation, and journal writing.

Inner Voice/Inner Guidance

**Historical and cross-cultural.** Humankind has traditionally consulted extramundane entities for expanded knowledge and empowerment, for they are traditionally considered “sources of wisdom” (Achterberg, 1985) that are transpersonal and able to convey crucial information beyond the normal range of space and time. Spiritual guides and teachers, imaginal gurus who appear to the spiritual seeker are ancient human experiences that have endured the span of centuries and are the legacy of every society known to man. These beings are not imaginary in the sense of being not real, pure fantasy, or artificially made up. They are imaginal, existing in a realm of experiences in which they inhabit a reality of their own, co-existent with the mundane experiential world or our ordinary state of waking consciousness.

Walsh (1994) outlines the training that a shaman typically undergoes on his/her journey to become one. Besides the apprenticeship with a master shaman, the young aspirant also has inner teachers. Although these may appear in various forms, a part of the training consists of learning how to contact and communicate with these helping spirits which are like “mystical organs” (Eliade, 1964). Eliade (1964) says that “seeing spirits’ in a dream or awake [state] is the determining sign of the shamanic vocation” (p. 4), a sign to the tribe that the person has crossed the bridge to the sacred world.

In Eastern mystical traditions, there has long been an ambiguity about such dialogues. On one hand, the various deities involved are symbolized as being outside the person; but, on the other hand, they are considered to be within the person's own psychological and spiritual nature. The *Bhagavadgita*, is a dramatic presentation of the internal dialogue between the aspiring personality (Arjuna) and the divine light, or higher self, symbolized by Krishna. Arjuna is in a crisis and he turns to his inner light (personified by Krishna) to find a solution (Kuppuswami, 1983).
Mahatma Gandhi spoke of the “inner light of universal truth,” which he would consult on important matters. When confronted by important issues, about which his colleagues were pressing him for decisions, he would retire into meditation to consult this inner light, and would emerge after he was rationally satisfied that with the help of this higher inner guidance, he had arrived at the best answer he could (Chatterjee, 1983). For Gandhi the experience was thus:

For me the inner voice of God, of Conscience, of Truth, or the Inner Voice or “the Still Small Voice” means one and the same thing. I saw no form. I have never tried, for I have always believed God to be without form. But what I did hear was like a Voice from afar and yet quite near. It was as unmistakable as some human voice definitely speaking to me, and irresistible. I was not dreaming at the time I heard the Voice. The hearing of the Voice was preceded by a terrific struggle within me. Suddenly the Voice came upon me. I listened, made certain it was the voice, and the struggle ceased. I was calm. . . . For me the Voice was more real than my own existence. It has never failed me, or for that matter, anyone else. And everyone who wills can hear the Voice. It is within everyone. But like everything else, it requires previous and definite preparation. (Prahbu & Rao, 1967, cited in Ferrucci, 1990, p. 305-306)

Mishra (1963), writing on Patanjali’s Yoga Sutras, describes the idea of Ishvara which guides consciousness from within each soul and is called Absolute Teacher. Assumedly Ishvara communicates to each of us by positive feelings when we do something good and negative feelings when we do something evil. Mishra (1963) writes: “Whatever obstacles there are, whatever diseases there are, either physical or mental, all are destroyed by incorporation of the virtues of Ishvara and a yogin realizes identity of his consciousness with the Consciousness of Ishvara, Cosmic Consciousness” (p. 145). One would incorporate the virtues of Ishvara through meditation.

In the west, the tradition of dialogue with the divine is at the very foundation of the Old Testament. The idea of conversing with a part of oneself that is attuned to the Divine is also found in the Jesuit practice of “Discernment of Spirits” - where a student deciding upon his religious vocation seeks to distinguish the “good spirit” within him from the selfishness that is the “devil.” The New Testament also speaks of receptiveness to “Divine Providence” as a
technique where, having exhausted the ordinary and rational ways of wrestling with a problem, one turns to a higher source for an answer (Shaw, 1981).

Socrates, in Plato’s *Theagetes*, referred to a divine voice, “by the favour of the Gods, I have since my childhood days been attended by a semi-divine being whose voice from time to time dissuades me from some undertaking, but never directs me what I am to do” (quoted in Goldberg, 1983).

Similar encounters with inner guides occur in other religious traditions. Religious examples include the Quaker’s “still small voice”, the Naskapi Indian’s “great man,” and the Tibetan Buddhist’s deity figure.

Physiological/medical perspectives. Research in the field of pain control has contributed to the development of the idea that imagination can be involved in the healing process. Bakan (1980) noted that the belief systems of patients played a significant role in the management of chronic pain. Although pain interfered with patients’ imagination, effective pain management was associated with enlarged imagination. Jaffe and Bresler (1980) further described how imagination was harnessed to reduce pain. They found that therapeutic guided imagery allowed the patients to access and alter unconscious physical processes.

Araoz (1985) also wrote about the capacity of the human mind to influence physiological processes. He used the term “Inner Healer” to describe a powerful resource to which we have access through right hemispheric intervention. Using what he called the “New Hypnosis,” he reconnected clients with valuable affective experience. Araoz reported that by engaging the client’s own inner resource the problem of resistance could be avoided and thus therapeutic progress facilitated.

For Oyle (1979) the therapeutic objective was to convince the client that there was a force within him through which he could be cured. He referred to this when he wrote, “the body is a self-repairing mechanism, it has the power to heal itself” (p. 18). This was accomplished by guiding the client through a meditative process, identifying a force within him.
through which he could be cured, and receiving its advice. Neurologically, Oyle (1979) postulated this process as a method by which the two billion brain cells used for speech and rational thought communicate with the 11 billion other cells concerned with survival and adaptation. Oyle suggested that healing occurs when the conscious and unconscious mind interact.

Several researchers (Bresler, 1984; Bresler & Trubo 1979; Rossman, 1984; & Rossman and Remen 1981), studied the use of what they called the “Inner Advisor” in pain management and personal health. Bresler (1984) defined the Inner Advisor as an imaginary living creature inside the unconscious mind. He found it to be a valuable storehouse of insight, suggestions, and desires. Rossman and Remen (1981) described it as a figure of wisdom and caring. They said that through dialogue and interpretation, the Inner Advisor was a helpful source of psychological, spiritual, and physical guidance.

Bresler (1984) reported the possibility of communication problems with the inner advisor. He reasoned that a dialogue with your advisor is a reflection of what is going on inside you, therefore, if your advisor acts timid or frightened, perhaps it is because you are feeling insecure. If your advisor will not talk to you, maybe it is because you are unwilling to open up about what really is going on inside.

Bresler (1984) tells us that advisors always “work on behalf of your best long-term survival-oriented interest” (p. 228). As an example, if there is danger in breaking down a particular psychological defense, the advisor usually will refuse to pursue the matter until the client is able to deal with it more effectively. His experience has also led him to believe advisors never tell patients something they are not psychologically equipped to handle.

Rossman (1984) writes that it is important to elicit the client’s response to and explanation of the advisor to make best use of it. If one is a spiritualist than one may believe that the advisor is a spirit guide or guardian angel. If not so inclined, one may believe in a neurological model and the importance of right-brain activity. Rossman and Remen (1981)
proposed a non dogmatic model for the phenomenon that is meant to accommodate most belief systems.

Rossman (1984) cautions that information received from the inner advisor needs to be evaluated before it is put into action. He does not advocate that people abandon their responsibility to their inner advisors any more than they would abandon it to anyone else. He cautions that one needs to consider carefully what the advisor tells them before doing it. If the advice seems reasonable and the risk is acceptable, to act on it and then evaluate the advice.

The relationship with the advisor is an ongoing one, and in time, a person may develop several advisors, each with a different area of expertise. Rossman (1984) advises people to think of the entire unconscious mind as an advisor, which can appear in different forms to deliver different messages. Thus, people develop a conscious attitude to cooperate with the unconscious.

Rossman (1984) and Bresler (1984) caution against using these techniques with psychotic or prepsychotic individuals, clients over involved in fantasy may not be good candidates. And to use clinical judgment with the technique, people with marked masochistic and self-blaming tendencies should be directed to look for strengths and resources in themselves.

Several interesting observations concerning the relationship between imagery and the prognosis of the treatment of cancer have been described by the Simontons (Simonton, Matthews-Simonton, & Creighton, 1978). From the nature of the image a person selects, they can predict with some accuracy how well that individual will fare in treatment. The images thus seem to be important diagnostic indicators about patients’ deep unconscious attitudes about themselves and their illness. In their residential program, the Simontons work with their patients’ imagery to alter or modify the images (as well as their attitudes) so that the cancer does, in fact, lose the mental battle.
Jean Achterberg and Frank Lawlis (1978), colleagues of the Simontons, examined the relationship between psychological variables and blood chemistries with cancer patients. They found the patient's imagery reflected attitudes about the disease and treatment, as well as any belief the patient might have in an innate ability to overcome the illness (via the immunological system or other properties of natural recovery). Often the attitudes assessed by the imagery were at odds with what the patients said they believed, indicating that these powerful images were not always available at the surface of consciousness.

It seems that the inner guide can be used to enhance healing by obtaining advice for the patient from his or her own unconscious through a guided daydream. In contacting the inner guide it is important to have a safe place and to have an open and non judgmental attitude. The therapist has to establish for the client not only safe and relaxed conditions to experience the imagery, but also needs to provide a receptive attitude towards the spontaneously emerging images and attach importance to them. The imagery becomes an important source of support and enhancement of well-being especially in chronic illnesses. The therapist's role is to reinforce continued contact with the inner guide (Bresler & Trubo, 1979; Dossey, 1988).

**Psychological perspectives.** Hilgard (1977) introduced the term “Hidden Observer” as a metaphor to describe a specific level of awareness in hypnosis. Hilgard believed this did not support the existence of a “secondary personality or a mysterious part of the mind lurking in the shadows” (p. 209). However, he did report his subjects’ description of the “Hidden Observer.” It was:

The hidden part, does not judge, knows all, mature, logical, has more information, analytical, unemotional, business-like, portion of me, cognizant of everything, sees more, he questions me, he knows what is going on all of the time, and is like a guardian angel. (p.209)

It seems that Hilgard (1977) accidentally discovered a subjectively real experience within the state of hypnosis, a state that was experienced by his subjects as separate, cognizant, and protective. But Hilgard was not the first to write about this phenomenon. William James
(1899) found that while in a hypnotic state some subjects exhibited what he termed split consciousness. James reported that a subject pricked with a pin during hypnosis could communicate in writing about the experience; but when questioned upon returning to a normal state, he was unaware of the incident and dismissed his own writing.

Jung recognized the psychotherapeutic implications of contact with the imaginal world, whatever the ultimate reality of its beings. He had his own encounters with an inner guide. His first experience was when he was about ten years old. A later experience involved an inner guide named Philemon, who first came to him in a dream. In his autobiography, Jung (1961/1973) wrote:

Philemon and other figures of my fantasies brought home to me the crucial insight that there are things in the psyche which I do not produce, but which produce themselves and have their own life. Philemon represented a force which was not myself. In my fantasies I had conversations with him, and he said things which I had not consciously thought. For I observed clearly that it was he who spoke, not I . . . . Psychologically, Philemon represented superior insight. He was a mysterious figure to me. At times he seemed to me quite real, as if he were a living personality. I went walking up and down the garden with him, and to me he was what the Indians call a guru . . . . And the fact was that he conveyed to me many an illuminating idea. (p. 183-184)

Jung (1939/1969) theorizes that the self or soul at the center of the psyche sends images to our conscious awareness from all parts of the psyche. These images are those most necessary for a person's development and growth, a process termed individuation. The suggestion being that a person can look at these images as being self-regulatory, that is they may help to keep one on the path of one's own development, at the proper rate. They can be guiding images that function to give a person the help they need at any point in their growth. Through the technique of active imagination, Jung encouraged clients to explore the symbolic representation of their unconscious. Jung (1948/1969) wrote:

The figure of the wise old man can appear so plastically, not only in dreams but also in visionary meditation (or what we call "active imagination"), that, as is sometimes apparently the case in India, it takes over the role of a guru. The wise old man appears in dreams in the guise of a magician, doctor, priest, teacher, professor, grandfather, or any other person possessing authority. The archetype of spirit in the shape of a man,
hobgoblin, or animal always appears in a situation where insight, understanding, good advice, determination, planning, etc., are needed but cannot be mustered on one's own resources. The archetype compensates this state of spiritual deficiency by contents designed to fill the gap. (pp. 215-216)

The technique of active imagination (Jung, 1958/1960) is one of a number of techniques in analytical psychology and occurs within the context of individual analysis. This approach presupposes a passive acceptance of the flow of imagery combined with active participation in the imagery. Painting or drawing of the images produce a further clarification of them. Success for the client is to maintain an open and ethical relationship with the imagery and, thereby, with his or her own unconscious (Hannah, 1981; von Franz, 1979; Weaver, 1973).

Potential difficulties arise with a lack of discrimination between individual and collective elements, or identification of the ego with the contents of either the personal or the collective unconscious (Hannah, 1981). It is suggested the client observe the paradoxical nature of particular inner figures, their positive and negative aspects, and how they interact with one another. It is assumed that the conduct and temperament of the inner figures, in relation to what they have to convey, may be the best indication of their status within the psyche. Weaver (1973) and Hannah (1981) have emphasized the therapist's role of nonintervention in working with this technique, except as a consultant to the client.

Change in the client due to the use of this technique may, in a general sense, be understood as the result of his or her having made conscious that which was previously unconscious. Through personification, one objectifies the contents, and thereby stands in a position to reason with them. The possibility of the client's critical judgment means that his or her relationship to the unconscious is changed. This is where the client's "ego frees itself from contamination" (Weaver, 1973, p. 8). Thus, there is the sense of reciprocity whereby the contents of one's unconscious change in their relationship to one as one changes in one's relation to them.

Psychosynthesis, as developed by Roberto Assagioli (1971, 1973, 1991), is a broad theory regarding the psyche and the process of psychological change in the individual. Among a
variety of approaches employed are the use of imaginal exercises, including dialogue by the
client with inner figures. Assagioli's (1971) description of his technique of inner dialogue
begins with a presenting problem then:

Explain to him that there is a wise teacher within him - his spiritual self who already
knows his problem, his crisis, his perplexity. Although he need not make an outer
journey to reach the teacher, it is necessary to make an inner journey, more exactly an
ascent to the various levels of the conscious and superconscious psyche, to approach
this inner teacher and then in imagination to simply state the problem, talking to the
imagined teacher realistically as if he were a living person and, as in everyday
conversation, courteously awaiting a response. On occasion the answer is immediate
and spontaneous; it is received clearly and comes with authority and an absence of all
doubt. But this occurs in only the most fortunate cases, for sometimes there appears to
be no answer at all. (p. 204)

Assagioli (1991, pp. 82-86) uses the term “vertical telepathy” to refer specifically to
inner dialogue with our inner master or spiritual self. The inner master represents the best part
of ourselves. Contact with it can occur deliberately or spontaneously. To enter into a conscious
relationship with our spiritual self requires we become attuned to it. It is not a problem of
receiving the messages but of refining our connection to the source of the messages. He
stresses the importance of putting into effect what we have been given through our connection
with the spiritual self. Communication with an inner master can be facilitated by the practice of
psychospiritual exercises which help us to distinguish the subtle messages of the higher self
from other voices.

Assagioli (1991) maintains that each of us possess a spiritual self which has a very
different perspective from our conscious self. It exists in an eternal now with a view that is at
one time rooted in the present and also aware of transcendent eternity. It possesses infinite
wisdom, and understanding love. It is patient with us as we learn and grow toward the high
goal we are destined for. It does not expect us to be perfect while making changes in ourselves.
The inner master can give us light, peace, and security which produces joy, love and makes us
instruments of good for others. It does not demand that we change any part of our life. It will
not force itself upon us. We must initiate contact and be willing to work with and accept its
guidance in our lives. We must seek it and if we address it, it will respond. It will gently show us what we need to change to make room for things of greater value. Assagioli states that the higher one ascends the more the limits of individuality disappear and one becomes united with a transpersonal whole.

Assagioli (1971) remarked that it was not necessary to understand how this technique worked, but that it “apparently involves the whole gestalt of the person's life and subtle unconscious interplay between the patient and his environment” (p. 204). The emphasis should be on what interests the client the most, that is the quality of the dialogue and the answer it provides, not the nature of the inner guide or an understanding of how the process works.

Miller (1975), a practitioner of psychosynthesis, wrote of this technique and characterized it in terms of the belief “that man has a higher aspect, or soul, and that this higher aspect can be contacted by the personality and asked for guidance” (p. 123). The emphasis is on the client's particular belief system such that this work may be viewed as an attempt “to contact an Otherness full of power and wisdom,” or as an attempt “to reach those parts of our own psyche that are not available in our ordinary lives” (p. 124).

The meaning and use of symbols in psychosynthesis is explained thoroughly in the writings of Assagioli (1969, 1971). In one sense, they are valued in terms of how they function as analogies for the client. If one understands that symbols in imagery convey analogies that concern one’s psychological understanding and growth, then, in these analogies, one may be able “to find new and unusual relationships and to find hypotheses - or ways of looking at things - which one did not have before” (Assagioli, 1971, p. 179). Through visualizing symbols, unconscious psychological processes are activated. This may lead to a transformation of the unconscious through the patient’s increased sensitivity toward and understanding of his or her unconscious material (Assagioli, 1971).

Regarding the form that images might take as symbols for the self, Crampton (1975) wrote:
There are a variety of symbols of inner wisdom such as a Wise Old Man, a Wise Old Woman, a phoenix, eagle, or dove, a gem, a spring, fountain, flame, sun, star, or light. Sometimes these symbols emerge spontaneously, or they can be evoked intentionally. Each symbol has its own particular value, its own kind of wisdom. For example, the masculine and feminine archetypes of wisdom are often complementary, with the male symbol tending to give insights of a more guiding, affirming nature and the female symbol tending to play a more nurturing role. So it is worthwhile to experiment with several of these symbols, or allow our unconscious to chose the one most appropriate to meet our particular need at the time.(p. 147)

In terms of the authenticity of the symbols of the self, Assagioli (1971) asserts that, “if the symbol works - that is the important thing” (p. 206). However, there is also a caution to distinguish whether the image (and the voice along with it) is or is not from the Higher Self. Miller (1975) and Ferrucci (1982) agreed that false voices may be discerned in terms of the tone of the imaginal interaction. Ferrucci (1982) wrote that any character “who is not a living embodiment of love, joy, and wisdom” (p. 147) may be regarded as fake. One’s ability to distinguish the authenticity of the image is also described in terms of the client’s conscious evaluation of whether his or her action, based on the advice received, will be hurtful or beneficial to him/herself or others (Miller, 1975).

Maslow stated in his study of self-actualizing individuals, that once the basic needs of belongingness, affection, respect, and self-esteem were gratified people would then become motivated by higher aspirations and become involved in something beyond themselves (Maslow, 1971). In this regard, the values of spirituality, religion, and the meaning of life come to the foreground. He suggested that listening to the “impulse voices” allows the self to fully emerge, adding that “looking within oneself for many of the answers implies taking responsibility . . . in itself a great step toward actualization” (Maslow, 1971, p. 6). He also indicated that these “inner signals” have a weaker voice than our basic needs and therefore require stronger attention (Maslow, 1971, p. 330). Although Maslow suggested that listening to an inner voice was a path to self-actualize one’s higher spiritual, religious and philosophical values, it is important to note that Maslow (1971) also offered a caution about heeding the inner voice:
The voice from within can occasionally be wrong, even in the wisest individual. In any case, such wise individuals generally test their inner commands against external reality whenever they can. Empirical testing and verifying of experiential knowledge is thus always in order, for sometimes the inner certainty, even of a veritable mystic, turns out to be the voice of the devil. It is not yet wise to permit the private conscience of one person outweigh all other sources of knowledge and wisdom, however much we respect inner experiencing. (p. 330)

Despite this, Maslow wrote adamantly for the fulfilling of individual potential, the striving from basic needs toward metaneeds completion and self-transcendence. In his chapter on transcendence (Maslow, 1971), he discussed the transcendent experience as mystical fusion, as a rising above one's ego or lower needs, as a changing from one state to another, as the loss of the we/they polarity, and being one with the universe. The descriptions of the transcendent experience suggest that "being in harmony with nature," that having the "ability to yield, to be receptive to, or respond to, to live with extrapsychic reality as if one belonged with it, or were in harmony with it" (Maslow, 1971, p. 271) are the paths to the mystical realm. Maslow appears to be saying that "extrapsychic reality" is to be given special recognition, but one must live with it in a balanced way.

Leuner (1978; 1984), in his work with guided affective imagery, defined the inner guide as a positive symbolic figure that appears spontaneously or is occasionally chosen to lead the individual to creative therapeutic solutions on a symbolic level. This method uses the principle of active imagination in concert with the structure provided by the therapist. The therapist induces a state of relaxation in the client and verbally guides a sequence of scenes and actions with a symbolic meaning. For example, the sequence of going in a cave or up a mountain and meeting a wise man or woman with whom the client establishes a dialogue, represents a semi-structured way of establishing an inner dialogue with the Self. Descent and ascent in guided imagery correspond to reaching down in the unconscious layers of the psyche or reaching up towards spiritual aspiration.

Allison (1974; 1980), in his work with multiple personality disorder, unexpectedly uncovered what he called the "Inner-Self Helper." According to Allison (1974) this
phenomenon is the manifestation of "a higher part of the personality which is a derivative of the soul, a part called the Inner Self, the Real Self, the Self" (p. 30). It is a helpful personality who is able to guide the patient as well as assist the clinician in the therapeutic process of reintegrating the fragmented personality. The therapist, working with the inner guide of the client, must have the complete trust of the client and be in touch with her/his own inner guide who is, in turn, in communication with the client's inner guide. The healing and the integration of the multiple personality can take place only when all the parts of the personality decide to follow the direction taken by the inner guide. Allison reported working with six individuals all of whom had such an integrative part as the inner self-helper.

Francuch (1981) wrote about the spiritual nature of inner guidance. Within the context of hypno-therapy, he assisted clients in identifying and interacting with a "Spiritual Advisor." This he described as an ever-present entity that constituted the body of the "Grand Man: Spiritual and Natural World." Its function was the continuous preservation of freedom by maintaining balance among affections and by giving continuous opportunity for choices, changes, and creativity.

Emmons (1978) attempted to assimilate the God-directed and brain-directed definitions of this phenomenon. He described this capacity as the "Inner Source" and defined it as a natural help within. Through meditation he encouraged clients to utilize their sources of inner knowledge and to initiate their own self-contained systems of help.

Samuels and Bennett (1974) and Bennett (1986) have described experiences with their own inner guides and the process that Dr. Samuels used in his medical practice with patients. They acknowledge Jung as a source for their ideas and a model for their own experiences. They write that the inner guide "may take many forms: a presence, a feeling, a voice, or an imaginary person or being" (1974, p. 34). They suggest that first contact with a guide may be in a dream, guided fantasy, or a spontaneous voice or vision. The messages of help may be clear and bring a feeling of well-being to the individual. They suggest that the more one communicates with a
guide the more one builds skills and experiences for self-trust. Recognition for the guide develops in time. They describe three parts to the communication process: asking, listening for answers, and recognizing the guides characteristics. Bennett (1986) cautions that guides may be fallible, but gives no example or advice on how to detect or handle this.

Wacks (1994) introduced a construct called the Inner Elder, which as an image, “consists of the conscious and unconscious acting of our images, beliefs, and expectations - all stereotypic personality and culturally based rules for aging and living” (p. 92). Whereas, the Inner Elder as essence “is seen as archetype and as reflection and expression of a higher self . . . an aspect of our real nature, our true self” (p. 89). He writes that wisdom is the primary characteristic of the Inner Elder and that it uses images to guide and teach the self. He describes two ways for an individual to discover and use the Inner Elder: (a) “witnessing or observing our experience as it unfolds in awareness”, and (b) using “active imagination or guided fantasy” (p. 91).

Research perspective. Some contemporary research on the inner voice was carried out by Myrtle Heery (1989), who studied the “inner voice experiences of thirty adult men and women who were neither saints nor psychotics” (p. 75). She found that subjective reports of inner voice experiences could be divided into three categories:

1. Inner voice experiences as a fragmented part of the self.
2. Inner voice experiences characterized by dialogue providing guidance for growth of the individual.
3. Inner voice experiences where channels opened toward and beyond a higher self.
   (p. 77)

The first of these is not necessarily transpersonal, but rather tends to come under the heading of subpersonalities. Rowan (1990) has written that many subpersonalities are well within the normal range of variation. We do no need to invoke the transpersonal to account for most of them. The second category is much more likely to relate to the transpersonal, particularly in the form of the archetype of the transpersonal self. One’s inner voice, one’s inner sense, can be a guide to what direction to take in life choices. The third category, Heery found,
was confined to people who had practiced some form of meditation on a regular basis and expressed a deep sense of spiritual connection through their inner voice experiences. So it seems that the existence of a voice can be less than transpersonal, or can be genuinely transpersonal.

Within Heery’s population of thirty research subjects, twenty-one had practiced some form of meditation and twenty-three had been involved in some form of psychotherapy. She interpreted this as suggesting that it was a group with both psychological and spiritual interests. She also noted that the majority of the subjects reported their inner voice experience to have occurred between the ages 35 and 45, indicating it may be age specific. Heery concluded that her findings suggest “an ongoing interior education with the inner voice as the teacher” (p. 81). Many people, she writes, describe the inner voice as a strong, positive directive force in their lives, a source of conviction, an authority which gives them inner certainty or a feeling of a pull or call from a higher principle.

There is a parallel between the three categories Heery outlined and the three reactions to spiritual awakening outlined by Assagioli (1989). Assagioli writes in terms of “energies” and levels of organization with regard to transpersonal experiences. The three possible outcomes are: (a) a failure to bring about a higher level of organization which may be painful and the individual may not recognize the transpersonal origin of the experience, (b) less intense and involving a temporary neutralization of personality patterns, where one gains a sense of direction to complete their own transformation, and (c) a permanent transformation of the individual’s life through a higher integration of personality.

Shore’s (1992) research involved phenomenological interviews with participants who had been treated clinically with the inner advisor technique. The inner advisor technique, as researched by Shore (1992), was taught to him by Drs. Bresler and Rossman, who had, learned the technique from Dr. Oyle. Shore (1992) writes that through personal communication with Dr. Irving Oyle he learned that Dr. Oyle was influenced in the origination of the inner advisor
technique by the work Dr. Carl Jung did with active imagination. Shore found the descriptions of his research participants generally confirmed the description of the technique by the founders.

Particularly relevant were the findings pertaining to patterns of use or contact with the inner advisor. Shore assumed there would be two reported patterns of use: (a) frequent contact (daily or several times a day) where the experience is as a thought or voice in their head, but not using relaxation or visualization in obtaining the advisor, and (b) infrequent contact where the experience is facilitated by relaxation, attention to imaginal detail, that is visual images, and increased affect. Although he did not find evidence of the first style, Shore surmised that its absence would show up in future research because it had occurred in a pilot interview and had been reported by Bresler in his training workshops. He further explained that his interview style did not lend itself to direct questioning concerning the participants’ pattern.

Shore (1992) reported that the participants experiences were related as important and endowed with affective qualities. Although these reports followed the second pattern of use outlined above, they did not directly refer to their general experience of the advisor. The advisor was always experienced in terms congruent with the participants beliefs and values. Participants described the advisor as a source of wisdom or knowledge and its helpfulness in dealing with problems or concerns to which other efforts had been fruitless. Only one of the six participants reported the importance of symbolism in their experience.

Although the participants described their advisors in various ways, they experienced their relationship to the advisor in similar ways, in that it was just right for them and was a source of wisdom, compassion, power, and peacefulness. The participants described their experience in terms of openness, expectation, and trust, with the trust and openness increasing as a result of their experience of the advisor. The advisor introduced and facilitated interaction with, imaginal figures other than itself and responded to requests and questions. The participant’s reports alluded to the advisor as part of themselves while they interacted with it as
if it were detached and autonomous from themselves. The relationship was described in terms of being of benefit to them and of general importance in their lives.

Shore (1992) described nineteen separate themes which characterized the relationship as being influenced by both the participant and the advisor. The participant understood herself as influencing the relationship by asking questions, following the advisor’s suggestions, and looking more deeply within herself, all of which strengthened the relationship. The relationship was described as being trusting, accepting, protective, faithful, understanding, and inspiring confidence. Usually the image for the presenting problem changed more than the image of the advisor. The image of the advisor changed in terms of the degree to which the subject accepts the image as wise and helpful. The image for the problem is transformed in that it does not evoke its customary response in the subject.

Although Shore does not tell us how many of these participants had formerly experienced meditation or psychotherapy, he does write of the participants differentiating the inner advisor experience from these other forms of internal work.

**Summary**

The diversity of the literature makes it difficult to draw conclusions. Yet, it seems there is an aspect of our consciousness, although usually inaccessible, that can become accessible through inner awareness or the activation of mental imagery. The type of consciousness elicited may hold a vast resource of knowledge and guidance that could be utilized for therapeutic benefit, that is, personal and transpersonal growth, self-understanding, healing, and change. The technique of the inner guide relies upon the client’s innate propensity for survival and growth. The literature contains a focus on the benefits of using an inner guide, reflecting what appears to be a bias among authors who employ the technique as part of their therapeutic approach. A major contradiction in the literature is the conviction among practitioners that the inner guide is an extremely powerful process versus the absence of follow-up research on therapeutic effects.
In the course of therapy it is difficult to gauge the impact of a specific intervention, but clients themselves are a relatively untapped source of information.

Research is needed to show the long-term development with the continued use of the inner guide and to clear up some of the confusion about what happens in therapy when an inner guide is used. Jung (1931/1954) felt that techniques like active imagination liberated the individual from dependence on the therapist, but some contemporary therapists, at least those who use trance states on a regular basis, fear excessive dependence and the development of complex problems related to transference and countertransference. This points to the need for follow-up studies with clients to inform practice, and to begin identifying whether the effects of specific techniques are lasting and beneficial. Therapists need to know what forms such effects take, and how these impact upon the individual.
CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Design

The question proposed here involves complicated issues of meaning and purpose which possibly change over time. A method was required which could provide detailed descriptions of individual experience, together with an interpretive understanding of those descriptions. The multiple case study was chosen as the most suitable design.

Yin (1994) suggests that a case study is capable of presenting a phenomenon as a dynamic totality, rather than as isolated fragments. It presents the lived experience of an individual and attempts to grasp the meaning of that experience for the individual. In this way it facilitates an understanding of the pattern of experience under investigation.

The multiple case study depends on the logic of replication, where each case "is considered akin to a single experiment, and the analysis must follow cross-experiment rather than within-experiment design and logic" (Yin, 1994, p. 53). The process of pattern building or pattern matching is central to the analysis of the case studies. When the patterns of each case match, the internal validity of the study is strengthened. The results of the multiple case study are presented as patterns of both individual and general experience of the phenomenon in the context of the life story.

Research Procedures

The literature review. The literature review provided the framework for the interviews by guiding the definition of the problem and establishing the range of information being sought. It also served as the background against which the data was examined and understood by specifying categories and organizing classifications of data and relationships between them.

Personal perspective. In holistic and qualitative types of human science research the researcher's own experiences and biases are evident in the questions posed to the informants. Not only will this influence their responses, but their responses will influence the researcher's
understanding and subsequent inquiries (Mishler, 1986). Therefore it is required of the researcher to present a form of self-questioning which seeks to uncover the fundamental assumptions that the investigator brings to the research.

Presenting a brief description of the researcher’s personal perspective (i.e., experience with an inner guide before and during the study) is intended to assist both the reader and the investigator to clarify the experiences which may have had an influence on the research. The explication of these biases and presuppositions enables the researcher to establish a greater degree of distance from them (Polkinghorne, 1989). Following is a description of the researcher’s personal experiences with an inner guide before and during the research project.

My interest in working with an inner guide began as a lifelong personal interest in my own personal and spiritual development. I first became acquainted with my own inner guide as a result of participating in a twelve week program to promote contact with an inner guide and to encourage the development of intuition. I had some initial difficulties in establishing the connection and accepting what was happening. For example, I was expecting something larger than life and more powerful than death to sweep over me and present itself as my inner guide. This was not the way it happened. My guide presented itself in the form of a seagull-like bird, its resemblance to the bird in the Jonathan Livingston Seagull story gave it a comfortably familiar appearance and yet this bothered me. This story had always been a favorite of mine, so I thought the coincidence indicated my mind was playing a trick on me. However, I worked at suspending my doubt in order to simply hear the messages being given and then judge its usefulness or appropriateness on that basis.

My work with an inner guide began in May 1994. Although I was encouraged to maintain regular contact with my guide, I found it very difficult to do this. Contact was sporadic at best over the following several months. There were always things distracting me or something more interesting going on in my life that kept me away from the quiet time needed to relax and make contact. It seemed that I recognized the voice of my inner guide as a voice I
had often heard in my head before. It had always been there, only now I was acknowledging it through the personification process of my imagery. But what indeed was this voice? Where did it come from? My own unconscious? I didn’t know. I wondered about the others who had been introduced to their inner guide, were their experiences similar? How would the experience change if the contact was maintained over a longer period?

When I first considered doing research based on the inner guide I was taking a class practicing counselling skills with classmates. I introduced the idea to my partner and she was interested and willing to experience it as part of our work together. It was near the end of this course and we were encouraged to try some of the things we had learned, including guided imagery. The session proved to be a very powerful one for my “client”, who proved to be an excellent subject. I guided her to a safe place where a wise being who knew her well emerged and conversed with her. She emerged from the session with a great deal of emotion and I was somewhat taken aback by this. Her emotion was a result of having met her grandmother, as the wise, caring being who knew her and conversed with her in the imagery. This grandmother had been deceased for a number of years and she was very fond of her. The result had been quite unexpected and rather powerful although my partner was happy to have had the experience and to have seen her grandmother again.

For me it was a big learning experience. I learned that this was not a technique to be taken lightly. That indeed the power of imaginal experience can be great. I became more interested to know how and what happens with individuals who used this contact with their inner guide on a regular basis. What would the pattern of development be? What would the benefits and problems be? How would it be different in the long term?

Participants. Through the network of the investigator's friends and acquaintances the intent of this study was made known. A letter of information regarding the study was made available for potential participants. This letter of information appears in Appendix A.
The key factors in the selection of the participants were individuals who (a) had worked with their inner guide(s) for a minimum period of two years, (b) could provide detailed accounts of their experience, and (c) were available and willing to participate. The participants who were chosen happened to be three women (two were forty-five years old and the third was sixty-six years old). All three are Caucasian and from a Christian background, more details about their individual lives are found in the narratives.

Once potential participants had chosen to contact me by phone, I answered any questions they had regarding the project. I also asked them to provide me with some information (e.g., how long had they been working with an inner guide) to determine their suitability for participation in the study. Once they were considered suitable arrangements were made for an interview at a time and place convenient to the participant and myself.

Interviews. The structure for the interviewing process has been adapted from Seidman (1991) who details a series of four-interviews for phenomenological data gathering, which was originally designed by Dolbeare and Schuman (Schuman, 1982). This approach combines life-history interviewing (Bertaux, 1981) and focused, in-depth interviewing informed by assumptions drawn from phenomenology (Schutz, 1967). The method utilizes open-ended questions, upon which the interviewer will build and explore the participants’ responses. The goal is to have each participant reconstruct her own experience with her inner guide.

The interview process consisted of three interviews of approximately ninety minutes each and a fourth shorter meeting (approximately forty-five minutes) to review the narrative written from the interview material. The first interview focused on establishing the context and history of the participant’s life. It was a biographical account of events before her involvement with an inner guide. The second interview explored her experience of her inner guide in depth. The third interview focused on the meaning and significance the participant attributed to her experience of an inner guide. This combination of exploring the past to clarify the events that led participants to the point where they encountered an inner guide and describing the concrete
details of their experience intended to establish condition for reflecting upon the meaning of the experience within the context of their lives (Seidman, 1991).

The initial interview began with a brief outline of why the help of the participants was sought and what benefits there might be for counsellors. Following a review of the conditions of participating in the research, including confidentiality and signing the consent form the first interview began. The consent form appears in Appendix B. The participants were told that there were only a few set questions within a specific area of interest. A sample of the questions asked through all four interviews appear in Appendix C.

The goal with each participant was to establish a climate of trust and openness which would persist throughout the interviews. Since the goal of the interviews was to discover how the co-researcher sees the world, it was essential that the relationship provide a climate of trust and openness. For example, each participant at some point during the interviewing process asked me about my interest and experience with the topic, so I further explained my interest in the subject and some of the background that led me to investigate the topic to them. As each participant told her story through the course of the interviews, I encouraged the elaboration of the story with a combination of active listening, minimal prompts, questions of clarification and open-ended questions. The intent was to allow the co-researcher to tell her story in her own words, in her own way, with minimal interference or direction.

In the first interview the participant was asked to consider that her life was a story and what might the chapters of her life-story be? Where would each chapter start and end? What would be the title of each chapter? In this manner the early life experiences in family, school, with friends, community, and work were explored. The focus was on how these life experiences led the participant up to the point of having an inner guide. In sum, the initial interview was a review of the participant's life history up to the time she began working with her inner guide.

In the second interview the general question was asked, "Could you tell me how you first became involved with an inner guide and what was that experience like?" The focus was to
understand the concrete details of each participant’s experience with her inner guide. In each interview the questions as listed in Appendix C were asked if they were not answered during the course of the interview. The co-researchers were also asked for stories about their experience with an inner guide as a way of eliciting details.

The purpose of the third interview was to allow each co-researcher an opportunity to reflect on the meaning of her experience with an inner guide. The general question was posed, “Given what you have said about your life before being aware of an inner guide and your life while aware of an inner guide, how do you understand the inner guide in your life?” In this manner the intellectual and emotional connections and influences between the participant’s life and their inner guide were made clear.

Each interview was recorded on audio-tape and then transcribed verbatim by the researcher. This information was reviewed after each interview in order that any ambiguity in the participant’s story could be further explored in the subsequent interview.

Narrative accounts. The narrative accounts were constructed through a synthesis of the transcribed interviews. Each account was written in the third person reflecting the cooperation between researcher and co-researchers in synthesizing the narrative. However, the participant’s own words were quoted or paraphrased as much as possible. Each account was organized so it represented a coherent story of the participant’s life history, the involvement and influence of her inner guide in her life, as well as the character of the relationship with her inner guide. In a fourth meeting the participants were asked to review the narrative to insure it communicated what they had intended and to determine whether anything of significance had been omitted or distorted. Where necessary the narratives were refined. In each case the co-researchers suggested few changes and these were demographic or omitted details. All participants were pleased with the narrative accounts constructed by the researcher in that they were accurate and fair representations of their lives and experience. Typically they remarked how odd it was to read it from the perspective of another.

35
A general narrative account was constructed by examining the individual accounts to
determine common themes and patterns of similarity, while respecting the individual differences
of each life. The general account was checked against the individual narratives as it emerged
and was revised. The development of the general narrative account also took into consideration
analytic and cultural categories developed in the literature review. As patterns and themes were
drawn from the individual stories, an increasingly clear sense of the structure of the overall
pattern of the phenomenon emerged.
CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

Individual Narrative: Ann

Ann was born in Adelaide, Australia in 1950. She was the youngest of four girls and her parents were well educated and employed and/or involved in the theater. Ann always felt unloved and unwanted while growing up despite a family-life that was, by all appearances, an incredibly rich, happy, loving, and caring one. Although she describes a family that often did things together, like summer vacations and weekend outings, her inner experience of being in the family was that “my father loved my three sisters and my mother but not me.” She considered any love he did show for her as, “just being nice.” Ann recalls her mother as having been, “incredibly loving and caring, one of the most passionate caring people I have ever known about family,” yet Ann was also afraid of her and her, “violent, explosive, unpredictable temper,” which was “very frightening to a small child.” Growing up in her family was like being the “last in a big group of very noisy, crazy, energetic, exuberant people,” and Ann “felt like I really wasn't wanted and it was easier and safer to be alone.” As a result her childhood is recalled as a time where as she says “I needed to find a way to fit in a world where I felt, truly, that I didn't belong and I had always felt that way.”

During her childhood Ann was “very shy, very introverted,” she “didn't know how to make friends at school,” and her sisters teased her, so she spent hours playing on her own because this was “safe.” Her parents had a great passion for the theater and the arts in general so Ann and her sisters were always encouraged to attend and to participate in a variety of cultural and artistic activities. Ann took piano lessons, her sister studied drama, and they all took part in a special theater program for children that their parents had created. They went to shows such as the Indian National Dancers and the original Broadway casting of West Side Story, when Ann was young. It was an incredibly rich environment.
Ann particularly recalls her sister, just fifteen months older, very friendly and outgoing, making many new friends easily and quickly after the family had moved when she was seven. This in contrast to Ann who was unable to speak to anyone or make any friends. In this instance her mother helped her by giving her some money to buy “lollies” and told her to give these to the girls in her class. In this way Ann was able to make one good friend, all she really wanted, “one friend who was my friend for several years.”

When she was twelve, the family moved again, this time to a new city, Newcastle. Here, in high school, she recalls having developed some social skills, but still being shy because she didn’t know how to put people at their ease or how to be at ease with them. Unlike her sister Sally, who was outgoing, very bubbly and energetic. Sally would sometimes tease her, and it was a result of one of these teasing incidents that Ann began to see what her sister was doing, that is she was being “smart with words, like it was a witticism,” and Ann thought that if her sister could do it then she could, too. So Ann studied her sister’s ways and began to copy these, learning the put-downs and “developing a social personality” in the process.

In her teenage years, Ann learned how to be “socially acceptable,” she had friends, went to parties, and had relationships with boyfriends. Although she described these as “dysfunctional” because of the wall she had around herself, a wall that shut people out and said, “love isn’t to be trusted, I’m unlovable and unworthy.” Having a boyfriend was a way of being normal, like everyone else. So again, like in her family life, there was the appearance of doing very well, she was successful at school, and part of the “in” crowd, but on the inside she had no place to put her pain and did not feel like she fit into the world.

In these early formative years, Ann had no experiences that “would indicate that [she] would end up on a really deeply spiritual path.” She grew up with the belief that such people had a special gift and were born that way. Her family was not religious, in fact her parents were “staunch atheists” who felt, “religion was a crutch for people who didn't have the strength to pull it together themselves,” and thought “all the spirituality stuff was just a bunch of garbage.”
Despite this her parents were tolerant and encouraged Ann and her sisters to explore and learn on their own. She did have periods (a matter of months, once or twice) in her life where she attended church or was involved in a “church girls society.” Although feeling religious at the time, she was quite bored with the church experience, i.e., “I connected with it so little that while the sermon was on I'd count the bricks up the wall.” Regarding the paranormal, Ann has a vague recollection of being fascinated and at the same time frightened, so she kept well enough away from it. She did not read books on it and was not consciously aware of her belief in it, “I think I believed in it then, without even knowing that I did.”

At seventeen Ann finished high school and left Newcastle for the city of Brisbane, where she worked for a while in a bar and then went to school to be a librarian. She got married at twenty-one, because “I still very much was trying to be normal, trying to be acceptable, trying to be who society wanted me to be.” Her goal in life was to be acceptable, to find a way to belong, and so she got married because it would prove she was “not a freak.” The marriage lasted a year to eighteen months, then she got separated and divorced.

In 1973, at the age of twenty-three, Ann came to Vancouver to visit her sister for a couple of months. There she met an Australian man and “fell in love,” and stayed on, “living with a bunch of hippies in a big old house in Surrey.” This began an important era in her life, for eight years from the time she was twenty-three until she was thirty-one, she lived the life of a “happy hippie traveler.” Spending the first eighteen months of that time living in Canada, then traveling Europe, the USA and the South Pacific finally ending up back in Australia. At home again she went to university for a year and studied fine arts. She soon tired of this and went off to western Australia to make money in the mining towns for a year. After which she traveled again for eighteen months (China, Hong Kong, Mexico, South America, Canada, and the States). Then once again returned to western Australia to work in the mining towns and make money which enabled her to travel for another eighteen month period (Africa, Europe, and back to Canada).
This eight-year period Ann describes as the “beginning of opening up to new ideas, opening up to the idea of a philosophy of life.” It involved experimenting with drugs and meditation; reading about the teachings of Buddhism, Hinduism, and Taoism; and an introduction to the ideas of reincarnation, enlightenment, and the paradox of being. She says that “whole package of experiences . . . started to open me up to new ideas - who and what I was and what life was.” Although her awareness had been expanded, there were times when she felt incredibly unhappy and to a large degree she was “still living out this public persona.” Despite the changes she had undergone since her first visit to Canada at age twenty-three, her parents remained very tolerant.

When Ann returned to Australia in 1981 she was ready for another change. She gave up on being a librarian, “the old conventional me, who was trying to fit in and do the right thing.” She had “shaken off enough of the need for that because now [she] could fit as a hippie.” Although she was still trying very hard to get it just right, now she was trying hard to be a hippie. “I was a chameleon, I could move into any section of society and just turn on what they wanted me to be and become that.” After eight years of being a “happy hippie traveler” Ann felt that her time of carefree adventuring was past and it was time for her to settle down. However, she soon discovered that all her old friends who had stayed at home for the past eight years, were now settled into careers with “nice homes, nice cars, and big incomes.” Ann felt out of place, like she did not belong, that she was “inadequate and a failure.” She made a decision to become something new, although she had no idea what and was not sure she had the resources to become something new. She decided she would become a “successful yuppie,” like her friends in the midst of whom she now found herself. To this end she worked for six months as the administrator for a dance company. Despite her success in this position she turned down an offer to have it extended for another six months because she was “totally burned out, not only from the hours that [she] worked, but also from the pretense to myself, to everybody.”
About this time when she was thirty-three she had a “mini nervous breakdown” and although she was diagnosed to have hepatitis, she did not. Then subsequently she was diagnosed as being depressed, which she was not. She was in a crisis, a place of total psychological denial, where everything was suppressed. Ann says there was no “conscious inner conflict” at the time “because everything was suppressed.” She says that “I had suppressed every negative emotion or thought I ever had because I wanted to be nice, because I wanted to be acceptable, because I didn’t believe I was, and because I was unworthy.” Although she describes her life at that point as being in a place of enormous fear and pain, she had no tools to deal with it. For all the awareness and experience she had gained through her hippie traveler days, she could not now help herself. She had been living an incredibly rich life, full of excitement, adventure, and rich with experiences on the outside, but now she was face-to-face with her inner world and it was bankrupt. It was at this point that “the extent of [her] denial was dumped in [her] lap” and “the deeper unhappiness really surfaced.” This was an eighteen month period where she was “very, very unhappy.”

This was a major turning point in Ann’s life, although she was not aware of it at the time. She went back to work after her breakdown and was “kind of treading water.” On the surface she “more or less had a life back,” she was working, she had a social life and a home which she shared with a friend, Judy. When one day Judy was on the phone making an appointment with a rebirther, and Ann found herself saying, “Me too, me too!” Even though she had no idea what it was or why someone might want to do it. The moment was spontaneous and changed the course of her life, as though it had been divinely guided. She realized that there was “a lot within [her] that could bear being looked at and changed.”

Subsequently Ann had two rebirthing sessions with Hannah before Jackie, an apprentice of Hannah’s, took over. With Jackie she did eight more rebirthings over an eight week period. The rebirthings were opening things up for Ann, helping her shift blocks and limitations that kept her locked in her self made prison. Rebirthing began in the west with Leonard Orr in the
early 70’s, but it really is an ancient breathing technique. It is a type of yogic breath of continuous breathing, that was practiced by both the East Indian Yogis and North American Natives. The name “rebirthing” is a misnomer because you don't necessarily experience your birth again, although you might. Ann describes it as an incredibly useful tool for people who “don't want to express their inner emotions, don't want to connect with, express and release the emotional trauma of whenever, wherever in your life that you have not released it.” It produces an altered mind state which “allows that which you are holding down or denying to come to the surface.” This was the context within which she was first connected to her own guides and was the beginning of her “opening up to spirituality, to God, and most importantly to [her]self.” The main difference between rebirthing and working with the guides for Ann is that with rebirthing one typically just works with whatever comes up in the process, whereas when she works with her guides, she typically has a specific question or issue to resolve with their help.

Jackie suggested to Ann, as her guides had advised her to, that Ann read Seth Speaks, (a book channeled by Jane Roberts) a book that Jackie herself had not read. It seemed to Ann that the ideas presented in this book were “already present in her genes” just waiting to be awoken. In Seth Speaks Ann had found a philosophy that “resonated with every cell in [her] body” and “gave [her] some tools to find out who [she] really was.” Upon reading the book Ann accepted the idea that we create our own reality through our beliefs and expectations and if you don't like your life, then figure out what your beliefs are that made it be that way and change them. Another idea she accepted and acted on was the idea of being able to do this work while she was asleep. She began to ask her guides to help change her beliefs during her sleep. She did this (and continues doing so) by asking them to help change or understand specific beliefs before she goes to sleep. When she wakes in the morning it is with a new perspective or new attitude toward the issue. For Ann reading Seth Speaks and acting on the ideas she found there was a big part of her initial and continued process of development. Rebirthing and reading Seth Speaks gave Ann “the tools to move forward” and “to find out
who I really am.” She says “that was my opening up to the whole new thought movement, to spirituality, to guidance, to God and to myself probably most especially to myself.”

Ann's initial experience with her guides came after the first eight rebirthing sessions with Jackie. Near the end of this time, Jackie told Ann that her guides had informed her that Ann needed to do some “psychic development,” which meant getting connected with her guides and doing some past life regression. Ann agreed and they had eight sessions of approximately two to three hours each and the focus of each session was communicated to Jackie by her guides each week. At this point Ann worked with many guides and was connected with them through a process of guided imagery.

Her facilitator, Jackie, began by suggesting she imagine or visualize standing at the bottom (or top) of a staircase, to imagine walking up (or down) twenty-one steps, and into a room where one-by-one she visualized herself being surrounded by the colors of the rainbow. Then going up another flight of ten steps and into a room, (or outdoor place) a safe and sacred place. For Ann the first place that came to her was a platform in space and with it a feeling of incredible freedom. She found herself wearing a long white robe and the felt the wind blowing comfortably through her hair. But because her facilitator had said it would be a room, she imagined there were four corner posts and four beams going around on the rectangular platform, but no roof and no walls. This place has changed for her many times over the years, including having created several rooms. Once in the imagined safe place her guides would come to her and she could communicate with them, both through inner conversation and through writing, which was part of her initial psychic development course. In both, the process involved the asking (or writing) of a question and then hearing (or writing) an answer.

Ann had “enormous enthusiasm” in the beginning, she really wanted to change and was dedicated to “taking the time each day to connect with [her] guides.” However, she had to struggle with it, too. She didn't trust herself or her ability to be able to do it, at times she felt
overwhelmed by a sense of unworthiness, of “not [being] good enough to have this guidance and not good enough to be able to communicate [with her guides].”

Initially Ann used the guided imagery to connect with her guides both in the sessions with Jackie and on her own. Fairly quickly she found herself able to go to that “mind space” without going through the whole visualization process. Recently she does different forms of trance work which are deeper than that initial experience. Through the years she has had three main guides, while others were usually introduced when the main guide felt it was necessary to give her specific help. Bramony was the first main guide she worked with, she originally knew him as Brian and he appeared in a long brown robe. However, Ann recalls little about the appearance of her guides, she is more “clairaudiant” than clairvoyant, that is she is more focused on their verbal messages than their visual image. At times she has experienced a whole collection of inner voices, not talking at once but present none the less, like a group of friends. She felt their presence as one of caring and supportive, sometimes she struggles with accepting the beautiful things they say to her like, “You are a child of God; You are a child of the sun.” At such times she would feel that perhaps she was making it up and she would doubt herself, not fully trusting the process.

After her initial introduction to rebirthing in July-September, 1983, Ann began the psychic development courses in October and then in the following February-March of 1984 she co-taught (with Jackie) this same course. Finally in May, 1984 she moved to a remote community in northern British Columbia where she lived and worked for seven years. During this time she continued to practice what she had learned and deepening her connection to guidance. In 1991 she moved to Vancouver and since then has been working as a therapist, teacher and psychic using what she learned to help others on their spiritual journey. In the summer of 1995 she moved back to northern B. C. In her work with her clients she says “I get out of the way, allowing the client and the guides to lead” although she says that her own experiences and intuitive knowledge play a role.
Over the years Ann has had three main guides. First Bramony who worked with her until about 1991, then Seth was her main guide for two years, and since August of 1993 she has been working with Melchoir. Moving from one guide to another was associated with her having attained a new level of awareness and the new guide specializing in working with individuals at the new level. For Ann the difference in personality from one to the other is quite obvious, but the result in her life has been constant. She has always had the benefit of guidance to continue expanding beyond her limitations, in terms of thinking, beliefs, and attitudes. She continues to experience their help, day and night, to make inner changes which lead her to greater peace, connectedness, clarity, and a sense of self-worth. Her present experience is to connect with guidance in meditation. She also finds that establishing a communicative connection with guidance can be quick and virtually unobtrusive to her daily activities, that is she can communicate with them while washing dishes or driving a car.

For Ann the experience of being connected to guidance is extremely difficult to put into words. However, it involves the feeling of never being alone and is characterized by a sense of being surrounded by “energy that is profoundly caring, supportive, encouraging, loving, non-judgmental, and full of grace.” This energy is available to her to the extent that she allows herself to experience it and allows herself to be in that place of connectedness. While in that place she feels peaceful, clear, grounded, safe, blessed, and joyous. She has the sense that the guides are there helping her always even when not directly connected to them and she has a feeling of security knowing they are there always. There have been moments where she has become aware of the profound love her guides have for her and has felt overwhelmed by its immensity. Recently Melchoir has taken her through exercises to help her feel the love that he and the other guides are sending to her. Whereas in the past she understood, intellectually, that her guides were loving, supportive and there to help her, she now can feel the reality of this in a much more profound way because she has “released enough of the fear and mistrust to be able to feel it.”
In her initial relationship with Bramony she was childlike and quite irreverent, in part because she had some issues with authority, but also because she saw him as being much wiser than herself, so tended to put him on a pedestal. This aspect of her relationship with the guides was particularly an issue when she was working with Seth, who told her, “You are one of us, get yourself up on the pedestal or bring us down. We are not here to tell you what to do or to be in charge of you or to run your life for you, we are here to give you what love, support and guidance we can.” She has learned to accept them as friends who are willing to help when asked.

Ann finds her relationship to the guides change as she changes, for example she now feels more aware of and able to accept their love for her. This is a result of her releasing the fear and mistrust she initially felt, and being more open, so that now she finds herself in a state of grace and trust more often. She compares the process to the peeling back the layers of an onion, with each layer she resolves deeper and deeper levels of mistrust and “fear based programming.” Her communication with the guides still contains an element of mistrust, as she has not yet got to the core of it. However, there is a dramatic difference between her present level of trust and that at which she began eleven years ago.

When she began this work she was not in a very clear state, she described herself as being a victim, she was confused not just about the guidance but about herself as well. While in this place of inner turmoil, wanting to be happy, and to have peace she found some tools to help her make inner changes, one of which was “her guides, or her own inner caring and wisdom.” They helped her both understand herself and make the inner changes she needed to become comfortable with herself and her life. While teaching and helping others over the years she has learned a great deal about the process of connecting with inner guides. In some ways this has interfered with her own direct experiencing of it and she feels she has lost some of the spontaneity and freedom she experienced in the beginning.
Ann initially connected with her guides from the perspective that they were spiritual entities, separate from herself. However, after having worked with her guides for eleven years she feels comfortable accepting other explanations, that is they may be “just [her] imagination or [her] higher self or angels or God,” because the fact of the matter is it works. She feels that she has tapped into a place of deep wisdom that helped her resolve the inner conflict and discomfort she previously experienced and which continues to help her. She regards them essentially as “non-physical beings who could help me understand myself and make whatever inner changes I wanted in order to be more comfortable with myself.”

In the beginning it was through guided visualization that she established a connection to her inner guidance. Over the years contact has become more like thoughts in her mind, as she says “it was about where my mind was focused and my mind was focused on the inner conversation.” Connecting with her guides through relaxation and guided imagery enables her “surface personality” to get out of the way thus allowing something deeper, wiser, more profound to come into her awareness. This process allowed her to “open up to the idea that there was one of these entities there for [her] and that [she] could communicate with this entity.” She says, “there is no point in asking a question, unless you are prepared to get out of the way for the answer.” In connecting with the guides she is aware of having to make the thoughts happen, to participate in the process. If she were to sit in total silence and wait for them to fill it, they wouldn’t because she has to activate something in herself that allows her to communicate with them. It is like a bridge where she needs to reach half way across in order to allow the connection to occur. She describes this process as “stilling the mind chatter,” to stop the constant stream of thoughts we have going through our minds. The process of connecting with guidance is “like listening to thoughts from a more profound place, or accessing knowledge from a place of deeper wisdom.” Once she is connected with her guides, communication is always in the form of “thoughts in her mind, mental conversations.” The writing is similar, only she writes down the thoughts instead of listening to them.
Originally Ann would ask predictive questions but has since learned that the guides are not there to tell her what her life is going to be, but here to help her create it in a way that feels good for her. To help her learn what it is within herself that she needs to change. She does not recall them giving her specific advice like changing her diet or to quit smoking. However, more recently they have advised her to quit watching television and to drink water with bright blue food coloring in it, focusing on the color as she drinks it to help her throat chakra. She recalls a time when she did not like the advice they gave and so tried to change it to what she wanted to hear but this turned out to be pointless. She now tries to be more clear on whether she is allowing their message to come through or is interfering with it.

Her guidance continues to be primarily auditory, a flow of thought words. Sometimes she gets information that is beyond words, a kind of intuitive knowing. “The process is almost like a translation process, the knowing comes and then it gets translated into words, like the communication can be a knowing that’s nonverbal and then it gets translated into words.” This intuitive knowing is something that she rarely experienced before she was connected, and now it occurs quite frequently. It is a knowing that they are there helping her find clarity and truth even when she is not directly talking with them and a knowing that resides in the body (“when I say something, I can feel if it is truth or not”). She distinguishes it from intellectual knowing which does not have the same bodily sense.

Ann feels her relationship with the guides is not quite balanced, as she does not know how to love them even though they have profound love for her, but she is learning. Now with Melchoir she finds things are starting to even out, as she becomes more loving of herself and more accepting of her connection with him. She is comfortable and confident that he is there for her always, without question. She has a difficult time being friends because she sees them as being wiser and tends to put them on a pedestal. Ann is aware that no matter what state of mind she is in, whether she is feeling angry, intimidated, impatient or judgmental, they are there and they are patient, non-judgmental, and kind. She is also aware that they know when to step
back and give her some space, because there have been times when she “hated the whole spiritual thing and wanted to just live an ordinary life,” so they allowed her that space and then were there when she was ready.

The eleven years since she first connected with her guides has been a gradual process which has led Ann to a place “of far greater strength, wisdom, and grace.” She is now profoundly different. She now has days where as she says “I am in a state of just the most incredible grace, where everything is beautiful and flowing, and joyous and perfect, and I most certainly attribute that to my spiritual path. To two things: that I accepted guidance into my life and that I used that guidance to clear mistrust and fear based programming. To allow me to move into a place where I can make the choice for grace, for love, for non-judgment.”

Ann acknowledges that she had a great deal of determination and desperately wanted to “get clear.” She took the premise that she was 100 per cent responsible for her life, for example if people were abusing her, she would reframe the experience and accept that it mirrored some aspect of herself that she needed to change. She says “the guides won’t give you the determination to get clear.” Hers’ was a process of inner exploration and meditation, examining herself and her life. When she needed help, her guides were always there to help her. Her guides have been with her for so long and done so much that she “can’t conceive of what it would be like to not have guidance.” She defines spiritual growth as the “process of growing beyond self-imposed limitations” and that this process is continuous.

Ann gets help from her guides to “expand limitations in terms of thinking, beliefs and attitudes . . . to make inner changes leading to greater peace, connectedness, clarity and increased self-worth.” She now feels she has acquired a certain measure of the inner peace, happiness and safety that motivated her initially to work with her guides and to work on herself. She attributes the inner peace, inner grace and inner wisdom she now experiences to the guides and their help. However, she feels the work will continue and her sense of clarity about her “unique expression in human physical reality” which she now experiences will continue to
grow. She no longer feels lost and alone, with her guides constant presence she is never alone. The experience is akin to being “buoyed up” or “cradled” by the guides or by her awareness of their presence and she benefits from this to the extent that she allows herself to connect with it. The process is one of surrender to that which she feels is truly divine and full of grace. Yet she says the guides “are not there to run my life, make it easy or be in charge.”

There is a difference in her relationships as well, at one time she was often in relationships where she was verbally abused, this is no longer the case. She is now involved in a healthy relationship where there is “respect, trust and support” and she is more aware of not “projecting” her own negativity on her partner. She finds her relationships with family and friends to be deeper and more truthful now than they were before. She no longer feels like the victim in her relationships with others.

In terms of her career, she is now helping others by connecting them with their guides and teaching them rebirthing. This work is something that fills her with “joy and nourishment.” What she is doing is “precisely aligned with [her] higher intention and higher purpose in this life.” She is certain that she came here to do two things, “one to awaken [her]self, and two to help others do the same.” Her guides and intuitive knowledge play a crucial role in her work with clients. Ironically she finds herself getting out of the way as much as possible to allow her guides, the client’s guides and the client to do the work.

Ann is now at a point where it seems nonsensical to be without guidance and she has given up trying to make sense of it, because the experience is the crucial aspect. She says “when I am connected I feel peaceful, grounded, clear, safe, blessed, lucky and joyous.” The experiencing of it is “Good,” and trying to make sense of it can only interfere with that experiencing of it. In the end, she feels that words can not explain it, can not express to another the essence of the experience.
Individual Narrative: Janine

Janine was born in 1950 in Hamilton, Ontario. Her family was French-Canadian, both her father and grandfather were born in Quebec and they moved to Ontario around the turn of the century. Her natural family was a characteristic French-Canadian household, it was very lively. "There was an enormous amount of passion and not necessarily of the positive sort." She was in the middle of six children, three boys and three girls. In 1956 they ranged in age from infant to eight years old when they were given up for adoption because the parents were divorcing. Although Janine was not aware of the circumstances at that time. She recalls being in her Grade One classroom and "these very large people in suits came in and took me away and I never saw my family again." Suddenly at the tender of age of six, she had "lost family, friends, [her] entire world was gone." She did not see her sisters again for thirty-five years. She was in an orphanage for a while with her brothers until she was "farmed out" to a family in nearby Caledonia, Ontario.

Her foster family lived on a farm and were an older couple of Polish-Ukrainian descent and had a nine-year old daughter. The change was a dramatic one, from a "very hyperactive family setting of six children and two parents to a rural setting with elderly people and their nine year old daughter." Her new home was "a more quiet household, very overly structured and somewhat suppressive." However the trauma of losing her family and her world allowed her to "learn how to live alone without being lonely," and gave her the opportunity to use her imagination more. She spent a lot of time alone on the farm with her "face literally shoved into the planet earth to feel her rhythm and to know the animals and the currents of life." Of herself as a child she says, "I sang in the choir, went to church all the time, loved God and was dedicated to school."

Janine is grateful for having been in a safe atmosphere with good nutritional food. She was closest with her foster father, "Uncle Joseph," with whom she spent time when working and doing chores. Her foster mother, "Aunt Mary," was more difficult to get along with and
was, as Janine puts it “excessively controlling, if she could have regulated my breathing apparatus I think she would have.” In her foster family “love was conditional, you could be one thing one minute and then you were told you were another thing the next minute, it depended on Aunt Mary.” Janine found her values would clash with those of her foster mother, for example if Janine saw a man begging on the street, her impulse was to help him, while her Aunt Mary would attempt to stop her from going near such a person.

Janine recalls her foster sister, Donna, as being manipulative and spoiled by her parents. For nine years Donna was their only child and when Janine came along she was still their only natural child. She remembers Donna being cruel to her physically and verbally. She would say things like, “you broke up one family, now you are here to destroy ours.” There was the general attitude in the family that Janine was the outsider and therefore she must be wrong. This led to self-doubt and a lot of guilt feelings for Janine. As she says, “you start believing things about yourself because adults do things to you that you don’t understand, you start thinking, children always take the blame for things.”

Janine was not allowed friends, she only saw other children at school and at church. She was a well-behaved and responsible child, who liked being alone and who was involved in doing the chores on the farm after school and during the summer. Her best friend was the farm dog Rexie, who “would literally kill anyone who tried to harm [her]” When wild animals or birds would show up in the farm yard injured or dying she would care for them and “had a way of knowing intuitively what would promote healing and continued health in them.” A quote from a piece of art work she did as an adult that “pretty well sums [her] up when [she] was a little kid: How dare you persist in being yourself. You will be who I tell you to be. Sure try again. What a strange world we live in, when one is punished for being oneself.”

Janine describes her childhood as having been very spiritual and that she possessed precognitive abilities which would horrify her foster parents. This coupled with her open, creative mind made her seem very odd to her foster family, they thought she was “strange,
weird,” and told her she was “crazy.” During the first four years of her schooling she was aware that there were unseen helpers around her and she would leave part of her seat for her guardian spirit, until she was embarrassed by the other children who commented on it and she stopped. Relying on God and her guardian angel as a child was really important to her because she was constantly reminded she was an outsider and unwanted.

In grade ten Janine’s Uncle Joseph suffered a serious illness. While in school she heard in her mind a voice explain to her that her Aunt Shirley, foster father’s sister, was coming to get her. Although her Uncle Joseph was not really dead, that is what they were going to tell her. By the time this message came to the classroom she was already at the door, with her books ready to go. She left with her Aunt Shirley and Donna who were already grieving because they believed that Uncle Joseph had died. Janine told them that he was not dead and they would not believe her and were upset to hear her say this. At the hospital they approached Uncle Joseph like it was his lifeless body. When he suddenly opened his eyes and reached out, they were in hysterics. The hospital staff intervened by escorting all of them out of the room and giving the aunt and foster sister tranquilizers.

Later that night Janine was awakened by a voice that told her to go wake up Aunt Mary and tell her that “her husband had passed over to us and she will receive a phone call in two minutes.” Janine obeyed this voice without considering the matter. She assumed it was to lessen the shock of hearing the news. Less than two minutes had passed after she had woken Aunt Mary and given her the message when the phone call came. This was apparently the last straw for Aunt Mary, she was terrified by this child who could foretell the future and regarded Janine “probably as possessed by the devil.” It had an impact on Janine as well, after blindly following the voice within her and having it create so much trouble, Janine concluded “why should I even bother trying, why should I listen to this [inner voice].” It felt like she was always going to be doing the wrong thing, so she might be better off turning her back on these messages. A short while later she ran away from the foster home and lived on the street in Hamilton for three
months. Several years later Janine spent a year studying to be a practical nurse. Although she really had wanted to be a veterinarian, she says that “I was told that I was too stupid” and “that I was artistic and I could never do the mathematics.”

Through her childhood Janine regarded her experiences of an inner voice as natural and as being “God-given.” She never doubted that they were from a higher power. It was not something she discussed with others. At the time she was studying to be a student nurse “anyone who heard voices . . . was usually shocked . . . and would have lots of pills put in them and were told they were delusional.” At the age of fifteen when her Uncle Joseph died and her Aunt Mary “condemned [her] to being possessed by the devil,” she turned her back on her intuitive abilities and her spiritual values. Many times over the next sixteen years she would choose not to listen to the messages or warnings. She had become fed up with “being different” and for “being condemned for my differences from the people that I lived with.” She would now prove to them that she was exactly what they had been telling her she was - “crazy.”

This time, until 1981, was a period of experimentation, of being lost, constantly testing her intuition and getting into trouble by choosing to ignore it. For example, she almost drowned three times and was in several car accidents where others had died but she was unscathed. She would get impressions when she met people, “if there is danger from a person . . . [she] would get a sawing feeling right through [her] solar plexus.” She became involved with a man and when she got this feeling, chose to ignore it. She says, “he beat me severely, he almost took my life. He put a loaded shotgun up against my back and I didn’t know if I was going to live or die.” This same man later killed two people and went to prison. It was a period of testing and of wanting to do it on her own without any help from anyone or anything - spiritual or otherwise. Through these “dark years” she was lost, confused and experienced a sense of low self-worth. She was in a state of total rebellion, yet she feels she learned a lot during this time and does not regret it.
Janine’s attitude at the time was that life “was pretty hard and its going to be pretty rough,” so she will “just have to get through it.” Janine believes that her belief about her life being rough, helped create a life that was exactly that. As she said, “I expected life to be hard now and so, I believe now, that I went out of my way to make sure that it was hard, I was fulfilling expectations.”

In her early twenties she moved out to Canada’s west coast and went to work as a practical nurse at a large hospital. At that time the area she was living in “was like a circus,” as there was an abundance of drugs and alcohol among the young people. She did not want to get involved and found it very difficult to live in the big city and soon moved out to Creston in the interior of B.C. Yet the drug and alcohol problems were worse in the small towns of the interior. She lived there for six years and four of these she lived in the bush where it was quiet, in an attempt to “get away from it all.” In the bush she lived with no electricity, no plumbing and no central heating, so there was “a lot of time devoted to the collecting of wood, chores and [she] had goats, pigs.” During this time she felt connected with nature and worked very hard as she had become accustomed to during her childhood. In the late seventies Janine moved to Vancouver Island and lived there for six years.

In 1981 she was thirty-one years old and found herself incredibly unhappy with her life which was not working out the way she was living it. She felt depressed a great deal of the time. Her common-law husband had become an alcoholic, involved with drugs and could be very abusive to her. She was “afraid of the outside world” and “felt trapped with this man and with the life that I had.” She considered suicide and thought it was her only option. She was even planning how to do it “with the least amount of blood and least amount of pain.”

Then one day while doing housework she walked by a mirror and had the experience she describes thus:

Peripherally I saw someone I didn't recognize and I thought, what's going on here? I looked in the mirror and it was myself I didn’t recognize ... it was like a light coming into my head, I realized that I had become whatever other people wanted me to be.
That I didn't have an identity... I didn't really have a sense of self. But beyond what I could see in the mirror, I understood that that person, that spiritual child who was so in tune, was still inside of me and that I could bring her out again. And I yelled at myself, that whoever this was that I was looking at was gone, that was the end, good-bye! You're gone, you're dead because I was going back to what I used to be and I labeled it my self-improvement program and I radically changed.

It seemed to her that she had a purpose to fulfill because there was no other reason to have survived. At this point she left her common-law husband of eight and a half years, took her rocking chair, sewing machine and books and moved to the other side of the island. Then she entered college and did the first two years of a fine arts degree.

Janine considers this to have been a spiritual experience. It didn't come on slowly, it was all of a sudden and she "realized that something really huge was missing from [her] life.” Her self-improvement program involved beginning yoga, changing her eating habits to becoming a vegetarian, and quitting drinking. This marked the beginning of self acceptance as she began to acknowledge that she was “a sensitive,” that she was “very intuitive and empathic.” She began reconnecting with her “inner guidance system” and “the creator.” She began to meditate and involve herself in understanding “universal truth not the dogmatic forms that are offered to us from our major religions,” and found that life began to go smoother.

It had not been the case that her intuitional impulses had stopped during the previous years, but simply that she had refused to listen. At this point in 1981, it occurred to her that she had tested her intuition long enough and it seemed that ignoring it was not working. It was a matter of realizing that without her guidance system she was not able to function properly. It became a conscious decision on her part to again listen to her intuitional impulses. Prior to 1981 had been a time of testing because she needed to prove things to herself by actually experiencing them.

At one point in 1985 while attending art school at a community college she chose to test her intuition again. She had met a man who gave her the impression that he might be dangerous. She says, “I got danger signals like you wouldn’t believe, all my sirens went off, all my alarms.” She describes the danger signal as “a sawing feeling right through my solar plexus”
and states that she has always had this feeling if she sensed danger in another's personality. For three months she kept her distance from this man, until she allowed "his charm to supersede [her] intuitive warnings," and decided to become involved with him. Soon after moving in together, he began to beat her and tell her she did not have a will of her own. It got progressively worse and finally after four weeks as she felt "that which makes me myself sliding away," she heard a voice in her head say, "pick yourself up, do it now, pick yourself up, stand up." She was able to find the courage and presence of mind to order him out of her home, she lost the fear that he had begun to instill in her. She is certain that the voice she heard was one of her guides and had it not been for that voice she wouldn't be where she is today, "I don't think I'd have my intellect as it is now or my identity." That was the last time she would test the warnings she received, it had been a shocking and frightening experience.

In 1983 she moved to the Lower Fraser Valley area to complete her fine arts degree, but soon learned that her two years of college on the island were not transferable to a larger University and was unable to complete the degree. This was a major setback for her. It left her in a place of needing to find some outlet for herself, a vocation, a focus for her energies. She became involved in amateur body building. Her life revolved around this for a time until she became ill and was hospitalized for two weeks. Afterwards she was not able to return to the body building lifestyle and took this as a message that focusing her energies on the physical body was not for her. While in the hospital she was near death and it was uncertain whether or not she would survive. She was not afraid of dying, "50% of me was unconscious and the other 50% knows that we only go into transition . . . leave a physical form and enter a spiritual form." After the ordeal in the hospital it took a year and a half for her to fully recover. During this time she took courses in typing and business office training, while doing some art work. She describes this as a time of "going back inside, connecting with the inner self and eventually the inner voice with the knowing that it was time to dedicate myself to my spiritual self." She was
still in a stage of experimentation, but was now actively “reconnecting with what [she] knew as a child and incorporating that as an adult.”

Janine felt a strong pull to return to her original and “innate” values, what she called “an endearing love for what I considered God.” She had essentially turned her back on her spiritual-self for many years, she had tried to do everything on her own and now found that it couldn’t be done on her own. So she “went back to God, back to a higher power, to allowing the information that [she] required to get along a little smoother and to pay attention to it.” In terms of her personal decisions and direction she returned to relying on her inner direction rather than on outside influences.

She acquired an eclectic understanding of spiritual matters from her extensive reading on topics like yoga, meditation and the eastern religions. She was practicing yoga which helped her to quiet her mind and stay balanced. In 1985 she began writing journals which included dreams, thoughts and situations from her life. These journals have amounted to approximately five thousand pages over the years. It was a compulsion, she felt driven to write and record what was going on but was often questioning herself, “Why? Why am I doing this?” She understands it was preparation for what she does now, the recording of free-flow thoughts when she is in touch with her guides. In 1988 she met her future husband, David, and in this new relationship there was a certain amount of security, financial and emotional. The relationship allowed her the freedom to follow her own path, for example to be able to meditate for two or three hours a day.

Janine was in contact with her natural brothers after moving out to the west coast in 1971. When her father passed away in 1975, she was unable to go back for the funeral. Subsequently she lost contact with her brothers as she moved around a fair bit. They all had lost contact with their sisters almost immediately in 1956 when they were adopted separately. In 1991 she began to feel the need to find out if she still had a family, despite having become accustomed to being alone with no support from a family. She realized that since her phone was
listed under her husband’s name if anyone was looking for her they would not be able to find
her. So she had their number listed under her name as well. Then she bought a ticket back to
Ontario and planned to stay with her foster family while looking for her natural family. One
month after putting her name in the phone book, she got a call from her sister whom she had
not seen for thirty-five years. Janine learned that a family reunion was planned for the very day
that she had already booked her ticket to go out looking for them.

This Janine describes as an example of the intuitive impulses she received before being
connected with her guides. This was one year before she had direct contact with her guides. As
she puts it, “if something comes with that type of strength inside of me, I have to do it. It’s got
to be done, it’s not for no reason.” She knew that she had to put her name in the phone book;
she knew she had to go out to Ontario to find her family. She knew people were looking for
her, but she wasn’t sure who. The reunion was incredibly emotional for all of them.

In July 1992 Janine was introduced through guided imagery to an inner guide, which
allowed her to give the intuitive impulses a name. Although she had been “trying to meditate”
for years, she “felt like a failure because [she] wasn’t meditating properly.” She wanted to learn
how to meditate properly and “wanted to learn metaphysics but with a spiritual base,” so she
set aside some money to do this and after four months of looking around for the right teacher,
she found Alice. Through the guided imagery which Alice taught, Janine learned “how to go
into trance state so [she] could meditate.”

Although Janine thought she did not know how to meditate, she now understands that
in fact she had been meditating but because what she had been doing did not correspond
exactly to what she was reading about meditation, she thought she was doing it wrong. Janine
now recognizes that “to be able to sit still and relax and to be able to just slow down, is really
quite helpful.” It was through her meditation that she was able to “raise [her] frequencies”
which allowed her to make a connection with her guides. As she describes it, “the higher your
vibrations are raised, then the higher the entities one is able to communicate with.”
In learning to work with her inner guide Janine began by asking the guide questions and then simply writing the answer, allowing it to come from that intuitive place inside herself. When Janine did this for the first time, she was overwhelmed. She did not know what was happening, she “heard this voice in [her] head and just kept writing and writing and writing.” This went on for two weeks and it frightened Janine, “to suddenly be able to access information and have a voice speaking in your head answering a question and to flow through writing like you are just writing a letter, it was scary.” After the first two weeks she was ready to quit, to “shut it down” because she was not comfortable and could not make any sense of what was happening. She was terrified because the experience was unprecedented and totally unfamiliar to her. As she put it, “the logical mind can not comprehend something like this, there is no empirical evidence. There is nothing I can give to my logical side and my intellect that this is actually occurring.”

It was the support and encouragement of Alice that helped Janine get through this initial disturbing experience. Her new-found guide Johen would also encourage her with messages like: “We would never do anything to hurt you. We are not here to harm you, we are here to help only. Never will you have a command come from us that would create harm for you or anyone else, and indeed you need not obey anything.” Janine has come to understand that there is no imperative that she follow any of the guidance given to her, that it is always for her to consider and for her to make the decision to follow the guidance or not. She understands that it is not meant “to overwhelm the analytical mind and my will, its just to offer guidance . . . gentle guidance.” Soon she was able to accept what was happening and she “developed a deep and enduring bond over the next couple of years with Johen.” Janine had always wanted to be of service to other people and this was something she could share. Yet, it was (and is) incomprehensible to her logical mind. She has learned that in order to maximize the potential for accepting the information she must be able to “push [her] intellect away and perceive things from [her] right brain and not impose [her] education, [her] biases, [her] personality on top.”
Shortly after becoming connected with Johen, Janine was told that she would need to move soon. Although she acknowledged this and discussed it with her husband, they made no concrete plans to move, after all he had been living there for ten years and she for five. Then one day their landlord told them that they would have to move because his son was getting married and would be moving into their place. When she asked Johen about this he suggested that she find a new place to live by visualizing it, “to use the tools that you have been given and to prove to yourselves that it works.” So for six weeks before they were to move, they only meditated and visualized what they wanted. They did not look in any papers or make any inquiries for a place. They did, however, pack up their belongings and prepare to move.

On the day before they were to move she consulted Johen, who gave the “go ahead,” and then checked a newspaper for possible places, she “intuitively underlined three places . . . called two,” then visited one and paid the rent. This process took two hours. However, Janine and her partner had to deal with their family and friends and “the negativity that surrounded [their] choice to obey invisible beings and voices that only [she] could hear.” For them it “was a true measure of [their] ability to focus and [their] faith, to be able to protect [them]selves from the negativity and to continue on in this way.” This experience gave them new confidence in themselves and “new confidence in [their] ability to sustain [them]selves in the face of incredible negativity . . . other people’s fears.” It taught her “that we do in fact influence and create our reality.” Janine also learned from this experience that one must be very careful exactly what one visualizes. She had “visualized a fireplace but [she] didn't visualize fire in it. [They] have a fireplace but [they] are not allowed to use it.” She had visualized a laundry room, but she “didn't see a washer and dryer in it, so [they] just got the room.”

Janine is aware that she has many guides but because she “didn't want to keep up with all the names and their special functions,” she requested that she speak to only one and they handle relaying the information from the others. She has been in direct communication with three different main guides in the past three years and considers each new guide a “higher
level.” Her first guide was a “male” entity named Johen whom she describes as “a portion of [her] higher self.” She worked with him for two and a half years until he suddenly disappeared with no warning which was quite shocking for her. After four days of no connection a new guide appeared which also had a male voice and called himself, “I Am. I am that I Am.” She simply called him “Iam” and he described himself as being “just a larger, yet again portion of the higher self.” He was present for several months and it was with this entity that Janine began to channel vocally. Then one day he disappeared, too. Again this was very shocking and disturbing to Janine. After four days she could hear a new voice, this time it was “female.” This voice called herself Ta’nara and described herself as “an ascended being,” Janine understood this as being,

no longer [her] higher self, the guidance system having moved up and out. Getting in contact with your higher self is the first level, then there is ascended beings and guides. And then it moves out until you eventually connect with beings who have never been physical and never will be because they are spiritual beings.

Her guidance has been consistent and with the same restrictions through the different guides, for example she is not allowed to inform others of impending death, if she feels that is possible. She is also not allowed to ask about just anybody, she must be asked by the individual for guidance first, otherwise it would be invasive. Janine has come to understand that there are certain “queries that a person has that are not for their highest good or best interests that they know the answer or have guidance in that particular thing because it will influence their direction.” So sometimes there is no answer. Regardless of the words she uses to explain the experience, she is definite about the source of her guidance being an inside one. Although she refers to ascended masters or guardian angels or spirit guides when discussing them, she feels strongly that it originates from a divine source, that it is a spiritual communication from an inner source. As opposed to talking to me or on the phone which is communication with an outside source.
While receiving guidance, whether typing or writing it out, she does not experience a "presence within" herself. In fact she had specifically requested that she not "be taken over by an entity." She does not want to do automatic writing and likes being in control of herself at all times so she has told the guides, "use me as a tool, do what you want but don't take me over!" The process consists of her asking a question and then listening to a voice dictate an answer in her head which she writes or types out. It is a matter of faith, Janine acknowledges that "it takes great faith to actually follow the guidance that is given by non-physical, invisible guides and actually incorporate it in your life and use it." Although her guidance is now a very big part of her life, it is never "without the feeling that it is right." As she puts it, "I retain total autonomy, it is only a guidance system, but when we go with it our lives flow. We have very little stress in our lives, no crises . . . just the little stresses, not the huge ones. We're happy people." She is certain that her beliefs influence what her life is and becomes, "if we are fearful of increasing crime, then guess what? We are most certainly going to get involved in increasing crime, probably as a victim."

Janine experiences "a caring, a definite caring" in her relationship with her guides. She finds they are familiar with her tendency to occasionally forget her physical needs and work too long or too late, so she will get a message from them reminding her to "rest her body." She says they feel like friends of hers and it is a really personal intimate relationship, which is "even closer than my husband really, because I don't have to have a physical connection with these entities." There are even times when she might be feeling down and they will send her a poem to cheer her up. Janine feels she can be completely at peace in a room with nothing to do "because I can just sit back and converse with my guides."

Janine finds a sense of security in being able to ask her guide for a comment or opinion on any issue and to have their reassurance regarding almost all matters. They give her the security and peace of mind that she is never alone. Through her connection with guidance and the understanding she has gained about the nature of our reality from them, she no longer fears
death, but views it as a “transition from this dimension to the next.” She has come to understand that “there is no judgment in spirit, only a sense of being unconditionally accepted . . . on the spiritual side there is nothing but love and acceptance.”

Janine has learned to be aware of things around her and more self-conscious in her relationships, she describes it like “being really clear on what my intention is, whatever I say, whatever action I take, how its going to impact you, the consequences on down the line.” Another example, as she describes it, is “if I become angry right now, its more likely that it has nothing to do with you. Its something to do with me and I’m just letting it out at that time and it really has nothing to do with you.” In this way she has learned to be more understanding of other people and not take things so personally. If someone is angry at her, rather than to just reflect that negative emotion back, to understand that it is mirroring something inside herself. She will therefore pay attention to what thoughts pass through her mind, if a negative thought comes in, she will immediately balance it with a positive one.

Her guides have helped other people as well like her husband and friends. For example a friend of Janine’s who had her car stolen, brought back and then stolen again was quite upset about it and could not understand why someone wanted to steal an old dented-up car. This friend asked Janine for help and she got a message that the car symbolized her past and she wasn’t letting go of it. Once she had this message and was able to let it go, a new car was given to her unexpectedly. Janine has found that sometimes when one is dealing with a personal issue, one needs someone more objective to ask the question and receive the guidance, this is another way guides can be “nurturing and caring.” Many of her friends will ask her to consult her guide, anytime, anywhere about anything. It is such a part of her life, that at a moments notice she will close her eyes and ask her guidance anything that she or her husband or a friend might be wondering about. Sometimes she will find herself compelled to write without having asked a question. Often this is a case of a message coming to her for someone she knows or someone who is close to her. In these situations the purpose is to provide safety and security
for people. These would be people who have asked for help previously from her guidance, "when it was unsolicited, its always been a warning to help somebody."

One year after initiating contact with her guides, they recommended that she and David, the man she was living with for the past five years, get married. She understood that because of the spiritual work she was doing she needed to honour and respect the laws and beliefs of the society in which she lived. She considered this carefully and discussed it with David and they decided to get married about a year and a half later. Getting married was, in fact, a spiritual experience for them, it deepened their friendship, their bond and their commitment with each other. During the ceremony they had a similar, shared experience of being lifted up and away from the heat, the noise and the nervousness of the setting, suddenly it all disappeared and they felt elevated above it all. For them this meant they were married in the "spiritual dimension" as well as the physical.

Being in contact with her guides and guardian angel means a lot to Janine, speaking with them makes her aware of spiritual laws and values. It confirms for her that she "really is on a journey." As she says, "the energy we share is all one and more often I am able to look past the way a person looks or how they act, to just focus on the fact that that person is me." And, "I try to remember that the animating energy, that which makes us one, is what we actually call God."

Janine's life has taken on more meaning, with a stronger sense of purpose, since she began working with her inner guidance. She has an understanding now that she is in school here and these are her teachers. Having her guidance allows her "to provide a service for other people because we are all on the same journey no matter what path we take." She finds that the guides are able to provide "emotional support" simply by reassuring others that they are "all right just the way they are," and by telling them of their potential. She feels blessed that she can be used to provide guidance to others who are not in direct contact with their guides yet.
Janine states that it is her goal with anyone she meets who is interested, to have them come into contact with their guidance system as well, so they will not need someone like herself. She asked to be of service to others in a spiritual way, she prayed for it, now she can do just that. She makes herself available to teach people how to connect with their guidance because she feels that she is not special in this ability. She doesn’t charge money for it, unless she is sure that the person is able and willing to pay. She feels it is better for others to depend on themselves than an outside force like herself. She does not do therapy or hypnotherapy with an individual to deal with specific problems because she says she is not qualified to do therapy. However, she is sometimes able to determine through guidance if the problem is rooted in a past-life experience or not and help an individual gain an understanding of the foundation of their problem. As she says, “I feel that I came here to live right smack in the real world and to learn how to incorporate the spiritual world and while I am growing, to help others to learn how to do the exact same thing . . . that’s why we’re here in the end is to help each other.”

Janine also does “communications” for clients. She will usually only use their first name and have them ask three questions. Yet, sometimes it is a case where “they don’t know what they want to know but they want to know it.” So that if they can not come up with three questions she will do an “open message” which allows her “guidance system to give information that is required for that particular person in any area.” However, she finds that “the guidance never says this is what you have to do,” but most often what occurs is “you are revealed to yourself.” For example, the guides will tell people “things about themselves they already knew but didn’t want to know and pushed it to the side and it is this denial which causes their problem.”

Before her connection with Johen in 1992, she did not experience her inner guidance system in terms of a voice or address it by name. It was “just intuitive impulses.” However, she was able to ask specific questions quietly to herself and get “an impression that was definitely yes or an impression that was definitely no.” Now when she has a question to ask she simply
centers herself, by closing her eyes and connecting with her guide (i.e., “Ta’nara are you with me?”), ask the question and then just listen to the answer. It is never a problem for her to know if the answer is yes or no, or if it is not one to receive guidance on. Sometimes there is no answer which indicates the decision is to be made without guidance, that is it is solely her decision because “we are not to become overly dependent upon the guidance system.” Now when she is writing out an answer, she may even stop and do something else for a short or even a long period like a day or a week and then just pick up where she left off.

Janine has a process of “clearing” herself that she likes to do before an important reading. This is to get her “personality out of the way,” so she may be a “clear channel” and “only the highest good may come through.” This centering and clearing process is also to insure that she connects with the “higher guidance” as opposed to a “passing earth-bound spirit.” When she finds interference in the process of contacting or receiving the information from guidance, it is usually attributable to her emotional state. In this situation she finds it necessary to do the centering.

The process of centering herself was necessary in the early stages of her connection with guidance, lately it is accomplished with greater ease and simplicity. However, in times when she is feeling emotionally unbalanced or upset it becomes important to go through the centering process again. This process involves becoming quiet and still by closing the eyes and breathing deeply to relax oneself. In this way one “stills the mind, stops the speeding intellect, the thoughts and words going by.” It may also involve visualizing “divine white light” entering “through my crown chakra, which is on the top of the head,” pulling it through herself “so that it fills me up from the cellular level and then emits out my root chakra . . . and forms a grounding cord that goes through me and straight into the earth.” This process is especially helpful if she is experiencing “anxiety or anger or fear or anything negative” because she will “push it down my grounding cord to be neutralized by the earth,” which gives her a strong
sense of "grounding." Typically she may do this process once a day or more than once if she is having a stressful day.

She also uses prayer, "for me prayer usually means giving thanks. I give thanks for being in the desired state already. In other words I give thanks for the relaxation and the comfort that I am already experiencing, rather than a state that is still in the future." The process of "grounding" or "centering" through relaxation, visualization or prayer has evolved over the past fifteen years and continues to change as Janine learns and incorporates new ideas and techniques. From Janine's present perspective prayer is something that she does "all day long, I walk down the street and give thanks for the trees, give thanks for the birds, give thanks for the people. Its a constant thing . . . when preparing food, give thanks for the food."

However, she is quick to point out that she is not "Holy, I have temper tantrums, too!" She uses a prayer to clear or center herself which is:

Oh Birther, Goddess-God, Mother/Father of the cosmos, I ask that I be made a clear channel so that only that which is of the highest good may come through me. I give thanks for my personality to be pushed aside so that it will not affect the information and guidance coming through. I give thanks for the protection from my spirit guides, spirit beings and always a special thanks to my guardian angel Helgameth for the protection, the circle of divine white light which encompasses me each time I channel.

Although she believes in a higher power, she has "never been a true Christian because that never made sense to me," yet she feels an affinity to much of what Jesus said "because His words make sense to [her]." She describes her relationship with religion this way, "although I honour all major religions, I stay far away from dogmatic beliefs."

Janine has thus far "not allowed" her guidance to influence her art work. She feels that perhaps she has been forcing her art to remain an intellectual focus, rather than a spiritual expression. At the time of the interviews she was not very involved in her art because she felt there was a "battle going on inside" her concerning whether or not to allow her guides to influence her art. She has a strong sense that someday she will be able to allow the spiritual expression to come through in her art. As she puts it, "yes, they are going to affect my work
greatly, when I allow them to do it.” When she does allow it, she feels “it will be what [she is] really meant to paint” and “in my later years that’s where [she] will really flower.” She has asked for and received a few pieces of art from her guides. She also did some art work before being in direct contact with her guides, while doing inner child therapy. Many of these works contain ghost-like beings hovering in the background. At the time she created them, she did not know who these were but now identifies them as her guides. It seems that if she wants to do spiritual art work, she must use her left hand, “if I just clear my mind and draw left-handed they come through.” When she uses her right hand she feels “constrained by technicalities” and she hears her art teachers’ voices “telling [her] to do it this way and not that way.” Yet when she uses her left hand, “there are no teachers’ voices, its total freedom.”

Recently, in April of 1995, Janine discovered that instead of needing to write what she heard the voice in her head say that she could verbalize it as it spoke to her. She discovered this while suffering from chronic tendenitis and was unable to write or type. A neighbour wanted some guidance from her and insisted she try even if she could not write it as she normally did. In this way she discovered that she could relate it verbally. While doing this she experiences a sense of “expanding from the inside,” like she is bigger, larger. Also she has the sensation of feeling “lighter, not as dense” and like “a regal presence” within herself. She finds this difficult to explain, it is not easy to put into words. She says that her posture becomes or must be straight not slouching over or lying down. However, there are no other noticeable changes in the sound or rhythm of her voice and no physical changes which she says she would not be comfortable with anyhow. Sometimes in this process she will sense “large energy beings” around her which she identifies as being the guides.

During the time of our interviews Janine began taking level one Reiki and was experiencing some changes in herself. However, she was not yet sure about them or where they were going. She understands that “in Reiki the energy comes from an outside force, it is the
divine energy.” She can feel and see, “in [her] mind,” her spirit guides when performing Reiki or when her husband is performing Reiki on her.

Janine is convinced that the inner guidance system she works with is within everyone, that it is innate and a part of being human. She believes that she did not come here to learn how to be spirit but to learn how to be human. She states that “the traumas of my childhood and my dark years were actually preparation for what I do now.” She has developed a sense of pride about the way her life has turned out, “its like patting the inner child’s head and knowing it all worked out, there was a reason for everything.” She describes the process of her ongoing development this way, “as you get into higher realms of spiritual knowledge you must raise your vibrations through prayer and meditation.” Her goal is, through prayer and meditation, to raise her vibrations or frequencies to the level where she can bypass the personality that all her incoming guidance is now sifted through. In this way she hopes to be a channel for “direct pure guidance.”

Janine expressed a concern during the interview process that she may not be giving enough detail about what it feels like and what it means to her to contact guidance partly “because its so difficult to describe.” When asked about the role of the guides during the interview, she said she employed the help of her guidance in answering the questions and telling her story during the interview. Occasionally during the process she would silently ask for help in focusing on what was being asked and helping her to recall incidents that related to the topic. Or ask for confirmation that she was indeed giving the information that was required.
Individual Narrative: Felicity

Felicity was born October, 1929 in a small village in Lancashire, England. When she was five her family moved to Liverpool. She had one brother eight years older than her and “a loving family, no problem with the family at all.” She went to an early school and learned to read when she was four. She attended elementary school at a nearby convent, although her family was not Catholic.

During her early years she had a “really hard time learning to be in the world.” One of her earliest memories about age two, is of being puzzled about the difference between herself and her older brother and trying to urinate like he did, but finding that it did not work. She recalls thinking, “this is how it is, so I better get on with it. I think it was a choice about whether I was going to stay or not [live].” Childhood was a time of “really trying to understand how one is supposed to respond in the world,” particularly her early years before age nine.

At the age of seven she decided to have a wishing stone. She found an attractive pebble and agreed to have three wishes with it. She wished for and received, first a surprise (a nice blue knife) and second a little bit of pocket money. Her third wish was simply that she could get whatever she wished for, thereafter. This was for her the first of several inner teachings. The lesson here was that whatever she wanted she could “just make it happen,” by her own will. From this point onwards Felicity felt secure in the knowledge that “it” would always be all right, that she was safe and things were going to turn out OK for her. This lasted through the years of the war and gave her a sense of security, that although things were difficult she “always knew that it, what ever ‘it’ was, would be all right.”

When she was nine years old the second world war began, it ended when she was fifteen. During the war life was simple, there was not a great deal of material things, like food or toys, to have or need and life was a matter of doing what needed to be done in order to survive, for example if the air raid sirens went off, they went to the air raid shelters. It was a time to learn self-discipline, both in her daily life at home and at the convent where she was a
student. From the nuns at school she learned “a lot of good manners” and was busy getting an
education. She found the more she studied the easier it was to avoid the abuse of the nuns, who
were not particularly fond of their students. When Felicity was twelve she had another lesson,
or “inner teaching.” This time it was that she could do many things and there was no need to
feel upset because she had to do something. These inner teachings meant that she was
connected to something greater beyond herself. They seemed to come naturally to her as a
child, but slowly faded as she grew older and learned “how to be in the world.”

As a child she knew and took for granted that there was something greater than herself
that she talked to. Although she never believed “in that ‘God in the sky,’ an old man-type-
God,” she “knew about spirit, [she] knew about light.” She recalls visits to her maternal
grandparent’s home where she would see “golden light [coming] up from the ground, it was in
the air and no one seemed to see that.” When her grandmother told her to go out in the garden
and watch the fairies she would do just that, see would see them as “glimmers of light, not little
people.” Her experience was “not like a separate, like connection was something separate, its
being part of something and you know it.” At the time she “was all part of it and [she] was
astonished that other people didn’t so the same thing.”

When Felicity was eleven she recalls trying to explain to her class what the soul is like.
Her idea of the soul at that time was that it was similar to the wind, invisible and free moving,
However, this was not what the nuns were teaching, nor the answer they expected. Her idea
was met by the laughter of her classmates and the scorn of the nuns who thought she was trying
to be funny. Yet, Felicity did not feel bothered by their differing opinions because she “knew it
was the truth” and she felt secure in that knowledge. This sense of knowing she characterized
as a simple accepting of a deeply felt truth, it is loud and clear. It was not the product of an
intellectual exercise, not a matter of thinking “perhaps it may be this way or that,” but a deeply
rooted knowing that was beyond all doubt, that had been born whole without question.
At age twelve Felicity wondered what she might do for a living when she grew up, so she formed the question and "really tuned into what is in the future and what it said was, teacher." This surprised her because she was in the convent at the time and was not interested in spending more time in schools when she was finished. However, she realized there were many kinds of teachers and when she tried to figure what sort of teacher, "it gave [her] the impression of religion." This, too, was somewhat surprising because she found the Sunday School she attended on weekends at the Presbyterian church her father went to was hollow and cold. She couldn't understand why anyone would subject themselves to it. In contrast to this was her experience of the ritual of Catholic mass at the convent where the energy would sometimes be so intense she would faint. The nuns arranged for her to occasionally sit out the morning mass that was part of their daily routine and when she did attend she was to sit instead of kneel through the particular parts where she might faint. In fact the Catholic mass had such an impression on her that at seventeen she went to talk with a priest about becoming Catholic, but found that he would not allow her to ask the questions she felt she needed to, so decided that was not for her either.

When she was fifteen her parents moved to London so she stayed at the convent as a boarder as opposed to finding a new school because she only had one year left of school. Her grandfather died while she was studying and boarding at the convent and she wrote to her mother quoting Shakespeare, "about the world being a stage, we are only players on it." This summed up for her young mind what life and death was about, "this is how human existence is, the stage isn't all there is and what goes on the stage, there is more behind that and there is a reality behind it."

After having done very well in school she was accepted into more than one University, but as the war ended, she and others her age were expected to wait a few years while those returning from the war could enter or reenter University and complete their education. She was determined not to wait so she enrolled in a polytechnic and completed two years toward a
B.Sc. At seventeen, when Felicity was in the polytechnic after the war, she felt she was still learning how to be in the world, for example how to put on lipstick. Yet there was a subtle voice inside guiding her. As she puts it, “every step of the way though, something told me: one, stay at the convent; two, go to the polytechnic, don't try another school.”

Upon completing two years at the polytechnic Felicity was offered and accepted a position with the research center of a large oil company, rather than wait to get into a University and complete her education. Even though she was not totally qualified she had a lab and was doing research finding applications for the chemical byproducts from the petroleum manufacturing process. Within a few years she was married and had bought a house with her husband Samuel, this marked the beginning of her adult life. After a few years she began questioning the work she was doing. She feels that this was guidance because she questioned things that no one had ever questioned before. For example, through her research she could determine that spraying a particular chemical on water would eliminate mosquitoes because it would cut off the oxygen going into the water. Yet she wondered, “[W]hat does it do to the rest of life because there is no air going in the water?” She was “becoming disenchanted” with her work and felt “it was a guidance because [she] was questioning things no one else had ever questioned before.”

After several years with the oil company her dissatisfaction was growing with her work and likewise her husband’s dissatisfaction with his work. However, the post war conditions made it very difficult to change jobs in England so they considered going abroad. There was an opportunity in Africa for her husband, Samuel, and in anticipation of getting the job, they sold their house. Only to find that he did not get the job! So being all set to go, but suddenly with nowhere to go, they each took a day off work and went to the Canadian Consulate and investigated the possibility of emigrating to Canada. In that same day they found themselves agreeing to go, and being accepted by the Canadian authorities. They went home, booked passage on a liner and told their families they would soon be off to Canada. Although she was
not conscious of it at the time, she attributes those decisions and circumstances to guidance. In 1954 they immigrated into Canada and moved to the prairies.

They found it very difficult to settle in Canada, being so far from home and their families. The great distances that surrounded them in and out of the city were difficult to adjust to. Felicity found a wonderful job working in a medical lab and she soon found that she preferred, in fact loved, working with people. Her husband also found work, but was soon struggling with being ill more than he was accustomed to. Felicity was also frequently ill and while attempting to start a family, she had an ectopic. Once she did get pregnant they decided to move back to England.

Things did not get a whole lot better once their first child was born. Felicity suffered for months afterward from post-partum depression and there was little help from the doctors at that time. Although she considered suicide at the time, "there was something inside that wouldn't let [her] do it." Once they were back in England they discovered they had grown away from their old friends. They found little to be happy about back in the place they had left once because they were not happy with it. They were feeling quite lost, dissatisfied with England, not happy with Canada's prairies and not sure where else they might resettle. In 1957, after eighteen months in England, they decided to see what Canada's west coast was like.

They soon found that the lower mainland of British Columbia was not any easier than the prairies had been and now they had the added responsibility of a child to care for. They encountered difficulties in finding a place to live, than having to pay high rent, finding work, having enough money to pay bills, dealing with the illnesses of their son and themselves, including a miscarriage. Having just arrived they did not have medical coverage to hospitalize their infant son when he was ill. In the middle of all these difficulties Felicity's father passed away suddenly and she was unable to return to be with her family.

After a few years they were able to buy a modest home with some financial help from her mother, although things were still tight for the young family. In 1960 Felicity's mother came
to visit and decided to immigrate herself. She lived with them for a short time and then found her own apartment. They now had two children and Felicity found part time work to help pay the bills. By 1962 they were expecting their third child and bought a larger house in the same school district. The children continued to be “sick in shifts,” then Felicity learned her mother had Parkinson’s disease. Her mother came to live with them until she needed to be hospitalized.

At this time Felicity again “had some guidance there, when things were important it always said, now”. So when it came time to find a hospital for her mother, she knew it was the right thing to do and the right time. The mid-1950’s to 1960’s, were difficult and particularly trying years for Felicity and her family, dealing with settling in a new community, raising a family amid illness and financial hardship, her father’s death, then her mother’s illness and death. It was at the time of her mother’s death in 1964 when Felicity began “to remake the connections” with guidance. They had begun to take the children to a Presbyterian Church and while her mother was ill Felicity had read an old book, The Golden Bough from her mother’s theosophical days. It was this reconnection that “carried [her] through [her] mother’s death.”

When her mother finally died Felicity visited her in the hospital a few hours later and heard her voice say, “Its done.” With this was the feeling that her mother had done her best and was now ready for whatever was next. Felicity had a similar experience when her father passed away. At that time she experienced his presence, she had a sense that he had come to visit her to address his concerns for her. He had never been to Canada and this was a way for him to say a final good-bye and to check on how she was doing in this far-off land. Felicity was able to let him know that it was hard but that it would be all right.

In the late 1960’s and early 1970’s when she was around forty, Felicity took part in some self-development workshops, in one of these she learned a breathing technique. This technique involved breathing accompanied by visualizing light entering various parts of the body and then breathing it out. The idea was to breath in bright clear light to each body part or organ and observe the colour that it was as you breathed it out. If the colour was dark or
cloudy than one would breath a few more times to that body part because there would be some
blockage there. Initially it took her about an hour to do this exercise and she was doing it twice
a day because, in her words, “this was in me, was telling me to do this. I had no idea why, but I
liked it.” After about three years she could do it very quickly. Then she began “to see unbidden
lights within [herself], raising up” and “started making really conscious contacts of wisdom.”
Initially these startled her and she did not know what to make of them. When she asked
someone, another student, they told her that these experiences were normal

Meanwhile Felicity and her family left the Presbyterian Church and joined the Unity
Church and she had become a very active board member in this church. Unity Church was a
“first step into spirit, working from spirit, not body.” The minister had left and this meant more
work for her to do running the affairs of the church. Now, besides working twenty hours a
week for the church, she was working her own job and had the family to care for as well.
Things were very busy, but everything was going smoothly as she was now getting help from
her guidance. About four years down the line, she stepped away from the church because it was
difficult to maintain her role simply as a leader in administration and she felt that Unity Church
should have a proper Unity minister to lead them.

In her employment she became involved in a legal battle while attempting to organize a
union. In this she found her growing inner voice to be very helpful as well. Eventually the
situation was such that she had to leave her work while she continued the legal battle for the
fledgling union. It became obvious that although she was no longer working she could not just
walk away from the situation. Her guidance told her that she would need to stop thinking about
it for a period of a week in order to get free. Circumstances than arranged themselves where
she was busy helping her daughter move out to Vancouver Island for a week. So eventually the
former employer was found guilty of nineteen counts of unfair labour practices and the
employees were able to have their union and a new employer who would negotiate with them.
During this time she was initiated into the Mevlevi order of Sufis, and was studying their approach to life. Through all of this she was finding her inner voice getting stronger and stronger. There were instances where her inner voice would pop up in everyday things, like in the hardware store when her husband was buying packets of hangers for the eaves trough. Before he could calculate the correct number of packets to buy, she suggested "twenty-seven." Then when he had calculated and bought them he told her it had been twenty-seven that he needed. These small occurrences served to increase her trust in the process she was developing.

At first the guidance and messages from her inner voice were very spontaneous, often she was not consciously looking for an answer and subsequently was sometimes surprised. So she decided to set up a technique whereby she could ask directly and tap into the source of this inner wisdom. Her intuition dictated that it would be good to keep the process clean from outside influences, so she decided to use two prayers. First she says a Sufi prayer,

Beloved Lord Almighty God, aside from which there is nothing else, help us to love thee more and teach us that the sole purpose of love is beauty. Bring us to know thee as thou art and to find thee in the one place that is big enough to contain thee, the heart of the perfect man.

Then she asks the question, "In the name of and through the power of Jesus Christ I ask . . . ."

Finally, she closes with a Christian prayer, the Lord's prayer. This approach was true to her roots in western Christianity and to her new found allegiance to Sufism. What she found happening was that an answer would be forming even as she was asking the question or saying the second prayer. It was necessary for her to write down the answers as they came because often the answer would dissipated like a dream if she did not. These writings were initially on any handy piece of paper, until she started keeping a journal to at least have a book to put the papers in she was writing on.

She found it necessary to be cautious of keeping it "clean and clear" because she might find herself in touch with the spirit of a deceased person "just because they are dead doesn't mean they are smart, so you don't take their advice." The breathing exercises were like
meditation, they helped to calm and center her. It was also a process of refining herself, as she says “releasing those conditions, that darkness, those compressions where the energy doesn't flow freely.” She observed fellow Sufi students suffering with emotional and physical difficulties as they progressed through the exercises and meditations of their path. Yet she did not have as many problems and at first she thought it was because she was not doing it properly. She feels that it was due to the years of breathing exercises she had done previously. For her the meditation and the breathing exercises were “the very beginning of everything, the connection, it takes you to that still place within you . . . through breath.” She found that the deeper the state of meditation she could put herself in the higher the wisdom she could reach. As she puts it, “you are refining yourself all the time, therefore your vibrations reach further in a way.”

A key component for connection to her inner voice has been meditation, reaching that still place within where she could make that connection. She reached a point after several years of meditation and connecting with her guidance where it was a very simple and quick process to get an answer. However, with some issues like family or personal matters it took more effort to reach a proper meditative state, to be clear enough to receive accurate guidance because of the emotional or personal nature of the question.

As Felicity began to work more with her guidance her connection grew and “then it started coming in very specifically, [she] was given definite exercises from inner teaching.” Although she was not sure what they were exactly, she trusted implicitly and carried them out, some of them were very similar to Taoist exercises. At one point she was told to ask a question every day in order to strengthen the contact. She found she could go into a meditative state easily and quickly on a regular basis to ask questions and to receive guidance. The more she utilized the contact, the stronger the connection grew. Initially it took a concerted effort on her part to trust in the process and to go with it, but eventually it became second nature and a
constant dialogue developed. As she describes it, “there is a change from learning to trust, to trusting totally and going with it.”

Although she has never consciously utilized her dreams, she has found the occasional dream to indicate where she is at spiritually. One, for example, contained the message that she knew all the methods, now she must use them. For her this a sort of “wake-up and get working” message. However, she does use her guidance to understand the dreams and to help her understand the images and messages she would spontaneously receive. This she describes as a translation process, asking the guidance for help to understand the symbols coming in.

Felicity experienced difficulties when she chose to not follow guidance. She had inherited some money and then invested it in her own business, despite the nagging voice inside that was telling her “not a good idea.” The business was to utilize her knowledge and experience with epikote resins in producing marble bathtub surrounds and similar products. She needed someone to sell and market her products so she found a man who was already in business doing this. It turned out this man was a “professional bankrupt” and never paid her for any of her work but continued to sell it and reinvest the money elsewhere until he was bankrupt and she was left with no recourse to regain her investment. When she questioned her guidance “why had this happened?” She learned that in part it was because she did not care enough about the money and was not prepared to go after it the way a serious business person might have.

At one point, as part of her Sufi instruction, Felicity was asked to contact a master in her meditation. She tried this and chose to first contact Mary and then Jesus, Mevlana and Hazrat Inyat Kahn. Felicity found in each case that they first appeared with “a signature personality.” She would ask each for a series of study sessions and they would agree. Then the next time she contacted them to converse or study found the "signature personality" had disappeared. At first this led her to believe she was not doing it properly and then when she questioned this she learned that in fact the masters do not have personalities but present one for the benefit of us who expect it. Felicity accepted that she did not have to have a personal
connection with an individual master. Her connection to guidance and her inner voice became a
connection to “a level or station of mastership, or love, or wisdom,” which did not lend itself to
a specific personality with which to converse. For her there is no visual image to focus on, and
no specific name or personality to relate to, she feels it is not necessary.

As the her connection to this inner voice and guidance developed she became interested
in working with flower essences. One night while experiencing a bit of insomnia, she slipped
into a trance state and was approached by two beings. Although she could not see their form,
she could “sense their presence” and hear their voices. They gave her instructions for a special
technique for using the flower essences to help other people. The technique involved helping
them to reach a meditative state and helping them harmonize. At the time she received this
instruction, she was concerned about her ability to follow the guidance properly. So she asked
the two beings if they could help her or give her some assurance that she would be following
the instruction properly. In response to this request she sensed that one being was, feeling
impatient with her, while the other approached her and as she smelled this being’s fragrance felt
assured that she would smell this again if she was going astray from the instructions. This
happened about twelve years ago and to this day she uses the same technique in helping others
with their problems and allowing them to establish some contact with their own guidance or
inner voice.

In her studies of Sufism she learned that may be a genetic component in the
development of her connection with spirit or guidance. Felicity feels there is evidence for this in
the lives of her mother, grandmother and in her children and brother’s children. Her
grandmother had been a Theosophist, she worked with stones and had a deep connection with
her environment. Her mother had been involved with the Theosophy movement. Her youngest
daughter sometimes sees auras and has never “forgotten where she came from,” and unlike
herself when younger, still has a connection. This “knowing where you came from” experienced
by herself and her daughter is a felt sense that “one did not come here to learn to transcend” but
in fact came here “to learn how to live in physical form on earth.” That we are spiritual beings with a physical body, not physical bodies with a spirit. Although her son would not initially “have anything to do with what [she] had to do with,” he is now a massage therapist as well as an accountant and does both to keep himself balanced. Her middle daughter may be the most sensitive of all, but has really struggled with it and sometimes has experiences which scare her.

For Felicity the development of her inner voice, of her guidance over the years has been like any activity which becomes overly familiar, eventually one gets to the point where one need not be conscious of it, one does not need to exert a great deal of effort in order to achieve the same results. The guidance was present in her early childhood and she slowly moved away from it as she grew, than as she developed a personality and learned “to be in the world,” she grew away from that which she was born with. Eventually she was led back to her connection and was able to recover that which she was born with in the first place. Meditation (i.e. the breathing technique) was a technique, a tool which helped her get there.

Her life changed as she came in closer contact with her inner voice, her guidance. Things started coming together for her, she was getting help on all levels. She says that with guidance she doesn’t “draw all these awful things” to herself. She found herself getting ill less often and found it easier to cope with life’s disappointments. She found she was able to help others do the same, through the flower essences technique she shared with those who came. This process of helping others started initially as one which she saw as a form of healing, although she now sees it as one of bringing harmony and centeredness into the life of another.

Felicity has found her preferences change, now she aims for harmony in everything she does. Another change involved learning to live appropriately, i.e. not discussing certain topics in respect for the differing views of others (those friends who might not have the same inclinations or philosophy as herself.) It has meant recognizing that it is not appropriate to be evangelical about her beliefs or to try and persuade others to have the same experiences as herself.
At times Felicity finds herself saying things to people and she doesn’t quite understand why she is saying that. She has learned to accept these because it seems that when it happens the person to whom she is speaking seems able to accept what she has said. In these instances, the experience is like her internal censors have been removed and the person has something they really need to hear and out it comes, “like a dam busting loose.”

The process of receiving guidance is experienced like a translation process, where the information may be received in the form of symbols, lights, shapes and the like. Then she asks of guidance what it means and an answer forms in terms that are more readily recognizable to her. Even then it may not always be easy to understand every message received.

Felicity’s present feelings about the experience of having guidance is one of respect, gratitude, and humility. While she feels a need to acknowledge that within her which makes it possible, she must also recognize that it is really a connection to something larger than herself. In fact, she is not separate from others but deeply connected. She recognizes that it is not because she is so great or so special that she has this connection, but that she has done the required work to clear herself and is able to accept it and use it. Along with that comes a responsibility to help others on the same path, because the guidance is available to all who ask and to all who aspire to it.

In her work with others she acknowledges that she alone is not able to help others but in fact she can empower them to help themselves. This means helping them establish their own connection with guidance. She does not ask people for money directly or charge for her services, nor does she advertise or solicit for clients. She shares with her clients her philosophy that one must give in order to receive. They may chose to give her some form of payment for her help or they may give in other ways to others, as she puts it “to repay their debt to the universe.”

She finds now that she is able to deal with things from a more “centered place,” that regardless of the unfortunate circumstance she might find herself in she can deal with it in a
healthy and comfortable way. For example, when her husband lost four hundred dollars, they decided there was not really anything they could do to get that money back so they prayed for it to be found by the person who needs it most and then let go. They soon found themselves coming into money from unexpected sources that doubled the amount they had lost.

The key factors for Felicity in her development were recognizing the guidance, tapping into that inner voice and having the courage to use it, to follow the advice given, to honour that which was given. This was a process of building or rebuilding the bridge and involved intention and clarity. She has found that the most important and helpful thing was to act on the guidance she received. She says of her guidance that, “even if I lose contact with it, I know it is there; even in the most difficult times, ... but when it really came down to it, it gave me that strength to go on, without asking for it.”

In summing up Felicity describes her experience as one where she feels that we are all part of something much, much, greater than ourselves and within that there are connections with everything else that we must honour. Part of this recognition is the knowing that “anything we do in the way of growth and service also affects the rest of humanity on some level,” therefore we must do our best to live more harmoniously with ourselves and with our fellow humans.
General Narrative Pattern

The experiences of the participants were synthesized into a single narrative representing the commonalities and highlighting the differences in the beginning, the middle, and the end of their respective stories. In describing a story, Cochrane (1986) wrote:

The basic organizing principle of a story is a gap between two poles. All stories begin with an “is” for which there is an “ought to be”. Scholars have used various terms to describe the beginning, such as disequilibrium, problem, disturbance, or upset. The path toward resolution of difficulty is the middle of the story. And the story ends when the initiating disturbance is calmed. (p. 13)

In this study the two poles in the story are the life experiences before being connected with an inner guide (i.e., childhood through young adulthood) and the meaningfulness and significance of having had an inner guide in one's life for many years. The middle encompasses the constellation of experiences around connecting and being connected to an inner guide.

In presenting a general narrative pattern of the early lives of these three women it is rather telling to note the differences in their experiences, as well as the similarities. It is these individual differences as children and young adults that suggests a variety of individuals may be able to access and benefit from an inner guide. There is a striking similarity in the patterns of experience for each of the three participants while working with their respective inner guides and in the significance of this experience in their lives. This chapter will look at the patterns of their lives before contact with an inner guide, at their experience of contact with an inner guide and finally at the significant manifestations of their having been connected with an inner guide for a number of years.

Beginning

Childhood. For each of the three women in this study there was a period of struggling to understand and fit into the world in which they found themselves. Felicity describes her childhood in terms of having “a hard time learning to be in the world” and “really trying to understand how one is supposed to respond in the world.” Ann was the fourth daughter in a family where everyone was involved in the performing arts. Her shy and introverted nature
made it difficult to fit in, or to feel at home as the “last in a long line of noisy people.” While Janine suddenly at age six found herself taken from her large, passionate French-Canadian family and put into a small, quiet rural family where she was always the outsider, as the adopted child.

Each of them, to varying degrees, had a sense of being alone as a child. Ann recalls being teased by her older sisters, not having a lot of friends as a child and spending a lot of time alone “because it was safe.” Janine was an outsider to her adoptive family and was subsequently very much alone as a child. She was not allowed friends except those she saw at school or church. She learned to “live alone without being lonely” and spent a great deal of time close to nature and with the animals on the farm.

Both Janine and Felicity had experiences in childhood that seem suggestive of an openness to the transpersonal realm of experiencing. They each had experiences which involved an awareness of inner wisdom and a connection to a larger spiritual realm. For example, Felicity experienced her first of several inner teachings at age seven. She felt guided from within to make certain critical decisions during her early years, such as going to the polytechnic instead of waiting for an opportunity to get into university. She described a “sense of knowing what the truth was” that went beyond simple intellectual knowing. Janine described her childhood as having been spiritual in that she felt close to God whom she believed in, loved and relied on. She was aware of and communicated with a guardian angel. She also had several precognitive experiences as a child. Whereas, Ann stated there was nothing in her childhood or early adult years that might suggest she would end up on a deeply spiritual path. For Janine and Felicity this was an opening or introduction to their deeper, inner selves, a precursor to future contact with an inner guide and the transpersonal realm.

There was a range of differences in their experience of childhood. While Ann and Felicity had rather normal and stable home environments, Janine had a rather difficult childhood. Yet, Ann felt unloved and unwanted throughout her childhood despite being in a
close, loving and rich family environment. Janine experienced a great deal of turmoil and stress, being taken from her natural family and placed in an adoptive family. Life with her adoptive family was not easy. She was told she was crazy and was often not believed in disputes between herself and her adopted sister, who could be quite cruel to her. Subsequently she experienced a certain amount of grief and pain.

Adolescence and young adulthood. At some point they each engaged life as young adults and found a way to overcome the difficulties they experienced as children. Their lives carried on in a natural progression from childhood to adolescence to early adulthood. They had each formed their own myth (or life-theme) to serve them through their adult years. This myth becomes crucial to ordering and energizing their life patterns. In each case there is evidence of a struggle to live and get along in the world.

As Felicity became an adult she developed a sense of what it was to be in the world, and how to respond in the world. She finished school, began a career, got married and with her husband and family struggled through many hardships as they tried to find a place to live and suitable work for themselves. At some point through this process of growing into adulthood she “forgot where she came from” and drifted away from the inner guidance and the sense of a connection to something greater beyond herself she had experienced as a child.

Janine's life from adolescence into her early adult years was a struggle with a seemingly endless string of hardships that presented themselves to her. She believed that life was going to be hard and so it was. She characterized herself at that time as being lost, confused, and having low self-esteem. At age fifteen, after her Uncle Joe had died Janine turned her back on her inner voice which had been guiding her to that point. She felt that listening to the inner voice got her into trouble, so she decided to stop listening. She consciously turned away from her spiritual values. As she says “I was tired of being different . . . being condemned for my differences from the people I lived with.”
As Ann was growing up she tried to become like her older sister who always had lots of friends and was very outgoing. This pattern of trying to fit in and be acceptable pervaded Ann’s life for many years. In her words, “I needed to find a way to fit in a world where I felt truly that I didn’t belong and I had always felt that way.” As a teenager she had a wall around herself that said, “love isn’t to be trusted and I am unlovable and unworthy.” As a young adult, Ann created and lived the role of the happy hippie traveler.

Although largely unconscious at the time, the hardships they endured followed from their respective life themes until they reached a point where they were no longer content with the life they were leading and the personal myth which dictated such a life.

Crisis point. The transition from the beginning to the middle of the story was typically experienced as a very disturbing period in life. The three co-researchers in this study each had a crisis point in their lives where they hit a low point. Each carried on with their life until they became aware, whether suddenly or slowly, of the conflict between what they were living and what they sensed might be possible. It was a dawning realization that the youthful myth that had sustained their life direction thus far was no longer valid and was inadequate. It was a dissolution of the personal myths by which the self understood its identity and presented itself to the world. This death of a key myth created a vacuum where anxieties intensified for lack of directional signals.

To varying degrees this point in their life was characterized as full of fear, anxiety, confusion, or with frequent occurrences of illness. For Ann it was a mini-nervous breakdown when, after eight years of being the happy hippie traveler and the failure of a marriage, she realized that she was not happy. That she did not have an identity of her own, but that she was a chameleon and could be anything that anyone wanted her to be. Felicity experienced a serious post-partum depression and then, when her mother became ill and subsequently died, was faced with her own mortality and aloneness. Janine had the sudden and dramatic experience of not recognizing herself in the mirror. She realized her life had come to a dead-end, she was with an
abusive man who was involved in drugs and alcohol. Concerning this crisis point, Janine says “I realized that I had become whatever other people wanted me to be. That I didn’t have an identity, I didn’t really have a sense of self.” Each was forced to reexamine the myths, which had sustained them thus far.

This crisis point was characterized by a sense of deflation and debilitation. In varying degrees, all three individuals felt deflated by life. Their existence had progressively depreciated in quality and they seemed to be sinking in depths of disintegration. This was best exemplified by the bouts of depression they all suffered and the thoughts of suicide experienced by Janine and Felicity. Also, in varying degrees, all experienced lack of self-esteem and loss of confidence in themselves. Their existence could be characterized by a feeling of alienation and loss. Each of them experienced a severance either from themselves, loved ones, life, God, spiritual values or a combination of these. Consequently, they lacked a sense of belonging and were without an emotional anchor. For example, Janine had forsaken and left behind her connection with spirit and God that she felt so secure with as a child. Felicity, too, had forgotten her connection with the light, and the inner voice that she had experienced as a child. Felicity had the added loss of her father, then her mother. While Ann was out of touch with her own self, she did not know who or what she really was.

Their lives were pervaded by fear. Lack of emotional anchorage led to feelings of mistrust and misery. Their lives lacked agency. Janine felt controlled by others and viewed herself as a victim of her own circumstances. Ann was unable to assess her options in life and take action towards change. They felt unable to exert their will and judgment in making productive decisions and taking charge of their lives. They felt relatively insecure and ill-equipped to deal with the demands and hardships of life because they lacked information about alternatives.

Janine found herself depressed and feeling hopeless about her current life situation. She considered suicide to escape the abusive relationship and the pointless existence she found
herself living. Ann described herself as a chameleon who could fit in to any section of society and just turn on what they wanted her to be and become that. After eight years of being the “happy hippie traveler” Ann found her life empty of any real meaning and she had no idea how to deal with this. At age thirty-three Ann suffered a “mini-nervous breakdown” and became physically ill. She found herself emotionally and spiritually bankrupt, she felt like a failure and alienated from those around her. She described it as a case of being in denial. As she says, “I suppressed every negative thought and emotion I ever had because I wanted to be nice and acceptable.” Her life at that point was in a place of enormous pain, fear and a sense of unworthiness. Felicity had suffered from a prolonged depression after her first child was born and although she thought about suicide at the time, she always had something inside that prevented her from carrying it through. Subsequently, this first child was often ill and she was in a new country, far from home when her father died. She had two more children as they struggled to make ends meet and then her mother who had come to live near them became ill with Parkinson’s disease and soon after succumbed to the disease.

Given this negative ground of experience, there arose a strong yearning for something better in life. As individuals they each desired a different way and/or were reminded of a former way of living that could transform their misery. Felicity quietly turned back to her mother’s theosophy, which reversed the gradual, almost imperceptible, shift away from her inner teachings she had undergone. While Janine suddenly recalled the young spiritual child which she still had inside herself. This was a conscious return to her intuitive impulses, just as it had earlier been a conscious rejection of her intuitive impulses and her earlier spiritual connection.

It was precisely this crisis point that propelled each of them toward change and subsequently led to a shift in the narrative. Now there began a searching for and the subsequent creation of a new myth to guide their life. It was at this point that each individual was introduced to or became reacquainted with their own inner guidance. This connection addressed the vacuum left by the failing of the old myth and served to move them toward a new
and promising life pattern. The participants expressed a yearning for a more fulfilling life through the practice of spiritual exercises aimed at attaining higher levels of insight and growth and through a search for their own identity. This searching soon led to a connection with an inner source of guidance.

Middle

Turning point. There was a point in each of the participants lives when they found themselves learning new ways of being and discovering new tools to heal themselves and promote their own growth. There was a great deal of work involved in clearing themselves and coming to terms with who they had become and what were the major myths controlling their lives. There was a great deal of determination to overcome the obstacles of their past life and to build a new and better life for themselves. This process involved various spiritual exercises such as rebirthing, meditation, yoga, prayer, breathing exercises, and/or the inner teachings which came from the inner guide itself. These spiritual exercises were a way to realize their yearning for a fulfilling life, to help them create new myths for guiding their lives. The role these exercises played in paving the way to an inner connection is vividly detectable in all three case studies. To varying degrees, the spiritual exercises became a source of strength, imparting meaning and generating mental, emotional and physical well-being.

The middle story concerns itself with taking responsible, active steps towards change and toward connection with inner guidance. As can be observed in their case studies, all three took conscious steps towards their connection to guidance in the context of everyday living. For example, it was at this point that Ann agreed to do some rebirthing, a breathing technique designed for psycho-emotional release. After her first few sessions her rebirther, who was connected with her own inner guides, told Ann that her guides suggested Ann read a book called Seth Speaks and that Ann connect with her own guidance, which she had no previous idea could exist. Ann was more than willing, she was now doing the rebirthing twice a week and found great comfort and help in the book, that it "resonated deeply within herself, like it
had already been there.” She began to see that there were many things deep inside herself that could be looked at and changed. She was empowered and felt a great surge of energy to go on and do more, deepening her connection and learning to meditate. She felt a deep and urgent need to get herself clear of the “fear-based programming” that had been running her life, it was a strong desire for change from deep within herself. As she says, “the guides won’t give you determination to get clear.” In describing this process she used the metaphor of an onion and all of the work she was doing was like peeling back the layers of herself (i.e., the onion), the layers of fear and mistrust.

It was at the time of Felicity’s mother’s illness and subsequent death that she began to reconnect with her spiritual side, that is the “sense of belonging to something greater outside of herself.” Felicity began by reading an old theosophical book of her mother’s and a few years later learned a breathing technique which promoted meditative states and led to a reconnection with her inner voice. After three years of diligently practicing the meditative breathing technique, she began to see unbidden lights and to make contact with a “deep, inner place of wisdom.” Soon after she began learning the meditative whirling movements and spiritual philosophy of Sufism.

At thirty-one years of age Janine had a wake-up call, an experience which she describes as spiritual. In a sudden flash, she realized that she no longer recognized herself and that the spiritual child she had been was still inside herself. She initiated a “self-improvement” program, which included leaving the relationship she was in, changing her diet, beginning yoga, meditation and going back to school to study art. Janine began to pay attention to the intuitive impulses that had been so much help to her as a child. It was a return to her spiritual values. In her words, “I came to realize that I was not able to function properly without the guidance system.”

For each of these women, their initial work with inner guidance was a potent force of strength and encouragement, stimulating hope for the future and offering a glimpse of a
meaningful lifestyle they could work towards. Attaining such a goal was no longer viewed as an impossibility. Desiring a different lifestyle is one thing and experiencing it, no matter how minimally, is quite another. This experience allowed them to embark on the attainment of higher levels of growth and insight.

All three of the participants in this study were looking for ways to attain inner harmony, balance and growth in their lives. They were each engaged in spiritual exercises of various kinds which facilitated the development of their connection to inner guidance. The power of meditation in this regard is conspicuously evident in all three case studies. Regular and intensive practice of spiritual exercises, particularly meditation led to some significant meaningful experiences which resulted in the partial realization of a balanced life.

The new myths that were emerging addressed the transcendental nature of human reality. This new myth fostered strength and provided an alternate perspective from which to view the unavoidable difficulties of life. Rather than viewing themselves merely as physical entities needing to learn about spirituality, they began to consider themselves as spiritual entities learning how to live as physical beings.

Connection with inner guidance. Ann was directly connected with her inner guide soon after beginning the rebirthing. This was a new connection, but something she desperately wanted. Janine had begun to listen to her intuitive impulses again and to cultivate her connection with them. After several years of working with her intuitive impulses, she was introduced directly to her guides through guided imagery. For Felicity the connection to guidance began spontaneously a few years after beginning the breathing exercises and while involved with her Sufi training. With Felicity and Janine it was a matter of reconnecting with the divine presence that they had experienced in their lives as children, while for Ann it was a new experience. Yet for all of them, the connection to guidance was something they all wanted and worked hard for.
Although Janine was still experimenting, it was a matter of reconnecting with the higher power, God, and also with her intuitive impulses that she continued to receive, which gave her a strong sense of ‘yes’ or ‘no’. A few years later she began compulsively writing journals regarding her life, dreams, and thoughts. After several years she decided she wanted to learn how to meditate properly and was formally connected to her guides through a visual imagery technique. Initially she was very scared by the experience because with the introduction of direct conscious contact with her guides there began a flood of information that seemed to pour through her without any end. She was hearing the voice of her inner guidance and writing down all she heard in her journals and it would not stop. She was overwhelmed and ready to give it up, her intellect struggled with what was happening because it made no sense to her. Eventually, Janine developed a deep and enduring bond with her guide.

Initially trusting oneself as well as the process was an issue for each of them. Could she trust this voice or not? Eventually a constant dialogue developed with the voice of the guidance. After many years, the voice and the process became very familiar, she need not be conscious of it, nor did it take a great deal of effort to connect with the inner voice, it became a constant dialogue. Ann described the trust-mistrust tension as her biggest obstacle in the beginning. But she persevered, was dedicated and put in lots of time practicing what she had learned.

In the course of working with guidance toward her own growth and development Ann found that rebirthing was helpful for expressing and releasing inner emotions. It allowed that which was being held back to surface. While her guides were helping her to understand herself and guiding her to make inner changes, Felicity says that the breathing exercises and meditations, some of which she received from her guidance, were responsible for clearing blocks and opening her up to be able to receive the guidance. She continues to use prayer and meditation to assist her in reaching “the still place” from which she may access her guidance.
Each in their own way emphasized that it is important to remember that if she was going to ask a question she must get out of the way for the answer and not interfere with it. Important to the process of connecting was the clearing or centering. In this regard each had their own strategies for creating the optimal connection with guidance, meditation being the most common and effective strategy reported. Janine must put aside her intellect and simply let it flow through without analyzing it or interfering with it, which she would do by using breath to relax while visualizing light. This also insured a connection with the higher channel of the guidance and not some earth bound spirit. Prayer was also important for centering, Janine’s prayer means giving thanks for the relaxed state already achieved. Her process of grounding is very eclectic and personal, it has and continues to evolve as she learns more from various sources. Now communication with her guides is like a direct conversation. All reported that anxiety and emotions may interfere with the process of connecting and getting a clear answer. For example, it can be especially difficult when dealing with family issues or a personal/emotional issue.

The use of relaxation and guided imagery was important for Ann and Janine, both in establishing a connection with guidance and also in continuing to work with guidance in their lives. For Ann this enabled her to move her “surface personality out of the way.” In time it became unnecessary for her to use the visualization. It became a matter of “where my mind was focused” and by focusing her mind on the inner conversation she could elicit the connection with guidance. Ann finds she must participate in the process of connecting with them, to meet them half way, because guidance of itself will not force it’s way into her consciousness. Janine and Ann found that after several years of meditation and working with their guidance they could simply use the name of the guide to connect directly and instantly. They routinely addressed their guide by name inside and heard the response, “Yes, we are always here.” Initially Felicity's contacts with guidance were spontaneous and sometimes surprising, they might occur as part of her everyday activities or as she considered some more personal or
profound issues. Eventually she created a prayer ritual for accessing her guidance and insuring its purity and her clear connection to the wisdom. However, they each found that the more they accessed the guidance and used it, the stronger the connection became. They also find, now, that they can connect very quickly within themselves in the midst of their daily activities to ask simple questions.

The primary mode of contact with the inner guidance for these women was the listening to the voice, hearing the words. Although initially Ann and Janine connected with their guides through guided imagery and seeing them was common, they found that hearing them was easier and that became their dominant mode of contact with them. Throughout Felicity’s experience contact with inner guidance has been exclusively one of hearing a voice in her mind, occasionally it has involved the other senses, (i.e., olfactory). For each of them the act of writing out what they heard became important. It was a way to keep the guidance alive and fresh before the memory of the words would fade away.

Soon after connecting they found that they could make requests of the guides, to understand some aspect of themselves or their life. This was something they have continued to do consistently over the years that they have been working with their guides. Initially they would often ask predictive questions. Now they rarely do because this type of question is not relevant considering their present understanding of the subtle interaction between themselves and their reality.

Each found that the guidance would seldom instruct her on specific things to do or not do, but would usually help her create a situation which feels good or right for her. In the experiences of the three participants of this study, the guidance is not there to run her life, or to make it easier or to be in charge. But rather the guidance is there to offer a gentle, caring, loving wisdom which may at times be a warning or a lessen to be learned. For example, Janine felt she always has autonomy in her relationship with guidance, although they offer guidance she has the choices to make in her life. Sometimes when asking for guidance Janine finds there
is no answer, which means that the question asked is not one to be given guidance on because guidance will influence direction too much.

Each one is secure in the knowledge that their guidance is always there even when they are not in direct connection, which is very comforting. Thus, “being connected means I am never alone.” There were times when Ann would get angry or upset with them, and once when she was tired of the “whole spiritual thing” and did not want contact with them, they left her alone until she was ready to connect with them again. Subsequently, she has always assumed their presence, no matter what.

Ann and Janine have each been aware of many guides, but have always worked with one main guide. They have each experienced three different main guides. Although there has always been many more in the background offering their help through their main guide. They both felt keenly aware of personality differences between the individual main guides and could distinguish one from the other. With each new guide they both had the sense that they were at a “higher” or new level of awareness. Their respective connection to guidance has involved deeper and deeper levels of meditation, through which they find that they can connect with deeper levels of guidance and wisdom.

Although Felicity has experienced visits by beings and through her own directed efforts contacted particular masters, she does not find it necessary to be in direct contact with a particular individual guide. She has the sense that she is in contact with a level or station of mastership or love or wisdom.

Each of them discussed a related phenomenon of intuitive knowing or intuitive impulses. Ann described intuitive knowing as something she rarely experienced before having a connection to her guidance, but since connecting she finds it is a frequent experience. She describes intuitive knowing as something that resides in the body, that it is different and distinguishable from intellectual knowing. For Janine intuitive impulses were very prominent before connecting with her guides and also involved a physical sensation.
The end of the story is the state of connectedness with an inner source of guidance. Here one can observe the end result of the development of new attitudes and lifestyles. This process includes what the individuals have achieved in their personal growth. Having successfully moved to this state they are in a better position to assess their options in life and work towards further personal growth. In viewing the end, one can notice five themes namely, the participants meaningful lifestyle and purpose in life, meaningful mature relationships, deeper self understanding, their desire to be of service to others on a spiritual path, and their arrival at higher levels of growth.

**Felicity.** Felicity has learned through her guidance that her purpose in life is not to transcend the human form but in fact to learn how to live in this physical form on earth. Essentially she lives her life from the perspective that we are all spirit with a physical body, not physical bodies with a spirit. She describes her life as becoming a great deal smoother with her guidance, for example she experiences less illness. Her guidance helps her understand the messages that she receives in the form of symbols, lights, shapes and colors. This help is like a translation process, where the guides attempt to alter the messages so she can understand them.

Felicity feels a great deal of humility, respect, and gratitude regarding her inner voice. It gives her clarity of intention and purpose while supporting her efforts to live in harmony and connection with family, friends, and people in general. She, like the other two women, are certain that having access to inner guidance is not a special gift which only a few can master, but that they have done the work necessary to open up to and accept the guidance into their life. They each feel a responsibility to help others do the same and they make a point of doing that for others, while being careful not to impose their ideas or beliefs on anyone else. The key to accessing and using guidance for Felicity was to recognize the guidance and to have the courage to use it, to honour that which she was receiving by using it.
Ann. Although Ann found it difficult to verbally describe the connection with her guidance she experiences a sense of “being surrounded by energy that is profoundly caring, and full of grace.” Ann tries to explain the feeling as one of being “cradled or buoyed up” by the guidance, or the energy or awareness that is her guidance. That energy or feeling is available to her to the extent that she allows herself to be in that connected place, “when I am connected I fell peaceful, grounded, clear, safe, blessed, lucky, joyous.” She never has to feel alone, and her guidance is supportive, encouraging, loving and nonjudgmental. She finds that her guides are always kind and patient regardless of her mood or emotional state. Ann finds the process of connecting with inner guidance is becoming more and more one of surrendering herself to the connection, to allow herself to feel the truly divine and to be full of grace.

Ann says her relationship with her guides has changed as she has changed. For example, initially she had a great deal of mistrust in herself and in the process but as she used it more, she found herself opening up easier. In the beginning she was irreverent because she had “issues with authority”, but as things progressed she developed a deeper sense of respect for and trust with her guides. Ann says she had difficulty being friends with them because she put them on a pedestal and saw them as being wiser and better than herself. Even now she feels their relationship is not quite balanced. Initially she thought of them as spiritual entities outside of herself, but after eleven years of working with them, she feels they could be whatever - part of her higher self, angels, or God; the point being that it works for her. She regards them as “very wise non-physical beings who could help me understand myself and make whatever inner changes I wanted in order to be more comfortable with myself.”

The process has been a ten year journey towards greater strength, wisdom and grace where the key factors have been her acceptance of the guidance and her willingness to use guidance to clear herself of the fear and mistrust programming. Her own inner changes have allowed her greater peace and contentment in her life as she has released the fear and mistrust that previously dominated her life. She has since been able to experience a greater sense of self
worth and clarity of purpose in her life. As a result she has developed a desire to help others along their spiritual-path, by introducing them to their own guidance and helping them experience rebirthing for themselves. She has the sense that her work and growth will continue as she continues to work on herself and with her guides. She finds she benefits to the extent that she is able to allow herself to connect. In her life she finds her relationships are deeper and more truthful. She is clear on her purpose in her life, to awaken herself spiritually and to help others do the same, to do it for love. It now seems nonsensical to imagine living without her connection to guidance.

Janine. In her relationships with the guides she finds them caring and nurturing. She feels considerable peace because she can converse with her guides anytime. “It's a really personal intimate relationship.” Although, sometimes she has spats with them. She feels unconditionally accepted by her guides and they allow her to feel incredibly secure. Janine stresses that regardless of the words she uses to try and explain her guidance, it is an inner connection and it originates from a divine source. She finds that with guidance in her life everything flows along peacefully, with little stress, and no crises. She experiences security and peace of mind and is never alone. She no longer fears death, partially because of what she has learned from the spiritual perspective of the guidance. She understands it is a transition to another life not a real ending.

Janine says that “the animating energy, that which makes us all one, is what we call God.” Her life has more meaning and a stronger sense of purpose. Part of this purpose is a desire to be of service to others, helping them establish their own guidance and providing hers for them. Her present purpose in life is guided by the thought that she did not come here to learn how to be spirit but to learn how to be physical (i.e., we are already spiritual). She feels a sense of pride, like “patting the inner child’s head and knowing it all worked out, there was a reason for everything.”
It was essential in creating and maintaining the connection that she begin to use what she was given and put into practice what she learned, what she professed to believe or know. She acknowledges it takes great faith to follow guidance. Listening and following it is essential to maintaining the connection. “I have to actually use it for it to mean anything.” Intellectually she has stopped thinking about it, because the intellect cannot make sense of it. Emotionally she feels acceptance.

Significance and meaningfulness of inner guide. There are various ways that the connection to guidance may lead to a fulfilling life. Trust in and connection to inner guidance seemed to become a strong anchorage of life for all three participants. The transpersonal experiences of oneness and unity with all others, that each experienced may be observed as the culmination points. This culmination point is arrived at gradually, with the apex being their acceptance of themselves as spiritual beings. A commitment to incorporate spirituality into life can lead to feelings of relief, as is evident in all three case studies. This commitment also spurred feelings of confidence in themselves. Although each one followed a different path in her effort to establish an inner connection to guidance, all eventually find their answers within and commit themselves to this inner source. This inner source was understood by each to be of a divine origin and prompted within them a love for and deeper understanding of God.

In the three case studies presented here, it is clear that with the help of their inner guidance each has adopted alternative attitudes to the difficulties encountered in life. The process of spiritual growth is by no means a smooth journey. Life is full of unanticipated tests and difficulties from which guidance does not spare one, no matter what level of growth or strength of connection one has attained. Growth depends on how one interprets these hardships. The crucial factor is one’s attitude towards such hardships. They each summoned serenity and confidence from within themselves and trusted that this inner guidance had its source in a Higher Being. For example, Janine was confident that she was not alone and that she needed to learn the higher lesson that was presented to her by the traumas of her youth. She
now understands the dark years and the trauma of her childhood to have been preparation for who she is now.

They have each established a meaningful lifestyle wherein they find life fulfilling. In their own way they each expressed a sense that life was smoother with the help of guidance and they had a general sense of satisfaction with life's direction, challenges and opportunities. They had developed an enlarged perspective on life. In examining the meaning of their daily suffering, they reflect on life and appreciate its trials and difficulties. From reading the case studies, one can interpret that the meaningful purpose they have adopted is of a transpersonal nature.

Despite the difficulty that each expressed in finding words accurate enough to describe the experience, they each experienced a deep trust in guidance. To varying degrees each woman felt a sense of security, safety, grace, wisdom, and joy pervading their experience of being connected. Gradually they are finding these same qualities are experienced more and more in their daily living. For them there is now an easy daily ritual to contact guidance, it is immediate contact, and guidance may be used in a wide range of life's problems from the mundane to the deeply spiritual. Each has an understanding of their own connection to a higher being and other humans, a sense of unity of all life. Each draws strength and empowerment from guidance and yet there is no sense of being overwhelmed by guidance.

In the process of deepening the connection to guidance the co-researchers developed meaningful and mature relationships with others. They developed the ability to connect with people on a deeper level and were concerned with and sensitive to others' needs and interests. They began to see themselves as connected to all people through the power and love of God. This was so because they had been able to develop a universal sense of belongingness or unity. A sense of universal unity, one in which people are aware of a different sense of community.

All three are involved in meaningful service to others, which gives them personal satisfaction and is congruent with their purpose in life. It became important to each individual to develop themselves spiritually and to be able to help others develop spiritually. Being
connected with their own guidance was central to the path for each of them. They are involved in meaningful acts of service to humanity. Service to others endows their lives with significant meaning, from which they derive strength and fulfillment.

Awareness of spirituality is not the end of the road for personal or spiritual growth. All three co-researchers revealed that transformation is a life-long process involving a long arduous journey of education and hard work on their part. At this point, they feel confident that they are on the right path and have access to valid guidance for further growth and fulfillment. Therefore, in a resolution to improve, they accept responsibility for personal growth and actively enforce alternatives and transmute weaknesses into strengths. In taking active steps towards change, they are developing a sense of agency in life. As can be observed in their case studies, all three took conscious steps towards the actualization of spiritual qualities in the context of everyday living.

In summary, all participants realized the importance of personal integration and intimate belonging to a greater whole. Ann, Felicity and Janine, each befitting their personal history, live with the seemingly irreversible certainty that a greater, spiritual, or ultimate reality has illuminated and transformed their existence. They have transcended the shortcomings and inadequacies of their respective pasts and are aiming at the actualization of further progress. The individual narratives of this study strongly suggest that connection to inner guidance may provide access to resources for personal and transpersonal growth, understanding and change.
CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

An analysis of the life histories of three individuals who have worked with their inner guidance for a number of years produced three individual narratives and one general narrative pattern. Although there are major differences in the individual narratives there appears to be a common pattern of experience which transcends the differences.

Limitations of the Study

The study is limited by the participants ability to articulate their experiences and their conscious willingness to disclose personal and sensitive issues to the researcher. An inherent limitation of using the self-reported biographies of participants as the sole source for data is that participants are prone to be limited by what they are willing and able to report and the factors (e.g., memory, etc.) that influence selectivity in reporting. However, this difficulty is partially offset by examining the narratives of several individuals as opposed to only one. For example, when a theme is common to the experience of several individuals it has greater validity. Yet the limitation remains, a co-researcher can only report what she is able to report and much of the experience of inner guidance would seem to be ineffable. In fact, it might be argued that the actual experience of relating to and working with inner guidance cannot be conveyed or shared verbally that it must be experienced to be understood. And yet an exploration of the life histories of individuals with such an experience can offer some insight into the context of the experience.

In narrative research interpretations remain open ended and may change if new information emerges. Likewise, cause and effect are not seen in mechanistic, positivistic terms, but in a common sense manner (Polkinghorne, 1989). Therefore, the researcher's own cultural background and personal biases may limit the findings by a skewing of the interpretations. Unlike traditional science, narrative research is not based on discrete facts in order to establish truth, its ultimate aim is to create understanding. Following Polkinghorne (1989), narrative
reality is a construction and reconstruction of experience and describes how something happened retrospectively.

With only three co-researchers, all female, no claim of generalizability can be made. However, from the perspective of the multiple case study (Yin, 1994) the pattern revealed is regarded as a component in the larger process of ongoing study. Generalizability is not achieved in one study, but by the comparisons and ongoing research of several investigators as they expand and challenge the themes to more faithfully represent the experience.

The results of this study are limited by the fact that each of the participants had been involved in various forms of spiritual exercises or activities aimed at their personal development, most notably meditation, for various lengths of time. While all were unanimous in their insistence on the complementarity of these and the effectiveness of the guidance itself, it is not possible to make causal statements about the relative impact of inner guidance, compared to meditation, on their development or to separate the effects of one from the other.

Further limitations of this research include, but are not limited to: (a) only revealing the factors relevant to the success of the technique, but not those factors which might inhibit its success; (b) not proving the total effectiveness or safety of the technique; and (c) although this research assumes the existence of the unconscious, it is not able to prove or explain its existence. However, despite these limitations there remains several theoretical and practical implications for counselling.

Theoretical Implications

The individuation process is the life work of each person according to Jung's theory of personality. It involves becoming more conscious of one's total self by bringing what is unconscious to consciousness (Jung, 1939/1969). This comes about via dreams, meditation and psychotherapeutic analysis. Perhaps a connection with inner guidance may also further this process. The narratives examined here suggest deeper aspects of the individual are revealed to themselves. The participants expressed a sense of grace and humility about their experiences,
suggesting the possibility that inner guidance could be a communication from the Self - the inner core of one's being. The narratives outlined the effects of inner guidance on their personal lives, spiritual growth and views of the world. Their lives were transformed by their experiences with inner guidance. The co-researchers in this study were empowered to make a difference and to find meaning in life through development of a new concept of self and through engagement in active and responsible steps toward change.

Each of the participants in this study came into contact with guidance after or during a crisis in their lives. All three encountered and utilized their inner guidance while in mid-life the time that Jung (1964) wrote of as being a significant time for individuation and pursuing spiritual matters. This was also the time (between 35 and 45) that the majority of the subjects in Heery’s (1989) study reported their inner voice experiences. Inner voice experiences may be age-specific, although the childhood experiences reported here would suggest they may not be related to only one age.

In support of Assagioli (1971, 1991) and the proponents of psychosynthesis (Crampton, 1975; Ferrucci, 1982; & Miller, 1975) engaging in spiritual exercises, restoration of belief in a higher power, adoption of alternative attitudes to unavoidable suffering and the new sense of self were all found to be occurring alongside of the continued use of inner guidance and each of the participants felt that their guidance was crucial to their personal and spiritual development.

The participants made attempts to gain a deeper insight into themselves by identifying their hidden or repressed higher and lower feelings and abilities. An objective exploration took place either through reading metaphysical books, engagement in spiritual exercises or religious activities. The participants took active responsible steps toward change by transmuting their weaknesses into strengths. They oriented their lives to the realization of spiritual values and spiritual qualities. And they added meaning to life by forming a new sense of self through their various experiences and a new understanding of God and their relationship to the universe through guidance. Realizing their true reality as a spiritual being empowered them to take steps
to develop abilities that are in harmony with their new sense of self. In doing so, they have followed both paths that Assagioli (1971) advocates: The way of active responsible actions and the way of submission to the will of God.

The narratives presented here fit the third category, “where channels opened toward and beyond a higher self,” outlined by Heery (1989) in her study of inner voices. However, where the individuals she studied all experienced spontaneous inner voices, this study found that inner guidance may be contacted intentionally. Yet can still be powerful a tool for personal and transpersonal growth. The case studies presented here could also be classified within the third reaction to spiritual awakening Assagioli (1989) outlined, where the individual’s life is permanently changed as a result of the experience.

Shore (1992) stated that he had expected to find two patterns of use with the inner advisor, one where it would be used frequently and where the experience would be of a voice or thought in the mind, but no visualization and infrequent contact where the experience of an image would be facilitated by visualization. However, he only found the latter and not the former. The results of the current study suggest that this pattern of contact may be an initial stage of learning. It seems that the more frequent mode of contact without a visual image was typical of the women in this study after they had worked with their guidance for several years.

In comparison to the findings of Shore (1992), the present results are quite similar. In agreement with Shore were the present reports of the guidance being a source of knowledge and its helpfulness in dealing with problems or concerns. The relationship to the source of the guidance was described as being beneficial to them and as important in their lives. The participants described their experience in terms of openness and trust that increased as they utilized the guidance. Also reported were the presence of multiple guides or voices.

**Implications for Counselling**

Working with inner guidance was seen as a critical turning point in the lives of the participants. In this change the mundane ego concerns were transcended and confrontation with
one's complex nature occurred. There was an invitation to “become something more,” the experience moved each to acknowledge the reality of another level of awareness, a higher consciousness or spiritual awakening. If this is so, counselling practitioners must move beyond the present limits of behavioural and cognitive change to include the transpersonal and the spiritual domains. Issues such as truth, beauty, altruism, love, meaning will have to be addressed. The narratives of the co-researcher’s included words which are not common to the language of mainstream psychology, words like, “grace” and “wisdom”. This study points to the need for a broader base in the field of psychology and more open mindedness in the counselling domain.

The narratives indicate that there is some concern regarding with whom the participant’s would share their stories with. Janine aptly illustrates an awareness of the stigma against those who hear voices in their heads. Counsellors need to understand these experiences so they can be accepting and encouraging when they are encountered. The participants of this study would challenge a counsellor to consider the reported interaction between the rational and intuition. An individual hearing voices may not be suffering a mental illness but experiencing a spiritual awakening (see Grof & Grof, 1989 for a discussion of spiritual crises of this nature).

In the area of multi-cultural counselling there is a need to allow for experiences such as these, which may be more common in the client’s home culture. For example, a native client dealing with a vision or voice would require empathic understanding not psychiatric referral. In the context of counselling, clients will only share their stories when they feel respected and understood and are able to trust the helper.

Inner guide imagery may be introduced by a counsellor in counselling to deal with a specific problem or situation. The counsellor may explore with the client the themes presented in this study to help the client understand what might be expected if they were to continue the relationship with their inner guide. A counsellor might decide to use the inner guide imagery to
help a client in the long term with transpersonal or spiritual goals in mind. If the client has concerns of a spiritual nature, this may be of benefit to them.

Counsellors may promote growth and change in their clients by recognizing possibilities of higher, transpersonal areas for growth which clients could orient themselves to. Counsellors may be able to enhance the effectiveness of their services by incorporating or recognizing, in an unbiased fashion, the inherent values of traditional spiritual exercises to promote insight, reflectivity, and sensitivity in their clients. They might be more open to value spiritual exercises of various faiths such as Buddhism, Taoism, Judaism, Hinduism or Islam.

The potential of the inner guide technique for healing is great, and correspondingly, the potential for harm. Judd, Burrows, and Dennerstein (1986) examined the closely related method of hypnosis to discover whether therapists had observed adverse effects. They concluded that adverse effects were no more frequent than with other psychotherapies and where problems do occur, appear to be associated more with lack of knowledge and experience or with poor technique than with hypnosis itself. The results of this research are an initial exploration which might illustrate how the inner guide can be a valuable source of psychological, spiritual, and/or physical guidance. It may serve as a basis from which to evaluate the experiences of clients using the technique. These results may also serve to inform future research regarding the efficacy, safety, and mechanism of utilizing the inner guide technique.

Using an inner guidance technique may create the possibility of connecting to energies on the spiritual continuum. One can ask directly to talk to the higher mind or one can lead a person into the higher mind through a meditative procedure. In dealing with this higher mind, the counsellor and/or client must be careful not to confuse the actual spiritual energy with another inner personality or free floating spirit. The inner guidance in these case studies gave a perspective, it did not solve problems outright. It does not create pressure. Amazing insight can come from such parts of ourselves. When such a voice is contacted, a strong empowerment
may take place. The counsellor may thus help the client connect to inner sources of strength and wisdom.

Implications for Future Research

Given that inner guidance may be a spontaneous experience and may also be a counselling technique for personal and transpersonal growth and development research aimed at understanding it seems well worth the effort. Yet there is a large gap in existing research. The narrative biographical approach contributes significantly to the holistic, contextual understanding of inner guidance. However, this study may conclude with more questions than it answers. Possible suggestions for future directions with inner guidance are:

1. To study the contextual relationship between self-development (i.e., quest for meaning or life mission) and use of inner guidance by sampling populations of either gender and various ages, cultures, religious affiliations, etc.

2. Particularly challenging would be a longitudinal study which could compare those who do not continue to relate to and use inner guidance with those who continue to work with inner guidance after being introduced through guided imagery. What would the factors be that predict continued use and the factors predicting discontinued use? Are there any situations or individuals for whom a connection with inner guidance would be contraindicated?

3. The experiences of Felicity and Janine suggest that an exploration of childhood experiences with inner guidance would be fruitful. How common are they? Do they lead to a connection in adult life?

4. Each of the participants in this study made reference to intuitive knowing and an increase in these experiences after consistent contact with guidance. Are they the same thing? What is the relationship between intuitive experiences, and inner guidance?

Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore the meaning of inner guidance experiences within the context of narrative biographies. To date there has been little research to substantiate
the claims of those who advocate the use of an inner guide imagery technique. The primary aim of this study was to contribute a holistic, contextual understanding of inner guidance experiences.

This thesis utilized a narrative methodology within a multiple case study design. Intensive interviews were conducted with three women who have worked with their inner guidance for a number of years. These interviews were transcribed, analyzed, and presented as individual narratives, which were validated by the respective participant. A general narrative pattern was formulated based on these individual narratives.

Although there are major differences in the individual biographies of the three participants there appears to be a common pattern of experience with the phenomena which transcends the differences. For example, the presence or absence in childhood of experiences with inner guidance. However, the common theme in developing a long term and beneficial relationship with inner guidance was the individual's personal desire to change and to accept that which guidance offered. This study may also raise the awareness of counsellors regarding inner guidance experiences in general and in particular their potential for fostering personal and transpersonal growth, a sense of belonging to a reality greater than oneself and serving society.
REFERENCES


Appendix C: Interview Questions

First Interview:

1. If your life was a story, how many chapters would there be? Where would each chapter begin and end? What would the titles of these chapters be?

2. What early experiences within your family, at school, with friends, in the community, or at work were especially important in making you who you are?

3. How did your early experiences lead you to have or accept an inner guide in your life?

Second Interview:

1. Could you tell me how you first became involved with an inner guide? What was that experience like?

2. Can you describe how you presently experience your inner guide? How is your present experience the same as the initial experience? How is it different?

3. What is it like to have an inner guide? How would you characterize your relationship with your inner guide?

Third Interview:

1. Given what you have said about your life before having an inner guide, and your life since you began working with an inner guide, how do you understand the inner guide in your life?

2. What sense do you make of this experience in your life?

3. What does it mean to you to have an inner guide in your life?

Fourth Meeting:

1. Participants will be asked to review the narrative I have written based on the material collected in the three interviews. They will be asked to comment on the accurateness of the narrative, and to suggest any corrections, changes or revisions that they wish.