LIFE-COURSE DEVELOPMENT OF REFORMED MARITALLY VIOLENT MEN

by

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ABSTRACT

How do boys grow up to be maritally violent? How do maritally violent men reform themselves and become violence-free? Little is known. The purpose of the study was to uncover reformed maritally violent men's own accounts of (a) how they developed through life, and (b) how and why these men stopped being maritally violent. A life story was collected in telephone and/or face-to-face interviews from each of six reformed maritally violent men turned into counsellors specializing in marital violence issues. The men ranged in age from 35 to 60, and were not only physical violence-free but also psychological violence-free. The length of time physical violence-free ranged from 10 to 23 years. A life-story method was used in order to understand developmental trajectories of manifestation and cessation of marital violence. Specifically, several developmental themes that could explain the men's use of violence/abuse in intimate relationships were identified: (a) communication difficulties, (b) distant relationships with fathers, (c) male socialization, (d) lack of proper role models, and (e) leaving home early. In addition, the processes of psychological as well as behavioural change were revealed. The study documented life-changing moments (i.e., turning points) and the nature of the therapeutic group counselling program that promoted transformation. Some of the results pertinent to cessation of violence/abuse and its maintenance can be explained by social controls such as (a) attachment to significant others, b) commitment to societal goals and personal aspirations (e.g., social change, career), c) involvement in conventional activities (e.g., work, family and social activities), and d) moral belief (Hirschi, 1969). Finally, the life stories portrayed the men's understanding of their current selves. The men not only ceased their violence/abuse, but also became generative adults who strove to be better persons. The study documented their generativity manifested in their fatherhood and the work they were doing as counsellors.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

"I once was lost, but now am found;

Was blind, but now I see" (Newton, 1779).

1.1 Background to the Problem

According to Statistics Canada (2005), 7% of married women (including common-law relationships) were victims of marital violence between 1999 and 2004.

In a Canadian study, 27% of women reported to have been abused physically by a husband, live-in partner, boyfriend, or date (Randall & Haskell, 1995). Women who are abused by their intimate partners have to live not only with terror but also with fear of being injured. According to Statistics Canada (2005), in 2004: (a) 44% of female victims of marital violence reported injury as a result of violence, (b) 13% of female victims reported that they sought medical attention, (c) 34% of female victims reported that they fear for their life, and (d) 29% of female victims reported that they have to take time off from their daily activities due to the violence. Campbell and Sheridan (1989) estimated that approximately 20% to 50% of all female emergency patients suffered from injuries inflicted by their marital partners. Indeed, "domestic violence causes more injuries to women than automobile accidents, muggings, and rapes combined" (Koop, cited in Barnett, Miller-Perrin, & Perrin, 1995, p.187). In addition, marital violence calls are identified as the largest category of emergency calls to the police (Gelles & Cornell, 1990).

The most serious form of marital violence is a homicide. In Canada, since 1974, 77% of all the spousal homicides have been against women (Statistics Canada, 2002). In 2003 in Canada, a total of 78 people were killed by their spouse, of which 64 were female victims (Statistics Canada, 2005). According to Crawford and Gartner (1992), 551 of 896 (61%) killings of women in Ontario from 1974 through 1990 were wife murders. Of the wife murders, 297 cases had recorded histories of marital violence; 166 cases had records of threats to the woman; and 130 cases had records of prior police intervention. Thus, marital violence is a serious problem in which women's physical and emotional well-

being is damaged, and its costs to public health care and the criminal justice system are taxing.

The present study is one endeavour toward an answer to the marital violence problem. Specifically, this study aims to understand the roots and cessation of marital violence by examining the lives of those maritally violent men who have reformed.

1.2 The Roots and Cessation of Marital Violence

How do boys grow up to be maritally violent? How do maritally violent men reform themselves and become violence-free? As far as the roots of marital violence go, evidence indicates that there is a link between childhood variables (e.g., witnessing interparental violence) and adulthood manifestation of marital violence (e.g., Whitfield, Anda, Dube, & Felitti, 2003). Currently available research is predominantly correlational. Such research informs one of what childhood factors are related to marital violence; however, it cannot reveal how and why these factors contribute to marital violence.

Likewise, most studies that examined men's cessation of marital violence were quantitative. In general, these studies measured violence at pre- and post-treatment to evaluate success of a particular intervention. In other words, they aimed to examine what would work to change men. Reviews of these studies (Riesen, 2003; Rosenfeld, 1992) indicate, however, that there exist serious methodological shortcomings (e.g., large attrition rates, low response rage at follow-ups). Thus, the majority of currently available research cannot adequately inform one of which particular intervention works, to say the least of how and why. Given the observation that most quantitative studies suffer from methodological shortcomings, how and why a maritally violent man becomes violence-free may be better examined in a qualitative endeavour.

Currently, there are only a few qualitative studies (Dobash, Dobash, Cavanagh, & Lewis, 2000; Gondolf & Hanneken, 1987; Stefanakis, 1998) that examined cessation of marital violence as the result of men's participation in a group counselling program. Thus, there is a significant shortage of this type of research. Moreover, little is known about how maritally violent men may become reformed without participating in counselling programs, as some do (e.g., Margolin & Fernandez, 1987).

Another reason for why current research cannot answer the questions presented at the beginning of this section is that current research is lacking a developmental perspective. How do boys grow up to be young men, and how do young men develop into middle aged men, in a context of marital violence? Little is known. In sum, only a few studies can answer how and why questions regarding the roots and cessation of marital violence. In order for this field of research to advance, how and why questions should be examined, in a qualitative endeavour, using a developmental perspective.

1.3 The Life-Course Developmental Perspective

A life-course developmentalist, Caspi (1998), has asked, "Why do some individuals change and others do not?" (p.367). This is a legitimate question also in marital violence research. Why do some maritally violent men reform themselves and others do not?

The central thesis of a life-course perspective is that individuals continue to develop throughout their entire life course (Baltes, Lindenberger, & Staudinger, 1998). According to Caspi (1998), "A life-course perspective is particularly suited to study processes of...change" (p.366). Similarly, other life-course theorists argued that the best way to examine a significant change (e.g., cessation of marital violence) and its lasting effects was to follow an individual through his/her life course (Baltes, 1987; Caspi; Clausen, 1993; McAdams, 1990). The present study will apply a life-course perspective in an examination of lives of men who ceased to be violent. To date, there has been no study that examined marital violence issues from a life-course developmental perspective, using qualitative methodology.

1.4 Life-Story Method

How can one study the lives of reformed maritally violent men using qualitative methodology? In the present study, a life-story method will be applied. Specifically, reformed maritally violent men will be interviewed and asked to share their biographical information that includes their earliest memories, turning points, peak experiences, and future plans. When Maslow (1971) studied self-actualization, he examined self-actualized individuals. When one aspires to study cessation of marital violence, shouldn't he/she

examine those men who ceased to be violent? Following Maslow's lead, this study will examine directly the lives of reformed maritally violent men.

A life story refers to "the person's subjective, retrospective report of past experiences and their meaning to that person" (Clausen, 1993, p. 192). The life-story method was chosen because, as Clausen (1998) stated, "Life stories provide knowledge of how the person sees his or her past and present life and the influences that helped to shape it" (p.191). The present study is particularly interested in deriving the following themes from men's life stories: (a) the roots of marital violence, (b) the processes of reformation, (c) continuities (e.g., constant poverty or academic success throughout childhood and adolescence), (d) turning points (e.g., first job, marriage), and (e) the effects of a certain time and place on developing individuals (e.g., growing up in a First Nation's reserve in Canada in the 1950s).

1.5 Purpose of the Study

Marital violence is a serious social problem. Current evidence indicates that little is known about how and why individuals grow up to be maritally violent and then reform themselves to be violence-free. A study using a developmental perspective and qualitative methodology appears to be promising in order to examine the roots and cessation of marital violence. In the present study, marital violence issues will be explored from a perspective of life-course development, using a life-story method. Specifically, the purpose of the study is to uncover reformed maritally violent men's own accounts of (a) how they developed through life, and (b) how and why these men stopped being maritally violent.

1.6 Defining Marital Violence

In the present study, marital violence is defined as constituting physical violence. Referring to the items from the Conflict Tactics Scales (Straus, 1979), this study defines physical violence as including the following acts: (a) throwing something at spouse; (b) push, grab, or shove spouse; (c) slap spouse; (d) kick, bite, or hit with fist; (e) hit or try to hit spouse with something; (f) beat up spouse; (g) choke spouse; (h) threaten spouse with knife or gun; and (i) use a knife or gun. The study concerns only male-to-female violence

in marriage. Cases concerning same-sex couples or wife-to-husband violence were not included for examination. The study considers co-habiting as well as dating couples as married.

Literature relevant to the present study will be reviewed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter critically reviews contemporary literature regarding marital violence, a life-course developmental perspective, and methods to study lives. The literature is addressed under the following headings:

* Becoming maritally violent

* Changing the pattern of marital violence

* Life-course developmental perspective

* Methods to study lives using a life-course developmental perspective

The chapter ends with a summary of the literature reviewed and a presentation of the research questions.

2.1 Becoming Maritally Violent

How do boys grow up to be maritally abusive men? In the following section, four theoretical models that can shed light on this question will be discussed. These are the developmental, social learning, socio-environmental, and biological models.

2.1.1 Developmental models. Previous studies found a strong association between becoming a wife abuser and the following childhood factors: (a) being physically (Bevan & Higgins, 2002; Kalmuss, 1984; Murphy, Meyer, & O'Leary, 1993; Rosenbaum & O'Leary, 1981; Whitfield et al., 2003) and sexually abused (Bevan & Higgins; Whitfield et al.), (b) witnessing interparental violence (Bevan & Higgins; Kalmuss; Markowitz, 2001; McBurnett et al., 2001; Murphy et al., 1993; Rosenbaum & O'Leary; Whitfield et al.), and (c) being insecurely attached to a primary caregiver (Dutton, Van Ginkel, & Starzomski, 1995; Wallace & Nosco, 1993). Attachment theory is the most powerful psychological concept to demonstrate continuous effects of child development on adult adjustment. It suggests that in order for a human infant to develop optimally, he or she must be securely attached to a primary caregiver (Bowlby, 1980). Securely attached infants develop a sense of trust and self-worth. Insecurely attached infants, on the other hand, are anxious, fearful, and difficult to soothe. (Ainsworth, 1973; Bowlby). Some attachment theorists (e.g., Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991) have argued that an insecurely

attached infant will grow up to be an adult who is not able to form satisfactory personal relationships.

According to Dutton and his colleagues (1995), a man's abusive personality is formed as a result of and as a reaction to early trauma. In their trauma model, Dutton et al. (1995) identified three traumatic experiences in childhood as risk factors for a boy's becoming a wife abuser in his adulthood: witnessing interparental physical violence, being shamed by a parent, and being insecurely attached to a parent. Examples of parental shaming include being scolded and humiliated in public, punished randomly, and criticised harshly (e.g., "You are the worst thing that happened to me") (Dutton et al.). Dutton et al. argued that parental shaming, particularly by a father, can be a powerful source of trauma for a male child.

Other studies found a link between becoming a wife abuser and the following three childhood factors, all of which can be described as stressful events: (a) growing up in an unstable family environment (e.g., parental divorce) (Bevan & Higgins, 2002), (b) being neglected (Bevan & Higgins), and (c) being harshly punished (Markowitz, 2001; Simons, Wu, Johnson, & Conger, 1995). In summary, developmental models suggest that childhood trauma that stems from experiences of being maltreated and/or insecurely attached are great risk factors for a boy to grow up to be a maritally violent man.

2.1.2 Social learning models. According to Bandura (1971), children learn behaviours and moral values by observing and modeling adults around them. Numerous studies presented results that are consistent with this model. For example, as discussed earlier, those boys who are exposed to interparental violence are more likely to become wife abusers in their adulthood than their counterparts who are not exposed to such violence (Gelles, 1997; Hotaling & Sugarman, 1986). Similarly, Straus (1991) has theorised that the use of physical punishment by parents may send children a message that the use of violence is legitimate in order to attain one's goal (i.e., to discipline well). Adults are not the only role models for boys. Boys can learn many unspoken rules and values from our culture and society. For example, our media have a tendency to glorify and justify violence. A study by Heath, Kruttschnitt, and Ward (1986) found that a combination of amount of children's TV viewing and children's being abused by either parent was associated with later criminal behaviours in adulthood. In a longitudinal study,

Huesmann, Moise-Titus, Podolski, and Eron (2003) found a link between TV-violence viewing at ages 6 to 10 and adult aggressive behaviour including spousal assaults about 15 years later for a cohort growing up in the 1970s and 1980s. In addition, conventionally boys are encouraged to be tough, reserved, aggressive, and competitive (Levant et al, 1992). Moreover, our society has a tendency to tolerate wife abuse, which appears to stem from cultural norms that support patriarchical dominance in marriage (Birns, Cascardi, & Meyer, 1994; Yllö & Straus, 1990). For example, a strong association between marital violence and patriarchical dominance was found in Brownridge's (2002) study.

2.1.3 Socio-environmental models. Previous studies found the following socio-ecological conditions to be associated with marital violence: (a) poverty (Gelles, 1997), (b) stress (Barnett, Fagan, & Booker, 1991; Seltzer & Kalmuss, 1988), (c) unemployment (Finn, 1985), (d) substance abuse (Chartas & Culbreth, 2001; McBurnett, et al., 2001; O'Farrell, Hutton, & Murphy, 1999; Schumacher, Fals-Stewart, & Leonard, 2003), (e) men's lack of community involvement (Gelles, 1997), (f) wives with educational attainment and occupational status higher than their husbands (Gelles, 1974), and (g) marital dissatisfaction (O'Leary et al., 1989). These factors are reported to be interrelated. For example, much of men's stress stems from poverty and unemployment as well as their marital dissatisfaction. In addition to these adulthood factors, one study by Corvo and Carpenter (2000) found a link between paternal substance abuse in a man's family of origin and his adulthood violence toward his spouse.

2.1.4 Biological models. The literature on criminology informs us that genes and birth complications are associated with adult criminal behaviour (Kandel & Mednick, 1991; Walters, 1992). However, to date, to the author's knowledge, there has been no study that examined how marital violence is specifically related to each of heredity and birth complications. Two biological factors that were reported to be associated specifically with marital violence are a history of head injuries and a man's instinct to control his female partner's sexuality. After examining the medical history of maritally violent men, Rosenbaum and his colleagues (Cohen, Rosenbaum, Kane, Warnken, & Benjamin, 1999; Rosenbaum et al., 1994) found a strong association between head injury and batterer status. Further examination of this link revealed, however, that head injury

alone cannot explain a man's aggression toward his spouse. Rosenbaum et al. found that a combination of head injury; neuropsychological impairments in such domains as learning, memory, and attention; and levels of emotional distress to be the strongest predictors of being a batterer. It would be meaningful to investigate how many head injuries in boys are caused by corporal punishment by their parents because, as mentioned earlier, harsh punishment by a parent is reported to be related to adult marital violence.

Another biological perspective that may shed light on marital violence is that male-to-female marital violence stems from a man's need to control female sexuality (Wilson & Daly, 1993). According to some evolutionary psychologists, a human male has an urge to pass his genes down to the next generation. Consequently, he has an innate motive to make sure that his mate(s) will bear his offspring, but not others', because he is not interested in preserving other men's genes by providing for children to whom he is genetically unrelated. The results of a study by Peters, Shackelford, and Buss (2002) support the view described above. Given the study's finding that marital violence rates decreased as the women aged (i.e., as the women's reproductive value decreased), these feminist researchers concluded that men resort to violence in order to control the sexual behaviour of a female partner during her reproductive years. Although it is an interesting hypothesis that requires further testing, a man's instinct to control his female partner's sexuality alone does not appear to explain the occurrence of marital violence. Evidence suggests that there exists female-to-male marital violence (Straus & Gelles, 1986) as well as violence among same-sex couples (Island & Letellier, 1991), the nature of which cannot be explained by an evolutionary psychological perspective.

In the previous section, developmental, social learning, socio-environmental, and biological models of the roots of marital violence in men were discussed. All the studies described above are correlational. As Gelles (1997) and Dutton (1999) pointed out, one should bear in mind the fact that none of these studies support causal relationships. For example, the majority of those boys who witnessed parental violence did not become wife abusers; rather boys who witnessed marital violence were more likely to grow up to be maritally violent than their counterparts who did not have such an experience.

Likewise, alcoholism does not cause marital violence; rather maritally violent men are more likely to abuse alcohol than their counterparts who are not maritally violent.

In addition, no particular variable alone can determine marital violence. From a quantitative perspective, marital violence is a result of complex interactions between multiple variables that are interrelated. Little is known about how these variables interact within an individual as he develops through childhood, adolescence, and young adulthood. In qualitative inquiry, variables that may contribute to the making of maritally abusive men are not identified by a researcher in advance. Rather, the processes of becoming maritally violent are revealed in men's own words. In sum, from a qualitative perspective, abusive men's lived experiences are recognized as the data source. Studies that examined the roots of marital violence using qualitative methodology are scarce. What has been largely missing in this field of research is an exploration of men's own accounts of how they became maritally violent.

In the next section, the literature pertaining to how maritally violent men reform themselves into violence-free individuals will be discussed.

2.2 Changing the Pattern of Marital Violence

How do men change from being maritally violent to non-violent? From a methodological perspective, there are two types of intervention studies of maritally abusive men, that is, quantitative and qualitative. In general, quantitative inquiry aims to answer what works to change men. Qualitative inquiry, on the other hand, tries to answer not only what works but also how and why it works. Thus, in order to answer the question asked at the beginning of this section, a qualitative study seems to be a good direction to take. Nonetheless, both qualitative and quantitative studies of intervention with maritally violent men will be discussed below.

2.2.1 Quantitative studies. In general, quantitative studies aim to quantify violence at pre- and post-treatment to evaluate success of a particular intervention. The definition of criteria for success of an intervention varies from one study to another. Some studies use reduction of violence as an index of success (e.g., Jaffe, Wolfe, Telford, & Austin, 1986), and others use cessation of violence as an outcome variable (e.g., Rosenbaum, 1986). How does one go about quantifying violence? Previous studies

measured violence in two ways - the Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS; Straus, 1979) and police records.

The CTS is, to date, the most widely used measure of how members of a family deal with conflict. The CTS measures (a) the specific types of tactics used to solve conflicts between family members (e.g., discussed calmly, threatened to hit, kicked) and (b) the frequency of each tactic used during a given time period (e.g., the preceding year). The CTS contains three separate subscales: (a) Reasoning, (b) Verbal Aggression, and (c) Physical Aggression. The Reasoning subscale assesses the use of rational discussion, argument, and reasoning when resolving the conflict. The Verbal Aggression subscale assesses the use of verbal and nonverbal acts (e.g., stormed out of the room) which symbolically hurt the other, or the use of threat to hurt the other. The Physical Aggression subscale assesses the use of physical force. The internal consistency reliability coefficients of husband-to-wife CTS for each of the three subscales are reported to range from .70 to .74 for Reasoning, from .70 to .73 for Verbal Aggression, and from .87 to .88 for Physical Aggression (Straus, 1990a).

Straus (1990a) argued that there was evidence of concurrent and construct validity of the CTS. Critiques of the CTS, however, question its validity for the following reasons. First, an examination of CTS scores of both husbands and wives indicated that men tended to under-report their violence (Edleson & Brygger, 1986). Thus, men's self-reports of their violence on the CTS may not be accurate. Second, the one-year referent period usually used in the CTS is too long for accurate recall (Straus, 1990b). Finally, because some CTS items ask men to disclose shameful, embarrassing, and private matters, there is an expected risk of "high refusal rates, arousal of antagonism in respondents, and self-defensively distorted responses" (Straus, 1990a, p.35), all of which can be a threat to the validity of this measure. Other major shortcomings of the CTS pointed out in the literature are that: (a) it assesses conflict-related violence only; that is, it does not tap the occurrence of purely malevolent acts (e.g., "As soon as he got home, he slammed me against the wall"); (b) it does not assess the contexts in which marital violence occurs (e.g., the relative size and strength of the persons, the nature of the relationship); and (c) it assesses only a limited set of violent acts (Straus, 1990b). In summary, caution should be exercised when interpreting the results of CTS-based studies

(e.g., Edleson & Syers, 1991; Gondolf, 2000) because there is evidence to suggest that there exist threats to the validity of this measure.

Another way of measuring violence is to refer to police records. There are a number of advantages to relying on police records rather than on the CTS-based victims' or abusers' self-reports (Hirschel, Hutchison, & Dean, 1992). First, it is economical because it is not necessary to locate informants at follow-ups and conduct extensive interviews. Second, police records have minimal case attrition. Finally, the violent incidents recorded in police records are validated by an independent third party (i.e., the police officers) (Hirschel et al., 1992). Disadvantages of relying solely on police records are that they can identify only those assaults that have occurred in a certain jurisdiction or country (Dutton, Bodnarchuk, Kropp, Hart, & Ogloff, 1997; Shepard, 1992), and reassault rates reported in police records are an extremely conservative measure of recidivism (Hirschel et al.). Thus, caution should be exercised when interpreting results based solely on police records (e.g., Berk, Campbell, Klap, & Western, 1992; Dutton et al., 1997; Palmer, Brown, & Barrera, 1992; Pate & Hamilton, 1992; Shepard; Sherman, Smith, Schmidt, & Rogan, 1992; Sherman & Berk, 1984).

How competent are quantitative studies of intervention with maritally violent men in terms of their assessments of violence? No study has yet achieved methodological rigor. Major methodological problems include: (a) large attrition rates in men's treatment programs (Gondolf, 1999), (b) informants' low response rates at follow-ups (Steinman, 1990), (c) small sample sizes (Palmer et al., 1992), (d) inclusion of both court-ordered and voluntary participants in the same treatment programs (Hamberger & Hastings, 1990), (e) exclusion of potentially difficult participants from the treatment programs (Dutton et al., 1997), (f) short follow-up period (e.g., Pate & Hamilton, 1992), and (g) wilful and non-wilful underreporting of violent cases by both men and their victims (Berk et al., 1992). In addition, the fact that quantitative studies use different definitions (e.g., physical violence, verbal abuse) and measures of violence (i.e., the CTS, police records) makes it difficult to evaluate and compare these studies to one another (M. Russell, personal communication, January 20, 2003).

2.2.2 Qualitative studies. To date, only a few studies documented abusive men's change from violent to non-violent behaviour using qualitative methodology. Gondolf

and Hanneken (1987) documented men's accounts of their own behavioural and cognitive changes as the result of their participation in group counselling programs. Specifically, the 12 reformed batterers who participated in this study described their abuse as stemming from a sense of failed masculinity. These men further revealed that cessation of marital violence was the result of their emotional development (i.e., enhanced self-esteem, increased capacity for empathy) which was facilitated by their participation in the counselling program. Another example is the study by Stefanakis (1998) in which he interviewed 20 reformed maritally violent men after at least 2 years of desistence. Stefanakis documented: (a) the men's understanding of the processes of change, (b) how they negotiated with non-violent identities, (c) how they actively maintained their non-violent self, (d) how our cultural standards may condone the use of violence.

Lastly, in their intervention study, Dobash et al. (2000) interviewed 122 maritally violent men and their spouses. They presented the processes of cessation of marital violence by examining qualitative as well as quantitative data. The accounts of the participants of their study included: (a) the nature of their relationships and violence, (b) the effects of interventions, and (c) changes in their lives. Dobash et al.'s study, however, did not demonstrate such psychological growth in their reformed participants and their partners as observed in the studies by Gondolf and Hanneken as well as by Stefanakis. Qualitative documentations such as the above are extremely valuable because they have implication for the development of future interventions.

In this section, studies of intervention with maritally violent men were reviewed. Given the observation that most quantitative studies suffer from serious methodological shortcomings, maritally violent men's change may be better examined in a qualitative endeavour. Specifically, there are five reasons for this argument. First, evidence suggests that there exist threats to the validity of the CTS (Straus, 1979) which has been used in the majority of quantitative studies, with the exception of police-based ones. Second, reliance on police records is not free of criticism either, mainly because police records are an extremely conservative measure of marital violence (Hirschel et al., 1992). Third, in-depth qualitative research has advantages over survey research in terms of level of specificity, degree of richness, and amount of data (Straus, 1990b). For this reason, Straus

argues for the necessity of exploring marital violence issues with both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Fourth, qualitative inquiry in which variables contributing to cessation or reduction of violence are not identified in advance seems to be more appropriate when examining change in abusive men's behaviour. A few counselling intervention studies (e.g., Dutton et al., 1997) suggested that there was a relatively high proportion of program drop-outs who did not re-assault their partners. What this phenomenon indicates is that some men may become violence-free without any intervention (Rosenfeld, 1992). Research on abusive men's change without intervention, however, is totally lacking in the current literature (Williams & Hawkins, 1989). Why don't we just try to listen and understand what a reformed wife abuser has to say, instead of predetermining and measuring variables that may or may not have contributed to their change? Finally, there is a significant shortage of qualitative research in this field. In summary, qualitative documentation of cession of marital violence warrants further exploration.

In the preceding sections, how boys become maritally violent and how maritally violent men are reformed to be violence-free were discussed. In general, this field of research takes a snapshot approach. For example, studies found that those children who were abused and/or witnessed interparental violence were more likely to become wife abusers compared to their counterparts who were not exposed to such violence in childhood (Gelles, 1997). Current research, however, does not inform us what happened to those maltreated boys in between their childhood and adulthood. We have several random "snapshots" (Giele & Elder, 1998) illustrating these boys' developmental pathways, but we can never totally understand the whole picture of how an individual comes to become a wife abuser and then is reformed based on these snapshots. One way to study how and why people become what they are is to use a life-course developmental perspective (Clausen, 1993), which will be presented in the following section.

2.3 Life-Course Developmental Perspective

The purpose of this dissertation is to examine the lives of those men who stopped being maritally violent from a perspective of life-course developmental psychology. In the field of research on human development, the terms "life-span" and "life-course"

development are used interchangeably. As Baltes et al. (1998) pointed out, those scholars who are sociologically oriented and/or who conduct biographical study of lives often prefer to use the term "life-course" development (e.g., Bertaux, 1981; Clausen, 1993; Elder, 1998a); those who are psychologically oriented and/or who are interested in mechanisms and processes of developmental adaptations over a life time have come to use the term "life-span" development (e.g., Baltes, 1987). Because the present study will rely on biographical data to explore the lives of men, following the lead of Bertaux, among others, the term "life-course" development will be used throughout this dissertation. It should be noted, however, that although "life-course" is a term most associated with the sociological/biographical perspective, the present study has a strong psychological orientation. The study should be recognized as developmental psychological that uses the term "life-course."

In the subsequent subsections, a life-course developmental perspective will be presented. In addition, rationale for using a life-course developmental perspective in the present study will be discussed.

2.3.1 What is a life-course perspective? According to Clausen (1998),

> The life course is a developmental process in which the individual moves from helpless organism to more or less autonomous person and which (a) takes place in a changing cultural, social structural, and historical setting; (b) increasingly involves individual choices as to the direction taken; and (c) almost always entails both continuities and discontinuities. (p.196)

Similarly, Elder (1998b) described the life course as "a sequence of socially defined, age-graded events and roles that the individual enacts over time" (p.941).

The central assumption of life-course developmental psychology is that individual development does not stop at adulthood when our biological growth reaches its maturity (Baltes et al., 1998). Rather, individuals continue to develop throughout their entire life course. Thus, from a life-course perspective, development refers to lifelong adaptive processes (Baltes et al.). Four key concepts are used in a discussion of a life-course developmental perspective. They are trajectory, transitions, turning points, and lives in time and place, and will be described below.

2.3.2 Trajectory. A trajectory is defined as "a pathway or line of development over the life span" (Sampson & Laub, 1993, p.8), or "the course of a life" (Clausen, 1993, p.196), and it is marked by a sequence of transitions.

2.3.3 Transition. Transitions are specific life events such as graduating from high school and becoming a parent, and are embedded in trajectories (Clausen, 1998). For example, work transitions such as being promoted or laid off are core elements of a work life trajectory; and family transitions such as a birth of the first child and children's leaving home are key features of a parental trajectory (i.e., a family life trajectory). As Elder (1998b) stated, "Transitions make up life trajectories, and they provide clues to developmental change" (p.7).

2.3.4 Turning points. Clausen (1998) defined a turning point as "a time or event when one took a different direction from that in which one had been travelling" (p.202). Likewise, Hareven and Masaoka (1988) defined it as "a process involving the alteration of life path, a 'course correction'" (p. 274). Consider the following hypothetical scenario. A man stopped using physical as well as verbal aggression toward his wife. Would this event be termed a turning point of this man's life? If he perceives that life after his cessation of marital violence has been dramatically different from what it had been before, then, this phenomenon is identified as a turning point.

As may be speculated, the terms transitions and turning points are often used interchangeably to describe similar types of life events. The major difference between transitions and turning points is that transitions are objectively defined life events or role changes (e.g., from a student to an employee); and turning points are subjectively perceived significant events or periods of time in life trajectories. For example, marriage per se is only an expected transition; however, if an individual reviewed his/her life and perceived that marriage had had dramatic effects on his/her subsequent life trajectory (Clausen, 1998; Sampson & Laub, 1993), then it is termed as a turning point rather than a transition. Indeed, Hareven and Masaoka (1988) described turning points as "perceptual roadmarks along the life course[,] ... [representing] individuals' subjective assessments of continuities and discontinuities over their lives" (p.272).

Other terms often used interchangeably with a turning point are change (Caspi, 1998; Laub & Sampson, 1993) and discontinuity (Elder, 1998b). The term used to

indicate the opposite of change and discontinuity is continuity. There seem to be two levels of change: one is real and the other is the mere absence of continuity (Caspi; Caspi & Moffitt, 1993). Consider the following hypothetical situation. A man stopped physically abusing his wife; however, he did not stop abusing her verbally and continued to treat her with disrespect. In this case, there was an absence of continuity of physical violence. It can be said that this man has modified his behaviours; however, one should conclude that real and lasting psychological change did not occur. One of the purposes of this study is to explore real and lasting effects of men's cessation of marital violence on their subsequent life trajectories. Indeed, as Caspi has argued, "Real people show real change over time, and the trajectories of real lives can be altered both by chance events and by planned interventions" (p.366). Evidence for this statement can be found in the three longitudinal studies on turning points discussed below.

The first study began in the mid 1960s in London, UK. The research participants were girls who were receiving institutional care as the result of severe dysfunction in their families of origin. These girls were rated as more disturbed emotionally and behaviourally than a control group of girls who were non-institution-reared. The second wave of data was gathered when the women were between 21 and 27 years of age. Quinton, Rutter, and Liddle (1984) found that ex-care women did poorly on measures of psychosocial functioning and were experiencing difficulties in parenting (continuity). Their data indicated, however, that some ex-care women were well adjusted and showing good parenting (change). Rutter and his colleagues further found that the major turning point for these well-adjusted ex-care women was a stable marriage with a supportive husband.

The second longitudinal study began in the late 1930s in Boston, Massachusetts when the research participants were male adolescents (Glueck & Glueck, 1959). These young males were 500 delinquents and a control group of 500 nondelinquents who grew up in the same urban slum environment. In order to test whether criminal activities persisted from childhood to adulthood, Sampson and Laub (1993) reanalysed the Gluecks' data in the mid 1980s. These researchers found strong continuity in criminal behaviours from childhood to adulthood. Their analyses also revealed, however, that there were those delinquent boys who grew out of their criminal activities and became

not only nondeviant but also responsible husbands, fathers, and employees. What made these boys change? Sampson and Laub found that turning points such as stable employment and good marriages contributed to these boys' deterrence from criminal activities. They argued that emotional investment in and strong commitment to adult social bonds (e.g., family, work, community) could modify deviant developmental trajectories that had been continuing from childhood.

The last study examined the life-course development of children who grew up in the Great Depression (Elder, 1986, 1987). Elder found that entering military service, especially at a young age, contributed to the betterment of disadvantaged young males' subsequent lives considerably in the following three ways. First, the military pulled the youth completely out of their past (the "knifing-off" of past experience), and gave them an opportunity to start new lives. Second, the military played a role as the "time-out" during which the youth could evaluate their past and contemplate their future directions. Finally, the military broadened the youth's perspectives and gave them a chance to obtain higher education, training, and marketable skills. According to Elder, for those disadvantaged youth military service was a turning point that redirected their lives forever.

The three studies described above inform us of the importance of examining both change and continuity as well as the effects of turning points that can redirect an individual's life trajectories in order to understand human development.

2.4 Rationale for the Life-Course Developmental Perspective

As Elder (1998b) wrote, "The multiple trajectories [e.g., education, work, family] of individuals and their developmental implications are basic elements of the 'life course,' as conceptualized in research and theory" (p.2). Applications of life course theory and its contribution to an understanding human development are well documented in the existing literature (Clausen, 1993; Cohler, Hostetler, & Boxer, 1998; Conger & Elder, 1994; Elder, 1998a, 1998b; Elder, Modell, & Parke, 1993; Ge, Lorenz, Conger, Elder, & Simons, 1994; Levinson, 1978; Neugarten & Datan, 1973; Rutter, 1996; Sampson & Laub, 1993). According to Elder (1998b), "Human development is embedded in the life course and historical time. Consequently, its proper study challenges us to take

all life stages into account" (p.9). In sum, taking a life-course perspective is a proper way to study how people develop through life. The present study will examine the lives of those men who stopped being maritally violent using the life-course developmental perspective. In addition, this study aims to reveal those men's accounts of how they come to cease to be maritally violent. There are three reasons for why the life-course developmental perspective should be used in this study.

First, the best way to understand human behaviour is to study it in its developmental context (Bertaux & Kohli, 1984; McAdams, 1990; Murray, 1938; Runyan, 1982). Following this thesis, articulated originally by Murray and most recently by McAdams, the present study views an individual as an organism that lived the past, is living the present, and will live the future, and aims to examine "the dynamic wholeness of lives from birth to death" (McAdams, p.150). Consequently, this study considers that a mere examination of cessation of marital violence is meaningless unless it is studied together with men's developmental trajectories through life. How can we truly understand men's cessation of marital violence if we don't know how they became violent in the first place? In addition, the best way to examine a significant turning point (e.g., cessation of marital violence) and its lasting effects is to follow an individual through his/her life course (Baltes, 1987; Caspi, 1998; Clausen, 1993; McAdams). As Caspi pointed out, "A study of real change involves a long-term follow-up" (p.369). One important purpose of this study is to examine how cessation of marital violence occurs and the enduring effects of cessation on men's subsequent life trajectories. A life-course perspective is an appropriate way to examine such developmental processes.

Second, a life-course perspective appears to be particularly suited to the study of marital violence issues. Consider continuity in a context of marital violence, for example. Although childhood variables such as being maltreated (Murphy et al., 1993) were found to be associated with adulthood perpetration of marital violence, these variables have not been considered as continuities in the marital violence literature. They have, rather, been considered as stressful life events that occurred at certain points during childhood and adolescence. Consider a man who witnessed interparental physical violence for ten months when he was eight years old. Is his subsequent developmental trajectory the same as that of another man who witnessed interparental physical violence for ten years from

eight to eighteen? Likewise, studies with maritally violent men reported that some men became violence-free as the result of interventions such as participation in group counselling and police responses (Dutton et al., 1997; Sherman et al., 1992). How this transformation occurred, however, has not been fully researched. Did a sudden realization that a man must not use violence come, as if being hit by a lightning, at the moment of his arrest? Or was it a slow, gradual, painful process that took years of trial and error? Do these men consider cessation of marital violence as their turning points? If applied in a study of marital violence, a life-course perspective can certainly shed light on the manifestation and cessation of marital violence.

Third, in the field of marital violence research, an adult developmental perspective has been totally lacking. Cessation of marital violence has been discussed only at a behavioural level. The only exception is Gondolf and Hanneken's (1987) qualitative study that discussed reformed abusive men's psychological growth as the most important contributor to their behavioural change. Evidence from the research on aging and life-course developmental psychology, on the other hand, indicates that adults still change, grow, and develop, or regress not only behaviourally but also psychologically (Clausen, 1993; Erikson, 1959; Levinson, 1978). Research that focuses on ongoing personality development of reformed and yet-to-be reformed maritally abusive men is clearly needed. Such research can be pursued using a life-course perspective.

2.5 *Methods to Study Lives Using a Life-Course Developmental Perspective*

In order to study human behaviour and development from a perspective of life-course development, one needs to obtain an individual's biographical data, which is generally a longitudinal endeavour unless a person is deceased. There are two ways to design a study for this purpose, prospectively and retrospectively (Scott & Alwin, 1998); these will be briefly described below.

2.5.1 Retrospective versus prospective design. In prospective designs, the same individuals are followed over time, and at each data collection, reports on present circumstances and current conditions are collected (e.g., Clausen, 1993). The bulk of longitudinal data accumulated in this manner reveal life trajectories of an individual and

individuals as a group. In retrospective designs, data on individuals' current interpretations of the past and their recollections of how they responded to an event when it was actually happening are collected. Thus, in retrospective designs, one can collect longitudinal data without actually using a longitudinal design (Scott & Alwin, 1998).

The main advantage of relying on prospectively collected data is that the data are more accurate than retrospectively collected data because respondents are asked to refer to the current circumstances. Disadvantages of using a prospective design are that it is expensive and time-consuming. For example, the Bennington Study, a longitudinal study that has been examining American women's shifts in political attitudes over the life course, was launched in 1938, and is still ongoing (Alwin, Cohen, & Newcomb, 1991; Newcomb, 1943). Moreover, the original sample may cease to be representative because of attrition or nonresponse over the years, which may seriously skew results of statistical analyses. A main advantage of using retrospective designs is, as easily speculated, that it is cost-effective. Retrospectively gathered data are "relatively instant to produce" (Scott & Alwin, 1998, p.119). Disadvantages of relying on retrospectively collected data are that peoples' recollections of their early experiences may not be accurate (Dex, 1995; Ross, 1989) and that data can be obtained only from survivors (Scott & Alwin).

In the present study, biographical information will be collected retrospectively from those men who stopped abusing their wives for the following four reasons. First, in a prospective longitudinal design, it is not possible to study manifestation and/or cessation of violence in a natural environment because it is unethical not to intervene if a researcher is aware that marital violence is occurring among respondents. Referring to a set of longitudinal data (Elder, Wu, & Yuan, as cited in Elder 1998b) retrospectively collected in China because prospective longitudinal studies were not possible, Elder (1998b) wrote, "This study proved unusually valuable in showing us the effectiveness of retrospective life history techniques for recovering knowledge about the enduring effects of past events" (p.2).

Second, in general, individuals don't recognize their lives' turning points when they are actually happening (Birren & Hedlund, 1987). Likewise, the exact direction of a life path immediately after a turning point is predictable only to some extent (Schroots, 1996). Thus, the only way to identify turning points that decisively redirected

individuals' lives is to look backwards. Moreover, individuals can hardly predict how chance plays a role in inviting a specific life trajectory (Bandura, 1982). Consequently, an evaluation of whether chance or choice has resulted in a turning point should be based on a retrospective review of one's life.

Third, this study is interested in reformed abusive men's subjective accounts of their life trajectory. The aim of this research is to collect information about these men's current and personal interpretations of their past. Thus, obtaining the most accurate information possible is not the prime concern. In addition, as Scott and Alwin (1998) pointed out, any survey research is based on retrospective data to some extent, and is subjected to the inaccurate nature of people's memory. For example, even a simple question regarding one's educational attainment requires one to retrieve a memory from the long past. Finally, collecting data on one's entire life retrospectively is much less expensive and less time-consuming. How to obtain biographical data retrospectively will be discussed below.

2.5.2 Methods to collect retrospective biographical data. There are a number of ways to gather biographical information about individuals: (a) interviewing in person; and (b) referring to archives, diaries, and other official and unofficial documents. In the present study, qualitative biographical information will be collected predominantly by interviewing those men who ceased to be maritally violent because the study's main objective is to understand these men's life-course developmental trajectories from their own perspectives. As Clausen (1998) stated, "There is, indeed, no better way to get at the elements that have become most firmly integrated into a person's sense of identity than a thoughtful account, whether spontaneous or elicited by prolonged, empathic interviewing" (p.191). As Modell (1994) argued, in qualitative interviews, "the inner logic of lives" (p.1391) is discovered. Similarly, according to Laub and Sampson (1998), qualitative data "will provide important clues on the unfolding of adult development that cannot be obtained from statistical tables" (p.228).

In the present study, men's qualitative biographical data will be derived from their life stories (Bertaux, 1981; Clausen, 1998; McAdams, 1990, 1993). A life story refers to "the person's subjective, retrospective report of past experiences and their meaning to that person" (Clausen, p. 192). The term life story is used interchangeably with the

following terms (a) life history (Laub & Sampson, 1998; Runyan 1982), (b) life review (Butler, 1963), (c) narrative (Bruner, 1986, 1990), and (d) autobiography (Birren & Birren, 1996). Each term can convey a slightly different meaning. For example, Butler referred to life review as "a naturally occurring, universal mental process, characterized by the progressive return to consciousness of past experiences…" (p.66). Clausen referred to life review as "a person's efforts to reenvision episodes or long sequences from the past" (p.192). According to Clausen, life reviews are likely to be fragmentary and not chronological. Compared to life stories and life review, life histories are more chronologically structured and are often based on various sources of data in addition to interview data (Clausen). Autobiography is the history or story of a life written or told by the individual who has experienced it (Birren & Birren). According to Bruner, narrative is a result of a cognitive action. In narratives, individuals give meaning to their lived experiences. Moreover, narratives can indicate how the narrators understand themselves and their social environment. Following the lead of Bertaux, Clausen, and McAdams the term life stories will be used throughout this dissertation.

Although "life stories are and should be based on what really happened and on what is likely to happen in the future" (McAdams, Diamond, de St. Aubin, & Mansfield, 1997, p.689), as mentioned earlier in this chapter, they are not accurate records of the past. One should keep in mind that they are episodic memories filtered through and interpreted by current mind-sets (Scott & Alwin, 1998; Huberman, 1995; McAdams, 2006). As Clausen (1998) put it, "[Life] stories provide knowledge of how the person sees his or her past and present life and the influences that helped to shape it. [They] entail a person's presentation of self and, potentially, may reveal how that self developed over time, especially if the accounts have a longitudinal perspective" (p.191). Interestingly, according to Huberman (1995), some researchers consider life-stories as a *truer* or *deeper understanding* of one's past because they are enriched by new information and subsequent experiences.

There are many approaches to the use of a life-story method. For example, McAdams (1988, 1993, 2006) and his colleagues (e.g., Maruna, 2001) have been studying adult identity formation and generativity manifested in life stories as well as

how life stories are told by particular subgroups of individuals using a narrative psychological perspective. According to McAdams (2006),

> Narrative identities are stories we live by. We make them and remake them, we tell them and revise them not so much to arrive at an accurate record of the past as to create a coherent self that moves us forward in life with energy and purpose. (p.98)

Other researchers use a life-story method in order to examine developmental trajectories (Clausen, 1993; Cohler et al., 1998). In the present study, following the lead of Clausen, among others, a life-story method is used as a tool to retrospectively collect longitudinal data in order to study life-course development of reformed maritally violent men. How one can actually obtain life-story data from reformed maritally abusive men will be described in the next chapter.

2.6 Summary

The literature reviewed in this chapter revealed that there are developmental, social learning, socio-environmental, and biological explanations of the roots of marital violence in men. Moreover, given the finding that most quantitative intervention studies of maritally violent men suffer from serious methodological shortcomings, cessation of marital violence may be better examined in a qualitative endeavour. Current evidence indicates that a study that is based on a developmental perspective is needed in order to examine how an individual becomes a wife abuser and then is reformed. The life-course developmental perspective will be taken in the present study because this perspective enables one to examine continuity, change, and turning points and their lasting effects on an individual's development through life. The study will use a retrospective design to collect biographical data from reformed maritally violent men mainly because an analysis of turning points and their effects requires one to retrospectively review his/her life. Qualitative biographical data will be used in the present study because the study's central purpose is to examine men's subjective interpretations of their lived experiences.

2.7 Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to address the following questions regarding men who stopped being maritally violent.

Question 1: How do men who have been maritally violent develop through life from their own perspectives?

Question 2: From their own perspectives how and why did these men stop being maritally violent?

The next chapter describes the methodology used in the present study. The study utilized a qualitative design in which life stories were collected from each reformed maritally violent man. Thus, the data are retrospective and biographical. Each life story was audiotaped and transcribed for analysis.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the methodology used in the present study. The methodology is described under the following headings:

* Participants
* The author's biases
* Data collection and analysis
* Design

The chapter ends with a summary of the methodology presented.

3.1 Participants

In their qualitative biographical study, Bertaux and Bertaux-Wiame (1981) collected life stories of French bakery workers until "the *process of saturation* takes place" (p. 188). Reaching a point of saturation, one perceives that no new information is forthcoming (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Bertaux and Bertaux-Wiame wrote, "It took us about 15 life stories of bakery workers to begin perceiving the saturation process; we did 15 more and confirmed it" (p.188). Following their lead, the present study set the goal to gather life stories from 30 men; however, the study was able to have only six participants due to limited time and resources.

Participants were recruited in the following two ways. First, seven community newspapers and media advertisements including TV and radio were used to recruit men from the general population; however, none of the participants were recruited through media advertisements during the 10-month recruitment period. This implies how difficult it is to come in contact with reformed maritally violent men. A copy of an advertisement placed in community newspapers, flyers and posters is shown in Appendix A. A radio/television script for the purpose of recruitment is shown in Appendix B. Second, in order to recruit those men who had participated in counselling programs in the past, approximately 157 practitioners (i.e., counsellors, psychologists, social workers, probation officers, community advocates) and approximately 360 mental health organizations that worked with men who had been violent toward their female partners

were contacted by mail, fax, telephone, or via the Internet. The directories of practitioners were obtained through community organizations and the Yellow/White Pages. Practitioners and mental health organizations across North America were contacted. Practitioners were asked to forward the toll-free telephone number and mailing address of the author to those men who may be interested in participating in the study. A copy of a letter/e-mail to practitioners is shown in Appendix C. This procedure is called purposeful sampling (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 1990).

Each participant gave informed consent to participate. The participants were assured that all documents would be identified only by code number, and they would not be identified by name in any reports of the completed study. Participants were told that participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time without penalty. Each participant had to satisfy the following criteria in order to be recruited in the study. First, he had to have been physically abusive toward his female partner(s) more than once a year for a total of at least two years. Second, he had to have not been physically abusive to his female partner(s) for at least two years.

During the course of the interviews, the participants not only shared information regarding their physical violence but also psychological abuse. The results pertaining to cessation of psychological abuse are also presented and discussed in the remaining two chapters of this dissertation. Cessation of psychological abuse, however, was not included in the recruitment criteria, and, consequently, it was not defined prior to the launch of the study. Thus, there might have existed some differences in understanding of what constituted psychological abuse between the author and the participants.

Whether a participant satisfied the recruitment criteria for the study was based on his self-report. He was not asked to take any screening tests nor was his criminal record checked. The rationale for this decision is described below. First, by screening those self-referred men who claimed to have been violence-free toward their intimate partners for the last two years, the author might have undermined the trust that needs to be established. To conduct a high-quality qualitative study, intense sharing, trust, rapport, and mutuality has to be established between the researcher and the informants (Fontana & Frey, 2000; Huberman, 1995; Lincoln, 1995). Second, as described in the previous chapter, recidivism based on police records is an extremely conservative measure of

marital violence (Hirschel et al., 1992). Moreover, any screening such as the use of the CTS is, after all, one type of self-report. Thus, as long as this study clearly defined cessation of physical marital violence for the prospective participants (see Appendix D), administration of any measure of marital violence did not appear to be necessary.

Participants were six reformed maritally violent men aged 35 to 60 years. Table 1 displays demographic information for the participants. All of the names mentioned throughout this dissertation are pseudonyms except the author's.

Table 1

Demographic Information for the Participants

	Dan	Howard	Mark	Nick	Ross	Steve
Age	48	60	55	41	45	35
Race	Polynesian/ Native North American/ Caucasian	Caucasian	Caucasian	Caucasian	Caucasian	Caucasian
Education	Less than high school	High school diploma	College diploma	Less than high school	High school diploma	Less than high school
Marital status	Co-habiting	Co-habiting	Married	Dating	Married	Co-habiting
Age of partners	49	49	46		41	30
Years with the current partner	10 years	1 year	15 years	3 months	18 years	3 years
Years free of physical violence	23	16	15	13	10	11
Children	Bio-1 Step-5	Bio-6	Bio-2 Step-2	Bio-1	Bio-3	Bio-3
Occupation	Counsellor	Counsellor	Electronics technologist	Truck driver	Renovation/ construction contractor	Plumber
Involve-ment in the field	Counsellor/ coordinator	Counsellor	Board of directors	Counsellor	Counsellor	Counsellor

The mean and standard deviation for the participants' age were 47.3 and 9.1, respectively ($N = 6$). The mean and standard deviation for the participants' partners' age were 43.0 and 8.0, respectively ($N = 5$). The age of Nick's partner was missing from the study because the author failed to obtain this information. The mean and standard deviation of the length of time violence-free were 14.7 and 4.7 years, respectively ($N = 6$). The mean and standard deviation of the length of the relationships with the current partners were 7.9 and 7.6 years, respectively ($N = 6$). In the literature on intervention programs with maritally violent men, most studies measured recidivism at 6- and/or 12-months following the completion of the interventions. The longest among the previously evaluated follow-up periods were up to 11 years (Dutton et al., 1997) and 5 years (Shepard, 1992). Thus, the participants in the present study were unusual in the number of years they have been violence-free. All of the participants were not only physical violence-free but also psychological abuse-free as well, although the length of their absence of psychological abuse was not accessed in the present study.

All of the participants except Dan were recruited from the same non-profit counselling organization where they had come initially as clients. The counselling program this organization offers consists of two phases: Phase I and Phase II. Phase I consists of 12 weekly group sessions. In Phase I the focus of a group is cessation of violence/abuse. Those clients who successfully complete Phase I are invited to attend Phase II. Phase II is an on-going support group for men who are further interested in working on personal issues that underlie their abusive/violent behaviour. Men can continue to attend Phase II as long as they wish. Howard, Mark, Nick, Ross, and Steve attended both Phase I and II. The majority of the male counsellors of this organization are reformed maritally violent men.

Among these five men, Howard was working at the organization as a counsellor on a full-time basis. Nick, Ross, and Steve were part-time counsellors there. Mark was involved in the organization on the board of directors as well as a volunteer who visited and talked to new clients at an orientation session. Dan was a full-time counsellor and a program coordinator of a mental health organization serving specifically Native North American populations. In sum, the participants of the study were men who became not

only non-abusive/violent physically as well as psychologically but were also promoting non-abusiveness/violence through counselling and/or other services.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, it was difficult to come in contact with reformed maritally violent men who were willing to share their life stories within the 10-month recruitment period. The participants ended up consisting of those six individuals who were reformed maritally violent men turned into counsellors. This uniqueness of the sample seems to be the very strength of the study. As far as the sample size goes, Dukes (1984) recommended studying three to 10 participants when dealing with a unique group of individuals who have experienced a particular life event or phenomenon. Cresswell (1998) suggested that when conducting an in-depth interview lasting as long as 2 hours with each participant,10 participants in a study seemed a reasonable size. For example, Margolin and Fernandez (1987) conducted an in-depth interview study with three married couples in order to examine natural cessation of marital violence. Goldolf and Hanneken (1987) interviewed 12 men who were reformed as the result of their participation in the counselling program.

As Miles and Huberman (1994) wrote, sample size in a qualitative study depends on how rich and complex the data are. According to Miles and Huberman, "with high complexity, a study with more than 15 cases or so can become unwieldy" (p.30). Considering the richness and complexity of the data each participant brought to the study, as presented in the following chapter, the sample size of six is justified..

The study set the minimum age of participants to be about 30. This is because in order for a man to be included in the study, he had to have been abusive to his intimate partner(s) for a total of at least two years and then not abusive for the following two years. It was expected that a man starts his intimate relationship in his early adulthood. Thus, in order for him to participate in the study, he needed to be at least about 30 years of age.

3.2 *The Author's Biases*

In a qualitative study such as the present one, the researcher needs to clarify any biases that might affect the process of the inquiry (Cresswell, 1998; Merriam, 1998). Two assumptions of the author need to be made explicit. First, she supports humanistic

psychology, the central thesis of which is that psychological growth is a natural phenomenon in humans (Maslow, 1971). The author believes that individuals learn, grow, and develop day by day, as they age, given an optimal environment. For her, it is not doubtful that maritally violent men could reform themselves. Thus, her subjective assumption might have affected the study in a way that she expected to meet those men who had changed their lives in positive directions. Second, the author attended the meetings sponsored by the British Columbia Association of Counsellors of Abusive Men in Vancouver, Canada in 1999, and the 5th International Conference on Family Violence in San Diego, California in 2000, and actually encountered reformed maritally violent men. She knew that they not only existed but also that some of them advocated actively in the field of marital violence as practitioners, although their existence was not visible in either media, or academic and popular literatures. Thus, she was optimistic about sampling those men who satisfy the participation criteria of the study. This notion of hers might well have impacted the process of the study.

3.3 Data Collection and Analysis

3.3.1 Data collection. Each participant received a consent form outlining the purpose of the present study, and guaranteeing anonymity to participants. The consent form offered the participants a chance to obtain a summary of the research findings, and asked them to indicate whether they were interested in receiving such a summary. A copy of the consent form to participants is shown in Appendix D. Then, each participant contacted the author via Internet to express their interest in participating. The e-mail address of the author was not distributed to potential participants; however, because the participants of the study were practitioners at the same time, they had an access to the author's e-mail address. The author scheduled the data collection session with each participant. Telephone interviews were conducted with Dan. With the remaining participants face-to-face interviews were conducted at the counselling organisation where they worked. Informed consent was obtained from Dan by mail prior to the first telephone interview session. For the remaining participants, informed consent was obtained at the interview site at the beginning of the interview session. Participants received a small honorarium for their involvement in the study.

The data collection session consisted of three parts: administration of the Life Satisfaction Chart (Clausen, 1993), the structured interview session, and the open-ended interview session. The interview was audiotaped. First, each participant was asked to complete the Life Satisfaction Chart (Clausen). As shown in Appendix F, the Life Satisfaction Chart is a simple grid with age on the X-axis and levels of life satisfaction ranging from 0 to 10 on the Y-axis. According to Clausen (1998),

> The life chart ... can be helpful in revealing turning points and peak and nadir experiences (e.g., life crisis), discontinuities, and the major sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction. It also can give clues to the extent to which historical events and circumstances have impinged on the person's consciousness. (p.202)

Thus, it was expected that the Life Satisfaction Chart would be useful supplementary data in the present study. Dan's Life Satisfaction Chart was obtained by mail after the initial interview session (see Appendix G). The remaining participants preferred not to complete their Charts at the interview site, and told the author that they would mail them to her later. In the end, the Charts from Mark (see Appendix H) and Ross (Appendix I) were obtained by mail. The fact that the study obtained only half of the Charts does not seem to have affected the overall results of the study. As Clausen (1993, 1998) suggested, the Charts were used as a supplementary device. The study's primary data were the life stories of each participant presented in the following chapter. In addition, the Charts obtained did not draw out much additional information when analyzed together with the life stories and the chronology of the lives of the participants (Appendix J).

Second, after the Life Satisfaction Chart (Clausen, 1993) was mentioned, the author conducted a structured interview. During the structured interview session, the following demographic information was gathered (a) age, (b) race, (c) language(s), (d) age of the current partner, (e) years of cohabiting with the current partner, (f) the number of children with the current partner, (g) the number of children with the former partner(s), (h) occupation, (i) education, (j) years violence-free, and (k) marital status.

Third, after having administered the structured interview session, the author conducted an open-ended interview. The interview questions were derived from the protocol developed by McAdams (1988, 1993). Studies by McAdams have shown that this interview protocol can successfully elicit rich life stories from college students and

adults from general populations. Specifically, a participant was asked the questions regarding his life-course development and future aspirations. A copy of a modified version of this protocol is shown in Appendix E. Each participant was provided with a copy of Appendix E during his open-ended interview session so that he could understand the questions clearly.

With Dan, three telephone interview sessions took place. The total interview took 3 hours. With Howard, one interview session took place. This interview took 70 minutes. With Mark, one interview session took place. This interview took 2 hours and 50 minutes. With Nick, one interview session took place. This interview took 70 minutes. With Ross, one interview session took place. This interview took 1 hour and 45 minutes. With Steve, one interview session took place. This interview took 2 hours and 15 minutes.

3.3.2 Transcribing. Each interview was transcribed by the author.

3.3.3 Extraction of codes. Interview transcripts were read a number of times together with the Life Satisfaction Charts. Then, codes were extracted for each interview. Codes are "tags or labels for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p.56). A list of codes was compiled for each of the six participants. At this stage, the six lists of codes were not yet compared with each other.

3.3.4 Life story development. Next, a life story was written for each participant. A life story was a summary of an interview in which the participant's own words were used and linked by the author. It included important turning points, life events as well as a participant's accounts of his roots and cessation of marital violence.

3.3.5 Formation of new questions. New questions for each participant derived from the analysis of a transcript were formulated. In addition, the parts of the transcript that needed to be clarified were pointed out. These new questions and points needing to be clarified were answered by the participants during member check procedures described in a subsequent section of the chapter.

3.3.6 First audit trail. External audit trails (Huberman, 1995; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Schwandt & Halpern, 1988) were conducted throughout the study. In an external audit trail, an expert is asked to review and critique each stage of

the data collection and analysis. The purpose of the external audit trail was to examine the legitimacy of the study's procedures and the authenticity of its conclusions. According to Lincoln and Guba, an auditor should possess the following characteristics: (a) be skilled in qualitative methodologies, (b) not be an expert in the area of the study, (c) show personal disinterest in the result of the study, and (d) have experience as an auditor.

The external auditor for the present study was Dr. Cynthia Andruske who recently earned her Ph.D. in the Department of Educational Studies at the University of British Columbia. In her dissertation (Andruske, 2004), Dr. Andruske interviewed those women who were transitioning from being on welfare. Dr. Andruske satisfied the necessary qualifications to become an auditor. Dr. Andruske was (a) skilled in qualitative methodologies, (b) was not an expert in the area of marital violence, (c) showed personal disinterest in the result of the study, and (d) had extensive experience as an auditor. At the time of this writing, she is an Adjunct Professor at the University of Houston in Texas. The author obtained Dr. Andruske's contact information from an online advertisement she had sent out to the graduate students in the Faculty of Education at the University of British Columbia. In this e-mail, Dr. Andruske wrote that she was available to assist graduate students in research. The author and Dr. Andruske talked on the telephone once to introduce each other. The rest of the correspondences between the author and Dr. Andruske were exchanged by mail and via Internet. Dr. Andruske spent a total of 60 hours to review the materials sent by the author. She was paid $20/hour for her services. In the rest of the dissertation, Dr. Andruske is referred to as the auditor.

The first task for the auditor was to critically review the following documents pertaining to each participant: (a) interview transcript(s), (b) life story, (c) a list of codes, and (d) a list of additional questions and points to be clarified. The author indicated to the auditor locations in the transcripts from which each code was extracted. The auditor sent back to the author two reports for each participant: her feedback on a life story, and a list of codes she came up with herself by examining the transcript. The auditor also examined a list of new questions to the participant, and sometimes suggested adding a few more questions she thought important to ask. Usually, the auditor came up with slightly more codes than the author. The author re-examined her original codes and compared them

with a set of codes extracted by the auditor. In some cases, the author modified her original set of the codes by including new codes suggested by the auditor. The auditor's codes also gave the author new ideas of how to rephrase a code or how two or three codes could be combined and expressed in one term.

The auditor requested that the author write her impressions on her audit. When they had different opinions on inclusion or exclusion of certain codes, inclusion or exclusion of certain life events in a life story, or what new questions to ask in a follow-up, they discussed these matters until each understood other's point. The final decisions were made by the author, however. The results of the first audit trail were satisfactory.

3.3.7 Member check. The purpose of member check was to establish credibility by asking the participants to judge the trustworthiness and authenticity of the author's interpretations (Cresswell, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). With each participant, a member check procedure was carried out as follows. First, a package containing an interview transcript, a life story, and a list of additional questions and the points that needed to be further clarified were sent by mail to each participant. Second, a participant was asked to (a) confirm whether the author adequately interpreted his interview and summarised his life events in the life story, and (b) answer the additional questions and clarify the points the author did not understand.

The member check with Dan was carried out by telephone, mail, and via Internet. One follow-up telephone interview with Dan took 30 minutes. The member check with Mark was carried out by telephone, mail, and via Internet. One follow-up telephone interview with Mark took 80 minutes. The member check with Ross was carried out by mail and via Internet. The member check with Steve was carried out via Internet alone. During the member check procedure, Dan Mark, and Ross were given a chance to revise the Life Satisfaction Charts they had constructed if they wished to do so. They confirmed that no revision was required. The member check procedure was continued until there was consensus between the author and participants. In sum, Dan, Mark, Ross, and Steve confirmed that the author had interpreted their life stories adequately. Howard and Nick were not available for their member checks. The average length of the interview per participant including the follow-ups was 2 hours and 30 minutes. The interviews collected during member checks were audiotaped and transcribed by the author. New

codes were identified, and the life stories were revised based on the additional information provided.

   3.3.8 Second audit trail. The second task for the auditor was to critically review the following documents pertaining to those participants who participated in the member checks: (a) new interview transcripts, (b) answers to the additional questions sent to the author by the participants via Internet and/or mail, (c) revised life stories, and (d) revised lists of codes. The auditor carried out the second audit trail in the same manner as she did the first one. The results of the second audit trail were satisfactory.

   3.3.9 Feedback from colleagues. In addition to the audit trails, the author's colleagues were invited to comment on trustworthiness of the findings of this study as they emerged. For example, the preliminary results of the analyses of Dan's life story were presented at the annual conference of the Ending Relationship Abuse Society of British Columbia in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada in 2004. At the end of the presentation, the practitioner audience asked the author several questions, and the study's findings were discussed further. Thanks to this opportunity, the author obtained many valuable comments and suggestions as well as a few new clarifications to ask Dan. For example, as presented in the following chapter, Dan experienced a life-changing moment while he was in prison. One practitioner commented on the fact that even in prison, a turning point that changes individual's life-course could occur, and further emphasized the importance of acknowledging those critical "moments" in her own clients' life stories. Another practitioner suggested that the author verify the racial background of an old friend of Dan who dramatically contributed to his change. This practitioner speculated that it would have been easier for Dan to recognize this friend as his role model if they shared the same racial background. In addition, on hearing Dan's episode of his meeting with his role model, one practitioner (S. Belanger, personal communication, November 6, 2004) commented that this turning point might have changed Dan's notion of a strong man from being tough to being wise. Belanger's comment was useful in the sense that it directed the author to pay more attention to the participants' notion of masculinity. Lastly, one another practitioner (J. Robson, personal communication, November 6, 2004) pointed out a discrepancy between what would generally happen in her actual practice and the finding of the present study and suggested

that the author seek an explanation for this discrepancy. Specifically, on hearing Dan's cessation of his psychological abuse as the result of him having been counselled by his female partner, Robson remarked that it was not common for abusive/violent men to listen to their partners and actually change their abusive/violent behaviour. These comments/questions were forwarded to Dan and clarified by Dan during the member checks. The remaining two chapters present and discuss these findings in detail.

3.3.10 Development of the study's themes. After a life story was written and codes in his life story were extracted for each participant, the author combined codes of all the life stories, compared them, and developed a list of the study's codes. First, each code from all six life stories was recorded on an index card together with the location(s) of this code in the transcript(s).

Second, all the index cards were sorted by the codes. For example, there were six index cards for a code, *My violence,* because all six participants were abusive/violent toward their intimate partners. Likewise, there were five index cards for a code, *Relationship with grandparents* because five out of six participants mentioned their grandparents or their relationships with their grandparents in the interviews. The purpose of this procedure was to visually present which codes were explored most or least by the participants.

Third, codes which struck the author as interesting, relevant, or important to this study were selected as the study's codes (Merriam, 1998). Because the study's goal was to understand origins and cessation of marital violence as well as developmental trajectories of reformed maritally violent men from their own perspectives, the codes that shed light on these issues were of particular interest. The codes that were mentioned by most of the men (e.g., *Hobbies/outdoors*) were also included in a list of the study's codes. Some codes that were discussed by only one or a few participants were also selected if they were considered as critical to answer the study's questions. For example, the code, *Religion/spirituality/meditation* was included, though only two participants discussed this topic at length. The study identified 47 codes that were common across the participants as well as unique to one or a few participants.

Fourth, direct quotes of the participants pertaining to each of the 47 codes were extracted from the interview transcripts and e-mails/mails, and classified under each code. Thus, the study came up with the 47 document files containing direct quotes.

Finally, the 47 document files were read a number of times, and the three most critical themes that best illustrated the transformation of the participants were extracted. They were: (a) *Factors contributing to abuse/violence*, (b) *Processes of psychological change and its maintenance*, and (c) *Personal growth*. In (b), "psychological change" rather than "behavioural change" was used in order to convey the study's finding that psychological change occurred prior to behavioural change, and the former promoted the latter. Within each of the three themes, a few subthemes were identified. Subthemes of *Factors contributing to abuse/violence* were *Inhibition of communication, Lack of male role models,* and *Leaving home early*. Subthemes of *Processes of psychological change and its maintenance* were *Turning points, Counselling program*, and *Staying non-violent/abusive*. Subthemes of *Personal growth* were *Self-understanding* and *Generativity*. These themes and subthemes are used to organize the substantial amount of information in the remaining two chapters of the dissertation.

Each subtheme was derived by grouping specific codes of the study. For example, the subtheme of *Lack of male role models* was derived by examining and grouping the following four codes: (a) Relationships with fathers, (b) Social learning theory, (c) Tough guy image, and (d) Relationships with peers. The subtheme of *Turning points* was derived by grouping the following four codes: (a) Co-incidence/chance events, (b) Relationships with children, (c) Instrumental women/good relationships, and (d) Turning points/change. Lastly, the subtheme of *Generativity* was derived by grouping the following three codes: (a) Relationships with children, (b) Identity/ethnicity, and (c) Generativity/as counsellors/community contribution.

3.3.11 Final audit trail. The final task for the auditor was to critically review the following documents: (a) earlier version of this dissertation, (b) all the interview transcripts, (c) field notes that were recorded after each interview session, (d) the author's methodological and personal journals of impressions of and thoughts on each stage of data collection and analysis, (e) correspondence exchanged between the author and the participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), and (f) the Life Satisfaction Charts (Clausen, 1993).

The auditor sent the author her feedback on these documents and discussed the legitimacy of the study's procedures and the authenticity of its conclusions. The results of the final audit trail were satisfactory.

3.4 Design

The present study utilized a qualitative design in which a life story was collected from each participant. Thus, the data were retrospective and biographical. Each life story was audiotaped, transcribed and analyzed by the author. The final product of the present study was a thick description of the lives of reformed maritally violent men turned into counsellors (Creswell, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1998).

3.5 Summary

In this chapter, characteristics of the study's participants were described. The author's subjective assumptions were clarified. The data collection and analysis procedures were described. Finally, the design chosen for this study was described.

The next chapter presents the results of the study.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of the present study. Life stories of each of the six participants are presented. The themes that emerged from the analysis of data are presented together with direct quotes from the interview transcripts and the personal communications of the participants. Because a life-story perspective was used in the study, the themes are organised chronologically as a sequence, and presented under the following headings:

* Factors contributing to abuse/violence

      Inhibition of communication

      Lack of male role models

      Leaving home early

* Processes of psychological change and its maintenance

      Turning points

      Counselling program

      Staying non-violent/abusive

* Personal growth

      Self-understanding

      Generativity

The chapter ends with a summary of the results presented.

4.1 Life Stories

In his seminal volume, *Children of Sanchez*, Lewis (1961) presented the life stories of each member of the Mexican family told in their own words without analysing them. By doing so, Lewis claimed that he could reduce the element of investigator bias, and convey to the readers the emotional satisfaction and understanding that he, as an anthropologist, had experienced when working directly with his informants. Following the lead of Lewis, the chapter begins with the life stories of the six participants in which the participants' own words are used and linked by the author. These stories were edited but not analysed. They enable the reader to better understand the analysis that follows.

The stories serve to introduce each participant to the readers as well. The Life Satisfaction Charts of Dan, Mark, and Ross are presented in Appendices G to I. The selective chronology of their lives is shown in Table J1, in Appendix J.

4.1.1 Dan's life story.

I was born in City A in the mid 1950s. I am half Polynesian and part Caucasian and Native North American. But I knew nothing about my biological parents up until very recently. I was adopted when I was three years old. My adopted father was Native North American, and my adopted mother was Caucasian. They raised me. I remember when they were coming to visit me at the foster home to get to know me. They took me out for a day to the zoo. I still remember what fun we all had! At that time my parents were so young and just in love. I felt their happiness. Me, that little guy, felt it so keenly from them.

My father was always a good provider, but had a drinking problem. To my mother he sometimes became verbally abusive. A couple of times, he was also physically abusive to her. To us children he was emotionally distant, never available when we wanted him to be around. My mother was a stay-at-home mom. She was very loving and dearly attached to me and my sister and brother.

I got along with my teachers all right, but not with my peers. They bullied me. And I knew why that was. It was because of my colour. We were the only brown family in the whole neighbourhood.

But it all changed, believe me, once my body started to grow bigger in Grade 4. All the neighbourhood kids were now smaller than me. They didn't pick on me any more because I just started to beat them up. At the same time, I started to hang around with some Mexican kids who were as big as I was. We were smoking and playing with prescription drugs and what not. Naturally, I got into a lot of troubles at school. I acted up, becoming a class clown and all, and bothered teachers a lot. I put my mother through a lot of heartache.

During my teenage years, I was getting more and more attracted to a tough guy image, and that got me in a lot of trouble. When I was 11 or 12, I started to run away from home and stayed with friends in town. They were much older men and had been in prison. I made my mother worry about me constantly.

My parents were separated when I was 16. Then, I ended up moving in with this old man. Everything went worse from then on. That was another turning point, a massively negative one for sure. This man was 40 years old; a pretty tough guy, a gangster type, and a heroin user. At that time, I thought I was a grown man and knew what I was doing. I was introduced to heroin and got addicted. In order to support my heroin addiction, I engaged in criminal activities and got arrested. For the next 20 years, I was in and out of prison; I did a total of six prison terms that

were equivalent of probably about 16 years. Sixteen years of my life I spent in prison.

During my dark years, I hung around with those men and women who were also using and drinking. My relationships with women in those days were not based on love or anything. We were in partnerships, more or less, because we were doing the same thing, using and drinking. Those men I was with didn't treat their women with respect; they became physically and emotionally abusive toward women in order to have their own way. I treated my girlfriends the same way; I was verbally abusive. I thought that that was normal.

When Sheila, my then girlfriend, was 6 months pregnant with my son, I got arrested. I was 23. It was during the middle of the night when I was sitting in my cell, the prison guard came to deliver the news that my son was born. That was the most wonderful moment of my life… Still is. I thought, "Here I am, a dad. I have a son in the world. I should be out there."

As far as physical violence went, I was twice physically violent to Sheila. I was about 25. The second time when I hurt her, it was worse. Afterwards, I felt shame and guilt as I did the first time. But this time, I really made up my mind never to physically hurt her again. When I finally realized how much physical damage I could do to her, something did change in me. Since then, I was never physically violent to women, even when women became physically and verbally abusive to me and even when I was drunk. It isn't an excuse, but both times when I was physically violent to Sheila, I was intoxicated. I believe that alcohol makes you more angry and uncontrollable.

In my 20s, I became really good at wearing this tough guy's mask both inside and outside of prison. I was still convinced, "Nothing is wrong. This is just normal. This is the life I am supposed to be living, to be a man." But, all that time I was getting old, and in my early 30s, I was getting tired of living the life I had been living.

Another turning point in my life came to me in the form of an old friend. That was when I was doing my fifth prison term. Just to break the monotony, I participated in a Narcotics Anonymous meeting. At this meeting, there were two men that came in that I used to run streets with. They were clean and sober. I knew them, especially one of them, very well. We used to shoot up heroin together and do a lot of criminal activities together. But now he wore clean clothes and was clean shaven and he had this look in his eyes, like, I don't know what it was, but I wanted it. I wanted it badly. It was very attractive. I talked to him after the meeting and he said to me, "You know what, Dan, you don't have to live this way no more, if you don't want to." At that time I didn't have any clue what he was talking about. But after a few more years, when I was still doing the same old stuff I was doing, those words came to me so clear. I started to ask myself, "Why am I doing this?" I came to realize that I was getting really tired of doing prison

time and that I was not living my life, so to speak. The main problem was my using and drinking. So, I started to reach out to do something different. During my last prison term, I got involved with a drug recovery program.

While in prison, I started to participate in the purification ceremonies in the sweat lodge. I went to a ceremony a week throughout the months. During the ceremonies, it became all clear to me what I really wanted in life. I wanted to live a life that is free from drug usage and criminal activity. I wanted something different. I really wanted to change! I wanted to become a better human being. I came to believe that that's what the Creator wants me to do. Through the ceremonies the Creator showed me my healing path. I became aware of what I really was. Those were the most significant times of my life.

I got out of prison in 1992, and continued thinking deeply of a life of recovery. I stayed involved with the drug recovery program, and kept going to the ceremonies. I also started work in construction. I met Jodi, my current partner, and we started to live together.

Around 1995, I was offered a job as a counsellor and program coordinator of a domestic violence prevention program at a health organization where I first came as a client. First I thought, "Women should be doing this. It's a women's job." But, over a couple of days, as I thought about this job seriously, it all came back to me; how my father treated my mother, how I vowed never to hit Sheila again. I thought about what right is and what wrong is in intimate relationships, and how men and women should live together. I finally realized that marital violence is not a women's problem. It's women's as well as men's. I decided to take this job and put all my heart in it. It resulted in one of the first Native North Americans' domestic violence program in the State/Province, which I'm very proud of.

Because I was doing this work and also because I hadn't been physically violent for a long time, I thought I was OK. But the most profound learning experience as a man, advocate, and counsellor came from Jodi, my partner. One day after a year and half since I started my work, she sat me down and talked about how I would become loud and intimidating to her when we argued over something. To tell the truth, I had never realized that I was verbally abusive to her during those moments. I never knew what I was doing. From that day on, I really started to look at myself and make a real conscious effort to change my behaviour. What I was doing to her was that I was using verbal abuse to control her or the situation. I was scaring her and her kids. I came to realize that I had been still violent, though not in a physical way. Nowadays, when Jodi and I have a heated discussion, I am very aware of my emotional state; how my voice is and how my body language is. I never go there now; I stop before I become threatening and intimidating. And I share this learning with my groups of men. To many men, treating women as I was treating Jodi has become their second nature. But, that's not the way it should be. I tell them that's not how the Creator wants men to relate to women.

Another important turning point occurred to me just about a year ago. I discovered my biological family out of sheer chance. All my life I was wondering, "Why was I taken away and adopted off?" It turned out that I was taken away by the authorities because of my late father's extreme physical violence to my mother. When I come to think of it, it's ironic that, years later, I became a violence prevention person. I now know who I was, where I came from. I've found my roots for which I had been searching, consciously or unconsciously, all my life.

My future plans are that I will continue what I am doing today. I will continue communicating with the Creator through the ceremonies, songs, drums, and prayer. I've learned how to pray now, everyday, a couple of times a day. No one can teach somebody how to pray. Somehow you learn to do that. Through prayer I feel this spiritual connection between myself and the Creator. I would like to continue the things that help me to become a better human being.

4.1.2 Howard's life story.

I was born in City B during WWII, and I grew up there with my two older sisters. My dad was killed in the war, and my mom was quite upset, of course. I don't really remember him.

Then, my mom remarried this guy, and my two half-brothers were born. Looking back, my step-dad was a good guy. But I wasn't going to have anything to do with him. Never really did much. I just didn't give him a chance. But at the same time, I was afraid of him. He was a big guy and from the old school. He was very strict. With my mom, I always had a good relationship. When we were little, my sisters and I physically fought a lot. But overall, we got along well. I also had a good relationship with my baby brothers.

When I was in Grade 4, my step-dad took us out to his property in the country where no school was around. So I did schooling by correspondence for a couple of years. My sisters went to the boarding school. When my brothers became old enough, my dad took us to the school in the nearest community.

In those days, kids were playing outside from dawn to dusk. Adults were not involved so they had to solve problems on their own. That was a good way to learn things. At school, I was getting As, but I was also a class clown, so to speak. I was getting the whole class into trouble. I frustrated my teachers and mom by always being trouble at school and not doing any work. I was almost kicked out of my class at school. My teachers would say, "Howard is the brightest kid in the class, but he doesn't apply himself." I didn't really care. I didn't like school very much. I thought that was stupid what they were doing, just memorising a bunch of stuff.

I didn't have any girlfriend up until I was in the university. I was afraid of girls because I never would've known what to say to them. I thought of myself as just too shy.

Our family moved back to City B, and I went to the university there for a while. I was always bored at high school. So I thought when I got up to university, it would be different. But it turned out to be just the same old nonsense. There was not even a chance to discuss things. It was in the early 60s, and this university was very conservative. But, still, I was very disappointed. I really didn't enjoy it at all.

Around that time, I dated this girl whose name was Margaret, and she got pregnant by me. We didn't have any choice but to marry. Forty years ago, that's what people did. I thought my life was ruined. I blamed her for that. Shortly after my marrying her, my step-dad died. My new life began, whether I liked it or not.

When I married Margaret, I had hardly known her. When our marriage ended 13 years later, I didn't know her much better. We moved to City C where I set up a logging company. I would stay in the logging camps or on my boats, and I was hardly ever home. When I was at home with Margaret, I was mean and abusive to her.

In those days, my goal was to become a millionaire as quickly as possible. My logging company was doing really well. So I invested in real estate. Soon, I started to own a lot of businesses. I developed this piece of property here and that piece over there. I was driven and worked long hours. I had to reset my goals constantly because I was achieving them one by one.

In my mid-30s, I met Gwen. She was just there… I fell in love with her. And that was one of the most wonderful moments in my entire life. I never really thought that I would ever fall in love. I thought I wasn't that kind of a guy. For the first time in my life, I was really in love with a woman who also loved me. But I was mean and abusive to her as well.

Around the time when Gwen and I had been together for 8 or 9 years, she told me that she wasn't happy in our relationship. I thought there must be something wrong with her saying that. From my point of view at that time, she would not have any reason to complain. I was making a lot of money, and she was always given more than enough to spend on herself. Frustrated with her, I sent her to a psychiatrist. He asked to see me and suggested that I come to this program. I thought if I stopped abusing her, she would stay on with me. She said she would. So I came to try to make the relationship work, to be with her.

Initially, I wasn't ready to accept what I was hearing in the program. I was always a very self-made guy. I didn't reach out for help. And that had always been very important to me. My attitude was like, "No way! Nobody would be telling me. I'm gonna figure out that by myself!" But, the groups were powerful. I met a male

counsellor who soon became a mentor to me. He was somebody who did things quite different than me. He always chose non-violent ways of doing things, but he wasn't a wimp. I also met a female counsellor who had excellent quality. She was somebody even I could admire.

So I started to change. Once the change started, it was quick, almost like a light bulb went on. And it was exciting as well because I learned different ways of looking at things. Up until then, I believed in the societal myth in which men were strong and tough, had no feelings, and would never worry about anything. I thought and behaved like I was the only sensible man in the whole world. In the groups, I came to realize that it was OK for men to be anxious and worried. For the first time in my life, I gave myself a permission to cry. I never cried from the time when I was very young. My step-dad was big on that, "Boy's don't cry." So the program worked at two levels: One was stopping my abusive behaviours, and the other was to re-heal my stuff that happened to me though I put no real blame on anybody. It was just the kind of thing that went on.

I hate to admit it now, but in my youth, I didn't have real respect for women. I just somehow got this notion that they were inferior to men. But the program was very much about equality for men and women. And now I believe in it 100%.

I started to change not only internally, but also behaviourally. Whenever I was violent to Margaret or Gwen, I would apologise to them and the kids saying, "I am sorry! I shouldn't have done that! I wish I didn't have a bad temper. I'm never gonna do this again!" But then, when I got angry again, I would just do it. I always did. What I realize since I came to the program was that it wasn't the fact that I got angry; it was what I did when I got angry. What I was doing at that time was that I was trying to stop myself from being angry. I would just hold it down saying, "I shouldn't get angry!" But I was finally blown up. Whereas, now I realize, "Yes, I am angry." But it doesn't mean that I have to call her names or push her or be mean to her just because I am angry. And I now have some tools that I can use. For example, I take time out, talk myself down, or stay sober when things are not going good.

So I changed. But so did Gwen. She would say, "Yeah, Howard is a good guy now. He worked really hard in this program. He is not abusive any more." But she changed her mind and ended our relationship. She was ready to leave me by that time. It was very hard for me. That's probably the worst thing that ever happened to me. I was devastated. I thought of myself as a guy who could just handle anything. But it shook me up for a while. What I learned from this was that you cannot change anyone. Gwen wanted to leave me, and she was entitled to do so. I could not change her mind. I had to accept that.

Somehow, life went on, and since Gwen I had several different relationships in which I was never physically violent.

I became a much better parent since I came to the program. I now have more knowledge. I have more understanding. Gwen and I had a son together. His name is Ted. He is 20 now. When we separated, he chose to live with me. When Ted got angry, I would say something like, "Hey, you are angry. That's fine. But you can't treat me like this. You can't say those words. Go into your room, and you can do anything you want there. We can talk about it later when you come down." Whereas, with my older kids, I just didn't let them be angry because I was so afraid of my own anger. And with my last two kids, I was more or less their primary caretaker since their mothers had careers. It totally changed my life. I regretted that I didn't do this with all of my kids. It's a very worthwhile job, being a parent. And it's good to see more men are now involved with children.

I am 60 years old. I am semi-retired now, and have more time to devote myself to my current partner, kids, and the counselling organisation where I work now. In our adulthood, my siblings and I got very close. We are scattered all over North America, but we talk on the phone all the time, and manage to see each other a couple of times a year. My house is always open to them as well as to my many nieces and nephews and their children.

What I wanna do now is to make my life simpler, to have less work to do. I used to be an ambitious entrepreneur. As I look back on my life, some ways I was sort of waiting for my life to happen. It was almost like, "Oh, I just do this today, and tomorrow things would be better." Or "If I just work harder, if I just do more..." But at some point, I realized that it's not really about getting across the river. It's enjoying the swim while you are going across. So where I wanna be now is to have more time to garden or to take the kids out on the boat, that kind of thing, just to enjoy myself, and to be in the present. I don't have any sort of dream to do anything big. I don't wanna do any more of that. I've had enough of that. What I need to do now is to find out who I am and keep doing it internally.

4.1.3 Mark's life story.

My dad was still in the Navy when I was born in City D in the late 40s. When I grew a little older and he returned home, I didn't know who he was. He was rather a cold man. In retrospect, he was a little jealous of me. He was very much in love with my mom. He would come home from the Navy for her affection, but I was still very small and getting all her attention. I was the oldest of their five children. One brother and three sisters came after me. Though early years were generally peaceful, and I have a lot of happy memories from that period, one of my earliest memories was not so. This occurred when I was 4 years old or so, and my mom was trying to put me in bed. But I didn't want to go to bed, and said to her, "I don't love you." Hearing my words, my dad gave me a bad spanking. I didn't really mean that I didn't love my mom. It was my way of saying that I wasn't happy with what was going on. In retrospect, since then, I always seemed to have this fear of expressing certain things. Even though I am feeling certain things, if I express some of them, I feel like I cannot deal with them. But, of course, it

doesn't mean that I lived my early years with a constant fear of this and that. In general, I was always surrounded by a lot of love from my parents and grandparents, and I would say that I had a rather good beginning to my life.

After leaving the Navy, my dad became a stationary engineer for the government, and was transferred to City E. I went to elementary school there. In the mid-50s, City E was just a tiny rural community. Everybody knew everybody. My brother and I played outside all day, all weekend, and it was safe to do so.

My relationship with my parents was mostly positive. Of the two parents, I was particularly close to my mom. She and I always got along very well. She was always very loving, thoughtful, and humble. It was much later in my life, in my forties actually, that I realized that she had been also very controlling. Her controlling was not physical or overt. It was more like she had a definite sense of how things should be done, and what was proper and what wasn't. However, if I might have been mad at her, or frustrated by her controlling at that time, I would not show that to her. I could not do that. Instead, I vented my anger or frustration on my brother. My brother was just a year younger than me. He and I did everything together. But I also beat him up a lot. Furthermore, I was doing much better at school than him. So, he was always in my shadow. The oldest of my sisters was about two years younger. My two youngest sisters were much younger than me, by about 8 and 10 and a half years. Overall, I had good relationships with my siblings.

My puberty and transition to junior high school corresponded to our move to City F, a suburb of the large city west of the Rockies. I left all my friends and peaceful rural life behind, and I had to adjust myself to this completely new situation. Looking back, it was a lot to deal with.

Most of my high school experiences were positive. I became a class clown. I was disrespectful to teachers, but I showed that side of me only when I could get away with it. I was very cunning. I met a very supportive art teacher in junior high school, and I became active in the Art Club. I spent a lot of my high school years doing art. I was also an active member of the school soccer team. I was not one of the most popular, leading light type of kids, but I was kind of on the edge of that. I wasn't unpopular among peers.

In my teens, I was in Sea Cadets, and most of my close friends, 6 or 7 guys who hung around with me, were also in Sea Cadets. By the time we were 16, it was a regular thing to do a lot of drinking among us.

Looking back on my youth, I can see now that I was always violent. I had a temper. I didn't beat my close friends up, but I easily got into fights with others. I beat my brother up all the time.

My relationship with my mom was mostly positive throughout my adolescence as it always was. By this time, it became apparent that my dad and I didn't get along. He was a disciplinarian, and very strict. My siblings and I got spanked by him a lot. In my late teens, I started to speak out and stand up to him a few times, and he didn't like that. We had a couple of fist fights.

Some of my most positive teenage experiences had to do with spending time with Ben, my maternal step-grandfather. I used to go with him in the summer out to log in some of his properties. He was a good teacher, very patient. Probably, he knew that I didn't have a good relationship with my dad. He accepted me. He was my father figure.

When I was 18, I had my first real girlfriend. Her name was Lisa. I was nuts about her. It was total infatuation. We were together for 6 months. Then, one day, she called me and said that we were splitting up. That was mid-summer in '67, just after my graduation. I was devastated. But I could not believe that she really meant it, and I still had hopes of getting back together with her. That fall, I started to take first year university courses, and I was doing really well. But, finally, towards the end of October, she told me over the phone that it was really over. It was one of my worst moments in my life. After the conversation, I just left home without telling my family, and hitchhiked to City G with just the clothes on my back. I ended up in jail there, and I was sent back home. So, yes, this break-up did have quite an impact on my life-course. If I had been less upset by it, I probably would have carried on with my studies and had quite a different life in many ways.

The next couple of years, I drank quite often. I travelled quite a bit, including a motorcycle trip across the country in '69 during which I used drugs a lot. When I returned home, I was still doing these things, and I was beginning to realize that I was in trouble and needed to change.

Then, one of the major turning points in my life occurred in '69 when I was just about 20 years old. I was in City H, and I was going to get on the bus and the driver wouldn't let me on it. And then, this guy who was about my age was just standing at the curb. He said to me, "So, what do you want?" I told him the drug I was on at that time. He said that he'd done a lot of that, but he stopped for something that was much better for him, and that was meditation. We started to talk, and I got pretty interested in this so-called meditation. Within a few weeks, I started to learn how to meditate. Transcendental meditation was very popular at that time. The main thing I gained initially out of that was that I stopped drinking and using drugs. One of the stipulations for becoming a student of meditation was not using any drugs or alcohol. This event was really significant in my life. If I hadn't stopped drinking and using drugs, my life would have been vastly different.

In my twenties, I was further drawn to becoming involved in transcendental meditation. I participated in a number of instructor training courses held in Spain, France, Switzerland, and India. I met a lot of people from all over the world who shared the common interest. That was really neat.

I met my first wife, Caroline, through my meditation activities in City D when I moved back there in '77. I was 28, and she was a couple years younger with two small children. Shortly afterwards, we started to live together.

When I was 30, Caroline and I got married and had two more children of our own. As soon as we got married, I went back to school for two years to study electronics technology. I needed to have skills which enabled me to support a family in the city. After college, I got a mainstream job. I was a husband and a father of four children. So, my life changed a great deal. I had a fairly stable family life, but this was the phase of my life when my violence was most prominent. There was lots of stress and turmoil in my family life. In my thirties, I was working long hours; often, I was very tired. When I was extremely angry with Caroline, she got some of my physical abuse, but most of it was vented on the kids as I had vented my anger and frustration from my mom on my brother. My abusive behaviours got worse and worse as they grew older. By the time I was in my late thirties, I had come to realize that I had a problem.

Whenever I had an abusive or violent episode, I would feel very remorseful and ashamed of my behaviour. I thought, "I'm never gonna do that again!" But a few weeks or few months later, I would do it again, and I would think, "Oh, God! I've done it again!" I was hopeful at first that I could change, but as years went by, I started to feel like, "Maybe I am just stuck in this. Am I ever gonna get out of this?" I went to a psychiatrist and a counsellor for individual sessions, and I gained some intellectual knowledge about myself. But it still didn't help me stop being physically abusive at home. I just didn't know what else to do. I felt out of control. At that time, my self-esteem was very low because I was behaving in a way that I knew wasn't OK.

When I was 39, that was in the late 80s, by chance, I heard about a group counselling program for abusive husbands on the radio. I made a voluntary choice to try that out. That turned out to be the most significant turning point in my life.

Before I joined the group, I had a face-to-face meeting with one of their counsellors. It turned out that this counsellor himself was once abusive in an intimate relationship. That, beyond anything else, gave me hope that I could actually change. Because there was somebody else that had transformed his life, and he was not exceptional, not a rocket scientist or anything, just a regular guy, I could say, "OK, there's hope for me."

He told me that it was really up to me, that choice to be abusive was what I made, not somebody else. Having that come to me, from the guy who had been in the

same situation, that was the key to the whole change in my behaviour. This intellectual knowledge came to me and became a part of me. This was very, very significant.

My change was gradual. I would still have inner struggles, and occasionally, I felt that I wasn't doing the best I could. But I wasn't hopeless any more.

I stopped using physical aggression on my family shortly after I had joined this counselling group. But around the same time, I decided to leave that marriage.

Shortly after my divorce, I ended up in the relationship I am in now. That was a completely violence-free relationship. My current wife's name is Charlotte. We have been married for 15 years. But Charlotte and I had worked together for 8 years before we got together as a couple. Before we got together, she had no idea that I had been abusive in my first marriage. I told her about my abusive past and my involvement in the group. So she did have a lot of trust in my change. It was clear from the very beginning that she would not tolerate any abuse from me, and that included toward children, hers and mine.

One of the happiest moments in my life was when I realized that my relationship with Charlotte was actually going to happen. She is just a regular person, not different from me or anybody else. But by just being the way she is, she can somehow strengthen my soul.

My abusive past, I cannot undo it however badly I wish it. I try to learn from my mistakes, and would like to strive to be a better person. My own children and step-children are becoming parents themselves. I would like to be a grandfather like Ben who accepted me and was kind to me.

Since I graduated from the groups, I have been involved in the organization not as a client, but as a board member. I wanted to contribute to the cause. I also go to their orientation sessions as a former client and talk to those men who are new to the program. What I want to say to them first and foremost is that it is possible to change. They can change because they have the ability to do so. We do have the resources within us and within our group structure to support them.

I wish to acquire wisdom as I age. It takes a great deal of courage to be wise. So, I am really hoping that I can be more courageous. I think the wise person is one who is real with people. I will strive to learn how to be real and genuine with others. When I said to my mom, "I don't love you," I had innocence, openness, and vulnerability of a little four-year-old who was true to himself without fear. Those things remain with us however old we get. But they get pretty covered up by things that happen to us, choices we make, and circumstances we are in. I would like to try to be in touch with those. With Charlotte beside me, I think I can do it.

4.1.4 Nick's life story.

I was born in City I in the early 60s. When I was a child, life was not kind to me. My father had drinking problems and my mother was also an irresponsible parent. One of my memories from childhood is that I was screaming at my mom in the crib for attention. I was the oldest of their four children; I have one brother and two sisters. When we were young, there was a lot of sibling rivalry. I was very distant to my brother, and my sisters and I were physically aggressive toward each other. We fought constantly. After my parents divorced, I was with my dad. Then, I lived at my foster parents for a short period of time. My elementary teachers were always very supportive, even more so than my parents. My first experience of anything closest to unconditional love was from my grandfather. I remember my secret handshake with him. He was always glad to see me, always giving me money. But that was over when he died. For most of my childhood years, I felt it was hard to be in the world.

I quit school at 15, and started to live on my own. I worked in a restaurant and provided for myself. I had friends who were quite a bit older than me because they were the only ones that were in the working community. They became like my big brothers. And then, I had a girlfriend for three years. I was aggressive to her in that relationship. I feel like I really didn't have a teenage life. It's like I had skipped adolescence.

Just before I turned 20, I got a job as a truck driver with the school board. I was elated. "Wow! I got a real job!" I have been with them over 20 years now.

Then, my father died. He was suffering from alcoholism. I attempted to take care of him when he was dying. He was to me a selfish, needy, and co-dependent father. It was a huge relief. But I was ashamed that I felt that. My relationship with my mother was difficult, strained, because I see my mother's behaviour as very irresponsible, so I found it very difficult to support her.

In my early 20s, I was having a lot of fun. I became a biker, and I started to live a life within my biker image. My first Harley was a sport type. I remember the day I bought it. It's like, "Wow! Look what I am now!" I had it for the first three years, and I used it constantly in the summer time. And then, when I graduated from the small Harley to the Big Harley, I took on a whole new persona. I had a different image of the world: a power biker image, being a biker, and living a life within my biker image. My motorcycle persona image has an element of superiority. It's an element of grandiosity. I felt tough and strong. I felt respected. I would go with my bike the whole time, all the time, winter and summer, all the time. I had long hair. I had a nickname. Girls liked me. I felt alive, youthful, and exciting.

I got married to Cindy in my mid 20s. I was physically abusive in that relationship as well. She heard about a counselling program for abusive husbands and wanted me to go there. At that time, I had a very different view of the world. I really felt

that I wasn't doing anything inappropriate at all. I thought Cindy was the real problem. She was the one who needed to get help.

My change came gradually; it was a slow process. The first assessment interview with a counsellor was quite an eye opener as I was asked a series of questions for about an hour and half. They were quite poignant and revealing. I guess I was somehow ready to hear what I was truly doing. I started to realize there was something that I was doing that was not OK. I wondered, "What are the things that are giving me permission to do those things?" I started to work on changing my belief system, changing my mind of how I see the world. Now I understand that I am responsible for my own action. And I'm still working on that because, even now, I still have a natural desire to blame, a natural impulse to go, "It's not mine." So, I'm still growing, evolving. I'm always asking myself, "What is it that I can do differently?" I am committed to do things in a way that it does not hurt myself and others. The key to my non-abusiveness is that I came to be able to value someone as I value myself.

One of my most wonderful moments was when my first son was born. But I lost him 16 hours later. Just over a year later, Cindy gave birth to my second son, Charles. It was very scary because it was almost like déjà vu. It's been very joyous to have him and to be able to continue to have him since then.

Though I became non-abusive, Cindy decided to end our marriage. She has taken Charles away from me and chosen not to acknowledge my existence. But I would never give up Charles. So, my relationship with Cindy has been very strained. I always longed to be as caring and loving to my son as my grandfather was to me, but I lost my parenting opportunity. Sometimes it is very hard to endure. I am currently a satellite dad to Charles who is 12 years old. But, I often feel frustrated because I have more energy for him. I know I can do much more for him if only I can get to see him more often.

I am still a motorcycle enthusiast. But my hair is short now, and my attitudes and beliefs have been transformed. I just simply evolved into a different understanding of what it means to be Nick in the world.

Around the time I stopped being abusive, I started to run. It was when I started to get into my body. I came to understand the importance of taking good care of myself, to be fit and healthy to be in the world. I have been an avid member of the local running club.

Since my divorce, I was in intimate relationships in which I have never been physically violent. My current partner and I have been together for a couple of months.

Most of the things I do now is how I am connected to other people. On weekends, I work as a counsellor for abusive men, which I enjoy very much. I also do

presentations on my non-abusiveness at schools and in the community. It's the best thing that happened to me, this opportunity to speak out to an open audience. At first, it's uncomfortable talking about myself, but I've tried my best. The most important thing is speaking my truth.

In our adulthood, my siblings and I got much closer. Now, we feel connected. It's been always hard for us to get along with our mom. So we all seem to support each other around the difficulty with her. I am surrounded with a great many fantastic people I got to know through my hobbies and community activities. Looking back, I never had such support networks when I was young.

I became abusive, attempting to communicate in an effective way. I always wanted to be heard. I didn't realize that it was me who needed to hear myself. So, I acted up inappropriately. Looking back on my childhood, I learned that first with my siblings, and carried that on to my intimate relationships.

In the future, I will try to continue to be the best father that I can to Charles. I aspire to speak the truth and help people as a counsellor. Because it seems life presents a new challenge constantly for me to be responsible; there always seems to be another opportunity to be a better person. I went through many tough times in my 41 years of life. Each time they brought me an opportunity to see who I was. I haven't always been able to face them as well as I would have liked. I can see that things are getting better for me. I like who I am more now than who I was younger. I can see the possibility of becoming even more likable. I can see in the future that it is possible for me to behave even better and that I can be more fulfilled than I am already.

4.1.5 Ross's life story.

I was born in the late 1950s in the UK. My parents were not all but quite religious. So, we were always in church and surrounded by church people. I was the eldest of their four children. My siblings and I were supposed to "be seen but not heard." I always felt quite lonely. My earliest memory is one when my youngest sister was born, I was perhaps 7 or 8 years old. I was watching Mom lying in the bed holding the baby, thinking, "Oh, no! Another one." I felt further pushed out, pushed away, whatever.

In elementary school, I remember feeling picked on. I was definitely unsure of how to live this life. I just didn't know how to say, "No." I could never say, "That's not OK," to my peers. So, with parents, siblings, and peers, I was feeling distant, detached. With teachers I felt the same. I was unable to accept warmth. I didn't feel close to anybody. I just shoved them all out, I guess.

When I was about 11, I went to the grammar school that offered a college preparatory education. There was only one other kid who went to the school from

the same junior school. So, it was kind of scary; I left behind all the peers. Everybody was new.

My relationship with my parents at that time was more or less the same; distant, explosive, confusing, resentful, bitter. At home, I could have done anything to get my parents' attention. I would misbehave at the table and annoyed Mom. I would pretend to be unconscious in my room to get Dad to rush at me. He would spank me hard, but I felt good. That's how I got acknowledged by him. It was worth being punished. It became almost a form of control. I was controlling my parents as the whim took me.

Until I was 13 or 14, I was one of the high achievers in the school. But then, I just thought, "That's enough of that." Since then, I basically dropped out though I still went to the school until I graduated at age 16.

At the school, I started to hang around with a group of boys and did a lot of stealing, smoking, and drinking. What I learned in school was that you make sure you don't get caught. If you get caught, you make sure to show others that you don't give a damn. You should appear just calm and cool. I once even smiled at the head master before being caned in front of the class. Then I got to be a hero among my peers. Everybody wanted to be like me. Anyone who can deal with pain like that would get recognized by peers. So, there were a lot of benefits of being physically in pain.

I began to feel incredibly embarrassed by my dad. He didn't drink, didn't fight, went to church, was a cub-scout leader, and on and on. I wanted to do just the opposite. I wanted to be what he wasn't.

In those days, I was living on thrill. I stole for thrill, dated for thrill, got tattooed for thrill.

By the time I was finishing school, I completely removed myself from my family; so did my peers. We became a family. All we wanted was to live in the moment as thrillingly as possible. When we didn't get enough thrill, we drank at pubs and fought on the streets. That was the beginning to going to soccer games and becoming hooligans. Looking back, it was a tribal act more than anything. We were all lost boys, going to soccer games, and experiencing pure thrill to be with thousands and thousands of out of control people. Among them, we felt safe, very safe, afraid, but safe.

After grammar school, I did a couple of years of apprenticeship in a mechanical setting, and then worked at the same place until I left the UK at age 27. One of the worst moments in my life was when I told my parents that I got my girlfriend pregnant. I didn't want her to have an abortion, but I didn't want to marry her, either. Our parents decided that we should marry. We got married when I just turned 17. The day before the wedding, I hid myself and got drunk. I was dragged

out to the ceremony and somehow made it through. All I wanted was just to disappear entirely from the earth. My first wife and I had a son, but our marriage ended when I was 22.

After being separated from my first wife, I lived with parents, with friends, kind of bouncing around here and there, everywhere. In those days, I was extremely violent both in intimate relationships and with strangers. I did a lot of pub drinking and gang fights together with friends, co-workers, and neighbours. We played soccer wherever and supported the same soccer team. We would travel all over the UK to fight with thousands of others in the name of soccer.

I met Barbara in 1985. Shortly after we met, she left for North America to work as a nanny. So, I took a three-week vacation and followed her to City J. But, that was it. I found myself a job and never went back to the UK. Looking back, a part of it was an escape. I left everything behind; my friends, soccer team, the work, the pubs, the streets I lived on, and the neighbourhood I grew up in. I came to a new country where soccer hooligans didn't exist, met new people and started to do a different job.

Throughout my young adulthood, my biggest fear was to lose women on whom I was emotionally dependent. When I thought my girlfriends were discarding me, I would become emotionally/verbally abusive to them. When I still saw them leaving me, I would become physically violent to make them stay with me. I did the same to Barbara.

The following year, we hitch hiked across the country out west. It was fun. But, in retrospect, I must have wanted to take her farther away from her family in the UK. She was very close to her family. I must have been unconsciously trying to isolate her from her family.

We came to City K with only a small amount of money left in our pockets. Barbara found a job to take care of disabled kids, and I started to work as a contractor, doing house renovations. We got married and had two kids. This time, I actually wanted to marry. One of the most wonderful moments in my life was when Cory, our first child, and my first and only daughter, was born. Soon after Cory, Tim was born. So, we were making our lives in this New World, and it all seemed fine on the surface. But I was still feeling this enormous emotional pain I had been hoarding since I don't know when. And I still didn't know what to do with it. My physical violence to Barbara got worse and worse.

One day I kicked Barbara. She was holding Tim who was 18 months old. Then, Cory who was standing beside her looked up at me. I saw her four-year-old face looking up at me. Up until then, I had never hit Barbara in front of our children. That had been the last thread of good thought I had about myself. But it was all gone, irreversible.

A couple of months after that incident, Barbara left me for the UK and took the kids with her. She told me to join the counselling program for abusive husbands. That's what I did in 1993. I would've been 34.

Gradually, during the last 10 years, things started to make sense to me. I began to understand myself. The things I did were bad, but I didn't have to remain to be that bad person. The male counsellors who worked with me were a completely new type of men. I had never been around those men who said that I didn't need to drink, I didn't need to be violent, and I could change. I eventually came to realize that I didn't need to be the kind of man I thought I had to be.

Around that time, I began to understand my dad. He always believed in himself, was a devoted family man, and totally committed whatever he did. I started to admire him for who he was.

When I was about to give in, I tried to see Cory's face in my mind's eye. Her four-year-old face looking up at me when I kicked her mother. I felt I could stand any emotional pain if only I would not break Cory's heart again.

About two years ago, Barbara and I had an argument. And she said to me, "For the first time since we've been together I didn't feel afraid that you would hit me." That was 8 or 9 years after I first came to the men's counselling program. That was interesting to me to hear her actually saying that, for the first time, at least five years after I considered that she was safe from my violence.

Although I didn't witness my parents being abusive/violent towards each other, there was no way I wasn't gonna be physically violent. I'd already learned those ways. I had never been anywhere around men who said I could be different. I physically fought because of the street I lived on, the neighbourhood I lived in, the school I went to, the soccer team we supported, and the pub drinking. All of them were related to my becoming a soccer hooligan. I was ready for that. Violence was very attractive and addictive to me and my peers. We all felt good afterwards, though for a brief while. That was the way to feel good about ourselves, feel powerful, important, and successful. Alcohol had the same effects. In my youth, the more you could hurt somebody, the more respect you got from your peers. You had to pretend to be fearless; otherwise, you would get picked on. So, there was a lot of peer pressure.

I always felt pain in my heart when I inflicted pain but always quickly stuffed that pain or acted out again to get rid of the emotion. Alcohol was always my most favourite painkiller.

Looking back, I can now clearly see what was going on with me. I always had this enormous sense of pain in my bosom. At certain moments, it seemed to me that I was utterly swallowed by it, eaten by it. But I didn't know how to deal with it except inflicting it on others. I had this book on pain, and would pass the book

onto others, "Here you have it." It sounds simple, but that's what we do. Unless you feel relief from the pain, you keep inflicting it on others.

As far as my violence in intimate relationships goes, I was always afraid that my partners were leaving me. This fear would increase my violence. I was using emotional abuse to keep them close to me. If it didn't work, I would be physically violent. And the next day, or the next week, I would realize what I had done. I would suffer from enormous remorse. Then, I would become ever more afraid of losing them. My fear would become uncontrollable, which, of course, was the fuel for more violence. So, I went through that cycle of violence again and again and again to the point where I could not do this any more. That was my cross, and I could not carry it any longer. I could not go on any farther. I stopped it strictly for me.

Since I came to the men's counselling program, I started accepting that I could change. I still feel pain and suffer from it, but now I tell myself that it's just an emotion. I still feel afraid, but again, that's just an emotion. I learned to recover from the pain and suffering without inflicting it on others. Just saying that I'm afraid helps me to stop feeling afraid. If I keep my emotions in there and don't allow myself to say that, feel that, and even experience that, then it will get bigger and bigger and bigger until it explodes, until it becomes unmanageable. You gotta release it! You just gotta release it! Now I can do it in a non-violent way.

I became a lay counsellor to those men who wish to cease their violent and abusive behaviours in their relationships in the same organisation to which I first came as a client. I know what I represent; past and present, before and after. That's why I sit in front of those men week after week. I have no desire to force change on anybody else. But, as long as that's what these men want, I would like to help.

My future plan is that I can let go of my kids OK. I'm sure it's gonna be painful. Cory and Tim, I think of each of them. They are truly a great fortune to me and Barbara.

I hope that I will be as non-violent and non-abusive as I possible can be. And I am dedicated to that. I know that I am very capable of not to go out there to hurt people intentionally as I used to. But, emotionally to do that is more difficult. When I'm feeling angry or extremely disappointed, frustrated, or impatient, it is difficult for me not to punish somebody for that. So, that's the desire that I would do as little as possible. And I'm very aware that I'm in charge of that. I have come to be able to live in harmony with my conscience. Nobody makes me do anything. I am fully responsible for my own thoughts, decisions, and actions. My conscience will lead me to live my decent human life. I'm one of those men who are fortunate enough to be given an opportunity to see that there is another life. In this other life, I am determined to live as guilt-free as possible.

4.1.6 Steve's life story.

I was born in City L in the late 60s. My parents were separated when I was two years old. Soon afterwards, my mom remarried my step-father. I called him dad all the time. They were hippie-like. We lived on 50 acres of land in a very isolated place. I was outside for most of my childhood years, playing alone. I would walk along the water and in the woods. And there were the wild flowers. When I was eight, my half-brother, Marvin, was born. Because there was no one else around, we played with each other most of the time. I always loved him, and I cared about him.

My step-father, Dave, was an incredibly creative person, but also very abusive, physically and emotionally. He was abusive to all of us, my mom, myself, and Marvin. Before my parents married, Dave was in Vietnam. I remember him talking about some of the things about the war. He would be crazy, like, he would just start drooling sometimes, running around with a gun, and it was just bizarre. Like, there were times when he was back in Vietnam in his mind. It was scary. He was very extreme. There were the times I really loved him, and there were the times I was terrified of him and hated him. My feelings with him were also extreme. Looking back on my childhood, I was always trying to please him. But every time, I felt that I could not live up to his expectations, and I felt a lot of sadness and hurt.

Whereas with my mom, I always felt accepted. We were always very close. As years progressed, we came to rely on each other a lot with my step-father being abusive. But we don't want to say that that was the only reason why we were close. We could somehow intuitively understand each other's feelings. As a child, I could not articulate that well, but I was still sensing things about my mom. Dave hated to see that bond between us.

Another person with whom I had a special relationship was my maternal grandfather. He lived far away, so we didn't see each other a lot. But I don't know there was any other person in my life with whom I ever felt more loved or cared for by, except my mom, just 100%, total acceptance. I was the centre of the universe when I was with him. He kept sending me the same, complete love until he passed away in my mid-20s.

My first teacher was my mom. She home-schooled me until I was up to Grade 2. As soon as I started to read, I read everything around me. It was my escape. That's how I acquired knowledge. Reading became my passion to this day. Then, my parents made a decision to move closer to a community where there was a school. They thought I needed to have social interaction with other kids of my age. So a lot of new things happened within that year. Because my mom home-schooled me so well, I skipped Grade 3. Mrs. Parker was my teacher, and I was with her for two or three years. She was a loving, kind woman, and I felt very cared for by her. My relationship with my classmates was not easy. I always felt that I didn't fit in. I felt I was different than anybody else. Often, I felt lonely.

As I said, Dave was extremely abusive to all of us, and I grew up in fear and pain. It was a roller-coaster living with him. I came home from school on a daily basis not really knowing what situations were gonna be like. I never felt safe at home except when I was with my mom. I had to be constantly figuring out what's going on, what I needed to do to survive.

In my adolescence, I started to challenge Dave a little bit, and my relationship with him got more and more tense. The conflict between us was almost constant. He couldn't be physically abusive with me as much any more as I became closer to his size. But once it occurred, it was much stronger. When I just turned 16, my parents told me that it's time for me to go. My mom didn't want me to leave, but Dave did. I thought, "Finally! I can be somewhere safe!" So, as the summer's end came near, I moved out of home to live with Ron, a family friend, in City M. My new life in a big city began.

Ron was a bachelor and had always been like an uncle to me. So it wasn't that uncomfortable living with him. That year in City M, I literally exploded. For the first time in my life, I tasted freedom. I had been so oppressed until then, and all of a sudden, I could do whatever I wanted. I could be whoever I wanted. Nobody was gonna hurt me if I did the wrong thing. I met Doug at my new high school, and he became my close friend. We did a lot of crazy stuff together.

I started my Grade 11 in City M, but I dropped out when I was in Grade 12. I disconnected myself from the school. I was too busy enjoying my freedom and exploring life. A lot of times, looking back, my teachers were frustrated with me because I had potential, but I was not using it. But I always felt the support by them. I felt lucky for the most part to have the teachers I did.

With my girlfriends, I was pretty disrespectful. Most of my relationships in my teenage years were short. And a common piece throughout all those was that I ended up hurting those girls emotionally. I didn't physically abuse my girlfriends at that time. But I smothered them and controlled them. I was extremely jealous. My attitude was like, "You are my girlfriend. You don't show interest in anybody else or anything." As I was growing up, I'd always heard that one day I would find a woman that I could merge with. Dave had strange concepts around how two people become one. So that's kind of where I went as a teenager. I was so desperate to be in a relationship. There was no time when it was OK for me to not have a relationship. Once I had a relationship, I had to be 100% close to her. They weren't about comfortable, easy, let's-go-to-the-movie kind of relationships. It was all about my feelings, not about my girlfriends'. I would do whatever it took for me to get my needs met.

When I was 18, I met Joan with whom I had my first long-term relationship. At that time, I was having a rough life in City M. After too much freedom, a lot of things that I hadn't dealt with were coming out in many other ways. I started to

have problems with alcohol and drugs. My behaviour was getting pretty erratic. I lost a lot of friendships by doing things to hurt them, not physically but emotionally.

I became physically violent to Joan. One particular time, as I was hitting her, I saw my step-father's face. And it just shocked me. It was totally terrifying to see that insane look on his face. Growing up, I was saying to myself, "I'm never gonna be like him! I'm not gonna do the same thing!" Then, all of a sudden, looking into the mirror myself, what I saw was Dave. I was just like him! Throughout that time with Joan, I was so unhappy and confused that I took out that on her a lot. I was slowly but surely damaging our relationship to the point of no repair.

After being together for one year or so, Joan wanted to live closer to her parents who just moved to City N. So we followed them there. As my life was falling apart in City M, I thought being somewhere totally different would be a good thing.

As I said, my brother Marvin and I were always close, so much so that when I wanted anybody to come up in City N, it was Marvin. I hadn't seen him for a couple of years actually. He was 11 at that time. He got there one night, and the following morning, my mom called and said that Dave committed suicide. I never forget how I sat down with Marvin and told him about it. It was the scariest, and I was very embarrassed or ashamed to say, the happiest moment in the first 20 years of my life. I said to myself, "The power over me is finally gone!"

Dave committing suicide affected me hugely. I felt safe, liberated, but also I felt ashamed that I was feeling that, and confused about that. The funny thing was that I felt alone. As long as he was alive, I had something to focus my energy on. I had someone to blame for the way I was. Straight after my step-dad died, Joan and I were split up, and I moved to City O where my mom and Marvin were at that time.

In City O, I met Kim right away, and we started our relationship. We have three kids together. One of the most wonderful moments in my life was being around the births of my kids. I felt the purest joy. When my first child and only daughter, Aychel, was born, it was scary as well. I thought, "Oh, I am a parent now. I gotta be responsible." I was also having a lot of fears of what I would be like as a parent. I thought of Dave as my childhood role model. Behaving like him was the last thing I wanted to do for my kids. So I started to think about my life differently. It's not just me any more.

For about a year after my daughter was born, I was still physically violent to Kim. This one time I was screaming at her and woke up Aychel who was asleep in the crib. She was 10 months old. That was for me a life-changing experience. I said to myself, "Oh, my God! I am doing exactly the stuff I said I would never do." I

knew what woke Aychel up. Something negative touched her, attacked on her. That was my energy. It didn't matter if I was hitting or yelling at my wife. My daughter could understand. She could still sense my energy.

With the help of my mom, I found a counselling program for abusive husbands, and I started to participate in a group session right away.

Initially, my attitude was like, "I'm not gonna listen to you. If you continue to talk to me, I'm gonna shut you up harder." It's basically how my behaviour towards my partners was. I didn't want to hear anything bad.

My first significant change was that I came to be able to believe that I was still a good person despite the fact that I heard things that were pretty scary to hear. During the next three years through my time at the program, I began to understand myself.

Shortly after I came to the program, I stopped being physically violent toward Kim. Then, Kim and I were together for another 6 or 7 years during which time she became addicted to alcohol. When she became verbally abusive to me, I would leave the house. I stopped engaging in any abusive situations, and the only way that I could be sure that I wasn't engaging was not be there. So I would leave the house a lot. That dynamic changed our relationship. Around the same time, I started to feel confident about myself as a parent. Becoming a positive role model for the kids was the biggest achievement of my life to this day. I have memories of walking into the kids' rooms and seeing them in sleep, and feeling the intense happiness.

As Kim's problems with alcohol got worse, it became too risky for me to live with her. To try not to be abusive to her was becoming impossible. At home I was second to her alcohol. My resentment and anger and hurts and frustration were getting so big that I couldn't be with her. I was dying. I regret leaving the kids there. But at that time, I didn't see that I had another choice. My fear of staying the same was so big that it overcame my fear of taking a leap to do something different and being alone. Leaving Kim was the only way I was gonna survive.

I had always jumped from a relationship to relationship, and had been mortally afraid of being alone. But this time, I was single for two and half years during which even considering being in a relationship scared me a lot. I believed that I had changed, and that I was not abusive in my relationship with Kim. But I didn't' have any real confidence in my non-abusiveness if I tried a new relationship.

But another life-changing-moment came to me when I was down in City P visiting my relatives. One night I was sitting on the beach by myself. It was dark. I was thinking about how I left my relationship with Kim. I realized that, though not in an intimate way, I was still very engaged in my relationship with Kim. We

had been together for so many years, and we were the parents of three small kids. My past abuse had a lot of negative impact on her. And she still wanted me to come back. So the dynamics were all the same. And I realized that despite my unhappiness in that relationship with Kim, I still hung on to it because it was me not being alone. I wasn't alone as long as I was engaged mentally. So I still had a hook there. Sitting on the beach, I was also thinking about how I loved being around Megan. Megan and I had been working together. And I had feelings for her. Then, all of a sudden, it all became clear to me that I needed to let go of something I was holding on to it and strike the new path. I made up my mind to start a new relationship with Megan, and my real task would be to be non-abusive in that new relationship.

Megan and I started the relationship three years ago. I had never had a more real, loving, challenging relationship in my life. I now know that I had the ability to be non-abusive. At first, my concern was, "OK, how's this gonna work with the kids?" Even in starting a new relationship, my focus was about the kids. That was something Megan and I had to work out. We've been both having urges to work those things out. Six weeks after we started to go out, the kids came to live with me full-time, to my greatest joy.

Around that time, I had a bad experience with my employer, and I left the job. I had been working in retail management for many years. I was never happy with my job, but I was good at it. And it had been my livelihood for so long. Because now I had kids, I couldn't just be getting into any new job. I had to find a Monday-to-Friday, nine-to-five kind of job. I was unemployed for 10 months altogether. For the first two or three of that, I was really not knowing what to do. And then the last five was me going, "OK. I'm starting something new." I did a lot of research, and I came up with plumbing since it was very profitable, and there's always work. I have been in an apprenticeship program for a couple of years, and it's been great. Learning this knowledge and getting tangible results daily have been very satisfying. It's something I couldn't experience as a retail manager. Also, I feel much empowered, having a physical trade like this.

I've already made big changes to myself so that my impact on my kids is gonna be much different. Staying as a positive role model for them is my biggest aspiration. Professionally, I hope to take off with my new career and to eventually become my own business owner. Again, that's something, just a few years ago, I had no clue how I would ever achieve that. As I said, my relationship with Megan has been a very special one. We will make every effort to keep this relationship healthy. As far as my role as a counsellor goes, I wanna continue to be a positive force. My strength is that I am able to relate to and empathise with those guys who come to the program. If I can help them anywhere close to the way I'd been helped by the people who helped me, then I'm pretty successful.

4.2 Factors Contributing to Abuse/Violence

The study found that the participants had had inhibited communication styles since childhood or adolescence, though the motivations behind and/or the origins of these inhibitions differed from one participant to another. As they grew up, some participants had a strong desire or need to appear tough and masculine, which further discouraged them to be communicative and emotionally open. Five out of six participants reported that, as young adults, they did not have effective communication styles with their intimate female partners, particularly in emotional content. The study also found that the participants did not grow up under the wings of proper male role models. None of the participants had warm, meaningful relationships with their fathers. They left home prematurely without having learned what it was like to be in a healthy relationship. In a way, the participants merely drifted away from homes, and began their adulthood on their own without role models, support, or optimal guidance.

4.2.1 Inhibition of communication. Three participants (Mark, Ross, Steve) noted that they had difficulty in communicating with others or expressing their emotions freely to others when they were young. The origin of this inhibition may differ from one participant to another. For example, Ross was not an assertive type as a young child.

> Ross (R): I guess I always felt quite lonely. I guess, difficult.
> Interviewer (I): Even with siblings?
> R: Aagh, yes. Yeah. Distance from that for sure, definitely (…). And, I don't really have that many memories of it. (…). Of that age. School memories…. I also remember feeling picked on and, I guess, a little, eh, definitely unsure of how to live this life. (…). And also stand up for [myself].
> I: You mean bullying and stuff?
> R: Some, and eh, yeah. And how to say, 'No.' I just, I don't remember (…), how to say, 'No.' (…). Yeah, how to say, 'That's not OK.' (Ross, Transcript, p.2, L45-56)

In Steve's case, his inhibition of communication may have originated from his notion of being an outsider.

> Steve (S): I felt I didn't fit in, that I was always very different than anybody else, couldn't fit in. (Steve, Transcript, p. 5, L39)

> S: So my school time, my social time, pretty much after school I was alone. (…). So, my relationship with my peers was probably pretty, was very strange, was very hard. A lot of sadness again. (Steve, Transcript, p.5, L42-46)

As described in Mark's life story earlier in this chapter, his saying, "I don't love you" to his mother was met by physical punishment by his father. He noted that this experience in his early childhood may have contributed to his inhibition about expressing certain things later in his life.

As the participants grew up, three of them (Dan, Howard, Ross) started to believe that expressing their emotions and concerns was not masculine. Thus, some of the participants' inhibition of communication originated in their wish or need to appear masculine. For example, Howard has never cried since childhood because his strict step-father loathed his crying.

> Howard (H): I never cried from the time when I was... My dad was big on that. My step-father, you know. 'Men don't cry. Boys don't cry.' (…). And so I never cried. (Howard, Transcript, p.10, L9-12)

Consequently, Howard came to believe that to be a man, he had to be tough and strong, and would never complain or whine no matter what happened. In his young adulthood, Howard had a definite notion of what a man was like.

> H: And it was like, I thought I was like the only sensible man in the whole world. And I believed in societal myth that we have that men, you know, we don't have any feelings, and we don't care, and we don't, you know. All we do is drink beer and fart or whatever [laughs]. (Howard, Transcript, p.9, L56; p.10, L1-2)

Thus, the participants appeared to have believed that being tough and masculine is equivalent to being reserved and uncommunicative.

By the time the participants were adolescents, it was very important to some of them, particularly to Dan, Howard, Nick, and Ross to be masculine and/or to be considered as being masculine. The participants seemed to have been convinced that masculine men were not only reserved and uncommunicative but also controlled and persevering; they never whined. Consequently, they learned to suppress their emotions in

order to appear tough. As a British youth who decided to live a life of a soccer hooligan, it was critical for Ross to maintain his good status in his peer group by not showing fear, enduring pain, hurting others, in short, being tough. How Ross made sure to appear unaffected whenever he was physically punished at school was described in his life story earlier in the chapter. Showing emotions, particularly fear, may have resulted in his being bullied, ridiculed, or seriously hurt.

> R: The more violent you are, which means the more capable you are of winning fights against big people (…), the more numbers you have around you.
> I: Yeah, just like people winning a war.
> R: Yeah, exactly. Well, you know, some mob. Family members, the mob, the more you've murdered, the higher the ladder you go, the more respect you get.
> I: Like Mafia?
> R: Yeah, exactly, yeah. And that was the same in my life.
> I: In your teenage years?
> R: Yeah. Absolutely, absolutely. The more you could hurt somebody else, the more respect you had, basically. Yeah.
> I: A lot of pressure, too.
> R: There's a lot of pressure, but you can't be afraid or show fear, basically.
> I: Wasn't that hard [laughs]? That kind of...
> R: Well, privately, but...
> I: Oh, you shouldn't show...?
> R: Out there you don't wanna betray fear. Yeah. Otherwise, you get picked on. And I was always in the middle of the pack. (…). There were people whom I could quite easily bully and other people quite easily bullied me. Right in the middle. (Ross, Transcript, p.20, L25-44)

Similarly, Dan learned to wear a tough guy's mask in his early 20s in order not to show his fear in and out of prison.

Some participants noted that they were not able to effectively convey their emotions to their intimate partners, which ultimately resulted in their use of abuse/violence.

> I: Please describe how you became abusive in your relationship.
> H: Oh, that's a hard one. I guess, I think for me, you know, I... What I was trying to do from my point of view was to tell how I badly felt about things. But I had a very inappropriate way of doing it... (Howard, Transcript, p.8, L49-51)

Nick also described his past violence as stemming from his difficulty to communicate effectively:

> I: Please explain how you became abusive in your relationships.
> Nick (N): Yeah. Attempting to communicate in an effective way. That's how I became abusive. I wanted to be heard. Didn't realize that it was me that needed to hear me [laughs]. So, I acted up. (...). Inappropriately. (Nick, Transcript, p.12, L42-47)

Mark also described his past abuse in terms of his pattern of communication with his intimate partners and others:

> Mark (M): I guess one of the things is it made me realize that I had responsibility to let other people know that if I didn't like their behaviour towards me, or they had constraints on me or whatever it was. So I had found the way non-violent, non-abusive way to communicate what it was that I needed. (...). And when I started to do that, eh, I was able to have a better life for myself. You know, to realize that if I am in a situation where things are, I'm not happy with what's going on. (...). I can, I actually, had courage to try to change that. Before I didn't really, I guess it's something I learned in the [group] that I had a responsibility to do that. But also I can do it, I mean, sometimes it's scary to tell people that you don't like what's happening. (Mark, Transcrip2, p.14, L5-17)

Thus, the results of the study clearly indicated the participants' own perceptions of developmental trajectories in terms of their communication styles with family members and peers in early years and with intimate partners in adulthood.

4.2.2 Lack of male role models. None of the six participants described their relationships with their fathers in their childhood as emotionally close.

> Dan (D): [My father was] a good provider, took care of us. But emotionally and spiritually, he wasn't really there. He couldn't be just... It was beyond him. (Dan, Transcript1, p.2, L39- 40)

> H: My step-father, as I said, when I look back he was a good guy. But, he was quite, you know, he's from the old school, he was quite strict, and I just, we just didn't have anything to do with each other. I didn't give him a chance, right? So... But I was afraid of him, too. He was a big guy, I was afraid of him. (Howard, Transcript, p.6, L32-34)

Ross, who grew up in the UK, described his childhood relationship with his father using such descriptors as distant, detached, confusing, resentful, bitter, and explosive. Mark did not get along with his disciplinarian father, either. He started to speak out and stand up to his father in his teenage years.

> M: He was, you know, we got spanked, and but as I got into my teens, and there were a couple of situations where I stood back and we actually had fist fights. (Mark, Transcript1, p.9, L17-18)

Although Howard, Mark, and Ross reported that their fathers were not abusive/violent to their mothers, they did not emulate their fathers' abuse/violence-free behaviours, which may have resulted from these sons' detachment from their fathers.

Some of the fathers of the participants were not only distant and strict to their sons but also inappropriate as role models. For example, Nick described his father as co-dependent, selfish, needy, and alcoholic. As Steve grew up, he endured on-going, damaging physical violence by the hand of his step-father.

> S: I remember I came home one night, I was probably an hour late, and he actually ripped hair out of my scalp. I still have a scar today. Eh, so the violence was very violent at that time. (Steve, Transcript, p.9, L27-29)

In addition, Dan and Steve witnessed interparental violence, specifically, father-to-mother physical violence in their childhood. It happened a few times for Dan, but for Steve, many times.

Some participants, particularly Dan and Ross, were strongly drawn to their peer groups in their early adolescence, which may have been caused by their distant relationships with their fathers, or the lack of appropriate male role models at home.

> D: As I started growing I sought the means to be connected because a lot of times, my father wasn't around. (Dan, Transcript1, p.2, L36-37)

> D: One of the things that I kept on doing at young age, oh, probably, 11 years or 12 years old through 16, I kept running away from home, and stayed with friends in town, and you know. I was really attracted to older men that had been in trouble, had been in prison. Because they had this sense of respect from

everybody, you know, false type of respect, and mostly fear induced, you know. (...). It was all attractive to me. (Dan, Transcript1, p.2, L47-52)

R: I guess that was the beginning to going to soccer games and hooligans, and violence, and...
I: With your peers?
R: Yeah, yeah. People you didn't know, and thousands and thousands of kids and, yeah, a lot of gang fights and stuff like that.
I: Did you play football as well?
R: Yeah, oh, yeah. Still do [laughs], try to these days. Yeah.
I: And hooligan thing, did you participate as well?
R: Oh, yeah. Yeah, yeah, very much so.
I: A peer thing?
R: I guess so. Looking back, as a memory now, [it's] a tribal more than anything. Just that thrill to be with thousands of out of control people, feeling very safe, very safe. Yeah. Afraid, but safe.
I: So, nowadays young people doing the same, you see the same thing is happening?
R: Yeah, I'm sure they do. I'm sure they do. In [the UK] it's very, that's still very prevalent. Yeah. (...). I guess a lot of lost boys.
I: [Laughs].
R: Lost souls [laughs]. And, yeah. I guess that's what it was. We were lost. And that became the family. That friends and those circle became the family. I removed myself from my family, pretty much...
I: And they did things together these boys?
R: Yeah, yeah, whatever we got to be in trouble, basically, whatever we could... Smoking, drinking, alcohol, a lot of, lots of lots of alcohol... (Ross, Transcript, p.3, L38-56; p.4, L1-3)

4.2.3 Leaving home early. Another common characteristic of the participants was that many of them left home much earlier than the norm: Dan at 16, Howard at 22, Mark at 19, Nick at 15, Ross at 18, and Steve at 16. Nick's adolescence ended at age 15 when he left school and worked to support himself. According to Nick, he skipped his teenage years (Nick, Transcript, p.8, L39).

N: My parents split up and I was basically just with my dad. (...). Trying to focus with my life that way. And then, moving from that transition into being with foster parents for a short period of time. (...). Then with my mom, and then, my granddad, and how I took another responsibility, well, I quit school. (...). And I lived on my own, and worked in a restaurant, and provided for myself. (...). At 15.
I: Fifteen? That's rather young.
N: Ya. (Nick, Transcript, p.2, L44-56; p. 3, L1)

In Nick's case, his family circumstances forced him to leave home and become independent at a young age. Similarly, as described in his life story earlier in the chapter, Steve was forced to leave home by his step-father at age 15. As for Howard and Ross, their girlfriends' unwanted pregnancies forced them to leave home and play roles as husbands and fathers, which they were not prepared to do.

In Dan's case, he left home voluntarily. His strong attraction to a tough guy image was briefly mentioned earlier in the chapter. After his parents' divorce, he decided to leave home permanently and live in the world of tough guys.

> D: At the age of 16, my mom, my mother and father had separated, and I was continuously, you know, leaving home. My mom told me, 'You know what? Son, if you need to go and do whatever you want, I can't...' She tried hard to keep me at home, you know. By that time, I thought I was a grown-up and didn't listen to her much. And I never, I never, abused my mom, (...). But I just kind of ignored her. (...). And I ended up moving in with this older man. I was 16, he was 40. (...). You know, he was pretty tough guy, was an ex-convict, and a heroin user, and a kind of a gangster type of guy, and while I was living with him (...) I was first introduced to, aagh, hard narcotics. (Dan, Transcript1, p.3, L4-13)

As soon as the participants left home, they started to have intimate relationships without having learned what constituted healthy relationships between men and women. For example, to Dan who was seriously addicted to alcohol and heroin in his young adulthood, intimate relationships were not based on love, but on convenience.

> D: The women that I had been with were doing the same thing, you know. Using something, and you know, that was all we really had in common, was not love, was more of, aagh, partnership, and, aagh, anyway. (Dan, Transcript1, p.5, L30-32)

Steve described the intimate relationships he had shortly after he left home as follows:

> S: I didn't have a lot of long-term relationships up until the time I was 18, most of my relationships were, teenage years, I guess, pretty short, and eh, a common piece throughout all those was that I ended up hurting those girls emotionally.... Eh, didn't really know how to read people and to be, really, because I was so desperate to be in a relationship. Uhm, it was about my feelings. It wasn't about

them, that I would do whatever it took for me to feel, to get my needs met. (Steve, Transcript, p.10, L26-31)

S: I smothered my girlfriends. I smothered them and controlled them. (Steve, Transcript, p.10, L41-42)

To make the matter worse for two participants (Dan and Ross), the role models they had upon their leaving home were not only inappropriate, but also indescribably negative. Dan described how he learned to treat his partners disrespectfully as follows:

D: I ended up getting arrested for sales of marijuana. (...). Then, I went to the jail and I went to a camp. Now all this time, though, Yuriko, all my contacts with the men, and I would see that the relationships between them, and women in their lives, it was always a place, like a privilege of them having the last word. (...). Them telling their women what to do, when to do it, and looking back retrospectively, they had a lot to do with my conditioning. (...). Anyway, it went on. And I did time, and...
I: Oh, OK, eh, conditioning is like believing that men were better, or...?
D: Yes.
I: And men could be tough and acting tough and using aggression sometimes, that kind of belief?
D: Yes. The conditioning is that being around those types of men...
I: All the time...
D: All the time.
I: And you were still very young...
D: Yeah, you are very young, and I thought that that was what I need to do to be a man. (...). And also, the way they treated their partners... (...). There was jealousy involved, there was control involved and then I would see them, and again, looking back retrospectively, I did a lot of the same stuff with my girlfriends. (Dan, Transcript1, p.3, L14-37)

In sum, the participants' weak attachment to their homes of origin, directly or indirectly caused by the lack of proper role models and/or the absence of emotionally dedicated fathers, may have made them leave home prematurely, and hasten to start intimate relationships of their own in which they became physically and psychologically abusive/violent.

4.3 Processes of Psychological Change and its Maintenance

This section describes turning points that had a profound impact on how the participants understood themselves and their abusiveness/violence. In addition, the significant contribution of the counselling program to the participants' transformation was described. Specifically, it was as the result of their participation in the counselling program that the participants: (a) came to believe that change was possible, (b) encountered mature role models, (c) realized the wrongfulness of their abuse/violence, (d) developed a sense of responsibility to be non-abusive/violent, (e) learned to share their emotions with other men and (e) became not only physical violence-free but also psychological abuse-free. This section also describes factors contributing to the participants' maintenance of a non-abusive/violent life style.

4.3.1 Turning points. In this subsection, turning points that promoted the participants' change are described. These turning points resulted in the participants' new realization of the self, which eventually contributed to their cessation of marital violence. For example, in the following episode, Steve describes what made him recognize his abusive self which he had been denying.

> I: Please describe any episodes where you underwent significant changes in your understanding of yourself?
> S: Right, [pause]. Uhm... Kind, eh, a few. I think a lot of them was, when I was 18, eh, living on my own in a relationship with a woman named Joan, and, I remember actually being physically abusive with her, and as I was hitting her one particular time, I remember seeing my step-father's face. And, eh, it just shocked me that, eh, you know, growing up, saying I'm never gonna be like him, I'm not gonna do the same thing. Then, all of a sudden, looking into the mirror myself, what I saw was him. (...). So that was one, I think, that broke down some of the denial about, about myself. (Steve, Transcript, p.3, L9-17)

> S: Like I said, having connecting myself with my step-dad, so clearly when I was hitting Joan, seeing, you know, his face, and that, that, (...) sort of, insane look on his face, eh, that I could picture in my mind, and seeing that, and at the same time identifying with him was totally terrifying, 'I am like him,' you know. (Steve, Transcript, p.19, L16-19)

To Ross and Steve, their children brought the significant turning points that changed their lives.

> R: I guess it was one of the, one of the things that promoted my change was [my daughter's] face. I used to, I guess the last, what I would consider the last thread of, eh, good thought I had myself was that I never hit Barbara in front of [my children]. And I kicked her. She was holding Tim who was 18 months old and Cory stood next to them. So, that was it…. That was gone. Aagh, maybe that was the rock bottom. That moment. Maybe… (Ross, Transcript, p.9, L49-53)

Shortly after this incident, Ross started to participate in the group counselling program in which his change took place. When Aychel, Steve's daughter, was 10 months old, he experienced a life-changing moment with her. He described this episode as follows:

> S: I was just yelling, (…) screaming at Kim, and I woke up Aychel. She was probably 10 months old or something. And, eh, that was me breaking down the rest of my denial. 'Oh, my God! I am doing exactly the stuff I said I would never do!' (Steve, Transcript, p.3, L18-21)

> S: I bet I realized at that moment that it didn't matter, eh, that she could understand. (…) is the fact that she could sense my energy and I knew that affected her. (Steve, Transcript, p.3, L37-38)

Two days after this incident, Steve found the group counselling program with the help of his mother.

In Dan's case, the following chain of events made him recognize his lethal self, which contributed to his cessation of physical violence in intimate relationships. This turning point occurred in his relationship with his son's mother when he was 25 years old.

> I: Please describe how and why you stopped abusing your partner.
> D: Well, aagh, the how of it was, aagh, you know. I look back again those two times when I was physically violent. Aagh, you know, I really made a choice not to do that with my son's mother any more. (…). I didn't stop all, I mean, completely the verbal, but she was pretty verbal with me, too. She was very verbal with me to the point where I get really nasty back at her verbally. (…).
> I: But you made a choice not to be physically abusive to her even before your purification [ceremonies]?

D: Yes.

I: Even before your total reformation?

D: Yes. You know, Yuriko, I really look at that. I think about those times I was physically violent with my son's mother. Both times, it's not an excuse, but it is the truth that both times I was intoxicated. (…). And I really believe that when we are intoxicated, we become angry. (…). Becomes more than what really is and I think that her hitting me, I reacted in a way that I would have reacted with anybody. But I over reacted it. Just, you know, aagh, I'd have kept hitting her if nobody got me off from her. (…). Again afterwards, I had that shame and guilt. And I really, really vowed that I'd never do that again, you know. (…). So... And I didn't. (…). After this, it happened twice, it's quite a long time in between, but actually the second time was the worst time. (…). You know, I never, never did it again. Even times when we were drinking and she made me upset, I never went there.

I: Mmhm. So, how did you manage? Just left?

D: Yeah. As far as the physical part. You mean when the times were come up?

I: No, when you were determined not to be physically violent even under the influence of alcohol, and you were angry, but you were deciding not to use force, I mean, physical force. You just left the scene?

D: The couple of times, well, more than a couple of times, where we got an argument while drinking, but I just, I didn't go there for some reason. I didn't go there. And she didn't, she was still, sometimes became physical with me. (…). You know. Hit me in the arm or slapped me. She did, she'd done that. Even after that, I didn't hit her back. (…). So, I don't know. I just think that the one time that was... I bruised her up pretty good. And I hurt her. I didn't put her in the hospital, but I hurt her, I know. It did change something in me. (…) You know. Physically what [kind of] damage I could do to her. (…). Now verbal stuff continued. But I didn't physically put my hands on her anymore. (Dan, Transcript1, p.34, L40-55; p.35, L1-32)

Another significant turning point occurred through Dan's intimate partner, Jodi. At the time of data collection, Dan had been co-habiting with Jodi for 10 years. As mentioned earlier, Dan started to work as a coordinator and a counsellor for the domestic violence prevention program in 1995. Although working in the domestic violence field, Dan was still emotionally abusive. Until this turning point, emotionally and verbally abusing his partners had been natural to Dan who grew up among maritally violent role models. Dan described how he was counselled by Jodi and stopped being emotionally abusive in his relationship with her as follows:

D: I found myself, aagh, at different times, beginning to debate, talking the same way my father used [to talk to] my mother in a real intimidating way. And it was,

it was [when] I started to work to look into myself. And then finally, [Jodi], you know, sat me down one day and wanted to talk with me and share with me what I was doing. (…). And that for me really made me aware of some of my own behaviour that was still not good. It was really not in a physical way, but was still violent. I had to look at that, and really be honest about what I am doing. (…). And I started taking a real conscientious effort in changing that, respecting her views and what she felt threatening and not threatening. (Dan, Transcript1, p.15, L6-16)

D: I was co-habitating with my partner.
I: And you were not violent.
D: Yes.
I: I mean, [you were] not physically violent. So you thought you were OK. But started to check more.
D: Yes, yes, exactly. Cause there's so much more violence than physical violence. (…). There's a whole ally of that. (…). There are tactics, you know. The men do, I mean, there's, we've given the permission, because just, when we were raised, the things we see as men. (…). Given the permission to act and behave a certain way that, a lot [of them are] not that healthy. (…). So, it's been a very, very profound learning experience for me. (…). In a very good way. (…). I don't know. You know, I am not perfect, Yuriko. I still, sometimes we get in a heated discussion. But I don't go where I used to go before.
I: No. No.
D: I am very aware of what I'm doing. (Dan, Transcript1, p.11, L21-43)

In sum, the turning points described above made the participants realize their abusive/violent selves as well as the damaging impact of their abuse/violence on their loved ones.

4.3.2 Counselling program. The participants (excluding Dan) stated that their participation in the counselling program itself was the turning point. Specifically, the counselling program: (a) made the participants believe that change was possible, (b) introduced non-abusive/violent role models, (c) made them realize the wrongfulness of their abuse/violence, (d) installed in them a sense of responsibility to be non-abusive/violent, (e) fostered emotional openness in the groups, and (f) contributed to their cessation of physical abuse/violence as well as psychological abuse.

Perhaps the most significant contribution of the counselling program was that it made the participants believe for the first time in their adult lives that they could change. For example, Mark went to an orientation session prior to his participation in the group, and met a counsellor who was a reformed maritally violent man. According to Mark, this

meeting gave him a great deal of hope right away. Mark described the reason for his optimism as follows:

> M: The key thing for the [group] is that you were hearing it from the men who have been in the same position as you have.
> I: Was that the most powerful thing?
> M: And because of that, that's what beyond anything else, made me, gave me hope that I could actually do that. Because actually somebody else that had had transformed their lives, and eh, because he had done it, and many of them had done it. So I can say, 'OK. Well, he could do it,' you know. He was not exceptional. I mean most of the men that I met was ordinary men in most ways. (...). Not a rocket scientist, or some sort of super person. They are just regular guy. (...) professions and all, whatever. But they are still regular people and so you think, 'OK, there's hope for me.' (Mark, Transcript2, p.12, L10-19)

Similarly, Ross described his new conviction that he was capable of change as follows:

> R: I'm not bad after all. The things I did [were] bad. But I don't have to be that person. That was the biggest understanding. (Ross, Transcript, p.6, L43-44)

It was in the counselling program that the participants finally encountered mature, non-violent male as well as female role models. Howard and Nick stated that their counsellors were their mentors. Ross described how his counsellors and newly acquired friend contributed to his transformation as follows:

> I: So, those people now [you] just mentioned, they contributed to your change in abusiveness?
> R: Aagh, [a friend of mine], Ian who is British lives in (...). Uhm, he just contributed to my life, basically.
> I: Yeah, overall...
> R: More the role model kind of thing. And I guess he signifies that I don't need to be a kind of the man I thought I had to be.... And the guys around the [counselling] program, George is the co-founder of the program, and Howard [who is the counsellor], same kind of thing, actually. Same kind of thing. (...). Aagh, I guess what they represent is, this was the very first place that I heard, I don't know I had ever been, you know, maybe that's true, maybe I had never been anywhere around men who said you can be different. (...). Yeah. You don't have to drink, you don't have to be violent, you can change, basically. (Ross, Transcript, p.9, L26-37)

According to Howard, before his participation in the counselling program, he "really didn't have real respect for [women]" (Howard, Transcript, p.7, L36)

> H: Well, I just thought superior to them. You know, at that time, I did. (Howard, Transcript, p.7, L44)

In the counselling program in which he participated, he met a female counsellor who became one of his mentors.

> H: You know, I mean this program was very much about equality for men and women, and I believed it. I believed it, and you know, Sandra [a female counsellor who worked with us] is very, somebody I could, that I could see as, you know. She has the quality, and she is the person I admire. (Howard, Transcript, p.7, L51-53)

Under the guidance of these new role models, the participants started to realize the wrongfulness of their abuse/violence and to learn to be responsible for their abusive/violent behaviour. For example, in one group session, Ross as a client was describing the episode in which he was physically violent to his wife. Then one of the counsellors said, "Bullshit."

> R: [He] said, 'Bullshit' [laughs].... 'You have plenty time to take a time out.' I was furious of it. (...). But I grasped with that word, 'Bullshit.' I was astonished that he said that. I had no sense of, no clue of what he was talking about. And that interested me. (Ross, Transcript, p.13, L3-6)

> I: In the men's group, you did not have any clue what the counsellor was talking about. How and why did that interest you immensely?
> R: I had never considered there was another way to act and think. I was only told I was wrong. (Ross, personal communication, May 2, 2005)

As Dan had not been aware of the fact that he was emotionally/verbally abusive to his partner, neither Howard nor Nick had realized the true impact of their abusive behaviour on their partners:

H: It was almost like I didn't really think I was, I didn't really think I was, I didn't realize what impact was on her. I didn't realize that. (Howard, Transcript, p.8, L55-56)

I: The change occurred quite quickly in you?
N: It's a slow gradual process. From the [assessment] interview, was quite an eye opener. [The counsellor] asked me a series of questions for about an hour and half. They were quite poignant and revealing. (...). And I started to go, 'Wow, I guess there is something that I am doing that's not OK. (Nick, Transcript, p.13, L19-23)

N: I really felt that I wasn't doing anything inappropriate at all. (Nick, Transcript, p.13, L 14)

As the result of their participating in the counselling program, these participants came to be able to accept what they had been truly doing to their partners.

Since his change, Howard has started to deal with his anger differently as follows:

H: One of the things that really helped me coming to this program was that I realized that it wasn't the fact that I got angry. It was what I did when I got angry. So, there were... So, I was kind of stopping myself from being angry. (...). And then I would just hold it down saying, 'I shouldn't get angry.' But I was finally blown up. (...). Whereas now I realize, 'Yes, I am angry. But it doesn't mean that I have to call her names or push her or be mean to her just because I am angry,' right? I can just go for a walk, take a look at my (...) or whatever. (Howard, Transcript, p.9, L29-36)

Like Howard, Mark came to realize that he had a choice to be violent:

M: The key thing was in stopping violence is to [realize] that I have a choice. And once I realized that I have a choice, then, I can't blame that to somebody else. (Mark, Transcript, p.22, L21-22)

Mark, Nick, and Ross described how they learned to be responsible for their own behaviour through counselling as follows:

M: For the first time in my life, that I really accepted and understood that I had responsibility for (...) that I couldn't bring other people to injuries. So, that made a big difference in my whole life at that time. (Mark, Transcript1, p.3, L21-23)

M: One of [the counsellors] told me that it is really up to us that (…), that choice is we make, not somebody else. Having that come to me, from the guy who had been in the same boat I was, that was the key to the whole change in behaviours. (…). So, just understanding that it's you that to make a choice to be abusive. Not someone else. So, that was very, very significant. And just accepting that responsibility. (Mark, Transcript1, p.5, L29-34)

N: [I learned how to] be responsible.
I: Of your action, of your words?
N: Of everything. I mean being responsible. Attempting to respond in a way it doesn't hurt yourself and others around you. (…). So, if any challenge that I am faced with, I hope I can face that in a way that is, eh, not hurting myself and others. (Nick, Transcript, p.14, L32-38)

In addition, for some participants, the counselling was their first place to freely express their emotions in front of other men without worrying about being ridiculed. According to Howard, "The groups are very powerful" (Howard, Transcript, p.9, L47). Similarly, Mark stated, "It can be often emotional" (Mark, Transcript2, p.13, L12). Howard who had never cried since he was very young allowed himself to be honest with his inner feelings for the first time in group counselling:

H: It wasn't until I came to this program when I even gave myself a permission to [cry]. You know. (Howard, Transcript, p.10, L12-13)

Usually, cessation of physical violence was followed by cessation of emotional abuse. All of the five participants who went through the counselling program stated that their cessation of emotional abuse took longer, or was more difficult than their cessation of physical violence.

I: So, your internal change, how long did it take, like 10 years?
H: Oh, I don't know. I think, very quick actually. Eh, phase I part of our program, we call it Phase I, 12 weeks long, and you know, it really, that changed, I mean. I wasn't perfect since then, but I've been perfect in terms of physical abuse. (…). So, you know, that changed quite quick. It was almost a light bulb goes on. The different ways of looking at things. And it was exciting as well because I think, it was for me was, cause I was trying to control everybody else around me instead of just being controlling myself, which never occurred to me. (Howard, Transcript, p.10, L26-33)

I: So, basically, after that incident, you join the [group] and you gradually stopped being physically violent?

S: I was only physically abusive, physically violent, one more time, eh, after I started the [group]. (...). That was probably 3 months after I started the program. (Steve, Transcript, p.4, L10-15)

I: And your stopping. How could you stop? You stopped altogether physical and emotional?

S: Eh, not emotional. Uhm, physical, that was for me easier choice than emotional. That was either I, you know, choose to grab Kim at that time, or don't. I would do something else. (Steve, Transcript, p.19, L22-24)

S: Emotional abuse... That's something that I remember, going to the [group], and doing an interview [for an assessment]. And being so surprised by what was classified as emotional abuse. I mean physical abuse was pretty obvious: It's physical abuse. But, eh, having to dig down deep and look at some of my beliefs that took a little longer. So, I would say that, probably at least Phase I for that, you know, 12 weeks, maybe a little bit at the Phase II. I looked at, eh, the ways to stop being emotionally abusive, psychologically abusive. (Steve, Transcript, p.19, L28-33)

N: And then [cessation of emotional abuse was] a gradual process of realizing what are the things that are telling myself to give me permission to do those things... And [I've been] working on changing my belief system, changing my mind of how I see the world. (...). And I'm still working on that. (Nick, Transcript, p.13, L35-39)

4.3.3 Staying non-violent/abusive. Several subthemes were identified as factors contributing to the participants' maintenance of a non-violent/abusive self. They were the participants': (a) on-going participation in the counselling program (excluding Dan), (b) use of some tools to handle home situations (excluding Dan), (c) satisfaction with and pride in their new identity as non-violent/abusive individuals, (d) new female partners who would not tolerate violence in intimate relationships, and (e) spiritual connection to the Creator (in Dan's case).

First, men's on-going participation in a counselling program, and giving and receiving emotional support to and from other men in the group contributed to their maintenance of non-violence/abusiveness. For example, Steve stated that his on-going participation in counselling taught him to have an ability to be vulnerable, in other words,

an ability to be honest with one's self, which was, to him, a primary condition to be abuse/violence-free.

> I: So, you made a conscious effort to look at yourself?
> S: Yes. Definitely, conscious effort and a willingness to put myself in a very vulnerable place. (...). In that room. That was the effort, right? To be, to look at the mirror basically, which was what it was. Yeah. Repeatedly. (Steve, Transcript, p.19, L34-38)

As shown in the life stories of the participants presented earlier in the chapter, those participants who underwent counselling programs obtained deeper understanding of themselves. Ross described how his on-going counselling promoted his self-understanding, which consequently contributed to his maintenance of non-abusiveness/violence as follows:

> I: Please describe any episodes where you underwent significant changes in your understanding of yourself.
> R: Aagh, (...). Understanding, I guess, would be all within the last, eh, 10 years.
> I: Mmhm, since you came to the counselling program?
> R: Yeah. Yeah, pretty much, yeah. When I began to understand me, and nothing else.
> I: So, it's not just one specific event made you understand, but a sort of a series of small things made you...
> R: Yeah, exactly. Exactly. Kind of (...) I get it. I'm not bad after all. The things I did was bad, but I don't have to be that person. That was the biggest understanding. And they come, not as regularly these days, but used to come regularly... (Ross, Transcript, p.6, L36-45)

Nick also said, "Just about understanding myself since I came to the [group]" (Nick, Transcript, P.8, L17).

According to the participants, a group of clients supported each other in their endeavour to become non-violent/abusive. For example, when Mark made a choice in a split second not to use violence, he phoned another group member with whom he was networking instead.

> M: So, the very first time I made a choice to take time out instead of being violent, or made a choice to phone one of the guys in my groups I was networking

with, I felt that I was empowered and that I had a choice here, 'I can do it!' I felt, 'Yeah!' I just felt, like a new person, anyway. (Mark, Transcript2, p.13, L42-44)

Mark further described how emotional support was exchanged in a group setting as follows:

> M: You got other men who are (...) various kinds of behaviour and various kinds of home situations. A lot of times (...). I was struggling with my marriage, and some of the men were separated, divorced and had custody thing or whatever going that makes their life really stressful. (...). The thing is that we are able to help with each other.
> I: From other men at various stages of change?
> M: Various stages of change or we can recognize in each other, 'Oh, I know what you are saying. I've been there, too. I had the same experience.' Or 'I handled this way.' Or 'I handled...,' you know. So, you can get, kind of, when you are hearing these strategies and approaches, and you are able to recognize also you are not alone in this. (Mark, Transcript2, p.12, L31-40)

The results of the study indicated that the counselling program also contributed to the participants' "healing" processes. This was apparent in the following two quotes from Howard's and Mark's interviews.

> H: I think that [the counselling] work[ed] at two levels. One is just stopping behaviours, and the other was to kind of, eh, re-heal my stuff that happened to me though no real blame (...) on anybody. But it's just, the kind of thing that went on, I mean... (Howard, Transcript, p.10, L13-15)

> M: [In the group, you noticed that] you are not the only person that felt this particular frustration or whatever. (...). And if you've been told that, 'Yeah, you feel frustration because of this.' Or, 'You feel angry because of that.' (...). Feel hurt. Cause you are really often looking at what would be the underlying feelings rather than the higher or the other more, what is presented itself is anger but usually there is, eh, some kind of hurt is underneath that. (...). Some, you know, deeper feeling. And you get to realize that, 'Yeah, just because there's hurt, it doesn't mean that the response have to be a particular kind of behaviour. (Mark, Transcript2, p.12, L42-52)

Second, in the groups, the participants learned how they could actually deal with their home situations without using violence or verbal abuse. Some tools were

recommended such as taking time out, talking one's self down, and staying sober when situations are deteriorating. One of the tools, time out, was frequently mentioned:

> M: It takes courage to walk away, too, you know. I guess a part of what we learned [in the group] is time out, you know. Sometimes it's just to disengage. (Mark, Transcript1, p.23, L21-22)

> I: How did you handle when [your ex-wife] was verbally abusive?
> S: Eh, I stopped, uhm, engaging in those types of things. I would leave the house a lot. (...). There were the times I didn't leave. I was engaged, I was verbally abusive. Uhm, but for the most part, the only way that I could be sure that I wasn't engaged was not being there. (...). So... That dynamic changed our relationship a lot because I never used to leave, right? (...). I used to stay until the fight was won. (Steve, Transcript, p.19, L44-52)

Third, the participants' satisfaction with and pride in their new identity as non-violent/abusive men contributed to their maintenance of non-violent/abusive selves. Some participants were tremendously rewarded by being positive role models for their children and other violent/abusive men. Their new identities as fathers and counsellors will be described in the following section of the chapter. The participants were also satisfied with their new role as caring husbands. For example, mentioning his relationship with Megan, Steve stated that he had never had a more real, loving, and challenging relationship in his life. Both Megan and Steve were willing to make every effort to keep their relationship healthy. Ross mentioned that others' perceptions of him also improved a great deal as well:

> R: One of those things I've learned is that my perception of the way people see me is completely evolved, completely evolved. And of course, my perception is based on my perception of me. (...). And I don't think that's ever. I'm sure people didn't like me for good reason. But, eh, it didn't need to be always that way. And it doesn't need to be that way tomorrow, either. (Ross, Transcript, p.16, L1-5)

Fourth, a supportive community that contributed to the participants' maintenance of non-violence/abusiveness consisted not only of the groups of men, but also of female partners who would not tolerate violence in intimate relationships. For example, neither

of Dan's or Mark's new partners would tolerate violence by the hands of her intimate partner.

> M: My wife, new wife, she was, she knew about my involvement [in the counselling program]. And (...) clear that she wasn't gonna accept any abuse. So, that included towards children, or her children, too. (Mark, Transcript1, p.4, L48-50)

Lastly, in Dan's case, his spiritual connection to the Creator contributed to his maintenance of non-violence/abuse as well as his abstinence from alcohol and drugs. His spiritual connection was felt anew through his participation in the sweat lodge ceremonies, singing, drumming, and daily prayer. Dan described how he learned to pray as follows:

> D: I've learned to pray everyday, a couple of times a day. (...). Sometimes more, you know. I know that when the things are bad, when things are hard to accept, sometimes, I have to do that [laughs]. (...). It's a good thing. It's what the Creator has taught me. (Dan, Transcript1, p.22, L19-24).

> D: Started to learn how to pray, you know. In a more sincere, genuine way with, aagh, between myself and the Creator. Because of the feeling that I had a connection. (...). There's a spiritual connection. So... (...). No one can teach somebody how to pray. Somehow, you learn how to do that, you know. (...). And I believe in that. (Dan, Transcript1, p.22, L35-41)

4.4 Personal Growth

The study revealed the participants' understanding of themselves after transformation. None of the participants stated that their goal was to accumulate wealth, gain fame, or appear masculine. Their current mission in life was to strive to become better human beings. The participants in the study not only became abuse/violence-free but also developed into generative individuals. The study found that their generativity was manifested in their fatherhood and counsellorship. These were men who tried to have positive relationships with their own children as well as to encourage other men to become non-abusive/violent, though they themselves never had such fathers or non-abusive/violent role models in their youth.

4.4.1 Self-understanding. In this subsection, the participants' understanding of their current selves is described. All of the participants stated that their future goal was to become a better human being.

According to Dan, to be better human beings is what the Creator wants us to be. He also considers himself as a person who has a spiritual connection to the Creator. Dan stated that the most important value for him was respect:

> D: I believe that, to me it is the most valuable thing, most important thing. The value in human living is being respectful. (...). Respectful to other human beings and respectful to all the teachings, all this natural (...) have talked to us from the Creator. Being respectful to your Elders, respectful to women. (...). Being Respectful to all living things, you know. (Dan, Transcript1, p.36, L31-37)

Howard perceives his past self as an ambitious entrepreneur who was trying to cross the river as fast as possible. He perceives his current self as a person who is enjoying the swim while crossing the river. He also describes himself as a good parent and a person who is still searching for who he is. For Howard the most important human value is compassion:

> H: Oh, I think it's probably compassion. I think compassion is to me, I mean, when I think about what I do, I want my kids to have more than anything, I think, is compassion for themselves and for other people. (Howard, Transcript, p.11, L27-28)

Mark perceives himself as a person who is striving to do justice, to be wise and courageous. He tries to be real and truthful when interacting with others. Mark also considers himself a learner. At age 55, he is curious about as many things as he was in his 20s, and would like to continue learning about himself and the world for the rest of his life. For Mark the most important human value is the centrality of love in our lives:

> M: It doesn't really matter, not much else matters, really. If you are not a loving person. And then, [laughs], you are not really anywhere. (Mark, Transcript2, p.5, L44-45)

Nick perceives himself as a community contributor. He is active in various community activities. He also enjoys giving presentations on his non-abusiveness in the schools. For Nick the most important human value is to value one another, and to be compassionate to one's self and others.

Ross perceives himself as a person who strives to be accountable. He is fully responsible for his thoughts, decisions, and actions. He is a person who is able to live by his values. He considers himself one of those men who are fortunate enough to be given an opportunity to see that there is another life.

> I: What is the most important value in human living?
> R: What is the most important value in human living? The first thing came to my mind is accountability.
> I: Is it that you are relying on somebody? Accountability?
> R: No, meaning being responsible, accountable for my decisions, and accepting that's what they are, my decisions, my choices, my actions, my thoughts... my words.
> I: So, nobody is making you...
> R: Nobody makes me do anything. Yeah. I'm very clear on that. (Ross, Transcript, p.13, L25-33)

> R: I believe that religious beliefs are pretty similar in its own ways. (...). I know there's a bit wrong way we go, and what happens and who's in charge. I don't believe in anybody's in charge.... But we have consciences. (...) always one way. That's very similar to most of other ways. We're living decent human life.
> I: That's your conscience?
> R: Yeah, that's my conscience.
> I: And that's your value.
> R: Yeah. Yeah. I've assigned in jail with, not in jail, but worked in jail through this counselling program, with the guys who murdered their wives, you know, bank robbers, abused little children. And none of them (...). I believe maybe a few really think that. I also believe that the majority of them lying in bed at night on their own with a lot of pain. That's [their] conscience. What they've done, they know what they've done. And that's what I did. I gave out an appearance that I was just mad, living life, you know, the way I wanted to. But inside on my own was very different, very different. And that was my conscience. That was my God. That's the way I see. That was God talking to me through my conscience. (Ross, Transcript, p.14, L22-37)

Steve perceives himself as a person who is able to accept a new challenge in life. He considers himself as a positive role model for his children. He is a father who receives

tremendous energy by being a responsible parent. For Steve, as mentioned earlier, the most important human value is the ability to be vulnerable. In order to make progress, according to Steve, one should be willing to put himself in a vulnerable place.

> S: It's about changing the way I live so that I always question, am open to new ideas and new information, and I [am] receptive, which means I put myself in a vulnerable place, and take risks that way. (Steve, Transcript, p.20, L2-4)

As mentioned in the previous section of this chapter, the participants had pride in their new violence-free identities. In sum, the participants succeeded in their cessation of marital violence, and now lived by the values they deeply believed in. Their mission in life was to become better persons who aspire to contribute to the next generation.

4.4.2 Generativity. This study found that all of the participants were generative individuals in their mid-lives. Generativity is a concept originally developed by Erikson (1963), the premise of which is that adults desire to produce, nurture, and educate the next generation. Generativity is expressed not only in parenthood, but also in creativity and productivity in any domain of human endeavour that benefits generations to come. In this subsection, two components of generativity found in this study are described. The first component involves the participants' becoming non-violent/abusive role models to their children. The second component involves their work as counsellors for violent/abusive men.

For many adults, generativity is manifested in their parenthood. All of the participants in the study were parents. Dan was also a grandparent. Since their cessation of marital violence, the participants have been non-abusive/violent role models for their children. The participants talked about their current relationships with their children/grandchildren at length.

Dan has been a positive role model for his son for the last 10 years, since his son was 15 years old. Dan stated that one of the reasons he wanted to stop criminal activities was to become a father who could support his son.

> D: I always thought about [the birth of my son]. I mean, it was like, you know, 'Here, I am a dad. I'm in a prison. I should be out there.' So as the time went on, it grew more and more heavily on my conscience. (Dan, Transcript1, p.6, L54-56)

He is also a positive role model for his five step-children who were born to Jodi as well as to his many grandchildren.

> D: My wishes are that my children, ones that are having problems with substance abuse, alcohol abuse, aagh, find their own paths, their own healing paths, you know. (...). With aagh, whatever help I can give them, but that's one of my main issues, my main, not issues, but wishes. (...). For them, and for my grandchildren, too. (...). That they will be able to grow up, not fighting some of the demons that I fought, and not going to some of the bad places that I went to. But become, aagh, more productive in their earlier life. (Dan,Transcript1, p.31 L47-55; p.32, L1-2)

> D: Some of the gifts that the Creator has given to me today is that I have a lot of grandkids. (...). Young spirits come and look up to you, and relying on you for certain things, you know. That I'm able to give today. (...). And, well, I think [what] I'm really looking at is we can do things better for them, for the younger generation for tomorrow. (...). And do what I can today, you know, my small piece, and slowly, slowly making that happen. (Dan, Transcript1, p.18, L46-55)

Among those participants who went through the counselling program, Mark was the only one who had already completed his parental roles. His adult children are becoming parents themselves. As described earlier in the chapter, Mark physically punished his children when they were young. He stated that if he were to parent again, he would do it very differently.

Howard currently has two very young children to whom he has been a primary caregiver because their mothers had careers outside their homes. Howard stated that since he had come to the counselling program, his parenting style changed dramatically. He said, "I have more knowledge. I have more understanding" (Howard, Transcript, p.10, L40). Howard's life story describes how he would respond to Ted, his son with Gwen, when Ted expressed anger toward him. Since his involvement in the counselling program as a client, Howard became a father who could help his children release their anger in a non-abusive way. He has been a positive role model for all of his six children for nearly 20 years.

As mentioned earlier in the chapter, Steve ceased to be abusive in order to become a good father and a role model to his three children with Kim. Steve stated that

even in starting a new relationship with Megan, his focus was about his children. To his greatest joy, Steve obtained the full custody of his children shortly after he started his relationship with Megan. He stated that being a parent with his children was the most significant achievement of his life.

> S: Well, I know that I've already made big changes to myself so that my impact on my kids is gonna be much different. (…). But I know that every New Year that comes up is gonna be a new challenge with them. So, eh, wish, aspiration... Eh, I wanna stay aware, I wanna stay with my kids in a sense that I'm gonna be changing as they change in that I learn as they learn. I evolve, you know. And I know that I have, so that's my life. I like to keep evolving, keep learning, eh, and meet new challenges. So... Being a parent with them is something I know is gonna change, is gonna be scary times and there's gonna be, you know. Also being probably the biggest achievement of my life. And so, I'll stay as a positive role model for them, and it's one of my biggest aspirations. (Steve, Transcript, p.17, L31-40)

Ross and Barbara have two teenage children, Cory and Tim. According to Ross, he had physically punished Mike, his first son with his ex-wife in the UK; however, he never used force to discipline Cory and Tim.

> I: Tell me the way how your wife and kids are significant to you. How come? Well, obviously the kids are related to you biologically, but your wife is not.
> R: Right. Aagh, how they are significant to me... Aagh, the kids, Cory and Tim. I guess they, aagh, how do I (…), I guess they are, they are a barometer, I guess. I've never hit them. I will not say that I never would. Eh, I certainly spanked and hit Mike who is in the UK, he's 28, the first son. Eh, but for whatever the reason, I guess, I had been just as angry at home then, but I never hit them. So, there was, eh, I don't have to hit them. That was real clear to me. And I wouldn't do that because I don't wanna do that. I just don't wanna do that. (Ross, Transcript, p.9, L40-47)

> I: You mentioned that you spanked your first son in the UK. Why didn't you spank your two younger kids? What made you change in terms of your dealings with your children?
> R: Probably because I could and have never hit without being angry. I learned that bad behaviour was dealt with sometimes by hitting. With my first son I would honestly say I knew no better. I had an understanding by the time my [North American] children were growing that if I hit them I was only satisfying my anger and frustrations, not addressing their behaviour. (Ross, personal communication, May 2, 2005)

Ross considers his wife and children as his most significant individuals in his life.

As mentioned earlier in the chapter, Nick has a son who lives with his ex-wife. Much of his disappointment comes from the fact that he cannot participate in the parenting of his son as much as he would like to. He said, "I still have a lot more energy for him" (Nick, Transcript, p.6, L11). Though Nick's interaction with Charles is limited, he is determined to "support him to the best of [his] ability" (Nick, Transcript, p.6, L9) by being a non-abusive role model to him.

The second component of generativity the study found is manifested in the work the participants do as counsellors. All of the participants in the study, except Mark, work as counsellors specialising in marital violence issues, on either a full-time or part-time basis. Mark devotes himself to the counselling organization where he serves on the board of directors. Dan works at a mental health organization that primarily serves Native North American populations. The remaining five participants are involved in the counselling organization to which they came initially as clients.

In his work, Dan supports an intervention with maritally abusive/violent men specifically designed for Native North Americans. Dan described how culturally specific interventions are appealing to Native men as follows:

> D: Another big piece I use is that, especially with the Native men, cause that's who I primarily see… is a culture. Aagh, you know. And opening the door where they can take pride of what they are doing to change, because, a long time ago, depending on what tribe you are from, a lot of same tribes, a lot of tribes believed the same way. (…). Any type of detrimental violence towards family members or the community was a threat against that whole community. So, they didn't condone it. They didn't believe in it. So, there was very severe sanctions in place to deal with those things. You know, some cases, if you were, aagh, violent to your partner, aagh, so, (…) banish you from the tribe. Aagh...
> I: That's a very harsh punishment.
> D: Yes.
> I: That'd sometimes meant death, perhaps.
> D: Yes, that, too, that, too. (…). You know, so there was, there was some very, very strong sanctions were in place. (…). That taught the community, especially men, that you cannot, we cannot condone this behaviour. (…). You know, so, there was no name for that. There was no, aagh, (…) because, they didn't, hardly existed. There was still, you know, still some problems but wasn't like it is today. (…). You know. So, I share that with the men on that point. And I share with the

men today we are living in the society that condones a lot of violence toward women. (Dan, Transcript1, p.11, L49-55; p.12, L1-8)

For the remaining five participants, their initial motivation to become counsellors and a board member was to compensate for what they have done and to give something back to the counselling program that brought them such positive change. As they helped other violent/abusive men to change their lives, however, they developed new identities as counsellors as Dan has developed his identity as a Native counsellor. The results of the study indicated that these five participants felt much fulfilled and that their lives were enriched by working for this counselling organization.

> S: Initially it was about, eh, I guess it was atonement, you know. 'Here I'm going to, eh, make up for what I've done,' and, eh... But I'm done with that now. I, I have done that.
> I: It's more about now.
> S: Yeah. I wanna contribute. I wanna be a positive force. And eh, if I can help those guys, anywhere close the way I'd been helped by the people who helped me, then you know, that's, I'm pretty successful. (Steve, Transcript, p.21, L49-53)

In addition to work as a counsellor, Nick advocates for non-violence, presenting his personal stories in the schools, and is active as a community mentor. Mark continues to devote his time and energy to the counselling organization, advocating so that the type of counselling program he participated in should be always available to other men.

4.5 Summary

In this chapter, each of the six life stories of the participants was presented. The themes best capturing the men's origins and cessation of marital violence were identified. They were *Factors Contributing to Abuse/Violence, Processes of Psychological Change and its Maintenance,* and *Personal Growth.* Direct quotes from the interview transcripts and personal communications pertinent to these selected themes were presented. The next chapter discusses these results.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses the results of the present study. The discussion is presented under the following headings:

* Summary of research purpose
* Origins of marital violence
* Reasons for change: A social control perspective
* Processes of change
* Turning points
* Counselling as an intervention
* Culturally specific interventions
* Implications
* Limitations
* Future directions
* Conclusions

5.1 Summary of Research Purpose

Current evidence indicates that little is known about how and why individuals grow up to be maritally violent and then reform themselves to be violence-free. The purpose of this study was to address the following questions regarding men who stopped being maritally violent.

Question 1: How do men who have been maritally violent develop through life from their own perspectives?

Question 2: From their own perspectives how and why did these men stop being maritally violent?

These questions were examined from a perspective of life-course development, using a life-story method.

5.2 Origins of Marital Violence

The study found that all of the participants experienced and/or demonstrated poor communication patterns with their partners. Specifically, the participants in the study reported that they had difficulties in effectively conveying their views and emotions to their partners. This finding was consistent with the results of the study with maritally violent men (Dutton & Strachan, 1987) revealing that violent men scored lower in spouse-specific assertiveness compared to their non-violent counterparts. Similar results were reported by Maiuro, Cahn, and Vitaliano (1988). Specifically, Maiuro et al. found that assertiveness deficits were associated with verbal hostility in maritally violent men.

One notable finding of the study was that two participants (Mark & Ross) had had inhibited communication styles since childhood, and all except Dan reported that they had it since adolescence, though the motivations behind and/or the origins of these inhibitions differed from one participant to another. Maritally violent men's early difficulties with communication have been rarely discussed in the existing literature.

The findings of the present study also indicated that the participants' inhibition of communication was encouraged by male socialization (Levant et al., 1992). Male socialization refers to a set of values such as being reserved, emotionally distant, tough, aggressive, and self-reliant. In the present study, male socialization had attracted Dan, Howard, Nick, and Ross. Dan, Nick, and Ross attached themselves to groups of men (i.e., street gangs, biker community); Howard came to firmly believe in patriarchy: Males are superior to females. According to Jennings and Murphy (2000), male socialization is a concept to explain marital violence, the processes of which are as follows: (a) males are socialized to present themselves as strong, stoic, and self-reliant; (b) failure to do so results in a sense of shame and a fear of abandonment by other masculine males; and (c) maritally violent men are those shame-based individuals who repress their shame by shaming their female partners through the use of violence. The present study neither supports nor rejects Jennings and Murphy's supposition; however, there certainly is a need for more studies that can test these researchers' hypothesis.

One notable finding of the study is that none of the participants developed intimate relationships with their fathers. This finding is consistent with the results of the qualitative study with 12 reformed maritally violent men (Gondolf & Hanneken, 1987).

The finding of the present study regarding the participants' negative relationships with their fathers in their childhood is also consistent with the results of the study by Beasly and Stoltenberg (1992). These researchers found that a maritally violent man's negative childhood relationship with his father was associated with his high level of narcissism in adulthood. Beasly and Stoltenberg speculated that narcissism of maritally violent men may have been caused by their having been under- or over-valued by their fathers.

As Chapple (2003) argued, much of the past research on children exposed to marital violence does not document the relationships between violent parents and their children, albeit many maritally violent men have witnessed father-to-mother violence as children (McBurnett et al., 2001). The few exceptions are the studies revealing the negative correlations between interparental violence in a child's home and child's attachments to their parents (Foshee, Bauman, & Linder, 1999; McNeal & Amato, 1998; Simons, Lin, & Gordon, 1998; Simons, Wu, Johnson, & Conger, 1995; Simons, Wu, Lin, Gordon, & Conger, 2000). In addition, in a study with 980 students in grade nine through eleven, Chapple found the following: (a) dating violence offending was strongly related to having witnessed interparental violence, high dating frequency, and low parental monitoring, and (b) students' attitudes toward violence were associated with having witnessed interparental violence and lower parental attachment. Chapple, however, did not examine father-adolescent and mother-adolescent attachments separately.

Based on the analyses of the reports completed by 140 maritally violent men, Dutton et al. (1995) identified three traumatic experiences in childhood as risk factors for a boy's becoming a wife abuser in his adulthood: witnessing interparental physical violence, being shamed by a parent, and being insecurely attached to a parent. Dutton et al. argued that parental shaming, particularly by a father, can be a powerful source of trauma for a male child. In the present study, Mark and Steve reported at least one such shaming by their fathers. Ross said that as a young soccer hooligan, he was embarrassed by his father because his father did not drink nor fight. The remaining participants did not particularly mention any shaming experiences caused by their fathers. Fathers of Howard, Mark, and Ross were reported to have been marital violence-free; fathers of Dan and Steve were not. Nick did not comment on whether he had witnessed inter-parental violence as a child. One common characteristic among all of the participants was, as

described above, that none of them felt that they had been closely attached to their fathers when young.

The study also found that the participants not only perceived their fathers as non-supportive, but also experienced a serious shortage of positive male role models while growing up. The lack of non-kin male role models as a childhood factor contributing to marital violence has been largely overlooked in the existing literature in which children's primary role models were usually their parents. Adult role models are not necessarily parents, however. As Williams (1989) found in his study with 20 maritally violent men and 20 violence-free men, more maritally violent men were exposed to violence in non-family settings (e.g., with friends, in their neighbourhood) than their violence-free counterparts. Williams concluded that violence can be learned not only in family environments but also from peers and friends, and in other non-familial environments. In the present study, Dan's and Ross's non-kin adult role models were not only inappropriate, but also indescribably aggressive/violent both at home and on the streets.

Another notable finding of the present study not documented in the literature on marital violence is that the participants left home much earlier than the norm. None of the participants left home for higher education, job opportunities, or vocational training. A common theme throughout their leaving home was that all of them more or less drifted away. From a life-course developmental perspective, the timing of important life transitions such as leaving the parental home has long-term consequences through effects on subsequent transitions (Elder, 1998b). According to Elder, "Ill-timed or off-timed events (too late or too early) can have adverse effects" (p.6).

In general, the literature on youths' leaving the parental home reveals correlations between leaving home early and: (a) parental divorce (O'Connor, Thorpe, Dunn, Golding, & the ALSPAC Study Team, 1999; Tasker & Richards, 1994), (b) single-parent family or step-family structure (Goldscheider & Goldscheider, 1993), (c) interparental conflicts (Cooney, 1994; Stattin & Magnusson, 1996), (d) negative parent-child relationships (Stattin & Magnusson, 1996), (e) lack of parental monitoring coupled with a youth's strong peer orientation (Silbereisen, Meschke, & Schwarz, 1996), (f) personal or familial substance abuse (Hussong & Chassin, 2002; Mallett, Rosenthal, & Keys, 2005), and (g) having one's own child (Cooney & Mortimer, 1999; O'Connor et al., 1999).

These findings are consistent with the cases of Dan (parental divorce, interparental conflicts, his substance abuse, paternal alcoholism, negative relationship with father, and strong peer orientation), Howard (having his own child), Mark (his substance abuse, negative relationship with father), Nick (parental divorce, paternal alcoholism, negative relationships with parents and siblings), Ross (having his own child, negative relationships with parents and siblings, strong peer orientation), and Steve (step-family structure, interparental conflicts, negative relationship with step-father) in the present study. As far as the participants' feelings about the transition goes, none of them felt particularly hopeful or excited. For example, Howard felt that his life had been ruined by his marriage. Ross resented his marriage as well.

In a qualitative study with youths and their parents in the UK, Spain, and Norway, Holdsworth (2004) found that a factor that promoted successful transition out of the parental home was family support. The strategies to provide support varied from one country to another, however. For example, in the UK and Norway, family support in the form of teaching youths the responsibility of independent living was given, whereas Spanish families were more concerned about their children's material well-being away from home. In the present study, as far as the support provided during the transition goes, only Ross stated that he had received such support from his parents. During his first year of marriage, Ross's parents let the young couple live with them. Nick and Steve did not seem to have received any support from their parents. Having been alienated from his mother and brother by his step-father, Steve felt abandoned and alone in a large city.

In addition, the participants in the study left home early without having learned what healthy relationships were like. They made the transition to adulthood and started to have intimate relationships at young age without having proper role models, knowledge, guidance, or support. This may have contributed to their manifestation of marital violence. This speculation is consistent with a life-course developmental model that emphasizes the "cumulation of disadvantages" (Elder, 1998b, p.6), that is, "a concentration of negative events and influences" (Elder, p.6). As Elder pointed out, "Early transitions can have enduring consequences by affecting subsequent transitions, even after many years and decades have passed" (p.7).

5.3 Reasons for Change: A Social Control Perspective

The reasons for the participants to stop being maritally violent and to remain violence-free may be explained by the social control theory of delinquency (Hirschi, 1969), the thesis of which is that "delinquent acts result when an individual's bond to society is weak or broken" (Hirschi, 1969, p.16). According to Hirschi, an individual has four bonds to his society: a) attachment to significant others, b) commitment to societal goals and personal aspirations (e.g., career, education, social change), c) involvement in conventional activities (e.g., work, family and social activities), and d) moral belief (i.e., values). In sociology, social control theory has generated much research on delinquency and reformation. For example, one such study revealed that turning points such as stable employment and good marriages contributed to young offenders' deterrence from criminal activities (Sampson & Laub, 1993).

The present study identified the following as the reasons for the participants to stop being maritally violent and to remain violence-free: (a) a wish to be a non-abusive/violent role model to their children (Steve & Nick), (b) a wish to remain in a relationship with a partner (Dan, Howard, Mark, & Ross), (c) moral dilemma (Mark & Ross), (d) to be counselled by a partner (Dan), (e) a realization that he was behaving wrongfully (Howard & Nick), and (e) realization that he had physical force strong enough to kill a person (Dan).

In their study with 483 adult males drawn from a large-scale nationally representative U.S. sample, Williams and Hawkins (1989) examined what deterred men from assaulting their partners from the perspective of social control theory of delinquency. This study found that those men who were more strongly attached to their significant others and those who disapproved of marital violence more strongly were likely to be marital violence-free compared to their counterparts. Likewise, Lackey and Williams (1995) found that those adult men who grew up in a violent home environment and who were currently committed to their harmonious marriages were more likely to be violence-free than their counterparts who grew up in a violent home environment but were not in such harmonious relationships. A set of police intervention studies also showed similar results. For example, Sherman et al. (1992) found that the recidivism rate

of those maritally violent men who were married and employed was lower than those men who were unmarried and unemployed.

Similarly, a wish to be a positive and responsible parent and a wish to remain in an intimate relationship can be explained by those social bonds such as attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief. Likewise, suffering from a moral dilemma and realizing that he was behaving wrongfully, or was violent enough to kill a person can be explained by moral belief, another social bond. The present study found that some participants were not aware of the effects of their abuse/violence on their partners (e.g., Dan said, "I thought it was not a big deal."). This finding is consistent with the results from the studies revealing maritally violent men's tendency to deny or minimize their abusive/violent behaviour (Anderson & Umberson, 2001; Cavanagh, Dobash, Dobash, & Lewis, 2001; Edleson & Brygger, 1986; Goodrum, Umberson, & Anderson, 2001). The present study, however, did not explore further the reasons for men's lack of awareness. Dan stated that he continued to be unaware of his emotional/verbal abuse toward Jodi because it was habitual. It was second nature. This may indicate our society's tendency to tolerate marital violence (Browne, 1993) which, according to Yllö and Straus (1990) and Brownridge (2002), stems from patriarchy.

Dan's realization that he had a physical force strong enough to kill a person came to him as if he was hit by thunder. His decision to stop being physically violent to an intimate partner was made in a split second. Since then, he has never been physically violent to women. By reviewing a set of quantitative studies of intervention with maritally violent men, Tolman and Bennett (1990) pointed out that there must be naturally occurring processes contributing to deterrence of battering. Naturally occurring change, such as Dan's, however, has been rarely documented in the literature on marital violence, although high proportions of natural change are quite commonly reported in the literatures on smoking cessation (Orleans et al., 1991) and alcohol recovery (Sobel, Cunningham, & Sobel, 1996). The reason for this may be that previous research on cessation of marital violence has focused exclusively on men's change facilitated by extrinsic factors such as counselling (e.g., Palmer et al., 1992) and legal sanctions (Ford & Regoli, 1992), including arrest (Berk et al., 1992).

There is, however, one case study that examined naturally occurring cessation of marital violence in three married, U.S. couples (Margolin & Fernandez, 1987). Margolin and Fernandez found the following as the couples' reasons for their spontaneous cessation of marital violence: (a) husband's realization that his wife can also hurt him, (b) children's awareness of the violence at home, (c) wife's encountering positive role models in the community (e.g., harmoniously married couples), (d) wife's newly acquired Christian faith, (e) husband's cessation of heroin usage, and (d) wife's confiding to her sister-in-law who in turn lectured her husband effectively. In contrast to Dan's case described above, none of the three couples decided to stop being abusive/violent in a split second. One striking difference in findings between their research and the present study is that these couples did not seem to have attained a considerable level of self-understanding and personal growth upon cessation of their marital violence compared to the participants in the present study. This may be mainly because the participants in the present study consisted of volunteer counsellors who were recruited from practitioner communities and were interested in contributing to the study whereas the three couples in Margolin and Fernandez's study were volunteers recruited through radio and newspaper advertisements.

One notable finding of the present study is that Dan was counselled by Jodi, and he accepted what she advised him. One counsellor working with maritally violent men remarked that it was not common for abusive/violent men to listen to their partners and actually change their abusive/violent behaviour (J. Robson, personal communication, November 6, 2004). From the perspective of social control theory, one explanation for this may be that Dan would have lost too much (e.g., Jodi, self-respect) if he had continued his emotional/verbal abuse. According to social control theory, the stronger the social bonds, the more controlled one is from behaving wrongfully and unconventionally.

One interesting finding of the present study is that some women (Charlotte & Jodi), but not all, made it clear to their partners that they would not tolerate violence. Their strong attitude and determination to live in violence-free relationships may have contributed to their partners' cessation of marital violence. The study does not imply that this is the only or major factor that promotes non-violence in relationships. Many other factors should be taken into consideration together with women's belief systems. For

example, in both Dan's and Mark's cases, their relationships with their female partners were the source of much happiness and pride. It seems that these men had to protect and nurture their relationships at whatever cost (i.e., cessation of marital violence).

5.4 Processes of Change

The study documented the processes of how each participant, from his own perspective, was transformed into a generative adult who would strive to become a better person. For Dan, everything came in one package. As soon as Dan started to walk on the healing path the Creator showed him, he started to change. Specifically, Dan's change had begun when he started to participate in a weekly purification ceremony at a sweat lodge. Dan stated that during ceremonies, he became aware of how much he wanted to change. In addition, during ceremonies, his Creator showed him what his purpose in life was. According to Dan, his purpose was to help those men and women become free from addictions. In other words, all of the following were by-products of Dan walking on the Creator's path and living by his values: recovery from addiction, stopping criminal activities, stopping being emotionally/verbally abusive to Jodi, working as a counsellor, and becoming a better person.

For the remaining five participants, their transformation was begun as soon as they participated in the counselling program for abusive/violent husbands. First, on joining the counselling program, these participants were not optimistic or hopeful. Some had a sense of self-doubt, self-hate, and hopelessness; others were not aware that they needed to change. Second, in a group counselling situation, however, the participants were welcomed by formerly maritally violent men turned into counsellors who were not judgmental. Third, group counselling somehow convinced the participants that they were capable of change. Fourth, the participants began their life-long journey of self-understanding. Gradually, they started to understand how and why they had become maritally violent/abusive, and the wrongfulness of violence/abuse. Fifth, cessation of marital violence was accomplished by utilizing some tools they acquired in counselling (e.g., taking time out, talking oneself down, being sober). Sixth, cessation of physical violence was followed by cessation of psychological abuse. Seventh, the participants maintained their violence-free life style by further participating in ongoing group

counselling sessions and supporting one another. At the same time, they started to aspire to become better husbands, parents, friends, and persons. Lastly, they became devoted counsellors and one became a board member of the organization for maritally violent/abusive men. As Steve said, their initial motivation to become counsellors was that they wished to atone for what they had done. The more they counselled or served on the board of directors, however, the more they felt rewarded and the more deeply they were devoted to the cause.

Why does a certain individual's life story take a certain form? (McAdams et al., 1997). This is an important question to ask when interpreting a life story. The life stories of reformed maritally violent men presented in the previous chapter had common characteristics: (a) growing up without role models that may have directly or indirectly associated with the men's inhibition of communication and leaving home early, (b) finding/connecting with those role models who were reformed abusive/violent men or a former offender, (c) becoming role models, and (d) emphasis on their current activities as role models (i.e., counsellors). The study interpreted this result from a developmental perspective (e.g., Clausen, 1993) in which finding/connecting with role models was considered as a major turning point in these men's lives, and becoming devoted counsellors as a part of the processes of the men's personal growth and development. Another way to understand why the participants' life stories took a certain form is to take a narrative psychological perspective (McAdams, 2006), as briefly mentioned earlier in this dissertation.

According to McAdams (2006), "Narrative psychology aims...to understand the role of stories and storytelling in...human life, in interpersonal relationships, and in society" (p.93). Narrative psychologists consider a life story as synonymous to adult identity (McAdams, 1993). Thus, from a narrative psychological perspective, a life story is one's attempt to make sense of his/her past with current concerns and future goals in mind (McAdams, 1988, 1993, 2006). For example, Maruna (2001) examined life stories of reformed ex-convicts, and found that they were more significantly interested in assisting young offenders to desist from crime compared to their ex-convict counterparts who did not "go straight." Maruna documented reformed ex-convicts' earnest desire to become generative role models for the next generation, and their sense of fulfilment in

doing so. According to Maruna, by telling the tales of their lives for the cause, the reformed ex-convicts found a way to come to terms with their past.

Of the two different perspectives described above , the present study used the former. A life-story method was used as a tool to retrospectively collect longitudinal data in order to study life-course development of reformed maritally violent men. The study's focus was on the content of the life stories themselves, rather than on how they were told and why. It is important, however, to acknowledge that there are different approaches to interpretation of a life story.

5.5 Turning Points

The study successfully identified turning points that promoted the participants' change and further personal growth. These turning points were broadly categorized as having the following six characteristics. First, a turning point can occur without a person's own initiative. Howard, Nick, and Ross were referred to the counselling program by their spouses and psychiatrists. They did not conscientiously seek and join with men's groups as Mark and Steve did. Nonetheless, the event turned out to be their major turning point.

Second, a turning point can occur co-incidentally (Caspi, 1998), as happened to Dan and Mark. Dan's meeting with his reformed friend in the Narcotics Anonymous meeting in prison occurred by chance. This turning point discontinued his involvement in criminal activities and substance abuse, and started to lead him to a completely different life-course. On hearing Dan's episode of his meeting with his old friend, one practitioner working with maritally violent men commented that this turning point might have changed Dan's notion of an ideal man from being tough to being wise (S. Belanger, personal communication, November 6, 2004). Interestingly, Dan felt like participating in the meeting "just to break the monotony" because he knew that there would be some coffee and doughnuts brought in, and he usually could not get those in prison. Mark stopped abusing substances and started to meditate by chance as described in the previous chapter. Specifically, he met a person at the bus stop who introduced him to meditation. What if there had been no coffee or doughnuts at the meeting in prison? What if Dan's old friend had not been there? What if the bus driver had let Mark get on the bus? Their

turning points may not have happened. Personal accounts of how chance plays a role in re-directing one's life trajectory, such as described above, are extremely valuable (Bandura, 1982) because such information can be available only through a retrospective review of one's life. In general, such information cannot be collected by conducting quantitative research.

Third, becoming a parent is a major transition in one's life trajectory. In Steve's case it turned out to be the turning point which directed him to become not only a non-abusive/violent father, but also a confident young adult who was devoted to the humanistic cause (i.e., cessation of marital violence). In order to understand Steve's turning point fully, once again, a life-course perspective is useful. Steve's strong aspiration to be a non-abusive/violent role model for his children stemmed from his childhood experiences of continuously having to witness interparental violence and being physically abused by his step-father. Emulating his step-father's behaviours was the last thing he wanted to do to his children. He hoped his relationship with his children would be as positive as his relationships with his mother and his grandfather had been. Steve needed to change upon the birth of his first child. Thus, any event can have the potential to be identified as a turning point depending on one's life history. Indeed, a mere examination of cessation of marital violence is meaningless unless it is studied together with an individual's developmental trajectories through life.

Fourth, a turning point can occur in a moment or two, as happened to Dan when he looked at the eyes of his old friend in prison, to Steve when a decision to start a new intimate relationship came to him on the beach, and to Ross who met his 4-year-old daughter's eyes when he kicked his wife. Once again, while an event is actually happening, one usually has no way of knowing that it will be his/her life-changing moment (Birren & Hedlund, 1987). Only when one looks back on the event retrospectively, will he/she understand the significance of it. This is one reason why a life-course perspective is suited to a study of change.

Lastly, a turning point brings real and lasting psychological change to one's life (Caspi , 1998). In general, a turning point co-occurs with profound understanding of the self. If a turning point does not involve significant psychological change, it is termed as the mere absence of continuity (i.e., discontinuity) (Caspi). When Howard met Gwen in

his mid-30s, he realized for the first time in his life that he was able to have an emotion such as love. Shortly after this, Howard started his new relationship with Gwen. Renewed understanding of who one is and what one is actually doing seem to promote one's change, or, as in Steve's case, change to come. Steve described an episode in which he saw his step-father's face while physically abusing his ex-girlfriend as one of his turning points. Another episode in which Steve came to understand himself was when his verbal abuse of Kim woke up his 10-month-old daughter. These experiences significantly contributed to his understanding of his abusive/violent self, which had been very hard for him to accept.

5.6 Counselling as an Intervention

All participants except Dan ceased their marital violence, both physical and emotional, by attending the same group counselling program for abusive/violent husbands described in Chapter 3. In this section of the chapter, the participants' accounts of this particular counselling program are discussed. In this program, male counsellors were: (a) reformed maritally abusive/violent men, (b) convinced that a client is capable of change, (c) facilitative of therapeutic group work, and (d) committed to fostering self-understanding in clients.

5.6.1 Reformed maritally violent men as counsellors. According to the participants in the present study, being counselled by those who were reformed maritally violent men was one of the main factors that fostered their change. As Mark forcefully argued, to the clients, reformed men were not only counsellors, but also role models and mentors. Although, in the literature on drug and alcohol recovery programs, the efficacy of the use of recovered alcoholics and drug users in self-help groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous are well documented (Kirby, 2004; Vaillant, 2005), little is known about the efficacy of men's counselling groups that are facilitated by reformed maritally violent men nor the characteristics of those counsellors who could provide successful interventions with maritally violent men. One notable exception is a survey conducted by Hamilton (2004) at the very counselling organization where five of the six participants in the present study were recruited. The survey examined 96 program completers who had been counselled by reformed maritally violent men and 82 female

partners of the program completers. Hamilton found that at the 18-month follow-up: (a) 70% of females reported that their partners used no physical violence, (b) 70% of females reported that their partners used less emotional/verbal abuse, (c) and 86% of females who were still in contact with their partners reported that they felt safer as the result of their partners' participation in the program. In sum, her findings indicate the efficacy of such a program, which is consistent with the accounts of the participants of the present study.

One speculation about why the groups facilitated by reformed maritally violent men were effective at this counselling organization is that the reformed counsellors seemed to have a good understanding of the processes of men's change because they themselves had been through their own processes in the past. For example, some participants mentioned that at their initial stage of change they resisted acknowledgement of their own abusiveness/violence or their need to change, and they could now observe the same resistance in their new clients.

5.6.2 Change is possible. Ross stated that the group was the first place where he was told that he could change. Up until then he was only told that what he had been doing was wrong. Mark also stated that upon meeting with one of the counsellors prior to the group sessions, he started to hope to change right away. Thus, the counsellors the participants worked with in the program seemed to have the ability to convince them that they could change.

5.6.3 Therapeutic group work. The therapeutic nature of the group counselling processes was well documented in the previous chapter. Mark stated that the supportive counsellor-client as well as client-client interactions during the group sessions were the key to his successful transformation. Mark stated that he had visited a counsellor and a psychiatrist for help prior to his participation in the men's groups; however, he did not find the individual counselling with those professionals effective.

Similar findings were reported by Gondolf and Hanneken (1987) in their qualitative study with 12 reformed maritally violent men. They found that "the non-judgemental approach of the staff and the sense of support that grew out of the group" (p.185) promoted the men's change. Likewise, Jennings and Murphy (2000) observed that "the emotional connection with other men appears to be the most powerful and desired aspect of treatment for the men themselves" (p.22).

Little is known about therapeutic factors in groups for maritally violent men. Therapeutic factors refer to those elements of group therapy that improve a client's condition (Bloch, Crouch, & Wanlass, 1994). For example, previous research identified the following group elements as therapeutic factors: (a) hope, (b) self-understanding, (c) altruism, (d) group cohesiveness, (f) catharsis (i.e., expression of emotions), and (g) universality (e.g., "I am not alone") (Macnair-Semands & Lese, 2000; Magen & Glajchen, 1999; Randall, 1995; Reddon, Payne, & Starzyk, 1999; Schwartz & Waldo, 1999). According to Schwartz and Waldo, there exist two studies that examined potential therapeutic factors in counselling groups for maritally violent men. One such study with 38 men in four counselling groups found that guidance, development of socialization techniques, and group cohesiveness were the three most frequently observed therapeutic factors (Schwartz & Waldo). These results were partially congruent with another study with 71 maritally violent men showing that at the early stage of their intervention, cognitive group processes such as men's self-understanding and awareness of their problem, and guidance were the most frequently identified therapeutic factors, whereas interactive and emotional group processes such as cohesion and universality were not (Roy, Turcotte, Montminy, & Lindsay, 2005). The next section discusses self-understanding, identified as one of the therapeutic factors of group counselling processes for maritally violent men (Roy et al.).

5.6.4 Fostering self-understanding. The present study found that what the participants gained most through the group experiences was their understanding of the self and personal growth promoted by this understanding. This finding is consistent with the results of the qualitative study with 12 reformed maritally violent men by Gondolf and Hanneken (1987).

In contrast to the findings above, a study with 96 maritally violent men who had completed a group counselling program showed that skills development (e.g., taking time out), anger management, and recognition of abusive behaviours and wrongdoing were the most helpful aspects of their group participation (Brownlee & Chlebovec, 2004). Self-understanding and personal growth were not identified as most beneficial in this study. The differences in men's perceptions of their groups in different studies from one study to another may be due to the stages of reformation these men were at. The participants in

the present study successfully completed their groups long ago, and have been violence-free for 10-23 years. In the study by Gondolf and Hanneken (1987), reformed maritally violent men had been violence-free for 10 months to 2½ years. In contrast, in the study by Brownlee and Chlebovec, the questionnaire was administered upon men's completion of their 24-week treatment.

According to the participants in the present study, counselling was not about merely changing their abusive/violent behaviour, but rather was about their inner journey to find out who they really were. As Howard put it, it worked at two levels: One was to stop being abusive/violent, and the other was to re-heal whatever happened to a person in the past - one's "unfinished business" (Kübler-Ross, 1997). Steve stated that he had to look at the dark corner of his mind in order to make progress. He described his counselling experiences as a client as looking at himself in the mirror repeatedly. The participants' high level of self-understanding and personal growth documented in the previous chapter can be explained by the fact that the participants were still continuing to discover themselves, not as clients anymore, but as counsellors. Previous research identified a significant level of self-understanding as one of the characteristics of competent counsellors (Riesen & Baker-Sennett, 2006). Indeed, as some of the participants of the study indicated, finding who you are is a life-long endeavour, which, according to the participants, seems to be a prerequisite to aspire to become a better person. These personal accounts of formerly maritally violent men turned into counsellors are very valuable because they are rarely available in the existing literature.

5.7 Culturally Specific Interventions

According to Statistics Canada (2005), Native Canadians are three times more likely to be victims of marital violence than are non-Natives (21% versus 7%). The present study reported Dan's accounts that Native healing was particularly beneficial for those Native North American men who were suffering from despiritualization and cultural identity problems. His view is supported by the contemporary literature on marital violence concerning Native North American populations (Duran et al., 1998; Oetzel & Duran, 2004).

In his qualitative study with 30 Native offenders, Waldram (1993) examined the effects of Native awareness and spirituality programs in prisons. Although this study did not examine maritally violent offenders specifically, it can shed light on Native specific interventions. In accordance with Dan's accounts, Waldram found that: (a) many Native offenders had little knowledge about their tribes' culture and history, (b) for many Native offenders, their first exposure to Native spirituality was in prison, and (c) group processes such as those that take place in sweat lodges had significantly positive effects on the offenders "as the 'brothers' work together to redefine their cultures and support each other within the restrictive confines of prison" (p.359). According to Waldram, the Native spiritual programs in prison were greatly appreciated by most, but not all, Native offenders. Most notably, the programs provided the offenders with a new identity as a Native person. Having a Native identity and being proud of it are critical components for healing, Waldram argued, because in order for healing to occur, the offenders must be able to identify themselves culturally with elders who would assist them to communicate with the Creator.

Both Dan's accounts in the present study and the results from Waldram's study support culturally specific interventions for Native North American individuals. As Waldram argued, the efficacy of spirituality programs should be acknowledged by policy makers so that this form of healing can continue to be available to those Natives who are interested.

5.8 Implications

5.8.1 Group counselling interventions. The results of the study have implications for prevention and intervention. Sonkin (2000) estimates that: (a) approximately 40-50% of those men who complete group counselling programs will re-offend within two years post treatment, and (b) only approximately 7% of program completers cease to be maritally violent two years post treatment. A recent meta-analytic examination of marital violence treatment indicates that currently available interventions have a minimal impact on reducing recidivism beyond the effect of being arrested (Babcock, Green, & Robie, 2004). As A. Rosenbaum (personal communication, September 24, 2000) advocated, the findings of the present study suggest that group counselling interventions with maritally

violent men should continue to be available, regardless of those estimates by Sonkin and Babcock et al. (2004). There are several reasons to support the above statement.

First, change occurred even in the absence of perceived motivation. The present study documented those cases in which participants reluctantly joined the counselling program (Howard, Nick), but changed nonetheless. Second, change occurred even in the absence of hope. The study illustrated a case where the participant (Mark) was dubious about his future change at the very early stage of the intervention; however, he changed nonetheless. Third, change occurred even in the presence of resistance to change at the initial stage of counselling (Steve). Thus, some circumstances force one to engage in something even though one is reluctant, hopeless, unwilling, or does it not of his own accord; one benefits from the experience in the end. A customarily held notion that people accomplish a great many things only when they have strong will and motivation, and with no fear does not always seem to be the case. The present study is a good example. Lastly, group counselling may be the only or first place for some men to: (a) observe non-violent/abusive male role models, (b) learn that they are behaving wrongfully, and (c) learn what healthy intimate relationships are like. As in Dan's and Ross's cases, those men who grew up surrounded by abusive/violent role models cannot envision easily that they can be different. Where can those men learn that they can think and act differently? Similarly, as in Dan's, Howard's, and Nick's cases, those men who are not aware of the true impact of their violence/abuse on their partners need a place to learn about it.

5.8.2 Educational implications. The present study has several educational implications. First, the findings of the study indicated that there is an urgent need to teach children to communicate in non-abusive/violent ways. According to the literature on masculinity, boys are taught that an ideal man is emotionally stoic (Chu, Porche, & Tolman, 2005; Watts & Borders, 2005). As the result of their socialization toward masculine norms, boys and men have difficulty and fears when expressing their emotions, especially to other boys or men. One of the consequences of male socialization is that men become unable to articulate their own feelings or recognize others' feelings. As Howard and Ross indicated, children should be able to allow themselves to have, feel, and express various negative emotions such as hurt, pain, and anger without being

aggressive/abusive/violent. When children fail to even feel the existence of those emotions within them, as Ross described, accumulated negative emotions grow to an unmanageable entity, and explode. Ross said, "You gotta release it! You just gotta release it!" In order to release negative emotions in a non-abusive/violent way, however, some children need guidance (C. van Elsakker, personal communication, November 6, 2004). Mark also argued that one should be able to convey something that may irritate or anger others without feeling threatened. Others may take the news unfavourably; however, suppressing negative emotions within oneself should be avoided at all cost. In sum, children need to learn how to be verbally assertive in a peaceful manner.

Second, given the study's finding that moral belief is one factor that deters marital violence, anti-violence education is called for. As Bandura (1971) argued, children learn behaviours and moral values by observing and modeling adults around them. As described in the present study, role models are not only parents. They could be anybody (e.g., male counsellors). Thus, children should be taught wrongfulness of the use of physical aggression/violence both at home and in schools. Recent research on anti-violence education suggests that school-based violence prevention programs are promising (Aber, Brown, & Jones, 2003; Flannery et al., 2003; Lewis, Powers, Kelk, & Newcomer, 2002). Williams (1989) argued that intervention efforts should be extended to outside of school, such as to neighbourhood groups, parks and recreation, boys' clubs and boy scouts. Williams also suggested that an intervention with participants and/or victims of peer violence was called for in order to assist these men to learn how to resolve conflicts in a non-violent way.

Third, given the study's finding that all of the participants left home much earlier than the norm without having learned what constituted healthy intimate relationships, teaching youths how to live in a healthy relationship is essential. If parents are not capable of teaching or monitoring adolescents, adolescents should be able to learn about healthy intimate relationships in a school or community setting before they make a transition into adulthood. Recent evaluation studies of a school-based dating violence prevention program reported positive results (Foshee et al., 1998; Foshee et al., 2004). Specifically, Foshee and her colleagues found that at the four-year-follow-up, their Safe

Dates Program, implemented in 10 schools, reduced successfully physical, serious physical, and sexual dating violence (Foshee et al., 2004).

5.9 Limitations

There are several notable limitations of the present study. First, the participants did not include any ethnic groups other than Caucasian and Polynesian-Native North American. Inclusion of other ethnic groups may have brought other information to the study.

Second, five out of six participants stopped being violent/abusive as the result of their participation in the counselling program. If the study had succeeded in including some more men who had changed not as the result of attending counselling programs, the results would have been further enriched.

Third, five out of six participants were recruited from the same counselling organization to which they had come initially as clients and with which they were currently associated as counsellors and a member of the board of directors. Thus, these five participants may have brought the culture, philosophy, and history of this organization to the study, which may be reflected in the findings of the study. For example, all of the five men discussed their parenting at length. Was it because of them, or the place? This study cannot determine which.

Lastly, psychological abuse was not defined because the study's initial intent was to examine cessation of physical violence, and cessation of psychological abuse was not used as a criterion for recruitment. In the course of interviews, however, the participants talked about their cessation of psychological abuse at length. Thus, there might have existed some differences in understanding of what constituted psychological abuse between the author and the participants.

5.10 Future Directions

The present study implied that, according to the participants, a group counselling program facilitated by reformed maritally violent men appeared to be effective. Research on such an intervention has been rarely documented in the literature. There certainly is a

need for more studies that can confirm the efficacy of such a program and reveal why it is effective.

The present study showed that a life-course perspective was suited to study change. It enabled the examination of processes of significant changes and their lasting effects on the lives of the six participants. Much insight was gained by the study's examination of the six life stories. The study also demonstrated that the biographical method can successfully identify life's turning points that result in further personal growth. Studying lives in the context of marital violence using this method seems to be a fertile area of research.

The results of the study implied that culturally specific intervention programs might be effective with Native North Americans. Thus, in order to verify this finding, development, implementation, and evaluation of such programs are called for. Marital violence intervention research with Native North Americans has just begun (Norton, 1997). In general, researchers recommend interventions that incorporate Native North American traditions and values (e.g., Oetzel & Duran, 2004). What is still missing from the literature is evaluation of such interventions.

The present study documented Dan's naturally occurring cessation of physical violence to his partner. The study identified only one study on natural cessation of marital violence (Margolin & Fernandez, 1987). As Margolin and Fernandez wrote, "[The group of those couples who cease their violence spontaneously] typically does not come to the attention of mental health professionals nor have [sic] they been the target of scientific investigation" (p.241). Although the topic may not be popular among marital violence researchers, it is a potentially interesting and fertile area of research for life-course scholars because it involves an examination of continuity, discontinuity, and turning points. If the present study is replicated in order to further explore natural cessation of marital violence, participants should be recruited from the general public through prolonged and extensive media advertisements rather than from mental health organizations.

The present study observed that none of the participants had close relationships with their fathers when young. After their behavioural and psychological change, however, the participants became positive, non-violent role models to their own children.

The literature on fatherhood in the context of marital violence is scarce (Peled, 2000). One of the important contributions of the present study is that it documented the positive fatherhood of reformed violent men. For example, since his change, Howard became a father who could assist his sons to release negative emotions (e.g., anger) in a non-violent manner. Thus, as Williams, Boggess, and Carter (2001) suggested, it would be interesting to examine children's adjustment before and after their fathers' cessation of marital violence. In addition, the present study revealed the improved parenting skills of the participants from their own point of view. It would be interesting to examine children's perspectives on their fathers' change and any change in their relationships with their fathers before and after the cessation of marital violence.

5.11 Conclusions

The purpose of the study was to uncover reformed maritally violent men's own accounts of (a) how they developed through life, and (b) how and why these men stopped being maritally violent.

The participants in this study consisted of a special group of individuals who were formerly maritally violent men turned into counsellors. In addition, they were not only physical violence-free but also psychological violence-free. Moreover, at the time of data collection, the length of time physical violence-free ranged from 10 to 23 years; not a norm according to the currently available data in the literature.

The strength of the present study lies in the very fact that the participants were formerly maritally violent men turned into counsellors. The study presented these counsellors' accounts not only of the roots and cessation of marital violence but also of their personal growth since the cessation of violence as well as of their personal experiences of counselling those men who are currently maritally violent.

Perhaps the most important finding of this study was that these men not only ceased their violence, but also became generative adults who strive to be better persons. Indeed, individuals continue to develop throughout their entire life course (Baltes et al., 1998). These men stepped forward to participate in the study for the same reason as Dan's old friend stood up and spoke his personal accounts at the Narcotic Anonymous meeting, that is, to contribute to the cause.

The study added to a growing body of research showing that retrospectively collected biographical data can offer much insight into turning points and their lasting impact on lives. Powerful effects of turning points, some mysterious, others coincidental, were presented. In addition, the processes of reformation were documented. The study was one of the first endeavours to examine cessation of marital violence using qualitative methodology from the life-course perspective. The study unexpectedly collected Dan's accounts of his natural change, rarely described in the existing literature.

Participants' accounts that were pertinent to cessation of physical violence as well as to emotional/verbal abuse were identified. Some of the results pertinent to cessation of marital violence could be explained by social controls such as: (a) attachment to significant others, b) commitment to societal goals and personal aspirations (e.g., career, education, social change), c) involvement in conventional activities (e.g., work, family and social activities), and d) moral belief (Hirschi, 1969).

This study did not provide a universal formula for cessation of marital violence. The study does not suggest that if a maritally violent man is a Native North American and goes to the sweat lodge ceremony, he will be healed. Likewise, the study does not suggest that if he is a Caucasian and goes to a group counselling program led by a reformed maritally violent man, he will stop being violent/abusive. As Dan put it, a man should find his own healing path. This study presented the life stories of six men who found the way.

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APPENDIX A

The Advertisement Placed in Community Newspapers, Posters, and Flyers for Participant Recruitment

Research Participants Needed!

Project Title: Life-course development of reformed maritally violent men

Principal investigator: Dr. Marion Porath

Co-investigator: Ms. Yuriko Riesen

If you are: Between 30 and 60 years of age;

Were physically abusive to your female partner(s) for more than once annually for a total of at least two years;

Have not been physically abusive to your female partner(s) for the last two years; and

Are willing to share your life story confidentially in a telephone interview setting,

Please contact Yuriko Riesen

1-866-616-3626 (Call No Charge)

The total time required in this project: 4-5 hours

The number of interview sessions: two or three

Your interview will be audiotaped. The results of this project will further our understanding of how men stop being violent to their partners.

This project is being conducted in partial fulfilment of the co-investigator's doctoral degree at the University of British Columbia.

APPENDIX B

The Radio/Television Script for the Purpose of Participant Recruitment

UBC scholars are looking for research participants for a project entitled, "Life-course development of reformed maritally abusive men."

If you are between 30 and 60 years of age;

Were physically abusive to your female partner(s) for more than once annually for a total of at least two years;

Have not been physically abusive to your female partner(s) for the last two years; and

Are willing to share your life story confidentially in a telephone interview setting,

Please contact Yuriko Riesen

1-866-616-3626 (Call No Charge)

Thank you for your interest and cooperation!

APPENDIX D

The Consent Form

Life-Course Development of Reformed Maritally Violent Men

I am a graduate student in the Department of Educational and Counselling Psychology, and Special Education (ECPS), in the Faculty of Education at the University of British Columbia, working under the supervision of Dr. Marion Porath. I am writing to ask for your participation in a research project I am conducting with Dr. Porath, as partial fulfilment of my Ph.D. degree. This research is entitled, "Life-course development of reformed maritally violent men." The research will further broaden our knowledge of how men stop being violent to their partners.

I would like to ask you for your participation in this project IF you are between 30 and 60 years old AND:

1. were physically abusive toward your female partner(s) more than once a year for a total of at least two years; AND
2. have not been physically abusive to your female partner(s) for the last two years.

In this project, physical abuse is defined as including the following acts: (a) push, grab, slap, or throw something at spouse; (b) kick, bite, hit her with a fist or something hard, (c) repeatedly hit her over at least a few minutes, or (d) threaten with a knife or gun, or use a knife or gun to hurt her.

The project involves having you complete the Life Satisfaction Chart and be interviewed by me on the telephone twice or three times. The Life Satisfaction Chart will be mailed to you as soon as I receive signed consent from you. During the telephone interview sessions, you will be asked to share your life story confidentially.
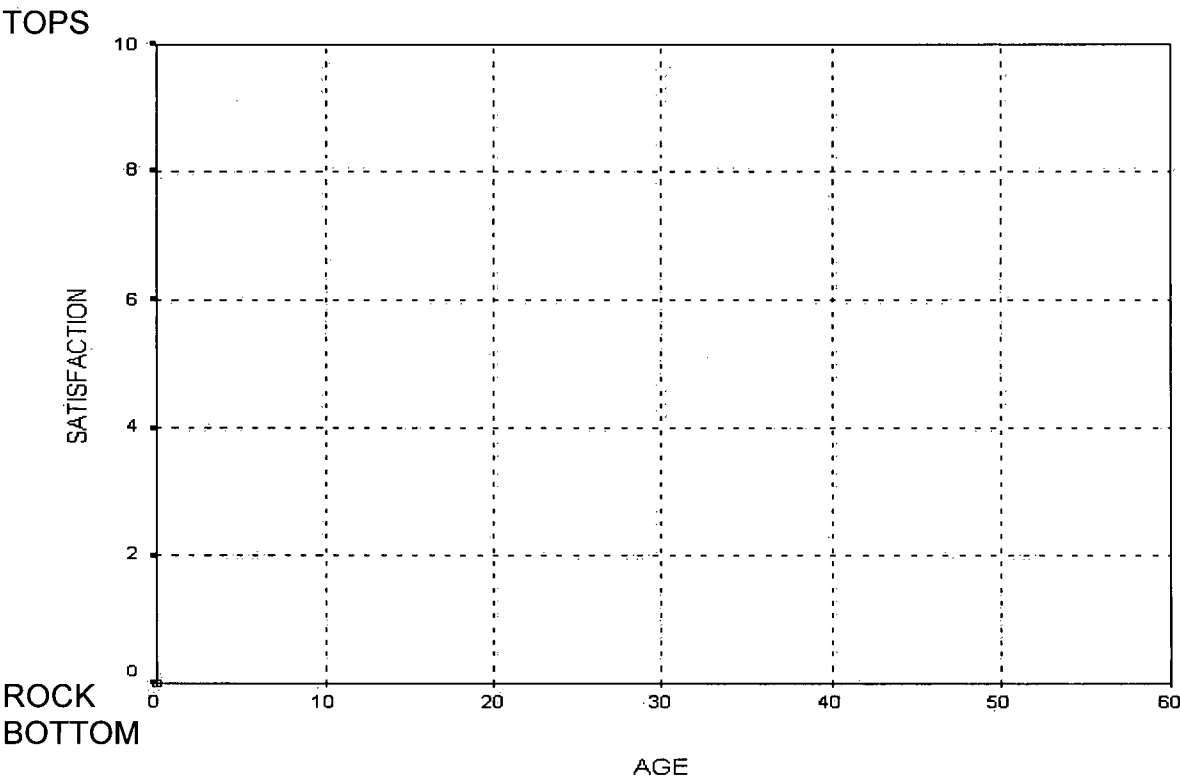
APPENDIX E

Interview Protocol (modified from McAdams, 1993, pp.256-264)

A. I would like you to think about your life as if it were a book. Each part of your life composes a chapter in the book. Please divide your life into its major chapters and briefly describe each chapter. You can have at least two or three chapters and at most about seven or eight. Discuss briefly what makes for a transition from one chapter to the next.

B. What was the most wonderful moment in your life?

C. What was the worst moment in your life?

D. Please describe any episodes where you underwent significant changes in your understanding of yourself.

E. What is the earliest memory you have?

F. Describe any memory from your childhood, positive or negative, that stands out today.

G. How were your relationships with your parents, siblings, peers, and teachers when you were a child?

H. Describe any memory from your teenage years that stands out today. Again, it can be either positive or negative.

I. How were your relationships with your parents, siblings, peers, teachers, and girlfriends (if any) when you were a teenager?

J. Describe any memory that stands out from age twenty-one onward.

K. Describe one other particular event from your past that stands out. It may be from long ago or recent times. It may be positive or negative.

L. Who are the four most significant people in your life? At least one of these should be a person to whom you are not related. Please specify the kind of relationship you had or have with each person and the specific way he or she has had an impact on your life story.

M. Tell me about any particular heroes or heroines you have in your life.

N. What are your future plans, wishes, dreams, or aspirations?

O. Please explain how you became abusive in your relationship(s) with your partner(s).

P. Please describe how and why you stopped abusing your partner(s).

Q. What is the most important value in human living?

R. Looking back over your entire life story as a book with chapters, episodes, and characters, can you point out a central theme, message, or idea that runs throughout the text? What is the major theme of your life?
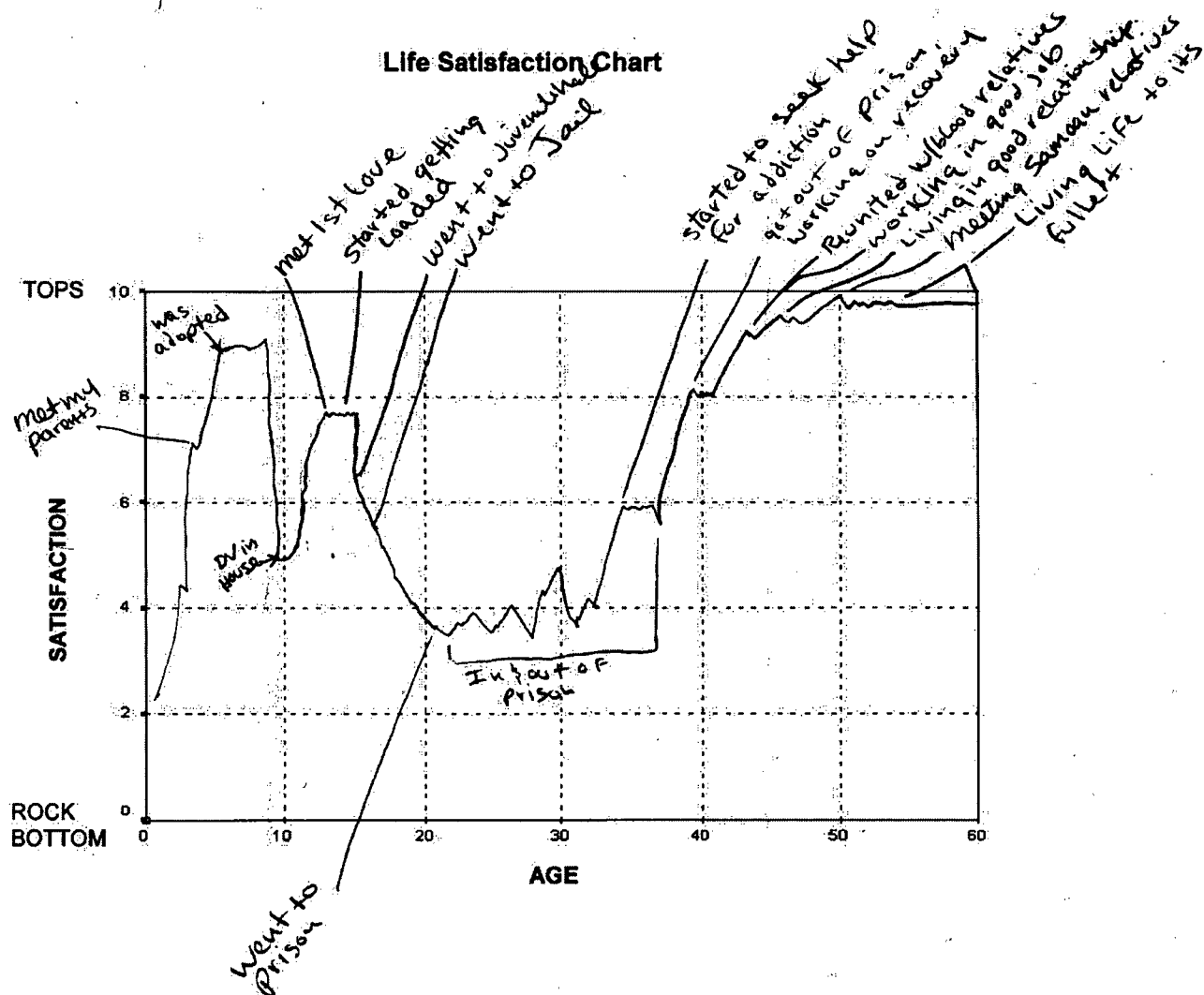
APPENDIX F

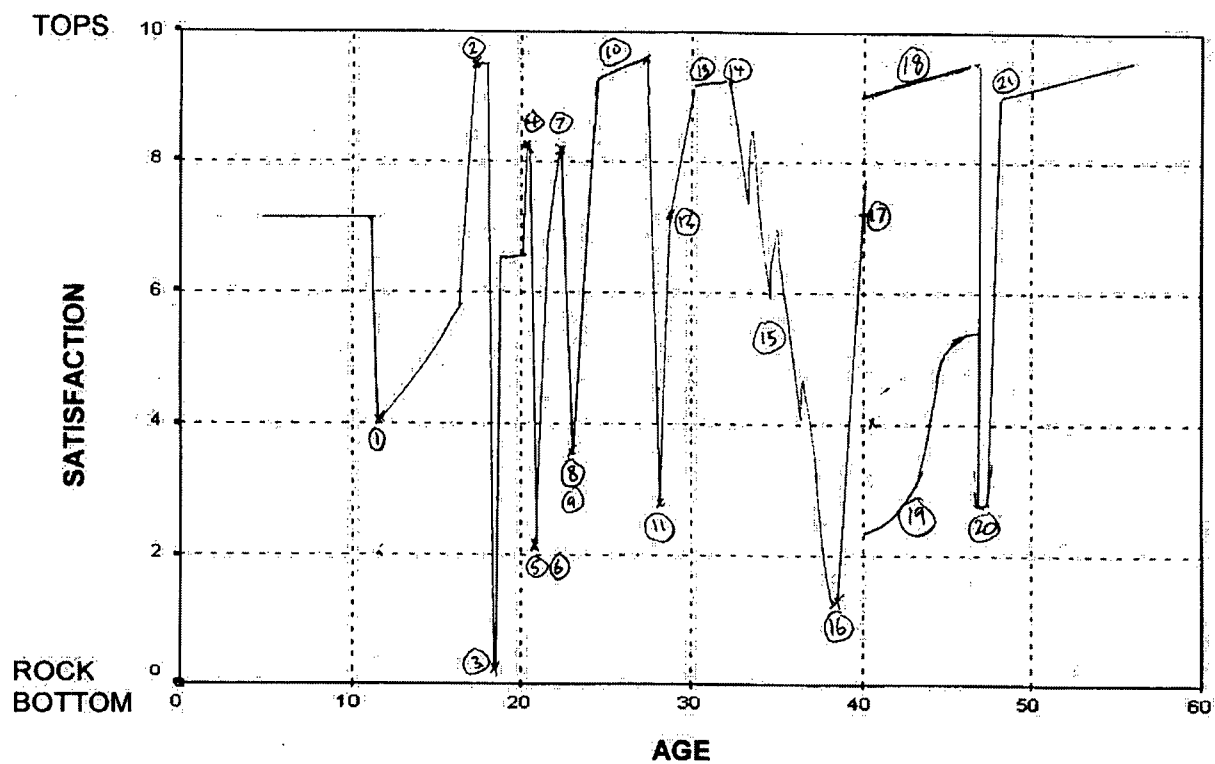**The Life Satisfaction Chart (modified from Clausen, 1993, P. 201)**

APPENDIX G

Dan's Life Satisfaction Chart

Life Satisfaction Chart

APPENDIX H

Mark's Life Satisfaction Chart


Life Satisfaction Chart

1. Moved from City E to City F
2. First real girlfriend
3. Broke up with girlfriend, left home, jailed in City G, kicked out of [the country]
4. 3-month motorcycle trip
5. Drug problems
6. Learned to meditate transcendental mediation (TM)
7. Travel with girlfriend, live together in bush cabin
8. Broke up with girlfriend
9. Mother died, drop out of art school
10. Involved in TM movement, teaching, 6-month course in Switzerland, short-term engagement
11. Broken engagement, involve in [TM] cult, rejected from cult
12. Engaged to first wife, living common-law
13. First wedding, 2 years college, daughter born
14. Son born, bean IT career
15. Cycle of violence and abuse, working too much over time, much conflict, cyclical, many good times mixed in
16. [The name of the counselling organization], end of violent, abusive behaviour
17. End of first marriage, beginning of relationship with second wife
18.-19. Simultaneous high and low---high due to new relationship, low due to nasty divorce, custody battle, child access, etc...
20. Unemployed, depressed, sick
21. Career back on track, children more independent, happy marriage, feel successful

APPENDIX I

Ross's Life Satisfaction Chart

Life Satisfaction Chart
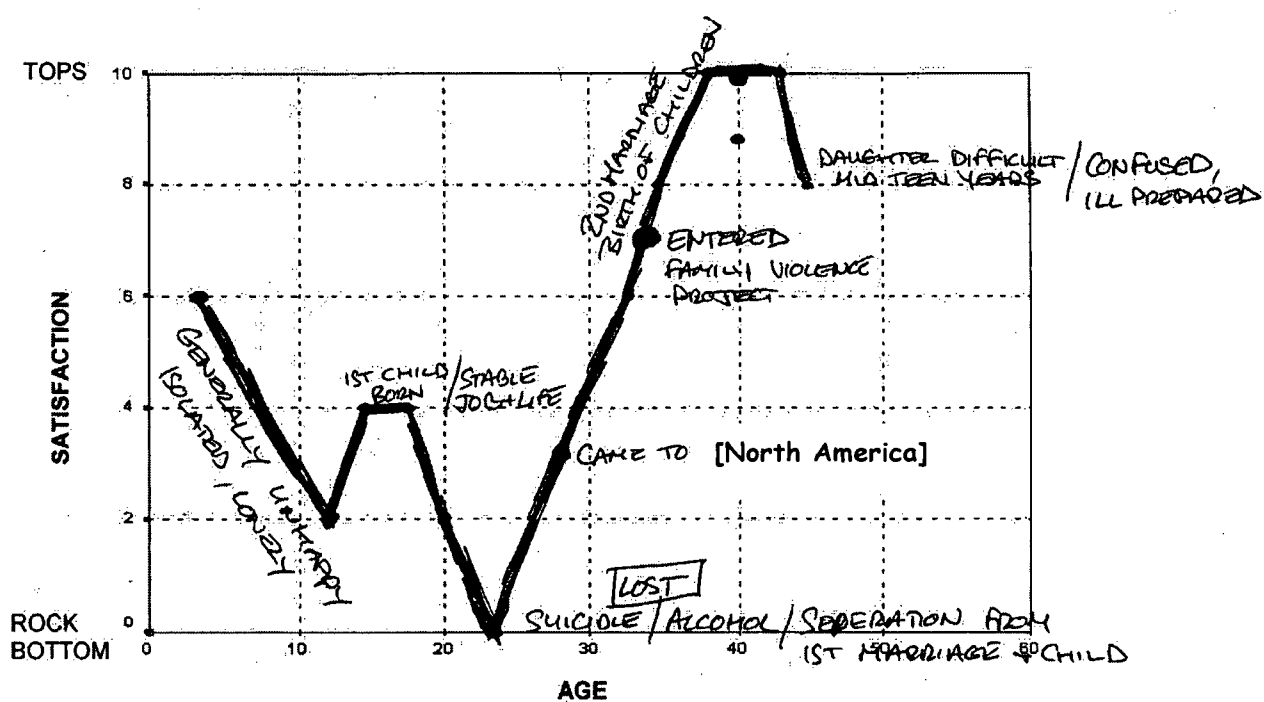
APPENDIX J

Table J1

Selective Chronology of the Lives of the Participants

Year	Dan	Howard	Mark	Nick	Ross	Steve
1944		Born in City B. Father killed in WWII. Mother remarried.				
1949			Born in City D.			
1954		Moved to remote property. Home-schooling (10).				
1955			Moved to City E (6).			
1956	Born in City A.		*(circa)* Played, but also fought with brother all the time (throughout childhood).			
1959	Adopted (3).	Had mean teachers in high school (15).			Born in the UK.	

(Table J1 continues)

Table J1 *(continued)*

Year	Dan	Howard	Mark	Nick	Ross	Steve
1962	Exposed to interparental violence a few times (6-8).	Went to university (18-22)	Moved to City F. Did a lot of art in junior high school (13).			
1963			*(circa)* Beat up brother (in his adolescence).	Born in City I.		
1965			Played soccer in high school. Was Sea Cadet. Had drinking parties with close friends (16).			
1966	Growing to a large male. Acting out in school. Smoking and using prescription drugs with peers. Started to run away from home (10) Kept running away from home (10-16).	Dropped out of university. Married to Margaret. Step-father died (22).				

Table J1 *(continued)*

Year	Dan	Howard	Mark	Nick	Ross	Steve
1967		First child born (23).	First real girlfriend. High school graduation. Broke up with girlfriend. Drop out of college (18).			
1968		*(circa)* Moved to City C. Set up logging company. Life as an ambitious entrepreneur (in his 20s and 30s).	Travelling, drinking, and using drugs (19).			
1969	First girlfriend (13).		Learned to meditate. Stopped drinking and using drugs (20).	*(circa)* Dysfunctional family. Fought with siblings (throughout childhood and adolescence).		Born in City L.

Table J1 *(continued)*

Year	Dan	Howard	Mark	Nick	Ross	Steve
1970			*(circa)* Became meditation instructor. Workshops abroad. Travelled wide to learn and teach meditation (21-28).		Started grammar school (11).	
1971	Dropped out of high school (15).		Mother died (22).			Parents divorced. Mother remarried to Dave. Moved to a remote place (2).
1972	Parents divorced. Left home and moved in with older man (16).				Started to smoke, steal, and drink with peers. Became a soccer hooligan (13).	
1973	Addicted to heroin. Started to engage in criminal activities (17).					

Year	Dan	Howard	Mark	Nick	Ross	Steve
1975				*(circa)* Parents divorced. Lived with foster parents (in his adolescence).	Grammar school graduation. Started apprenticeship (16)	
1976	Went to prison (20). In and out of prison (20-36).				Married. Lived at parents. Son, Mike, born (17).	Home-schooled by mother (7).
1977	Sent to penitentiary (21).		Met Caroline in City D (28).		Moved out from parents. Lived with wife and son (18).	Bother, Marvin, born (8).
1978				Dropped out of high school. Started to live on his own. Work at restaurant. Abusive/violent to girlfriend (15).		Moved to community with school. Started to go to school (9).

Table J1 *(continued)*

Year	Dan	Howard	Mark	Nick	Ross	Steve
1979	Son Born (23).	Met Gwen. Divorced from Margaret. Moved back to City B. Common-law relationship with Gwen (35).	Married to Caroline. Went back to school. Daughter born (30).			
1980				*(circa)* Father died (in his late teens).	Divorced (21).	*(circa)* Witnessed frequent interparental violence. Physically abused by Dave. Felt lonely among peers. Read voraciously (throughout childhood and adolescence).

(Table J1 continues)

Year	Dan	Howard	Mark	Nick	Ross	Steve
1981	Stopped being physically violent to female partners (25).		Son born. Started to work as an electronics technologist (32).	Broke up with girlfriend (18).	*(circa)* Life as a soccer hooligan. Pub drinking and street fights. Violence both at home and on the streets (in his early 20s).	
1983					*(circa)* Got job as a truck driver for school board (19 or 20). Became biker (in his 20s).	
1984		Son with Gwen born (40).	*(circa)* Being abusive and violent at home. Seeking help to become violence-free in vain (in his 30s).			
1985					Met Barbara. Followed her to North America (26).	Left home. Lived with a family friend in City M (16).

(Table J1 continues)

Table J1 (continued)

Year	Dan	Howard	Mark	Nick	Ross	Steve
1986					Hitch hiked across the country with Barbara. Settled in City K (27).	Dropped out of high school. Substance abuse. Psychologically abusive to girlfriends (17).
1987					Married to Barbara. Abusive/violent to her (28).	Relationship with Joan. Abusive/violent to her (18).
1988	Started going to purification ceremonies (in his early 30s).	Joined counselling program. Stopped being abusive/violent. Separated from Gwen (44).	Joined counselling program. Stopped being abusive/violent. Divorced from Caroline. Started new relationship with Charlotte. Custody battle with Caroline (39).	Married to Cindy (in his mid 20s).	Daughter, Cory, born (29).	Move to City N with Joan. Going to community college (19).

Table J1 *(continued)*

Year	Dan	Howard	Mark	Nick	Ross	Steve
1989		*(circa)* Had several violence-free relationships after Gwen (in his 40s and 50s).		Joined counselling program (about 26).		Dave's suicide. Break-up with Joan. Move to City O. Met Kim. (20).
1990				Started to jog (27).	Son, Tim, born (31).	Relationship with Kim (21).
1992	Got out of prison (36)			Son, Charles born (29).		Daughter, Aychel, born (23).
1993			Brother died (44).		Joined counselling program (34).	Joined counselling program. Stopped being abusive/violent to Kim (24).
1994	Started to live with Jodi (38)					

(Table J1 continues)

Table J1 *(continued)*

Year	Dan	Howard	Mark	Nick	Ross	Steve
1995	Got job as counsellor. Stopped being psychologically abusive to Jodi (39).			*(circa)* Divorced from Cindy. Had violence-free relationships since divorce. Hoped to spend more time with Charles who lived with Cindy (in his 30s).		*(circa)* Kim's alcoholism worsened (in his 20s).
1999						Divorced from Kim (30).
2000		6th child born (56).				
2001						Started relationship with Megan. Obtained child custody. Started plumbing apprenticeship (32).

(Table J1 continues)

Table J1 *(continued)*

Year	Dan	Howard	Mark	Nick	Ross	Steve
2003	Met biological family (47).	Divorced from the youngest child's mother. Started new relationship (59).	Started work as manager in large health care organization (54).	—	Went back to the UK for family reunion (44).	—
2004	Visited grave of biological father (48).		Served as Chair of counselling organisation (55).			

Note: Ages and developmental stages of the participants are shown in brackets.