ADOLESCENT CRISIS AS RITE OF PASSAGE:
AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF MULTIGENERATIONAL THEMES

by

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ABSTRACT

Title: Adolescent Crisis As Rite Of Passage: 
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There is a tremendous amount of literature on the nature of adolescence, as well as the problems and dilemmas specific to this age group. There is relatively very little written about parents' own experiences with an adolescent child, how they experience the child separating from the family and eventually leaving home.

The following study is an exploratory one. Using a qualitative design, the study sets out with two fundamental purposes; (1) to understand parents' experiences of adolescence and (2) to understand the use of rituals during adolescence, particularly with regard to themes that may be present within the rituals. Fifteen couples (mothers and fathers) who have had children leave the family home, were interviewed for approximately two hours. The interviews followed a general interview guide, and were audiotaped.

The findings indicate that there are an abundance of rituals parents use to mark the transition from childhood to adolescence as well as recognize the change when adolescents and/or young adults leave the family home. Another finding is that parents honor the past and play out themes from their families of origin within the rituals with their own children.
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My understanding and interest in families began through my original family, my mother and father. Their love and belief in me have enabled the sky to become my limit.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is often a period characterized by turbulence and turmoil. Much research has been done on adolescence as a major developmental transition in the family life cycle. Various researchers have identified that successful transition to adolescence and adulthood requires the resolution of the apparent paradox of helping the family member become an autonomous individual, capable of intimacy outside of the family unit. In order for successful transition to occur, Haley (1980) states that family members must be able to tolerate the strain brought about by the adolescent's emotional involvement, without reacting in extreme ways. For their part, adolescents need to know that they can safely experiment with new roles and relationships without the family "burning their bridges" behind them (McGoldrick, 1982).

Parents of adolescents are often confronted with decisions and choices regarding the allocations of rights, privileges, and responsibilities without necessarily knowing the physical, emotional, and social competencies of their adolescent children. It appears that some parents "adapt" to the developmental period of adolescence without having to resort to extreme reactions, such as emotional distancing and rejecting the adolescent. Other parents, however, interpret the adolescent's experimentation with new roles and relationships as a betrayal, and thus, respond
accordingly by becoming more rejecting. Some adolescents respond by moving even further, emotionally, from the parents. As this mutual rejection escalates, parents may contemplate removing the adolescent from the home, or "kicking" him or her out of the house.

How do parents experience their children being adolescents? Are there ways in which parents indicate to their children that this developmental period is recognized? In what ways do parents respond to the differences or "conflicts" that may arise with the adolescent child, and is this way of responding related to the parents' recollection of their own adolescence in their families-of-origin?

Although there is considerable literature about the nature of the developmental period known as adolescence, as well as problems and dilemmas specific to this age group, there is relatively little known about how parents experience their child's adolescence. Specifically, there has not been much written about how parents view this time period, nor what they do when confronted with challenges or conflicts with their adolescent children. Some of the current literature concludes that adolescence is experienced as difficult in North American society because there are hardly any rituals to mark or acknowledge adolescence as a change in the family life cycle. Much of the emphasis in the family therapy and psychology literature is on what parents do wrong regarding their interactions with their
adolescent children, with very little attention to what they do right, and the naturally occurring rituals in the family.

**Purpose**

One purpose of this study was to explore and understand parents' experiences of their children being adolescents and eventually leaving home, (physically) with particular emphasis on the use of rituals during this time period.

A second purpose of this study was to explore and discover the multigenerational themes that arise and are punctuated through adolescence, particularly during a "crisis" or "conflict/problem" period within the family during this time.

The following research questions, which encompass the above purposes, have been designed as the main focus of the study.

**Research Questions**

1. *What kinds of rituals, either implicit or explicit, enable or prevent the adolescent to separate from the parents?*

2. *How are these rituals, whether they be consciously or unconsciously manifested, rooted within individual and family themes? How are they expressed through the generations?*
What is the connection (if any) between certain rituals created by the nuclear family during adolescence and the role of the extended kin? What lessons or ideas did parents learn from their own experiences as adolescents in their families of origin?

It is believed that this study will be relevant to the fields of social work and family therapy in two ways; in terms of its theoretical implications and regarding it's practical or clinical use. In attempting to understand in more depth the complexity of adolescence and the process of separation that occurs within the family during this transitional period of time, one will begin to understand how people leave home, and what are some of the issues relating to how this is done. This is significant in a practical sense in terms of working therapeutically with families, as well as theoretically in terms of developing a theory of families. Specifically, by attempting to understand how rituals may or may not be used as the adolescent attempts to become more independent from the parents, one will perhaps begin to discover more about how parents' own beliefs and assumptions about being a family are challenged. In recognizing the formal or informal use of rituals during adolescence, one may learn more about the parents' own families-of-origin and the stories and mythologies of the past.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

In defining things, the only real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes. (Marcel Proust)

The review of the literature has been divided into four parts. The first part will examine the nature of adolescence in the family context. Because of the tremendous number of articles and books that have been written over the years, focusing on the problems and dilemmas of adolescence, it is useful to briefly review what has emerged from the literature pertaining to this turbulent age group. The second part of the literature review will explore the concepts of rituals and rites-of-passage. These concepts have often appeared as if interchangeable within the psychology and family therapy literature, and therefore, it is important to examine these concepts from the discipline in which they have first been studied, that of cultural anthropology. Also, in this second part of the literature review, a working definition of these concepts for the purpose of this study will be provided. The third part of this chapter will review the clinical and empirical studies which are relevant to this present study. Within
the fourth section, the theoretical and conceptual framework from which this study has been envisioned will be highlighted. Pertinent to the theoretical orientation of the researcher are the notions of stories and mythologies, which will be briefly addressed.

*The Nature of Adolescence within the Family Context*

Defining "adolescence" is a difficult task. The actual beginning and end of adolescence is becoming increasingly unclear. Whereas traditionally adolescence may have been defined purely in terms of chronology, such as the beginning being the onset of puberty and the end perhaps being linked to the "legal age" in Western culture, these do not seem to be the only determining factors anymore. Quinn (1985) suggests that the definition of adolescence is becoming less dependent on chronological age and more dependent on meanings that the individual, family, subculture, and larger social system ascribe to it.

It appears that the contemporary developmental phenomenon or process of adolescence is influenced by several factors. Ambron (1982) affirms that the accelerated pace of physiological growth due to improved nutritional habits, medical advancements and environmental changes, have stretched the stage people in North American culture come to define sociologically as adolescence. Peterson (1979) points out that the onset of puberty has dropped two years,
from 14.2 to 12.5, since the turn of the century. Thus, in a physiological sense, we can determine the onset of the adolescent time period, however, sociologically we have not (at least not in this particular society) come to a consensus on how to determine its onset or termination. In many ways, one could say that this uncertainty obscures, in a very real sense, markers for defining roles and status of family members, and subsequently, family interactional patterns. In fact, Haley (1980) suggests that the family structural conditions and interactional patterns that sometimes interfere with personal growth and the attainment of independent status have been an outgrowth of, as well as a precipitating factor in, an increasing lack of clarity in the relationship between the adolescent and the family. There are two dimensions of this problem as described by Haley (1980). On the one part, parents and children have difficulty developing flexible relationships signifying age-appropriateness, thus leading to prolonged dependence. On the other part, accelerating physical development and pseudo-emotional maturity have tempted parents to expect more autonomy in their children at a much earlier age. 

Ruth Benedict (1938) had formulated an interesting way of explaining the problems in the transition from adolescence to adulthood. This cultural anthropologist emphasized that cultures vary on a continuum of continuities and discontinuities in cultural conditioning along such dimensions as responsibility, dominance, and sex roles.
According to this theory, families vary along the same continuum. Thus, in some households, children would be expected at a young age to demonstrate responsibility for their behaviors, even when playing. In other households, expectations of the child would be underemphasized. This latter type of family organization, Bennedict (1938) explained, would potentially threaten to inhibit gradual transitional experiences. In such families, a "defiant" adolescent would be viewed as a "troublemaker" rather than an individual in search of autonomy.

Zilbach (1968) contends that in our Western culture, one of the main tasks of adolescence is to develop a sense of one's identity apart from the family of origin, attaining independence, yet still remaining connected to the family of origin. Adolescence as a process is generally considered as the stage occurring between childhood and adulthood. The adolescent is no longer considered a child but is not yet an adult. This way of describing "adolescence" emphasizes one of the central dilemmas of this stage: there is confusion and ambiguity regarding whether the individual is a child or an adult. Are they "neither/nor" or "both/and" children and adults? A potential problem with the confusion of this "in between" state is that the adolescent is not accorded the rights and privileges of adulthood, yet is expected to be more responsible and to act or behave differently from a child.
Much research has been done on the impact of adolescence on the family, especially in terms of the structural shifts and renegotiation of roles in families with adolescents. McGoldrick (1989) and others have suggested that in order for adolescents to establish autonomy, they need to become gradually more responsible for their own decisions yet feel the security of parental guidance. Stierlin (1979) emphasized that the difficulties inherent in the task of separation are greater when the parental support system is not working or is unavailable. Specifically, this theorist pointed out that families who have experienced early losses tend to become overprotective, and the parents may attempt to exert control on their adolescent children, creating potential conflicts. From a family systems perspective, the difficulty in defining adolescence combined with the strong demands of the adolescent child (such as more independence, greater control or decision-making power, etc.) serve as catalyst reactivating emotional issues in relationships across generations (Preto, 1989). The struggle to meet the demands of the adolescent often brings to the surface unresolved conflicts between parents and grandparents, or between the parents themselves. An example of this, for instance, could be that the requests for greater autonomy and independence often stir fears of rejection in parents, especially if, during their own adolescence, they felt rejected or abandoned by their own parents (Preto, 1989).
Duvall (1977) described the period of adolescence as being "part of normal family development", as well as being one of the stages in the family life cycle. McGoldrick (1989) discusses the family life cycle perspective as being a way of viewing symptoms and dysfunctions in relation to normal functioning over time, and thus, adolescence is a phase within the individual life cycle which takes place within the family life cycle. McGoldrick (1989) describes this perspective as a way of framing problems within the course the family has moved along in its past, the tasks it is trying to master, and the future toward which it is moving. Therefore, in McGoldrick's view, adolescence ushers in a new era or "phase" because it marks a new definition of the children within the family, and of the parents' roles in relation to their children.

The period of adolescence in terms of a life cycle perspective for the individual has been studied extensively by Erikson (1950). According to Erikson, the question "Who am I" comes to the forefront during adolescence, creating much confusion, turmoil, and anxiety. The adolescent answers this question only by forging a stable and consistent sense of personal identity. Erik Erikson (1950) describes "identity crisis" as being the process the adolescent child confronts in terms of questioning his/her beliefs, rejecting once cherished notions, and becoming critical of both society and the self. Erikson's theory of "identity formation" is at the center of his eight-stage
model for psychosocial development through the life cycle, however, the concept of identity does not reach its peak until the period of adolescence, at which time "identity crisis" becomes the focus of psychosocial development. Along this line of thinking, the resolution of the identity crisis sets the stage for the adolescent's confrontation with the crises of adulthood.

As can be seen by this brief review of various definitions and notions of what being an adolescent is as well as the process of adolescence within the family, the range of differences regarding how this time period can be described and identified is immense. Although for certain there is some degree of overlap between the ideas and views presented above, what remains salient, however, among all of the perspectives, is the difficulty in recognizing the onset and the termination of adolescence. Except for an agreement on physiological descriptions of adolescence, there is not a consensus regarding the psychological and emotional onset of the adolescent, and many of the researchers previously mentioned refer to the "ambiguity" and "confusion" that surrounds this time period, both among parents and their adolescent children alike.
Rituals and Rites-of-Passage

Ritual is a statement in metaphoric terms about the paradoxes of human existence. (C. Crocker, Shaughnessy, 1973)

In itself, the concept of ritual is elusive; on the one hand transparent and conspicuous in its enactment, on the other, subtle and even mysterious in its boundaries and effects on participants (Wolin and Bennett, 1984). In a review of animal studies, Lorenz (1955) has noted that ritual is an injunctive concept: one understands it more through the cumulative power of examples across a variety of behaviors than through a narrow definition. As with perhaps other injunctive concepts, Wolin (1984) suggests that family ritual gradually fades into other notions such as simple, patterned, interactional behavior. An example being that when family members dress for work and school, fix toast and coffee and fight over the paper morning after morning, the label of ritual may be invoked by an observer. Similarly, one readily understand that a religious service involves ritual, but where does the ritual begin and end? While the boundary separating ritual from non-ritual is not always clear-cut, Wolin (1984) believes that the concept should not be abandoned for this lack of clarity because it reminds one that communication can be symbolic, that form gives meaning, that repetition promotes learning, and that the past is embedded in the present.
So, how can this concept be defined for the purpose of this thesis? As with the concept of adolescence, ritual is difficult to define, although there have been a tremendous number of articles and books referring to this concept, in the family therapy literature, in anthropology, psychology, and other disciplines. The purpose of this present section, once again, is not to examine just yet the various studies and research on rituals relevant to this present study, but rather, at this moment, the purpose is to explore the range of variation in the definitions of this concept, and then to propose a working definition for this thesis.

Definitions of the concept of ritual first appeared in the field of anthropology. And although there is some degree of variance among anthropologists on the actual operational limits of the concept, there is nonetheless some common acceptance of Victor Turner's definition of ritual which is "prescribed formal behavior for occasions not given over to technological routine, having reference to beliefs....and the symbol is the smallest unit of ritual" (1967). This highlighting of symbols is significant in Turner's definition in three areas: (1) the ability to carry multiple meanings, (2) the ways that symbols can link several disparate phenomena that could not be joined as complexly through words, (3) the ability of symbols to work with both the sensory and cognitive poles of meaning simultaneously. The most important aspect or component of a ritual according to Turner's (1967) definition are the
symbols within it. Within the field of anthropology it has been agreed that the it is the _symbolic significance_ of rituals that distinguish rituals from simply patterned interactions or tasks (Rappaport, 1971).

Myerhoff (1977) accepts the key aspects of ritual as defined by Turner but also makes reference to the physiological aspects of ritual, meaning its costumes, masks, colors, textures, foods, songs, dances and so on. However, Myerhoff also points out a particular contradiction of ritual, in that a ritual defines reality in a sense but actually happens in a "sacred" time and space that is outside of the usual "reality". Imber-Black (1988) compares Myerhoff's definition of ritual to family therapy in that therapy is seen as a process to rework day to day interactions yet happens in a special time and space outside of the usual boundaries of daily interactions. Imber-Black is not the only one to compare the concepts of _ritual_ and _therapy_, however, there has been a recent trend in family therapy to create therapeutic rituals for families and individuals experiencing difficulty in transitions. Examples of this trend will be presented in the following section.

Imber-Black (1988) has emphasized that the concept of ritual is usually defined in terms of symbols, action, and spontaneity. Within the field of systems family theory, Selvini Palazzoli first defined ritual in 1974 as _"an action or a series of actions, accompanied by verbal formulae and"_
involving the whole family. Like every ritual, it must consist of a regular sequence of steps taken at the regular time and in the right place".

In the last several years, this definition by the Milan group has moved away from needing verbal elements. Van der Hart (1978) discusses the importance of open and closed parts in ritual. Open parts to rituals according to Van der Hart (1978) refers to the parts of the ritual that can be changed and are flexible, whereas closed parts pertains to that which is more rigid within the ritual (ie, the way the table is set at Thanksgiving for some families) and can not be changed. Also, Van der Hart has enlarged the definition of the Milan group by introducing the notion of "empty" or hollow rituals. Empty rituals refer to events or interactions, which from their enactment might resemble rituals but do not carry much symbolic significance for the people involved.

Most researchers in the family therapy literature agree that rituals do not refer only to the ceremony or actual performance, but it must also include the whole process of preparing for it, experiencing it, and reintegration back into everyday life. Thus, family traditions, celebrations, and ceremonies are all components of the larger concept ritual. The following definition of ritual by Imber-Black (1988) has its roots in both anthropology and family therapy and forms part of the working definition to be used in this thesis;
Rituals are coevolved symbolic acts that include not only the ceremonial aspects of the actual presentation of the ritual, but the process of preparing for it as well. It may or may not include words, but does have both open and closed parts which are held together by a guiding metaphor. Repetition can be a part of rituals through either the content, the form, or the occasion. Rituals may have multiple meanings for the family, as well as a variety of levels of participation. (Imber-Black, 1988)

The above definition provided by Imber-Black seems to capture several components emphasized by a variety of researchers and thus, it appears to be more inclusive than other definitions researched. Also, the use of the word "coevolved" appears to fit with how the concept of ritual is used within a family and since this current study is about how parents use rituals with their adolescents, the above definition allowed for this emphasis. Imber-Black's definition also appeared to be the most connected and integrated with the way in which rituals have been defined in the field of anthropology. This is extremely important since the concept of ritual was developed originally from observation and ethnography in other cultures. Thus, the definition of ritual for this study includes Imber-Black's definition (1988) as well as the three fundamental aspects of Victor Turner's (1967) definition of rituals based on the recognition of symbols:

(1) rituals can have multiple meanings and different levels of participation;

(2) rituals can incorporate both parts of contradictions;
(3) there is a metaphorical quality to rituals in that there is meaning beyond the doing. These components of Victor Turner's definition enable rituals to have *symbolic significance* which reaches across generations and solidifies group membership (Rappaport, 1971).

Conceptually, *rites of passage* is a *subgroup* of rituals. Rites of passage were initially described by Van Gennep (1909) who recognized a common theme of transition and change in this subgroup of rituals. Changes of place, state, social position and age serve as the occasion for *rites of passage* in a number of different cultures. Most prominent are the life cycle rites associated with the movement of the individual through the life course. These kind of rituals have a three stage structure consisting of separation, margin or liminality, and reaggregation. Anthropologists have observed that the first phase detaches the ritual subjects from their old places in society whereas the last phase installs them inwardly transformed and outwardly changed, in a new place in society. The most important stage in terms of understanding the processes of change is the *liminal* phase, and this has been studied extensively by Victor Turner in his work with the Ndembu tribe in Africa (1967).

"Liminality" means literally, "being on a threshold" and implies a state or process which is betwixt and between the normal day to day cultural or social state (Turner,
Turner describes this further as the "intervening" period between the more stable and orderly phases of separation and reaggregation. During liminality, the subjects of a rite of passage take on the ambiguous status of "passengers" between the more structured relations that characterize periods of relative homeostasis, (Turner, 1967). During liminality, much of what has been bound and constrained by habitual relations is liberated. Anything might happen...well established rules may be challenged or broken, tabooed subjects may be discussed, and new definitions of family relations may be tested. As a result, Turner says, there is an increased sense of risk, excitement, and uncertainty.

The purpose of this discussion on rites of passage, a subgroup of the concept ritual, has been to demonstrate briefly that they are not exactly the same in meaning. Often, the literature in psychology and family therapy has referred to both these concepts in the same sentence, as if they were identical and interchangeable. Thus in summary, this distinction must be made regarding the two terms. All rites of passage are rituals. However, not all rituals are rites of passage. Rites of passage mark and assist change, or the transition from one state of being to another, (Van Gennep 1908). Rites of passage facilitate change. Van Gennep (1909) emphasized that a rite of passage is "a ceremony or ritual that recognizes or symbolizes an individual movement from one state to another", (pg., 498).
What is important to remember about rites of passage is that their purpose is to *enable* change or transitions to occur.

Many of the rituals of adolescence discovered in this present study were in fact rites of passage. However, not all of the rituals associated with the time period of adolescence can be considered rites of passage, since some rituals serve to prevent or discourage change from occurring. These ideas will be explored in much more depth within the chapter on findings.
Clinical and Empirical Research

As has been illustrated, there have been numerous books and articles written on the nature of adolescence, particularly regarding the problems of this transitional time. Preto (1989) elaborated on the idea of adolescence being a transitional time with strong demands for family adaptation. For instance, Preto (1989) stated that adolescence in general demands structural shifts and renegotiating of roles in families involving at least three generations of relatives. Adolescent demands for more autonomy and independence tend to precipitate shifts in relationships across the generations, particularly for parents and grandparents to redefine their relationship and for spouses to renegotiate their marriage (Reiss, 1982).

Numerous clinicians have brought forth another dilemma regarding the developmental period known as adolescence. Quinn (1985) describes this the most completely as a problem in definition in the sense that the beginning and the end of adolescence remains unclear, particularly in our society. The problem of defining and characterizing behaviors representative of adolescence continues to baffle many families. Children demand to grow up, but both generations are confused about the form the growth should take and struggles for power intersect with outdated or ambiguous role perceptions of family members (Quinn, 1985).

In Western culture, one of the main tasks of
adolescence is to develop a sense of one's identity apart from the family of origin, attaining independence yet still remaining connected to one's family (Zilbach, Bergel, and Gass, 1968). However, because of the difficulty in defining adolescence, and the confusion regarding whether the individual is a child or an adult, it is becoming apparent that the world views of many families "have given way to a more vague and meaningless set of adolescent expectations and affirmations" (Quinn, Newfield, and Protinsky, 1985).

In commenting on the transition of adolescence to adult, Haley (1973) discusses the lack of rituals used at this stage:

*In many cultures, the weaning of children and parents from each other is assisted by a ceremony that defines the child as a newly created adult. These initiation rites give the child a new status and require parents to deal with him differently from that point onward. In middle class America, there is no such clear demarcation; the culture has no way of announcing that the adolescent is now an individuated adult.* (pg. 60)

Kobak (1984) and Quinn (1985) state that our society has banished many definitive and precise rites of passage that mark the beginning and termination of adolescence. Quinn (1985) describes a rite of passage to be a ceremony or a ritual that recognizes or symbolizes an individual movement from one state to another and he contends that the absence of rites of passage in families has a profound effect on a child's sense of achievement, self-concept, and the ease with which new role expectations can be integrated.
Based on clinical observations, Quinn (1985) addresses the importance of rites of passage as they pertain to family development and change; and he then advocates making them explicit in family therapy to change family interaction and structure. Lax (1988) also recommends the use of "therapeutic rituals" as a useful technique to assist families in making life cycle transitions. Other therapists working with families discuss the significance of constructing rituals around "crisis" points in the family as a demarcation from the past (Imber-Black, 1988). Watzlawick (1978) and Gutstein (1987) describe therapeutic rituals as being an elegant synthesis of intervention and technique, as long as the values of the family are respected and the ritual "fits" with the family's world view.

Most of the discussion on rituals thus far has been based on clinical observations. Several empirical studies have focused on family rituals in a systematic way. In 1950, Bossard and Boll defined ritual as being an experience that was localized around family living, frequently observed, interactional in style, and having an emotional impact on the family. Bossard and Boll (1950) published a study that systematically examined ritual behavior in 186 families, based on published autobiographies and reports written by students regarding rituals in their families of origin. These researchers concluded that these repetitious, highly valued, symbolic family occasions were "the core of family culture" (1950). Bossard and Boll also
identified the ritual as a process in which family values and beliefs could be transmitted.

Reiss (1982) noted the role of ritual in maintaining and perpetuating a family's paradigm, or general beliefs. In several laboratory studies of both normal and pathological families using a problem-solving procedure, Reiss classified families into several types, each defined by characteristic paradigms. In this study, Reiss proposed that ritual is the primary mechanism by which a family preserves its paradigm, and its way of dealing with the outside world.

Over the past fifteen years, Wolin and Bennett have studied the impact of alcohol abuse on family life, with particular emphasis on the use of rituals in these families. In a major study (1980), Wolin and Bennett interviewed members of over one hundred families about the rituals practiced in their homes when they were growing up. Using a semistructured interview, they obtained reports of family life largely comparable from one family to another, (1984). In these interviews, families reflected upon their repetitious behaviors during various periods of family life. When several members of the same family reported symbolic behaviors that recurred in the same form over time and that carried meaning to everyone, these behaviors were defined as rituals. The rituals reported in Wolin and Bennett's study (1984) fell into three categories; family celebrations, family traditions, and family interactions. Wolin and
Bennett found the concept of ritual to be an ideal vehicle for comparing families and for assessing the relative impact of internal stress - such as chronic alcoholism - upon family life. They discovered that extreme ritual disruption was significantly related to greater intergenerational recurrence of alcoholism, whereas ritual protection was associated with less transmission, (1980). These researchers discovered that family rituals were significantly related to the core culture of the family and had the robust quality in connecting themes over generations of families (Wolin and Bennett, 1984). They reported that families frequently described their qualities in terms of the rituals they maintained. In carrying out these rituals, family members learned crucial family rules as well as the family's myths about its history (Wolin and Bennett, 1984).

This present study was concerned with the transitional period of adolescence and the use of rituals in the nuclear family during this time. Specifically, this study focussed on parents' experience of adolescence in two fundamental areas; (1) their children's adolescence and eventual leaving home, (2) their own adolescence in their families of origin and their eventual leaving home. Although the literature on adolescence is abundant, there is very little written about how parents themselves experience and interpret this time period in the family life cycle. Discovering there is a tremendous amount of writing on the problems and dilemmas of adolescence in general, this
researcher considered it important to interview the "experts" on the subject: parents who have had adolescents. The emphasis on rituals during adolescence in this study has developed from the previous literature indicating rituals to be like a window into a family's underlying shared identity, providing special access to the behavioral and emotional tenor characterizing each family, over periods of time, even generations (Wolin and Bennett, 1984). Prior to discussing the methodology, it is relevant to understand the theoretical framework from which this study has emerged.
The Multigenerational Model

We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.
( T.S. Eliot )

The term "multigenerational" in reference to its use within this study can be understood best in the context of family systems theory. It is not necessary to completely review the application of general systems theory to the field of family therapy, except to understand that the concept of system has received wide acceptance in scientific and professional disciplines, (Buckley, 1968).

A system is typically understood as a whole made up of interdependent and interacting parts. Thus, it is more than a number of elements since it is assumed that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Depending on the nature of the relationship among the parts, the whole has particular characteristics by which it can be recognized and identified.

The definitions of the concept system are numerous and lengthy, and it seems that various systems theorists take different positions with respect to general systems theory and the parallel theories developed during the same period. General systems theory, however, was first proposed in 1956 by von Bertalanffy, as "the formulation and derivation of those principles which are valid for systems in general"
(von Bertalanffy, 1956). Later, Bertalanffy (1968) stated that "general systems theory was conceived as a working hypothesis... (as a) theoretical model general systems theory has as functions the explanation, prediction, and control of hitherto undiscovered phenomena".

Through a systematic study of the general systems literature, Freeman (1981) has identified six most frequently used systems concepts and applied them to the family as a way of conceptualizing the family as a complex adaptive system. These are the concepts of boundary, feedback, matter-energy, steady state, progressive differentiation, and equifinality. In keeping with the purpose of this study, it is not relevant to explore the meanings and applications of these concepts to the field of family therapy, but rather, it is important to understand that the general systems approach provides a way of conceptualizing that brings phenomena and events into dynamic relation to each other, taking time into account and encompassing the steady flow of life. It enables one to make sense of behaviors that might otherwise be difficult to understand. Systems theory is not in itself a body of knowledge, it is a way of thinking and of analysis that accommodates knowledge from many disciplines. In many ways, it offers a framework in which social interactions can be understood without jeopardy to the individual. Freeman (1981) states,"

...in order to do family practice, it is necessary to
have a conceptual framework that brings together theories, concepts, and assumptions about how individuals, families, and communities operate. No one theory in itself can accomplish this task. Thus, the family therapist needs a framework that helps him to interconnect ideas about how different system levels function individually as well as how they influence each other. One of the primary advantages of a general systems theory is that it provides a theoretical framework that is both broad enough and precise enough to bring together specific behavioral theories to conceptualize reality, as a unified whole," (p. 31).

The term multigenerational in the family therapy literature (also referred to as intergenerational or transgenerational), essentially refers to several generations, or in between different generations (Schulman, 1973; Hoffman, 1981; Spark, 1974). There has been much research done recently in the fields of family therapy, sociology, and psychology on family relationships between the various generations, as well as the impact or influence of one generation to the next. However studies in anthropology, more often than other disciplines, have traditionally focused on kinship patterns and trends, with a special emphasis on the relationships and dynamics of individuals in different generations. In attempting to understand the transmission of culture, anthropologists have indeed recognized the importance in examining the roles and functions of the extended family.

Only in the last several years have clinicians and researchers developed more of an understanding and awareness of the impact of the extended family in relation to the nuclear family. Bowen (1976) states that the
multigenerational transmission process is an expanded version of the family projection process, which he has described as a process through which parental undifferentiation impairs one or more children within the father-mother-child triangle. Bowen (1978) suggests that children may become objects of the projection process via the amount of emotional turn-on or turn-off felt for the child. The multigenerational process embodies historical and futuristic perspectives. This concept thus traces the emotional process through multiple generations and predicts outcome for future generations. In this way, the presenting problem is seen as a product of previous parental relationships.

For the purpose of this study, the term multigenerational refers to a way of thinking about families in general, which has been best described by Freeman (1992) when referring to therapy as an approach that emphasizes the importance of family connections in people's lives. Freeman's multigenerational model has been built according to several fundamental principles; in order to understand the theoretical framework from which this present study has emerged, three of these principles are relevant to discuss. The first principle refers to the family as a multigenerational emotional system, (Freeman, 1992). According to this principle, families are a continually moving, changing, evolving, and powerful force in their members' lives, and thus, various relationship patterns and
trends are passed on through the generations.

"Parents bring lessons from their own families-of-origin and try to put them into practice in their new family-of-procreation. ...Many people assume that when they marry they start with a clean slate and will evolve a unique family unit. The family that the couple develops is indeed unique; however, it has been greatly influenced by the emotional lessons and experiences each person has brought into the family", (Freeman, pg. 10, 1992)

Within the context of this study, the above principle relates to the writer's assumption that the way in which parents' experience their children's adolescence is connected to how they experienced being adolescents in their families-of-origin. What were the lessons and ideas that the parents' learned in their families-of-origin about separating and leaving home, and are these replayed in the parents' new family?

The second principle contends that every individual emerges from his/her family of origin with a certain degree of unfinished business (Freeman, 1992). This paradigm refers to the idea that children potentially incorporate their parents' fears and anxieties and thus, when they get older and have children of their own, the same fears and anxieties will potentially be projected onto this new generation. This principle also refers to the idea that some present day responses are shaped by past anxiety producing experiences.
The third principle in Freeman's multigenerational model that is especially relevant to this study states that people's relationships are shaped by their family stories. Freeman affirms that, "

_in order for change to occur in relationships and/or families, we have to rethink the basic stories that we carry in our heads about ourselves and our family. When we feel that our family experiences occurred because we were not lovable, then we will continually look to others to make us feel worthwhile. Paradoxically, we will also be more likely to perceive others' behavior toward us as a confirmation of our feelings of inadequacy", (p. 12, 1992).

Thus, the "stories" or "mythologies" that one carries with oneself through life enables one to respond and interact in a certain way to significant others and life events. These stories enable one to remain "safe" in relationships in the sense that they contain metaphors and symbols about important emotional events, and in fact serve as a frame of reference about the world.

It is through an understanding of the above principles that the particular research design employed in this project was envisioned, although this will be discussed in more detail within the chapter on methodology. However, the term _"multigenerational themes"_ can be discussed now. One purpose stated earlier pertaining to this study was to explore the multigenerational themes and mythologies that arise and are punctuated through parents' experience of
their children being adolescents, particularly as the adolescents begin to separate from the parents and eventually leave home. There is the suggestion, in the above stated purpose that the ways in which parents experience this developmental period in the family life cycle is perhaps related to their own experiences of adolescence in their original families. The ways in which parents respond to their adolescent's separation attempts, for instance, through the use and/or creation of rituals may indicate how they honor their original families. Freeman (1992) discusses this idea in terms of the degree of loyalty, debt, and attachment issues carried into the new family.

Each partner brings into the marriage a degree of loyalty from his or her original family. (pg. 10, 1992) Career choices, the type of wedding, the naming of the children, and so forth, are all potential ways in which we honor our family. It is important that we make peace with our parents. The degree to which debts and loyalty issues influence our decision making for the future is connected with how well we have been able to make peace with and say good-bye to our parents and our old attachment issues. (pg. 52, 1992).

Therefore, multigenerational themes carries an implicit assumption in this study that when parents talk about the past, either about their child being an adolescent or what they recall of their own adolescence, certain themes within the mythologies or stories will become apparent. How parents say good-bye to their children and enable them to leave home may indicate how the parents themselves have left
home.

Several family researchers have studied the notion of "family stories" in order to obtain more information on family experiences, generational relationships, and family themes. Stone (1988) contends that family stories are beginning to get more notice among family therapists because there is an increasing awareness of how profoundly these narratives can affect what we see and therefore how we live. She further elaborates that family stories go even one step further in that they not only define what the various family members should do, but who they are, or who they should be. Thus, she states,"

What the family tells us has a force and power that we never quite leave behind. What they tell us is our first syntax, our first grammar, the foundation onto which we later add our own perceptions and modifications. We are not entirely free to challenge the family's beliefs as we might challenge other systems of belief. And even when we do challenge, we half disbelieve ourselves", (p.101, 1988).

Others interested in family stories or mythologies, such as Martin (1988) suggest that stories not only tell about various events that happen in a person's life but also reflect generational relationships and remembrances of otherwise forgotten family members. It is suggested here that family stories can tell us about themes and leading ideas that often recur in the family context.

Hagestad (1984) identifies that family experiences extracted from genealogical stories could determine which
life events "remain" as "family inheritance" and how long such stories persist. In this way, the content of such stories can further tell us what lineage path a particular story takes, and who the "heroes", the main characters, of the stories are.

Another factor in family stories has to do with the notion of themes. Thomae (1968) emphasized that thematic units of experiences relate to the meaning of events. By remembering family stories, individuals might well give themselves points of orientation. Askham (1982) stated that family stories can be categorized into particular themes (such as work or health related experiences) and one can analyze whether generations within the family share similar themes, which thus, in turn, orient the following generations in regard to their own life paths. Hagestad, in various intergenerational studies (1984), identified certain themes that pervade human experience: views on social issues, work, education, money, health, daily living, and interpersonal relations. Such themes may in fact be reflected in family stories.

In this study, the concepts of "story" and "mythology" refer to the same thing; a piece of verbal literature, with the emphasis being on form rather than content. In essence, what is meant here is that "story" or "mythology" has to do with the way people describe or talk about something of the past, whether it be an event, situation, another person, a particular time period, a historical event or anything else.
What is important in terms of this particular kind of definition is that a story or mythology does not (although it can) necessarily reflect "concrete facts" of what actually happened or occurred, rather, it refers to an individual's or family's interpretation or experience of the so-called facts. In attempting to have parents' recount or re-tell stories of their own adolescence in their families-of-origin, the purpose here is not to discover "what really happened", but rather, to gain some insight about how the parents have integrated their past experiences and interpretations within the family of procreation.
CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

Method: Exploratory Research

This present study was exploratory in nature. Arkava and Lave (1983) suggest that when a research topic is poorly understood it is appropriate to engage in "exploratory-descriptive research" (pg. 190) Since the research covering parents' experiences of adolescence and the use of rituals during this time is limited, and a conceptual framework that attempts to clarify the development of these rituals from a multigenerational perspective has not been developed, a qualitative study was undertaken.

A qualitative design in research is related to the kinds of data that are gathered. Purposely, this approach to research favors the collection of subjective perceptions, interpretations, thoughts and feelings of the parents in the sample population. Patton (1980) described this by emphasizing;

....a qualitative approach to measurement seeks to capture what people have to say in their own words. Qualitative measures describe the experiences of people in depth. (Patton 1980, pg. 22).

Through this kind of research design, many aspects of parents' experiences can be explored offering a richness and breadth not always available in quantitative methods. The parents' experiences are validated by an exploratory
approach in that these experiences are recognized as significant and valuable and can be learned from. This design allows parents to have a voice, an opportunity to express in their own words what it was like to have a child in adolescence and eventually leave home. Since there had been very few studies in the literature giving parents this voice, an exploratory, qualitative research design was considered important.

Selection of Parents

Fifteen mothers and fathers (couples) living in the Vancouver area were interviewed, all of whom had at least one child between the ages of 18-25yrs. who had left the family home. The fifteen couples (parents) for this study had been living in Canada for at least twenty years, and their children had been born and raised in Canada. All of the couples interviewed had been together since the birth of their child (children) and all were still together as a couple. The average age of the parents interviewed was 54 yrs. The socioeconomic status of the parents was a professional/middle class group. None of the parents were currently seeing a therapist/counsellor or considered themselves to be in a particularly vulnerable or "crisis" period.

The fifteen couples interviewed for this study were selected purposefully because they had children who had left
home in the last years and these parents were open to talking about their experiences of adolescence in their families of origin. The snowball method (Van Meter, 1991) of research was used with regard to how these parents were selected, meaning that the researcher talked informally to friends and/or contacts who knew of people who might be interested in participating in this study. A letter of initial contact was given to the friend/contact once the potential participant agreed to receiving more information (See Appendix B). All of the parents contacted the researcher once they received the letter.

**Data Collection:**

The parents (both the mother and father) were interviewed together, in a face-to-face interview with the primary researcher. Each interview lasted approximately 90 to 120 minutes and all interviews were audiotaped. Open ended questions were asked, following a general interview guide (see Appendix E) that was divided into three parts. **Part 1** of the interview guide focused on parents' experiences and recollections of their children being adolescents and the use of rituals in the family during this time. **Part 2** focused on parents' memories and stories of how their children had left home, and the rituals that had punctuated this time period. **Part 3** of the interview guide addressed the parents' stories of the past, in terms of what they remembered of their own adolescence in their families.
of origin and how they had left home. The questions throughout the interview placed emphasis on parent's perceptions, interpretations, thoughts, beliefs, and feelings around the experience of their child's and their own adolescence.

Other methods of qualitative data collection include questionnaires, participant observation, and telephone interviews, (Patton, 1980). However, face to face interviews were used to collect the data in this study because this kind of interview has been described as the most appropriate way of disclosing and discussing emotionally laden subjects, (Selltiz, Wrightsman & Cook, 1976, p.298). The researcher felt that having parents talk about their children's and their own adolescence could evoke strong emotions, and therefore, only face to face interview would allow for the emotional needs of the parents to be adequately addressed, if needed. A general interview guide was employed rather than a "standardized" list of questions because the interview guide could offer more flexibility in terms of wording and sequence of questions. Also, the interview guide could serve as a "basic checklist" (Patton, 1980) ensuring that all the relevant areas would be covered, but encouraging parents to talk about their experiences in their own way. The researcher felt that this mode of data collection, because of its flexibility, would be the best way of accessing parents' stories.

The interview guide (see Appendix E) enabled questions
to be clustered around themes that the researcher believes may be relevant to the parents' experience of adolescence and the use of rituals (Patton 1980). This information for question selection was deduced from what is known about related areas (ie, adolescence, family functioning, family rituals, etc.). The questions were then "tried out" on two couples who were not going to be part of this study to get their feedback on the kinds of questions being asked, especially in terms of clarity. The questions were then further revised/modified. The data from these two couples were not included in this study.

Reliability and Validity

In a qualitative study, the credibility of the statements made by interviewees is important, (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Regarding reliability, one might wonder if parents would give different responses in an interview because they had different experiences or because the questions had been asked differently. Standardization of format was increased by utilizing only one interviewer so it was more likely that the interview questions were asked and presented in a similar fashion than if there had been several interviewers. Reliability was also enhanced by audiotaping the interviews which avoided selective recording of the responses.

Validity is the extent to which an instrument measures
or assesses what it is supposed to measure, (Arkava, 1983). During the interviews, the researcher was mindful of key factors that might influence the way parents report subjective data. Some factors might include guilt around reflection on parenting their children, not wishing to disclose memories of their own experiences as adolescents in their families of origin, desires to please the interviewer, or fears of being judged. The researcher attempted to facilitate an open and non-biased discussion with the parents by sharing some previous experiences of parents of adolescents or children who had left home, as well as reasons for interest in this project, and ensuring that comments made and questions asked were done so with a non-judgemental attitude. It was anticipated that because of this attempt, the parents would find it easier to share non-biased statements of their own experiences. The parents' reports were accepted as having "face validity" (Stanley and Wise, pg. 53, 1983).
Data Analysis

Although the data analysis actually began in the data collection stage as patterns and themes emerged within the interviews, the formal process of analysis began by transcribing seven of the fifteen interviews into the written form. The transcribed data was subjected to the constant comparative method of analysis (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1978; Strauss and Corbin, 1990).

First, the seven transcripts were read and each point was coded. A point refers to one or more sentences with a common subject or idea linking them. Miles and Huberman (1984) defined a code as an abbreviation or symbol used to classify a segment of words or sentences in transcribed field notes. An example of a transcribed interview can be seen in Appendix F. The codes arising from the seven transcribed interviews were subsequently organized into categories and properties. A category stands alone as a conceptual element, whereas a property is an element of a category, (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This process of merging codes brought the categories to a level of abstraction that would include the variety of rituals described by parents and their experiences of adolescence. A primary purpose of the merging process was to develop a system of categories and properties that would clearly represent the diversity of the rituals described in the interviews, as well as the magnitude of parents' experiences of their child's and their own adolescence.
The conceptual categories, properties and indicators of those properties that emerged from the coded seven interviews were organized into a beginning conceptual framework. The eight remaining interviews were then listened to very carefully, several times, and where indicated, new properties and categories were refined and/or generated, and examples of the concepts elected.

This method identifies and exemplifies or "grounds" (Glaser, 1978) each concept in raw data, and was useful for controlling the researcher's biases. The system of categories and properties that developed from the coded transcripts and the eight remaining interviews included three main categories and their properties, (see Appendix A). These were the following; (1) **Rituals of Becoming an Adolescent:** (a) transformed rituals, (b) separation rituals, (c) relationship rituals, and (d) adolescent crisis rituals; (2) **Rituals of Leaving Home:** (a) destination rituals, (b) belonging rituals, and (c) family crisis rituals; (3) **Multigenerational Themes in Rituals:** (a) Family Membership, Loyalty, and Continuity, (b) Love and Nurturance, (c) Being Prepared and Safe in the World, (d) Fears of Loss and Separation. Using the data collected from the parents in these fifteen families, the researcher was able to develop a composite picture that presents an understanding of the nature of the different rituals that surround the developmental period of adolescence within a family. This is presented in the following chapter.
CHAPTER FOUR

Findings

Rituals and Stories of Adolescence

Using the data collected from the parents in these fifteen interviews, the researcher was able to develop a composite picture that presents an understanding of the nature of the different rituals that surround the stage of adolescence within a family. Although the specific details varied for each family, the data reflected three major parts, or categories, to the nature of these rituals. First, there were the rituals around "becoming an adolescent". Second, there were rituals around leaving adolescence, conceptualized in this chapter as "rituals of leaving home." And finally, there were multigenerational themes evident in these two different kinds of rituals. This chapter will distinguish the different properties that make up each of these categories, clarify the meaning these properties give to each category, give examples of these properties from the data, discuss how these properties function within the structure of each category, and finally, discuss the meaning that each category gives to the importance of these rituals to the parents' experiences of adolescence in the family.

The data reveals at various points that parents' experience of their children being adolescents, particularly
regarding how they have recognized or acknowledged this time period influences how they are able to say good-bye to their children. Even more poignantly, the manner in which parents have experienced their own adolescence in their families of origin influences the kind of rituals they create or develop during their children's adolescence. This finding has emerged throughout the study and will be examined within the discussion of each of the categories elected through the data.

The three categories can be viewed as interdependent and interrelated groups as they are not discreet but have a profound impact on each other and are connected together through parents' experiences of their child's adolescence and what they remember of their own. The connection between these categories will become more evident upon closer examination of the properties within them as well as the types/dimensions/conditions within these properties. Prior to beginning a discussion of the first category generated through the data, it is important to remember the definition of ritual that was provided at the beginning of this study. Essentially, this definition consists of three fundamental components; (1) ritual consists of duality in the sense that there are often multiple meanings and different levels of participation, (2) ritual can incorporate both parts of a contradiction, (3) ritual has a metaphorical quality in that there is meaning beyond the doing. It is also important to remember that the emphasis
of this study, from its conception, has been on parents' thoughts, feelings, interpretations and perceptions regarding their child's and their own adolescence. Therefore, all of the rituals presented in this study have been events, situations and interactions that the parents considered to be rituals. Whether or not the adolescent or the extended family would have considered these to be rituals as well can not be addressed nor is it relevant to this present study.

Discussion of the findings based on interviews with fifteen mothers and fathers will proceed in the following manner; the first two categories focus primarily on the kinds of rituals identified during the period of adolescence within the nuclear family and some of the messages and symbolic meanings of these rituals. The last category explores in more depth the multigenerational themes of these rituals by examining the parents' stories of their experience of adolescence in their families-of-origin. It is this last category that unifies all of the categories, particularly regarding how rituals are created or developed within families.

Category 1: Rituals of Becoming an Adolescent

The parents, in answering the question, "tell me about the time in your family when your child became an adolescent?" revealed a category made up of three different
properties: transformed rituals, separation rituals, relationship rituals, and adolescent crisis rituals.

As one might expect, families have many rituals during the period of adolescence that are simply old rituals that have carried on from previous years, and thus, may not necessarily be reflective of "rituals of becoming an adolescent". These old rituals were sometimes referred to in the data as cultural rituals (Christmas, Chanukah, Mother's Day, etc.), and life cycle rituals (birthdays, weddings, funerals, etc.) and family traditions, (such as the way a family gets ready in the morning, or family vacations, etc.). During the period of adolescence, the data indicates that although many of these old rituals remained the same, some of them changed in a particular way to recognize or punctuate the period of adolescence within the family. These kind of rituals became a property of the category rituals of becoming an adolescent and were called "transformed rituals". Many of the parents interviewed in this study referred to some transformed rituals that for them had acknowledged and recognized their child becoming an adolescent.

Transformed Rituals

As already mentioned, when parents in this study began to first describe rituals that recognized their child becoming an adolescent, many of them talked about family
rituals that had originally been developed prior to adolescence, but were transformed and took on new characteristics or dimensions during their child's adolescence. This is illustrated in the following example of a transformed ritual described by a parent as a "dinner ritual";

Dinner has always been an important part of our family, like, it was always expected on our parts that the kids would be home for dinner by a certain time and so on. Of course, when Sarah (adolescent) was, oh, sixteen, she became less interested in eating with us every night, an we could have had a lot of arguments about it, but we decided to try and compromise, and so we sat down with her and talked about the idea of coming home at the very least for Sunday night dinner, so we could reconnect, and be together as a family. This worked for her, and so, for several years after that, until she left home, our Sunday night dinners became sacred, a time for us to be with one another, closely. And I would say it was very much a ritual. (mother 6)

As can be seen, in the above example, the "dinner ritual" has existed for a long time in this family, prior to the child being an adolescent, but during the period of adolescence, the dinner ritual changes and transforms to some degree. Dinner is still a ritual about family togetherness and closeness, but the attendance requirements of this ritual are modified so that the adolescent child can still participate. Specifically, the family ritual of dinner transforms in a way to punctuate the time period of adolescence by recognizing that the adolescent is different from the child. This transformation happens in two ways;
first in the negotiation that occurs between the parents and the adolescent child about attendance and participation in the ritual and second, as a result of the changing of the ritual requirements, the ritual itself appears to become even more important if not "sacred" than it had in the past. The ritual of dinner continues to be a way for the family to come together, but it also appears to become a ritual that symbolizes the shift in the parents' own thinking about their child being an adolescent. As this mother further elaborates:

_It was rare that Sarah missed a Sunday night dinner with us because I think that aside from knowing how important we considered this time to be for our family and remaining connected to each other with our hectic schedules, I think she felt kind of special, like, Sunday night dinner was different from other dinners because she would be there and felt important because often we hadn't seen her a lot of the week._ (mother 6)

Sunday night dinner, a ritual that had been transformed from the dinner rituals of the past, becomes a ritual that acknowledges the differences in Sarah in terms of her independence from the family. In this way, the ritual serves to keep her connected to the family because it allows her to feel special and important. This researcher would suspect that the Sunday night dinner also gives Sarah permission, in a symbolic sense, to live a separate life (spending time with friends, etc.) outside of her family.

The second example of transformed family rituals pertained to the "rituals of fun" described by a father.
We were always a family into the idea of playing games, and having an element of fun in our lives. Games in this family is what you would call our rituals of fun. When the kids were teenagers, we continued to play games, but we deliberately increased their complexity, and the kids had a lot more input into how they were to be done, when and where, and essentially, they had a lot more control. (father 4)

The father illustrates how this family ritual has existed prior to the period of adolescence but that it changes in structure to recognize the developmental differences of the children becoming adolescents. This father describes how the games became more complex and that the children were given more control about which games were to be played. Interestingly, as adolescent children, they continue to participate in a ritual that has existed since they were young children. It becomes apparent that they continue to enjoy this ritual because it acknowledges and legitimates their increasing competence and development as individuals in the family. The rituals of fun still invite a certain playfulness into the family, but they also become rituals that differentiate the adolescents from being children. By modifying the structure of this old family ritual in a way that recognizes that their children are growing up, the parents are able to ensure that the adolescent children are still interested in having a part in the ritual. At a later point, this father emphasizes;

I think they (adolescent children) actually enjoyed these family games more as they got older because they suddenly had power in the family and could tell us what to do! .....you should have seen the way they added
new rules to our monopoly games - we had no chance of winning against them but we had a lot of fun in playing with them, nonetheless. (father 4)

It is interesting to observe that in both the examples presented here, the transformed rituals are able to incorporate two sides of a contradiction. For instance, the rituals are altered either in their structure or their manifestation in order to demonstrate the parents' recognition of their children being in a new developmental period. However, at the same time, it is because these rituals have been altered (transformed) in some way that the adolescent children continue to be engaged in them. Many other parents in this study identified old rituals that took on new characteristics as their children became adolescents and some parents were very astute in their understanding as to why the old family rituals had changed.

Well, if we had argued and had fights about her being home for dinner everyday, she simply would have told us where to go and what would we have been able to do? This way, at least she readily came home for dinner Sunday nights. (mother 6)

We had always celebrated Christmas a certain way as he was growing up, but during his teenage years, naturally we had to be more flexible because he wanted to be with friends and then his girlfriend....all we really cared about was giving him enough room about Christmas so that he would want to spend time with the family as well. (mother 9)
Separation Rituals

The second property of *rituals of becoming an adolescent* involved rituals that focussed on the amount of freedom that the adolescent had in the family. Many parents spoke about a general theme around their home during this time period which had to do with their adolescent child demanding to have more freedom, especially pertaining to such areas as time away from home with friends, and the ability to make decisions/choices without parental interference. The following example illustrates the property of separation ritual;

*Once he turned thirteen, and every birthday after that, well, until he left home, we would make a special effort to have a meeting to talk about curfew and rules and things like that. As he got to be about sixteen, we began to have these meetings every six months, maybe every few months to renegotiate all this stuff. This was indeed a ritual for us - although I'm sure Sean (adolescent) hated these meetings, we found that they were very necessary. (mother 1)*

In the above example, regarding the rules/curfew negotiation meetings, the mother describes how a ritual is created when her son turns thirteen - a space in which the parents and the adolescent can discuss the boundaries and structure of his freedom. These meetings symbolize two aspects of the child becoming an adolescent; (1) the parents' awareness that their son is now at an age in which he is going to demand for a later curfew or more independence and (2) the parents' possible fear that without these meetings, their
son's quest for freedom will be out of their control. The father of this son elaborates on these two aspects in the following;

_We felt that it was absolutely necessary to have these meetings with Sean. We knew how strong willed and stubborn he was and that without negotiating with him, well, he would simply do what he wanted. We also knew, from talking with friends of ours who had teenage children that if we didn't set up some kind of order and structure, well, then we'd lose control forever._

(father 1)

And the mother of this son also added;

_Sean loathed these meetings - like, he knew that they were about us trying to control him, trying to curtail his freedom. But I don't know if we ever had control, but maybe he just let us think that we did! But the idea of control has always been a big issue in our own families...._(mother 1)

As is characteristic of rituals, there exists symbolic meaning and a metaphorical quality beyond the actual act or task. In the example of the meetings, one realizes from the parents' own descriptions that this ritual is not simply about making rules and setting curfew, but it holds a deeper meaning in that it conveys the parents' concern about losing control (and potentially losing their son). Although the mother refers to the notion of control as having existed in their families-of-origin, one perceives that the theme behind the ritual is about being safe in the world, not wanting anything to happen to their son. At a further point in the discussion of the findings, the multigenerational
themes of the rituals will be examined. This will occur by discovering, as in the above example, the themes or meanings behind the rituals parents' created within the family of procreation and then discovering if these themes also appear in the stories that parents recall of their own adolescence in their families-of-origin. It is interesting to note, however, at this early point, how often parents referred to the past when describing the rituals they had developed or created with their adolescent children. Even prior to being asked about their own adolescence, many of the parents in this study remembered an experience or situation that had perhaps influenced the way in which they had experienced their children's adolescence.

The second example of separation rituals is presented in the following regarding the driving licence.

In talking about rituals like this, like during adolescence, the first ritual that I think about is Mark and his driving licence... gosh, the fights we used to have about that! He wanted it as soon as he turned sixteen, and he had started to talk to us about it when he was fourteen, but we thought that he should wait a year or so because he was so impulsive, almost reckless in his everyday life, that we were concerned that he would end up killing himself or someone else on the road! (father 7)

The father refers to the "fights" that had incurred between this adolescent and his parents about the driving licence, and it becomes apparent that the licence may have been symbolically different for both sides. Since the son had been talking about obtaining his driving licence when he was
fourteen, one can assume that there had been much importance placed on being able to drive, from his perspective. However, his parents' reluctance over him having his licence appeared to be related to their concern about his *readiness* about driving and their concern about his increasing separateness from the family. The mother of this son expresses this idea in the following;

*I don't think we had been unreasonable in wanting him to wait a bit of time before getting his licence. As it was, he was hardly ever home, so in a way, we knew as soon as he could drive, we'd never see him or the car anymore.* (mother 7)

Implicit in this ritual of the driving licence is the idea that the son is becoming more independent and spending less time with the family. There is also the idea, as expressed by the mother, that by preventing the ritual from occurring the son may remain closer connected to the family. However, as the father had expressed earlier, there had been many fights surrounding the issue of the driving licence, and both parents had experienced their relationship with their son as having deteriorated during that particular time period. Interestingly, once the parents finally "gave in" and allowed the son at seventeen to obtain his licence, their relationship with him improved.

*....we were completely worn out by these endless arguments and badgering about the driver's licence so we gave in one day, just to get him off our backs. ....once he had his licence, he seemed to make more of an attempt to get along with his brother and us, like he was not as angry anymore....*(mother 7)
The driver's licence, in the example illustrated, was coded as a separation ritual because it symbolized the adolescent's attempt to acquire more independence and responsibility outside of the family. By allowing the ritual to occur, only then is the adolescent able to safely remain connected to the family. By the term safety, what is meant is that as long as the ritual is prevented from happening, the adolescent positions himself against his parents, in a stance of confrontation. Both the mother and father describe the year (from turning sixteen until seventeen) in which the fights occurred as being "the most difficult" and an "extremely straining" time in their relationship with their son. The separation ritual validates the adolescent's experience of wanting to be recognized as an older person in the family, and thus in participating in the ritual, he does not have to "fight" with his parents about their recognition of his new position. The ritual symbolizes the change for both, in terms of how the parents see their son, and very likely in terms of how they then perceive that he is seen in the family. In this way, once the ritual occurs, their sense of connection as a family is strengthened.
Relationship Rituals

A variety of rituals that emphasized a changed relationship made up the third property of the rituals of becoming an adolescent. Specifically, these rituals tended to focus on a particular aspect or dynamic in the parent/child relationship that was changing or had become different. As with the other rituals discovered through the data analysis, some were created or developed within the nuclear family in a conscious and deliberate way, whereas others had evolved over time and occurred in an almost "unconscious" fashion. Several examples of these kind of rituals will be presented, but what is important to remember regarding how these rituals were grouped together as one property is that they all symbolized a shift in the parents' relationship with their children. Or at the very least, these rituals symbolized a shift in the parents' perceptions of their relationship with their children. For certain, as has been previously mentioned, there exists a certain degree of overlap among all of the groups of rituals within the category rituals of becoming an adolescent, and therefore, one could probably examine all of the rituals referred to thus far and perceive an aspect of the ritual that focuses on a change in the relationship between the parents and the child. However, although the properties (or groups) of this first category of rituals are interrelated, some of the rituals emphasize parents' experience of their children...
becoming adolescents through *transformation* (the transforming of old rituals into new ones) or through *separation* (the child separating from the family) or through *relationship* (a changing or re-examination of the relationship between the parents and the child). This third property, also termed *rituals of relationship* are illustrated in the following:

*I don't know if we ever really talked about it, until this moment, but when I think of this subject of rituals, I think about Josh [adolescent] and I going on our yearly canoe trips. ....just him and I, nobody else, like Sue [mother] and the girls wouldn't come, it was basically a time for us to fish together and spend a few nights under the stars. We started doing this when he was fourteen, and have continued these trips every year, even now, with him not living here anymore. These trips have even become better with time.* (father 4)

When asked by the researcher why the father started going on the canoe trips when his son turned fourteen years old, he replied;

*I'm not completely sure why. But I remember thinking, and I talked to Sue [mother] about it, and I remember feeling like he was getting older, and he was getting to be so tall, not so much a little boy really, so I wanted to do something with him to let him know that I knew that he was growing up, that he was not a baby but a young guy that I could talk to and do things with.* (father 4)

The above ritual developed when the son was fourteen, and it did not exist previously in the family, although the whole family did go on a summer vacation together every
year. But when the son turns fourteen, the father and the adolescent start going on a trip together, apart from the rest of the family and this "ritual of the canoe trip" appears to symbolize the father's awareness that his son is not a child anymore. With this awareness, the father has the need to develop a new kind of relationship with his son. As the father describes this ritual, it becomes clear that the decision to start these canoe trips was a very deliberate and conscious one, although the father did not think about these trips as "rituals" until speaking about what they meant to him. As he further elaborates on the notion of ritual:

"You don't really think about rituals in every day life, like, I never really would have thought about these trips as rituals until you introduced this subject. But now, when I think of the meaning behind these trips, and what they represented to me, well, it was more than just going fishing and camping, it was about being closer to Josh, not just as a father, but as a friend." (father 4)

One of the defining characteristics of a ritual is the meaning beyond the actual act or event, which is what this father identifies when speaking about the relationship ritual that was created as his son was becoming an adolescent. Other parents in this study also identified some relationship rituals that they remembered during this time period.

...when you ask us about rituals when he was a teenager, I don't really remember any, but I think
getting a job was the turning point in our minds about him no longer being a kid. And surprisingly, the other two (children) also got summer jobs when they were about thirteen or fourteen. They must have known, from our own values, that we would see them differently once they started working and acting more responsibly... (mother 2)

At sixteen I gave her the ring that my mother had given me when I was sixteen, the same ring that she had received from her mother, my grandmother. This ring had been very special among the oldest daughters in our family over many generations for it meant that the young girl was now considered a young woman. It also was a symbol - a symbol that the mother and daughter would continue to grow in their relationship with one another. (mother 12)

The two examples above illustrate the property of relationship rituals in that both emphasize a change in the relationship between the child and the parent. These rituals are different in the way they have been developed within the family. For instance, the ritual of getting a job has evolved in a rather "unconscious" or less deliberate fashion in the sense that neither parent had ever said overtly to their children that if they started working in the summer, then they would be treated differently in the family. Yet, the children do receive this message nonetheless, perhaps through the values that the parents had spoken about over the years, as the mother suggests in the above example, and thus, at thirteen or fourteen they all obtain summer jobs and are "seen" differently by their parents. In an unconscious way, without having been deliberately created, getting a summer job becomes a ritual that symbolizes a "turning point" in the parents' minds of a
change in their relationship with their children.

In the second example, the ritual of giving a ring has been created in a very deliberate way within the family. The meanings of the ritual are consciously known. The mother explains how the ring has been passed on to the oldest daughter in each new generation and that the ring symbolizes growth in the relationship between the mother and her daughter. It becomes very evident, in examining this particular ritual, that it developed from the past and would hold much importance and meaning in the mother's family of origin. This ritual, as with all the rituals discovered in the course of this study, carries certain themes from the past, particularly from the parents' recollection of their own experience of adolescence in their families-of-origin. The ritual of giving a ring very clearly, through the mother's own words, emphasizes the relationship between the mother and the daughter. However, the ritual also hints about family membership and continuity as a multigenerational theme. As already mentioned, the concept of multigenerational themes in rituals will be explored at a later point.

**Adolescent Crisis Rituals**

A group of rituals that appeared to have developed within the family in a rather unconscious way formed the final property of the category, rituals of becoming an
adolescent. This group of rituals was quite varied and different in comparison to the other groups of rituals mentioned thus far because for most families, the rituals that formed this group were not perceived as "positive" events or occurrences in the family. These rituals were called adolescent crisis rituals because all of them emphasized a crisis or critical event that punctuated or marked the child becoming an adolescent. Several parents, when asked about what kinds of rituals existed in the family during their child's adolescence, referred to an event or crisis that indicated in their minds that their child was an adolescent. It is important to understand that these kind of rituals were very often not identified as rituals by the parents in the beginning of the interview with the researcher. Only through the process of talking about what happened and what they remembered about the time period, as well as the meanings and interpretations that they presently gave this past event did the parents then perceive the past event/occurrence as a ritual or a rite-of-passage. It is equally important to understand that not all adolescent crises were regarded as rituals; only those crises described by parents that met the primary characteristics of a ritual used in the definition provided at the beginning of this study were considered. The following is an example of what is meant as an adolescent crisis ritual;

I'm not sure when we recognized that he was no longer a child but an adolescent because he basically
continued to do child-like things in his early teen years. Not just with his peer group, but in his behavior at home—lying, stealing, like, he was really a difficult kid. ....when he got her pregnant, well, our world came crashing in, so to speak, especially because we had talked to all our kids all of the time and very openly about being careful and so on and everything. Yea, I guess we did see him very differently after that.....(father 9)

And the mother of this adolescent commented further;

It is really ironic, his pregnant girlfriend, like it had always been our worst fear, you know, consequences of irresponsible teenage sex, but, he suddenly became more responsible after that point, or perhaps we saw him differently and then he changed, it is hard to say.

......anyway, in terms of rituals, in a very sick way, getting pregnant has historical roots in our family that it has become sort of ritualistic....Susan (mother's sister) got pregnant when she was sixteen, and Marsha (mother's youngest sister) thought she was pregnant at seventeen but wasn't....I remember continually going for pregnancy tests myself but I was never pregnant....(mother 9)

Both the father and the mother remember thinking about their son differently when his girlfriend becomes pregnant. Through the crisis of teenage pregnancy, the parents recognize their child becoming an adolescent, and remember that he appeared to change in his behavior. From doing child-like activities to engaging in what his mother had described as their worst fear, this boy changed and became more responsible. Interestingly, both parents describe their own adolescence in their families-of-origin and the various stories and mythologies that existed regarding becoming pregnant, and although they both talked about how devastated they had been during this "crisis" with their
son, they also mentioned that they had not been tremendously surprised by it.

*It had a devastating effect on our whole family - everybody always talks in this family, so it was difficult to keep a secret. There was so much fuss being made by our parents and cousins and everyone - but we weren't shocked that it had happened, well, we were shocked, but knowing how irresponsible he had been in general, it wasn't shocking that it could have happened, you know?*  (father 9)

The ritual of the crisis, or becoming pregnant in this particular family, adheres to the three fundamental components of a ritual used in this study in that (1) it has multiple meanings and different levels of participation, (2) it incorporates both parts of contradictions, (3) it contains a metaphorical quality in that there is meaning beyond the doing. For instance, the parents give the ritual different meanings, right from the beginning. From the father's perspective, after the girlfriend becomes pregnant, he sees their son in a new way. But the mother remembers that once this crisis occurs, their son becomes "more responsible". The emphasis on meaning is not the same in the two perspectives. Direct participation in the actual ritual is obviously limited to the son, however, the parents participate in the "preparation" of the ritual and in its aftermath. One could suspect that "preparation" for this ritual involves the number of stories and the amount discussion that has surrounded the notion of becoming pregnant in this family for generations, and once the ritual
has occurred, there is much "running about" and "working things out" involving not only the parents, but other members of the extended family. This is where the ritual incorporates both parts of a contradiction. In one way, the parents have described the notion of becoming pregnant as their worst fear with devastating consequences. Yet in another way, the ritual serves to "unite" them as a family and keep them together. The father describes this process;

Once we found out, we had to meet with her parents and talk about what was going to happen, how to work things out and of course, our family already knew about it and everybody had been offering us advice or telling us what we should do, and it was a crazy time in all of our lives - running around to doctors and having everybody in our families always bringing the subject up.......but we have always been a family to stick together in a crisis time, like, no matter what personal arguments may have been happening at the time, everybody was there for us, and we were strong all together. Traditionally, we have always been strong whenever there is a crisis.....(father 9)

One wonders what the meaning of the "adolescent crisis" or "becoming pregnant" signifies to the family, or specifically, to the parents from their own experience of once having been adolescents themselves. In order to fully understand the metaphorical quality of this ritual, one must understand more about the parents' own stories of their adolescence in their families-of-origin. Simply by hearing about the story of their son becoming an adolescent (through the crisis ritual) one identifies certain messages about "responsibility" (not lying, stealing, and engaging in
teenage sex) and "prudence" (being careful, particularly when consequences could be devastating) however, the story of their son's adolescence does not give one enough information about the greater *multigenerational themes* behind these messages. In this particular example, these parents are extremely articulate and refer often to their extended families, and therefore, one does get the impression that the crisis ritual is not a completely new occurrence and there is meaning within it beyond the nuclear family's experience of it. The purpose of the category *multigenerational themes in rituals* (third category of the findings) is to examine this complex but ongoing process.

For some families in this study, adolescent crisis becomes the ritual by which they recognize that the child has entered a new developmental period in the family life cycle. The adolescent crisis serves to punctuate or mark the period of time in which some parents remember thinking about or perceiving their child in a new way. For some parents, the crisis ritual *facilitates* the transition from childhood to adolescence. In the example of the teenage pregnancy ritual, the crisis ultimately serves to bring about a change in the parents' perception of their son and his increasing responsibility. Prior to the crisis occurring, the parents describe how they did not recognize their son becoming an adolescent because his behavior did not stand out to them as being different from when he was a child. The crisis highlights this change and the parents
begin at that point to think about their son differently. Whether he actually does become more responsible or not is difficult to assess, but the parents interact with him in a new way and the transition from childhood to adolescence is facilitated. The following mother expresses this idea;

_When this happened, his girlfriend getting pregnant, we realized that he was not a child anymore with child-like problems. Consequences of his actions were now on a much grandeur scale - in the world of adults, and we simply had to come to terms with the idea that he was not just a kid anymore. I think we as parents were different after that point.... (mother 9)_

For other parents in this study, the crisis ritual serves to prevent change from occurring, or at the very least, maintain the status quo. The following is an example of such a ritual;

_We expected her to be different by the time she was fifteen or sixteen from when she was a child. But she did nothing around the house, her room was always a mess and she hardly spent any time with family. It was like this was her flop house - she'd come home to sleep, eat, change clothes and then she would be gone again. Yet she demanded to be treated like an adult - all the freedoms of an adult but no responsibility. It was a continual struggle with her during those years. (mother 2)_

As with other crisis rituals mentioned within this study, the "crisis" was not perceived as a ritual by the parents until they actually began to remember and talk about what had happened during that time. The father elaborated further on his daughter's adolescence;
I don't think that our expectations had been too high....but we certainly were not going to give her more privileges without her showing us that she could handle more responsibility.....I don't even like to think back to that time in our lives, it was more than a struggle,- it was quite chaotic, one crisis after another - the problems with Linda (adolescent) almost affected our marriage.....so we were fairly strict with her because we were very concerned about her activities out of the house....(father 2)

Both parents elaborated at great length in the interview the effects of their daughter's various crises in their family life and how most of their memories of her during that time were related to responding or reacting to her behavior and her "demands" for more "freedom". When asked about rituals in the family that recognized her becoming an adolescent, the parents explained that they did not believe that they had any because the "crises" were what had reminded them that they had an adolescent in the family. The father emphasized this idea;

Rituals? We didn't need to create anything to symbolize Linda being a teenager, she did it all by herself with each new crisis. We had known from talking to friends who had teenage daughters that we were in for a tough time, but that did not make it easier. By the time Ellen (younger daughter) got to be Linda's age, we were more prepared. (father 2)

And the mother added the following regarding rituals;

It is interesting, in retrospect, looking back, that although the problems that our oldest daughter got into indicated to us that she was definitely a teenager, rebellious like our friends' daughters had been, it is because of these crises that we couldn't allow her to do more things, a later curfew for example because we couldn't trust her. And when Ellen was
fifteen, she started acting in a similar way as Linda.....maybe these struggles were our rituals. Our friends had similar experiences with their daughters.....(mother 2)

Through the interview with these parents, one learns that they had come to expect or anticipate that having an adolescent daughter would entail a certain degree of struggle or some "tough times". It also becomes apparent that the parents did not consciously create a ritual to punctuate their daughter becoming an adolescent because the various "crises" that occurred during this time period symbolized in their minds that she was indeed a teenager. How did the parents indicate to their daughter that they now recognized that she was older and in a different developmental period than that of a child? It is at this point that the crisis ritual becomes somewhat paradoxical; although it symbolizes to the parents that their daughter is a teenager, it also reinforces their beliefs about her not being "responsible" or "trustworthy". Thus, the crisis prevents change from occurring in the sense that the parents continue to respond to her as a child. As the father expressed in a previous passage, as parents they were not prepared to give their daughter "more privileges" without her first showing them that she could handle more responsibility. So, with each new crisis event, the parents become convinced that Linda (adolescent) was not ready to be treated differently (allowed more freedom outside of the house) yet it is the crises that remind them that she is
"now a teenaged daughter". Through similar stories from their friends, these parents have learned what to expect, and it could be possible that their children have also learned, perhaps on an unconscious level, what it means to become an adolescent. Thus, the **crisis ritual** in this particular example becomes circular in that it reinforces itself; the crisis referred to here involves the daughter opposing her parents and spending more time out of the house in activities which her parents would not approve, however, it is this same behavior that symbolizes to them that she is now an adolescent. Nonetheless, it is because of this behavior that the parents won't negotiate more privileges (ie, later curfew). Yet, as the mother states in the very first passage of this example, "**we expected her to be different by the time she was fifteen or sixteen from when she was a child....**" and this leads one to believe that the parents viewed her subsequent behavior to be indicative of her not being ready to be treated "as an adult". Unlike the crisis ritual of **becoming pregnant** in the first example which allows the parents to perceive their son in a new light, this crisis ritual of the **rebellious behavior** allows the parents to continue seeing their daughter in the old way, not responsible enough to be given more "freedom". In this way, the ritual attempts to prevent change from occurring.

Inevitably, one might wonder why it is that similar rituals (ie, adolescent crisis rituals) can have very
different impacts on parents' experiences of their children's adolescence. Although it is perhaps not possible to fully answer this question within this present study, the analysis of the data does suggest that the differences of the effects of rituals is closely connected to the different multigenerational themes of which the rituals represent. Once again, throughout the analysis, what has been discovered repeatedly is that the meanings of these rituals emerge from the past.

All of the rituals discovered within the category of rituals of becoming an adolescent to some degree focuss on how to separate and how to remain connected during the transitional period of adolescence. The rituals were grouped into properties depending on what appeared to be their primary emphasis, although all of the rituals had a certain amount of overlap. In other words, although some rituals were coded as rituals of transformation for instance, one might still be able to identify aspects of the ritual that could also fit into the property of separation rituals. As was seen in the rituals of play (fun) presented earlier in this chapter, coded as the property of transformation, this ritual had clearly existed in the family prior to the period of adolescence and was thus coded as an old ritual that had been transformed to become a new one. It could also be said that there were aspects of this ritual that emphasized the adolescents' increasing separateness and independence in the family. In fact, the
father had described this ritual as purposefully recognizing these characteristics of adolescence. However, because of the deliberate and conscious fashion in which this ritual had been altered (transformed) to punctuate the children becoming adolescents in this family, it was coded as a property of transformation. What must be kept in mind, as has been previously mentioned, is that although the properties of the rituals of becoming an adolescent are distinct, they are also interrelated and can not be viewed as completely disconnected from each other. To do so would be to distort the essence of ritual, a concept that is both elusive and conspicuous at the same time.
Category 2: Rituals of Leaving Home

The second category of findings discovered within this study had to do with the rituals that marked or punctuated the adolescent or the young adult leaving the family home. These rituals were events, occurrences, and interactions that happened around the time period of the child physically separating from the nuclear family. An interesting observation that emerged from the interviews was how vehemently and vividly parents spoke about their children leaving home. Although parents easily remembered the time period of when their children were in the process of becoming adolescents, as was evident of the findings in the first category (rituals of becoming an adolescent) there appeared to be a greater intensity in their recollections of their children leaving home. One could presume that since all of the parents in this study had a child leave home in the last three years, their memories of this time period would obviously be clearer than that of the time period of when their children had become adolescents, and thus, this might account for the difference in intensity. However, the researcher suspects that a more compelling reason for the vehemence in which these parents spoke about the rituals of leaving home had to do with the memories it triggered for them of their own leaving home in their families-of-origin. Throughout the interview, when parents discussed how their children had left home, they frequently would refer to how
they themselves had left home, to punctuate or illustrate a point in the story of their children. There were many instances when the researcher did not have to ask anything about the parents' own experiences as an adolescent in their families-of-origin because this story would be woven into the story of their children leaving home. This process is expanded upon within the category of multigenerational themes.

There were three properties discovered within the category of rituals of leaving home and they are the following; rituals of (1) destination, (2) belonging and (3) family crisis. This category, and the three properties that are derivatives of it, can be seen as the parents' attempts to instill in their children the proper way to leave. Specifically, the rituals created or developed within the family during this time emphasized how the leaving was to take place. Although often not in a conscious or deliberate fashion, the rituals organized the process of leaving in terms of where to go, what to bring, and whether or not the leaving should even occur. These were the properties of the rituals of leaving home, interrelated as were the other rituals discovered in the first category, but very distinct in their enactment within the family.
Rituals of Destination

When parents spoke about their children leaving home, many of the rituals that they remembered had to do with where the children went once they left. These rituals were identified as rituals of destination. A primary characteristic of these such rituals was the emphasis placed on "going somewhere" when leaving. These rituals marked or punctuated the adolescent leaving the family home by the journey to somewhere new, away from the nuclear family. For some parents, going to university was the ritual of how their children had left home, whereas for other parents travelling or going on a trip was what had punctuated the time period, in their minds, of their children no longer living with them. As with other rituals that have been described in this study, for some parents, the ritual of their child leaving home had been consciously developed in the family over a period of many years, whereas for other parents, the ritual had evolved in a rather unconscious way, and the parents had not considered it to be a ritual until they began to reflect back upon how their children had left. An example of a consciously developed destination ritual is illustrated in the following;

....naturally, we had simply expected that they would leave home when they got accepted into university. Maybe not right away, but gradually, as they were in their second or third year, we knew that they would slowly move out.
Marg (mother) and I met at university, and we were no longer living at home. (father 3)

During the interview this father described how his twenty-four year old daughter had been accepted to Harvard, and how his twenty-two year old son was currently studying medicine at McGill. The father elaborated how proud he and their mother had been when their children had been accepted to these universities. They indicated what they had done to facilitate the transition of their children living in different cities in the following way;

We did whatever we could to help them in the beginning because we wanted them to be able to succeed and concentrate on studying. During the first summer, both Tanya and Mike came home and got summer jobs in Vancouver but by the second summer, Tanya decided to stay at Harvard and get a job there and eventually she only came home on certain holidays, like Christmas and Thanksgiving. But I would say that she doesn’t live here anymore - she's working in Boston and is renting a place there with her boyfriend. So she kind of moved out gradually, and now is fairly independent from us, financially. Mike too, he plans on staying in Montreal once he finishes his last year. ....once they had been accepted to university, we knew that they were on their way out....in terms of not living at home anymore...(father 3)

And the mother added;

Since we had both attended university, we sort of expected that all three of them would as well, and we had talked to them about the idea of going to university since they were young kids. Going to university is particularly a ritual in George's (father) family, like, you didn't have the choice. That's how you left home. When Greg (third child) decided he didn't want to go to university, it had been fine with me, but George had a very hard time with it....(mother 3)
The above passages illustrate going to university as a ritual of leaving home, particularly a ritual that emphasizes destination. Even prior to discussion of the parents' experiences in their own families, it becomes evident that going to university was highly emphasized within the father's family. Both parents in this example state that process of their two older children leaving home had not been difficult for them because they themselves had left in the same way. However, when their third child decided that he wanted to live with his girlfriend and get a job as a bicycle courier, they remember a very turbulent and stressful time in their lives.

Greg and George had been arguing and fighting for several months about Greg's plans....Greg had not been doing well in highschool and wanted to one day become an actor or go into theater. I felt that he was a bit young, eighteen, to be leaving home but he had always been a very sensible boy and I trusted his judgement and knew that he had to try it on his own....but George felt that he was ruining his life....(mother 3)

It becomes apparent, through the course of the interview with these parents, that the father experiences his youngest child's leaving home as very difficult, because on some level, it does not occur in the accepted ritualized fashion in which his other children have left, and how he himself had left in his own family. What emerges from the interview with this father is that there is a right and a wrong way to leave home, and the ritual of leaving in this father's family of origin has been traditionally to go to
university. When this does not happen with one of the children in the father's new family, the process of leaving becomes turbulent.

....I just wanted him to be O.K. in the world, like, he did not seem ready to leave home, not ready to take care of himself, anyway. It is not that I didn't want him to be independent, it's just that having him leave in those circumstances, well, that was unacceptable. (father 3)

Leaving home to another destination other than university produces anxiety in the parent who has come to view "leaving the university way" as the route in which the child will be "O.K." and "safe" in the world. In order to fully understand what going to university symbolizes to this family, and particularly to this father, it is necessary to understand what it represented when the father left his own family, and the context from which it developed. This will then reveal the multigenerational theme of the ritual, to be discussed in the following category.

The following examples are also destination rituals but they have evolved in a less conscious and deliberate way.

I don't know if you would call it a ritual, but when our kids left home they both went on trips - Marsha to Israel and Don went to Greece. They both came home after these trips, but it was sort of like these trips with their friends were the beginning of their lives apart from us... (father 8)

She left home when she got married. I don't think that we ever talked about it but our way of recognizing
that she was leaving home was planning the wedding and reception - you know, celebrating the beginning of her new life. It was sad for us to let her go, but it was also beautiful and we were so proud of her. (mother 4)

He was offered a terrific job in Guelph, Ontario. That is when he left home, at twenty-five, - there was really no reason to leave before that. He studied here, had summer jobs, had his friends here, his family - we always told our sons that they could stay at home as long as they wanted, until there was a reason to leave. (mother 10)

The three rituals just described - rituals of going on a trip, getting married, and getting a job - are connected in that all of them focus on leaving home by leaving toward somewhere new, arriving at a different destination. Although some of the parents expressed that they had never really discussed overtly with their children that there was a certain way to leave home, it is interesting how siblings in the same family would often leave via a similar route. As is a characteristic of rituals in general, the capacity to incorporate both parts of a contradiction was indeed a component of the destination rituals. For instance, although the getting married ritual was experienced by the parents as the beginning of their daughter's new life, the ritual was also experienced as "sad" according to the mother. Upon further exploration of this sadness the mother explained:

Well, of course we were happy for her, and got along well with Steve (daughter's husband) and his family, but our sadness came from realizing that our little family was ending in a way....it would never really be the same....(mother 4)
Also, in the example of the ritual of getting a job, a similar contradiction is expressed by the father. Although the son leaves home in the accepted manner - when there exists a "reason to leave", a good job offer, one still gets the impression that his parents are not tremendously enthusiastic about him leaving.

The job offer was really too good to turn down, we knew that, but I guess I was still surprised when he actually left, like, I didn't really believe it until he was gone....my feelings were mixed about him going when he left us that day...(father 10)

All of the rituals of destination offer a way to leave home, however, when the parents talk about these rituals, there seems to exist a certain ambivalence about their children leaving nonetheless. Whether it be expressed as "sadness" or "disbelief", the leaving is powerfully experienced by the parents, and is clearly remembered. The rituals of destination facilitate the parents' experience of their children leaving home in the sense that the themes from the past are honored. Although this topic is the discussion of the third category on multigenerational themes, it is important to mention at this point that parents referred to the past in some way when discussing the meaning of the destination rituals.

....we never suggested to her that she had to get married when she left home, but she knew how traditional our family was, especially my parents, so
she herself used to talk to us about the idea...(mother 4)

...when I left home, I was very unprepared and had some rough times, got into some trouble...John (son) didn't want to repeat my mistakes, and he only left when the best opportunity came up, the job in Guelph. (father 10)

When the child leaves home but does not follow or observe the destination ritual cast forth consciously or unconsciously in the family, the parents may not truly perceive the child as having really left or they may experience the leaving as more difficult. In fact, parents may respond in two ways; either by not really acknowledging or recognizing that the child has left home, and/or by attempting to encourage the child home again. An example of this first way of responding can be seen in the following. Two parents in this study described that their daughter had left home to be able to "experiment" with living on her own and working, but they had always felt that she should leave when she got married. So even though this daughter had physically moved out of the house, the parents continued to think about her as someone still living with them. The mother elaborated on this idea;

....although she had been living out of the house for a few years before she got married, we did not really consider that she had left home because she still used our house as her home base and used to come home very often, for dinner, doing laundry....I would say that when she got married was when she really left us.....(mother 3)
An example of the second way of responding was apparent in the first destination ritual presented earlier, going to university. The mother had described the "fights" that had incurred between the father and the son about the son's choice of how to leave home, which was to become a bicycle courier. A few weeks after the son has left home, the parents invite him out for dinner, to his favorite sushi restaurant. The father describes the meaning of this dinner;

....Going out with him that night, the sushi thing, was our way of letting him know that he could come back....that we had not closed the door. As you know, the circumstances in which he had left had been very difficult, and I guess that I wanted him to know that he could come home again.... (father 1)

The son has not chosen the typical destination ritual followed by the other two children in the family. One gets the impression that the father's idea of going out for dinner is a way to encourage and entice the son to come home again so that this time, perhaps he can leave the right way.

Rituals of Belonging

Another property of the rituals of leaving has to do with belonging. These rituals emphasize what the adolescent and/or young adult brings when leaving home in order to remain and stay connected to the family. Whereas the
destination rituals punctuated the leaving by pointing to the direction or the way to go, the belonging rituals punctuate the leaving by demonstrating how to continue to belong to the family, while maintaining a life outside of the family home.

There are three dimensions to what one brings as one is leaving home; (1) material gifts (2) family legacies (3) family obligations. All of these types or dimensions are about remaining connected as one is leaving home. An example of each type of belonging ritual will be presented and discussed.

Some parents in this study, when reflecting on how their children had left home and what rituals had emphasized this time period, remembered certain gifts that were given. These parents identified these gifts as rituals because of their symbolic significance, their connection to the past, and because of the ceremonial context that surrounded the giving of these gifts.

When Mike left home, what I remember as a ritual was giving him my leather jacket. When I was about sixteen, my grandfather found it and was about to throw it out but I wanted to keep it.... it had belonged to my father who had died when I was very young, and it meant a lot to me....so Mike and I went out for a beer and I gave him this gift....(father 2)

The giving of the leather jacket, in this specific example becomes a belonging ritual because of its recognition of the son leaving home yet at the same time, its' emphasis on the
son remaining connected to the family. When asked why the gift was given to his son at this particular time, the father explained:

*For me, this jacket reminded me of my Dad...not a great jacket, really, when I got it as a kid, kind of worn out and beat up, but when I got older I got it fixed, and I would wear it and think about my father who I never really knew....seeing that Mike was leaving, I wanted to give him something that might remind him of our family...you know, like, wherever his travels took him....(father 2)*

Although the purpose here is not to discuss the multigenerational themes of this ritual just yet, one learns that although the *giving of the leather jacket* in itself was not a ritual when the father had left home, the themes and meanings behind the ritual seem to have emerged from that time period. It is apparent that the father wants his son to *remember* the family "wherever his travels might take him". The *giving of the leather jacket* occurs as the son is leaving home because it is anticipated that he might travel far away from the family. One gets the impression, from the above passage, that the father derived some sort of comfort and sense of connection when he used to wear this jacket for it reminded him of his father. When the son wears this leather jacket, will he too, be reminded of his family and in particular, his father, in moments when he can not be physically with them? If so, then the ritual of the *gift* will have served its primary purpose; to emphasize the leaving by demonstrating how to stay. How to stay, when
leaving home, is related to remaining connected, and to continuing to belong to the family-of-origin. There also appears to be an aspect of this ritual that emphasizes the son's connection not only to his father and present family but to the grandfather whom he never knew. But this will be discussed further in the subsequent category on multigenerational themes. It is evident, in this example of a belonging ritual, (a property of the *rituals of leaving*) as well as other rituals mentioned thus far, that it is often quite difficult to examine a ritual without examining the parents' stories of the past. Throughout the descriptions of the rituals of leaving emerged meanings and themes that were born yesterday. It must also be mentioned that not all "gifts" given are necessarily rituals; only if the primary defining characteristics of the concept *ritual* (defined in the beginning of this study) have been adhered to were the gifts described by parents as their children left home considered to be rituals. For instance, some parents talked about giving their children money as they were leaving home. Unless the *giving of money* symbolized something aside from the physical survival of the adolescent/young adult outside of the family home, then it could not be considered a ritual. For a gift to be considered a ritual, it had to have *symbolic significance* beyond the actual act, capable of incorporating multiple meanings and different levels of participation. More importantly, as with other rituals discovered within this
study, parents had to be able to talk about or refer to the metaphorical quality of the act (giving of a gift) in order for the concept of ritual to be applied.

A second type or kind of *ritual of belonging* discovered in this study had to do with the *legacy* that was created as the adolescent/young adult was leaving home. Some parents, in responding to the question about the time when their child left the family home, described special events and activities that occurred. These events or activities had been deliberately created by the parents so that the child could leave home with a certain image or special memory of the family. In creating these events or activities, parents hoped that the child would carry a legacy about the family into his or her new life, and thus always remain connected to the family as a whole. The following is an example of such a ritual;

*Traditionally, we had always done things together as a family, so knowing that Tom was preparing to move out in the fall, we wanted to do something special that summer, like something that we had never done before. .....so we built a house together, with our backgrounds in architecture and design, we thought it would be easier than it was, but it was an immense project....and in fact we didn't complete it until the following summer.....(father 4)*

When asked what it had meant to "build a house" together the summer prior to his son leaving home, the father elaborated further;

*It was a way to celebrate his leaving, in a sense,*
by becoming involved in our biggest project ever. Games, projects, as we discussed earlier, were rituals in our family, so this was also a ritual in a way because he could leave knowing that he had built something huge, he would remember that summer always, as we would too....(father 4)

The mother of this son also added her interpretation of what it had meant to build a house as a family;

....we wanted to work and sweat and really have a good time together because we knew that once he was gone, he might never have the time again to get involved with something as big as this with the family. So it was a summer to remember - the way our family was together, how we worked together, good and bad times, this is who we were, and Tom would always be a part of this crazy group....(mother 4)

Through the parents' description of this belonging ritual it seems evident that the emphasis is about a family legacy, or remembering the custom or the heritage of the family group. As the son is preparing to leave home, the parents want him to bring with him a composite picture of the way their family was together - who they were, what they did, what they built, the good and the bad moments. Building a house together symbolized the legacy of the family as a group; it had certainly not been the first project that they had undertaken together, but it may have been the largest. The parents describe a history of games and activities that the family had engaged in together over the years, but they wanted to celebrate their son's leaving home by giving him "a summer to remember" regarding who they were as a group, and his membership within it. The mother stated that
through this ritual of belonging "Tom would always be part of this crazy group....". What better way than to become involved in the creation of something new - a house - which in many ways could be seen as a symbol of their connection to one another and their ability to move on.

The following is a brief example of another ritual of belonging where the emphasis is on the family legacy when leaving home.

And so we had a beautiful party to let all our friends, her friends, and our families know that she was moving out on her own. I wanted so much for her experience in leaving to be different from mine; I remember how traumatic it had been for me....So I knew, long before she actually left home, that it would be different for my daughter. (mother 8)

When asked why the family decided to have a party for the daughter as she was leaving home, the mother explained;

So when she looked back on this day, and thought about our family, she would remember our support and pride in her. It was still hard to let her go, but I wanted her to never have any doubts in our belief about her ability....supporting our children had always been important to us....(mother 8)

The going-away party, in this example, emphasizes what the daughter will hopefully, from the mother's perspective, bring with her as she leaves. The mother hopes that she will bring with her the notions of support and pride that her parents have tried to pass on. These notions are part of the legacy the mother wants her daughter to be aware of
as she leaves; the legacy that the parents believed in her ability. When living outside of the home, the daughter will have the memory of this good-bye party, and the knowledge that her parents wanted to "send her off" in this way, a different way from what the mother experienced when she was leaving home. Without hearing the mother's story about how she had left home, it is still evident how the meaning or the metaphorical quality of this ritual has emerged from the past, and it becomes difficult to examine it further without also understanding the past context.

Finally, the last type of belonging ritual discovered within this study has its emphasis on *family obligations*. Some parents, when discussing the rituals of how their child had left home, remembered an activity or an event where participation was required or strongly expected. Some parents, for instance, referred to *coming home for dinner* or *coming home for certain holidays* as being a ritual that had indicated in their minds that their child was no longer living at home. It was as if, for some families, previous family rituals suddenly grew in importance and meaning when the adolescent/young adult was no longer living at home, and the ritual would then take on certain obligatory characteristics. The following is an example of such a ritual;
belonged to a family, like, she was one of us and although it was O.K. for her to leave, she could not simply walk away from us just like that. (mother 5)

The above example illustrates, in essence, the idea of belonging rituals in general with an emphasis on obligation in particular. The mother described how although it was "O.K." for their daughter to leave home, it was also extremely important that she was aware of how she belonged to a family, and this was made aware to her by requiring her to be home for certain dinners and certain holidays. Prior to the daughter leaving home, the parents had mentioned how being home for dinner had not been as significant as it became when she left because they saw her all the time and she participated in other family activities. But once she was leaving, Sunday night dinner and certain holidays took on a mandatory component, so that the daughter would be required to come home, so that she could not simply "walk away". Whereas the other examples of rituals referred to in the property belonging rituals emphasized remaining connected to the family through the giving of gifts or the passing on of a family legacy, the above ritual proposes connection through family obligations. The following is another example of such a ritual;

I can't really remember any rituals in our family as Don left home, except that every year he came home to help us put up the car tarp, you know, we had this plastic garage that we used to put up every winter to protect the cars from the snow, ... as kids, they always helped us put it up after the first snowfall, so somehow, when you talk about rituals, I think about how
Don, and now Marty, even though they are both married and have their own families, they still come back every year to help us with this car tarp....I suppose we could have hired someone to do this, but it seems to me that there is something about coming home to do this for us that is important, since they are members of our family - it is something that we do together, it is like a strange ritual that is unique to this family....(mother 15)

In the above example, the emphasis on obligation is more subtle and discreet than the first example, but it is still evident. When asked why they thought that their sons came home to participate in the putting up of the car tarp, the father replied;

I can't imagine them missing it, maybe they're aware of our hidden expectation of their participation, maybe we're a weird family....but they call us every year asking when the car tarp is going to be put up....that's how we come together, when they were living at home, we had to argue and push to get them to help out, but now, they do it on their own....(father 15)

One learns, through the father's description, that in the past, the car tarp ritual was required, that the parents used to have to remind the boys about it, even argue and push them to do it, but now, as they are no longer living at home, it is as if their commitment to the ritual has increased. This is how the family "comes together", and perhaps the sons are aware of what the father describes as the parents' "hidden expectation" of the ritual. If the sons decided not to take part in this event each year, how would the mother describe them, in terms of being "members
of the family"?  Would the family still be "unique" and "weird" in the parents' description of themselves as a group?  The fact that the father can not imagine the sons "missing" the annual participation in the car tarp event leads one to believe that a component of obligation does indeed exist within this ritual.  One does not get the impression that the sons eagerly await this event, particularly since they had to be "pushed" to participate in it when they were younger and living at home, but now, as they have both left home, the ritual of the car tarp symbolizes to the parents the membership and connection of their sons to the family.  In spite of being married and having families of their own, as the mother indicated about her sons, the parents continue to see their sons as belonging to this original family through their commitment to this ritual, which the father mentioned they could have hired someone to do.  Thus, the car tarp event is more than just a task, but a ritual that emphasizes belonging once the children have left home.

The belonging rituals discussed here as a second property of the rituals of leaving emphasize how to remain connected and part of the original family through the giving of gifts, or the passing of a family legacy, or through family obligations.  These rituals show the way to leave by demonstrating what to bring when leaving.  The general message of these rituals is that leaving is "O.K." if these items (gifts, legacies, and obligations) are carried forth
into the new life. The destination rituals, which composed the first property of this category, also delivered a similar message with a different emphasis; that leaving is "O.K." if one leaves toward a particular place, (ie, university, marriage, etc.)

What happens when the general message about leaving the family is that it should not happen, when leaving in any circumstance is "not O.K."? This leads to the third kind or property of the rituals of leaving discovered within this study, family crisis rituals.
Family Crisis Rituals

A group of rituals that were quite different and
varied among one another and in comparison to the other
rituals presented thus far made up the final property of the
rituals of leaving home. These rituals were identified by
several primary characteristics which they all shared;
(1) they had evolved mostly in an unconscious way in the
family, (2) they were often not identified as rituals
because of what was perceived by the parents as the
"negative" implications of the event or activity, (3) the
enactment of these rituals was not formally planned in the
family but was often described as having just "suddenly
happened", (4) all of these rituals involved some sort of
crisis or chaotic time period surrounding the
adolescent/young adult leaving the family home.
Because of the fourth characteristic of these such rituals,
they were grouped together and identified as family crisis
rituals.

It is important to state, prior to presentation of two
examples of these rituals, what in fact enabled these family
crises to be conceived as rituals. For instance, it would
be erroneous to consider all crises that occur in a family
as a child leaves home to necessarily be rituals. For the
purpose of this study, the concept of ritual was applied to
a family crisis if the following factors (dimensions of the
definition provided) were identified in the parents' descriptions of the crisis; (1) The crisis contained *symbols* which parents could speak of, enabling the crisis experience to carry *symbolic significance* or contain a *metaphorical quality* for the parents. (2) The enactment of the crisis occurred after some kind of preparation period, and followed by some sort of re-organization period. Specifically, what this meant was that when parents spoke about the crisis, there would be the *appearance* of a beginning and an end to the crisis. Although the definition of ritual allows for a certain elusiveness to exist between ritual and non-ritual, this second factor was important so that the "crisis" could be identified and separated from what could be termed as simply a chaotic or disorganized way of living. For instance, if parents had identified that they had always "been in crisis" and thus could not distinguish the crisis that had occurred as their child was leaving home from the crisis that occurred every day in their lives together, then this kind of crisis would not be considered a *ritual of leaving home* because there would not be any way to differentiate this event from the every day events in their lives. This example is different from families who described having had many "crises" in their lives together because at least here, the crisis could be separated from the ordinary every day experience of the family. This second factor used in defining *crisis rituals* highlighted a fundamental component of the concept *ritual*; the specialness or
distinctiveness of the activity, event or occurrence from other moments in the day, week, year, or lives of the family. If being in constant conflict or crisis was the way some families were with one another and the periods without some kind of turmoil were few and far between, then the crisis could not really be viewed as a ritual because it was not special or distinct from other moments in the family. Therefore, this second factor addressed the idea that the appearance of a beginning and an end were in part what separated the ritual from the non-ritual.

(3) A third factor that had been identified in family crises considered to be rituals pertained to the multiple levels of participation in either the preparation for, the enactment of, or the re-organization following the ritual. As with other rituals presented in this study, on some level, even discreetly, various family members participated in the crisis ritual. Participation in the crisis was often very different for each family member but when parents spoke about the crisis, it would be evident that several family members (whether it be the nuclear or the extended families or both) had a role in some fashion within it.

(4) Another factor that enabled the crisis to be conceived as a ritual was its' ability to incorporate several meanings, including contradictions. Thus, some parents described the crisis differently from one another, or came to understand the meaning of the crisis along different perimeters. This factor was related to the first
one identified earlier regarding the symbolic significance of rituals. Therefore, when parents spoke about these crisis rituals, it was apparent, based on their descriptions, of how the crisis had become symbolic to them in several ways.

(5) Finally, the last factor considered before identifying a family crisis as a ritual of leaving home was its ability to connect the past with the present. Specifically, when parents described the crisis, there was an element or aspect of the crisis that referred to the past in terms of the nuclear family's use of rituals in general or the past in terms of the multigenerational themes that had been inherited through the generations from the parents' families-of-origin.

The family crisis rituals identified in this study could all be defined and examined along these five dimensions discussed. Specifically, for the parents, all of these crises were events or occurrences that had marked or punctuated the time period of their child leaving home. It was through the enactment of these crisis rituals that the parents began to view their child as an individual no longer living in the family home.

The following is an example of what is meant by family crisis as a ritual of leaving home:

...it's not easy for me to talk about that time. Mike [adolescent] didn't really leave home the way other kids do, in fact, he would say that we kicked him out, but, I think it is a decision we came to because our
family was falling apart - I couldn't take the arguments anymore between him and Steve [father] and finally one day, they almost had a fight, and I knew then that things were really out of control.....(mother 11)

Well, he had really been pushing our limits for a long time, all we had been asking him was to get a job or go back to school....at nineteen, I think he was old enough to have some sort of responsibility in his life.....I forget exactly how it happened, I think that I caught him with a joint in his room with some friends and I asked them to leave and he [adolescent] swore at me - something ridiculous like that, and anyway, I ended up hitting him, I don't remember all the details....anyway, he stormed out of the house, or maybe I asked him to leave...it was a long time ago. (father 11)

In responding to the question "tell me about the time when your child left home", these parents remembered that it happened suddenly and in the midst of conflict. The specific scenario regarding whether both parents or just the father asked him to leave or whether the son left on his own accord (stormed out of the house) is somewhat unclear because the parents remembered that occurrence slightly differently. They both mentioned that prior to him leaving, there had been a fair amount of "tension" escalating between the son and his parents, particularly with his father. It became evident that discovering the son in his room with his friends, smoking a "joint" precipitating event that lead to him leaving home. The exact circumstances surrounding how this son left became nebulous, even confusing, as the parents spoke about the various details regarding the crisis period. However, it is precisely this crisis that enabled
them to see their son differently, in a new way, as someone who would be living on his own after that point. They expressed this in the following:

*It was that scene with his friends that made me realize then that he would be leaving. Again, I don't know who said what first - whether I told him to get out, or he threatened to leave and then I told him to go - who knows anymore, but for me, it was kind of a turning point. It's not like I did not know that he was smoking up regularly, I knew about it, but I guess when he told me to fuck off, like, I just lost it and knew that it was over, that he couldn't stay here anymore - that was it for me....*(father 11)

*....all I knew, about Mike leaving, is that when Steve hit him, well, I wasn't there, but downstairs at the time, but I heard about it, I think Mike had called me a few days later, but anyway, it was because Steve had really lost control like that, I mean, he had never been violent in the past, ever, and for me, it was the fact that he had lost it enough to go against his own values that I thought maybe it was a good idea that Mike leave, you know, I was afraid that things would really get out of control....*(mother 11)

Both parents discussed a different aspect of the crisis that had signified to them, individually, why their son had left, or had been asked to leave home. For instance, in the father's description of the crisis, what had been emphasized was the fact that his son had spoken to him in a particular way, and this became the *symbol* that indicated to the father that "*...it was over, that he couldn't stay here anymore -*. However, in the mother's description of the same crisis event, the emphasis had been placed on what she perceived as the father "losing control" in terms of his reaction toward the son and "going against his own values". Thus, the
perception of "lost control" became the symbol within the crisis event, for the mother, that "....maybe it was a good idea that Mike leave....". As can be seen, both parents had a different intonation about what it was that had symbolized to them that their son was leaving. The mother had implied at an earlier point that there had been numerous "arguments" between the father and the son prior to this incident occurring and the father had suggested in one of the above passages that he had been aware that his son had been "smoking up regularly". Thus, one could infer that there had been a series of incidents or occurrences within the family involving this son that eventually led to this crisis. What about the time period leading up to this crisis with the son? The parents responded in the following;

...many of our past arguments were over him wanting to leave, as crazy as that might sound. But he used to criticize us endlessly, and say that we were trying to control his life, and that we were horrible people, not giving him enough money, and on and on, anyway, he would threaten to leave home if we didn't do or give him what he was asking, and really, we didn't want him to leave but we would finally get fed up and just tell him to go, and so he would leave for a few days but always come back....
(mother 11)

....I guess you could say that we had kind of kicked him out a few times before the time he actually did leave, but he would come home again, and then things would be calm for a few days until he would talk about how much he hated it at home and wanted to leave again.....but there was something different about the final time he left, like he didn't come home, maybe because he knew that he had crossed a line with me, or that this time, I really did want him out, whereas the
other times, well, we had not wanted him to leave....
(father 11)

The crises of kicking the son out have become ritualistic in that they have occurred numerous times prior to the son actually leaving home. There appears to be a pattern that the parents remember about that time period and it could be interpreted as the following: their son would declare that he wanted to leave home for various reasons and finally, in exasperation, the parents would tell him to go, (kick him out). However, as both expressed in the above passages, they did not really want him to leave those other times, prior to the final time, and so after a few days, the son would return home and the family would be together again. Thus, one could say that the ritual of kicking the son out, in these instances served the purpose of getting him to stay, because he always came home again. What was it about the final incident that signified to the parents that this time he would be leaving permanently? It would appear that the final crisis contained symbols for the parents, ones that they could not overlook, and so this time, kicking the son out served the purpose of allowing him to leave home.

The symbols seemed to emerge from the parents' own past experiences;

....when he [adolescent] said to me what he did, all I could think of was what my own father would have done.....I remember leaving home after an argument with my father, but it was tame compared to the way Mike left....I never could have spoken to my father in that way, ever....(father 11)
Although the circumstances surrounding how this father left home will be examined in more depth in the following chapter, it is interesting how his own memories of leaving were also about a conflict with his father. When his son swore at him, one wonders whose voice the father symbolically heard that indicated to him that it was time for his son to leave home? Was it his own voice, realizing that his son could only leave in conflict, or did the voice emerge from what he remembered of his father, of how his father may have reacted? Although it is evident that the crisis of *kicking the son out* has become a ritual, and eventually a ritual of leaving home, it is difficult to understand the symbolic significance of the crisis without hearing the parents' stories of their own leaving home. Without knowing more about the father's perceptions about his own adolescence in his family of origin, the ritual of *kicking the son out* remains an idiosyncratic ritual about the parents' ambivalence about their son leaving home. The meaning or themes of the crisis symbols identified by the parents - *son swearing* and *lost control* - remain ambiguous when only the story of their son leaving home is told.

The following passage also illustrates another but briefer example of *family crisis* as a *ritual* of leaving home:

*It was sort of like a battle ground when she left home - a lot of angry words, misunderstandings, a real*
dysfunctional situation, a crisis. She was leaving to go live with this fellow whom we both disliked - she was going to postpone university to live with him, and Paul absolutely loathed him, anyway, everybody, like my sister and Paul's father got involved and tried to give her advice, you know, so she wouldn't ruin her life....but she was very determined, and she left to be with him....(mother 15)

When asked what it had meant for her, to have her daughter leave home in this way, the mother replied;

Well, it was horrible, just horrible....I mean, it had reminded me so much of myself, and I had so much wanted it to be different for her....I left home to be with Paul [father] and it was very very difficult for us, with our families and everything....it's just amazing, that she ended up leaving the exact same way....after everything that we had told her!.....(mother 15)

As can be seen, the family crisis has occurred around the daughter leaving home in a particular way, and various family members participate within the crisis (giving the daughter advice) to prevent her from leaving. This particular ritual of leaving home has occurred in the past as the mother described that she had left home in the same way. In spite of the number of stories the daughter may have been told about how her mother had left home and how difficult it may have been, the daughter chose to leave in the same way. What does leaving the crisis way symbolize to this family? How does the crisis ritual actually facilitate the leaving?

Because family crisis rituals have evolved primarily in an unconscious way, the only way to answer the above
questions is to go back, to the parents' experiences of having once been adolescents in their families of origin. The symbolic significance of these rituals can only be understood through understanding how they originally came to be.
Category 3: Multigenerational Themes in Rituals

The final category explored within this study was composed of four multigenerational themes that had been discovered within the rituals. Although already discussed in the beginning of this study in the chapter on definitions, it is important to state what is meant by multigenerational themes. Most of the rituals presented thus far contain certain overt or general messages that are fairly evident to the reader. For instance, when discussing the ritual of the leather jacket, it is quite apparent that this is a ritual about wanting the son to remember the family, to wear the jacket and think about his father, the way the father had thought about his own father long ago. Or, it is also obvious that the ritual of the Sunday night dinner as the daughter was becoming an adolescent was related to the parents' need to see their daughter on a regular basis and to let her know that she was part of a family. However, in order to ascertain the metaphorical meaning of the rituals, or the symbolic significance beyond the visible message of the ritual portrayed in its enactment, it appears as if the past must be better understood. In terms of the past, specifically, it seemed as if the parents' own recollections and memories of the time when they had been adolescents in their families of origin was connected to the creation and development of rituals with their own adolescents. In the first two
categories discussed, many of the rituals presented could not even be separated from the past when parents spoke about them. Particularly, when parents spoke about the rituals of their children leaving home, it was interesting how often an aspect of the past was referred to, highlighting the ritual being described. Through the analysis of the data, four paramount themes were discovered within the parents' stories of having been an adolescent and how they left home. Upon discovering these themes in the parents' stories of themselves, suddenly the rituals they had just described took on a much more symbolic and metaphorical meaning, far beyond what simply their enactment had initially suggested. It was as if, prior to hearing these stories, the rituals had been one-dimensional, pertaining primarily to the parents' experiences of their child becoming an adolescent and then leaving home. Through the analysis of the parents' stories, the rituals came alive and became truly multidimensional, unifying the past with the present and the future. It became evident that these rituals reflected the same themes that had emerged in the parents' stories of themselves, and thus, they were identified in this study as multigenenrational themes.

The purpose of this present chapter and third category is to present these multigenerational themes of the rituals discovered in this study. Each theme will be discussed through the brief exposition and commentary of either one or two stories told by parents in different families. Once
these stories have been presented, then a ritual that has already been described by these parents at an earlier point in the interview will be re-examined, this time in the context of the parents' story.

It is intriguing how the multigenerational themes of the rituals occasionally emerged from both parents' (of the same family, the couple) stories of the past in a unique way. Sometimes, a ritual would have two basic multigenerational themes, one that honored the father's story and one that honored the mother's story. In most cases, however, the data suggests that a ritual carried one predominant multigenerational theme. Also, it appeared that in most examples, the ritual had emerged primarily from one parent's story, and thus, this story had become the dominant influence in the creation or development of that particular ritual. The implications of this finding, the dominance of some stories over others in terms of how the couple (parents) experienced their child's adolescence will be addressed after the stories and the multigenerational themes have been presented. Although the examples discussed in the following pages do not represent all of the stories and rituals discovered within this study, they portray as much as possible the range and breadth of what emerged in the analysis of the data. These examples were chosen purposely to illustrate the extent of diversity delineated in the findings.
All of the rituals described by parents, whether they were identified as rituals of becoming an adolescent or rituals of leaving home, honored either one or more of the following themes: (1) family membership, loyalty, and continuity (2) love and nurturance (3) being prepared and safe in the world (4) fears of loss and separation.

Family Membership, Loyalty, and Continuity

When some parents spoke about the past, in response to the questions "tell me about the time when you were an adolescent in your family" and "tell me the story of how you left home" the theme of family membership came forth as paramount. Family membership had to do with what it meant to be a family member, especially during transitional or stressful times in the family life cycle. The themes of family loyalty and continuity were so intimately tied to what it meant to be a family member that they were identified together in the analysis as the same kind of theme. For instance, some parents remembered the feeling of not belonging, or not feeling part of the family when they had been adolescents. Some of these parents told stories about all the ways in which they had attempted to fit in so that they could become closer to their families, so that they could feel accepted, whereas other parents remembered becoming rebellious and rejecting of their families because of the feeling that they were not considered to be family members. Often, the theme of membership was expressed and
remembered by parents as relating to emotional closeness and distance. Several other parents told stories about how leaving home had been difficult because of the conflicted loyalties they had felt about being able to remain connected to their family while at the same time being able to live independently. Other parents talked about family continuity as being the perpetuation of family traditions and values, and they remembered how this theme had been passed on to them when they were adolescents but particularly as they were leaving home. In essence, the theme of family membership, loyalty, and continuity emphasized the idea that families had insiders and outsiders in terms of who was in the family and who was not. Loyalty had to do with on-going attachment to the family in spite of physical or emotional separation, in order to retain membership. Continuity for many represented how to continue being a family member through the adherence of certain values and traditions, or the acceptance and recognition of what had been passed on from the family.

Story 1; "A time and a place to be"

Connie remembered only vague and fleeting thoughts of having grown up in her family. Particularly, during adolescence, she remembered many periods of time that involved crises and chaos. These periods of time, although she did not remember much about the details, she knew that
they really did not involve her or her siblings. Being the youngest of five children, Connie remembered having a close relationship with her older brother and three older sisters. She talked about how they had always been very kind to her, and had demonstrated their caring by helping her with her homework, attending her school plays (as an adolescent she had been very involved in drama) and essentially they made her feel secure, both growing up as a child and as an adolescent.

You know, I have always been close to my brother and sisters, I don't really remember any conflicts or rivalry with them. They were my family - I loved them dearly, then, and even more so now, remembering all that they did for me.

When talking about her relationship with her parents, Connie expressed that she found it difficult to talk about them, and wanted to forget, in some ways, what that had been like. She described her mother as having been a person who "always had something going on" in the sense that she was continually worried about one thing or another. Most of Connie's memories of her mother had to do with her being sick in some way. As an adolescent, Connie related that she often didn't see her mother for days at a time, for her mother would be in bed with a new ailment.

My mother was always sick, or anyway, that is how it had seemed to me. She would retreat to her bedroom for days at a time, and my father would tell us not to disturb her because she was either tired, coming down with something, or possibly had a disease. I remember
my brother and sisters discussing our mother's possible sickness - they would stay up after I had gone to bed and talk in the kitchen until early in the morning about our mother maybe having cancer, or a blood disease or whatever. I used to lay in bed, listening and then I wouldn't be able to sleep because I worried that something was really wrong with her, that maybe she was going to die. One night, my brother heard me crying to myself in bed, and he came into my room very concerned, and then my sisters came in after him and they made me hot cocoa and sat up with me in my room, comforting me and telling me that I shouldn't worry, that she was going to be alright....I'll always remember how they took care of me....

Connie said that she really did not remember much about her father, except that he was very often not home, and when he was, he seemed distant and preoccupied, and very concerned about her mother. She related further that if it had not been for her siblings, then really, she would "not have had a family". Although she remembered her parents being involved in some family activities (dinner, going to a summer cottage) when she was very young, she stated that after the age of fourteen, she could hardly recall anything that they had done together. It had seemed as if her mother's emotional and physical condition had worsened after that point. Connie elaborated that most of the time, her parents did not participate in even eating with "their children", and when they did, it was if they were guests because neither parent had done anything to prepare for dinner.

My sisters usually did the shopping, and preparing meals, and my brother and I would clean up. But I never minded, even late in my teens when my friends weren't going home to eat, I hardly missed a night
dinner with my brother and sisters...it was the one time in the day where I had a time and a place to be...at home, with them, like, if it hadn't been for us always eating together, then we would have literally been like ships passing in the night. As it was, I never saw my parents, and in time, I didn't care because it was like we had redefined who our family was anyway...our family was the five of us, and I loved being part of them....

While Connie described her experiences of having been an adolescent in her family, her husband Tom, who had been fairly quiet during most of her story, finally exclaimed how he felt that she was in "denial" by not recognizing that her whole family had been "dysfunctional", that really, she did not have a happy family life. He stated the following quite emphatically;

I can't just sit back and hear how you enjoyed these family dinners because they weren't with your family, like, it wasn't what ordinary families do....it was just you kids, like that's not a family, your parents, well, particularly your mother, was emotionally sick or depressed and you kids survived the best way you could, but you can't tell me that you loved being part of them, like come on, it must have been tremendously hard on all of you.....you were severely neglected....

Connie responded to her husband by stating that although she understood how an "outsider" might have viewed the circumstances, she did not remember having felt deprived or neglected when she had been an adolescent because of the sibling love that had surrounded her. She also recounted that at the time, she had not resented her parents but had felt concerned about them, and worried about her mother's
welfare. Only in her adult years had she experienced some anger about how she had grown up. Once again, Connie emphasized how in many ways, she had considered herself lucky to have been part of this family.

It's only now, looking back, that I realize we had some problems....but at the time, I really felt connected and part of them, my family,...I didn't feel neglected...even today, I am very close with them, my brother and sisters.

Discussion

Throughout this mother's (Connie) story about having been an adolescent in her family of origin, the theme that emerges as paramount is one about family membership. In the very beginning of the mother's story, one learns about what her siblings did to "make her feel secure" and "part of a family". Although this mother described what she remembered as a distant, if not almost nonexistent relationship with her parents, she learned that families are close and care for one another through her brother and sisters. Connie gave several examples of how her siblings instilled in her the notion that she was "one of them" and a way in which this was accomplished was through the creation of family dinner, of which they all participated. It had been these family dinners that gave her a time and a place to be, a reason for coming home, and a way of connecting to those she loved. One gets the impression that through these dinners
the family became somewhat "redefined" in terms of who was in the family and who was not. When her parents attended dinner, it was as if they were guests and this Connie remembered thinking about her family as having five members instead of seven.

It is interesting how this Connie's husband heard her story in a completely different light than what she remembered of having experienced it. From his perspective, as he stated, she could not have been happy because they had been "severely neglected" and their family dinners were not the way "ordinary families" got together. Yet his wife stated that she experienced growing up in a family where she felt connected. This difference, regarding what the wife had told herself about her family and what her husband perceived about her family can be attributed in part to the membership theme itself. Looking in from the outside, the husband, not being a member of Connie's family, could only identify a situation of pathology and neglect. Yet his wife, having experienced membership in what she had defined as her family, from the inside, told a story about family membership and connection. It is important to remember, as is true with all stories, that whether or not the events or facts actually happened in the way they were remembered or recounted is not really relevant. The essence of the notion stories pertains to what individuals have come to understand or interpret of the events or facts.

At an earlier point in the interview with this mother
(Connie), she had described a ritual in her new family (family of procreation) that had punctuated or marked the time period of her daughter becoming an adolescent.

Dinner has always been an important part of our family, like, it was always expected on our parts that the kids would be home for dinner by a certain time and so on. Of course, when Sarah (adolescent) was, oh, sixteen, she became less interested in eating with us every night, and we could have had a lot of arguments about it, but we decided to try and compromise, and so we sat down with her and talked about the idea of coming home at the very least for Sunday night dinner, so we could reconnect, and be together as a family. This worked for her, and so, for several years after that, until she left home, our Sunday night dinners became sacred, a time for us to be with one another, closely. And I would say it was very much a ritual. (mother 6)

This ritual, in the analysis of the data, had been identified as a ritual of transformation, a property of the rituals of becoming an adolescent. Without hearing Connie's story of her own adolescence, the ritual of dinner would have simply remained a ritual that had been altered and transformed from past rituals in the nuclear family to punctuate the daughter's increasing independence from the family and to ensure that she would continue to participate within it. By examining this dinner ritual in the context of the Connie's story about herself, suddenly it becomes more robust, and much more powerful as a metaphor and a symbol of the theme family membership. Prior to telling her own story, the mother had commented further on this ritual of adolescence;
It was rare that Sarah missed a Sunday night dinner with us because I think that aside from knowing how important we considered this time to be for our family and remaining connected to each other with our hectic schedules, I think she felt kind of special, like Sunday night dinner was different from other dinners because she would be there, and felt important because often we hadn't seen her a lot of the week. (mother 6)

Having now heard the mother's story of her own adolescence, one can re-examine her description of this dinner ritual and understand how very connected it is with her experiences. Had she not ensured that her adolescent daughter attend at least one family dinner during the week, would they have become like "ships passing in the night", something the mother had feared would have happened in her own family had her brother and sisters not created these dinners together? The fact that these Sunday night dinners became "sacred" in the mother's own words, leads one to imagine that they represented more than just a time for the family to come together and reconnect, but perhaps symbolized the theme of membership. When one thinks about sacred events, often an image of something divine is conjured. To refer to a family activity as sacred, in part, is also to refer to the exclusive nature of the activity, for those on the inside, those who are considered to be members of the family. It is difficult to imagine these Sunday night dinners, as described by this mother, as having been sacred if non-members had been present.

The ritual of dinner, a ritual that had purposely been
altered in this family to recognize the developmental needs of the adolescent, symbolizes much more when the mother tells her own story of adolescence. This ritual honors the theme of family membership from the mother's past, and in this way the theme becomes multigenerational. Remembering how the dinners with her brother and sisters gave them the place to "redefine" who was in the family, one wonders, if on some level, the Sunday night dinners in the mother's new family also redefines who is in the family. Because of the adolescent's increasing separateness from the family, they do not see her too often during the week. But on Sunday night, she joins them for dinner, and her presence defines her as a family member even though she has been spending more time away from home. The mother's story of her past allows the ritual to be examined more fully, and completely, and by recognizing the theme that it honors, the ritual's symbolic significance transcends what its' actual enactment in the nuclear family may have suggested.

Story 2; "Never free, never me"

Jordan remembered an adolescence of rebellion and reckless behavior. At thirteen he had been arrested for drug possession. At fifteen, he remembered being suspended from highschool because of violence toward another adolescent. When first talking about his adolescence, Jordan described various conflicts and problems he had
encountered with the school, the community, and the police. These stories revolved around how he had constantly been in and out of trouble as a teenager.

*I was always into something - partying, drinking, drugs, whatever, life was a big joke to me then. Fights, it was like I deliberately looked for them, and I got myself into a lot of trouble as a result. That's what I really remember about being a teenager.*

When asked about his relationship with his parents, Jordan disclosed that both his parents had been killed in a car accident when he was four years old, and his memories of them were very faint. He explained that from the time of his parents' death until he was old enough to live on his own, he had lived with his maternal grandparents in their home in another city. He was an only child, and he recalled how alone he had felt growing up, even though he remembered his grandparents as having been kind and loving toward him. Jordan did not recollect having any contact with his father's family; the paternal grandparents had died in the holocaust and his father's only brother lived in Europe. Other family members of his father were spread out across the country. However, Jordan did have much contact with his mother's family, not only her parents but other members of the extended family. He commented that although, as a child, he had close relationships with some of the family members, he had always felt like an "outsider".

*They were really nice to me, it's not that they*
were uncaring or cold, it's not really that, but they [the maternal grandparents] never ever talked about my father. They used to tell me all kinds of wonderful things about who my mother was, what kind of person she had been and all that, but they never talked to me about my Dad. I remember as a kid, I sometimes used to ask about him, but they would either change the subject, or say something about not really knowing him, and then that would be it. It was like he had never existed or something, and I used to wonder about him. After a while I stopped asking about him because it seemed like they just didn't want to talk about him, like there had been some secret or something....but it made me feel kind of strange, like, maybe he had been a bad person, I don't know, but it made me feel like I didn't really belong in their family, like I was on the outside somehow, or an outsider because he had been my father.....

Jordan further described that as he got older, around twelve years old, he had wondered if his grandparents had somehow blamed his father for the car accident because he had been driving. Jordan described that he often felt frustrated about the lack of information about his father, and except for a few pictures and a few items like a leather jacket that had belonged to his father, he really had no idea what kind of man he had been. As Jordan became more confrontational and experimental (in terms of drugs and alcohol) in his teenage years, he remembered that his relationship with his grandparents deteriorated.

My grandparents were really kind of traditional and I guess I was not their good little boy when I was a teenager. They really didn't know how to handle me once I got passed twelve....I didn't pay attention to their rules, I did what I wanted so they kind of lost all control....like they couldn't punish me by grounding me or taking away privileges because I ignored them completely....so they were constantly angry with me...
Jordan described feeling more and more alienated and on the "outside" during his adolescent years and very much "lost" in terms of even being in touch with why he was doing certain activities, like fighting with peers. Jordan also recalled that when his grandparents were really angry with him as an adolescent, they had started to refer to his father by such comments as "if you continue this way, you are going to turn out to be just like your father, a reckless and irresponsible drunk" or "obviously you've inherited your father's genes, because no one in our family would have ever acted this way". Jordan described how these phrases, among the first he had ever heard about his father, had stayed in his mind, and how tormented and distressed he had felt after hearing them. He felt that his grandparents referred to his father as a way to punish him, so that his behavior would change, but instead, he began to feel even more alienated from them and the family, and more so, from himself.

They started saying these kind of things when I was about fifteen....and I remember feeling frustrated and confused, like I didn't have a family at all. I had never known my father, but I wasn't free from him either, not free from the images that my grandparents had of him. And I had no idea who the hell I was anymore, at fifteen, or where I had come from., so I couldn't be myself, I couldn't be me without knowing who he was - I felt trapped and nowhere, never free, never me.

Jordan left home at seventeen in extreme conflict with
his grandparents. He managed to borrow money from a friend so that he could go to Europe, in search of his father's brother, whom he had received a letter from the previous year. He remembered taking one item with him as he left - the leather jacket that had once belonged to his father.

Discussion

Upon examination of this father's (Jordan's) story of being an adolescent, it becomes evident that a major dilemma of his growing up years was the impression that he didn't quite belong. As a child, he remembered his grandparents loving and caring for him, but he also remembered feeling as if he was on the "outside" of the family. The outsider feeling appeared to have developed in two fundamental ways; from the lack of stories about his father as he was a child, and from the negative comments made about his father when he was an adolescent. The father described how not knowing who his father was lead him to wonder even more, about himself, and about his membership in the family with his grandparents. The predominant theme that emerged in this father's story of his adolescence was membership - his yearning to be a family member on the inside.

From the father's descriptions of himself and his activities when he was an adolescent, it remained unclear why he stopped being his grandparents' "good little boy" during that time. On a surface level, his participation in
various events and situations could have been viewed as developmentally appropriate, since many adolescents try out new roles and experiences as a way of separating from the family. However, one develops the impression that this father had been fairly frustrated as an adolescent, in part because it appeared that he "deliberately looked for fights" and through his own words "I remember feeling frustrated and confused". It seemed that not only was he frustrated about the perception that he didn't belong to a family, but his confusion pertained to not knowing "who the hell I was anymore, at fifteen". In a profound way, this father illustrated what would seem to be an impossible scenario, being trapped and nowhere at the same time. Never free of the "images" presented to him about his father, he could not really be a member of the grandparents' family. But by not knowing about his father, he could not truly be himself either.

In the beginning part of the interview, this father had discussed how his own son had left home and the ritual that had been created to mark this time period.

When Mike left home, what I remember as a ritual was giving him my leather jacket. When I was about sixteen, my grandfather found it and was about to throw it out but I wanted to keep it....it had belonged to my father who had died when I was very young, and it meant a lot to me....so Mike and I went out for a beer and I gave him this gift....(father 2)

The above ritual had been identified in the analysis as a
belonging ritual among the rituals of leaving home. The ritual had recognized the son leaving home yet at the same time it had emphasized the son remaining connected to the family. However, upon hearing the father's story of his adolescence, the ritual of giving the leather jacket suddenly develops a greater symbolic significance than it had by simply hearing about its enactment within the family of procreation. More than a ritual of belonging, the gift of the leather jacket becomes a symbol of the son's membership and being considered on the "inside" of the family. Belonging, as described earlier in the previous category, referred to remaining connected to the family. Belonging rituals emphasized leaving by demonstrating how to stay. Membership as a theme includes the above but also infers more; being part of or a fundamental component of the whole. Through the father's story of himself, it was evident that his only connection to his father had been through a few photographs and the leather jacket that was almost thrown out. When he left home, in conflict with his grandparents, he took the leather jacket with him as he traveled to Europe to meet his father's brother. When asked about the meaning of taking the leather jacket with him, he had replied;

It was my only link to my Dad - something that he had owned, and when I wore it, well, it gave me the sense of being part of him, and you know, I had wanted so much to be part of something. (father 2)
Through this passage, the membership theme emerges again. The leather jacket allowed the father to be "part of", rather than just "connected to" his father whom he had never known. The difference between the two, although subtle can not be overlooked; connection is the way a self relates to another, whereas membership (part of) is about the self's identity. Family membership in particular is an even more central component of the self's identity. Unless this context is understood, giving the leather jacket years later to his own son loses some of its original symbolic significance. This father emphasized the ritual of giving the leather jacket in the following:

"...seeing that Mike was leaving, I wanted to give him something that might remind him of our family,...you know, like, wherever his travels took him...."(father 2)

Upon having heard the father's story of his adolescence, one can imagine that the leather jacket became a symbol to this father of his son's membership in the family. The leather jacket could also be seen as a metaphor of the father's own yearning to have been a member of a family when he was his son's age. This yearning "I had wanted so much to be part of something" is passed on to the new generation through the ritual of the gift, and becomes the father's way of recognizing and emphasizing to his son that he is indeed part of a "something", a family, wherever his travels might take him. Thus, the membership theme is a multigenerational
one, discovered and accessed through the father's story.
Through the discovery of the multigenerational theme, the ritual becomes a robust metaphor of the past, carrying a powerful message for the future.
The second multigenerational theme discovered within the analysis was identified as *love and nurturance*. Parents' stories of their own adolescence and leaving home often reflected the theme of love and nurturance in a myriad of ways. When these parents spoke about rituals they had created or developed with their adolescent child to punctuate the beginning and/or the end of adolescence, these rituals reflected the theme of love and nurturance. Prior to the presentation and commentary of one story, it is important to briefly examine the essence of the *love and nurturance theme*.

Love and nurturance, as messages or themes in parents' stories were so closely related that they were identified together as one theme within the analysis. *Love* was comparable to the nature of attachment and affection experienced within the family, whereas *nurturance* was associated more with the kind of caring, cherishing, and support offered within the family. Not surprisingly, these concepts were all interrelated and overlapping when parents referred to them and described how they were manifested, either in the past or the present. For instance, some parents emphasized how close they had been with their families and the amount of support they had received. For other parents, the love and nurturance theme was expressed
in terms of what had been missing as they were growing up in their families. And others asserted that although they felt loved and supported in their families-of-origin, it was never verbalized and therefore, nobody ever made any reference to it but it was implicitly understood. Some parents referred to their adolescence as having been turbulent because of the lack of support offered within the family. There were several stories to chose from amongst the array of parents' stories reflecting love and nurturance as the predominant theme. The following presentation of a story was chosen because of the unique way in which it illustrated the love and nurturance theme from both parents' (the couple) stories of the past, and the way in which they honored this theme in their new life together.

Story 3; Can we laugh together?

{Part 1}

Michael took a few minutes to pause and think about what his adolescence had been like before answering the question, "tell me about the time when you were an adolescent in your family?" When he did answer he spoke slowly, as if choosing his words carefully so that he would not be misunderstood. Being the oldest of three boys, Michael remembered that his parents were more strict with him than his brothers and their expectations were higher. He commented that he didn't remember anything significant about being a teenager because he was very involved with
school and essentially considered himself to be a very serious adolescent who never really confronted his parents about anything.

They were tough as parents, particularly my father, but that was nothing new, they had been like that my whole life, so it didn't really change when I was an adolescent. I guess if I had been a wilder kind of person, I may have had a lot more problems than I did....basically though, I don't remember ever really having a problem or anything significant with them. They expected me to study hard and stay out of trouble, both expectations which I lived up to, and I remember thinking that yea, they were tough in comparison to other guys' parents that I knew at the time, but they were also very fair, like, if something was bothering me, I could go to them, they would be there.

Michael explained that as an adolescent he had not been interested in "things" that adolescents today are interested in, and he gave examples of "drinking" and "girls". He elaborated that he didn't have a girlfriend before nineteen years of age, as he was getting ready to leave home. When reflecting upon that time period, Michael stated that he didn't believe that his parents had ever said to him that he shouldn't drink or have a girlfriend as an adolescent, but he felt that he had interpreted the family atmosphere to reflect those messages.

It's hard to explain, but generally, the atmosphere in my family, all through growing up, was very very serious, almost too calm or sedate. My own kids used to say that my family life was depressing, but I wouldn't call it that....it's just that my parents, because they had been through the war, they kind of were much more serious than other adults I knew at the time. Nobody was very emotional in the family - none of us - nobody got too excited about anything, good or
bad. It was like things were always steady, on an even keel, without much variation. I never ever remember any yelling or raised voices, for instance, like if my brothers, who used to get into more trouble than me, if they screwed up, well, my father would punish them, but always very very calmly, without ever displaying any anger or any kind of emotion. On the one hand, there was a certain tranquility that our house had, like, you could come in after a hectic day and expect things to be calm and peaceful, but on the other hand, there was a certain emptiness to it all, it's hard to explain without giving the wrong idea, like, I knew they must have cared for us, and loved us, but because nothing ever involved emotions, sometimes it just felt empty, like, no real passion existed in our family. Nobody ever got really angry, but nobody ever laughed either, like sometimes the calmness of it all was like a big void. And I guess as a child, well, an adolescent, you pick up on the environment that you live in, it rubs off on you, so the ideas of going out to drink or having a girlfriend were foreign to me at the time...its simply something that I didn't think about.

When asked if he ever remembered a time when his parents were more emotional, Michael at first responded that he couldn't think of any time in their lives together that his parents had become more emotional, even at his graduation from university, he couldn't remember his parents looking happy. Then he remembered the family's three week vacation every summer to a cottage in the Laurentians in northern Quebec. For the next hour he spoke about what he remembered of the family vacations together.

I guess you could say that one of the best times in my life as a child and as an adolescent were those times in the laurentians. Every summer, for as long as I can remember, we always went to our summer cottage, which was on a lake, and that was actually a ritual in our family, speaking of rituals. A few days before leaving, my parents would become a bit more rushed around the house and start preparing all the stuff to bring with us, and I remember a certain excitement in the air then. Even as adolescents, unlike kids today,
we never would have considered missing those family vacations....after a few days in the country, it was like my parents would relax, especially my father, and we would actually do things together, like go fishing, hiking, swimming, and I knew during those times that my parents were happy....

Michael talked about what it was that made those summer times together as wonderful as they were. He explained that it was through these family vacations that he and his brothers felt their parents' love and support of them, as individuals in the family. Elaborating further, he emphasized that although they all loved the outdoors and being close to a lake, what really made these vacations memorable were the way his parents were during those times.

It is like they opened up a bit more, and we could see more of them in the sense that we could feel their love not only for us, but for each other. What also stands out for me was the way we would laugh together, I don't think I ever heard my father laugh except during those times in the summer....although logically, I knew my parents cared for me all year round, it is during the summers that I could feel their love, by the fun we had together. I never wanted to lose that....I remember even at eighteen, thinking that it was sad to say good-bye to those summer times, that my parents were always different in the city, more serious or perhaps depressed as my kids would say, and I always felt sad when the three weeks were over.....

Michael mentioned that when he was eighteen he had commented to his father about the difference he had observed in the family during the three week vacations compared to the rest of the year, and his father had simply answered that "this was what life is about".
I think my father's philosophy, and my mother too, was that playing and having fun was a luxury, something you only do when you've earned it, sort of? Well, for me, it felt like nourishment, emotional nourishment that I craved, and having it only for three weeks in the summer was not enough.

Michael left home at nineteen, to go to a university in another city. He did not remember anything significant or particularly memorable about actually leaving home except that his parents liked the idea that he was furthering his education. At university, he started to "drink occasionally" and "go to parties" and "have girlfriends". Once he was away from home, he began to seek out ways to have fun and relax, which was different for him than when he had been an adolescent living with the family.

At university, it's like I opened up and I started to have more fun in life. I really don't know why I changed then, maybe it had something to do with getting out of the serious atmosphere of home....

Three years after leaving home, he met Alice, whom he married a year later.

(Part 2)

When Alice met Michael, she knew this was the "man of her dreams" and that she would want to spend her life with him. Describing what it was about Michael that she had been attracted to, Alice said the following:

Right away, after being with him for a few days, I
knew I could spend my life with him.....what really impressed me was his humor, the way he could see a funny side to everything, the way he could laugh at himself. It was contagious, his laughter, his ability to make others happy that way....I think that's what I loved about him first.....

hearing what it was like for him in his family is still strange, hard to believe because he was and is so different from what his family atmosphere sounded like.....

When Alice spoke about her experiences as an adolescent in her family of origin, she stated that her life at that time was very "heavy" compared to what Michael had described of his own family life as having been calm and serious. Alice, the youngest daughter of two, recalled an adolescence with on-going turmoil and conflict. She stated that the problems in her family at the time really did not pertain to her or her sister, but her parents had many issues of their own. She remembered many "heated" arguments between them that would result in one of them leaving the house for a few days at a time. Although her parents would always "get back together" in the end, Alice felt that she had lived in a constant state of anxiety, wondering what would happen to her parents, as well as her sister and herself.

I remember during my teenager years the constant fighting going on between my parents, the tension and stress of the house almost always. I don't remember really any rituals, except that we did have dinner together, but often that was pretty tense, like my Dad would be overly critical about us, and then my mother would get tense and tell him not to be critical and then he would get mad and she would yell at him or whatever and then off they'd go again. We used to wonder why they stayed together, quite honestly, it didn't seem as if they loved each other, that's for sure, and I used to wonder if they even loved us. They
were so engrossed in their own fighting, that it was like one of us could have died and it would have taken them a few days to notice.

Alice referred to "not being loved" several times throughout her stories of being an adolescent and eventually leaving home. She did not have many memories of family events involving the extended families, and she explained that her parents had not really liked each other's families and therefore, the contact between them had been sporadic. She said that she found it difficult talking about her adolescence because it had appeared to her that as she and her sister got older, her parents became less aware or involved with them. Although she remembered birthdays and certain holidays being celebrated, she couldn't remember anything that had been particularly fun in her family.

We did do some family things together, now that I'm thinking about it, I remember, but it's like you have to force yourself to try and remember something, it's not like it stands out on its own, nothing too enjoyable.....I basically think I was on my own as an adolescent, not physically, but psychologically and emotionally. I lead my own life, had some good friends, a few close teachers who cared and offered me the support I wasn't getting in my family, and I carried on. .....there was a time, as a young teenager, I asked my mother if we could spend more time together, or something to that effect and my mother barely even looked up from the book she was reading as she mumbled something about me being a big girl now, able to entertain myself.

Alice had nothing further to add to her story of being an adolescent in her family. When she met Michael, they started living together after six months and got married
within a year. Alice did not remember the details of how she left home to live with Michael, except that her parents had offered to take them out for dinner a week after she had moved out and then they had cancelled "at the last minute". Alice remembered this incident as being fairly typical of her parents in general.

Discussion

The above are examples of two parents' stories of adolescence where the predominant theme in the stories has been about love and nurturance. The father (Michael) described that as he was growing up in his family, his parents were of the "serious type" and never really made room for "fun" and particularly "laughter". Interestingly, this father identified laughter with his parents' love for him and his brothers. Hardly ever hearing his father laugh at home, what he had remembered about those three week family vacations was that the family laughed. He had commented further that "....it is during the summers that I could feel their love, by the fun we had together". Not only could he feel his parents' love for him, but he could feel their "love for each other". Describing those vacations as among the happiest times of his life, this father remembered feeling sad by the end of the three weeks. In a unique way, he compared the three weeks to being similar to "nourishment", what he needed emotionally, and he
did not feel that what he received of it during that one time each summer was really enough to sustain him during the remainder of the year. Although he rationally could and did tell himself (from his story) that his parents must have obviously loved their children throughout the year, he also remembered experiencing an "emptiness" to home life, although quiet and calm, it felt empty. As he had stated, "Nobody ever got really angry, but nobody ever laughed either.....".

One develops the impression that when this father left home he became involved in activities which perhaps gave him the emotional nourishment he craved and through that process, he started to "open up". Although it is uncertain what exactly he meant by this, one could suspect that he was referring to a shift in himself, moving from a personal space of calm and seriousness (and possible emptiness) to one that incorporated more fun.

When the mother (Alice) in this example met the father, (Michael) she was moving out of a family life that she had described as "tense" and "stressful". In relating what it had been like for her as an adolescent in her family, she had stated that she had often wondered about the status of her parents. As she commented, "...it didn't seem as if they loved each other, .....and I used to wonder if they even loved us ". Although there were potentially other themes portrayed in this mother's story of herself, the theme of love and nurturance was paramount. From the mother's story,
one comprehends that regardless of what actually happened (or didn't happen) in her relationship with her parents, she perceived being dismissed or overlooked by them in such a way that "...one of us could have died and it would have taken them a few days to notice." A profound feeling of not being loved and cared for prevailed in this mother's story of adolescence, and she remembered the moments in her family as being "heavy".

It is perhaps not surprising then, that this mother was drawn to a man who deliberately incorporated fun and laughter into his life. The mother remembered that what impressed her the most about this man was his humor and ability to see a "funny side to everything". The fun and laughter became symbols for the father of emotional nourishment (and the feeling of being loved) and perhaps for the mother, having come from what she perceived as a "heavy" family life, these symbols offered a certain lightness she had not known.

When re-examining the rituals these parents had presented earlier in the interview of how they had recognized their own children becoming adolescents and leaving home, one remembers the rituals of fun and the ritual of building a house.

In describing what they did to recognize that their children were adolescents, the father had said,

_We were always a family into the idea of playing games, and having an element of fun in our lives._
Games in this family is what you would call our rituals of fun. When the kids were teenagers, we continued to play games, but we deliberately increased their complexity, and the kids had a lot more input into how they were to be done, when and where, and essentially, they had a lot more control. (father 4)

The above ritual was identified in the data analysis as a transformed ritual, a property of the rituals of becoming an adolescent. The rituals of fun had always existed in the family, and thus they were not new, but as the children became adolescents, the parents altered the structure of the these rituals so that the adolescents would continue to be engaged in them. By transforming these rituals, the independence and need for more control on the part of the adolescents were indeed recognized in the family. However, upon hearing the parents' stories of their own adolescence, and the symbols of fun and laughter that had emerged from the past, suddenly the rituals of fun signify much more than what could have been understood by just hearing about them in the context of the family of procreation. These rituals also honored the theme of love and nurturance in that the parents had hoped that by "playing games" their children would feel that the parents enjoyed their presence, and loved them. As the mother stated,

*We loved spending time with them, and even as they were becoming more independent from us as they got older, it was important for us that they knew that we enjoyed their company.....our rituals of fun provided this chance.* (mother 4)

It becomes evident that the mother's story of having been
"overlooked" and "dismissed", in some way, fostered in her the idea that she wanted her own children to know that their company was enjoyed. Also, one wonders if the father, when helping create these rituals of fun, thought about the three weeks he had spent with his parents each summer and wanted to provide his own children with more "emotional nourishment" than he had received. Through these rituals of fun, did he want his children to experience the feeling of being loved, that he remembered experiencing when he and his parent had laughed and had fun together? Could he laugh with his children even though they were becoming adolescents? The parents' stories of themselves clearly add a richness and new dimension to the rituals of fun that they created with their children. These rituals increase in symbolic significance when they are examined in the context of the parents' stories, and it is apparent that the theme of love and nurturance is carried forth in the rituals. In this way, the theme is multigenerational.

When describing the way in which they had recognized their son leaving home, these parents had referred to the ritual of building a house together:

_It was a way to celebrate his leaving, in a sense, by becoming involved in our biggest project ever. Games, projects, as we discussed earlier, were rituals in our family, so this was also a ritual in a way because he could leave knowing that he had built something huge, he would remember that summer always, as we would too.... (father 4)_
Although this ritual had been previously identified in the data analysis as a *ritual of belonging*, a property of the *rituals of leaving home*, one can understand more about the ritual's symbolic significance through hearing the father's story of his adolescence. The father remembered the three week vacations with his family because they represented the love and support of his parents. In an interesting way, he created a summer that his son would remember too, as he was leaving home. More than a ritual of belonging, this ritual could also be seen as vehicle carrying the theme of *love and nurturance*.

The mother added her interpretation of the ritual of building a house together in the following:

> ...we wanted to work and sweat and really have a good time together because we knew that once he was gone, he might never have the time again to get involved in something as big as this with his family.....(mother 4)

As the mother described this ritual of leaving home that had been created for their son, one must remember, upon hearing the mother's story, the "heaviness" she had felt in her own family, and the perception of having not been noticed. This mother did not remember having done anything "fun" with her parents, and in many ways, left home to be with someone who could offer her laughter and lightness to balance the heaviness. Having these *symbols* of love in her new life, the mother attempted to instill these in the lives of her children. What better way than to make *having fun* a ritual.
and celebrate her son leaving home by giving him a summer to remember, with "hard work" and laughter. In this way, the ritual grows and expands in dimension, taking on deeper meaning and importance. The ritual becomes a multidimensional metaphor of three stories of the past; what didn't happen for the mother, what did happen in the summers for the father, and the love story of how the parents came together. Honoring the predominant theme of love and nurturance in the three stories, the rituals of fun and the ritual of building a house together become more than rituals that recognize the beginning and the end of adolescence, but they poignantly connect the past with the present, offering a way to live in the future.
The third multigenerational theme discovered in the analysis involved preparation and safety in the world. Often this theme was camouflaged in the form of family expectations or values, and therefore, occasionally it would be more difficult to detect this theme within the rituals, particularly if the rituals were adolescent or family crisis rituals. When some parents described their experiences of adolescence in their families of origin, their stories would contain many references to what they had identified as "rigid" family values. As they described these values and expectations in more depth, what emerged was the theme of being prepared and safe in the world. Specifically this theme addressed the parents' notions of what it meant to be equipped for life outside of the family. Being prepared referred to the lessons one had to learn and the skills one had to acquire to be ready for the future, whereas being safe referred to choices one had to make regarding lifestyle. These notions were closely attached and often could not be separated from one another, so in this study, they were identified as the same theme.

For some parents, the notions of being prepared and safe in the world existed on an unconscious level, whereas for others these ideas were much more deliberate and known, and they could speak about them overtly. Some parents described, in their stories of being an adolescent in their
families of origin, how their own parents had expected that they would participate in certain activities or events (such as family chores, team sports, or boy scouts for examples) because it was believed that these would help prepare them for when they were older. Other parents remembered stories that had been told to them as they were leaving home about "things to do" so that they could meet the challenges of life in the most successful way possible, (examples as going to university, or getting a particular job). This is not to claim that participating in boy scouts or going to university always represented the theme of being prepared and safe in the world, however for some parents this theme was expressed in these ways. And finally, other parents spoke about how difficult it had been for them to leave home because their family had not approved of the choices they had made about leaving. When these choices were examined more closely in the interview, it appeared that the family's notion of what it meant to be prepared and safe in the world was not being observed in the choices, and thus, the leaving was not supported.

Essentially, the theme of being prepared and safe in the world presented itself in a variety of parents' stories about the past, and rituals that were created in the family of procreation. As with the other multigenerational themes previously discussed, the theme of being prepared and safe in the world was usually not the only theme apparent in some of the parents stories, however, it emerged as the
predominant one for some parents.

**Story 4: If you leave, get out**

Steve hesitated before responding to the questions "tell me about the time when you were an adolescent in your family". He then commented that his hesitation was about trying to define in his mind what adolescence actually was as an age category or time period. Explaining further, he said that he really wondered if he had even had an adolescence, because he certainly had not done many of the "things" that his children had done as they were adolescents! He spoke about how when he had been thirteen, he had come to Canada from Australia with his parents and his younger sister Noreen who had been eleven. He remembered feeling "lost" in the beginning, being in a new city and new country. But in his early adolescent years, he did not remember his parents responding to him any differently than they had in Australia when he had been younger. When he was fourteen, a baby sister was born.

Steve continued to explain that once his sister had been born, his parents became very busy with her and he was expected to assume more responsibility around the house and some responsibility over his eleven year old sister. He remembered his father telling him that when he had been Steve's age, he had also been responsible for his younger siblings. Steve mentioned this because what he had
remembered most of his relationship with his father were the number of stories his father used to share with him about his past.

My father was extremely busy, with his work and projects, and he often wasn't home or around. But when he was, he spent as much time with us as he could. As I got older, about fifteen, he would make more of a point of hanging around with me, like, I was interested in motorcycles, so I was always playing around with them in the garage, fixing them, taking them apart, I must have owned four motorcycles at one point. Although my father wasn't really interested in motorcycles, he was always the one to encourage me in developing my own interests and pursuing hobbies. He would hang out in the garage with me, and play around with some of the motorcycle parts as he told me stories about his childhood, and his past, my grandparents.....

As he talked about his involvement in repairing and building motorcycles, Steve remembered certain arguments that existed between his parents in response to their son's "hobbies". He recalled how frustrated his mother used to get about the motorcycle "parts" all over the house and on the grounds outside of the house. Steve stated that his mother used to feel that he spent more time with his motorcycles than he did with his schoolwork and she had been concerned that he would become a "drifter", and eventually drop out of school. His mother used to be constantly asking him to "pick up his motorcycle things" and when he didn't, she would finally turn to his father and ask him to tell Steve to "get rid" of the motorcycles because he wasn't able to contain them in the garage. But Steve remembered how his father used to "stick up for him" and emphasize how
wonderful it was that Steve had an interest in projects that could be useful in terms of a future career.

I guess now, I can see my mother's perspective about the motorcycle things, she had the baby to care for, my Dad was always involved in his own projects from work and used to keep papers all over the house, and it probabaly didn't help that she had a son who literally had motorcycle parts and pieces all over the house as well. By the time I was sixteen and a half, my mother loathed motorcycles and was constantly arguing with my father to have me get rid of them. Although he always said that he would talk to me about it, I knew that he supported my interest in motorcycles because he felt that somehow, building them helped train my mind for other things, that my ability to put things together would be a useful quality to have as I got older. So, after an argument with my mother, he would come into the garage, with her thinking that he was going to lecture me about cleaning up or getting rid of the motorcycles, but really, he would come and talk and tell me about something he had done when he was my age that drove his mother crazy, and then he would ask me what I was working on, and we'd talk about it, and I always felt that he supported me because he believed that these projects would eventually take me far......that they'd prepare me for what he used to call, a changing and unpredictable world.

Steve spoke about how he considered himself to be fairly studious in his adolescent years, when he was not working on his motorcycles. He didn't remember much contact with extended family members because his father's parents lived in Australia and he saw them only once every year or two years, and his mother's family was from Belgium, and contact was also infrequent. Steve didn't remember any conflicts with his parents except for the on-going problems his mother had about his motorcycle projects. He commented that he had felt better understood by his father when he was
growing up in his family, and as he approached eighteen, his relationship with his mother was more strained than it ever had been. However, Steve recalled a particular incident that had perhaps caused the strain between his mother and him.

When I think about it, my mother was really the disciplinarian of my parents. My father usually had little to do with rules, and structure and all that. At eighteen, I guess my interest in motorcycles had kind of shifted to cars, and I think I had three old cars that I was rebuilding, and so my mother really got angry with all the car parts all over our lawn and driveway.....she was forever hassling me about them, and she used to say that at eighteen, it was about time that I became more serious about school and stopped playing games with my motorcycles and cars, and so one day I finally got mad and told her off, like swore at her, something I had never done before, anyway, she was extremely hurt by what I said, and of course told my father. It is the only time I really remember my father being disappointed in me, even as a kid, I don't ever recall my father getting angry or being disappointed in anything that I did, but the time that I told my mother off, he came to talk with me, very serious and solemn, and he didn't say much, except that he would never have talked to his mother in the way I had, and he had lost some respect for me. Since my father had always been my biggest advocate, a hero in some ways, what he said left an impression on me.

Steve commented that after that particular incident with his mother, his relationship with his father was not quite the same. From what he remembered, his father did not appear to overtly support his various projects with cars and motorcycles as he had in the past, and began to suggest that Steve start thinking seriously of what he wanted to do in the future. Steve commented that he felt overwhelmed when asked about the future and didn't know what he wanted to do.
after highschool. He had suspected that his mother wanted to him to go to university, since she used to say that this was the only way he could have a secure future, however, he also felt that his father thought that he should perhaps go into business for himself, because of his skills with mechanical endeavors. Steve remembered a difficult time at home when he was nineteen, in part because of his uncertainty about the future, and in part because at that time, his parents began to experience problems with his seventeen year old sister, Noreen.

I wasn't sure what I wanted to do - there seemed to be a lot of pressure, from both parents that I had to make up my mind about choosing a career or a job that they considered would offer me a secure future. Their views were different, and I felt confused....the pressure was very overt from my mother that I should go to university, and it was more subtle from my father about going into business, but I couldn't really talk to him about it because our relationship had changed, ever since that fight with my mother, it's like he was not as approachable anymore....I don't know, I was kind of intimidated by him or something, anyway, my sister Noreen got into some pretty intense scenes with my parents, she was doing things that I never had done, like skipping school and not coming home at night, and they were at their wits end with her, and I remember one of them, I think my father telling her that if she didn't come home at night then she better start thinking about another place to live, something like if you leave, then get out, yet it was I who ended up leaving because I couldn't take the pressure anymore at home.....

Steve talked about when he decided to move out during that particular time period, his parents had not been happy with his decision. He still hadn't decided what he wanted to do so he decided to travel to California for the next
year. Steve remembered his father coming into his room the night before he left to persuade him not to leave.

He really didn't want me to go, he was convinced that I was being foolish, that I hadn't prepared enough to be living on my own, and that once I was gone, I wouldn't be safe, that I'd run out of money......he kept asking me, but what will you do there? Why are you leaving? I couldn't answer these, because I had no idea really. But it felt good to know that he cared, because he had really been distant with me in the past year, and in that moment, we seemed close again even though he was unhappy about the way I was leaving....it was like the crisis with Noreen (sister) prompted me to leave instead of her. I felt ready though, I had to leave to figure out what I wanted to do with my life, without being as prepared as my parents would have liked......

Steve left home, knowing that his parents were not pleased, but also knowing that it was time for him to go because he had felt ready. He also left knowing that although there were still immense problems with his sister, she had confided to him that she didn't want to leave home.

Discussion

Upon hearing the father's (Steve's) story of his adolescence and how he eventually left home, what emerged as a predominant theme was that of being prepared and safe in the world. At several points in the father's story, this theme was referred to in a unique way. For instance, in the very beginning of his narrative, one learned that his interest in motorcycles was both supported by his father and not supported by his mother for reasons associated with
preparation and safety in a future life outside of the family. From his mother's perspective, "playing with motorcycle parts" would perhaps jeopardize his chances of staying in school and she feared that he would become a "drifter". However, from his father's viewpoint, being interested in motorcycles and then cars would help "train his mind" and give him "additional skills" for a "changing and unpredictable world". These two contrasting positions existed simultaneously as this father (Steve) was growing up in his family. Sometimes, as this father described, the different perspectives regarding which was the best way to prepare for the future would come into conflict, usually under the guise of his mother becoming angry with all the "car parts all over the lawn and driveway". Although for certain, upon hearing this father's story, one can imagine his mother becoming upset with "car parts" left all over the family home, one must also consider what the car parts may have symbolized to this mother. Would this mother have responded as intensely if her son's homework for instance, had been left all over the house? Would she have argued with her husband about it, urging him to get the son to "get rid" of the homework? It is probable, based on Steve's story, that the car parts symbolized to his mother a potential distraction from what would really secure his future which, from her perspective, was finishing highschool and going to university. To her, "playing with car parts" was a game, and by the time her son was eighteen, she began
to warn him to become more serious.

The subject of the car parts was perhaps symbolically different for Steve's father, based on how he responded to them in Steve's story. One can not help but wonder why Steve's father never really responded to his wife's requests to have their son "clean up" and "get rid of" the car parts yet when this son at eighteen swore at his mother, his father then reacted with extreme disappointment and disapproval. It would appear that to Steve's father, the car parts symbolized a potential future career for his son, a hobby that could help his son become better prepared for what lay ahead. As Steve recounted, his father would "hang out" with him in the garage, demonstrating interest in his projects and sharing stories of the past.

The relationship apparently changed between Steve and his father after the incident (as described in the story) with Steve's mother. The relationship became more distant, and in many ways, Steve had lost his "biggest advocate". Although Steve's story of himself contained several themes and messages, the predominant theme of being prepared and safe in the world consistently appeared throughout the narrative, from being an adolescent in his family to eventually leaving home. For instance, he remembered much pressure from his parents as he stated "...I had to make up my mind about choosing a career or job that they considered would offer me a secure future...". Finally, through the crisis that was happening at the time with his seventeen
year old sister, he was able to leave home. It was as if, once the focus was away from him momentarily because his parents had been at their "wits end" with his sister, Steve was able to "get out". In his own words, he described how the "...crisis with Noreen prompted me to leave instead of her", and he left, feeling ready, even though he wasn't as "prepared" as his parents would have liked. Not only did Steve's leaving home occur in the midst of a crisis, but interestingly, his leaving created an opening again in his relationship with his father. He remembered how "it felt good to know that he cared " and how "in that moment we seemed close again", and thus, although his leaving was not supported by his father, it had nonetheless fostered a certain revival of their relationship.

At an earlier point in the interview, Steve had described how his own son had left home.

Well, he had really been pushing our limits for a long time, all we had been asking him was to get a job or go back to school....at nineteen, I think he was old enough to have some sort of responsibility in his life.....I forgot exactly how it happened, I think I caught him with a joint in his room with some friends and I asked them to leave and he [adolescent] swore at me - something ridiculous like that, and anyway, I ended up hitting him, I don't remember all the details....anyway, he stormed out of the house, or maybe I asked him to leave....it was a long time ago. (father 11)

Steve's wife, however, had pointed out that it had been her impression that their son had been "kicked out" because they (the parents) had asked him to leave several times in
the past after intense arguments but their son had always returned home. This particular incident with his father had been the final "crisis" in which he had left permanently.

In the data analysis, this way of leaving had been identified as a family crisis ritual, elaborated in the previous chapter. Without having heard the father's story of his own experiences as an adolescent in his family of origin, it had been difficult to discern the symbolic significance of this ritual. As with other stories presented in the analysis of the findings, the father's story enlarged the meaning of this family crisis ritual, enabling one to understand it on a deeper level.

In the context of the father's (Steve's) story, it becomes evident that the ritual of the family crisis in the family of procreation honors the theme of being prepared and safe in the world. When this father spoke about his feeling that his son at nineteen was old enough to have responsibility in his life, he referred to getting a job or going to school. Is one to believe that getting a job or going to university were the only ways in which their son could assume more responsibility in the family? The father (Steve) clarified this idea further by the following:

\[\text{It was important for us that he was grounded in something, it was more than simply being responsible, but you know, he had to have some plan or something he was striving for....(father 11)}\]

Remembering on some level that his mother had feared
that he would become a "drifter" if he was distracted, did this father also fear that unless his son was "grounded in something" he too might become a "drifter"? Did this father wonder how safe his son would then be in the outside world? Why else would there have been, as this father had indicated, numerous arguments surrounding the notion of the son either getting a job or going back to school? Although these questions can not be answered absolutely, upon hearing the father's story, it would appear that the theme of being prepared and safe in the world had become multigenerational. It is interesting how the ritual of the family crisis honored this theme, as well as certain symbols from the past.

....there was something different about the final time he left, like he didn't come home, maybe because he knew that he had crossed a line with me, or that this time, I really did want him out, whereas the other times, well, we had not wanted him to leave......(father 11)

What had made this difference? What "line" had this son crossed with his father?

....when he [adolescent] said to me what he did, all I could think of was what my own father would have done....I never could have spoken to my father in that way, ever....
(father 11)

A potent symbol of the family crisis ritual is evident from the above passage. This symbol is the "son swearing", and
it is through the enactment of this symbol that the father interpreted this particular crisis as a way for his son to leave. In the past, there had been several crises with the son, and he had been "kicked out" several times before, but he always returned home. This time, however, because of the symbol within the crisis, the leaving was permanent.

Remembering the father's story of himself, one can not overlook the similarities of the past story with the present one. This father (Steve) remembered swearing at his mother and then having his father come to him afterwards, stating his extreme disappointment and emphasizing that he never would have talked to his mother in that way. Almost using the same words that had once been spoken by his "biggest advocate", this father (Steve) explained that when his own son swore at him, a "line" had been crossed, because "I never could have spoken to my father in that way, ever...."

Both Steve and his son had left home in the midst of family crises. For Steve, as he had expressed in his story, the crisis with his sister had prompted him to leave, and although he had not been as prepared as his parents might have liked, he had felt ready and his relationship with his father actually became closer as a result of his leaving. Steve's son had also left home via the crisis way. After being "kicked out" several times only to return home again, the ritual of being kicked out that actually enabled the son to leave was the one that carried the powerful symbol from his father's past. Thus, Steve's son left home without
being as prepared as his parents might have liked, since he didn't have a job and wasn't in school. Did Steve wonder, on an unconscious level, if his relationship with his son might improve once he left home, the way his own relationship with his father had been revived as he himself was leaving? Did he envision, perhaps, that his son was "ready" to leave, even though he had not "prepared" by having a "plan"? Although these questions can only be hypothesized, the closeness of the two stories, the father's story of himself and his story of his son, leads one to believe that the predominant theme that they honored was the same, that of being prepared and safe in the world. When Steve, and later on his son, couldn't leave home in the way their parents had felt would prepare them the most for the outside world, they left through crisis.
Fears of Loss and Separation

The last multigenerational theme discovered within the analysis of the data was identified as fears of loss and separation. Prior to presenting an example of this theme in one of the parents' stories, it is necessary to explain briefly what this theme represented.

Fears of loss and separation emerged in many parents' stories of themselves in their families of origin. Essentially, fears of loss as a theme was expressed in terms of a feeling parents had about their own parents' perceptions of them "growing up". This feeling was associated with what some parents described as "the loss of the child" in the family. Although these parents acknowledged that inevitably children grew up to be adults, many of them expressed a certain sadness about the inevitable change that this entailed to the family, not having the child still present. Some of these parents then told stories about how their own parents had experienced a certain sadness as they became increasingly independent from the family. Other parents described how angry and rejecting their families had been as they had attempted to separate from the family. And other parents recounted stories of the ways in which their parents had tried to control them, through very rigid rules, sanctions, and even rituals as a way of "delaying the inevitable", the child growing up and
leaving home. Although all of these stories had been different, with emphasis on either parental sadness, anger, rejection, or control, they were similar in that all of the parents had remembered their own parents as having been "afraid" or "fearing" the loss of the child. The theme of "fear" had been paramount in these stories of the past, although not surprisingly, parents remembered the fear being expressed in a variety of different ways.

Fears of separation were very similar to fears of loss, and therefore, in the analysis, they were identified as one theme. In describing the past, some parents had remembered how their own parents had told them stories about family closeness. These stories usually had highlighted the notion that anything that potentially jeopardized family closeness was negative and should be avoided. For instance, a father talked about how his mother had not wanted him to go to a university away from the family home because it could potentially threaten the closeness he shared with his family. Or, a mother expressed how her parents never overtly acknowledged negative feelings in the family because they had feared that these feelings would prevent the family from being close, and thus, the family would eventually "drift apart". And other parents described how it had appeared to them that as they became adolescents in their families, their parents had actually become more demanding of their time because of the fear that independence would threaten family unity. The unifying and predominant theme
to these stories appeared to be *fears of loss and separation*.

It is important to differentiate this theme from the theme of *being prepared and safe in the world* because initially, they could be perceived as similar. The third theme, as described in the previous chapter, was about parental concern regarding how prepared and safe the children would be once they left home. Often, this theme would be expressed as fear, but the fear was related to what would happen *when* the child lived away from the family. However, the theme *fears of loss and separation* was about parental concern regarding the impact and effects of the child's independence and leaving on the family, and the parents in particular. Thus, in this theme, the fear was related to what would happen *if* the child lived away from the family. Therefore, a significant difference exists between these themes in that one is about preparing the child to leave, and the other is about justifying why the child should stay.

*Story 5: We won't let you go*

Margaret didn't want to talk about her adolescence in too much "depth", and she commented that she was uncomfortable even thinking about it. She was the middle child in her family, with a brother three years older and a sister two years younger. She described her family,
particularly her parents, as being very traditional in terms of conservative values and beliefs. She stated that throughout her life, her parents had been very concerned with "family image", in the sense that whatever anyone did or said was evaluated along the dimensions of what other people might think. Margaret remembered that an "overwhelming preoccupation" of her parents pertained to the family members "being positive and happy" at all times. This left Margaret with the feeling of being stifled in her family, never truly able to be herself.

*My parents were very caught up in this image business - whatever we did as kids was never really looked at for itself but rather, what seemed to matter was what other people might think. My parents were very up in the social scene and went to a lot of parties and political gatherings and so they were often mentioned in the social notes of our local newspaper and this was their life.....I often felt like my thoughts and feelings didn't count for them, unless it went along with what they were already thinking, or was positive....I felt pretty stifled....*

Margaret described her parents as being much more "rigid" and "controlling" when she was an adolescent. She stated that she did not believe that her parents were intentionally "controlling" but it was simply part of who they were as people.

*....they were very into power and control. I don't think they were even aware of it, in fact, my mother used to say that she wanted us to be a close family, that she wanted us to be able to express ourselves at dinner time, like express how we were feeling and all that, but as soon as one of us kids expressed a feeling that was not the most positive, my parents would either*
pretend they hadn't heard, or try and convince us that we were not feeling whatever it was that we were feeling.....their kind of closeness was very controlling, especially as I got older, and it was their insistence and demanding for closeness that prevented us from really being close.....they seemed afraid about losing us, and maybe that is why they couldn't tolerate anything negative that was said or felt.....

Margaret elaborated that around fourteen she developed an eating disorder and it lasted throughout her adolescence. She remembered all the discussions between her parents about her not eating properly, and she recalled the number of professionals her parents took her to with the hope that she would be "cured". Margaret expressed that her parents' concern about her eating had felt like another form of control and she remembered feeling at the time that everything they did was a way to prevent her from becoming independent and "from becoming her own person".

When I think about it as an adult, my anorexia was a way for me to get back some control from my parents, it was the one area that they really couldn't control. In general, that's what my adolescence was about - I don't want to get into it much further than that, except that their concern for me, at least my impression of it then, was related to their need to keep the family together, don't get me wrong, I think they cared for me somehow, but their kind of caring was just so limiting ....I left home at seventeen, still anorexic, and joined a commune out of state, and my parents were horrified with my plans....it's like a huge fear for them was coming true - one of their kids leaving them, and I was the first one to leave. When they found out I was going, they kept saying we won't let you go, and I wondered how they would stop me......it was really traumatic, for all of us, but the only way for me to be my own person and grow up was to leave, to go as far away as possible from their control....
Margaret found it "painful" to have shared what she just had, and she stated this in the interview. She commented that she found it easier to talk about her own children being adolescents than herself. Margaret emphasized that she had spent some time on her own "working things out" about her past, and she simply wanted to "put it to rest" and not have to think about it anymore. The discourse around the topic of Margaret's adolescence concluded at this point.

**Discussion**

There were several references made by this mother (Margaret) about not wanting to talk about her adolescence in "much depth" (or "much further") and thus, one is inclined to believe that the story is somewhat incomplete. It was evident how difficult it had been for this mother to recount the story of her adolescence, and although she did not spend as much time talking about the past as other parents in this study had, her moving account was a tribute to the theme *fears of loss and separation*.

From the beginning of this mother's (Margaret's) story, one learned about her feeling of being controlled in her family of origin. In many ways, the notion of control could be seen as a *symbol* of the parents' fear of losing their children, as Margaret had expressed, "...they seemed afraid of losing about us...". Although one can not ascertain what
exactly the parents were afraid of losing or how their fear had developed, based on Margaret's story, their fear seemed to be expressed through the ways in which control was displayed in the family. Margaret had described how negative thoughts or feeling had not been recognized by her parents, and she had suggested that it had perhaps been her parents' fear that made these areas intolerable. Remembering her mother's "insistence" that they be a close family, Margaret described how her parents' "kind of closeness" had been limiting. Particularly, as Margaret became older, in adolescence, she remembered her parents becoming even more controlling and she described how her not eating had been a way for her to "get back some control". Throughout Margaret's story there were references made to control being the way her parents attempted to "keep the family together", and finally, when she left home at seventeen, her parents had been "horrified" with her plans, as if "a huge fear for them was coming true - one of their kids leaving them". Had they feared that the family closeness would be threatened? Was their fear related to the "loss" the family would inevitably feel with one of the children gone? Or had their middle child's leaving reminded them of another experience in which separation had been negative? Although the last two questions remain largely hypothetical because of the incompleteness of Margaret's story, it is evident, nonetheless, that Margaret's parents feared a loss of some kind - perhaps the family image or
family closeness. But Margaret, as an adolescent could not see their fear but could only feel what seemed to her as their control, and she became the first child to leave home, to become her "own person".

At an earlier point in the interview, Margaret had described a ritual that had been created in her new family as her son was becoming an adolescent.

Once he turned thirteen, and every birthday after that, well, until he left home, we would make a special effort to have a meeting to talk about curfew and rules and things like that. As he got to be about sixteen, we began to have these meetings every six months, maybe every few months to renegotiate all this stuff. This was indeed a ritual for us - although I'm sure Sean [adolescent] hated these meetings, we found that they were very necessary. (mother 1)

Commenting further on why her son may have hated these meetings, this mother (Margaret) had explained;

Sean loathed these meetings - like he knew that they were about us trying to control him, trying to curtail his freedom. But I don't know if we ever had control, but maybe he just let us think that we did! But the idea of control has always been a big issue in our own families.... (mother 1)

Within the data analysis, this ritual of the family meetings had been identified as a separation ritual, one of the properties of the rituals of becoming an adolescent. Separation rituals had been defined as rituals that emphasize or highlight the adolescent's increasing independence and separateness from the family. Before
hearing the mother's story of herself, the ritual of the family meeting examined only within the context of the nuclear family signified the parents' awareness that their son was now at an age in which he would be demanding a later curfew or more time away from the family. When re-examining this ritual in the context of the mother's story, the deeper meaning that emerged was the theme *fears of loss and separation*. When the mother told her own story, she had emphasized how she had disliked the control her parents had displayed, and this control had seemed to increase as she became older. Interestingly, when she had described a ritual to mark her son becoming an adolescent, it was a ritual that in fact existed to structure (or control) her son's independence (or freedom) outside of the house, in terms of the parents' expectations of what activities he would participate in and when he would be home again. This mother was aware of how much her son had disliked their attempt to "curtail" his freedom. But in spite of this, the ritual of the family meetings occurred more often as the son got older. When asked why the ritual of the family meetings had been important to her, the mother said;

*Well, without these meetings, we were afraid that we'd lose control completely over what he did....these meetings at least gave us the semblance of control....I'm not sure why it was important, I think maybe I felt that something would happen to him, without at least some guidelines set as to what we expected, and I knew that teenagers in general, well, that age group, lost interest in their families and I didn't want that to happen to us, I didn't want him to lose interest, that sounds stupid doesn't it? In*
retrospect, the more we had these meetings, the less he wanted to do with us.....(mother 1)

Not fully understanding the importance of these family meetings, this mother felt that without them, she and her husband would experience several losses and thus, this ritual was created, whether consciously or unconsciously to prevent these losses. The first loss, as indicated in the above passage was related to control, without which, "something" would have happened to their son. Although one is not certain what exactly this fear was about, and the mother herself seemed uncertain about this, it is evident that a general fear existed that without "a set of guidelines", they might "lose" the son (the child) potentially through his own activities or through his loss of interest in the family. As the mother stated in the above passage, "...I didn't want that to happen to us....", one is lead to postulate that the theme fears of loss and separation was behind the family meetings ritual, and had indeed been passed on through the generations, becoming a multigenerational. The way in which this theme has surfaced again, in spite of the mother remembering how stifled she felt because of her parents' fears, is indicative to some degree of the powerful nature of family themes. The ritual's capacity to honor the old theme while at the same time punctuate the developmental period of the child becoming an adolescent illustrates the multidimensional nature of rituals, highlighting the new with symbolic
Further Thoughts on Rituals and Themes: In Review

Prior to examining the limitations of this study as well as the theoretical and clinical implications of what emerged in the data analysis, it is worthwhile to briefly review several aspects of the findings just presented in the previous chapters.

What has emerged throughout the findings is a pivotal or rotating quality to rituals of becoming an adolescent and of leaving home. What is meant by pivotal or rotating quality is the ability of the same rituals to be perceived and experienced differently by different people, especially members of different families. For instance, in the findings, Sunday night dinner was referred to by three different families as a ritual, but the meaning and significance of this ritual was different for all three families. For one family (two parents interviewed) Sunday night dinner had become a transformed ritual, an old ritual that had been altered in the family to recognize the independence of the adolescent, thus engaging the adolescent to continue participating within the ritual. For another family, Sunday night dinner was a ritual that had been created as the adolescent left home, emphasizing the parents' desire to instill a sense of belonging within their child. And for another family, Sunday night dinner was a
ritual reserved only for very special occasions, such as job promotions or anniversaries, and thus, although they referred to it in passing, these parents did not perceive this ritual to be associated with their child either becoming an adolescent or leaving home.

Another example of the pivotal or rotating quality to rituals could be seen in the giving of gifts. For instance, within the findings, a mother related giving her daughter a ring that her mother had given her when she had been fifteen. This ritual giving of the ring had been identified as a relationship ritual because in the mother's description of it, the giving of the ring had symbolized future growth in the mother's relationship with her daughter. However, also within the findings, a father had talked about giving his son a leather jacket that had belonged to his father. Although the overt enactment of this ritual in comparison to the ring ritual would appear to be the same, the giving of a gift in this second example symbolized the father wanting to give his son a sense of belonging as he left home. When the father's story of the past had been examined, the theme of family membership had emerged and it then became apparent that the giving of the leather jacket had symbolized, on a deeper level, the father wanting his son to know about his membership to the family. Because of this pivotal quality in rituals, it is important to know what meanings people attach to the ritual, rather than attempt to understand the ritual based solely on its enactment. The researcher
suspects that this *pivotal quality* in rituals also exists between members of the same family, although this can not be confirmed since only parents had been interviewed in this study. For instance, if the researcher had interviewed the adult children of the parents in this study, it is hypothesized that these members of the family would have had *different* meanings of the rituals, or they may not have even considered certain events or interactions to have been rituals in the way that their parents had. Although this idea will be explored further in the concluding section, what is important to mention now is that the pivotal quality in rituals is connected to the concept of *stories*. The story that an individual has about a particular time period in the family life cycle, for instance, influences to a large extent the meaning the individual might give to the ritual. Therefore, the adult children of these parents most likely had a different experience of their adolescence than their parents had, and thus, one could anticipate that their understanding of certain rituals would have been very different from their parents. Or, other family members, such as the grandparents, would also probably have different stories to tell about their children's adolescence (the parents of this study) and thus, one could anticipate that the meanings they would give to certain rituals would also be different from what their children had interpreted. But, interestingly, when parents of the same family (the couple) in this study spoke about the rituals that were created or
developed as their child was either becoming an adolescent or leaving home, the meanings and understandings they gave to the ritual were fairly similar to one another. However, when these parents then told their own stories of the past, it became clearly evident that the deeper meaning of the ritual had emerged from one parent's past in particular. The deeper meaning of rituals pertains to the message or theme of the ritual that can not be determined through simply describing its enactment in the nuclear family but it is the message that emerges after having heard the parent's story. In this study, this was identified as the multigenerational theme.

What also emerged within the analysis as presented in the previous chapters was the multidimensional component of rituals. The multidimensional component of rituals specifically refers to the ritual's capacity to punctuate the present with symbolic reference to the past. Because of this unique ability to bring together past and present symbols simultaneously, the ritual also becomes a means for proclaiming a direction or message for the future. For example, a father in this study had described a ritual of leaving home to be going to university. In the analysis, this ritual had been identified as a destination ritual because of its emphasis on where one goes when leaving. This father had described the numerous arguments he had with his son who did not want to go to university and chose to leave another way. Each time the son attempted to leave
home, the father would find a way to entice him back home (i.e., through taking him out to dinner, giving him money, etc.) so that eventually he might go to university. Upon analysis of the father's story of the past, what had emerged as a dominant theme was **being prepared and safe in the world.** The symbol for safety in this father's family had been **education.** When his son did not choose this symbol in his own life, and left home via another route, the father had described the anxiety he had felt about his son not being "ready" to live on his own. The ritual of **going to university,** in this example, had arisen directly from the father's past, symbolizing preparation and safety, and punctuating the way to leave home in the father's new family. As can be seen from this brief example, the multidimensional nature of rituals in this study became increasingly evident upon the discovery of the multigenerational themes.

All of the rituals described by the fifteen mothers and fathers of this study contained what the researcher has identified as an **overt** message or meaning. This overt message or meaning pertained to how the parents' themselves had described the ritual in terms of its significance and enactment in the nuclear family, or the family of procreation. The first part of the analysis in this study focussed on the overt messages or meanings of the rituals by identifying them as either rituals of **becoming an adolescent** or **rituals of leaving home.** Within both of these categories
of rituals, certain properties were identified based on how the parents had described the rituals, particularly, in terms of their interpretations and perceptions of why the rituals had been created or developed with their children. The second part of the analysis had concentrated on the parents' stories of themselves in their families of origin. This part of the analysis did not intentionally examine rituals that had existed in the parents' families of origin but rather the focus had been on parents' perceptions, thoughts, and interpretations of their experiences being an adolescent and eventually leaving home. Sometimes, rituals that had existed in the past were mentioned, but at other times, there had not been any reference made regarding rituals in the family of origin. The interview guide (see Appendix A) had purposely been structured to enable parents to tell stories about their past, and in analyzing these stories, various themes were generated. It is these themes elected from the stories that gave the rituals parents had previously described a deeper symbolic significance, and a richer metaphorical quality. A point of caution must be made regarding what the researcher had identified as overt messages of the rituals and the deeper symbolic messages originating from the parents' stories which had been identified as the multigenerational themes. These are not absolute or completely separate distinctions. In many of the rituals parents spoke of, the overt message could be perceived as fairly similar to the multigenerational theme.
that had emerged upon hearing the parents' stories. For instance, in the example that was already presented regarding the giving of the leather jacket, the overt message of this ritual when the father had described it initially was on belonging. Within the father's story of his past, the theme of family membership had been identified. Thus, the message of belonging and the theme of family membership, although subtly different, are not unrelated. However, there were other examples of rituals described by parents where the overt message was quite different from the multigenerational theme. For instance, in the example of the ritual of family meetings (as presented earlier) the overt message, as described by the parents, had been on separation. When the parents spoke about these family meetings, the emphasis had been on recognizing and marking their son's increasing independence from the family, and therefore, this ritual had stood out for them as having indicated that their son had become an adolescent. However, upon hearing the mother's story of her past, the theme fears of loss and separation emerged, giving a deeper meaning to the ritual she had previously described. Without the mother's story, one may not have understood the metaphorical quality of the family meetings ritual, which although had recognized the son's separation from the family, on a deeper level, had symbolized the parents' fears of loss. And still, there were several other examples of rituals in this study where the overt message of the ritual
was unknown, and only through hearing the parent's story of
the past did the ritual develop meaning and symbolic
significance. This was observed in several of the
adolescent and family crisis rituals, an example being the
crisis of kicking the kid out. It was difficult to
understand the overt message or the symbolic significance of
this ritual when simply hearing about it in the context of
the nuclear family. Yet upon hearing the father's story of
the past, and the theme of being prepared and safe in the
world, it then became apparent that the ritual of kicking
the kid out had in fact honored this theme, and had
reflected an overwhelming concern of the parents regarding
their son's future. If one had not heard the father's
story, it might have appeared that this way of leaving had
occurred because of the parents' lack of concern and caring
for their son. Once again, it is the parents' stories, and
the multigenerational themes that emerge from these stories
that allow the rituals of the present to be understood in a
deeper way. The purpose of this discussion has been to
emphasize the that the overt messages of rituals may or may
not be different from the multigenerational themes that are
discovered as parents talk about their own recollections and
experiences. What is important to keep in mind is that
there is some degree of overlap and interconnection between
all of the properties identified within all three categories
(See Appendix F). Although the differences between them are
very real, they are not absolute.
A few final words on rituals and themes must be stated prior to discussing the further implications of these findings in the concluding section. As mentioned earlier, it appears, from the analysis of the data, that some stories become more *dominant* in the family of procreation than others. When parents described a particular ritual that had punctuated the time their child had become an adolescent or left home, it appeared that the ritual emphasized a specific theme from one of the parent's past in particular. On occasion, the ritual would highlight a predominant theme from both parents' stories of themselves, but in most cases, most of the rituals discovered in this study honored *one* predominant theme from *one* parent's story of the past. It is difficult to ascertain, based on the parameters of this study, *how* some stories become more dominant or more influencing in the creation or development of rituals than others. However, the researcher observed that the more emotionally intense as well as the more unresolved stories appeared to be the most influencing in terms of the multigenerational themes conveyed in the rituals. For instance, when two parents (the couple) would each tell a story of leaving home, it appeared that the story which evoked the most emotion (positive or negative) in a parent, or the story in which the parent had alluded in some way to the unresolved nature of the story, (ie, by commenting that "it was difficult to talk about"), would be the story that was embedded in the ritual. This conclusion is very
tentative and would have to be further examined in a future study. It is clear that some stories in families appear to carry more emphasis than others or are given more opportunities to be expressed, and it would be interesting to discover how this happens.
This final and concluding chapter will begin with a discussion of the limitations of this study. Following this, the findings of the data analysis will be compared to other studies on rituals and adolescence, as well as the multigenerational model delineated in Chapter two. Throughout the comparison and integration of the findings with the existing literature, potential questions for future research will be raised. Finally, the theoretical and clinical implications for social work will be explored.

Limitations of the Study

(What didn't happen, what couldn't happen)

One of the limitations of this study could be identified as the retrospective nature of the design. The parents interviewed in this study all had children who had left home in the past three years. These parents were asked to talk about their experiences with these children as well as their own experiences as adolescents in their families of origin. It is quite probable that these parents' perceptions of themselves and of their children had changed over time. For instance, given the retrospective nature of telling "stories", one could anticipate that the stories
parents told today might in fact be different from the stories they would have told yesterday about the same time period in their lives. Thus, the story they would tell a few years from today might be different than the one they told today. Although the retrospective nature of this study could be seen as a limitation because one was not able to obtain parents' first impressions or original stories about the various time periods in their lives (their child's adolescence, their child leaving home, etc.) this aspect of the study could also be deemed a strength. One could presume that with time, parents have been able to reflect on their experiences, as well as gain more information which might allow them to put their experiences in clearer perspective and integrate their experiences into a cohesive whole. This in itself allowed parents to acquire some emotional distance on these time periods, particularly if an initial crisis period had occurred or if the experience had been "painful" or distressing. The researcher presumed, based on previous studies done on "stories" that the meaning of stories is enriched over time, (Stone, 1988). The parents' stories of their children and themselves could be perceived as "evolutionary" and constantly "in the making", thus allowing for the full range of parents' perceptions, thoughts, feelings, and interpretations to emerge within the story. In this way, the retrospective nature of this study could be perceived as a strength, since the original purpose of the study had been to focus on parents' perceptions of
what had happened, rather than concrete facts.

Another limitation of the study had to do with the sample size. The sample was small and purposive in nature, (fifteen mothers and fathers) and from a qualitative research perspective, this could be perceived as limiting generalizability. However, some qualitative researchers would propose that a study's sample size does not necessarily indicate its ability to generalize, (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). What is important is developing conceptual clarity about the experiences of parents within a context. This can be achieved with fifteen interviews of mothers and fathers, and from there, the process of examining the particular topic in greater detail can begin. As previously indicated in the chapter on methodology, these parents were from somewhat different situations. The parents represented a variety of ages, different ages of children, different ages of when these children had left home, differences in level of contact with extended family members, very different experiences of having been an adolescent in their families of origin and leaving home, different professions and careers, different levels of education, and different geographical areas throughout North America and Europe in which they had lived with their original families.

However, even though there was some diversity amongst the parents interviewed, there were also several similarities which limited generalizability. These parents were all from a professional/middle socioeconomic group and
had been living in Canada a minimum of twenty years. All of the parents had been together (as a couple) since the birth of their child (children) and were still together at the time of the interview. Thus, no single or divorced parents were interviewed, biasing the data in terms not reflecting the large diversity of people who are parents in this society, but no longer part of the original couple. One has to wonder if the findings would have been different if the stories from single and divorced parents had been included in this study. What would have the rituals described by these parents have emphasized? Would the multigenerational themes of the rituals have been different from what was discovered? Would these parents' experiences of their children leaving home have been more or less difficult than parents who were still together?

The parents of this study were all Caucasian, therefore biasing the data in terms of ethnicity. Would different cultures have displayed differences in the use, creation or development of rituals punctuating the beginning and the end of adolescence? Would parents from other cultures have placed greater emphasis on the role of the extended family, and the participation of the extended family in the rituals? Would the rituals discovered with parents of other cultures have been more publicly or visibly ceremonious than the rituals that emerged in this study? Would the multigenerational themes surrounding parents' experiences of adolescence have been different?
A third limitation of the study was related to the biases of the researcher which were manifested in several ways. Obviously, the theoretical or conceptual orientation of an individual influences not only the choices regarding what kind of research to become engaged in, or what kind of research design to apply, but also the analysis of the data. It is quite probable that a researcher who was not coming from a multigenerational family therapy framework would have interpreted different categories in the data, or at least, would have heard the parents' stories of themselves in a different light, and may not have identified the multigenerational themes in the same way that the researcher had. For instance, how would a Jungian therapist have analyzed the themes emerging from the parents' stories? This leads to another bias of the researcher that had an impact on the study. The term ritual in this study was defined a particular way, based primarily on the work of cultural anthropologists (such as Victor Turner) who have studied this concept extensively. This was a definite choice on the part of the researcher based on a judgement that the psychology and family therapy literature had not adequately defined or applied this concept in the past. For certain, there were several components of specific family therapists' definitions of ritual (such as Even Imber-Black) that were acknowledged in the use of this concept within the study, however, the researcher's understanding of ritual had developed essentially through
the field of anthropology. This has been relevant to mention since the way in which one chooses to define an injunctive concept such as ritual can influence to some degree the analysis of the data.

A final limitation of the research pertained to the actual qualitative design of the study. The analysis was extremely time consuming, which included transcribing the data from audiotape into the written form, coding the transcribed interviews in terms of individual phrases, statements, and then main ideas. A tremendous number of hours were needed to generate categories and elect properties of these categories. Then an equally demanding amount of time was required to adequately analyze over thirty parents' stories in the attempt to discover themes. A qualitative study of this nature also generates an alarming amount of paperwork, both in the collection of the data (transcribing of interviews) and in the data analysis. This researcher accumulated over three hundred pages just in the transcription of seven interviews! Many hours were then needed to listen to the audiotapes of the remaining eight interviews, as well as transcribe relevant quotes, passages and stories from these interviews. In the attempt to recreate the reality studied, this study required much space in presenting the findings. The time and labour intensive characteristics of a qualitative research design can not be overlooked, and in this way is a limitation.
Integration of Findings with Literature

And Future Research Questions

(How does it fit together? What still needs to be done?)

This present section will present the findings of this study in the context of the previous literature. It is important to mention that the findings referred to in the following are not considered to be conclusions but rather they are theoretical assertions generated by the research conducted. Conclusion is a term that implies completion or termination, and since this study was exploratory in nature, the findings that have emerged from the data collection and analysis need to be examined further, possibly using other research methods. Although the following assertions are stated as facts, they are to be read as hypotheses, constantly evolving and potentially changing with new information.

(1) Rituals are multidimensional in nature, enabling the past, present, and future to be connected through the use of symbols.

Multidimensional refers to the ritual's capacity to punctuate the present with symbolic reference to the past. Because of this unique ability to bring together past and present symbols simultaneously, the ritual also becomes a means for proclaiming a direction for the future. Throughout this study, examples of rituals punctuating the
beginning and the end of adolescence were presented. Parents in this study described rituals they had created with their adolescent children, and it became evident in the analysis that these rituals had contained symbols and themes that had emerged from the past. The finding on rituals being *multidimensional* is in accordance to what Victor Turner (1967) described as the ritual's most potent component: the symbol. It is the symbol that connects the past with the present and the future. Wolin and Bennett (1984) had emphasized that family rituals were significantly related to the core culture of the family and had the robust quality in connecting themes over generations of families. Wolin and Bennett's (1984) work is related to the finding of this study pertaining to the multidimensional nature of rituals, in which symbols are used simultaneously, and the rituals honor themes of the past. This leads to another finding in this present study identified as multigenerational themes within the rituals, however, this will be discussed at a further point.

Rituals have the power to be symbolically different for different people, even members of the same family. This capacity was identified in the findings as the pivotal or rotating quality of rituals.

Within this study, there were several instances when parents would describe a particular ritual that had either been consciously or unconsciously created during the period of adolescence, and the symbolic significance of the ritual was different for each parent. For instance, a couple described
how they had taken their son out for a special dinner a few weeks after he had left home, in conflict with his father. For the mother in this family, the *ritual of the special dinner* had symbolized her way of wanting to celebrate their son's independence. However, the father in this family described that from his perspective, the *ritual of the special dinner* had symbolized a way to "entice" the son home, to let him know that the "door was open" so that he could come home again. The father had explained how *going to university* had been a ritual of leaving home in his family of origin, and when his own son had not left home in a similar way, the ritual of the special dinner, for this father, had been used to encourage him home again, so that this time, perhaps he would leave the right way. The *enactment* of the ritual was the same for the parents, however, the *symbolic significance* was different. Within the family therapy literature, others studying rituals have not addressed this pivotal quality. In fact, some researchers, such as Fiese (1992) have stated that it appears that the family's shared representation of the symbolic significance of its family rituals is important regarding how adolescents feel about themselves and the world. Fiese (1992) suggests that there are possible negative effects of disparate views of family rituals, although these potential negative effects are not elaborated. There is the suggestion, however, in Fiese's study that family members become more emotionally distant
from one another when their symbolic interpretations of the rituals are different. The data in this study do not correspond with Fiese's findings, in fact, it has appeared that rituals are powerful because of their ability to incorporate many levels of participation and multiple meanings. This finding corresponds with Victor Turner's definition of ritual being capable of representing contradictions. A possible area for future research would be to interview members of the same family to explore in more depth the various ways in which rituals are interpreted between family members.

(3) Contrary to what some of the previous research has indicated, this study revealed an abundance of family rituals that exist during the period of adolescence and as children leave home.

Most of the previous literature reviewed indicated that there were a lack of rituals and rites of passage surrounding the time period of adolescence in Western society. Some of the researchers have even suggested that it is because of this lack of rituals that adolescence is a difficult transition in the family. Haley (1973), Koback (1984) and Quinn (1985) have emphasized that this society has banished many definitive and precise rites of passage that mark the beginning and termination of adolescence. However, parents in this study described in great depth the various rituals they had created within their families as their children were becoming adolescents and leaving home. Many of the parents claimed, prior to the interview
beginning, that they were uncertain if they would be able to participate in this study since they were not sure if they could describe any rituals. Other parents mentioned, also in the beginning, that they had never really thought about rituals prior to being asked about them. As the interview progressed, these parents remembered events and occurrences that they considered to be rituals. Interestingly, the researcher observed that as parents thought about rituals, it was as if they remembered other rituals either in their current life or the past. The researcher suspects that it may not be that there is a "paucity of rituals" during adolescence but rather, it may be that families have become too close to them; that rituals are not always recognized and are often lost in the clutter of everyday life. It also may be that rituals have different meanings, not all of which facilitate transitions. Perhaps the rituals that have evolved in a primarily unconscious way, or the rituals that do not necessarily support change are not always thought of as rituals. Many rituals of this nature emerged in the interviews, and as parents began to speak of them, it was as if they began to recognize more of them. The interview process prompted parents to remember rituals they may have forgotten.

(4) Some rituals that punctuate the child becoming an adolescent in the family or leaving home facilitate change whereas other rituals maintain the status quo or actually prevent change from occurring.
This finding emerges from the previous one just mentioned. Most of the literature, when referring to rituals or rites of passage, deliberately highlights rituals that facilitate change. In fact, the psychology and family therapy literature referred to both these terms as if identical without any mention of rituals that actually prevented change from occurring. This idea - that some rituals actually serve to maintain the status quo or prevent change from occurring needs to be further researched and tested. Within this current study, some parents had described rituals that they had created to punctuate the time of their child becoming an adolescent however the ritual in many ways had "kept things the same" in the family, discouraging the adolescent from becoming more independent or separating from the parents. An example of this was seen in some of the adolescent crisis rituals where although the enactment of the crisis had indicated to the parents that they now had an adolescent in the house, the enactment of the crisis also had indicated to the parents that the adolescent was still "behaving" in childlike ways. In this way, the parents felt justified in continuing to treat the adolescent as a "child". Thus, the ritual of the adolescent crisis had served to actually "keep things the same". Since this idea has not really been elaborated within the literature, it needs to be addressed further in future studies on family rituals.

(5) Not all rituals are positive occurrences or events
in the family. Some rituals, such as the adolescent or family crisis rituals have evolved in a somewhat unconscious fashion, and although usually not positive in their enactment, they serve a purpose in the family.

Throughout the interviews with parents and then the analysis of the data, what emerged continually was the fact that some rituals of adolescence appear to have been deliberately created within the family in a conscious and direct way, whereas other rituals appear to have evolved in a rather unconscious way. When parents first spoke about the rituals in their family, they only remembered the ones that had been consciously created. Through the course of the interview, parents began to remember the "unconscious" rituals that had evolved within the family context. Some of these less deliberately planned rituals had been identified by parents as being "negative" occurrences or events that they had remembered. Although not all crises were considered to be rituals, some of the adolescent or family crises did have the primary characteristics of a ritual and when examined within the context of the parents' own stories of themselves, there appeared to be symbolic significance to the past. What is important to emphasize here is that often, crises carry or honor symbols from the past, and when these crises have become rituals, (as described in the chapter on findings) they serve the purpose of either facilitating or preventing change in the family. Some researchers, in the literature review, refer to these kind of rituals as "symptomatic" rituals, (Schwartzman 1983) and
they suggest these symptomatic rituals need to be replaced by new, healthy rituals without the symptoms. Haley, (1980) suggested that the symptomatic ritual takes on meaning, may need attention, and/or can be viewed as a metaphor for other processes within the social system. Many researchers then suggest devising a "therapeutic ritual" to replace these symptomatic rituals. This researcher believes that only the surface of this concept has been touched - whether crisis rituals, which appear to resemble what others have termed as symptomatic rituals should indeed be altered in the context of the therapist's office or whether they should be further explored in terms of understanding their symbolic significance is difficult to ascertain within the realm of this current study. This requires more research, possibly of the qualitative kind, to understand the nature of these rituals in more depth. However, two aspects of this discussion needs to be emphasized before moving on and these are the following; (1) to label rituals in the family as symptomatic adds a certain tone of pathology to what this researcher had observed as naturally occurring rituals in the family during a transitional time, (2) the symbolic significance of these kind of rituals was evident through the multigenerational themes that were honored as parents told their own stories of the past. Other researchers studying "symptomatic rituals" do not appear to have examined the symbolic significance of these rituals through understanding the past of the parents. What emerged in this
The present study regarding crisis rituals was not about a family's pathology but rather, a family's way of surviving and making sense out of the world. The way in which these crisis rituals had indeed connected the present with symbols and themes from the parents past could be understood within the context of Freeman's multigenerational model, as emphasized by the final two assertions.

(6) When parents relate stories about their own adolescence in their families of origin, and the story of how they left home, certain themes or messages emerge in these stories. These same themes are apparent in the rituals of adolescence created in the family of procreation.

In describing the first principle of the multigenerational model, Freeman refers to the family as a multigenerational emotional system, (Freeman, 1992). According to this principle, families are a continually moving, changing, evolving and powerful force in their members' lives, and thus, various relationship patterns and trends are passed on through the generations. This principle relates to the above theoretical assertion generated through the data analysis. Interestingly, although only five stories were actually presented in the chapter on findings, all of the parents' stories gathered within this study (which amounted to over thirty stories) contained one or more of the four multigenerational themes discovered in this study. These same themes were discovered in the rituals that parents had described of their children being adolescents. What emerged as a finding in this study was that in order to understand
the metaphorical quality of the rituals described, and to fully comprehend the symbolic significance of the ritual, one had to hear the story parents told about themselves. This is in accordance to Freeman's (1992) multigenerational model which postulates that parents' experience of their children's adolescence is connected to how they experienced being adolescents in their families of origin. Even more poignantly, the manner in which parents leave home influences how they are able to say good-bye to their own children. This finding was observed throughout the interviews. When parents described the rituals punctuating their children leaving home, although these rituals in themselves were often very different from rituals that had existed in the parents' family of origin, the meaning placed on these rituals by the parents had emerged from that time period.

What was left unresolved in the parents' experiences of adolescence and leaving home in their families of origin is played out in some way within the rituals created in the nuclear family. The rituals honor the past of both parents in a unique way.

The second principle of Freeman's (1992) multigenerational model used in this study contended that every individual emerges from his/her family of origin with a certain degree of unfinished business. This principle refers to the idea that some present day responses are shaped by past anxiety producing experiences. The following mother expressed this idea quite profoundly when describing the ritual that had
been created as her daughter left home;

And so we had a beautiful party to let all our friends, her friends, and our families know that she was moving out on her own. I wanted so much for her experience in leaving to be different from mine; I remember how traumatic it had been for me, and how horrible my mother had been about the whole thing. So I knew, long before she actually left home, that it would be different for my daughter. But as I looked into her eyes that night as we sipped our champagne, I saw myself and my mother all in the same moment. I saw myself through my daughter's courage and determination, and I saw my mother in the momentary look of fear and uncertainty that my daughter couldn't hide. And then, it was so strange, but I was able to forgive my mother, for whatever she must have experienced as I was leaving home.

The ways in which parents respond to their adolescent's separation attempts and eventual leaving home, through the use and creation of rituals indicates how these parents honor their original families. Freeman (1992) discusses this idea in terms of the degree of loyalty, debt, and attachment issues carried into the new family. The multigenerational themes discovered within this study, through parents' stories and through the re-examination of rituals in the context of these stories, carry forth the unresolved issues of the past as well as new messages for the future.

Theoretical and Clinical Implications
(So what does it mean?)

There are several theoretical and clinical implication of this study to the field of social work. This concluding
section will begin with a discussion of the theoretical implications of the findings and then turn to the clinical applications.

Theoretically, the findings generated through this study correspond to Freeman's (1992) multigenerational model on family therapy. This model delineates a particular way of thinking about families, emphasizing the importance of family connections in people's lives. The findings concur with the principles that a family is a multigenerational system, and that each individual emerges from his/her family of origin with a certain degree of unfinished business (Freeman, 1992). As social workers or family therapist, it is important to understand the theoretical connotations of these principles because they remind one of the impact of families in the lives of individuals. Whatever the theoretical framework by which one does research or clinical work with individuals and/or families, it would appear that the framework must encompass a multigenerational perspective in some fashion. Without the understanding of this theoretical premise, the study of the human phenomenon remains one-dimensional and incomplete. Throughout the analysis this study, the impact of families in the lives of individuals was evidenced in a myriad of ways. Particularly, it became apparent that even when not asked about the family of origin, many parents had difficulty describing what had occurred in their new family (family of procreation) without reference to the past in some way.
This study demonstrated how parents honor the past by the creation or development of certain rituals. The theoretical implication of this finding is important in terms of understanding how themes from the past are often honored through the replication of certain symbols. This finding also accentuates Freeman's multigenerational model by emphasizing how "unfinished business" may be expressed symbolically, often without words or conscious awareness, through family rituals.

The discovery of the pivotal and multidimensional nature of rituals is theoretically integral to how this concept was originally defined within the field of anthropology. By comprehending how rituals can be perceived differently by members of the same family, or how the enactment of what would appear to be the same ritual (ie, Sunday night dinner) can be symbolically different for different families, one becomes increasingly aware of the power of symbols in rituals. The symbols in rituals are what enable them to be multidimensional - capable of representing various time periods simultaneously. Often, what emerges in the family therapy and psychology literature is an emphasis on the enactment of rituals, (the preparation and acting out of the ritual), whereas the findings in this study suggest that the emphasis should be on the symbols of rituals. Rituals are both robust and elusive in their symbolic significance, as well as their ability to be metaphorical, but to truly understand these characteristics,
one must appreciate, on a theoretical level, the importance of symbols.

The unfolding of multigenerational themes in rituals is theoretically meaningful to the current research being done on family stories. Freeman's multigenerational model (1992) emphasizes that people's relationships are shaped by their family stories. All kinds of rituals were described within this study, but the symbolic significance of these rituals became more apparent when they were examined in the context of people's stories. At times, when the rituals had evolved in a very unconscious way in the family, the only way to discern the symbolic significance of these rituals was to hear parents describe their own experiences as adolescents in their families of origin. The value of *stories*, not only as a way of accessing the symbolic significance of family rituals but also as a way of understanding on a deeper level how people survive and make sense out of the world, can not be overlooked. Theoretically, this indicates that what people have to say about the past, or the stories that they carry with them about themselves, influences how they interpret and come to understand what has occurred in the present. A theoretical question of interest would be whether people's stories of the past transform as their perceptions and/or interpretations of the present change or become more refined.

It appears important to recognize and be somewhat cognizant of research being done in other disciplines.
relevant to the fields of social work and family therapy. The study of rituals and stories has been explored in great depth by anthropologists (Turner, 1964; Levi-Strauss, 1966; Leach, 1966; Rappaport, 1971). Since these concepts have now appeared in clinical and empirical studies done by social workers and family therapists, it is important to be aware of how they were first used, how they were defined, and in what context they appeared. The study of families and their experiences, particularly what they have to say in their own words, appears in various other fields such as sociology, anthropology and literature. Theoretically, this is significant in terms of developing a model or framework by which to understand the human experience more fully. This study focussed on what parents had to say, in their own words, about the experience of adolescence. The theoretical implication of this focus do not remain solely within social work or family therapy, but become part of the larger body of knowledge in other fields. The overlap and interconnection between the social science must not be forgotten as one designs and conducts research.

The clinical implications of this study emerge from the theoretical considerations just illustrated. There are numerous implications to social work and/or family therapy practice based on what has been discovered theoretically within this study. Assuming that what one does in practice or as a clinician is related or influenced to some degree by theory, then every theoretical consideration discussed
could have a subsequent clinical implication. However, for the purpose of concluding this thesis, only the two most prominent clinical ramifications will be discussed.

What arose as clinically significant within this study is a model of health. Freeman's multigenerational model (1992) emphasizes the wisdom and health in individuals and families. By adopting the fundamental premise that people behave and respond in ways that enable them to feel safe in the world, the principles in Freeman's model honor and search for the inherent health in families rather than focus on pathology. Throughout the interviews with parents, and the analysis of the data, what emerged repeatedly was that parents experiences and responses to their children becoming adolescents and eventually leaving home were based on health, not pathology. Even what appeared to be "symptomatic" in terms of the kinds of rituals created, such as adolescent or family crisis rituals, when these were examined in the context of the parents' stories, what emerged as paramount were themes indicative of how much parents cared about their children. The multigenerational themes discovered in this study, family membership, love and nurturance, being prepared and safe in the world, and fears of loss and separation highlighted parents' wisdom based on how they had remembered the past. Regardless of what actually had occurred in the past, parents created rituals in the present that reflected what they had learned from that time period. When working with families and
adolescents, it is important to look beyond the presenting problems and "symptoms", and understand how they connect to the past. Even more importantly, one must refrain from labelling parents' reactions to their children's demands for more independence as unhealthy or dysfunctional, but rather, an attempt must be made to search for the deeper meanings, or the symbolic significance of certain responses. One way to do this is to become more aware, as social workers or family therapists, of the rituals that exist in the family.

This leads to a second clinical implication of this study. Families have an abundance of rituals that are either created in a deliberate and overt way, or have evolved in a somewhat unconscious fashion. Many parents in this study had initially reported that they did not have any rituals. However, through the interview process, all of these parents remembered events, interactions, or activities that they could identify as rituals. This finding is important to remember when working clinically with families and adolescents. Much of the family therapy literature in recent years has focused on "constructing therapeutic rituals" with families who are experiencing difficulty and do not have any rituals of their own. The findings of this study contest the premise that some families do not have any rituals. Instead of attempting to devise new rituals with families, it would seem that more emphasis should be placed on assisting families to become more familiar with the rituals they already have, and to develop a keener
understanding of the symbolic significance of these rituals. In this way, the focus is about connecting people to their past rather than creating "new rituals" that may not be very meaningful outside of the therapist's office. Having observed how powerful symbols were within the rituals parents created with their adolescent children in this study, one must question whether "therapeutic rituals" can ever be as symbolically meaningful as the rituals that already exist in the family. Most of the symbols discovered in this study had emerged from the parents' past experiences, and very often, the parents themselves were not initially aware of how these symbols appeared in the present. Through symbols, the rituals became multidimensional, able to connect the past and the present with the future. Because of symbols, the rituals often became meaningful to the parents in very different ways, able to sustain contradictions and represent the pasts of both parents in a unique way. How can a therapist create a ritual that will ever be as symbolically significant as the ones that already exist in the family? Even if these "therapeutic rituals" are created together with the families, as many researchers have suggested, in what way will these "new rituals" connect people to their own stories of the past? Would it not be more respectful and honorable to a family's history to enable the family members to take ownership of the idiosyncratic but natural rituals in their lives? Would it not be more therapeutic to help individuals
and families become more aware of the *unconscious symbols* that punctuate their lives, instead of attempting to create new symbols that may not have as much depth or meaning? Embarking on a journey of exploration and discovery, this study has opened the doors to further questions, and in this way, is a beginning.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Appendix A

Framework for Understanding Parents' Experiences of Adolescence and the Use of Rituals

Types/Dimensions/Conditions

- Old family rituals transformed to recognize adolescence in the family. Rites of Fun and ritual of Sunday night dinner.

- Emphasis is on how to separate but remain connected, i.e., ritual of family meetings.

- Relationship changes between parent/adolescent, i.e., ritual of canoe trip.

- Crisis either facilitates or prevents change, i.e., ritual of teenage pregnancy.

Properties

- Transformed Rituals

- Separation Rituals

- Relationship Rituals

- Adolescent Crisis Rituals

- Rituals of Destination

- Rituals of Belonging

- Rituals of Leaving Home

- Family Crisis Rituals

Categories

- Rituals of becoming an Adolescent

- Rituals of Leaving Home

- Family Crisis Rituals

- Family Membership, Loyalty, and Continuity

- Love and Nurturance

- Being Prepared and Safe in the World

- Fears of Loss and separation

Multigenerational Themes in Rituals

- What it means to be a family member, on the inside, part of a sacred group.

- Affection and care are expressed and felt.

- Encouraging independence (leaving is O.K.) if one is equipped for life outside of family.

- Leaving threatens family, and punctuates the losses.
Letter to parents from referrals through friends and/or contacts

Appendix B

Dear Mr. and Mrs. (Family name)

Through our mutual friend (name of person) I was informed that you would not mind if I wrote to you. As a candidate in the Masters program in social work at the University of British Columbia, I am about to begin a research study which will involve parents who have experienced at least one of their children being an adolescent.

Although there is much written on adolescence in general, as well as the problems specific to these children, there is very little written about the experience of parents of adolescents. The purpose of this study is to better understand the experience of parents who, like yourselves, have had an adolescent child. How did you deal with the problems or concerns that arose in particular, and how did your own experiences as an adolescent help prepare you for helping your child through his or her own adolescence?

By sharing aspects of your own personal experience of your child's adolescence, you will help broaden the understanding of issues in this area. This will lead to more effective treatment for parents, families, and adolescents in conflict/crisis with one another.

If you agree to participate in this study, this would entail being interviewed together by Lisa Shatzky, for approximately 1 to 2 hours. The interview will be audiotaped to ensure accuracy in recording your responses. The tape will be transcribed into the written form and then the tape will be erased. Your confidentiality will be protected in that at no time will your name, address, phone number, or any other identifying information appear on any of the research material.

Please note that your choice not to participate will in no way jeopardize any future contact with the University of British Columbia, or any other agency.

Thank-you for your time and consideration. I will wait for you to contact me in the next week if you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, or if you wish to participate in this study. I may be contacted either at my home number, 224-3665 or at my office, 873-5501.

Very sincerely yours,

Lisa Shatzky, B.A., B.S.W., M.S.W. (Candidate)
Appendix C

Parents Interview Consent Form

Adolescent Crisis As Rite Of Passage: An Exploratory Study of Multigenerational Themes.

Faculty Advisors: David Freeman, D.S.W.
Professor
School of Social Work,
University of British Columbia
822-5070

Garry D. Grams, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
Department of Family Practice,
University of British Columbia
822-5431

Student Researcher: Lisa Shatzky, B.A., B.S.W.
M.S.W. Candidate,
School of Social Work.
Family Therapist at the Elizabeth Fry Society of Greater Vancouver.
224-3665 or 873-5501

The period of adolescence is often viewed as a transitional time in the family life cycle. The purpose of this study is to better understand the perspectives and thoughts of parents who have experienced their child in the period of adolescence, and in particular, what they remember of that time period that was difficult or problematic for the parents and the adolescent. Another purpose of this study is to understand in more depth what parents do when their children are adolescents and what they recall of their own adolescence in their families of origin.

By sharing aspects of your own personal experience of your child's and your own adolescence, you will help broaden the understanding of issues in this area. This will lead to more effective treatment for parents, families, and adolescents in conflict or crisis with one another.

Information will be gathered in face to face interviews with parents together. Interviews will be conducted by Lisa Shatzky, (224-3665 or 873-5501) who currently works as a family therapist with the Elizabeth Fry Society and is a candidate for the Master of Social Work degree.

Your confidentiality will be protected in that at no time will your name, address, phone number, or any other identifying information appear on any of the research material. The interview will be audiotaped to ensure
accuracy in recording your responses. The tape will be transcribed into written form and then the tape will be erased.

If you consent to this interview, you are free to withdraw at any time or to refuse to answer any of the questions. Any such choice will in no way jeopardize any further or future contact or service that you may have, either with the Elizabeth Fry Society, the University of British Columbia, or any other agency. This interview will take approximately 1 to 2 hours.

As you are aware, talking and reflecting about a past event or time period that may have been problematic or a crisis can sometimes be difficult, even painful. If at any point in the interview, strong emotions are evoked for you, these can be addressed with the interviewer as they arise, or after the interview has finished, whichever is preferable for you. Please feel free to ask any questions as well.

Please indicate your formal consent to being interviewed and to the utilization of the interview material for the above noted research study. Your signature also acknowledges your receipt of a copy of the consent form.

Signature(mother):

Signature(father):

Signature(interviewer):

Date:
Appendix 1

BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCES SCREENING COMMITTEE FOR RESEARCH AND OTHER STUDIES INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

INVESTIGATOR: Freeman, D.
UBC DEPT: Social Work
INSTITUTION: Homes of parents
TITLE: Adolescent crisis as rite of passage: an exploratory study of multigenerational themes
NUMBER: B91-413
CO-INVEST: Grams, G. Shatzky, L.
APPROVED: MAY 4 1992

The protocol describing the above-named project has been reviewed by the Committee and the experimental procedures were found to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects.

Shirley H. Thompson
Dr. R.D. Spratley
Director, Research Services
and Acting Chairman

THIS CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL IS VALID FOR THREE YEARS FROM THE ABOVE APPROVAL DATE PROVIDED THERE IS NO CHANGE IN THE EXPERIMENTAL PROCEDURES
Appendix E
Interview Guide

Demographic Information:

Age of parents
Occupations
Income
Where they live
Number of kids - ages - sex - living at home?
elsewhere?
left home at what age?
First time leaving?
Any return home?

What does child do currently (oldest child/first born)?
Kind of counselling/professional help because of adolescent
being the I.P.? (family therapy, self help group,
psychologist, etc.)

Providing Definition of Ritual:

Rituals are coevolved symbolic acts that include not only the ceremonial aspects of the actual presentation of the ritual, but the process of preparing for it as well. It may or may not include words, but does have both open and closed parts which are held together by a guiding metaphor. Repitition can be a part of rituals, through either the content, the form, or the occasion. Rituals may have multiple meanings for the family, as well as a variety of levels of participation. (Imber-Black, 1988)

Explain the definition - give a few examples - celebrations, ceremonies, patterned interactions or events, things they have always done together - cultural rituals such as Christmas/Valentine's Day/Mother's Day, etc - family traditions, either nuclear family or extended - family life cycle events (weddings, births, etc.) - day to day life rituals, like getting up in the morning, bedtime, eating together, whatever......make sure definition is understood. These are considered normative rituals.

Throughout this interview, I am interested in your thoughts, perceptions, interpretations, experiences and reflections on these areas.
Questions Pertaining to Ritual Life of the Family:

(1) When was the last family event that you celebrated? (Nuclear family? Extended family?)
(2) How often would you say that the family gathers together to mark something, nuclear family and extended family?

(3) Do you think you get together more or less than other families you know?

(4) Does this family have any day to day routines?

(5) Would you say there are certain traditions, or things that you do, that you carry over from year to year?

(6) Would you say that the kinds of things you do as a family (traditions, ceremonies, celebrations, daily routines, have changed over the years, or as the child (children) has grown older?

(Part 1 & 2)
Questions Pertaining to Adolescent Child:

(7) Tell me a story about when ____ became an adolescent. For instance, when did it become apparent to you? Was it the same for the two of you? How did you know, that ____ was indeed an adolescent? (PROBE: was it age, behavior, etc.?)

(8) Do you remember doing anything different when ____ became an adolescent, or thinking anything different about ____? Did you talk about it?

(9) Do you remember doing something special or different to mark this change, or to acknowledge to ____ and yourselves that he/she was now an adolescent? Could you tell me more what this was about, or what it meant or signified to you? Was the extended family involved (aunts, uncles, grandparents, cousins, etc.)? (PROBE: celebrations, traditions, rituals, etc.)
Tell me a story about a particular incident, or time period during adolescence that was particularly difficult for the two of you, that you would describe either as a crisis period, or a very stressful time in your lives. (PROBE: what happened, what did you do, who did you talk to, see, etc.)

A. What did you tell yourselves at the time about what was happening?
B. What did you learn about yourselves during this time?
C. What did you learn about that you did not already know, prior to this happening?
D. What do you think the effect was on the family? The extended family?

We spoke about rituals previously. Do you think there were any rituals (patterns, ceremonies, traditions, get-togethers, or essentially, things that you did together, etc.) that either changed, were modified, or especially created during this particular time period? Could you describe what these were - who was involved, what actually occurred, perhaps what it signified to you at the time? Was either of your extended families involved?

In telling me the story that you have about this "crisis" or "problematic" period, what do you think was the most difficult (or painful) part of the whole thing for you? Specifically, what do you think caused you the most anxiety? How was it the same or different for the two of you? Reflecting on it a bit more. what do you think it was about for you?

(Only if oldest child has left home) Could you tell me the story about how eventually left home? (PROBE: what actually happened, when, what was it like, etc.)

A. Was there anything special or different that you did to mark this transition, or emphasize this difference in the family?

Questions Pertaining to Each Parent's Own Experiences of Adolescence:

In re-telling what happened with _____, it must bring back some memories for you, whether it be similar or disimilar to your own experience. Could you tell me what you remember of being an adolescent?
(15) Do you recall an experience or an event, as you were an adolescent, that created some conflict between you and your parents? What was that about?

(16) What kinds of rituals do you remember in your family during your adolescent years? (PROBE: traditions, day to day routines, etc.) Did these change as you grew older?

(17) In recalling your own adolescence and eventual leaving home, what would you say were the important messages or lessons your parents tried to pass on to you about being a family? (PROBE: an example being, things they would say to you, beliefs, world views, values, etc.)

(18) Could you tell me a story about what it was like for you to leave home? (PROBE: Did your parents do anything to mark this transition?)

(19) In your perspective, what would you say is the role your parents have had with your child (children)?
Appendix F
Sample Transcript
(all names have been changed)
(First interview out of two with these parents)

LS: This interview is about parents' experiences of their children being adolescents. I am also interested in what you remember of your own experiences, being an adolescent, and I will also be exploring with you, your use of rituals, in your life in general, and with your adolescent in particular. I do not think the term "ritual" is used extensively in this culture, therefore, I mean, it may be used a lot, but I don't know if everyone has the same definition for it. So, I am going to read to you a definition of the term "ritual" that has its roots in anthropology and in family therapy and I will explain this definition as I go along. Basically, it encompasses everything possible, and I got this definition from someone called Imber-Black, who has studied rituals as a concept extensively.

(Here, I read out loud the providing definition of Ritual)

LS: So, do you have any questions, about the definition as such, or the way I have described the word ritual?

LS: Well, I would like to begin with a few questions pertaining to the ritual life in your family...these questions are a bit more straight forward than other questions to come. Now, thinking back, when was the last family event that you celebrated together, either as a nuclear family, like the two of you and Sean or with others in your extended family?

M: Your birthday (turning to father)

F: Last night? Yea...

M: You mean last night's supper?

F: Yea, aren't Sunday nights like a ritual? We always do that, the Sunday night dinner.

M: Yes, that's right, Sunday night dinner is like a ritual in our house.

F: Yea, ever since Sean moved out, it has become a ritual...

M: No, way before then...like, ever since Sean turned twelve, Sunday night dinners have been a big thing...I think
as he got older he stopped eating dinner with us to be with his friends, so then Sunday night became an even much bigger thing.

F: Yes, that's right. He would be gone Friday and Saturdays to be with his friends, so we would insist on seeing him Sunday nights. We needed to have an excuse to see him...like, we had not seen him the whole weekend. So, the Sunday night dinner became sacred, and often, we would take turns cooking, so Sean learned how to cook during this time as well.

LS: Did this Sunday night dinner occur when he was not living here as well? Like when he had moved out?

M: Yes.

F: Yea, maybe just one Sunday he had missed...I think he was pissed off at us.

M: Yes, I think he was kind of making a statement, like, I do not have to do this anymore.

LS: Can you think of other things you do, like, in a way in which the nuclear and extended families come together or get together to mark something, or to celebrate?

M: You mean like Christmas?

LS: Yea, like that.

F: Well, I think Christmas and birthdays...they're the most important.

M: But, my family are too far away...they do not really take part in these things, only every few years.

F: My family are also far, but they get here more often than yours, (turns to mother).

LS: In your opinions, thinking about rituals and so on, do you think that you, as a family, get together with your extended families, more or less than other families you know?

M: I would say less.

F: Yea...I think less.

LS: Why do you think that is?

M: Why do I think that? Well, families, well, we hardly ever get together with our families...I mean, we aren't even home for dinner that much, not really, and my family lives
really far away, and so do his, like everyone is very far away.

F: Well, that may be some of it, for certain. But there is something behind it, like, it is an expression for what our families are like. In my family and in your family, there is a lot of distance. Our families are distant.

LS: What kind of distance here are you talking about, physically, emotionally?

F: Emotionally. Well, physically as well, although my family is not as physically far. Well, they are all across Canada. But this whole idea of emotional closeness, well, I think it is like a foreign language to my parents. So, I don't know...regarding rituals, I think the rituals my family had were fairly hollow. I don't really know though...we had a lot of rituals...but, I need to think about this....

LS: How about you (turning to mother), do you remember a lot of rituals growing up or a few rituals?

M: Oh yes, I remember lots of rich rituals growing up...my mother was really into holiday rituals, and we certainly had to have dinner every night together, and ah, well, I come from a very enmeshed family...and ah, and ah, like, closeness was required, which is why I am so distant from my family...I don't really enjoy their kind of closeness.

LS: Would you say there are certain traditions, or things that you do, like when the two of you first got together as a couple, like traditions that you carry from year to year?

F: Well, Christmas is a big one. It has always been a big thing for us. And, something as simple as having a coffee together in the morning, has become a tradition.

M: And, like coffee, as a way of spending time together. Like, we don't read the paper or anything, but it is a way for us to spend time together. Like, Sean used to come and sit on our laps, when he was young.

F: It has been a while since he has done that!

M: And Friday night martinis...that's a tradition for us.

F: I don't know...

M: Well, Friday is special, a highlight of my week. Even though we both work Saturdays now, Friday night is still special, like it is time we spend alone and...
F: We often go out for dinner on Friday nights.
M: We may even have one drink or so.

LS: Would you say that the kinds of things you do as a family, like in terms of traditions, ceremonies, celebrations, daily routines, and so on, have they changed over the years, from when you both got together or as Sean got older?

F: Well, certainly around food, yes. You know, when Sean was small, we lived on the island, in a very small community so in many ways our life style was different, and as we left the island, so when he was younger, we could not afford to go out to eat, so we would have special dinners, and like, I would ask him, what do you want to have as your special dinner, and then we would all discuss what the special dinner would be.

LS: You have mentioned food before, as being part of a particular ritual. What do you think "food" signifies to you, what does it mean?

M: It's very significant to me...it's about nurturing, ah, I think. There is a lot of personal stuff around food too.

LS: What about for you? (turning to father)

F: For me it is different, in a way. Food is one thing, but going out for dinner is , ah, I think has more meaning. It is a way to celebrate. It is also a way of how you see yourself. Ah, you know, like Sean could see himself as someone who is successful, well to do, sophisticated...when we would go out to eat, these things would in a way become emphasized.

M: It's just luxurious...

F: Well, yea, that is luxury, I think , really, it was a way of introducing Sean to the world, ...

M: ah huh...

F: So, it is not just the food that is important but, ah...

LS: A way of life?

F: Ah, not really, well....maybe, well, it is not really our way of life...

M: No but, say, introduce someone to a way of life, a more luxurious way of life...
F: Yea, like, it would open up more possibilities for sure, ah, like it may be uncomfortable in a restaurant, but at least he knows about it then, about that being there, and...ah...

M: Yea, and his favorite meal was a meal that we never cooked, that was sushi...like, it is exotic. It is also very much going out to eat, for me, is a taste of the exotic, it has a lot to do with as a way of making the world bigger for myself.

LS: And this is something you can recall doing, very early on with Sean?

M: Oh yea... I remember being so proud of Sean when we walked into a strange capucino bar in Victoria, he said,"this looks like a place where you can get almond milk", and I thought, ah, my son is so sophisticated... you know that feeling?

LS: Yes.

M: Well, it was very important on the island, in the community where we lived, because it seemed like the world was so small, and so provincial, and so unsophisticated, and I thought it was important to show him more,...yes, that's true, it was very very important for me at that time, and it is important for me now, the experience,...like I can't travel across Europe, but I can go eat all over the country.

LS: That is interesting. We will probably get back to some of this a bit later, these questions were in a way to get a sense, for me, of your use and understanding of rituals. So, now, I would like you to tell me a story, of what you remember, or what comes to mind when Sean first became an adolescent, or was there a particular point that you remember stood out...you both may recall different things, or points.

LS: Do you want me to explain more, what I mean?

F: No, I think I know what you mean,...but I am trying to figure out when, it dawned on me that he was an adolescent...for me it was probably a particular weekend that stood out. Like a friend of mine had a cabin up at Whistler, and Sean wanted to come up with us...

M: And we assumed that he would come...

LS: Because he had in the past?

M: We just never left him behind.

LS: How old was he, at the time?
M: He was just thirteen.

F: Maybe fourteen?

M: No, he was just thirteen,...

F: And we had said we would leave early the next morning, and he had been, ah, I forget really, but there were some problems at the time...

M: We were having huge fights about doing his laundry and cleaning up his room, and all that stuff and it had gotten really bad.

F: And so he basically refused.

LS: To go to Whistler?

F: No, to do his laundry.

M: No, we told him to do his laundry tonight, and he said no, I will get up in the early in the morning and do it. And we said, well, we were living in a smaller place at the time, so we said, no, you will wake us up, we don't want you to get up in the morning and do it, do it tonight. And he said no, I don't care. So, we said, you can't go then.

F: Well it was more than just that, we had a huge fight about something, and so he left and spent the night somewhere else, and we didn't really know where he was.

M: Well, we suspected where he might be.

F: So we left for Whistler and called the next day, and he was to spend the weekend alone.

M: And he slept in our bed...

LS: So, what happened...you called, and...?

F: He had spent the night at his friend's place and then came home the next morning to find that we were gone, and he was very angry with us.

M: He may even still be pissed off at us... he certainly was years later.

F: Yes, he was, that's right.

M: He felt that that was really outrageous behavior on our parts...that we left him behind, and that we were into this power struggle about his laundry,... and that we were trying to control him....now, I kind of agree with him.
F: Well, I don't. I think it may have been unreasonable the way we did it, but I do not think being in a power struggle with him was unreasonable at all, I still, even today, would have left him behind. I just wouldn't do it that way.

M: Well, in retrospect, what was horrible about it at the time was that we were fighting a lot with him, and there was some talk about kicking him out, or giving him social worker numbers, and....ah....

LS: This was prior to the Whistler weekend?

M: Yes, there was a lot of conflict for a few months before that weekend, this was just the central point. And, after that, I think he decided to cool it a bit, you know...

F: Well, I don't know...

M: Or he went underground.

F: I think that's it...yea...

LS: Was this the event where you realized that he was an adolescent now?

F: Well, I think that crystalized it for us - that he wasn't our compliant little boy anymore. Until then, we had always been able to do something about it, but now, we couldn't. Until then, we could, somehow, get him to do what we wanted him to do. But with this weekend, I think, ah, we realized and he realized that he did not have to do what we wanted...a difficult realization.

LS: How about you? (turning to mother)

M: Yea, I would say the same for me...it crystalized it...like I remember talking to a friend about it who wanted to teach us how to overpower Sean, physically, and restrain him, and I realized that I did not want to do it that way, but I realized that we were in a difficult time, uh...

F: A power struggle.

M: Yea..yes.

LS: Do you recall your thoughts about it at the time? What did you tell yourselves at the time about what was happening?

M: I don't know. I know that I felt really unhappy about it at the time. I felt really unhappy that he would not choose to go with us, by not doing his laundry. Like, we're
not asking him to crawl bare kneed along the street or anything, it's like, just do your laundry, O.K.!' I remember being very unhappy about the relationship between you two (turns to father) I felt there was tremendous conflict between the two of you and I wanted to do something about it. And, there was a certain amount of resignation as well, like, I was studying family therapy at the time, and I knew about, like, what kids do, and I had some expectations about conflict from my own adolescence, and from my own beliefs about what adolescence is like and about and such.

LS: Those beliefs...what are they?

M: Well, you know, my own experience being an adolescent, and all the reading I had done, like, I guess I just believed that conflict to some degree was inevitable, that it was the way Sean was going to leave the family, like, that is what being an adolescent was about. I guess I believed that adolescents in general were obnoxious, and argumentative so that they could leave more easily...I don't know, something like that is what I believed.

LS: What about you (turning to father), what did you think at the time, what did you tell yourself about what was happening?

F: I didn't have a clue. (laughs) My adolescence had been, ah, well, I didn't have one. Period. I came to Canada, and I was twelve, and it took some time to get used to being a Canadian and then I went to university when I was sixteen, and I worked hard, and got top marks, so, uh, about Sean, well, I didn't know what to do with this monster at all. I mean, really, I had no clue. But I did have a lot of fear, like, Sean was not doing well in school, and he never has, so I was fearful as to what would happen to him, how he would end up, and ah, I remember reading an article at the time, as part of my work on psychosis, and uh, I began to wonder if this could explain our son...like, did he have a psychosis? (laughs) But, well, I was fearful, because I could see where this would all lead to...and um, and I really got worried about him, I almost had nightmares at the time. But I am not as worried now, like, now, I can see where he has certain strengths, ...like I know there is some way that he can survive, he's got some strengths, but anyway, I got really freaked by his refusal to do what I thought was simply a responsible thing to do, you know, about the laundry. Christ, like, I never disagreed with my parents, are you kidding? (laughs) It just wasn't done when I was growing up, never. So, I really didn't have much understanding about adolescents, in families, or in Canada anyway..

LS: When we were talking about rituals, like ceremonies, traditions, and day to day routines, how would you describe
these kinds of things in your family, with Sean at the time?. For instance, did you do anything differently, or did things stay the same, in terms of rituals?

M: Well, I think we made every attempt to keep our rituals and things the same, although it became more difficult because he seemed to be losing interest in anything that had to do with the family, and he didn't show up often, and well, it was hard to get him to do things that we used to do together.

LS: Are there any rituals that come to mind, during this time period with Sean? Do you recall any in particular?

F: Washing dishes. It became more of a ritual as he got older...it was the one time of the day where we could count on him to be with the family (laughs). But seriously, the whole dinner routine, although he would often not eat with us, he was expected to help clean up, even cook once in awhile.

M: Because Tom and I were working, and going to seminars and conferences, we set up this deal that we would take turns cooking, and whoever was not cooking, would clean up. So it became like a ritual too, like if I would cook, Tom and Sean would have a fight about who would do the dishes, but in the end, they would do them together. So then we would all laugh about it because it happened all the time, and it became predictable - this kind of play fighting about the dishes.

F: Yea, we always had this. And, I think this is how Sean learned how to eventually cook. I remember him making horrendously simple things in the beginning, but with time, he became quite a good cook.

M: Oh yea, I remember he became very good at cooking, to the point that if I came into the kitchen to ask if I could do anything to help, then he would say,"do you want to do it", (laughs) so, I would have to walk off, and wait until he asked me for help, which he didn't, and I had to learn not to be such a busy body. (laughs)

LS: Do you remember any other things, rituals or such, that you did to acknowledge, or mark this transition for him, or this different age period?

M: Well, yea...we gave him a clothing allowance in his teenage years, he had already had a regular allowance as a kid, but this was something extra, so that he could buy his own clothes and things. I don't think we did anything else deliberately different, although things kind of evolved that way.

F: Yea, it wasn't a conscious thing.
M: We did make a big thing out of his thirteenth birthday. I don't remember exactly what we did, but I do remember that for us, it was very significant.

F: Yes, turning thirteen, we had a big party, the three of us and his and our friends.

M: Oh, there is another ritual that comes to mind, every six months, we would sort of get together and talk about curfew.

LS: With Sean?

M: Yes, and especially every birthday, we would make a special effort to have a meeting to talk about curfew and discuss other things important to him. We sort have had it in our minds that when he turned sixteen, we would not be as worried about curfew.

F: But, it turned out to be somewhat later than that...

M: Yea (laughs) in fact, I am still concerned about curfew.

F: I know, but I think that we only really gave up on curfew when he turned, like, seventeen and a half, close to eighteen.

LS: These get togethers that you have mentioned to talk about curfew, what do you think that was about for you, like, what were you thinking about at the time, in doing this?

F: I think for one it was to keep up some semblance of control. To make it look as if we still had control.

M: Yes, I would agree with that exactly!

F: He would agree to something, and then he would push it...it was push push push...and we would say, like, Sean, you have arrived late, and blah blah blah, but he would ignore this, and when this occurred several times, well, then we figured it was time for one of these meetings.

LS: You both agree on that?

M: Yea. (laugh)

F: I don't know how conscious we were of that, but...uh, well, we would say, well, he is getting older so it is O.K. for him to stay out later, I mean that is what we said, but I think, looking at it now, there is also that other side to it.
M: Well, in everything, everything there was this kind of push that we would want to somehow give permission for so that we would not be totally out of control. And it is not only out of our need for control, but, it was also, ah, well, we had the sense that somehow, the tension was important, ah, that somehow the struggle was important...that to give it up altogether, like to say, well, oh well, do what you want, would be to say, I don't care, it doesn't matter. It seemed somehow necessary to make it orderly, and to have some, ah, kind of official recognition of handing over responsibility, rather than just, ah, allowing him to just take it...uh,

F: Actually, I think, like I was thinking of it in terms of this ritual stuff, and I think our insistence on his coming to dinner, and all that stuff probably had to do with wanting him to know that we cared, whether it be coming to dinner, birthdays and even the thing about washing dishes, that was symbolic of our caring...yea..

M: Well, it was to keep a sense of family.

LS: What do you mean?

F: Well, it was more than that, I mean, I think that, my belief, and I think yours is too (turning to mother) is that giving kids everything isn't O.K., in the sense that they need to struggle against something, and the difficulty was, I think, how can we let Sean win, without giving up...how strong does the distance have to be...I think our insistence on birthdays, and dinners, and like, how the Christmas tree should be, and the night before Christmas and the morning of Christmas and keeping all that together was part of that. Like, it is O.K. for him to leave, but he does not just walk out the door, you know?

M: And, there were also a lot of other things that happened in it, that, were semi-conscious, ...like, I remember a few years ago, when we first moved into this house, with our son and another friend, we all sat around to talk about how we were going to take care of the responsibilities...and Sean suddenly took over the meeting, which we didn't even realize and-

F: Oh, I did!

M: I wasn't even thinking about it - and I remember saying something like how are we going to do this, and then Sean said oh I will take care of it, and he took the pen and paper and, well, maybe he wanted to get it over with, but after he walked out, our friend said, he ran the meeting...and I was surprised...like when I think about it, Sean learned a lot of skills in our setting up these ritual
meetings...that I don't think a lot of kids know how to do this really.

F: Actually, we also had those family meetings,...

M: That's another ritual.

F: Did they start when we were living in Victoria?

M: Well, they actually really started when we first began to see a counsellor for problems we were experiencing with Sean, but then we continued them on our own.

LS: Could you describe what these were like?

M: Ah, we tried to make them once a week, although, Sean, he didn't like them...

F: But I think they were especially important as he became, ah, like, a middle teenager, like around fifteen, sixteen...they were crucial. They were very structured meetings. Different from the curfew meetings.

M: But, you have to realize, he fought them tooth and nail.

LS: These meetings?

M: Yes, he absolutely loathed them.

F: He absolutely hated talking about all these things, like feelings, emotions, what was going on...(laugh)

LS: What do you think that was about for you, to have these meetings? What meaning would you give these meetings?

M: Everyone being there to make decisions about how things should work, to somehow get his buy-in and participation in how we do things here. And we gave him a lot of say in how things could be done...I think... but, it is not like we avoided fights this way, because we really didn't, but we may have hoped at the time that we would have been able to avoid fights. But, I don't believe that is ever possible with an adolescent. But, it was like, at least we all had a grounding, like, this was an official time to come together.

LS: (turning to father) You had expressed something interesting before, in referring to the kinds of rituals you used, it was a way to express caring. Could you say anything else about that?

F: Well, all of these things, you know, that we insisted on him attending to, even these structured meetings, had to do with wanting to show him that we cared, and we simply could not, and would not, simply just let him be. We wanted to
let him know, in our own way, that we belonged together in the sense that this was his family, and ah, he ah, could not simply walk away.

M: That is what the fabric of family life is....like we made it more deliberate, in a way, than maybe other families, but if we had not created those things, then we may have created other things. I just think it is, ah, keeping a family together as a family may be different for different families, but, you somehow, do things that are partly deliberate, and you do some things that are part of the evolutionary process...of how we do things here. And, I think Tom and I are very controlling people (laughs), we like things to be our way, so, we would try to set up ways to make agreements, and we like things to be predictable, like, we don't like them to be chaotic, so we would try to set up things so that most of the time we would know what to expect. And we would make our expectations known, and state what would happen if we didn't get them.

LS: (turning to father) Would you agree with that, in essence?

F: I have been sort of spaced out, thinking about the rituals in my own family, so I really didn't hear what has just been said.

LS: That is O.K. . Could you tell me what your thoughts were?

F: Yea, like, I was thinking, in my own family, things appeared to simply evolve, whereas, in this family, it seems like things were done in a more deliberate way. I think I had a hard time with some of the deliberateness in this family...and, I think, in a way, I assumed that that is the way it should be, like, things should evolve naturally. I remember thinking that it was somehow unnatural that we had to make such concrete plans about everything...it is strange.

LS: What do you think that was about, in terms of where you were coming from?

F: Well, I think I was coming from the perspective...ah-

M: (laughs) Go ahead, I'm sorry to interrupt. I'm just thinking about your mother! Like, in your family, your mother would just do everything, plan everything, and everyone would simply go along with it. Whereas, I tried to get you guys to participate in it, your mother just would have gone ahead and done it! And this is how it is done - that is it!
F: (laughs) Well, sure, that's part of it. But I think as I was growing up, there seemed to be more tradition, in the sense that things evolved more, whereas I think here, in North America there is not as much inherent tradition and things have to be made to happen in a much more deliberate way, because it is not there on its own. But you are right - my mother would just do things, and I would just, uh, well, I would go along with it because it was like the word from God. That is the way things should be.

M: And I did not want to do everything.

LS: Of all your experiences with Sean, what do you think was the most difficult point during this time period? Could you tell a story about this?

F: There is one crisis story that I remember that I can not tell you without violating his confidentiality...it was the most difficult for me, though.

LS: Could you talk about your thoughts or feelings at the time of the crisis, without actually telling the story?

F: Well, I think my need to protect him came into it, as well as my helplessness about actually being able to do anything that could help. I felt helpless in the sense of getting him to deal with what was actually happening at the time, and I believe my knowledge, or at least what I believed would happen in terms of consequences if he did not deal with it, well, I thought it could ruin his life. So, I wanted to protect him, and guide him in a way, although it did not come out like that...I don't know, my caring about him came into it, ...

M: The most difficult period for me with Sean, I think was related to what Tom was talking about, but it had something to do with control, like I, as a parent, was going to lose control, and I could not allow that to happen, especially believing that he was putting himself at risk. You see, I remember a time when one night he simply did not come home. This is a kid who almost always called home or let us know where he was going to be, like he was always called. But one night, he simply did not show up - he was, uh, oh, about sixteen and a half, and he didn't call or anything. Well, we went mildly crazy...we were up all night, we called the police, argued and paced around the house, it was horrible. Horrible. And the next night, well, he did show up at his job, and he looked horrible, and had been drinking all night, and doing God knows what else, and uh, well, we had called his work to inquire if he showed up, and much to our shock, he did arrive at work, and on time as well. We were shocked. So, we went to pick him up, because his, ah, boss, ah, well, told him to go home because he was so hung over. Anyway, we went to get him, and he looked so bad that we
didn't really know what to say....ah, but we were stunned that he had shown up for work nonetheless. Like, that was the lovely thing about it, like God dammit, he showed up for work! How responsible!

F: Well, they did send him home because he was so hung over and he reeked of alcohol (laughs).

M: But, we got him home, he passed out for the rest of the day, and when he awoke, some time the next day, I remember, Tom, you were really quite angry about the whole thing, like you had this thing about wanting to punish him somehow.

F: Well, I don't know if punish is really the right word, I wanted to let him deal with the natural consequences of his actions...I mean, I felt that he needed to be made accountable for his behavior.

M: Well, we had a very serious meeting when he awoke the next day, and you, Tom, I remember you saying that although he had behaved horribly, and should in some way be punished, you also said that you were very worried about him, and the amount of drinking he had done. And, Sean broke down then - he just sobbed about us not caring for him, not trusting him, trying to control his life and on and on. I felt so bad when he said those things, I felt bad for me, and you, but mostly, for our little boy.

F: Yea, I remember feeling, well, uh, maybe Sean is really not happy with us, maybe we are being too hard on him, or expecting too much.

M: So we developed this safety thing.

F: Oh yea, I almost forgot that. Another ritual, in a way.

M: Like we developed this safety thing, meaning that whenever Sean went out drinking, we promised him that we would never get angry or punish him for phoning us and just letting us know that he was O.K.. Like, we agreed that perhaps we would talk to him about it at another time, but, we would only be concerned with him being safe. He never had to worry again about our reactions to his behavior, as long as he called us and informed us that he was safe.

F: Yea, but this did not mean that we would never get angry or never feel like punishing him again, it just meant that he did not have to worry about phoning us, like, we were not going to freak out over the phone. That our primary concern would be his safety.

LS: When you recall what had happened at the time, what do you think was the most difficult part for you, in all of that? What caused the most anxiety?
M: The not knowing where he was, the dread and the fear that maybe something had happened to him, or maybe he had simply left us. The fear that he was gone. And the fears about him putting himself in danger, with his drinking and other activities. Like, I believed at the time that people who drink in excess are attempting to escape something, some sort of pain, so I think I had the fear that Sean was in some deep pain, or was hurting in some way, so I felt even worse, thinking that he was maybe putting himself in some sort of danger, and that it was our fault somehow. But the most anxiety producing part was the fear that our Sean was gone. That we had lost him somehow. I remember yelling at Tom, sometime during this period, that he had driven our Sean away, with his anger and so on.

F: Yea, you were very blaming of me, like that somehow, I was being too hard on Sean. You accused me of being very punitive.

M: Well, you were! Remember when we had that meeting about the safety thing, and Sean sobbed and said that you don't care...you don't care, you don't care, you don't care, he kept repeating that over and over again.

F: No, I don't remember Sean accusing me of not caring.

M: Yes, I do. Tom said to Sean that he didn't care anymore about what he did, that he didn't care if he got involved with bad kinds of activities, and I remember Sean sobbing, you don't care anymore, like, all that Sean heard out of those statements was that his Dad did not care anymore. It was horrible! Like, I knew what you meant, that were trying to tell Sean that you knew that he had free will, but all that he heard was that you did not care anymore. I think that Tom had a hard time letting Sean know that he cared, without trying to control him at the same time.

F: Well, I don't know if that is really what it was about for me.

M: Maybe that is what it was about for me. And that come from my own family, wanting to be close, but at the same time fearing it, and trying to control it. A lot of things about control in my family.

LS: I would like to get back to that a bit later on. (Turning to father) What was the most difficult part for you, during this time period?

F: I'm not sure. Part of it had to do with my having to do with what I believed was the right and the wrong thing to do. The most difficult thing for me was watching, what I considered to be at the time, Sean's destruction of his own
life. Like, I knew what I had done in my own life to be, well, ah, what I considered to be successful, and well, Sean was not doing it that way, so it was very very difficult, as a father, to just step back, and allow him to make a mess of his life. My concern about it, like wanting him to look at the consequences of his actions, my ah, well, wanting to make him accountable for what he was doing really had to do with wanting him to act in a more adult way, when I should have realized that he was only sixteen. When I was sixteen, I had been very different. When I think back now, on this safety thing, or this meeting that we had at the time, this thing about me saying that I did not care about this or that, really, in a way, was a way for me to cover up the tremendous fear I had, that I had screwed up as a father. My saying that I did not care was a form of withdrawal, in a way, like, a way of dismissing myself and him, like, that if he did not turn out to be like me, well, then, I couldn't give a shit. But, you know, I was fooling myself.

LS: Let me ask you a few things of what you remember of your own adolescence. In thinking back, what stands out for you, like, tell me a story about what it was like for you to be an adolescent.

M: Well, I think it was absolutely horrible, that is what stands out. A lot of fights, a lot of control stuff going on. My parents, particularly my mother, felt that they had to control for everything. Makeup, boys, school, friends, you name it, my parents thought that they could control it. And, uh, well, I was anorexic. Lots and lots of fights about my not eating. And I was extremely withdrawn, and I tried hard to avoid conflict by always being agreeable, by doing a lot of pretending. They, my parents, always imagined our family to be a close family, but even to this day, they do not know how to be close to each other or anyone. They know nothing about closeness, they only know about control.

LS: Could you elaborate, a bit?

M: I don't know. They were just very controlling and cold people. Very rigid, very unforgiving in a lot of ways. I never saw them as nurturing, and as I was an adolescent, I found them even less so. And food was such an issue, but I just couldn't eat in front of them, and eating in itself became aversive. They were continually worried, as I was an adolescent and dating boys, they were terrified that I would get pregnant. Like, they used to tell me, and my younger sisters, and I have two younger sisters, that we had to be careful not to get pregnant, because there were several, aunts and others in our extended family who had become pregnant as adolescents. Sure enough, we all got pregnant in our teenage years, myself and my sisters. It is
incredible, how their concern in our potential for becoming pregnant actually resulted in our getting pregnant.

LS: Do you remember any particular rituals in your family as you were an adolescent, any traditions, or day to day routines?

M: Well, maybe, getting pregnant was a ritual, in a sick sort of way. None of us had our babies, but, for all of us, becoming pregnant was significant, and changed our relationship with our parents forever. Like, by getting pregnant, it was as if suddenly our parents saw us in a new light, or maybe they just realized that we were not little children anymore. Other rituals...well, we had a lot of traditions around Christmas and birthdays, they were big occasions. And one night a week, my mother would prepare a special meal, and we would all be expected to attend, like it was a tradition, but as we got older, in our adolescence, this became more difficult to enforce, since we became less interested in attending. When I was young, I did enjoy these traditional dinners, but not as I became a teenager. I did not want that much closeness with them. I mean, I think that was the purpose of these rituals, well, not the thing about getting pregnant, like, I don't include that one, but the other ones, well, they seemed to exist to keep us close to the family. And since my mother didn't work or anything, that was her whole life—keeping the family together. And as I became a mother, I think I took some of that on, in the sense that I wanted to keep our family together, to keep us all together.

LS: In recalling your own adolescence and eventual leaving home, what would you say were important messages or lessons that your parents wanted to pass onto you about being a family?

M: Well they tried to teach me that family was important, I suppose, however, they live thousands of miles away from their own families, the way I live thousands of miles from them, so that is, ah, so, I am not sure what I have really learned. They tried to teach me that closeness was important, but, their kind of closeness, to me, is an illusion. Like, it is not like our closeness, like me and Tom, our closeness seems to be more real.

LS: What do you mean by closeness, just so I am clear about what you are referring to?

M: Well, their closeness means that every one must agree, with everything, all of the time. Like, disagreement means that there must be a fight, a big argument to get the person who is disagreeing to agree. Whereas in our family, I believe, for us, closeness means getting to know each other, right, like, that is interesting and all of that. Whereas
for my parents, disagreeing is threatening, and it is perceived as dangerous to being close to the family.

LS: Tell me the story of how you left home.

M: Well, I was eighteen, and uh, well, I was in university but I still had to come home in the summers for the first few summers. My family was always very enthusiastic about university and education and stuff like that, so they were pleased that I was going to university.

LS: Did your parents do anything special or different to mark this transition, to acknowledge that you were now living away from home?

M: I don't really know...what I remember the most is that once I was away from home, they would send me care packages, of all kinds of foods, and they would write these cheerful little notes about eating right, remembering that they loved me, taking care of myself, eating right, eating right (laugh) they never really got over me being, early in my adolescence, anorexic. But I enjoyed getting these packages, regularly, they, ah, somehow, were, reassuring. I remember that leaving my parents was very difficult, even though they liked the idea of me being in school, they still wanted to control my life, it was very difficult to separate, in the true sense. I remember thinking, once I was physically living away from home, how closed they were, in their beliefs and knowledge about the world and such things. I remember developing a taste for the exotic, wanting to travel and meet people and get away from them. Like, living away from home wasn't enough, I wanted to be as far away as possible, so that they would eventually give up trying to control me. But in a strange way, I don't think I ever really separated from them, not even when I got married. This wasn't with Tom, this was my first marriage, and I was twenty-two at the time.

LS: Is there anything you would like to add to this, to increase my understanding of what it was like for you, leaving your parents?

M: Well, no, not really, except although I found it difficult to leave, I believe the fact that I was in school facilitated this process tremendously because they considered this acceptable. I would have hated to experience leaving in a situation where they did not consider it to be acceptable.

LS: Let me ask you a few things, Tom, about what it was like for you to be an adolescent. Do you remember a story about your adolescence?
F: Well, as I said to you before, I don't think I had an adolescence, not really. What do I remember? Let's see it was difficult adjusting to becoming a Canadian, so, everything was very new and strange when I first got to Canada. Like, I don't remember ever really having a girlfriend, I don't remember partying or drinking or doing any of those things, even in my late teens. I remember studying and being fairly serious.

LS: Do you remember an experience or event that caused some conflict with your parents during your adolescent years?

F: I had no conflicts with them, that was the amazing thing. It is like there was this unspoken agreement in my family that arguing or fighting was not really civil, and I don't know, it is kind of weird, but we all followed that assumption. I am the oldest, too, of five kids, two girls and three boys. But perhaps I just went underground with what I did, in the sense that my parents trusted me because they had no clue about what was going on. Also, one of my brothers was born when I was thirteen, so, uh, a lot of the focus was on him, and not on me at the time. Then, my parents, well, they left Montreal when I was seventeen, they moved to Ottawa, while I stayed on and studied at McGill. Like, they encouraged me to stay, because, like Joyce, school was a very big thing for them. So, I would go home on weekends, spend summers there, and generally kept good contact with them. But, I don't really remember ever having any kind of conflictual time with them, certainly not in the way we have had with Sean.

LS: Do you remember any rituals in your family, during the time when you were an adolescent, any day to day routines or traditions?

F: Um, Christmas and birthdays were very highlighted in the family. Ah, we had a place, up in the country, the laurentians in Quebec, and we used to go there every summer, all together. I always enjoyed those times, even during my teenage years, because my Dad would relax more, once he got away from his work and he would be like a different person. We used to play fight a bit, me and my Dad, it was a lot of fun. We would only have these play fights when we got up North, to the country house, because it seemed to me, that this was a special place for all of us, more fun and exciting than every day life back in Montreal. Like, our country house was kind of old and not in the best of shape, so cooking and even doing laundry was a challenge.

M: Tell her how you got your laundry done when you were in university! (laughs)
F: (laughs) I would mail it home, to Ottawa, when they moved to Ottawa.

LS: Mailed it?

F: Yea, in boxes.

LS: What do you think that meant?

F: (laughs) Well, it became sort of a joke in our family, doing the laundry. Like when we would go to the country house in the summer, it was such a hassle to get the washing machine to work, and me and my Dad would struggle to get the old shitbox working, and after much effort, it would perhaps start, but then shut down again, so, we used to laugh about it, and use it as an excuse not to do laundry. So, while I was living on campus, I would send home my laundry, almost once a month, and I would enclose a little note, explaining that the washing machines didn't work properly on campus, and my parents knew that this wasn't so, but they would laugh, and they came to expect that I would do this. But, I would have to change the note, to become more creative each time, because they would kind of look forward to reading what my next excuse would be. And then they would send the clean clothes back to me. You know, it was kind of like a ritual, in a way, because it kept us connected, and we would make reference to the country house up North and, ah, well, it had an element of fun to it. (laughs)

LS: In recalling your own adolescence and eventual leaving home, what kinds of messages or lessons would you say that your parents attempted to pass on to you about being a family?

F: Well, I think my mother's caretaking and my father's working stood out for me as important lessons about life. My mother had the primary task of nurturing the family, and my father had the primary task of providing for the family. The roles for men and women were clearly outlined in my family. Working hard and being responsible were important traits to being a good person according to my parents. Being idle is the worse thing a person could be, aside from, like, killing someone. Being busy, and engaged in continual projects and such was highly respected by my parents. Also, complaining a lot was, ah, well, it was kind of like a ritual. I think my mother complains about everything, and in a way, is egged on by my Dad. I wonder what that means, uh, I think, well, it may have something to do with breaking the ice, or starting conversation. Like for my mom, complaining a lot was a way for her to get close to people, or to initiate some kind of conversation, I mean, I don't know what else she would have to talk about (laughs) and, uh, it is her way of joining, or uh, belonging, fitting in. And we all sort of picked up on how to do this...it is kind
of strange. I never really considered my family to be a family that was close, but in talking to you about it, in this way, I think perhaps we were close in a way, and by close, I am referring to emotional closeness, an emotional understanding or connection. As a kid, we did a lot together. Moving to Canada, at the onset of my adolescence, to a large extent altered this time period for me be, in that it became more difficult. I remember my sister being the one who had a lot of problems with my parents when she was growing up, I don't know what it was about, but it seemed like that, she was always into something.

LS: In your perspective, what would you say is the impact or influence that your parents have had on Sean?

F: My ideas about work and responsibility come from my parents. I think Sean has much more courage than I had, at that age, to do and say what he wants to do. Well, this is not really answering your question, what is the impact of my parents on Sean? I don't really know, our contact with them is fairly infrequent, and they have really mellowed out anyway, so, they are different with him than they were with me. But I think that they did the best that they could, given the time and the situation, and having five kids. They are different now, in the sense that they are not as caught up with work and responsibility and so they are, in a way, more accepting of Sean than I was because I am still very caught up with those old notions. So in a way, I guess you could say that the impact that they have had on Sean is that they have tried to add a softer approach, contrary to what they had passed on to me.

LS: Tell me the story of how Sean left home.

M: He had a huge fight with Tom and took off!

F: Well, not exactly. He came home late one night, in the rain and dark on his bike with no lights on, and so I was concerned, and I told him that that I didn't want him doing that anymore, like it was dangerous, and he could get hit by a car, and on and on I went, lecturing, sort of. But he just went to bed, and when I got to bed, Joyce told me that I shouldn't have tried to lecture to him since he was drunk anyway and probably had not heard a word. Never argue with a drunk, right? Any way, he left us a note the next morning telling us that he was going to stay at a friend's place, like he made it look like he was going for a visit, but then he simply did not come home. But he was very good on letting us know where he was, that the was O.K., you know, the safety thing, or ritual, and well, that was that.

M: He was very good in keeping in touch with us, in spite of having left in a huge fight.
F: Oh come on, it was not that huge...not really.

LS: I was going to ask you, how did you mark this transition, this change in your family, with Sean living outside of the home?

M: We went out and celebrated with his favorite dish, sushi. Sean loved sushi, so one night, about two weeks after he had left, I called him up and told him we wanted to take him out to celebrate, his independence, and his determination, and he could eat all the sushi he wanted! (laughs)

LS: What did this mean to you, the going out and eating sushi?

M: It was about showing him that we still loved him, that we were not angry, but I think it mostly had to do with my need to nurture him. Food in this family has always been a sign of nurturing. Another ritual, in a way.

F: Also trying to make sure that he knew that we were still available, as parents, that we had not closed the door. I mean, seeing that he was not in school, not doing anything, well, that is not quite true, he did have two jobs, but he wasn't studying, so well for me, he uh, well, still had a long way, uh, to go, to becoming independent. Going out with him that night, the sushi thing, was our way of letting him know that he could come back.

LS: Is there anything you would like to add, to this story of how Sean left home, or anything else you have told me today?

F: You know, before today, I never really thought about these things, well, in this way before. It is really difficult, you know, letting go by trying to be there nonetheless, loving, but not controlling. We are continually struggling with that one, even today. I wish, in a way, that I had been different with him, when he was younger, like, maybe have built a more solid foundation when he was a child. Because to attempt to do that, uh, when a child becomes an adolescent, well, you know, in your work, you must see that it is nearly impossible, right?

LS: Well, tell me more what you mean.

F: Well, I wish I had emphasized having fun with one another, more than I actually did. I worried about him, always, even to this day. What I am saying is that maybe I should not have worried as much, like, although he is not in university, and I think one day, when he is ready, he might decide to study, he has, nonetheless, become a workaholic, in a way, very similar to me. Like right now, he is
balancing three part time jobs, all having to do with bikes and so on. He really works hard, and is quite responsible about it. Why all these jobs? So he can make more money and buy more bicycles! (laughs)

M: You have to realize that we never believed that he would actually have enough self-discipline to get one job, so having three is something we never imagined. We used to think he was totally irresponsible, but we were wrong. Like his income is continually on the rise.

F: A lot of people don't make as much as he is making, (laughs), he has even suggested to me, very recently, that I should get a real job one day (laughs)

M: I too, wish that I had done some things differently, like not be so damn middle class. I could have maybe respected more, his need to be different from us, not average or ordinary. I'm not sure what I mean, but perhaps I could have emphasized more that being different was O.K., that he was O.K., that we had faith in him.

F: Yea, we could have showed more faith. Even today, I need to have more faith in him. We could have had more rituals of fun, simply.

LS: What do you think that would have done?

M: Perhaps enabled us to more comfortable and at ease with ourselves. I honestly look at what we were trying to do with Sean as he was an adolescent, and we were always trying to get him to work harder, and I don't blame him for saying, no, I don't want that way of life.

F: Yea, on a grander scale, he has some bad feelings toward us. We wanted him to do things our way, and uh, well, I see how that could produce some problems. And our ways, Joyce and I, were tremendously different.

M: But we pretended to agree, in a sense.

F: Rather, we struggled to agree, barely, and Sean must have thought we were nuts. No, he actually did think we were nuts.

M: Well I pretended to agree with you.

F: (laughs) Don't think that I didn't know that, ultimately.

M: Well you didn't care - pretense or not, as long as it was submission, it did not matter to you! (laughs)
LS: Do you have any questions, for me, about this process, or the interview itself?

F: Yea, I would really like to get a copy of those questions, like maybe when your study is done? They would be useful in my work.

M: This has been interesting for us to look at with you, thank-you.

LS: I thank the two of you, very much, for your time and energy, for sharing a part of yourselves.

F: There is a certain therapeutic component to this, I almost forgot that you were doing some kind of study (laughs).

M: Yea, have we said anything damaging? (laughs)

LS: (laughs) No, I would think that - *Taped interview ends here.*