

The Lived Experience of Self-Identified Introverts: A Phenomenological Approach to
Understanding the Essence of Introversion with Respect to Self-Concept

by

Paula Jean Remus
B.A., University of Calgary, 2000

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in the Department of Educational Psychology and Leadership Studies

© Paula Jean Remus, 2005
University of Victoria

All rights reserved. This thesis may not be reproduced in whole or in part, by
photocopy or other means, without the permission of the author.

Supervisors: Dr. Geoff Hett and Dr. Blythe Shepard

Abstract

The term introversion has been associated with such traits as "introspection" and "quietness", as well as more current yet controversial terms like "shy" and "anti-social". The misperceptions of the term "introvert" has led many introverted individuals to feel misunderstood in our predominantly extraverted Western society. The present study employed a hermeneutic phenomenological approach to explore the lived experience of self-identified introverts. To understand how the self-concept of introverts has been influenced by our extraverted society, five self-identified introverts were interviewed. Interviews were thematically analyzed to identify categories: Perceptions of Self, Perceptions and Concepts of Self in Relation to Others and Environment, Trial and Tribulation Experiences, and Meaningful Experiences and The Call for Change. Challenges associated with being a self-identified introvert essentially involved social realms (e.g., education/work systems, and general relationships with others). Implications for the general, educational, and counselling communities were discussed, in addition to recommendations for societal change.

Supervisors: Dr. G. Hett and Dr. B. Shepard (Department of Educational Psychology and Leadership Studies)

Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Table of Contents	iii
List of Tables	v
Acknowledgements	vi
Dedication	vii
Chapter One: Introduction	1
Introducing the Phenomenon	1
Statement of the Problem	7
Purpose of the Study	7
Summary of Chapter One	8
Chapter Two: Literature Review.....	10
Introduction.....	10
Historical Groundwork on Introversion and Extraversion.....	10
Characteristics of Introversion and Extraversion.....	13
Self-Consciousness: A Distinct Introverted Quality.....	16
Self-Concept.....	17
Working Example of the Misconceptions of Introversion.....	19
Division Between Shyness and Introversion	20
Temperament Type and Self-Concept: Implications	21
Implications for the Counselling Community.....	24
Summary	26
Chapter Three: Methodology	27
Introduction.....	27
General Approach - Qualitative Paradigm.....	27
Research Design.....	28
Why Phenomenology?	28
Why Hermeneutic (Interpretive) Phenomenology?	29
Entering Assumptions.....	33
Participants.....	34
Pre-Pilot and Pilot Study.....	36
Instrumentation for Data Collection	36
Procedure for Data Analysis	40
Quality of the Study	42
Criteria of Trustworthiness	42
Ethical Considerations	46
Summary of Chapter Three.....	46

Chapter Four: Results.....	48
Introduction.....	48
Essential Structure of the Experience	48
Categorical, Cluster, and Thematic Structures.....	51
Category One: Perceptions of Self.....	52
Category Two: Perceptions & Concepts of Self in Relation to Others & Environment.....	58
Category Three: Trial and Tribulation Experiences	77
Category Four: Meaningful Experiences and The Call for Change.....	89
Reflections from the Primary Researcher	103
The Researchers Experience of "Being" a Self-Identified Introvert.....	103
Reflections on the Research Process.....	106
Summary of Chapter Four.....	108
 Chapter 5: Discussion	 110
Introduction.....	110
Research Contributions	110
Purpose One	110
Purpose Two	113
Comparisons to the Literature.....	115
Limitations	119
Implications.....	120
Implications for the General Community	120
Implications for Educational Institutes	121
Implications for the Counselling Community.....	121
Future Directions for Research	122
Final Summary	123
 References.....	 126
 Appendix A: Self-Assessment for Introverts Questionnaire.....	 134
 Appendix B: Informed Consent Form	 136
 Appendix C: Study Poster.....	 139
 Appendix D: Interview Questions.....	 140
 Appendix E: Ethics Approval Certificate	 141

List of Tables

Table 1 Categories and Their Respective Clusters.....	52
Table 2 Clusters and Supporting Themes for the Category, Perceptions of Self.....	53
Table 3 Clusters and Supporting Themes for the Category, Perceptions & Concepts of Self in Relation to Others and Environment.....	59
Table 4 Clusters and Supporting Themes for the Category, Trials & Tribulation Experiences.....	77
Table 5 Clusters and Supporting Themes for the Category, Meaningful Experiences and The Call for Change.....	90

Acknowledgements

I would first like to acknowledge the inspiring introverts who participated in this study. Your dedication to this research has allowed the voices of introverts to be heard and honoured within our community.

I would also like to thank my committee members for their individual contributions to this project. To Dr. Geoff Hett who originally gave me the encouragement & confidence to engage in the thesis process. Without this encouragement, this research never would have come to life. And secondly to Dr. Blythe Shepard who was my guide during this process. I am deeply indebted to all your support and teaching efforts. To Dr. Bill Zuk who kindly joined my committee and offered many valuable insights. I thank you each graciously.

Finally I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to my women friends at UVic. Your individual inner strengths inspired me throughout this journey.

Dedication

To my parents, George and Tilly Remus.

I am grateful for your endless love and support.

Chapter One: Introduction

Introducing the Phenomenon

What does one consider when they hear the word introvert? Do they envision someone who is shy, excessively-sensitive, or socially unskilled? Would any of these perceptions be an accurate description of the temperament of introversion? To determine an accurate response, further exploration is required.

To initiate the research, one finds that by typing the word introversion into a computer and clicking on the synonyms key the following words appear: *bashfulness, coyness, wariness, nervousness and timidity*. In contrast, if one types in the word extraversion the synonyms that appear include *sociability, unreservedness, conviviality and companionability*. At first glance, it appears that the classification of introversion suggests an undesirable undertone in comparison to its counterpart of extraversion.

Popular understanding appears to reinforce a circumscribed and unsatisfactory view of introversion (Hills & Argyle, 2001). In her own search for the meaning of introversion, Laney (2002) found comparable results to the above, that is, a distorted view of the temperament of introversion. Findings included the misuse of the descriptors *shy* (one who is socially anxious and extremely self-consciousness when around people), *schizoid* (those that fear close involvement with other people), and *highly sensitive* (people who are extremely perceptive, intuitive, and observant) that are being interchangeably used with the word introversion. However each word in itself portrays particular and important aspects of human experience that either introverts or extraverts can possess (Laney). With the exception of the term 'highly

sensitive' (e.g., Aron, 1996; Aron & Aron, 1997), the language used to describe introversion seems somewhat disheartening in nature.

Contrary to the connotative language used to describe the temperament of introversion (i.e. shy, schizoid, bashful, etc.), Laney (2002), as supported by Jung (1923), states that introversion is simply the healthy capacity to tune into one's inner world. Significantly, only 25% of North American society identify themselves as being introverted (Card, 1993; Kagan, 1994; Keirse & Bates, 1984; Laney; Rauch, 2003; Tieger & Barron-Tieger, 1995). Introversion is considered to be a beneficial and creative quality that is found in many autonomous thinkers whose contributions have enriched the world (Laney). A few of these autonomous thinkers who self-identify as introverted include Michael Jordan (famous basketball player), Bill Gates (software pioneer), and Clint Eastwood (actor/director). "Introverts have social skills, they like people, and they enjoy some types of socializing...[they] enjoy one-on-one conversations, but group activities can be overstimulating and drain energy" (p.43).

In the psychological literature, introversion has been conceptualized as a turning inwards of the libido (psychic energy), whereby a movement away from 'object' (i.e. outer world/society) to 'subject' (i.e. inner world/internal experience) is expressed. Personal interest does not move towards the object, but recedes towards the subject, towards the individual's own conscious experience. Introverted thinkers feel and act in a way that clearly demonstrates that the subject (i.e. inner process) is the chief factor of motivation, while the object at most receives only a secondary value. Introversion may possess either a more intellectual or more emotional character, just as it can be characterized by either intuition or sensation. Introversion

is active when the subject wills certain seclusion in face of the object. It is inactive when the subject is unable to restore again to the object the libido which is streaming back from it (Jung, 1923).

Extraversion, on the other hand, means an outward-turning of the libido (psychic energy). It is a manifestation of movement of the subject's interest towards the object. Individuals in the state of extraversion think, feel, and act in relation to the object, and do so in a direct and clearly observable fashion, so that no doubt can exist about one's positive dependence upon the object. The state of extraversion means a strong, if not exclusive, determination by the object. "One should speak of an active extraversion when deliberately willed, and of a passive extraversion when the object compels it, i.e. attracts the interest of the subject of its own accord, even against the latter's intention" (Jung, 1923, p. 543).

In the psychological community the importance of introversion-extraversion in personality theory and research has long been recognized. Carl Jung (1923) developed a complex theory of intrapsychic processes which included the idea of many polarities existing within each personality, including the opposing tendencies of introversion and extraversion. Both tendencies were viewed by Jung as necessary and healthy to the understanding of one's personal identity.

Eysenck (1970) assumes that there are a number of significant differences between introverts and extraverts. In his biological theory of extraversion/introversion Eysenck postulates that the personality dimension of extraversion and introversion is related to the ascending reticular activating system (ARAS), a neuroanatomical structure ascending from the brain stem to cortical regions (Rammsayer, 2003). As

Rammsayer explains, "collaterals from the ascending sensory pathways elicit neuronal activity in the ARAS, which subsequently induces enhanced excitation in various sites dispersed throughout the cerebral cortex" (p.207). Introverts and extraverts differ in their general levels of neural activity, with introverts being chronically more aroused than extraverts. In practical terms, extraverts prefer activities that raise their neural activity level. Extraverted individuals enjoy a varied and stimulating life-style which include, but are not limited to, such activities as going to parties and/or extensive socializing. Introverts, on the other hand, favour activities of "a relatively unstimulating nature (e.g. reading), and thus their behaviour is suggestive of *stimulus aversion* (italics added)" (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1985, p. 249).

Self-perceptions also influence the way one acts, and in return these actions will influence an individual's self-perception in a reciprocal process (Marsh & Hattie, 1996). People categorize the vast amount of information they have about themselves and relate these categories to other people. In other words, the perceptions others hold of us can directly influence our perceptions of self. Shavelson, Hubner and Stanton (1976) state that the self-concept refers to an individual's self-perceptions formed through the experiences with, and interpretations of, one's environment.

Environmental elements that contribute to one's self-perceptions include the evaluations by significant others, reinforcements, and attributions for one's own behaviour. Shavelson et al.'s conceptualization of the self-concept is quite similar to Bandura's (1989) social cognitive theory. The theory suggests that individuals are neither autonomous agents nor simply mechanical conveyers of animating

environmental influences, but rather "make causal contribution to their own motivation and action within a system of triadic reciprocal causation – action, cognitive, affective, and other personal factors, and environmental events all operate in interacting determinants" (p. 1175) to one's overall self-efficacy or self-concept.

As Harter (1999) notes, "self terminology abounds: self-concept, self-image, self-esteem, self-worth, self-evaluations, self-perceptions, self-representations, self-schemas, self-affects, self-efficacy, and self-monitoring, to name but a few" (p. 3). As Byrne (2002) states, definitional problems related with self-concept appear to be in remission, however "one remaining difficulty relates to the lack of distinctiveness between self-concept and self-esteem" (p. 901). With that being said, in the current study, self-concept will be best understood as the organized configuration of perceptions of the self that is composed by such elements as the perceptions of one's characteristics and abilities, the perceptions and concepts of the self in relation to others and to the environment, the value qualities which are perceived as associated with experiences and objects, and the goals and ideals which are perceived as having positive or negative valence (Rogers, 1951).

Polarities in temperament exist (e.g. Eysenck, 1970; Eysenck & Eysenck, 1985; Jung, 1923) and the essence of such differences manifest most clearly through the principle of preference versus aversion to social stimulation (i.e. Eysenck). Given this conceptualization, it stands to reason that messages from society and the personal messages interpreted as truth will have a direct effect on one's self-understanding or self-concept. In particular, introverts may be particularly sensitive to these messages due to their minority status in North American society.

Popular beliefs held about introversion can be understood by Becker's (2003) article. Becker asked the question "[are] introverts less happy because they act introverted or do they act introverted because they're less happy?" (Becker, p.14). Becker explored this issue by consulting a study conducted by Fleeson, Malanos and Achille (2002) which asked fifty undergraduate students to act assertive and energetic (allegedly traits representing extroverted behaviours) during a small group discussion, and then to act shy and passive (apparently representing the introvert) in an additional small group discussion. The results showed that "when students acted extroverted (i.e. assertive and energetic) they indicated high levels of happiness and fun. When the same individuals acted introverted, they consistently rated themselves as unhappy" (p.14). An article written by Powell (n.d.) lends credence to Becker's and Fleeson et al.'s work. In Powell's eight step guide entitled - *So if you are an introvert and want to be happy* - he suggests that introverts can (for example): (a) act like an extravert, (b) feign high self-esteem, and (c) smile.

The messages delivered by such publications suggest that if introverts wish to be "happy" then they need to act like an extrovert. Self-identified introverts are asked to deny their introvert identity in order to better fit with the larger society. When academics state, "it is not known why extraverts are happier than introverts" (Fleeson et al., 2002, p.5), they may wish to explore popular articles written about the temperament of introversion to find their answers. Introverts are told to be something they are not, and as a result they may be left feeling incredibly misunderstood, unheard, and perhaps "unhappy".

Statement of the Problem

The intent of the study is to examine the self-perceptions of self-identified introverts. The overarching research question - *What sense do self-identified introverts make of their lived experience in relation to their self-concept?* - will be explored.

The present issue is not whether introversion has been significantly researched. Instead the purpose of the study is to understand the implications of the term introversion in the lives of individuals who identify themselves as introverted. In particular, more information is needed in understanding how a self-identified introvert's self-concept has been affected by living in a society that appears to be predominantly extroverted and consequently prescribes to extraverted modes of existence (Hills & Argyle, 2001).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to investigate, to explore, and to provide the academic community and the community at large with greater insight into the dispositional realm of introversion. In addition, it is hoped that this study will update the literature written on introversion. Previous research conducted by theorists, for example, Carl Jung and Hans Eysenck, will be examined to aid in demystifying introversion and to promote new representations.

My reason for studying the temperament of introversion is both personal and professional in nature. As a self-identified introvert, I believe it important that there is a greater understanding of the temperament of introversion. At the present time, there appears to be more knowledge and acceptance of extraversion than of introversion.

The focus on extraversion as a valued disposition may contribute to the misrepresentation of the true essence of introversion.

Articles published by the popular press unfortunately may contribute to inaccurate understandings of introversion. By re-examining the influence of such misrepresentations on the introverted community I hope to re-educate the academic community along with the general public. To hear the voices of introverts, their thoughts and perceptions about introversion, and how their lives have been influenced by their personal temperament and their temperament counterpart (i.e. extraversion), will assist in the demystification and reconstruction of these erroneous notions. By listening to the voices of introverts and allowing their lived experiences to be told *is*, in essence, shedding innovative light onto how their social reality has been directly and/or indirectly influenced by prevailing extroverted societal norms.

Summary of Chapter One

In this chapter the reader was introduced to the temperament of introversion. The exploration began by examining the inaccurate vocabulary that is currently being used to depict introversion. From there a counter-argument was presented with the attempt to challenge the reader to reflect beyond the stereotypical words of "shyness" and "socially inadequacy" to describe introversion. Next a brief introduction to key figures who have extensively studied personality temperaments (i.e. Carl Jung and Hans Eysenck) and self-concept (i.e. Albert Bandura; Susan Harter; Carl Rogers; Shavelson et al.) was introduced. The section concluded by stating both my personal and professional reasons for pursuing the study on introversion, which was described in detail in the remaining sections of the chapter.

The purpose of chapter two will be to further investigate the temperament of introversion to assist the reader in grappling with the focal question of importance – *What sense do self-identified introverts make of their lived experience in relation to their self-concept?* This will be accomplished by providing a supportive historical background to the temperaments of introversion and extraversion, in addition to examining current literature on introversion and the self-concept. Factors influencing self-concept, and implications on introverts regarding the pressures to conform to extraversion, will also be explored.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Introduction

To understand the foundation of the research question of - *What sense do self-identified introverts make of their lived experience in relation to their self-concept?*- a comprehensive literature examination is required. In chapter two, the historical groundwork on the temperaments of introversion and extraversion will be explored, and in addition a comprehensive list of the common characteristics unique to each temperament will be provided for comparison. A review of the literature on self-concept, a working example of a common misconception held about introversion, and the implications surrounding temperament and self-concept will be provided. The chapter will conclude with a section on the implications this study may have for the counselling community, followed by a brief summary of the chapter.

Historical Groundwork on Introversion and Extraversion

To begin to understand the essence of introversion one must start with its foundational works. Carl G. Jung first popularized the terms "introversion" and "extraversion" with the publication of *Psychological Types* in 1923. He clearly referenced in the introduction that "every individual possesses both mechanisms – extraversion as well as introversion, and only the relative predominance of the one or the other determines the [personality] type" (Jung, 1923, p.10). He viewed the temperaments of introversion and extraversion as opposing ends on a continuum, whereby an individual locates themselves somewhere between very introverted and very extraverted (Laney, 2002). Apart from either extreme, any place on the continuum is considered healthy and, by nature, humans hold a natural niche upon the

continuum where they function best, which is important in understanding one's lifestyle (Morris, 1979).

Jung developed two models of understanding the introvert/extravert temperaments: the Structural Model and the Dynamic or Energy Model. For the purposes of this project (i.e. defining introversion in terms of energy flow) the latter of the two, the Dynamic/Energy Model will be discussed briefly to aid in the understanding of how the model contributes to one's sense of self. The Dynamic/Energy Model distinguishes introversion and extraversion in terms of the direction of flow of energy (i.e. one's interest or value) between "subject" (signifying "subjective" and into the "inside") and "object" (signifying "objective" and into the "outside") (Shapiro & Alexander, 1975). An introvert experiences a movement of energy from object to subject.

Contrary to current beliefs, introverts do not sit encapsulated with their interest focused directly on self; that is, introverts are not individuals who are preoccupied with their own thoughts, who avoid social contact and who tend to turn away from reality (i.e. Dictionary of Psychology, as cited in Laney, 2002). Rather, as Jung (1923) and Shapiro and Alexander (1975) note, introversion in the Dynamic/Energy model refers to a movement of energy toward what is at the same time self and one's thoughts and feelings of the moment. This movement is focal for the introvert. For the extravert the focus is on the movement toward the object itself. An extrovert is defined as having movement of energy from subject to object. Their thoughts and feelings move toward an increasingly accurate and inclusive representation of their contacts in the world, but is less focused on the thoughts and

feelings occasioned by the object in relation to self-identity. Consequently, an introvert's thoughts and feelings in their course of "inward movement" (i.e. from outer world to inner world) are sensed as becoming oneself or the process of conceptualizing self.

Whereas Jung's approach to the study of introversion was intrapsychic, Eysenck's orientation is biological and behavioural in configuration. Eysenck defines the basic difference between extraverts and introverts as biological, rooted in the reticular activating system of the brain (Morris, 1979). The foundation of Eysenck's approach is based on his theory of arousal. The reticular activating system monitors incoming neural impulses resulting from environmental stimulation that either excites or inhibits responses of higher brain centers to those stimulations. In other words, the system controls the arousal level of the cortex of the brain. "Extraverts and introverts are held to differ in the relative strength of the opposing processes of excitation and inhibition such that introverts typically have higher levels of cortical arousal compared with extraverts" (Morris, p.7). Bullock & Gilliland (1993) found that:

The overaroused condition of introverts leads them to exhibit more restrained and inhibited behaviours and to seek social situations that are non-arousing in an effort to reduce external stimulation. Conversely, the lower internal arousal of extraverts leads them to exhibit more unrestrained and impulsive behaviors and to seek social situations that are more highly arousing in an effort to increase external stimulation. Thus, much of the characteristic behavior of either personality group is merely the result of their attempt to maintain an optimal level of arousal (p.113).

According to Eysenck, this neurological difference causes introverts to withdraw from stimulating situations. Laney's research (2002) supports this claim by stating, "extroverts are linked with the dopamine/adrenaline, energy-spending, sympathetic nervous system, [whereas] introverts are connected with the acetylcholine, energy-conserving, parasympathetic nervous system" (p.73). Therefore, as concluded by Eysenck and Eysenck (1985), "introverts should be better able than extraverts to cope with extremely low levels of stimulation, whereas at high levels of sensory stimulation it should be extraverts who are less adversely affected" (p.249).

Characteristics of Introversion and Extraversion

Many theorists, practitioners, and researchers (i.e., Aron & Aron, 1997; Briggs Myers & Myers, 1980; Card, 1993; Henjum, 1982; Hills & Argyle, 2001; Laney, 2002; Morris, 1979; Santo, n.d.; Shapiro & Alexander, 1975; Tieger & Barron-Tieger, 1995) have taken the original concepts of introversion and extraversion (e.g., Jung, 1923; Eysenck, 1970) and have developed comprehensive accounts of the diverse features of each temperament group. Synopses of their individual findings are listed below. In general, introverts most typically have the following traits in common:

- Prefer to be quiet, calm and self-contained
- Are better at reflective problem solving and tasks involving long-term memory
- Prefer to work independently or with one or two people
- May have trouble establishing rapport with others
- Oriented toward inner world of ideas and feelings
- Prefer low sensory input and low levels of activity

- Excel at focusing attention for long periods of time in situations if there are no distractions
- Have an active inner world (introspective)
- Prefer to observe situations rather than actively participate
- Seek social stimulation in the company of few people
- Need to rest after activities (preferably alone or with a few close friends)
- Tend to process thoughts before speaking/acting ("forethinkers")
- Conduct in essential matters is governed by subjective values
- Intense and passionate
- Idea-oriented (i.e. enjoys the process of becoming)
- Experiences their "mind going blank" in groups or under pressure
- Does not take pleasure in feeling rushed with daily activities.

The study of introversion becomes more conclusive and clear when its opposite temperament is considered. Based upon selected temperament contributors (i.e. Briggs Myers & Myers, 1980; Card, 1993; Hills & Argyle, 2001; Laney, 2002; Santo, n.d.; Tieger & Barron-Tieger, 1995) the characteristics predominantly shared by those that are extroverted include:

- Talk more and tend to take action with less reflection than introverts
- Work better in groups than alone
- Are good at interpreting body language and facial expressions
- Excel during classes with high levels of activity
- Respond well to praise and competition
- Are good at tasks involving short-term memory

- Are highly resistant to distraction in interference conditions involving divided attention
- Prefer bright colors and excitement
- Prefer a stimulating outer world
- Relish variety and enjoy small talk
- Seek social stimulation in the company of many people
- Understand life after they have lived it ("afterthinkers")
- Conduct in essential matters is governed by "objective" conditions (i.e. outward energy)
- Expansive and less impassioned than introverts
- Results-oriented (i.e. solution focused)
- Seek outward energy (activities) and are quite energetic

Deuschle (2001) provides a simplified summary of introversion/extraversion by declaring that the extravert most typically participates in a public, objective, outer world familiar to everyone, and characteristically functions most successfully as part of a team. The introvert is most typically at home in a more private, subjective inner world foreign to others, and functions most successfully alone. The previous work of Briggs Myers and Myers (1980) supports this finding as they state that the extravert's "real world...is the outer world of people and things" whereas the introvert's "real world...is the inner world of ideas" (p.56). This is not to imply that introverts do not enjoy the company of others, but rather the *stimulus* of social engagements (i.e. the noise of many people, the action produced by many people) often proves overstimulating for introverts, and they may feel the need to withdraw themselves

from such environments after a period of time. Therefore, it is not the personal relationships with others that introverts do not enjoy, rather it is the stimulus involved that appears to be of concern. As a final note on the characteristics of introversion and extraversion, it should be understood that researchers agree (Briggs Myers & Myers, 1980; Jung, 1923; Laney, 2002; Tieger & Barron-Tieger, 1995) that each individual has a natural preference for either the outer or inner world, although by necessity everyone functions in both. "Functioning in our preferred world energizes us; functioning in the opposite world is more difficult and can be tiring" (Tieger & Barron-Tieger, 1995, p.14).

Self-Consciousness: A Distinct Introverted Quality

Many introverted individuals personally identify with the characteristic of self-consciousness (Roback, 1933). In an introverted state, perception, thinking, feeling, and action are determined more directly by subjective factors (i.e. the individual's own conscious experience of an event) than by the object (i.e. other people or things) (Coan, 1984). In other words, when an introvert reflects on interactions with the environment, it is continually in relation to the role of self. This self-consciousness can be defined as the tendency to think about personal aspects of self or self-aspects that are on public display (Harrington & Loffredo, 2001). As discussed by Roback (1933), the introverted individual is more susceptible to self-consciousness than the extravert due to their reflective, reserved, and sensitive nature. Self-identified introverts spend a great deal of time and energy reflecting on how they may be perceived by others within their immediate environment. Consequently this reflective aspect of one's position within society has a direct influence on an

introvert's overall concept of self. Introverts have a unique predisposition that allows them to maintain a state of consciousness of self.

Self-Concept

William James (1890/1963) was the first to recognize and develop the notion of self-concept. Four aspects of self, were seen as specifically important: (a) the *I* (self-as-knower or active agent) and *Me* (self-as-known or the content of experience) distinction, (b) the multifaceted, hierarchical nature of self-concept, (c) the social self, and (d) the definition of self-esteem of subjective importance (Marsh & Hattie, 1996).

From these roots grew a wide variety of theoretical models of the structure of self-concept. One highly regarded theoretical model is the Internal/External Frame of Reference (Shavelson, Hubner, & Stanton, 1976). According to the Internal/External model, "individuals form their self-concept judgments in a particular domain by comparing their own competence in the domain with the perceived competencies of others in the same domain (an external, social comparison process) and by comparing their own competence in that domain with their own competencies in other domains (an internal...process)" (Marsh & Hattie, 1996, p.51). From this model developed the *Shavelson model* (Byrne, 2002), which states, "global self-concept (is) shown to split into two branches: academic and nonacademic self-concepts. The nonacademic branch comprises three facets: physical, social, and emotional self-concepts" (p.898).

Contemporary theory and research on the self-concept draws a distinction between the contents of the self-concept and the structure of the self-concept (Campbell, Assanand, & Di Paula, 2003). "The contents of the self-concept refer to one's self-beliefs and self-evaluations - to how one answers the questions "who am I"

and "how do I feel about myself?" (Campbell et al., p.115). The structure of the self-concept refers to how the contents of the self-concept are organized, or the theoretical perspective of self-concept. Shavelson et al. (1976) identified seven features that are considered critical to their definition of the self-concept. Briefly stated, they include the following:

1. Self-concept is structured so that individuals categorize the information they have about themselves and relate these categories to one another.
2. Self-concept is multifaceted.
3. Self-concept is hierarchical. Perceptions of personal behaviour in specific situations form the base, the inferences about self in relation to social, physical and academic domains are at the middle, and a global, general self-concept rests at the apex.
4. The apex of the hierarchy is relatively stable, but as one descends the hierarchy, self-concept becomes increasingly situation-specific and therefore less stable and influential on the other levels of the hierarchy. For instance, an introvert's perception of their personal behaviour in social situations (i.e. base of hierarchy) indirectly influences their global self-concept (apex of hierarchy).
5. Developmentally, self-concept becomes increasingly complex with age. Individuals in adulthood experience the various levels of the self-concept hierarchy, whereas young children only experience global self-concepts.
6. Self-concept has both a descriptive (i.e. "I am cheerful") and an evaluative aspect (i.e. "I do well in social situations"). Evaluation aspects are more often than not based on comparisons with peers or the expectations of significant others.

7. Self-concept can be differentiated from other constructs to which it is theoretically linked. For example, academic achievement should be more highly associated with academic self-concept than with social or physical self-concept.

A sound understanding of how the self-concept is perceived by the research community aids in the debate on the influence of the temperament of extraversion on introverts. Kunda and Sanitioso (1989) studied motivation changes in the self-concept. They found, "people induced to theorize that a certain attribute promotes desirable outcomes come to view themselves as having relatively higher degrees of that attribute [however] changes in self-concepts appeared to be constrained by prior knowledge" (p.281). In their study, subjects who were predominantly extraverted did not come to view themselves as predominantly introverted when encouraged to believe that introversion was beneficial. Sanitioso (1998) conducted a similar study to the above and found the same results. Subjects:

Still believe that extroversion was overall more predictive of success than introversion...indicating that subjects held previous beliefs relating extroversion to success [and that] subjects' beliefs that extroversion was more predictive of success [than introversion] suggested that the subjects were predominantly extroverted (p.284).

These two studies appear to support the theoretical basis of self-concept modifications as outlined by Shavelson et al. (1976).

Working Example of the Misconceptions of Introversion

The follow section will provide an example of a current day misconception regarding individuals who are introverted. Though several misleading beliefs exist

about introversion (e.g. introverts as anti-social, disengaged from the social world, lacking of self-esteem, etc.), one main misconception, that of shyness, continues to be a leading misconception about introversion.

Division Between Shyness and Introversion

Many individuals use the word shyness to denote introversion; however, this descriptor would be incorrect. Zimbardo (1977), a founding researcher in the study of shyness, describes four theoretical positions to explain the causes of shyness. The first position suggests that shy individuals are biologically more sensitive, and have easily-aroused nervous systems that cause socially avoidant behaviours. The second position suggests that shyness is a learned phobic reaction. For instance, if one had the experience of being ridiculed in a social setting, this might prevent, and even cause, one to develop a phobic reaction to social setting in a broader sense. The third position is that shyness can be understood in terms of social and cultural programming. And finally, the fourth position states that shyness may result from faulty labelling and manifest itself in a self-fulfilling prophecy.

The question at this point becomes why does there exist an interchangeable use of the terms shyness and introversion when in fact shyness is derived by its own means? Dohn (n.d.) provides a sound response to the argument by stating, "shyness seems to relate to introversion, insofar as shyness has to do with low sociability and a desire to avoid social situations" (p.3). However, the avoidance of social situations for those who are privately or publicly shy in comparison to those who are introverted, are done for very different reasons. "Introverts enjoy interacting with others, but it drains their energy in a way not experienced by extroverts. Introverts need to find

quiet places and solitary activities to recharge" (Keirse & Bates, 1984, p.15). Individuals who are characteristically shy may be facing something quite dissimilar to introversion, which may encompass a diagnosis of a social anxiety disorder (Zimbardo, 1977). In addition, the mislabelling of introverts as shy individuals has a direct influence on their personal hierarchical self-concept (Shavelson et al., 1976).

Temperament Type and Self-Concept: Implications

"With their endless appetite for talk and attention, extroverts also dominate social life, so they tend to set expectations. In our extrovertist society, being outgoing is considered normal and therefore desirable, a marker of happiness, (and confidence" (Rauch, 2003, p.134). Most individuals would like to be viewed in a positive light by their social environments and recognize there are ramifications when one does not meet the criterion for what is considered societal norm.

Temperament (e.g. introversion) is a "manner of thinking, behaving, or reacting characteristics of a specific individual" (McCrae et al., 2000, p.173).

Environmental influences play crucial roles in the functioning of the personality system in several different respects: they define the conditions under which human personality evolved; they shape a vast array of skills, values, attitudes, and identities; they provide the concrete forms in which personality traits are expressed; and they supply the trait indicators from which personality traits are inferred and trait levels are assessed (p.175).

As previously supported, Eysenck (1970) believes that personality is *biologically* based. However, the psychology field in general understands personality as perceptual and the result of learning experiences which can reshape the developing

brain (McCrae et al., 2000). In other words, life experience might affect personality through its effects on the brain. This idea is demonstrated by Blickle (as cited in Nussbaum, 2002) "who found a weak but significant positive correlation between introversion and a desire to reach consensus with other people" (p.185). This supports the notion that the pressure for introverts to conform to the dominative extraverted society is indeed a social reality. "If personality development reflects environmental influences, then groups whose histories have led them through different environments should show different developmental outcomes" (McCrae et al., 2000, p.177). Introverts move through the extraverted Western society with developmental outcomes related to their temperament identification.

Sanitioso (2002) conducted a study to show that the motivation to see oneself positively, for example, to see oneself as characterized by "success-promoting attributes" (p.9), influences possible selves or how one might perceive oneself in the future. Results from the study showed that participants still viewed themselves as primarily extraverted in future circumstances regardless of the induced belief presented to them that introversion was most related to future successes. Sanitioso (2002) explains this phenomenon by stating, "extraversion is a characteristic that is considered desirable in many western societies...(therefore) it is not surprising that people have possible selves that are more extraverted" (p.19). The construction of positive possible selves is influenced by the social context within which the individual finds him or herself.

In a study exploring the relationship between temperament type and communication style, participants who preferred extraversion tended to score higher

on communicator image than did those individuals who preferred introversion (Opt & Loffredo, 2003). According to the authors, this study reinforces the idea that introverts tend to be socially disadvantaged because of their communication preferences. "Their lower scores on communicator image suggest that they are more likely to perceive themselves as poorer communicators. In addition, negative communicator image has been linked with low self-concept, which may affect introverts' interactions with the world around them" (p.567).

The above studies have implications for self-identified introverts. Their temperament may impact their careers, especially careers that are dominated by extraverts, such as, positions in marketing, sales, public relations and performing (Card, 1993). In addition, because the self-concept changes in the perceived similarity to others, "individuals experiencing professional and personal losses are also likely to find themselves losing their friends" (Kunda & Sanitioso, 1988, p. 283). Card (1993) poses the question, "how many creative minds are lost because they are not supported and honoured?" (p.30).

In addition to career realm implications, a further concern regards an introvert's disadvantage within academic settings. Many educational institutions are designed to foster quick-thinking, immediate-responses, and social engagements (e.g. group work, presentations, etc.) that stress verbal communication (e.g. Davis & Johnson, 1983-84; McCann, Short & Stewin, 1986; Nussbaum, 2002). This type of learning environment serves the extraverted personality quite well, however, in general introverted students prefer a classroom setting where instruction from the

teacher/professor is directive (McCann et al., 1986), and where sufficient time is allotted for intellectual processing (Davis & Johnson, 1983-84; Nussbaum, 2002).

The above is not to imply that introverted students do not perform well with other students in a classroom setting; in fact Nussbaum (2002) found that introverts appear "to work together to co-construct solutions to problems" (p.188). Rather an introvert's unique learning style suggests the need for academic instructors to adjust their teaching techniques to best serve the needs of their students. When academic instructors neglect to recognize the educational needs of introverted students (e.g. preference to think before speaking out loud) classroom satisfaction and grade performance of these students suffer (McCann, et al., 1986).

Implications for the Counselling Community

"A positive self-concept is a desirable outcome in many disciplines such as educational, developmental, clinical, and social psychology" (Marsh & Hattie, 1996, p.38). Therefore, attention should be given to minority social groups who experience a lack of social acceptance for their way of being. Because society appears to prefer extraversion, "introverts may feel as though they need to act like extroverts. Introverts often feel pressured to conform to extroverted standards of behaviour, since their quiet ways and desire for time alone are interpreted as antisocial behaviour" (Mudore, 2002, p.18). Laney (2002) notes that forty-nine of the fifty introverts she interviewed "felt they had been reproached and maligned for being the way they were" (p.53). As a result, many introverts live with feelings of shame and guilt around their identity as an introvert. Shame plays a pivotal role in our *being*, our lived experience. Shame causes us to view our existence as unworthy. Laney (2002) provides a brief list of

indicators that suggest one might be experiencing shame: an impulse to shrink or hide; the wish to disappear; the sense that one's whole body is withering; and feeling that speaking is even harder than usual.

Sanitioso and Wlodarski (2004) examined how the motivation to see oneself as characterized by desirable attributes (i.e. either extraverted or introverted, whichever the participants were told was desirable) may influence feedback seeking and social preferences. Findings indicated that extraversion-success participants (those participants who were informed that extraversion was conducive to success and desirable attributes) preferred others who perceived them as extraverted, whereas the reverse was found for introversion-success participants; they preferred others who perceived them as introverted. The outcome suggests "people appear to rely on how others regard them to *realize* (italics added) a desired self-perception" (p.412). This supports the notion that the self is socially constructed, that is, individuals rely on the perceptions of others to help form a desired self-perception. If the feedback from others regarding introverted behaviour is perceived as "awkward, unconfident, unsociable, reserved, shy, unfriendly [and/or] cold" (Sanitioso, 2002, p. 16) it should be of little surprise that introverts may feel shame in Western society for being who they authentically are.

The negative implications that introverts may experience regarding their temperament can be seen to form a vicious cycle. Being introspective and self-contained by character may prove to be a deficit for introverts if they experience feelings of shame, guilt, or depressive symptoms. Further removal from societal participation may increase to unhealthy levels. According to Morris (1979) educators

must not forget that "self-esteem is not unidimensional and involves both a personal dimension and a social dimension" (p.82).

"More research needs to be done to understand how introverts' communication preferences affect their ability to live comfortably and successfully in a society that tends to value extraverted communication processes" (Opt & Loffredo, 2003, p.567). The counselling community needs to take Opt and Loffredo's (2003) words to heart, and act responsibly and ethically to aid in the understanding and acceptance of the introverted culture.

Summary

This chapter has examined the historical basis related to the temperaments of introversion and extraversion, and has provided a comprehensive list of the common characteristics unique to each temperament. This chapter has also examined selected literature on self-concept, and attempted to distinguish and discuss the differences between shyness and introversion. Temperament and self-concept were discussed and were intended to have the reader notice the need for a study that asks the question - *What sense do self-identified introverts make of their lived experience in relation to their self-concept?* How has living in a predominately extroverted society affected their self-concept? How do introverts feel, think, react, and relate to their temperament of introversion and of their counterpart of extraversion? Do they ultimately feel understood and accepted? Chapter three will outline the methodology I will use to uncover the responses to these unanswered questions.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Introduction

The methodology used for the research question -*What sense do self-identified introverts make of their lived experience in relation to their self-concept?* – will be outlined within chapter three. The methodology will include information pertaining to the general paradigm in which the study is based, along with information related to the research design, entering assumptions of the primary researcher, participants, instrumentation, data collection process and data analysis procedures.

General Approach - Qualitative Paradigm

The qualitative paradigm was chosen in order to comprehensively investigate how the self-concept of self-identified introverts has been influenced by the social environment of extraversion. A qualitative approach presents social reality by emphasizing the meaning of events as expressed by those who experience them. In other words, "qualitative research is an activity of reflection and practice, whose intent is to give rise to a wiser and more meaningful portrayal of social phenomena" (Rothe, 2000, p.21). In this study, social reality is constructed by participants as they participate in an environment that seems to favour extraversion.

As Anderson & Arsenault (1998) state, "a profound understanding of the world can be gained through conversation and observation in natural settings" (p.119). By bringing voice to the introvert's experiences, it is anticipated that a more comprehensive understanding of the temperament will be presented. The strength in using a qualitative paradigm for this study is that it will allow for the structure of people's reasoning (e.g. how people reason, rationalize or legitimize their actions and

points of view) to be heard and understood (Rothe, 2000). The qualitative paradigm puts meaning to life experiences and allows for views of "normality that inform how people converse with others in relation to their self-image and how they believe others perceive them" (Rothe, p.20). Finally, qualitative research allows for patterns of behaviour that come about in everyday situations, but yet may not be fully understood by others (e.g. introversion), to be heard and considered, and therefore can be viewed as an offering for social change.

Research Design

A hermeneutic (interpretive) phenomenological research design was chosen for this particular study. The applicability of the phenomenological approach and the reasons for choosing hermeneutic phenomenology are outlined below.

Why Phenomenology?

Phenomenology, in general, attempts to look at the essence of an experience as one lives it. The expression of "lived experience" signifies, in epistemological terms, the way in which humans exist in the world as selves, and it implies that the essence of this lived experience lies precisely in its "lived" character. "This lived character consists not simply in what is felt or undergone by sentient beings in the passage of time, but of what from this passing sentience is meaningfully singled out and preserved" (Burch, 1990, p.133). Therefore for the purposes of this study, the preserved essence will be the participants' lived experience as self-identified introverts. Through the research design of phenomenology the core essence of introversion in relation to self-concept will be uncovered for both the participants and myself as the primary researcher.

Shapiro & Alexander (1975) state that because introversion "is an attitudinal phenomenon, (it) cannot be studied exclusively through an operation of it" (p. 19). As stated, the central task in phenomenology is to describe a particular view of the world, as it is perceived, and to find concepts that capture a particular way of being in the world. In a study looking to explore the perceptions self-identified introverts have regarding their self-concept and social environments, the knowledge lies in "the existence of *awareness* in the human being" (McCall, 1983, p.55).

Gall, Borg & Gall (1996) suggest that conducting a phenomenological study includes four fundamental procedures. Briefly stated, they include the first procedure of *identifying a topic of personal and social significance*. The subject area of introversion is of personal and professional interest, for it motivates me both emotionally and intellectually. Secondly, phenomenology requires *a selection of appropriate participants*: "the essential criteria for selecting participants is that they have experienced the phenomenon being studied and share the researcher's interest in understanding its nature and meanings" (Gall et al., p.601). Thirdly, the researcher is responsible for *interviewing each participant* in-depth. In this study each interview was no less than one hour and was no more than one hour and 40 minutes. Finally, an *analysis of the interview data* is conducted to identify themes of the interview, ultimately to find meaning to the research question.

Why Hermeneutic (Interpretive) Phenomenology?

As Lopez and Willis (2004) argue, many researchers who employ a phenomenological research design neglect to articulate the philosophical components on which the study is based. Consequently the reader has the difficult task of

obtaining a clear sense of how the knowledge produced by the study is to be evaluated and used. In this sense, it is deemed important for researchers to state the ontological and supportive epistemological stances that guide their study.

This study fosters an interpretive approach rather than a descriptive design because of the ontological beliefs held by myself as the primary researcher. When examining descriptive versus interpretive phenomenological beliefs (i.e. Husserlian phenomenology versus Heideggerian phenomenology), strength is found in both ontological perspectives (i.e. assumptions regarding the form and nature of reality and what can be known about it), however more allegiance and personal connection is found within Heidegger's interpretive viewpoints.

For example, a philosophical assumption underlying the interpretive phenomenology approach is that presuppositions on the part of the researcher are viewed as valuable guides to inquiry and make the inquiry a meaningful undertaking (Lopez & Willis, 2004). In contrast, the methodology of pure descriptive phenomenology is such that it conceives an approach toward research that aims at being presuppositionless (van Manen, 1997). Such a position must exclude the intimate connection that a researcher has with the phenomena that may be seen as confounding research results. A technique that aims to construct this essential feature is that of bracketing. Bracketing is the process by which the researcher attempts to hold prior knowledge or beliefs about the phenomena *in suspension* in order to perceive it (the phenomenon) more clearly and without biases (LeVasseur, 2003). This is not to suggest a complete elimination of preconceived notions, but rather the researcher is to be aware of their preconceived notions and bracket them out by

engaging in reflexive writing (i.e. personal journal, in field notes), by consultation with committee members, etc. As Willis (2001) states, "the acts of naming and saying things about the phenomenon, even while consciously 'bracketing out' culturally generated abstracting interpretations, are still forms of interpretative action. There is still some kind of hermeneutic or interpretative template at work" (p.6). Therefore it is my ontological belief that presuppositions simply cannot be "bracketed" out, nor does reflexive writing, consultation with committee members, etc. eliminate, (temporarily or otherwise), a researcher's unique connection to the topic of study. In my case this would include my personal lived experience as an introvert. As supported by Heideggerian philosophy, "it is impossible to rid the mind of the background of understandings that has led the researcher to consider a topic worthy of research in the first place" (Lopez & Willis, p. 729). Therefore, it is my position that measures of reflexivity and consultations aid in a study's overall trustworthiness, but to call such epistemological techniques a form of "bracketing" is ontologically unfitting.

What appears to "fit" in the sense of suspending theories and assumptions is what interpretive phenomenologists call the *hermeneutical circle* (LeVasseur, 2003). In the hermeneutical circle we make progress toward sense and meaning by questioning prior knowledge, and hence we disburse into new horizons of meaning. "Meanings that the researcher arrives at in interpretive research are a blend of the meanings articulated by both participant and researcher within the focus of the study" (Lopez & Willis, 2004, p.730). When one interacts with another in an act of understanding one's lived experience, it is based on a personal horizon of experiences

and meanings. Therefore, the interpretive process is achieved through epistemological means of the hermeneutic circle which moves from the parts of experience, to the whole of experience. This process moves back and forth again and again to increase the depth of engagement with and the understanding of the lived experience under study (Lavery, 2003). Interpretation then supposes a shared understanding and makes explicit that the shared world of understanding between the researcher and the researched (Conroy, 2003) is in essence the represented lived experience.

Another reason for why this study prescribes to a hermeneutic (interpretive) phenomenological approach is that the interpretivist framework of inquiry supports the ontological perspective of the belief in the existence of not just one reality, but of multiple realities (Lavery, 2003). There is no one true meaning produced by any interpretive study (Lopez & Willis, 2004), but the meanings that are stated in the research findings must be logical and plausible within the study framework, and must reflect the realities of the study participants. "The hermeneutic phenomenologist, rather than seeking purely descriptive categories of the real, perceived world in the narratives of the participants, will focus on describing the meanings of the individuals' *being-in-the-world* (i.e. how one exists, acts or is involved the world) and how these meanings influence the choices they make" (Lopez & Willis, p.729).

With regards to this study, the participants' *being-in-the-world* will be understood as multiple realities; however, the term *essence* will represent the commonalities (i.e. themes) shared by the self-identified introverts. The phenomenological term of "essence" does in fact have its roots in Husserlian philosophy (Lopez & Willis, 2004); however, as van Manen (n.d.) states, "essence is

not a single, fixed property by which we know something; rather, it is meaning constituted by a complex array of aspects, properties and qualities – some of which are incidental and some of which are more critical to the being of things" (p.3). Knowing this, the term "essence" will be used throughout this study to refer to the lived experience commonalities shared by the introverted participants all the while remaining mindful that each participant's *being-in-the-world* is unique and multi-layered.

Entering Assumptions

Many of my ontological beliefs were stated in the above section [i.e. prescribing to a hermeneutic (interpretive) phenomenological approach] and so will not be reproduced but simply declared within this section. There remain, however, four central assumptions that must be made explicit. The primary researcher has considered her assumptions and they are:

1. The participants will be open and honest with their responses to the Self-Assessment for Introverts Questionnaire, as well as to the questions asked by the researcher during the face-to-face interviews;
2. The researcher's predisposition is that the identities of introverted participants have indeed been influenced, whether positively or otherwise, by the temperament of extraversion;
3. When employing a phenomenological research design, it is assumed that the perceptions of participants will present us (i.e. researcher, academic realm, general society, etc.) with evidence of the world as it is *lived* and not as it is merely thought to be;

4. It is also assumed (within a phenomenological research design) that human existence is meaningful and of interest. Existence is understood as *being in the world* in that "people are in their worlds and are understandable only in their contexts" (Morse & Richards, 2002, p.45).

Participants

To determine the participant selection for this study that wishes to examine the question of - *What sense do self-identified introverts make of their lived experience in relation to their self-concept?* - the purposeful techniques of both criterion sampling and snowball sampling were employed. Criterion samplings are those "cases which meet a set of predetermined conditions" whereas snowball sampling (i.e. "word of mouth") is "a technique used to locate key informants on a referral basis" (Anderson & Arsenault, 1998, p.124). It is important to note, however, that those individuals who were selected through snowball sampling successfully met the criterion for this study which is discussed below.

Participants were chosen from two Western Canadian provinces based on their scores on the Self-Assessment for Introverts questionnaire (Appendix A). This self-assessment measure was used as a screening tool designed to determine and distinguish between "highly introverted" individuals and those less than "highly introverted". The return of the questionnaire, along with a signed informed consent letter (Appendix B) to the primary researcher from those interested potential participants allowed for scoring of the assessment measure. Those individuals who scored as "highly introverted" (scores ranging from 20-30 out of a total of 30 true/false questions regarding introverted behaviour) were then considered and

contacted for the study. Ethical approval was granted for the researcher to post advertisement research study posters (Appendix C). This was carried out at a few locations, with no potential participants responding to this process of recruitment.

Coincidentally, the first five interested individuals who were recruited through snowball sampling (in addition to the completion of the self-assessment questionnaire) became the five participants for this study. The participants' scores on the Self-Assessment for Introverts Questionnaire ranged between 26 to 30 out of a possible 30 points, all well within the classification of "highly introverted". Participants ranged between 25-34 years of age which is appropriate since "personality development is not complete until the end of the decade of the 20s" (Costa & McCrae, 1994, p.139). Moreover, increased questions of one's self concept (e.g. "who am I?", "where do I 'fit' in society?") increase with age (Shavelson *et al.*, 1976) particularly throughout adolescent development (Costa & McCrae). Due to the recent recognition of their temperament type (i.e. post adolescent years), individuals in their mid 20s to mid 30s may have the increased ability to reflect upon the specifics associated with their introversion. It is for this reason this age group was chosen for this study. This is not to imply that self-identified introverts older than 35 could not speak to their introverted experiences, but the *challenges* of accepting one's introversion may be discussed more vividly by introverted individuals who have fairly recently accepted their introversion. Therefore the lived experience of self-identified introverts is limited to those individuals who are within the age group of 25-35. And finally, all five participants, four female and one male, were Caucasian and each had post-secondary education from a recognized university within Canada.

Pre-Pilot and Pilot Study

Both a pre-pilot study and pilot study were conducted before the authentic interviews were completed. The pre-pilot study was done within a qualitative research course in March 2004, where one of the applied assignments included conducting a research-type interview with a student colleague or volunteer (no informed consent was therefore needed). The pilot study was conducted in June 2004 for further review of the instrumentation of this study. Both the pre-pilot volunteer and pilot participant consented to completing the Self-Assessment for Introverts questionnaire, in addition to partaking in an audiotaped interview.

As suggested by the pilot participant (and as reviewed in consultation with a co-supervisor), a final question was added to the interview schedule. The additional reflective question offered participants with an opportunity to thoughtfully review their lived experience as self-identified introverts and to report any new learnings or new thoughts they had regarding their sense of self and their introverted temperament.

Instrumentation for Data Collection

This section will provide the reader with a detailed account of the instruments used for the data collection process of this study. Three principal instruments were central to the study on introversion: the primary researcher, the self-assessment for introverts' questionnaire, and the face-to-face semi-structured participant interviews.

As Anderson and Arsenault (1998) explain, one significant difference between qualitative and quantitative instrumentation consist of the primary instrumentation utilized. "In qualitative research, the researcher is the principal data collection instrument; whereas in quantitative research, scientifically designed data collection

tools are developed" (p.123). The primary instrument (i.e. the researcher) is ultimately responsible for keeping "meticulous records of all sources of information used, using detailed transcripts, and taking field notes of all communications and reflective thinking activities during the research process" (Anderson & Arsenault, p.134). Because I, as the researcher, personally identify with the temperament of introversion, I was required to partake in devoted self-analysis to become aware of personal biases that may influence the overall rigour of the study (Tobin & Begley, 2004). However, hermeneutic phenomenologists (e.g. van Manen, 1997) note that one's own experiences with a phenomenon (e.g. my experience as an introvert) are also the possible experiences of other introverts. Using one's personal experience as a starting point to research is viewed by interpretive phenomenologists as valuable and good practice. Therefore in preparation for the data collection process, I began an ongoing reflexivity journal which helped me gain clarity of my "direct description of my experience as it is without offering causal explanations or interpretive generalizations" (van Manen, p.54) of my experience as an introvert. An excerpt will be included within the researcher's reflections section of chapter four.

In addition to the instrumentation of the primary researcher, a Self-Assessment for Introverts Questionnaire (Appendix A) was used prior to conducting any semi-structured interview to ensure that the participants did indeed identify with having a lived experience as an introvert. As previously mentioned all five participants for this study scored between 26 and 30 out of a possible 30 points on the Self-Assessment for Introverts Questionnaire, placing them all well within the classification of "highly introverted". The criterion of scoring as "highly introverted"

speaks to the study's *credibility* in that the participants were accurately identified and described. The questionnaire itself was developed by Laney (2002) and was specifically chosen for this study because of its current publication and ease of administration. It is quite similar to the Pittsburgh Scale of Social Extraversion-Introversion (Bendig, 1962). However, that instrument was not preferred due to the outdated language of the questionnaire items [i.e. "I can usually let myself go and have a hilariously good time at a gay party" (p.205)]. Rather, the instructions on the Self-Assessment for Introverts Questionnaire (Laney) are clear, concise, and fit the parameters of the study. It is not confounded by any additional variables (i.e. measuring something other than introversion as in the case with measurements such as the MBTI, or Keirsey Temperament Sorter) and therefore aided the assurance the participants were accurately chosen.

Face-to-face interviews were conducted with each of the five "highly introverted" participants during the months of July 2004-October 2004. It was my responsibility as the interviewer "for creating a climate in which the research participant will feel comfortable and will respond honestly and comprehensively" (Moustakas, 1994, p.114). This was accomplished by conducting the interviews in an environment that was mutually agreed upon by both the participant and researcher. In addition to having the participants feel physically comfortable for the interview, each participant was also emailed or given a hardcopy of the interview questions (Appendix D) before the scheduled interview time. This was done intentionally in order to honour an introvert's preference to reflect about a matter before providing

their response (Laney, 2002). Positive feedback by the participants reflected the appropriateness of this action.

Before each interview I prepared myself by engaging in the process of *reflective-meditation Epoche* (Moustakas, 1994). Epoche is in fact a form of bracketing, but the meditative practice of this form of Epoche allowed me to feel centered, grounded and fully open to hearing the narratives of my participants. This state was achieved by letting my personal connection to introversion enter my consciousness and then to leave freely, leaving me to feel internally ready to enter freshly into the interview process. The reflective-meditation Epoche practice is best described by Moustakas (1994) when he states:

The Epoche process inclines me toward receptiveness. I am more readily able to meet something or someone and to listen and hear whatever is being presented, without coloring the other's communication with my own habits of thinking, feeling, and seeing, removing the usual ways of labelling or judging, or comparing. I am ready to perceive and know a phenomenon from its appearance and presence (p. 89).

Each interview was face-to-face, in-depth, and semi-structured. The duration of the individual interviews were between 60-100 minutes each. Four pre-determined open-ended questions were asked, in addition to a number of follow-up open-ended questions that evoked and ensured a comprehensive account of the participants' experiences. Asking open-ended questions enabled me to develop a comprehensive understanding of each participant's lived experience (Roberts & Cairns, 1999).

Each interview would commence with a review of the informed consent measures. Participants were also asked at this time to complete a demographics form, and if they had any questions before the audio-taped interview proceeded. None of the five participants had any questions regarding their participation in the study; therefore at this point I began with the interview questions:

1. How did you first come to identify yourself as an introvert?
2. What does being an introvert mean to you?
3. Describe and express in as much detail as possible your lived experience(s) as a self-identified introvert.
4. Take a moment to reflect on our past hour/two hours together. What, if any, new learnings/new thoughts, etc. have emerged for you regarding your sense of self and your introvert temperament?

The interview questions are consistent with using a phenomenological approach in that they are informal and utilize open-ended comments and questions (Moustakas, 1994). "A description of the experience of introversion requires a phenomenology of subjectivity" (Shapiro & Alexander, 1975, p.24) and provides self-identified introverts with an opportunity to contribute directly to the study of introversion. Open ended questions serve the introverted minds by utilizing their interest and overall attention that is engrossed by inner events, and by respecting their real world is in fact their inner world of ideas and understanding (Briggs Myers et al., 1980).

When each interview was completed, the participant was thanked, given their honorarium (Appendix B), and told that future contact with them would be made regarding further participation requirements. Further participation included two

member-checking validations for: 1) the accuracy of the transcript and 2) accuracy of thematic representations, which will be discussed within the next section.

Procedure for Data Analysis

After the data from each interview was collected and transcribed verbatim by the primary researcher, it was thematically analyzed using Colaizzi's (1978) method which has been modified and informed by Roberts and Cairns (1999). The adapted data analysis method consists of five different stages:

1. Read all of the participant's descriptions (i.e. transcript) in order to acquire a sense of the meaning of each participant's experience.
2. Identify phrases that highlight important details which pertain to the investigated phenomenon;
3. Assign theme words to the extracted phrases or sentences that reflect the essential meaning of the participant's words;
4. Group themes (i.e. theme words) into theme clusters. A theme cluster encompasses, reflects and categorizes similar themes;
5. Group similar theme clusters to form categories that encompass, reflect and categorize the cluster themes.

Miller (2003) suggests using Colaizzi's (1978) data analysis steps provide clear guidance for the novice phenomenologist. The data analysis stages proved supportive and beneficial in the overall identification of the essences of the introverted participants. Movement and fluidity between the stages of analysis were found by the researcher: having to re-read and revise some of the preliminary findings which was documented within an audit trail of the analysis. This process is familiar

within phenomenological research analysis as Colaizzi (1978) suggests that the framework is not definitive and there is a tendency for the stages to overlap (Miller, 2003).

The hermeneutic circle of co-construction of themes with the participants (Lavery, 2003) was accomplished by two separate member-checking procedures: after stage one and again after stage five of the data analysis procedures. After each interview was transcribed and read by the primary researcher (stage one), each transcript was returned to the participants (via email or hard-copy) for authenticity review, for feedback or comments, as well as an opportunity for the participants to eliminate or further comment on any sections of their transcript. A second co-construction and member-check was performed after stage five. Each participant was sent (via email or hard-copy) a detailed description of each category and cluster themes with quoted illustrations from their interviews that spoke to each of the categories. Participants were asked to see how the categories correspond to their concept of self as a self-identified introvert. They were then further asked that if something did not accurately capture their experience within the wording of the category and/or theme cluster to advise me of this in order to make the needed changes. With the exception of a couple minor changes (i.e. recommendations) made by two of the participants, no major changes were made to the final data. It was at this point that the categorical, cluster, and thematic representations were reviewed by an expert member on the researcher's committee.

Quality of the Study

Quality of a study is the means by which researchers show integrity and competence: it is about ethics and politics, and a way of demonstrating the legitimacy of the research process, regardless of the paradigm (Tobin & Begley, 2004). This section will discuss the measures taken by the researcher to generate the quality of the study.

Criteria of Trustworthiness

"All research must respond to canons that stand as criteria against which the trustworthiness of the project can be evaluated" (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). Furthermore, interpretivist inquiry requires an organized, thorough, conscious method as do other methods of inquiry (Lincoln, 2003). The criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability were the measures taken to produce such results.

Credibility refers to the demonstration that the study was conducted in such a manner as to ensure that the subject under study (i.e. the life experiences of self-identified introverts) was accurately identified and described (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). Furthermore, credibility is seen as the conscious effort a researcher takes to establish confidence by employing a number of techniques: verbatim transcripts, member checking, expert checking, and keeping an audit trail. These steps were taken for this study.

Closely related to the concept of credibility, authenticity involves the depiction of research that reflects the meanings and experiences that are lived and perceived by the participants (Whittemore, Chase & Mandle, 2001). I strongly feel

that the credibility and authenticity of my study was met foremost through my conscious choice of methodology, that of interpretive phenomenology.

Phenomenology is grounded in the belief that essence of a phenomenon can be found in the lived experiences of those individuals who experience the phenomenon. As LeVasseur (2003) states, choosing a phenomenological approach is best suited for studies where a particular phenomena is not well understood and the phenomenon is central to the lived experience of human beings. As my writing has shown, introversion seems to be somewhat misunderstood and misrepresented by the literature written on the temperament. Therefore, authenticity was shown by listening carefully to participants' voices and allowing this under-represented group of introverted participants a space to express themselves.

Additionally, credibility was established by having potential participants complete the Self-Assessment for Introverts Questionnaire prior to any official interview. The criterion of scoring as "highly introverted" speaks to the study's credibility in that the participants were accurately identified and described.

Credibility and authenticity was also established by taking a phenomenological approach to interviewing the participants. A phenomenological interview is not significantly directed by the interviewer (mostly often only one, or at most a few, interview questions are asked) therefore creating less of an opportunity for participants to be led by a comment or question an interviewer might pose. Phenomenologists view this interview approach as an attempt to authentically allow the essence of a phenomenon to emerge. That is not to say that phenomenologists do not use open-ended probes during the interview, (i.e. "can you tell me more about

that?", "can you explain that in more detail?") but the interviewer has constant awareness of their phenomenological position while conducting the semi-structured interview. Credibility, or the accurate interpretation of the meaning of the data, was also established by following a well-regarded coding analysis procedure developed by Colaizzi (1978) as modified by Roberts & Cairns (1999). Once the data was analyzed, the participants were asked to review their interview transcript as well as to review the categories and cluster themes for their accuracy. This technique is known as member checking.

Dependability is attained through a process of auditing where others can observe the researcher's documentation of data, methods, decisions and end products (Tobin & Begley, 2004). The thorough construction of this thesis is one way in which the dependability of the study is shown. Another form of dependability central to the audit trail includes the researcher's engagement with a reflexivity writing process. Two types of reflexive writing were undertaken by the researcher during the research process: reflexivity as introspection and reflexivity as intersubjective reflection (Finlay, 2002). Reflexivity as introspection refers to examining one's own experience and personal meanings with the phenomenon under study, which help form a more generalized understanding and interpretation of the phenomenon. Reflexivity as intersubjective reflection refers to the exploration of the mutual meanings that emerged with the research relationship where "the self-in-relation-to-others becomes both the aim and object of focus" (Finlay, p.216).

"Confirmability is concerned with establishing that data and interpretations of the findings are not figments of the inquirer's imagination, but are clearly derived

from the data" (Tobin & Begley, 2004, p.392). Through engaging in the processes of the hermeneutic circle, member checking, and expert checking, the participants and I were able to achieve "logical" results.

Transferability refers to the generalizability of inquiry, but in a naturalistic study of this kind this can only apply to case-to-case transfer (Tobin & Begley, 2004). However, self-identified introverts who are reading this study may find the narratives provided by the participants resonate with their own experience, and see relevance to their particular situation.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval for this study was obtained from the University of Victoria Human Ethics Committee (Appendix E). All participants were advised their participation was completely voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any time. Participants were also informed that their anonymity would be ensured by the use of pseudonym names and identification numbers, and that their factual names would not be attached to any of their interview data. All records were contained in a locked cabinet that only the primary researcher had access to and the participants' data was kept in the locked cabinet throughout the duration of the study. All data will be destroyed after three years time.

Summary of Chapter Three

Chapter three outlined the methodology that was implemented for the study of - *What sense do self-identified introverts make of their lived experiences in relation to their self-concept?* In summary, the general research paradigm for the study is qualitative, with a hermeneutic (interpretive) phenomenological research design.

Criterion and snowball sampling were implemented to choose the participants for the study (i.e. five "highly introverted" individuals between the ages of 25-35 located within two Western Canadian provinces). Instrumentations of the study include the primary researcher, the Self-Assessment Introvert Questionnaire and the face-to-face interviews with each of the chosen participants. The procedure for data analysis focused on the works of Collaizzi (1978) as adapted by Roberts and Cairns (1999). The chapter concluded with a review of the measures taken to ensure the study's rigour, and the considerations taken for ethical research practice.

Chapter four outlines the results of data analysis, including an overview of the essential structure of the lived experience under investigation, as well as a synopsis of the thematic, cluster and categorical representations. The chapter ends with a section devoted to the researcher's reflections on her personal identification with introversion, and reflections on the overall research process.

Chapter Four: Results

Introduction

Chapter four presents the results of data analysis. This chapter is organized into three main sections: essential structure of the experience, a comprehensive synopsis of the categories and their respective clusters and themes, and reflections from the primary researcher.

In an attempt to respect and honour the participants' experience, this chapter will provide the reader with details from the participants' narratives including various excerpts from the original data. In addition, the categories and cluster themes have been organized in a manner that best interconnects and reflects the participants' whole experience. In essence, this chapter will focus on describing the meanings of the participants' *being-in-the-world* and how these meanings have contributed to their self understandings.

Essential Structure of the Experience

The present investigation focused on the experiences and perceptions of five self-identified "highly introverted" individuals: Raine, Marley, Emma, Sherry and Liam¹. Interviews were conducted with each of the five participants to identify how their lives have been influenced by their personal temperament and their temperament counterpart (i.e. extraversion). Each participant provided in-depth descriptions of their introverted experiences and perceptions.

The essential experience of the introvert's existence is not based on one reality, but rather the participants' narratives suggest multiple realities that are constructed and altered by the knowers themselves. The data from the interviews

¹ Pseudonym names are used to protect the anonymity of the participants' identities.

suggest common lived experiences found between the introverted participants. In addition, the common lived experiences give voice to self-identified introverts and provide the reader with an in-depth look at the temperament of introversion.

The essential experience of self-identified introverts can be best understood when represented in a relatively chronological order. In other words, to understand the lived experience of introverts, one must take into consideration the effects of cumulative experiences. For example, each participant spoke to the reactions they received from others regarding their introverted behaviours, starting as early as age three, until present day. Understanding how cumulative experiences help shape current perceptions regarding self is fundamental to this investigation.

Participants were able to clearly articulate the characteristics of their introverted selves that they hold in high regard. Each participant voiced their overall contentment with their introverted temperament and how living as anything other would be incongruent to their true selves. The deep connection to their introvertedness, however, was a long and personal journey only recently recognized.

Throughout the interviews, the participants often focused on the challenges of being a self-identified introvert within our Western culture that appears to prescribe to extraverted norms of human behaviour. Introvert challenges were found to be most predominantly experienced within social realms. Examples include school challenges (i.e. feeling understood and valued by teachers and peers), work/career challenges (i.e. getting ahead in one's career when introverted), and relationship challenges (i.e. having significant others, including one's partner, that accurately understood introversion).

As previously mentioned, the self-concepts of the introverted participants have been greatly influenced by the interactions with their social environments. The perceptions and reactions held by others within society (mainly those individuals who are relatively extraverted) prove to be influential in the positive and healthy self-concept development of self-identified introverts. A personality factor that makes introverted individuals susceptible to the reactions of others seems to be their self-conscious nature.

Each participant was able to identify "turning points" or lived experiences that were central to the true acceptance of their introverted selves. These "turning points" were experienced by the participants in their early to mid 20s, making the acceptance a relatively new phenomenon. Factors that have helped introverts attain self acceptance include educational aspects (i.e. learning about introversion, taking a personality assessment test such as the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory), and significant relationships with others.

A final note of caution is provided for the reader. Though the results may appear to suggest a strong partition between introversion and extraversion, this is not to imply any fault within, dislike for or disapproval of extraverted individuals. To suggest so would be an inaccurate depiction. The introverts within this study expressed no aversion to their temperament counterpart of extraversion. In fact, each participant mentioned having healthy relationships with significant extraverts within their lives. Instead, the results indicate the concern participants have over the perceptual views held by particular societal members on introversion. As well, when speaking about introvert/extravert differences, most participants refer to the greater

Western societal norms of social behaviour and not towards specific extraverts themselves.

Categorical, Cluster, and Thematic Structures

Through the data analysis process emerged four central categories: 1) Perceptions of Self, 2) Perceptions and Concepts of Self in Relation to Others and Environment 3) Trial and Tribulation Experiences, 4) Meaningful Experiences & The Call for Change (Table 1). Category one is composed of two clusters, category two consists of four clusters, category three is comprised of three clusters and finally, category four includes three clusters. Within each cluster a number of themes were identified (Tables 2, 3, 4, and 5).

Table 1 Categories and Their Respective Clusters

Categories			
Perceptions of Self	Perceptions & Concepts of Self in Relation to Others & Environment	Trial & Tribulation Experiences	Meaningful Experiences & The Call for Change
Clusters Within Each Category			
Identification with Introversion	Perceived Societal Messages & Influences	Challenges	Turning Points in Self-Concept
Descriptors and Beliefs about Self (in relation to one's introversion)	Reactions by Others regarding Introverted Behaviours and the Affect on Self	Coping Behaviours (reaction to challenges & societal messages)	Self-Acceptance of Introversion
	Feeling Misunderstood	Product of Coping Behaviours	Recommendations for Societal Change
	Personal "Sense-Making" of Introvert/Extravert Differences		

Category One: Perceptions of Self

The category *perceptions of self* is comprised of two clusters: 1) identification with introversion, and 2) descriptors and beliefs about self (Table 2). In general, this category speaks to self experiences that are not in direct relation to the social world, and focuses on participants' perceptions of the characteristics and abilities that help form part of their overall self-concept.

Table 2 Clusters and Supporting Themes for the Category, Perceptions of Self

Perceptions of Self	
Identification with Introversion	Descriptors and Beliefs about Self (in relation to one's introversion)
Themes Within Each Cluster	
Sensing One's Introversion (innate feeling)	Valued Qualities in Self
Identifying with Term "Introvert"	Self-Consciousness

Cluster one: Identification with introversion. Interviews with each participant revealed two ways through which they came to know about their introverted temperament. "Sensing One's Introversion" was intuitive in nature where participants described their introvert innateness. Participants sensed at young ages (e.g. 3 ½ years of age for Sherry) that they preferred activities that were more solitary. Liam states, "I was always, as a kid, happy playing by myself...I never had a problem with it...it's just the way I (was)". Like Liam, Sherry remembered her introverted innateness best by reflecting on her childhood memories as well:

I remember that I only played with people that were in walking distance of the house...I always remember being sensitive to other people's emotions and feelings, so to have that many people in my life was that many people I had to deal with...I never remember wanting to have people in life....it felt inconvenient.

Sherry, along with the other participants knew innately that they preferred a quieter sense of being, a simple way of being. Sense making was also very simple..."that's my make-up, that's how I was born, that's who I am," stated Sherry.

The second manner in which participants came to know and understand their temperament was through the personal identification with the term "Introvert" itself. Whereas the former was associated with an innate knowing, this form of identification came through mediums such as personality assessments (i.e. Myers-Briggs personality profile), readings on introversion or personality types, and/or learning the term through a college/university psychology course on personality. Marley describes her experience of coming to know the term introversion in the following way:

I took a psychology course...we did the Myers Briggs...and [I] came up as highly introverted on that scale and that was the first time I really learnt of the word introvert or what it was or had ever heard of it. I think it was probably 18 or 19 and I was quite excited because I found it somewhat validating because it just captured who I was so much more than anything else ever had.

This was similar for Emma. Her personal understanding and identification with the term introverted did not arrive until her early 20s. "I'd always been called an introvert but I didn't know what that really meant until I was about 23". *Being called* introverted and understanding *what is truly meant* by this label are two distinct themes.

Cluster two: Descriptors and beliefs about self. This cluster concentrates on concrete descriptions of self as they apply to the introvert realm. Two themes comprise this cluster: "Valued Qualities in Self" and "Self-Consciousness". Participants named those qualities of self that initially appear unassimilated with the social world. In other words, these valued qualities form the basis of one's self-

concept and it is from here that the social world comes to know these individuals. The first theme, "Valued Qualities in Self", refers to how these participants personally describe themselves and wish to be known. The valued qualities that were thematically consistent included descriptions of their reflective nature (including an emphasis on analytical reasoning), sensitivity, quietness, observant nature, and preference for solitude. These qualities often were not spoken about in complete isolation from each other, but rather the "valued qualities" were viewed as equally fundamental, with each valued quality intertwining with the others.

Each participant made some reference to their reflective nature. Emma describes her contemplative self in the following manner:

If you're introverted I think that maybe you're more sensitive to what's really going on sometimes, like I think sometimes you see the deeper meaning in things...cause I take the time to think about a situation and what's going on. Since I was born I liked to know the deeper meaning of things and I want to know what things are happening.

Emma's reflective nature is associated with knowing the deeper meaning of things. Sense-making occurs for an introvert on this reflective level. Tied very closely to this reflective nature is an introvert's tendency to be sensitive to the world around them.

Sensitivity in an introverted sense is not necessarily associated with emotionality though this might well be the case depending on the context. A quote from Raine shows these two sides of heightened sensitivity: "I do like to reflect and sometimes I can just reflect and reflect and reflect...I think I feel things really deeply, like the littlest thing can happen and it will stay with me for a long time." Later she

mentions "that being sensitive and being introverted go together for me...like sensitivity to other stimulus...which is partly why I like to have my alone time cause otherwise I find myself just totally frazzled if there's too much noise." Sensitivity for participants refers to both an emotional state and as a response to external environmental states.

A way in which participants handle their heightened sensitivity is by making time to be alone. Time alone serves many functions for the introvert.

I spend a lot of time reflecting on things and I like to think, (I'm a) very deep thinker like I can just get lost in thought really, really easily. So I like time to myself to be able to do that and time to myself just to, I do find it energizing...I can feel the most relaxed and the most at home with myself I think when I'm alone. (Marley)

Being alone provides the safe environment for these introverts to reflect and to make meaning of their experiences. Raine states, "I like spending time alone, I like having quiet time to reflect and think things out in my own head." In addition to the reflective piece, time alone also serves as a way to rejuvenate and feel most "at home" with self.

When I was home by myself doing homework or reading which I love to do, I felt quiet inside and I felt happy and I felt at peace and I felt, like I would close my bedroom door and have this retreat and just be like ahhhh. (Sherry)

Having a quiet environment (i.e. alone time) serves as a response to both internal (i.e. sensitive characteristic, time for self) and external stimulus (i.e. interactions with

others). In addition, the quiet and reflective presence of these introverts serves yet another unique function as Marley clearly explains:

A big part for me of being an introvert [is] being very, very observant because I'm not talking. I'm seeing pretty much everything and people always identify me as particularly observant...but that's something I'm really aware of, is being really observant.

The quiet nature of the participants serves as a way to observe the world around them, a sense-making of their perceptions of the social world. Quiet observation leads introverts into reflection, which is best done in the company of oneself. What comes from this intertwining of valued qualities helps shape the second theme found within this cluster.

The second theme of this cluster refers to the "Self-Conscious" characteristic each participant was able to identify to varying degrees. Liam senses "that self-consciousness....comes from being extremely sensitive to all things and...comparing yourself socially to a certain extent and a fear of...maybe not measuring up to society's expectations."

Marley highly identifies with her self-conscious trait as it appears to have been present throughout her experiences as an introvert:

I've always been self-conscious which I think in hindsight is related to my being introverted and being different than most people around me who are extraverted, so I've always been self-conscious and I highly relate those two ...that those really go hand and hand.

Marley makes sense of her self-conscious nature by explaining that it is in relation to her desire for social acceptance:

I want to come across as being engaged and interested, and I think that's harder to portray when you're not saying a lot then it is for the people who are really saying a lot...I think this is also related to being self conscious cause I really look for acceptance.

Self-consciousness appears to have surfaced primarily in situations in which self-identified introverts did not feel authentic. At various points during the interviews, participants stated that when they are not in their natural element (i.e. alone or in the company of a few close people) they have a heightened self-awareness. This self-consciousness comes most into play when introverts face their individual social realities. However, this self-consciousness is dependent on how the participants perceive themselves in general. Liam further explains the essence of an introvert's self-conscious nature when he describes the term introversion in general:

Introversion means, to me means sort-of self-awareness...a different perspective I guess than most people. I mean I do notice a lot of things that people never notice... it's [i.e. introversion] more about being self-conscious than being self-aware than it is about being shy. You're far more self-conscious, far more self-aware, far more sensitive to people's reactions to you so it's, I guess, a sense of self, and you're hyper-sensitive to your sense of self.

Category Two: Perceptions & Concepts of Self in Relation to Others & Environment

The category *perceptions & concepts of self in relation to others & environment* is comprised of four clusters: 1) perceived societal messages, 2)

reactions by others regarding introverted behaviour and the effect on self, 3) feeling misunderstood, and 4) personal "sense-making" of introvert/extravert differences (Table 3). This category speaks to self experiences that are in direct relation to the social world. The relationship participants have to their social world has a direct influence on their sense of self.

Table 3 Clusters and Supporting Themes for the Category, Perceptions & Concepts of Self in Relation to Others & Environment

Perceptions & Concepts of Self in Relation to Others & Environment			
Perceived Societal Messages & Influences	Reactions by Others Regarding Introverted Behaviour and the Affect on Self	Feeling Misunderstood	Personal "Sense-Making" of Introvert/Extravert Differences
Themes Within Each Cluster			
Societal Expectations & Pressures	Childhood & Adolescent Experiences	Shy	Living in an Extraverted Society
Perceived Expectations from the Academic and Work Realm	Adulthood Experiences	"Anti-social" or Lacking Social Skills	Something "Wrong" with Self.
Perceived Expectations and Pressures from Peer Relations		Generally Misunderstood	

Cluster one: Perceived societal messages and influences. This theme cluster includes participants perceptions of the societal norms regarding the values and beliefs of human social behaviour. Three essential themes comprise this cluster: "Societal Expectations and Pressures", "Perceived Expectations from the Academic and Work Realm", and "Perceived Expectations and Pressures from Peer Relations."

All five participants made reference to conventional "Societal Expectations and Pressures" that influence how a person chooses to interact within the social world. For example, Raine believes there are more "rewards" for extraverts since they are more verbally and physically present within our society:

I don't think that people generally think it's [i.e. introversion] positive cause I think there's still more rewards for being extraverted then there are for being introverted. Just in society in general, like if you're more of a go-getter and you blow your own horn.

The outward social energy that extraverted individuals appear to portray helps aid in the formation of societal norms. Emma recalls that she has frequently felt this perceived societal message since a young age.

When I was younger I felt like it wasn't okay to be that way [i.e. introverted], which I think is typical in our society that you got to keep running, you got to be as busy as possible all the time, or you have to fit in, you have to be with a group or you have to do these things...I just, I can't be that way.

Societal pressures and expectations seem to have an influence on how one chooses to be in this world, which unfortunately may mean not always living a life congruent with one's true understanding of self. Liam states, "there were always pressures that made me take roads that I thought would make other people happy. I guess, if you will, because that's what was expected." Making "others" happy or content seems to take the forefront while exploring what would make the introvert "happy" appears to remain in the background.

Societal messages and influences also appear to be derived from the "Perceived Expectations from the Academic and Work Realm(s)." Participants' natural tendency to be fairly observant allowed them to explain how they perceived their behaviour within the academic realm. Sherry holds the following perception regarding her introverted struggle to integrate into the norm of the classroom setting:

It really wasn't valued, if somebody was reflective before they answered they must have been stupid cause they couldn't come up with an answer quick enough. Or if the teacher was standing at the blackboard and asked you a question, I would know the answer but I wanted to think it through first just to be really sure and then it was, you know, tap at their desk, or make a comment or make an assumption that you didn't know it, and then you would feel stupid and then you would feel self-conscious and then it would turn into a thing. So I always felt this pressure to try to answer right away because I felt that was expected or acceptable.

Raine recalls similar reactions from her experiences within the academic realm. She felt a sense of others perceiving her in an unfavourable light due to her introverted qualities; for example, she does not have a desire to continuously verbally participate during class time but rather likes the reflective part of learning:

This one prof that I had, I totally felt like he thought I was stupid cause I didn't really say anything...I guess I felt misunderstood by him cause I never seemed to be able to express myself properly cause I'd get nervousI wasn't really able to say anything in class because I don't, I'm not really good at just like jumping right in there.

With regards to the work realm, Liam exclusively speaks to his experience as a self-identified male introvert who feels the pressure from our society to become an extraverted male within the career realm. His current job matches his temperament of introversion quite well; however, the pressure to pursue a more "extraverted" career is frequently felt.

Being a man you're sort-of supposed to be pursuing like the almighty dollar...and in a world where you know the extraverted male is always moving on up and, and getting bigger and better. Like all these material things sometimes you do feel an indirect pressure that you're suppose to be doing more and you know I work full time, do a good job, well thought of by the people I work with but there's sort-of a societal thing always in the background saying ya that, you know, real men make six figures a year and have two or three cars and a very big house and they go to Hawaii for a vacation they don't go camping (laughs) right um, and that's sort-of a society thing cause that's the world we live in.

Liam's response highlights the extravert's majority status within society which shapes the formation of societal expectations regarding what is worthy to work towards in careers.

The theme "Perceived Expectations and Pressures from Peer Relations" speaks to those experiences in which participants perceive the social behaviour of others and apply this lens to their own behaviour. Sherry states:

I'd see people in a group together and they'd be laughing and joking and this and that and I thought "wow, they must have something that I don't, they're

having fun, they look really um bubbly and happy" and, and for me it wasn't that I was unhappy, it was that I didn't like the bubbly stuff, I didn't like that type of energy.

Sherry's perceptions of "fun people" were those groups of individuals who were "bubbly and happy." Since she does not feel that energy speaks to her sense of being, she was then left questioning herself, "'Why aren't I fun? I'm not fun, I should be fun, people seem to like fun people', so I put a lot of pressure on myself to be what I thought was socially acceptable."

Marley was able to speak to the perceived pressures of peer relations from recalling her lived experience growing up with an extraverted sibling. It was because of this experience that she was able to explain from a more broad perspective the overall self-comparison reflective process:

I do lots of comparisons and I don't know if that's from being introverted or and being really observant and noticing other people, it could be. I'm not entirely sure but I often compare myself to other people, like I spend a lot of time in my head reflecting on other people like its almost an automatic of, "Oh well she's doing that and that's so much better", or any, it can be anything.

Many of the participants were able to confirm this sense of peer and social comparison that introverts naturally perform given their "heightened sense of self" (Liam). Observing and interpreting societal norms (i.e. regarding peer relations, work and academic perceptions, etc.) ultimately impacts the self-expectations of introverts.

Cluster two: Reactions by others regarding introverted behaviour and the affect on self. The introverted participants were able to clearly articulate their

experiences and reactions to the opinions and verbal reactions of others regarding their introverted behaviour. The lasting effect of these responses are best understood in the two themes that compose this cluster: "Child and Adolescent Experiences" and "Adulthood Experiences".

The theme "Childhood & Adolescent Experiences" encompasses those lived experiences where others (e.g. teachers, friends, and family) have verbally commented on participants' introverted behaviour. Participants were able to express how these influences made them feel as children and adolescents growing up in a society that was predominantly extraverted: "I figured out really quickly, in my mind, as a child it wasn't okay," Sherry states. Emma recalls experiencing difficult times with her teachers in that they did not generally understand her temperament:

To be a part of the classroom, and their idea of being a part of the classroom was to be extraverted or to be, you know, asking questions and getting, you know, and talking to the teacher and doing all these things which I don't function that way. Actually I've had a teacher... sort of basically tell me like "I don't understand you, I don't understand why, (you) write really well, you're understanding it and you won't take part in my class, you know... speaking it, you don't want to be a part of this so I don't know why you're here then" I felt really like she just picked on me completely for who I am because that is basically the way that I am, and she was putting that down and it reinforced that that was wrong to be that way.

Sherry remembers her first teachers making the same comments on her report cards nearly every year.

The favourite saying in all my report cards, I wasn't living up to my potential because I didn't interact in class activities, didn't volunteer for things, didn't answer questions, didn't like being tested, didn't like being brought into any activities. There was also comments from teachers that I don't participate but I did, I mean I was always, in my mind, participating because I was listening, I was engaged.

This reinforced to Sherry that her way of engaging was not the "correct" way of being.

Having the comments that I wasn't participating or living up to my potential to me wasn't true because it was somebody else's perception of what I was suppose to be, so I always felt like I never fit with what was expected.

Not all participants received such direct feedback from their teachers. In fact, in Raine's early experiences with teachers, they often viewed her introversion as a good quality for a student to possess:

I guess I had a couple of teachers who appreciated that I was quiet...in big classes and stuff teachers don't have time to pay attention to everyone and so the person that's acting out gets the attention right and if you're not, like if you're good then...

Quiet and independent self-identified introverts appeared to get overlooked in a classroom setting because they were not as vocal as other students. Raine comments on how this classroom norm affected her:

I don't think I was encouraged to explore exactly what I could do, like I didn't get a lot of attention because I was just doing fine on my own and I did read a

lot and I did learn a lot on my own, but there were some things that I didn't even know to ask because I didn't know that they existed.

In this study, participants as children seemed to experience either a lack of favouritism from their teachers regarding their temperament, or teachers appeared to believe that introverted students do well enough on their own and therefore do not require the attention that could be given to more vocal students.

When an introvert tries to be authentic in their being (i.e. to present oneself to society as introverted), it is often not accepted by others. Sherry speaks of one experience she had as a late adolescent when a close friend of hers explained her discomfort with Sherry's introversion. "[S]he said, you're not fun anymore, I don't know what's wrong with you, I don't know what's happening or what's changed but you're not fun anymore and I don't like it. I want you to be how you were before." Sherry remembers the effect this experience had on her. "So then for me it didn't feel like it was a guess that being introverted wasn't acceptable, she told me she wasn't going to be my friend anymore if I wasn't pretending to be extraverted."

Raine noted: "[P]eople would pick on me because I was, I don't know, a geek or something like that, so it wasn't just me having a sense that I was different, people would observe that I was different I guess." Raine also remembers being bullied in her junior high years. "I totally got bullied in grade seven cause I didn't know anybody and I was this quiet little nerdy kid, so that was miserable." As in the case of Raine's lived experience, childhood and adolescent peers seem to be rather intolerant of children who were "different."

The reactions from family members also seem to have played a role in the lives of participants. Marley remembers her mother being concerned about her daughter's quiet nature and provided her parental assistance.

I was always shy...as a child like just unbelievably shy as a child and my mom actually set up a reinforcement chart that if I talked to people I'd get a check. Then at the end of the week if I had a certain number of checks I'd get a treat, because I just wouldn't talk to anybody.

Emma remembers that her parents would reinforce her quiet nature by telling her that she was shy.

I'd always been told by my mom or you know dad, "Oh you're, you're very introverted," or, "She's shy." They wouldn't necessarily call me introverted but shy, and it was almost, to me when I was a kid that almost sounded like a negative thing you know. They didn't mean it negatively but I sort of took it as, "Oh that's a bad thing to be shy."

In general, the participants did not feel that their family members (e.g. parents) pushed or opposed their introverted temperament. Rather, the parents themselves might have been responding to how they knew society would interpret and treat such quiet individuals and therefore wished for something better for their child. Liam states, "My parents did a bit [i.e. worry about his introversion] but I think they sort-of thought it was something I'd grow out of."

In "Adulthood Experiences," reactions by significant others (e.g. professors, partners, etc.) regarding one's introverted self still proves difficult for many of the participants in a number of realms. This theme was not as predominant as the

previous theme. However, this may be due to the relatively young adult age of the five participants (i.e. 25-34 years of age). Nevertheless a number of instances were still recalled within this theme.

Raine remembered a specific experience with a university professor. "I had [another] professor who basically told me that I needed to jump out in there more, that it was important to do that especially if I was going to grad school." The reaction Raine had to this comment speaks to her desire to be authentic in her introverted ways.

Well, part of me was kind of like rebelling against that cause I got...I can be pretty stubborn and contrary sometimes, like a part of me felt like well I don't want to so I'm not going to, but then the other part of me was kind of feeling resigned, like okay well that's what I'm going to have to do then.

As witnessed by the above narrative, self-identified introverts may experience an adverse reaction to the sense that they must conform to extraverted ways of being in order to succeed in institutes such as a university.

Other adult experiences included having a significant "extraverted" other within one's life. Liam remembers a meaningful long term relationship he had with an extraverted female. He recalls the difficulties he had in trying to explain his introverted tendencies to her. "[S]he didn't get that, like she just didn't understand why I wasn't running around trumpeting every little thing that I did and that was definitely kind-of the person she was." This close relationship with an extraverted partner has had a lasting affect on Liam's sense of self:

I sort-of felt like I joined this world and nothing could be more ridiculous than me in that setting... I think I recognized that I was the person who sought to leave [the relationship] because I was not being myself, I'm not being true to who I am, I'm not doing anything that interests me because I'm trying to be this other person, and I'm not that person.

Cluster three: Feeling misunderstood. Themes within this cluster speak to participants' concerns regarding feeling personally misunderstood within a society that is predominantly extraverted. The three themes within this cluster represent the introverted "labels" that do not accurately describe an introvert's demeanour. The three themes are: "Shy", "Anti-social or Lacking Social Skills" and feeling "Generally Misunderstood."

The first theme recognized was the general disagreement with the term "shy" or "shyness" to describe the participant's sense of self. Emma states that the term "shy" does not properly describe an introvert's quiet nature.

Which isn't, I don't think true actually that introverts are necessarily shy, it's just that they're not as engaged with people. Ya I don't think its true at all, like I actually don't really define myself as shy it's just that I don't...I'm not as engaged with people. Oh I love people though, and I love to be around people.

Similarly, Sherry states, "[S]hy to me signifies withdrawn and an introvert to me is different than that...and to me an introvert, my definition of it now, is somebody that is being true to internally what they are and there's a fit between themselves and their experiences. Shy I associate to fear, strange I don't know why but withdrawn or fear and to me that's not what an introvert is."

Liam is able to articulate his introverted sense of shyness in a way that may not be readily recognized:

It sort-of works on, on many levels, shyness...some people are not, some people are chronically shy with everybody, from the people who are closest to them in the world, to strangers, whereas I found my shyness again comes from the degree, the degree of the unknown that's involved in the situation and the more I'm not aware of, the more I don't know what's going on, and the more I don't have control of, the shyer I become. Whereas, the more control I feel I have, the more I'm aware of the people involved, the more comfortable I am and I guess you come out a little more and maybe just relax a little more, and you're able to be yourself.

Liam attributes his way of understanding his sense of "shyness" by recognizing his behaviour through shyness patterns. In this way he is able to distinguish between shy individuals and introverted individuals:

As you start moving into adulthood and I think, you know, I recognized that I was not shy in all situations, I just found myself pulling back more when I was in situations that I wasn't familiar with and I wasn't in control of, and that I just didn't have 100% certainty with how it was going to go. And then I recognized that's when I started to pull back, that's I think when I started to become aware that there was something very different between being shy and being introverted, because an introvert can still function in society....if you said someone is shy, especially in an adult setting, to me that's a person that is

dealing with sort-of a crippling social phobia that affects them no matter who they're dealing with and what context.

Liam clearly distinguishes between an introverts sense of shyness from those individuals who have a general shyness attribute. An introvert's "shyness" appears to be related to the uncertainty one feels in unfamiliar situations.

Marley was the only participant who strongly identified with the characteristic of shyness. "If someone just refers to me as shy, I'm fine with that because that's how I identify myself and I always have."

The second theme in this cluster is the misunderstanding of an introvert's quiet nature. This characteristic of an introvert often gets misunderstood and labelled as "Anti-Social" or one who is "Lacking Social Skills." Marley states that the label "anti-social" is "[A] misperception. I know that I'm not overtly social but I don't feel that I'm anti-social. I feel quite social on a one-on-one, very social on a one-on-one or two, if you get to know me". She continued to mention that she wishes people would understand:

That I was kind and not anti-social or snobby, that I was actually the opposite of snobby quite cause when I think of snobby I think of conceited and I'm the polar opposite of that. I'm quite self-conscious...I would like them to know that I'm not snobby and that I'm open-minded and compassionate and sensitive.

Like most people, Marley wishes to be known for her strong and positive characteristics rather than having others highlight the more challenging aspects of her way of being. Feeling misunderstood by others (regarding her introverted qualities)

leaves Marley with a difficult predicament. How can she be comfortable and open about her actions as an introvert if those actions are being consistently misunderstood by others?

Emma explains her discomfort with the term "anti-social" in the sense of being misperceived as snobby. "I think there is a lot of judgements placed on people who are introverted, or at least if you're extremely introverted. I really think that people sort of, they think you're snobby because you're not...engaging with [them]."

Liam provides an interesting yet simple interpretation worth consideration for why introverts may appear "anti-social."

As an introverted person you don't want to be the center of the universe but there's a part of your mental state that always thinks you are so you always think people are looking at you, and you always think people are judging you even though they're strangers.

The perceptions the introverted participants have of people judging them may prevent them from being more intensely interactive with their social environment.

Participants spoke with great intensity about feeling "Generally Misunderstood." Female participants felt a sense of aggravation and/or irritation as their sense of self continues to be highly misunderstood by society. Sherry spoke of her unhappiness in how teachers perceived her as a student. Sherry wishes her teachers would have understood that:

Ya I'm here, I'm awake, I'm thinking, I get it. To me that was participating but for my teacher that was not participating, not living up to my potential, not being engaged. I heard that one quite a few times, but to me it wasn't that I

wasn't there but it would come across that way, like I became really aware of that all the way through school. It was not that I had a bad attitude, but it just was their perception seemed to be that I had checked out, which I always found kind of offensive.

There appears to be an incongruence between how an introvert behaves and how their behaviour is understood by others. Furthermore, Sherry revealed that many people have asked her about her demeanour, which she finds frequently misunderstood:

I wanted to have space, and to have quiet, and to have it respected that I'm introverted. I'm not shy, I'm not rude, I'm not stupid because I don't speak up. I'm not disengaged because I'm not verbally participating. I wanted it to be understood that it was a personality characteristic of me.

Sherry simply wishes that her temperament could be better understood, instead of being continuously misinterpreted.

I've been asked if I'm depressed, I've been asked if I'm sad, I've been asked if there's something wrong, I've been asked if I'm not feeling well. The worst one for me is, "Did I do something wrong? Why don't you want to join?" [and] that's like, you feel like this horrible person because if you're being true to yourself and who you are and what works for you, it gets so misinterpreted.

I've been, I've been accused of being stand-offish which is probably in the ballpark of snobby but...quiet, I hear quiet a lot.

Sherry feels like this "horrible" person when she is being true to herself since others in society can't seem to comprehend her introverted behaviour. A sense of guilt

and shame overcomes her, yet so does a sense of resentment as her way of "being true to self" is not being heard.

Sherry, along with the other female participants are particularly self-protective of their introverted temperament. Emma notes, "I became extremely defensive in the sense that I felt completely misunderstood and I felt like I was being treated like I'm stupid or slow and I would actually be con-notated that way."

Marley appears to understand that her introverted style makes it difficult for others to appreciate her. There appears to be an internal struggle in trying to find a balance between remaining true to one's introverted sense of self while still feeling part of one's bigger community. "I want to come across as being engaged and interested and, and I think that's harder to portray when you're not saying a lot then it is for the people who are really saying a lot."

Cluster four: Personal "sense-making" of introvert/extravert differences. This cluster speaks to the over-all "sense-making" introverts have regarding what they have experienced and witnessed by being-in-the-world as a self-identified introvert. This cluster consists of two major themes: "Living in an Extraverted Society" and "Something 'Wrong' with Self."

The first theme highlighted by participants was "Living in an Extraverted Society." Emma states, "I think that our society is very, it's very extraverted or it's geared towards extraverted people and I don't think that we appreciate the quieter ones that, you know, do see the subtleties in things." Emma is voicing her experience in sensing that our society appears to not value the qualities of an introverted individual, such as their observant nature.

Sherry's experience encapsulates the feeling of what it is like for an introvert growing up in an extraverted society:

The attributes that seemed to be valued in other people was the extravert, the popular, the friendly the person that always looked happy and up and friendly and these seemed to be qualities that people liked and seemed to be what I felt was pushed for.

Marley is able to summarize this sense of living in an extraverted society and the meaning it has on her sense of self.

Most people are extraverted I think so just being different than most people um and I think that society is kind of set up more for extraverts, like the school system I think is set up for extraverts, and just, most things that you have to do in society like even going the bank or something you have to talk to the teller like everything involves being a little bit more extraverted I find. And so those situations make me feel really self-conscious and nervous....that's going against kind-of my personality I feel like I'm having to put myself out there, like it makes me quite self-conscious.

Once again an introvert's self-conscious disposition surfaces when engaging in "social" activities, for example, in school or banking systems. Liam provides an interpretation of his experience: "[Y]ou feel like you're out of your league and when you're introverted you tend to feel like that much more often than most people." Liam continues by saying:

I like being part of society I just don't necessarily fit into society the way most people do, and at the end of the day there's really nothing wrong with that I

mean that's just what makes people interesting I find. But in our society there's not a lot of attention paid to those people who don't want to jump out and make themselves seen.

The second theme that naturally emerged from the participants' narratives was a sense of believing or feeling like there was "Something 'Wrong' with Self" or feeling that they did not fit in. Many participants voiced their disappointment in not feeling a part of the greater social world. Sherry talked about the societal values that set the norm for general social behaviour, and her struggles in making sense of the belief that there was something wrong with her. "If you're quiet there must be something wrong, or you would get asked what was wrong, so I thought, you know, 'I'm tired of feeling like there's something wrong.'"

Emma's experience, like Sherry's, explains how her early experience as an introvert made her feel:

Embarrassed about it sort of, and I actually thought there was maybe something wrong with me because I didn't really fit in with a particular group or I didn't really enjoy being in large crowds and, and when you're in high school it's sort-of you know, you go to parties, you hang out with a certain crowd.

Other participants spoke to what it felt to not "fit in." Raine "...felt hurt and misunderstood, and sometimes I was really lonely because it seemed like...I don't know, like I just didn't fit in...like it definitely was isolating sometimes."

By observing the behaviours of others and by listening to perceptual norms, the participants came to view themselves as members of society that simply did not

"fit-in." This is apparent through the participants' experiences in such social realms as the school system.

Category Three: Trial and Tribulation Experiences

Category Three provides an expressive illustration of the challenges, coping behaviours and the personal costs self-identified introverts experience in relation to exploring and formulating one's self-concept within social environments. Three theme clusters were taken from the data: 1) challenges, 2) coping behaviours and 3) the product of the coping behaviours (Table 4).

Table 4 Clusters and Supporting Themes for the Category, Trial & Tribulation Experiences

Trial & Tribulation Experiences		
Challenges	Coping Behaviours (reaction to challenges & societal messages)	Product of the Coping Behaviours
Themes Within Each Cluster		
Social Engagements & Social Comparisons	"Acting" Extraverted	Feeling Incongruent with Self (no authenticity)
Educational & Work Environments	Retreating Away from "Non-Introverted" Events	Feeling Secure in Self Within a Nurturing Environment
Specific Introverted Attributes		

Cluster one: Challenges. Experiences that are personally challenging, and consequently make an introvert question one's beliefs about self are examined. The experiences are best understood by the three themes that form this cluster: "Social

Engagements and Social Comparisons," "Educational and Work Environments" and lastly "Specific Introverted Attributes."

The theme of "Social Engagements and Social Comparisons" includes challenging social activities such as large groups of people, "small talk" conversations, or entering into an "unknown" (i.e. unfamiliar) social activity. As Marley recalls, social situations elicit many difficult emotions:

I just remember always being that way...just very shy and quiet and uncomfortable in large social situations or uncomfortable meeting new people, uncomfortable in class, anything with lots of people or new people. I always felt embarrassed or self-conscious again because....I just, I felt really different from everybody else and that everyone else could talk and if someone talked to me I never knew what to say back and I would always sound really dumb. So it definitely had an influence on my self-esteem, like a poor influence...in that I always felt like I didn't know what to say to people....so I think I was always concerned about what other people were thinking and I always thought nobody ever really knew me.

In this study it appears that the challenge to relate to others that do not appear to be like-minded in the sense of one's social characteristics proves to be damaging to an introvert's overall positive sense of self. As Raine notes, many social situations have made her sense that there "didn't seem like there was anybody else that was like me," which caused feelings of self-consciousness and discomfort. This reaction is particularly familiar in new social situations:

If we go to a party where there's all kinds of strangers I feel kind-of like, like I'm looking around like I don't know anybody and I wonder if anyone is going to come talk to me, I guess I'm going to have to talk to people.

Participants all recalled feeling self-conscious when entering into the "unknown" social world. Marley's experience of going into a new social situation closely resembles Raine's but with a further description of the social comparisons that happen when she feels self-conscious:

What I'm thinking is things like "Oh my God, I'm standing against the wall, I'm not talking to anybody and I must look so [silly] and people are probably wondering what the hell I'm doing here"...and then I start having like a challenge in myself like "Okay you have to go talk to somebody"...and I start just having internal kind of arguments with myself cause I know that I have to but then I can't seem to make myself do it. And then I do a lot of comparison with the people around me too like, I'll be like "Oh well she's chatting away with that person and why can't I just go and chat with somebody?" So I start comparing myself to the other people who seem more comfortable and extraverted.

Social comparisons can occur by many different means for an introvert. For example, Sherry learned from her brother the importance of being "popular" and extraverted in high school:

What I did going into high school I thought "Okay my brother had said to me 'it's really important who you're friends with going into high school, it sets the tone', cause he was a year above so he said 'you need to go into high school

doing this and this and this," and it was picking the right social group and basically he reinforced that it was important for me to be popular. It was important for me to be extraverted and friendly and pick the right friends and join clubs and do events.

Sherry's experience has been influenced by her brother in the sense that he outlined for her what was socially valued and, from there, social comparisons resulted. On a slightly different tone, Marley discussed the social comparison that results from having an extraverted sister within her family.

She's very, very extraverted and I've always found it very uncomfortable....I've always disliked being around her because I come across as very, very quiet in her presence, because I find if I'm around someone who's extremely extraverted I just tend to become even more quiet and kind of let them take the floor. Especially with my sister, she's older than me and in any sort of situation with family friends or family...I would come across as extremely quiet and kind of hard to get to know. Definitely in my mind she's viewed as the more, in a more positive light because I find when she's not there then not only is there not the comparison, but there's I feel like there's more of an opportunity for me to come out of myself more so that people do get to know me a bit better.

Marley wishes and chooses to be "known" by people. However, due to her perception of not being viewed in the same positive light as her extraverted sister, she feels less like a person others would want to get to know. "[M]y sister's being (extraverted) has

definitely taken a toll on my self esteem because I've always felt like I've been in her shadow."

Social events were more comfortable when participants knew a number of the people in attendance. As Liam states, "[Y]ou're okay as long as you sort-of know everybody," but if an introvert does not know everybody then "that's tough, you sort-of end up blending into the furniture if you can right and you talk to people and stuff but you don't sort-of throw yourself out there."

"Educational and Work Environments" is the second theme that participants identified as particularly challenging. Many of the participants voiced their frustration regarding the school system, explaining that the school system is not conducive to an introvert's preferred learning style. For instance, introverts find it challenging to verbally participate in class where "quick-thinking answers" seem to be valued.

Society, I feel, is not really set for introverts. Like the school system I feel is very poorly set up for introverts because those things, like a teacher posing a question to the class and people putting up their hand, and I never do because I'm not ready and you end up getting, or I would end up getting poor marks on participation or they would think that I wasn't, didn't know the answer which I didn't at that time but I could come up with it in five minutes. (Marley)

Emma believes her school grades suffered due to her verbal style: "I think that's why I didn't do very well in high school, or junior high. Actually I hated school at one point because I feel that it's, it's geared towards extraverted people, it's geared toward quick thinking."

The concern introverts voice over the school system applies to post-secondary educational institutes as well. In fact, Raine believes that an introvert's preference for reflective rather than verbal participation is more detrimental in post-secondary education. "I think that was more true when I was younger because now I'm afraid, I think in post-secondary I think that if you don't speak then people think you're dumb." Marley provides a descriptive account of what it is like to verbally participate in class when it feels expected:

It kind of goes against my learning style that way and when professors would go around the room and have people say something like that is just horrible to me. I can feel my heart pounding out of my chest and I'm trying to formulate what I'm going to say as quickly as I can and it's coming around and then I hear what other people say, and I'm like, "Oh my God that sounded so good" and then I'm trying to reformulate what I'm going to say and I know my hands get all sweaty and it's so uncomfortable. And then when I go to speak usually at the beginning my voice is kind of shaky.

Like the educational system, many work environments are geared for extraverted personality types. Liam speaks to how his introversion limits which working environments best fit his individual needs: "I probably could succeed in anything I did, but when you have that introverted personality you have trouble finding what it is that you think you'd be good at and how that would, how that fits into the world." He continues by explaining, "There's probably lots of work I could do and do very well at all of those companies but most of them I just pass off right away and again it's that fear of getting out of my comfort zone." Some participants sought

"introvert friendly" working environments, but by doing so they became prone to having fewer career possibilities.

The final theme, identified as "Specific Introverted Attributes," includes qualities that contribute to the difficulties participants experience in other social settings (e.g. school, work, etc.). For example, Liam notes how an introvert's introspective nature can at times make it difficult for introverts to verbally articulate the skills and knowledge they have. "[Y]ou have enough self-confidence about yourself like you know what you're capable of, and you know how intelligent you are, and that sort-of thing, but you have trouble articulating it because you keep it to yourself." Since participants tended not to favour verbal language, they found it difficult to express their true selves. Introverts such as this study's participants may be perceived by others as lacking self-confidence, rather than realizing that non-verbal preference is merely another mode of being-in-the-world.

Raine notes how her introspective nature (or what Raine refers to as her "analytical side") is challenging in the sense that she often finds herself "analyzing" a variety of daily events and interactions. "I totally analyze everything all the time. I guess that's what I do, I analyze everything." She continued to state how her behaviour of analyzing may be related to her sensitivity. The combination of an analytical mind and a sensitive nature can prove especially challenging both psychologically and emotionally. Raine felt her daily activities and events very deeply.

And finally, Marley expresses how her shyness is at times exceptionally challenging for her and realizes others do not fully understand the difficulty for her.

I feel like being shy is a challenge and it's difficult, and so I think when people who aren't shy say, "Oh ya I'm shy", it's almost like they do it because they think it's cute or that it makes them seem sweet or something, and yet they don't have the challenges that come with it...so I think I get annoyed because I think...that's not what it's about, like it's really quite challenging and so I think people don't really get that.

Cluster two: Coping behaviours. The second cluster refers to the reactions participants have to societal challenges and messages, including the ways in which they choose to respond to such societal challenges. The themes include "Acting Extraverted" and "Retreating Away from 'Non-Introverted' Activities."

The most common way in which participants chose to handle the challenges of being introverted was to act extraverted. By "acting extraverted" (e.g. being more social, more verbally participatory, etc.) participants felt they were more socially accepted by others. In essence, the participants felt it was easier to "act extraverted" than it was to feel the internal confusion and external pressures associated with their introversion. As Sherry states, high school years were alive with social pressures:

I'm not like everybody else and I just felt like there was so much pressure from other people to be social and to do things that I picked the most popular people, got friends with them so I had a group of about eight people and it was exhausting, I was exhausted.

Raine was also able to identify with the high school pressures to be extraverted. She believed that to be extraverted was in some regard just easier to deal with than believing something was internally wrong with her way of being in the world. For

example, Raine recalls joining the high school improv (drama club) in order to "fit in" with the social circle of her school:

I think cause in high school then I tried to be more extraverted to fit in...I joined the improv team, that's not a very introverted thing to do...because the two girls that I was friends with that I became with in grade nine, they were, they were extraverted....I kind of thought like that I wanted to step out of my comfort zone [by joining the improv team] and I thought there were advantages to being more extraverted sometimes. Like just sometimes it's just easier to just fit in.

Emma recalls dealing with her frustration of feeling different from those around her by becoming more extraverted as well. However, Emma's extraversion was a way of voicing her irritation with not feeling accepted as an introvert within her social realm:

Well I'd feel angry, and I'd become rebellious...and become more extraverted ya, those were my ways of dealing with things when I was younger....so I started to, I became extraverted I guess because I was trying to show what was going on inside of me in a sense because I was just upset that I felt that I was being ignored...so my way of dealing with (it) was to become really outspoken and because that's what I was feeling inside.

"Acting extraverted" became a steady way in which many of the participants were able to deal with living in a predominantly extraverted society that naturally prescribes to extraverted behavioural norms. As Liam states, "[Y]ou almost do feel like you have to be something you're not, and I don't know how long you're going to

last in that environment." How long each participant was able to "act extraverted" will be discussed within the next cluster theme within this category.

The second theme, "Retreating Away from 'Non-Introverted' Activities," was not as predominate among participants as the first theme of "Acting Extraverted". However, the act of retreating away from non-introverted activities (i.e. large social gatherings) emerged as another way of coping with introverted challenges. Marley believes that her introversion not only makes her feel uncomfortable in social situations, but also makes others feel uncomfortable as well. As a result, Marley sometimes finds herself retreating from social activities:

It's just so uncomfortable, I've gotten to the point where I usually don't even go anymore, which is unfortunate, but I just feel that, that it's so not set up for somebody like me...and I find that I just can't function well so it's better for everyone I think if I'm not there cause I feel like I'm creating an awkwardness too in the room. I mean I'm standing against the wall and it's probably uncomfortable for other people who feel like they should be doing something...I think in those situations I wish I was more extraverted.

Liam's coping behaviour is associated with retreating away from "non-introverted" activities in the sense that he accepts his introversion for what it is, and does not attempt to modify it to any large extent. Liam does occasionally feel it would be easier to move through this world as an extravert, however, modifying his social self-concept is not a preference.

It's who I am and I think it brings a lot of the qualities that people like in me...so I mean it's who I am and I think I would be a lot less happy if I was

trying to be the other side of the coin, if I was trying to be extraverted, if I sort-of took a sales job and went out every Friday night...I'd be miserable because that's all sort-of extraverted activities and that's just not who I am.

Cluster three: Product of the coping behaviour. In this cluster are participants' impressions of their sense of self after engaging in a coping behaviour: "Feeling Incongruent with Self (no authenticity)" and "Feeling Secure in Self within a Nurturing Environment."

The theme "Feeling Incongruent with Self" highlights how participants felt after they engaged in a coping behaviour, mainly by "acting extraverted." For example, when Emma began to "play extraverted" at school, she noticed quite a dramatic change in herself:

[I] started not to handle school all that well, like sometimes I'd have to take a day off school, not cause I was sick just cause I could not handle going back there, going to school you know...so I was really being out there ["acting" extraverted] and I would become completely exhausted...and have to take a day off.

Emma noticed on a number of levels - mental, physical, and emotional - that "acting extraverted" produced a harmful effect to her overall well-being. In similar manner, Sherry spoke to how her "acting extraverted" in high school:

...was painful, really painful but I felt like I needed to do that to be socially accepted and I picked people that I thought were what I was supposed to be because I figured that I hadn't met anybody that was quiet.

Raine had similar opinions as Emma and Sherry regarding the coping behaviour of "acting extraverted" at school.

Like then it was a problem [i.e. junior high/high school] to be introverted and so I kind of had to change the way I was to fit in more because otherwise like it was just painful, not physically painful, like I mean it was like....unpleasant, like generally like unpleasant.

"Exhausting and "painful" seem to be the two descriptive words that the participants used to articulate what it was like for them to be something they're not: acting extraverted when one's authentic self is naturally introverted.

Two participants made reference to "acting extraverted" as a definite option, and admitted they had engaged in playing the extraverted role in specific instances. For example, Liam noted "you did sort-of put on a mask on in some situations." Overall though, "acting extraverted" was, and is, not the way which these participants chose to be.

"Feeling Secure in Self in a Nurturing Environment" was felt when in the company of individuals who are similar to self. As Liam noted, "I had a group of people that were reasonably large and that was the group I hung out with but they were all sort of like me." Liam's friends were similar in the sense that they did not like loud, over-stimulating environments with a lot of people.

We were the people that sat down and watched a movie or hung out at a restaurant or something like that so, I don't, if consciously I went looking for those people or if it was just a natural process that you fall in with people that were similar to you but I know I didn't fit with the other group...like if I'd

gone to the house party like I would have stuck out like a sore thumb cause a) I wouldn't have been comfortable with the environment and b) I wouldn't have known any of those people anyways so I would never would have gone (laughs).

Marley's experience is closely related to Liam's in that she knows certain limits and has social preferences. "I can feel the most relaxed and the most at home with myself, I think, when I'm alone." This is not to imply that Marley does not enjoy having a social group of friends, but rather she understands quite clearly her preference.

I think going out one-on-one with the person or maybe with them and one other friend who we both know well, although three I'm not really comfortable with threes, four would probably be better cause I find with threes it can be, two people start having a conversation again it's that thing of me not wanting to come in on two people whereas in a four you can have two people and two people so I think either one-on-one or in a four, group of four where I know everyone quite well.

Category Four: Meaningful Experiences and The Call for Change

Category four includes those experiences that have helped shape the acceptance of one's introversion. These healthy experiences have helped serve the participants in their overall positive self-concept. As a result, they wish the same for others and provide suggestions for societal change. This category is best represented by three cluster themes: 1) turning points in self-concept, 2) self-acceptance of introversion, and 3) recommendations for societal change (Table 5).

Table 5 Clusters and Supporting Themes for the Category, Meaningful Experiences, and The Call for Change

Meaningful Experiences & The Call for Change		
Turning Points in Self-Concept	Self-Acceptance of Introversion	Recommendations for Societal Change
Themes Within Each Cluster		
Significant Educational Moments	"Honouring One's Introversion" (i.e. finding one's voice)	Early Education on Temperament Differences
Significant Relationships with Others	Sense of an Authentic Self	Nurturing Environment(s)
Significant Event(s)		

Cluster one: Turning points in self-concept. This cluster identifies those defining experiences that appear to have played a unique role in the positive development of the participants' self-concepts. It is comprised of three themes: "Significant Educational Moments," "Significant Relationships with Others," and "Significant Event(s)."

The first theme, "Significant Educational Moments," identifies the "turning point" experiences that are directly related to acquiring knowledge about one's introversion from educational realms (i.e. university or college setting). For example in her college years, Marley found taking the MBTI (Myers-Briggs Type Inventory), which identified her as an introvert, to be very authenticating. Marley expresses her experience with the Myers Briggs as "very, very validating. It was like, 'Oh thank God!' It was really (laughter) relief, it was a huge feeling of relief.". Marley further explains:

I think a huge defining moment was when it was explained. Introversion was explained more fully in that class, that is actually something that I think about often because it was literally like a huge weight came off of me because I'd always thought that I was dumb on some level, that I couldn't process information fast...so that was a *huge* moment for me....that made me so much more comfortable with that aspect of myself. It made me realize that that's just another piece of me... it's just part of this whole bigger thing of being introverted.

For Sherry, her turning points included separate events, one of which will be discussed here. Sherry remembers reading and learning about introversion in her first post-secondary psychology course:

When I was 18, and I read through it and went oh...yeah first psych course, between psych and social they were talking about um group stuff and group dynamics and different types of personalities and what happens when people get together in groups and I thought oh there's type A, there's type B, there's introvert, there's extravert, oh I fit somewhere, that's okay.

For Sherry finding out about introversion through the psychology course was "really great." Prior to this event she felt her introversion was a quality not many desired. "It kind-of normalized what worked for me and gave me more permission to be myself."

"Significant Relationships with Others" is the second theme within this cluster. Participants discussed previous relationships with significant others (i.e. boyfriend or girlfriend) and how they have played an influential role in the self-acceptance of their introversion. For this reason, significant relationship with others is

viewed as a "turning point" theme. For instance, when Raine moved away to university, the relationship with her partner ended. This was a major turning point in Raine's rediscovery of her introverted self.

That was a big shift because I felt like I was able to rediscover myself, and I really liked myself again, and I liked that I was introverted. I started to see all the good things about it, whereas I think before I didn't really see that there was good things to it, because all that happened from being introverted was that people like, I felt that I was misunderstood or I didn't have friends....I just started to see...there were payoffs for me to be, being introverted....I really started to just like get out of the negative headspace that I was in and enjoy[ed] my own company and do[ing] nice things for myself...and then...I met the girls that I became friends with in university and, and [they] reinforced that, I was...a nice person, or whatever, and part of it was because of the quality that I associate with my being introverted.

Although her relationship ended, Raine was able to rediscover her introversion and found that it was positively reinforced by the development of new relationships within her life.

Liam's turning point came at the end of a significant relationship as well. He was with an extraverted partner who had a difficult time understanding Liam's introverted ways. Liam compensated by trying to be more extraverted, yet sensed its lack of authenticity.

That was a big part of the reason that the relationship fell apart and it didn't work, is that I was trying to be what I sort-of thought they expected...I sort-of

felt like I joined this (extraverted) world and nothing could be more ridiculous than me in that setting, and I think I recognized that...I was the person who sought to leave because I was not being myself, I'm not being true to who I am, I'm not doing anything that interests me because I'm trying to be this other person.

The ending of his relationship gave Liam an opportunity to rediscover his sense of self. As it stands today, Liam is in a new relationship with a woman who encourages and supports Liam's introvertedness even though she is not highly introverted herself.

"Significant Events" is the third and final theme within this cluster. The focus of the theme is how a significant event in one's life (whether in direct relation to one's introversion or not) has the healthy capacity for making change within one's life. It appears that significant events which occur for an individual can have a meaningful impact on many areas including self-views. For example, in her late teen years Sherry was involved in a serious car accident. Her recovery period allowed her to reflect upon her sense of self. In doing so she discovered her desire to nurture her introvertedness more willingly than she previously had before.

Before that [psychology course] I had had a serious car accident and I couldn't go out anymore so there was a three month period where I couldn't leave the house. I couldn't socialize, I couldn't do things, so there was kind of an imposed break...and before it just didn't seem okay, that didn't seem possible to do so....I went back into school with one or two friends...I thought this is okay, I like this, this is alright, so the one-to-one then going back into school

having a different social opportunity and different knowledge about it and starting to learn about I function the way I function and that's okay.

Similarly to Sherry, Emma's turning point came in her late teen years when she felt worn out both physically and mentally from living an extraverted lifestyle. As a result, Emma had the desire to move to quieter lifestyle where she could reconnect with her natural introverted self. As Emma describes:

I burned out when I was 19, 20 that's why I moved (away) actually, I mean I didn't choose (*name of town*) it was just an easier place to move to, but I just sort of burned out. I became, I just couldn't play that role anymore, I just couldn't.

Emma describes how she reconnected to her introverted sense of self by moving away from the city.

[I] went into a quieter lifestyle for a little while, and I had to do that. And I knew that I'd move back to the city and all that, but I had to withdraw a little bit to find out what I wanted and I wanted to do, what I wanted to be and that's when I discovered that I am introverted and that that's okay to be, and I have to do things at a slower pace, you know. I can't take six courses at college right now. I just don't have, I think that I would quit if...it would be too much for me and I would end up sort of...I just can't handle when things are thrown at me.

Cluster two: Self-acceptance of introversion. Participants acceptance of their introversion includes two themes, "Honouring one's Introversion" and a "Sense of an Authentic Self." In the first theme, "Honouring one's Introversion" refers to the

narratives which show the secure acceptance of one's temperament type of introversion. Many of the participants recall honouring their introversion in their early to mid 20s. For example, Emma's acceptance did not emerge until she was well into her mid 20s. "I finally sort of honoured that part of myself when I much older and appreciated it that I was an introvert." Emma continues to explain how the acceptance of her introversion has developed through the years:

I enjoy being an introvert now, like even though I hated it when I was younger, I actually don't. It doesn't bother me at all now, I enjoy my time by myself. I think that when I was younger I felt really lonely because I wasn't accepting, or not accepting but, because I wasn't identifying with myself, or you know I wasn't accepting who I was, and now that I appreciate that part of me.... like I accepted that part of myself now and I'm not denying that part of me.

For Emma, honouring her introversion comes from not denying the introverted part of herself but from accepting and appreciating her introvert uniqueness.

I'm comfortable with that part of myself...it took me a long time to get to that point but I'm quite comfortable being that way, I don't look at an extraverted person and go, "Gee I wish I was like that, I wish I could just you know fit in with people"... I'm okay with...who I am.

Sherry's acceptance is associated with no longer viewing her introversion as a "deficit" but rather as something she honours because it is an innate part of her being:

I'm honouring more what my qualities are and I'm valuing them versus chastising myself for them, or trying to be something that I'm not...I've

taken a step back and go, "Okay work with it, this is who you are, and that's okay," and to recognize what qualities I bring to a group situation instead of I'm the quiet one or like viewing it as....not as much as a deficit as I used to.

Raine has uniquely come to honour her introversion by witnessing the positive portrayal of other introverted individuals:

I recognized like that people whose books I read, some of them were introverted, but they weren't people that I interacted with.... I started seeing maybe in the media or in films maybe, characters or reading other stories about people or meeting professors who are obviously like a little eccentric.

In addition to seeing other content introverts, Raine was able to honour her introversion with age, and her freedom to discover self.

I feel like the world is really geared to extraverts...being older I had more freedom and liberty to define my life the way I wanted to, it was less prescribed and so that probably led to greater satisfaction of life and being able [to] nurture that side of myself more, because I was more conscious of it, like explicitly conscious of it.

Liam began honouring his introversion by the simple acceptance of his innate way of being. Through awareness came Liam's acceptance and an ability to walk through life with a clearer sense of being in the world.

At the end of the day I mean it's who I am and I think it's a lot easier to move through this world when you're being yourself than if you're trying to be someone you're not...it's always going to have its frustrations, it's always going to have its hurdles but at the end of the day it does allow me to be the

person that I am and that's a lot easier to face those things if you, and the people around you, are keenly aware of who you are.

Liam's clear sense of being is illustrated by his optimism and trust in the belief that people succeed in life when they accept who they are, or in other words, have a strong self-concept.

It's only been in the last couple years that I think I've become 100% comfortable with who I am, and know what things I do and do not want to pursue. The pressure is still there...that's always going to be, but I think I'm much more comfortable now accepting that I'm not going to succeed in any of those until I accept sort-of who I am, and what I'm good at, and what I'm passionate about. And then those financial successes that fall in line with what society wants will come because, whether people are introverted or extraverted, all these people I cross paths with, their success has come from being passionate about what they do, or having a keen interest in what they do.

The second theme within this cluster, "Sense of an Authentic Self," refers to the narratives that speak to the participants' confidence that honouring their introversion leads to the experience of an authentic self.

Sherry's sense of an authentic self comes from being "more assertive" with the fact that she is introverted. In other words, being one's own authentic self can be revealed to society by having a secure trust in self.

Being more assertive about it and almost feeling like a stronger sense of self cause before that for my entire life I tried to be something that I wasn't and

you can only do that for so long. Well, I mean I guess you can do it forever but it was exhausting, like just not fun. And now it's like, I'm introverted and that's the way I am, no one's under the misconception that I'm not...when I try to do something else I'm not congruent, and I'm not comfortable and I'm not happy.

Sherry also came to realize that the perceptions of others did not have to play a pivotal role in her general concept of self:

That's okay if I'm perceived as that, that's fine, and [I'm] being more upfront about it, I think it had a lot to do with settling into a stronger sense of self, and acceptance, cause now introverts it's like "yeah, no problem there", I am *so* introverted it's not even funny, and that's okay. To me it was never a choice. It was a battle against being who I am. So if I battle against what I am, I'm never going to be happy.

Raine's sense of authentic self comes from her reflection of childhood. She realizes that her introversion has always been an immense feature of her life, and with time she has come to sense this authenticity:

When I was younger and I knew that I was different, or like that I was introverted, and I was always kind of protective of it, I think. Like if you had interviewed me when I was little, I would have said that I liked being introverted then too, probably even though it was causing me problems at times, I still liked it...even though it was caused emotional upset at times, I still would rather have been that way than another way.

Cluster three: Recommendations for societal change. Participants made recommendations to help other individuals (both introverted and extraverted) in the development of positive self-concepts in those individuals who struggle with similar introvert self-concept issues. Two themes encompass this cluster: "Early Education on Temperament Differences" and "Nurturing Environment(s)."

"Early Education on Temperament Differences" is the first theme within this cluster. Participants believed that early education on temperament differences could be extremely helpful in supporting the development of a positive self-concept.

Just to start educating people young about temperaments because I think it's such a *huge* piece of who we are, and to just to have that education younger even in elementary school.... and educating teachers maybe, and professionals, and just kind of getting it more well known so that people do, do know that and don't necessarily go through as long as a time thinking there's something wrong with them. (Marley)

Marley expresses her gratitude for a study like this on introversion for she believes this will help other self-identified introverts make sense of their way of being:

I think introverts are somewhat misunderstood and that's one of the reasons why I'm so glad that you're doing this type of project, because I think, not only are they misunderstood by other people, but I think a lot of introverts, cause this was my experience, *are misunderstanding of themselves* (italics added) because there's just not enough kind of education about it. Like I went all through school thinking I was dumb....and having had [education on introversion] ten years early I would imagine would have made a difference

for those ten years, cause it's made a difference for the year that it's been...so having learnt that earlier I think would have, could have made a big difference.

Sherry beliefs are in line with Marley's in that Sherry believes that early education on introversion and other personality characteristics can aid in the healthy psychological development of children and youth:

More awareness about it, and kind of more understanding of how hard that was to be that, especially through elementary school and high school, and the other people's lack of understanding about what being an introvert means, and how you could foster the development of an introverted child instead of chastising them because they don't speak up or they're not living up to their potential, or to me there's kind of a lot of missed opportunities in that.

Raine believes that if individuals (e.g. teachers and peers) understood the dynamics involved in temperament differences then they could have assisted Raine in her self-concept development:

I see that if I had...had people who...understood me a little bit better around me that um, some of the mistakes I might not have had to make, like I probably would have done okay without making some of the mistakes (laughter).

The second theme, "Nurturing Environments," refers to what participants feel is necessary for their healthy mental and emotional development. Emma indicates that being in a physical environment conducive to one's introverted qualities fosters healthy development.

You know how some people can live wherever and they're quite comfortable. For me it's pretty important that I'm in a nurturing environment or...a quiet place, like I can't live downtown. Other people would love living downtown....

Most significantly, participants mentioned how having individuals (i.e. friends and family members) who respect and appreciate their introversion is highly validating and important. What is interesting to note is how each participant mentioned that nurturing relationships can be found from both introverted and extraverted individuals. As Marley states:

I do get along really well with extraverted people and I think it's because there's a complement to each other, they kind of help me to be more extraverted and I kind of help them to be more introverted or provide that listening place for them.

As previously mentioned, the special bond between introverts and extraverts was a sentiment that was shared by all participants. Many people may believe that introverts and extraverts cannot have meaningful relationships. However, this is not true according to the participants. What makes an introvert feel nurtured within their environment is having the support and understanding of people, regardless of their temperament.

Raine mentioned a previous job experience where the environment was predominantly extraverted. However, the fact that Raine's co-workers accepted and valued her introverted qualities made the working experience exceptionally positive.

Through this positive work experience, Raine was able to meet additional supportive individuals who remain close friends.

Everybody that I worked with there was really nice and accepting of me being quiet cause I was the only quiet one. It was like a novelty to them I guess....so that was nice...that I was accepted unconditionally, I guess, there because it was a very like, that's just the way it was and that's where I met my friend [friend's name] who introduced me to [two other friends] and all the other girls that I became friends with so that's how I made my good friends that [are] the best friends I've ever had because they were more understanding of [my introversion].

Sherry discussed how her nurturing environment came from a supportive home life. More specifically, Sherry's introversion was nurtured by her mother who is also a highly introverted individual:

Well, I'm thankful for in my home it was valued because my mother is introverted moreso than I am, and my dad is extraverted moreso than anyone I've met...life of the party would be my dad, and my mom is so, so, so introverted. So that was acceptable because I watched her do that and she as always had a really strong sense of self, so that being so valued I think was kind of my saving grace about it, because anywhere outside of the home your chastised for it, it's not acceptable, it's not okay.

Liam's introverted experiences have led him to the belief that introverts require close relationships with individuals who understand the temperament of introversion reasonably well.

I think if you're going to be introverted and you're going to have a close relationship with anyone it is going to have to be with someone who at least has some sense of what you're going through, right? I mean they don't necessarily have to be as introverted as you.

As seen by the different views of the participants, nurturing environments include the physical surroundings and meaningful relationships with others. Ensuring that one's life is surrounded by factors that support introverted qualities is deemed vital for positive self-concept development.

Reflections from the Primary Researcher

The following section will provide the reader with a short account of personal reflections regarding my role as both a self-identified introvert and a researcher. This section is intended to provide others with a clear idea of how this research project was intimately developed and what personal new learnings have emerged from the research process. This section will be divided into two independent, yet corresponding, perspectives: "The Researchers Experience of 'Being' a Self-Identified Introvert" and the "Reflections on the Research Process."

The Researchers Experience of "Being" a Self-Identified Introvert

"The researcher is intimately connected with the phenomena being studied and comes to know (oneself) within one's experiencing of these phenomena" (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996, p.600). With the above words holding true, this section is intended to share with the reader a part of my personal lived experience as an introvert.

Most individuals in my life recognize me as a highly introverted individual, and much like the participants within this study, I myself have innately felt my

introversion since a very young age. I have always enjoyed solitary activities, which, in hindsight was validated and supported by others (i.e. parents and teachers) in my early years. I was the quiet, yet respectful and kind child that did not require much attention. This worked well for me during my childhood. However, like most individuals my concept of self was put into question during my adolescent years. Suddenly my quiet way of being appeared quite odd when compared to other individuals my age.

I recall countless times during my late teens when I would ask myself "What's wrong with me....why don't I like big social events and gatherings? I just don't fit in." Friends and family would tell me I was just a shy person, and that I should continue going to various social activities to help overcome my shyness. With this advice, I too played the extraverted lifestyle (i.e. "acting extraverted") for the duration of my late teen years and the beginning of 20s. Yet I never felt harmonized with my sense of self. Instead, I found myself becoming increasingly discouraged with who I was: a person who did not appear to "fit in" with the societal norms of social behaviour. Then a few memorable self-concept "turning points" emerged: the identification with my introversion through the Myers-Briggs assessment measure, and through the reading of introvert literature (i.e. *The Introvert Advantage* by M.O. Laney, 2002). These experiences helped me to reshape my self-concept. I moved from a place of holding the negative perception of feeling as though there was something honestly wrong with my temperament to a place where self-acceptance came from the validation of the above "turning point" experiences. Through this self-acceptance

came my passion to help other introverts "make sense" of their introverted lived experiences.

Though difficulties in accepting one's introversion may be predominantly felt in late childhood and early adulthood, the introvert challenge in keeping a positive self concept remains a battle even in later life. It has been my adulthood lived experience to occasionally encounter individuals that appear to lack the knowledge and acceptance of introverted individuals. For example, during this personal research experience I had an unpleasant interaction with a classmate who apparently misunderstood my introvertedness. I share this experience below.

Midway through my research process I had a classmate stop me one day to ask me about my "quietness." She began by saying to me, "Paula you're so quiet in class, I often wonder what you're thinking," I replied with a simple, "Just reflecting that's all." As I began to walk away I sensed my unwillingness to explore this topic with her any further. I didn't want, nor did feel I had to justify my behaviour to this classmate. Nevertheless, a few additional comments were made by the classmate that included the vivid statement, "It's people *like you* who make me feel like I talk too much." Shocked by such an obvious intolerance to my presence, what came out of my mouth next was exceptionally natural and somewhat profound; "It's just my being" I said. With that our interaction was over. As I processed that event I felt an array of emotions emerge. I felt shamed, hurt, misunderstood, isolated, angry, frustrated, and annoyed, yet quite elated that this woman indirectly validated the need for a study of this kind. Furthermore, the interaction between that student and myself refuelled my passion for researching the temperament of introversion. This particular personal

"introvert" experience, along with countless others make up my lived experience as a self-identified introvert.

Reflections on the Research Process

The research journey has taken many unexpected twists and turns, but it has also provided countless learning paths that have proven extremely fruitful to the overall accomplishment of this project.

An initial concern I had regarding this study was its objectiveness given my intimate connection to introversion. I was concerned that others would read the results and question the validity due to my personal identification with the study's phenomenon. I soon came to the conclusion that such a connection serves the study well and my subjectivity can be monitored through appropriate methods (i.e. practice of reflective-meditation Epoche, reflexivity, personal journaling, etc.). After each interview was completed, I would reflect on how the experiences of the participants were similar and different to my own. On reviewing my notes, I came to realize that more similarities were found between myself and the participants than differences.

For example, I identified with Raine's frustration in needing time to reflect before speaking out loud, and how this preference can be misperceived by others. With Marley, I identified with the challenge she experiences in social situations. In fact, after my interview with Marley I found myself particularly reflective. Social situations prove challenging for many introverts, but I found it difficult to hear that some introverts, like Marley, are getting to the point of withdrawing from social activities due to the uncomfortableness of trying to "fit in." I myself have had similar thoughts. However, I am left feeling a sense of sadness that some introverts are

socially withdrawing as a response to their frustrations. Being introverted does not imply that social contact is unnecessary. Introverts, like extraverts, are social beings in need of human contact.

I related to Emma's passionate and introvert-advocating nature fuelled by how she feels towards the norms of our extraverted society. My way of revealing my passion was through this project, whereas Emma's passion in helping the introverted community became apparent in her interview narratives. As for Sherry, I identified with her adolescent confusion of whether or not to "play" extraverted in order to "fit in" with her social environments. Making personal sense and meaning of one's introversion is difficult at any age, but particularly hard during the critical years of adolescent identity development. An introverted adolescent playing the role of an extravert contributes to an overall sense of their own identity confusion.

And finally, I related to Liam's highly introspective nature and sense making of his introverted qualities. I noticed through our interactions a certain similarity in our introvertedness sense-making. In other words, Liam and I share similar reflective and interpretive mannerisms when it comes to our sense of self.

A rewarding finding included the effectiveness of the research questions. I was pleasantly surprised at the ease in which the participants openly discussed their lived experiences as self-identified introverts. For example, question three (Appendix D) allowed each participant to naturally discuss the challenges they have had with their temperament. That is not to say that the participants did not have positive experiences with their introversion, but as many of the interviews unfolded it appeared to provide the participants with a quiet and safe place to speak about their

challenges with introversion. In fact, by the end of my third interview I realized the order of questions one, two and three were somewhat irrelevant, with most participants very naturally exploring their introversion with little guidance on my part. I continued to ask the questions in order, but my concern with the structure of the interviews eased, which allowed for the lived experience to be told in a manner that best suited the participant.

One unexpected turn in the research process concerned the difficulty in recruiting male participants for the study. It was my initial plan to interview three self-identified female introverts as well as three male introverts. Initially, it looked as though this would be accomplished; however, two initially interested male participants did not return the phone calls I placed to discuss the personal involvement for the study. I'm left questioning the factors that could be involved with the lack of being able to recruit male introverted participants. Are there more stigmas attached to being a male introvert than a female introvert? This reflection will be further explored within chapter five.

Overall I feel the self-identified introverts who were interviewed were all extremely articulate in nature. This allowed for the results to speak for themselves with a small number of interpretations. It is my hope that this chapter accurately depicted the participants as they truly are: healthy, happy and successful introverted beings.

Summary of Chapter Four

Chapter four has detailed the results of the present investigation. Specific attention was given to describing the essential introverted experience, in addition to

the categorical, cluster, and thematic representations that emerged from data analysis. This included the use of participant quotations to help convey the meaning of specific experiences, concepts, and perceptions. The chapter concluded with a section on the reflections of the primary researcher.

In chapter five the study's findings will be discussed in the context of the existing literature. Furthermore, in chapter five practical implications of the current investigation will be explored, the limitations outlined, and suggestions for future research presented.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a comprehensive summary of the study's results in relation to the research literature on introversion and self-concept development. This will be followed by a discussion of the results as they relate to the purposes of the study. The summary will then continue with sections on the study's limitations, implications, and future directions for research.

Research Contributions

Exploring the research question of - *What sense do self-identified introverts make of their lived experience in relation to their self-concept?* - has created rich and meaningful results that can be of use for both the general community in improving relations between introverted and extraverted individuals, for example, and academic community in providing early education on temperament differences. By listening to the voices of five self-identified introverts, new evidence of the phenomenon can be applied to the existing literature.

Purpose One

As outlined in chapter one, the purposes of this study included an interest in the investigation and exploration of introversion, with the aim of providing the academic community and the community at large with greater insight into the dispositional realm of introversion. Employing a hermeneutic phenomenological method of study provided the framework in which to discover the ways self-identified introverts "make sense" of their lived experience as it relates to views of self.

Introverts made sense out of their lived experiences through a combination of intrapersonal and interpersonal interactions. Perceptions and reactions by others regarding introverted behaviours and qualities influenced how participants came to view themselves. For example, if a participant watched his or her family praise and validate the behaviour of an extraverted sibling, and did not receive validation from the family regarding his or hers introverted behaviour, the self-identified introvert learned to associate extraversion with social praise and acceptance, and introverted behaviour as one that does not receive admiration. Interactions with one's environment (such as the experience described above) are deemed especially meaningful for the study's introverts due to their highly introspective and sensitive nature.

The perceptive characteristic of an introvert corresponds to Jung's (1923) Dynamic/Energy Model. As the basis of their consciousness, introverts are predisposed to view their lived experiences in a subjective manner, whereas extraverts view their lived experiences in an objective fashion - noticing sights and sounds before mediating their personal experience of it (Davis & Johnson, 1983-84). In general, introverts "*personalize* (italics added) their experience by taking a subjective stance to it" (Davis & Johnson, p.163). Their lived experience of interacting with their world is felt very personally due to their reflective views of self (Shapiro & Alexander, 1975).

The reflective and subjective experience of introverts needs to be better understood and esteemed by Western culture. Lack of understanding affects not only the introverted individual and their views of self, but also others who miss the

opportunity to understand introversion. Introverts within this study indicated that the environments they deemed particularly challenging included social engagements, educational environments and work environments. Would a teacher serve the best needs of introverted students if a predominantly non-directive approach to teaching, for example, the use of discussion groups was taken? When the interaction between extraversion-introversion and teacher's level of directness in teaching was explored (McCann et al., 1986) results indicated that the grades and level of satisfaction for introverted students correlated positively with highly directive classroom environments. That is, better grades and higher levels of satisfaction were reported for introverted students who had directive teachers. Participants in the current study suggested that they were particularly unhappy when they felt misunderstood by educational instructors.

One way in which participants coped with the challenges of living in a predominantly extraverted society was by acting extraverted. Dunning (1999) argues that the schemas that people have of social traits and concepts, which are the building blocks of social cognition, are shaped by the motivation to retain flattering images of self. Fortunately, for the richness of human diversity, the participants recalled feeling extremely exhausted from playing the role of an extravert. Since introverts tend to feel physically and psychologically drained after long periods of social interaction (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1985), as the introverted participants stopped playing the extraverted role they were able to refocus their energy on authentic traits of self and to further explore their sense of self. Introverts view themselves as unique and

emergent beings because of their ability to reflect on the experiences that promote personal growth in one's self-concept (Shapiro & Alexander, 1975).

As the participants opened to their reflective selves, turning point experiences were encountered. These self-concept building experiences included formally learning about their introversion through personality tests (i.e. MBTI), having a significant relationship with another individual who honoured their introverted temperament, or experiencing other significant personal events. This journey to self-acceptance was unquestionably challenging for the introverted participants, but nevertheless essential for the birth of personal authenticity.

The introvert's reflective nature serves them well on their passage to self-acceptance:

For the *I* [introvert] the course of his [*sic*] thoughts and feelings in reflection is itself an object. It is viewed not only as a focal object but as an object of fascination, the basis of which lies in the recognition that the thoughts and feelings are being transformed, that they are growing and changing, and that they have a rich and intricate course....the *I* is fascinated with the course of his [*sic*] thoughts and feelings in reflection because he [*sic*] views that course as his [*sic*] *becoming self* (Shapiro & Alexander, 1975, p. 132-133).

Purpose Two

The second purpose of this investigation was the desire to rejuvenate and update the literature written on introversion. The original work on introversion/extraversion portrayed introversion favourably; however, the passing years have left behind distortions.

Jung (1923) believed extraversion versus introversion to be the most basic dimension of human temperament, neither one was considered preferable to the other, but simply two different means of *being-in-the-world*. Eysenck and Eysenck (1985) found that introverts have exceptionally sensitive cortical excitation processes as opposed to extraverts, and therefore tend to feel intellectually and emotionally overwhelmed by moderate social and physical stimulation. "As a consequence, they [introverts] often resort to a self-protective retreat from their surroundings and may limit interaction by means of self-control or behavioural inhibition" (Coan, 1984, p.479).

The concept of introversion has been viewed in a critical fashion. For example, Sigmund Freud "concluded that extraversion was the healthy condition, while introversion constituted a predisposition to psychopathology" such as narcissism (Coan, 1984, p.478). For a person of his influential power on the psychological community, claiming that introspective individuals such as introverts were susceptible to narcissism was a risky statement to make. Freud's beliefs have significantly contributed to the second factor supporting the misrepresented use and understanding of introversion; that is, the influence of Western thought on the acceptance of introversion.

Western society, in comparison to Eastern society, emphasizes extraversion over introversion (Coan, 1984; Hills & Argyle, 2001; Jung, 1923). The effects of Western beliefs and values, combined with the influence of some psychologists, have caused a misrepresentation of and lack of tolerance for introversion. Results from this study have shown how the perceptions and reactions of others regarding participants'

introverted behaviours have had a direct effect on their self-concept development. Participants' self-doubts were internalized until turning point experiences (e.g. reading/learning about introversion) provided them with new lenses with which to view their way-of-being. From here the introverted participants came to authenticate themselves within our predominant extraverted society by not only accepting but also embracing their introversion.

With reference to this study, an update on introversion literature includes the discovery of an introvert's self-conscious disposition. According to participants in the current study, an introvert's tendency to be self-conscious is rooted *not* in having a lack of self-esteem or self-confidence, but rather in what appears to be a heightened *consciousness of self*. Participants noted their sense of self-consciousness stems from a lack of personal control over unfamiliar environmental and social interactions. Being familiar with external factors helps an introvert remain relaxed, and decreases the chance of over-stimulation in cortical regions of the brain (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1985). This also reduces the rates of feeling judged by others due to discomfort in unfamiliar situations. The participants' descriptions appear to concur with earlier definitions of self-consciousness, a "preoccupation with one's own personality to such an extent as to suppose that one is the object of observation by others" (Roback, 1933, p. 9).

Comparisons to the Literature

Additional results from the current investigation indicated a number of noteworthy findings that can be compared to the existing research literature on

introversion and self-concept development. This section attempts to illustrate a few working examples.

As reviewed in chapter two, Shavelson et al. (1976) identified seven self-concept features. Specific features of Shavelson et al.'s model can be related to the findings of this current study on introversion. For instance, features three and four of their self-concept model state that *self-concept is hierarchical and interactive*; perceptions of personal behaviour in specific situations are at the base, inferences about self in relation to social, physical and academic domains are centre, and a general self-concept sits at the apex. The apex of the self-concept hierarchy is relatively stable; however it becomes weakened by the unstable development of the base and the middle. This same weakness in the self-concept structure was witnessed through the narratives of the introverted participants in this study. As the perceptions of and inferences about one's introverted self came into continuous question, through the challenges presented within their social and academic environments, so too did their overall concept of self. This question of self appears to have become increasingly complex with age; concurrent with Shavelson et al.'s fifth concept of self. The process of identity development for adolescents is challenging enough, but perhaps even more so for introverted youth facing judgement about discovering and accepting their true introverted nature.

One external factor that can greatly affect self-concept development for all introverted individuals at all developmental stages includes the misrepresentation of the temperament of introversion within published literature, both academic (e.g. Sanitioso, 2002) and non-academic (e.g. Becker, 2003, Powell, n.d.) published

literature. Misrepresentations can produce cumulative effects. For example, if a school teacher reads a report that associates introversion with such descriptors as "unconfident," "unsociable," "shy," "unfriendly" and "cold" while extraversion is affiliated with "confidence," "sociability," "friendliness" and "warmth" (Sanitioso, 2002, p.16), then the teacher naturally would be concerned for the introverted students within the classroom. The teacher might even go as far as to implement social skill building groups for the introverted students, when in fact an introvert's preference for occasional solitude is healthy. "A tolerance or even a preference for your own company is to some extent a result of being secure in yourself...you are confident that your own resources are enough for you to feel complete and good about yourself" (Layder, 2004, p. 38-39).

Layder's quote echoes the sentiments of the participants within this study. The participants longed for acceptance and validation from others (e.g. teachers, peers, family, significant others, etc.) regarding their unique sense of self, yet regularly met with resistance. Fortunately the self-identified introverts within this study have a strong resilient nature that allowed them to persevere. Though I am satisfied overall to see academic work published on the self-concept development of introverts (i.e. Kunda & Sanitioso, 1989; Sanitioso, 1998, 2002, 2004; Sanitioso & Wlodarski, 2004), I nevertheless stress the importance of providing accurate depictions of temperaments to banish the misrepresentation of the introverted community.

Feeling misunderstood is an elemental form of rejection which cuts deeply into one's sense of identity (Layder, 2004). Many of the participants voiced concerns over feeling generally misunderstood by others within society. The introverts recalled

being consistently asked by others if there was "something wrong", or if they were depressed, sad, or upset. Sometimes their behaviour was mistaken as unfriendly, unapproachable, and socially inept. Introverts are often mistaken as unhappy or depressed due to their introspective nature. As Hills and Argyle (2001) note, "introverts are sometimes represented as withdrawn, isolated or lacking social competence, rather than as individuals who seek independence and autonomy" (p.597). Like the participants within the current investigation, an introvert can be happy and fulfilled in spending time by themselves, engaging in a reflective process. Introverts find happiness and contentment in being alone for periods of time. However, in a society that values extraverted social behaviour, "happiness derived from largely solitary activities has either been overlooked or explained in 'parasocial' terms" (Hills & Argyle, p. 605). As recommended by the participants, early education on temperament differences should be provided to prevent positive self-concept development delays in introverted individuals.

While recognizing and honouring an introvert's need for autonomy, it is important to not ignore the psychological problems that can occur for some introverts who suffer from self-concept issues. In their study, Rankin Young and Bradley (1998) hypothesized that when assessing possible future maladjustment in youth, one must look not only at personality factors (such as introversion) but also emotional stability (neuroticism). Differences were noted between stable introverts (those who were generally happy and were simply not interested in large amounts of social interaction) and unstable introverts (those youth who would like to approach others but the attempt is blocked by their anxiety). These differences suggest that it is not simply

introversion that determines negative social consequences, but rather it is an adolescent's level of emotional stability that predicts maladjustment (Rankin Young & Bradley). Addressing the needs of unstable introverts, as well as unstable extraverts, will need to be continued by school psychologists, teachers, and parents. However, as the narratives of the participants suggest if a child or adolescent appears content and satisfied with their introverted state, care must be taken to avoid labelling them as "unstable." Mislabelling can often cause damage to a youth's healthy psychology development.

Limitations

Specific demographic features have influenced the overall results. The study was limited to the lived experience of five "highly introverted", self-identified introverts between the ages of 25-35, gender not specific. Originally it was anticipated that three female and three male participants would be recruited for the study. However, difficulties in appealing to the male introverted community caused for some delays in the data collection process. Therefore the study was based on the experiences of four female and one male "highly introverted" individuals. As such, the results may be more conducive to a population of female rather than male introverts.

Another limitation included the age parameter established for this investigation. Perceptions and experiences were limited to introverted participants who fell between the ages of 25-35. Finally, the study's results are limited to the population of "highly introverted" individuals, as scored by the Self-Assessment of Introverts Questionnaire (Laney, 2002). Therefore, the present study is unable to

speak to the lived experience of introverts who are "moderately introverted."

Although it would be of interest to conduct a further investigation with this population, for the purposes of this study it was necessary to collect data from highly introverted individuals, who could speak truly to the essence of the phenomenon under investigation in order to expand understanding of the temperament of introversion.

Implications

Participants "make sense" of their lived experience by recognizing the effects of introverted challenges on their views of self. With age, participants were able to identify their predominant self-concept issues, with prevailing issues occurring in mid-adolescence to early adulthood. Such findings have implications for the general community, educational institutions, and for the counselling community.

Implications for the General Community

Chances are we could each name someone in our lives who would be classified as an introvert. This person may be a romantic partner, friend, co-worker, boss, or brother, etc. Since these social relationships exist, it would seem sensible for the general public to be mindful of temperament differences. This attentive nature can help build community cohesion. Understanding and remaining receptive towards individual differences (i.e. introversion) can have a positive effect on all individuals, but possibly for temperament minority populations specifically.

How can this optimistic goal of human understanding come to light?

Individuals can educate themselves and others by reading current literature on introversion and extraversion differences (e.g. Hills & Argyle, 2001; Laney, 2002);

by asking an introvert about their introvert experiences; and by sharing with others the knowledge on temperament differences. It is the responsibility of both introverted and extraverted communities to promote healthy understanding of human social relationships.

Implications for Educational Institutes

Many of the participants spoke about the introvert challenge of feeling misunderstood during their years of receiving an education. Specifically, participants referred to their experience of having teachers who misinterpreted their introverted behaviour as students. Reactions from others regarding the participants' introverted behaviours affected their self-concepts. An implication from this study, therefore, includes the need to provide early education to students and teachers regarding temperament differences and similarities. For students in junior and high school, this education could take the form of group counselling programs. For teachers, a workshop on introverted and extraverted student learning styles and behaviours could be provided. By arranging school time to provide education on temperament differences to youth, and by having teachers educated on student performance differences in relation to personality traits, the healthy self-concept development of introverted individuals would be fostered.

Implications for the Counselling Community

As reported in chapter one, Laney (2002) found that many introverts live with feelings of shame and guilt around their identity as introverts. The experience of shame can cause feelings of sadness, isolation from social events, and even major depression. Shame is only one example of an emotion that introverted individuals

may encounter if they are under the false impression that their way of *being-in-the-world* is odd, disliked by others, or wrong. Though the participants within this study did not use the exact word of "shame" to express their lived experience, they did report feeling embarrassed by their introverted way of being and believed there was "something's wrong" with them. The ability to verbally acknowledge that one is embarrassed by the self represents a developmental acquirement that is dependent upon socialization experiences (Harter, 1999). Therefore, counsellors should remain mindful that perceptions of self are highly related to one's social world.

Depressed clients often report feelings of shame, embarrassment, and guilt regarding their sense of self. The skilled counsellor may address these issues, but may neglect to explore personality influences such as one's introversion. With proper training or knowledge of personality traits, counsellors could be of further assistance for introverted clients facing self-concept issues. Furthermore, if the need is sufficient, counselling agencies could consider offering support groups or counselling groups to introverted populations to explore self-concept.

Future Directions for Research

A study of good value can produce an array of future research possibilities. These are the sentiments held regarding the current investigation. Listening to the voices of "highly introverted" participants has helped pave the way for further possible research advancements within the temperament field. As the primary researcher for this project, I identify three central areas that could greatly benefit introversion research for the future. These specific areas are briefly discussed below.

The current investigation consisted of examining the experiences and perceptions of four female and one male "highly introverted" participants. A participant pool of this kind created a predominantly female introverted perspective. It would therefore be of interest to the research community to further investigate gender differences and/or comparisons of the lived experience of male and female introverts.

Furthermore, as discovered by my interview with Liam, his introvert male perspective suggests that a unique dynamic between introversion and career choices exists. Career challenges may appear to exist for the male introvert more so than for female introvert population.

Directions for future research may also include exploring the effects of self-concept development on youth when they receive early education on temperament differences. As suggested by the participants, introverted youth may view themselves in a more favourable light when they are educated on the healthy variations of personality development. Furthermore, extraverted youth may find themselves increasingly understanding and accepting of the minority temperament population of introverted individuals. In any event, proactive measures such as early education for youth regarding introversion and extraversion should be of interest to future personality researchers.

Final Summary

This study explored the research question of - *What sense do self-identified introverts make of their lived experience in relation to their self-concept?* By conducting a study within the qualitative realm of hermeneutic (interpretive)

phenomenology, the lived experience of self-identified introverts was comprehensively explored.

Throughout the face-to-face interviews, the participants described various elements that influenced their overall sense of self. This included "making sense" of their initial identification with introversion (e.g. introverted innateness), "making sense" of the perceptions and reactions from others regarding their introverted behaviours, and "making sense" out of the challenges they faced within a predominantly extraverted society. This sense making caused many of the developing introverts to feel a certain disconnection from their true sense of being. However, through their identity confusion regarding introversion emerged certain clarity of self-acceptance. When the introverted participants learned about the normalcy of their introverted tendencies, in addition to being validated for their uniqueness by others, the introverted participants came to honour their gift of introversion and began to view it as a pivotal characteristic in their overall positive self-concept.

This research report was not intended to devalue the temperament of extraversion, but rather to enlighten us as to the gifts of introversion and introverted individuals. As originally suggested by Jung (1923), introversion and extraversion are equal in their value to our society, and are simply two diverse ways of *being-in-the-world*. Challenges exist for both temperament types. However, introverts are faced with the additional challenge of remaining the temperament minority within Western culture. Introverts are left with the distinct challenge of determining their role within society. Do they choose to join the extraverted majority by "acting extraverted", or do they choose to honour the personal gifts introversion can bring to their authentic

living? With that said, I leave the readers, both introverted and extraverted, the opportunity to reflect on Layder's (2004) thoughts, and to decide for themselves where their personal views of societal behavioural norms lie.

Although we can never stand completely apart from society, we nevertheless retain a certain amount of independence from it. We are able to choose how we behave towards others in ways that are, for us "appropriate" and that satisfy our own needs, wishes and desires. Society can only present us with a set of choices, it can never completely determine for us which choices we actually adopt (p. 9).

References

- Anderson, G., & Arsenault, N. (1998). *Fundamentals of Educational Research*, (2nd ed). Bristol, PA: Falmer Press.
- Aron, E. N. (1996). *The highly sensitive person*. New York: Broadway Books.
- Aron, E. N., & Aron, A. (1997). Sensory-processing sensitivity and its relation to introversion and emotionality. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 73(2), 345-368.
- Bandura, A. (1989). Human agency in social cognitive theory. *American Psychologist*, 44(9), 1175-1184.
- Becker, A. (2003) Don't worry, be extroverted. *Psychology Today*, 36(3), 14.
- Bendig, A. (1962) The Pittsburgh scales of social extraversion-introversion and emotionality. *The Journal of Psychology*, 53, 199-209.
- Briggs Myers, I. & Myers, P. B. (1980). *Gifts differing*. Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press, Inc.
- Bullock, W. A., & Gilliland, K. (1993). Eysenck's arousal theory of introversion-extraversion: A converging measures investigation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 64(1), 113-123.
- Burch, R. (1990). Phenomenology, Lived Experience: Taking a Measure of the Topic *Phenomenology + Pedagogy*, 8, 130-160.
- Byrne, B. (2002). Validating the measurement and structure of self-concept: Snapshots of past, present, and future research. *American Psychologist*, 57(11), 897-909.

- Campbell, J. D., Assanand, S., & Di Paula, A. (2003). The structure of the self-concept and its relation to psychological adjustment. *Journal of Personality*, 71(1), 115-141.
- Card, C. N. W. (1993). *Discover the power of introversion*. Gladwyne, USA: Type & Temperament Press.
- Coan, R. (1984). Extraversion/introversion. In R.J. Corsini (Ed.), *Encyclopaedia of psychology* (pp.478-479). New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Colaizzi, P. (1978). Psychological research as the phenomenologist views it. In R.S. Valle & M. King (Eds.), *Existential-phenomenological alternatives for psychology* (pp.48-71). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Conroy, S. A. (2003). A pathway for interpretive phenomenology. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 2(3). Article 4. Retrieved November 20, 2004 from http://www.ualberta.ca/~iiqm/backissues/2_3final/html/conroy.html
- Costa, P., & McCrae, R. (1994). Stability and change in personality from adolescence through adulthood. In C. Halverson Jr., G. Kohnstamm, & R. Martin (eds.) *The developing structure of temperament and personality from infancy to adulthood* (pp.139-151). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., Publishers.
- Davis, L. T. & Johnson, P. J. (1983-84). An assessment of conscious content as related to introversion-extraversion. *Imagination, Cognition and Personality*, 3(2), 149-168.

- Deuschle, W. F. (2001). Myers-Briggs-Jung psychological type theory reformulated as a cognitive socio-psychological theory of type. *Journal of Psychological Type, 57*, 18-24.
- Dohn, J. (n.d.). *The relationship of introversion to shyness and introspection*. Retrieved December 3, 2003 from <http://www.iaw.on.ca/~jdohn/litrev.html>
- Dunning, D. (1999). A newer look: Motivated social cognition and the schematic representation of social concepts. *Psychological Inquiry, 10*(1), 1-11.
- Eysenck, H. J. (Ed.) (1970). *Readings in extraversion-introversion 1: Theoretical and methodological issues*. London, Great Britain: Staples Press Ltd.
- Eysenck, H. J., & Eysenck, M. W. (1985). *Personality and individual differences*. New York: Plenum Press.
- Finlay, L. (2002). Negotiating the swamp: the opportunity and challenge of reflexivity in research practice. *Qualitative Research, 2*(2), 209-230.
- Fleeson, W., Malanos, A., & Achille, N. (2002). An intraindividual process approach to the relationship between extraversion and positive affect: Is acting extraverted as "good" as being extraverted? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 4*(4), 4-23.
- Gall, M., Borg, W., & Gall, J. (1996). *Educational Research*, (6th ed). New York: Longman, Publishers.
- Harrington, R., & Loffredo, D. (2001). The relationship between life satisfaction, self-consciousness, and the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory dimensions. *Journal of Psychology, 135*(4), 439-451.

- Harter, S. (1999). *The construction of the self: A developmental perspective*. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Henjum, A. (1982). Introversion: A misunderstood "individual difference" among students. *Education, 103*(1), 39-43.
- Hills P., & Argyle, M. (2001). Happiness, introversion-extraversion and happy introverts. *Personality and Individual Differences, 30*, 595-608.
- Jung, C. G. (1923). *Psychological types*. Edinburgh, G.B.: The Edinburgh Press.
- Kagan, J. (1994). *Galen's prophecy: Temperament in human nature*. New York: Basic Books.
- Keirsey, D., & Bates, M. (1984). *Please understand me: Character & temperament types*. Del Mar, CA: Prometheus Nemesis Book Company.
- Kunda, Z. & Sanitioso, R. (1989). Motivated changes in self-concept. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 25*, 272-285.
- Laney, M. O. (2002). *The introvert advantage: How to thrive in an extrovert world*. New York: Workman Publishing.
- Laverty, S. M. (2003). Hermeneutic phenomenology and phenomenology: A comparison of historical and methodological considerations. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 2*(3). Article 3. Retrieved March 26, 2004 from http://www.ualberta.ca/~iiqm/backissues/2_3final/html/laverty.html
- Layder, D. (2004). *Social and personal identity: Understanding yourself*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- LeVasseur, J. J. (2003). The problem of bracketing in phenomenology. *Qualitative Health Research, 13*(3), 408-420.

- Lincoln, Y. (2003). Emerging criteria for quality in qualitative and interpretive research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 1(3), 275-289.
- Lopez, K. A. & Willis, D. G. (2004). Descriptive versus interpretive phenomenology: their contributions to nursing knowledge. *Qualitative Health Research*, 14(5), 726-735.
- Marsh, H. W., & Hattie, J. (1996). Theoretical perspectives on the structure of self-concept. In B. Bracken (Ed.) *Handbook of self-concept: Developmental, social, & clinical considerations* (pp.38-90). New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. B. (1995). *Designing qualitative research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- McCall, R. J. (1983). *Phenomenological psychology*. Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press.
- McCann, S. J., Short, R., & Stewin, L. L. (1986). Perceived teacher directiveness, student variables, grades, and satisfaction: aptitude x treatment interactions? *Instructional Science*, 15, 131-164.
- McCrae, R., Costa, P., Ostendorf, F., Angleitner, A., Hrebickova, M., Avia, M., et al. (2000). Nature over nurture: Temperament, personality, and life span development. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 78(1), 173-186.
- Miller, S. (2003). Analysis of phenomenological data generated with children as research participants. *Nurse Researcher*, 10(4), 68-83.
- Morris, L. W. (1979). *Extraversion and introversion: An interactional perspective*. Washington, D.C.: Hemisphere Publishing Corporation.

- Morse, J. M. & Richards, L. (2002). *Readme first for a user's guide to qualitative methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Mudore, C. (2002). Are you an introvert? *Current Health*, 29(4), 17-20.
- Nussbaum, E. M. (2002). How introverts versus extroverts approach small-group argumentative discussions. *The Elementary School Journal*, 102(3), 183-197.
- Opt, S. K., & Loffredo, D. A. (2003). Communicator image and Myers-Briggs type indicator extraversion-introversion. *The Journal of Psychology*, 137(6), 560-568.
- Powell, R. (n.d.). *Introversion of happiness. Intro Version of Success*. Retrieved December 3, 2003 from <http://www.introversion.homestead.com/Happy~ns4.html>
- Rammsayer, T. H. (2003). NMDA receptor activity and the transmission of sensory input into motor output in introverts and extraverts. *The Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology*, 56B(2), 207-221.
- Rankin Young, M. R. & Bradley, M. T. (1998). Social withdrawal: self-efficacy, happiness, and popularity in introverted and extraverted adolescents. *Canadian Journal of School Psychology*, 14(1), p.21.
- Rauch, J. (2003). Caring for your introvert. *Atlantic Monthly*, 291(2), 133-134.
- Roback, A. A. (1933). *Self-consciousness and its treatment*. Cambridge, MA: Sci-Art Publishers.

- Roberts, J., & Cairns, K. (1999). *School children with HIV/AIDS*. Calgary, Alberta: Detselig Enterprises Ltd.
- Rogers, C. (1951). *Client-centered therapy*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.
- Rothe, J. P. (2000). *Undertaking qualitative research: Concepts and cases in injury, health and social life*. Edmonton, Canada: The University of Alberta Press.
- Sanitioso, R. (1998). Behavioral consequences of motivated self-concept change. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 28*, 281-285.
- Sanitioso, R. (2002). Motivated self-concept change and possible selves. *Revue Internationale de Psychologie Sociale, 15*(3-4). Special issue: Self and identity, 9-24.
- Sanitioso, R. (2004). Desired self and biased judgment of past behaviors. *Current Psychology of Cognition, 22*(2), 117-132.
- Sanitioso, R., & Wlodarski, R. (2004). In search of information that confirms a desired self-perception: motivated processing of social feedback and choice of social interactions. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 30*(4), 412-422.
- Santo, S. (n.d.). *Extraversion/introversion*. Retrieved December 3, 2003 from The University of South Dakota Web site:
<http://www.usd.edu/~ssanto/extravert.html>
- Shapiro, K. J., & Alexander, I. E. (1975). *The experience of introversion: An integration of phenomenological, empirical, and Jungian approaches*. Durham, USA: Duke University Press.

- Shavelson, R. J., Hubner, J. J., & Stanton, G. C. (1976). Validation of construct interpretation. *Review of Educational Research*, 46, 407-441.
- Tieger, P. D. & Barron-Tieger B. (1995). *Do what you are* (2nd ed.). Toronto, Canada: Little, Brown and Company.
- Tobin, G. A. & Begley, C. M. (2004). Methodological rigour within a qualitative framework. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 48(4), 388-396.
- van Manen, M. (1997). *Researching lived experience: Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy* (2nd ed.). Edmonton, Canada: University of Alberta Press.
- van Manen, M. (n.d.) Phenomenology online: glossary. Retrieved May 12, 2003 from <http://www.phenomenologyonline.com/glossary/glossary.html>
- Whittemore, R., Chase, S. K., & Mandle, C. L. (2001). Validity in qualitative research. *Qualitative Health Research*, 11(4), 522-537.
- Willis, P. (2001). The "things themselves" in phenomenology. *Indo-Pacific Journal of Phenomenology*, 1(1), 1-14.
- Zimbardo, P. (1977). *Shyness: What it is, what to do about it*. Don Mills, Ontario: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co.

Appendix A

Self-Assessment for Introverts Questionnaire (Laney, 2002)

Instructions: Consider each statement in terms of what is generally true or false for you, not how you wish you were or how you are some of the time. Don't analyze or think too deeply about each statement. Your first impression is usually the best. Good luck!

_____ When I need to rest, I prefer to spend time alone or with one or two close people rather than with a group.

_____ When I work on projects, I like to have larger uninterrupted time periods rather than smaller chunks.

_____ I sometimes rehearse things before speaking, occasionally writing notes for myself.

_____ In general, I like to listen more than I like to talk.

_____ People sometimes think I'm quiet, mysterious, aloof, or calm.

_____ I like to share special occasions with just one person or a few close friends, rather than have big celebrations.

_____ I usually need to think before I respond or speak.

_____ I tend to notice details many people don't see.

_____ If two people have just had a fight, I feel the tension in the air.

_____ If I say I will do something, I almost always do it.

_____ I feel anxious if I have a deadline or pressure to finish a project.

_____ I can "zone out" if too much is going on.

_____ I like to watch an activity for a while before I decide to join it.

_____ I form lasting relationships.

_____ I don't like to interrupt others; I don't like to be interrupted.

_____ When I take in lots of information, it takes me awhile to sort it out.

_____ I don't like over-stimulating environments.

- _____ I sometimes have strong reactions to smells, tastes, foods, weather, noises, etc.
- _____ I am creative and/or imaginative.
- _____ I feel drained after social situations, even when I enjoy myself.
- _____ I prefer to be introduced rather than to introduce others.
- _____ I can become grouchy if I'm around people or activities too long.
- _____ I often feel uncomfortable in new surroundings.
- _____ I like people to come to my home, but I don't like them to stay too long.
- _____ I often dread returning phone calls.
- _____ I find my mind sometimes goes blank when I meet people or when I am asked to speak unexpectedly.
- _____ I talk slowly or have gaps in my words, especially if I am tired or if I am trying to speak and think at once.
- _____ I don't think of casual acquaintances as friends.
- _____ I feel as if I can't show other people my work or ideas until they are fully formulated.
- _____ Other people may surprise me by thinking I am smarter than I think I am.

Scoring:

20-30 (highly introverted)

10-19 (moderately introverted)

1-9 (extroverted)

Note to reader. The scoring of the test was not provided to the potential participants. This was done to help control for participant bias. The scores were tabulated by the researcher once received from the potential participants.

Appendix B

UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA
 OFFICE OF THE VICE-PRESIDENT,
 RESEARCH
 HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

Participant Consent Form

The Lived Experience of Self-Identified Introverts: A phenomenological approach to understanding the essence of introversion with respect to self-concept

You are being invited to participate in a study entitled 'The Lived Experience of Self-Identified Introverts' that is being conducted by Paula Remus; a MA Counselling Psychology candidate in the department of Educational Psychology and Leadership Studies at the University of Victoria. You may contact her if you have further questions by telephone at (250) 881-7442 or by email: p.remus@telus.net. Correspondents can also be mailed to Paula Remus care-of The University of Victoria, Educational Psychology and Leadership Studies Dept., PO Box 1700 STN CSC Victoria BC V8W 2Y2.

As a graduate student, I am required to conduct research as part of the requirements for a Masters of Arts degree in Counselling Psychology. It is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Geoff Hett. You may contact my supervisor at (250) 721-7783 or by email: hettg@uvic.ca

The purpose of this research project is to explore, through qualitative inquiry, how the self-concept of self-identified introverts has been influenced by their identification as introverts and by the temperament counterpart of extraversion. Conducting a study of this nature will help provide the academic community and the community at large with greater insight into the dispositional realm of introversion.

Although there is a broad-spectrum of research completed on the temperament of introversion, research of this specific type is important because very few studies have focused on the lived experience of introverts and the challenges they face by self identifying with this personality type. Research has shown that 75% of North American society identifies as being 'extraverted' thereby making introverts the clear temperament minority. Completing research with members of the minority group of self-identified introverts will help contribute to personality type research, and with the overall understanding of introversion.

You are being considered to participate in this study because you are a male or female between the ages of 25-35. Only those interested individuals who score as 'highly introverted' on the Self-Assessment for Introverts Questionnaire (see enclosed copy) will be asked to further participate in the study. The return of the Self-Assessment for Introverts Questionnaire and *signed* participant consent form will determine if you will be eligible for further participation. For those individuals who do not score as 'highly introverted', your questionnaire and signed participant consent form will be destroyed immediately after you have been notified.

If you agree to voluntarily participate in this research, your participation will include devoting 15-25 minutes to complete and return the Self-Assessment for Introverts Questionnaire. If you score as 'highly introverted' on the Self-Assessment for Introverts Questionnaire a single

1-2 hour audio-taped interview will be conducted with me, the primary researcher, Paula Remus. The interview will occur in a quiet location of mutual convenience. Options may include your home, in a private room at the local university or college, or in a public library study room. You will be asked questions in the area of introversion and asked to describe/share your thoughts, feelings, and behaviours regarding your identification as an introvert. After the interview has been completed, transcribed and analyzed, you will be asked to review your written transcript for accuracy. 30 to 60 minutes will be required for your transcript review.

Participation in this study may cause some inconvenience to you, including time commitments necessary for completing and returning the Self-Assessment for Introverts Questionnaire (approximately 15-25 minutes), the interview (between 1-2 hours in length) and a review of your written transcript (between 30-60 minutes). In scheduling these times, I will work around your schedule and time commitments, and will reschedule the interview at your request to a more suitable time if the need arises. I will also make myself available for the discussion of any concerns or questions that may come up from your participation.

Due to the personal content that you may disclose during the interview, a potential risk by participating in this research study includes possible emotional upset. Procedures in preventing or dealing with this risk include temporarily or permanently ending the interview, collaboratively producing a list of debriefing contacts, and/or referring you to a community counselling agency within your area if you should require.

The potential benefits of your participation in this research include the opportunity to reflect on your personal attitudes, beliefs and values as well as the opportunity to share your understanding, thoughts, and personal meanings about being an introverted individual. You will also have this opportunity as a means of helping others in society (i.e. friends, family, co-workers, etc.) to better understand your temperament of introversion. And finally, your participation is an opportunity to contribute to new learning's for the academic community and to possibly help generate future research studies on the subject matter of temperament differences.

As a way to compensate you for any inconvenience related to your participation, you will be given a \$20 Chapters Gift Certificate upon the completion of the interview. It is important for you to know that it is unethical to provide undue compensation or inducements to research participants and, if you agree to be a participant in this study, this form of compensation to you must not be coercive. If you would not otherwise choose to participate if the compensation was not offered, then you should decline.

Your participation in this research must be completely voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any consequences or any explanation. If you do withdraw from the study your data will not be used in the analysis. Your audiotape will be erased and your transcript destroyed.

To make sure that you continue to consent to participate in this research, I will, prior to the interview commencing, review orally the informed consent process with you.

In terms of protecting your anonymity, only partial anonymity only can be maintained. This is due to the 'snowballing' (word of mouth) recruitment process that makes it possible for participants to know each other. For those individuals who were not recruited by 'word of

mouth' (i.e. those individuals who responded to advertisement posters), your anonymity will be completely protected. Efforts to maintain participant anonymity, regardless of the recruitment measure, will include replacing your name on the data by identification numbers and by using a pseudonym in place of your real name. Your name will not appear on the data, thesis, published articles, or any other material used in presentations for others. And finally, your signed consent form will be kept separately from any recorded data.

Your confidentiality and the confidentiality of the data will be protected by placing all research data (i.e. questionnaire results, signed consent form, audiotapes, written transcriptions, and any additional paperwork, etc.) within a locked filing cabinet located within my home premise. Please note that I will be the only person with access to any identifying data (i.e. signed consent forms). Signed consent forms, questionnaire results, interview audiotapes, transcribed data and any additional notes or drafts will be destroyed within 3 years from the date of completing your Self-Assessment for Introverts Questionnaire.

In addition to completing the thesis requirements, other planned uses of this data may include possible publication of research reports and papers in scholarly journals.

Data from this study will be disposed within 3 years from the date of completing the Self-Assessment for Introverts Questionnaire. Audio-tapes will be erased at Computer Services, written transcripts, notes, and drafts will be shredded through the University of Victoria confidential shredding, and all computer files will be deleted and back-up disks will be destroyed through confidential shredding services at the University of Victoria.

It is anticipated that the results of this study will be shared with others in the following ways: (1) a copy of the research report will be made available to you, the participant, if interested (2) the results of the study will contribute to a Masters of Arts thesis, (3) the results of the study will potentially contribute to a published article, and (4) the results of this study may possibly be presented at a professional and/or scholarly conference.

In addition to being able to contact me and/or my supervisor Dr. Geoff Hett at the phone numbers provided (refer to 'researcher and supervisor contact information' sheet), you may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Associate Vice-President, Research at the University of Victoria (250-472-4362).

Your signature below indicates that you give permission for your interview to be audiotaped.

<i>Name of Participant</i>	<i>Signature</i>	<i>Date</i>
----------------------------	------------------	-------------

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study and that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researchers.

<i>Name of Participant</i>	<i>Signature</i>	<i>Date</i>
----------------------------	------------------	-------------

A copy of this consent will be left with you, and a copy will be taken by the researcher.

Appendix C

Are you an Introvert interested in sharing your experiences as an introverted individual?

Then perhaps participating in a research project that aims at having those experiences heard is of interest to you.

I am a Graduate Student in Counselling Psychology at the University of Victoria, supervised by Dr. Geoff Hett. I am interested in the self-concept of those individuals who identify themselves as introverted within our society.

To participate in my project you must be:

- Between the ages of 25-34, male or female,
- Score as 'highly introverted' on a 30 true or false Self-Assessment for Introverts Questionnaire (please phone for further details)

If you might be interested and you fit the conditions above, contact me by phone or email:

Paula Remus

Telephone: 250-881-7442

Email: p.remus@telus.net

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE STUDY ENTITLED:

"The Lived Experience of Self-Identified Introverts: A phenomenological approach to understanding the essence of Introversion with respect to self-concept."

Individual Interview (Young Adults)

You are being invited to participate in a study entitled "The Lived Experience of Self-Identified Introverts: A phenomenological approach to understanding the essence of Introversion with respect to self-concept." The research team for this project includes Dr. Geoff Hett, a faculty member in Counselling Psychology at the University of Victoria and Paula Remus, graduate student. If you have any questions or concerns about the project, you may contact Paula Remus at (250) 881-7442 or p.remus@telus.net or Dr. Hett at (250) 721-7783.

Appendix D

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

For the Study - The Lived Experience of Self-Identified Introverts: A phenomenological approach to understanding the essence of introversion with respect to self-concept.

Conducted by Paula Remus.

A trait many Introverts have in common includes the preference to think about verbal responses to questions/comments, etc. before choosing to speak them out loud. If this characteristic is applicable to you, I wish to honour your special quality. You will find below a list of the interview questions I will be asking you during our interview together. The purpose of providing them now is simply to give you any additional time that you may require to reflect upon possible responses that you might wish to share. Further questions may be asked of you during our interview, but this will naturally occur as our interview unfolds. If you should have any questions or concerns, please feel inclined to contact me (please refer to RESEARCHER AND SUPERVISOR CONTACT INFORMATION sheet). I look forward to hearing about your introvert experiences!

Interview Questions

1. How did you first come to identify yourself as an introvert?
2. What does being an introvert mean to you?
3. Describe and express in as much detail as possible your experiences as a self-identified introvert.
 - For example (but not limited to) specific instances, situations, interactions with others, personal moments of reflection, etc.
 - This question is designed with the intent of giving you an opportunity to broadly explore your identification with introversion.
4. Take a moment to reflect on our past hour/two hours together. What, if any, new learnings/new thoughts, etc. have emerged for you regarding your sense of self and your introvert temperament.
 - For apparent reasons, this question does not require any prior reflection.



University of Victoria

Appendix E

Human Research Ethics Board Certificate of Approval

<u>Principal Investigator</u> Paula Remus Graduate Student <u>Co-Investigator(s):</u>	<u>Department/School</u> EPLS	<u>Supervisor</u> Dr. Geoff Hett	
<u>Project Title:</u> The Lived Experience of Self-Identified Introverts: A phenomenological approach to understanding the essence of introversion with respect to self concept			
<u>Protocol No.</u> 337-04	<u>Approval Date</u> 17-Sep-04	<u>Start Date</u> 23-Jul-04	<u>End Date</u> 17-Sep-07

Certification

This certifies that the UVic Human Research Ethics Board has examined this research protocol and concludes that, in all respects, the proposed research meets appropriate standards of ethics as outlined by the University of Victoria Research Regulations Involving Human Subjects.

Dr. Richard Keeler
Associate Vice-President, Research

This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above term provided there is no change in the procedures. Extensions or minor amendments may be granted upon receipt of a "Research Status" form.

337-04 Remus, Paula