

How do Adolescents Determine the Right Things to Do?

A Cultural Ecological Exploration of
Making Moral Decisions in the Lives of
Fifteen Grade Ten Students

by

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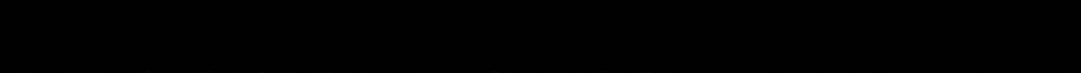
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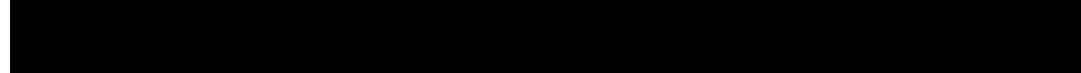
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Abstract

In this research, fifteen adolescents talk about activities involved in making moral decisions. Their words suggest that they use these decisions as expressions of an on-going experience of identity, and that this experience involves balancing personal freedom with societal responsibility. This experiential view of adolescent morality and identity highlights the importance of interacting with adolescents in a participatory manner. Such interaction honours two important aspects of an adolescent's experience: (1) the capacity to make autonomous contributions to their environments, and (2) the need for guidance and support as this capacity emerges within a culture undergoing significant changes in terms of the traditional sources of moral authority and information in our culture, i.e. family life and religious affiliation. Given these changes, educators are faced with a compelling need both to clarify their own role expectations with respect to moral issues and to create viable conditions that foster adolescent moral development.


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Chapter One

FOCUS, RATIONALE, AND ANIMATING BELIEFS

This research document focuses on what fifteen adolescent students have to say about how they make moral decisions. Because of this focus on their life experiences, I think that the names which these adolescent contributors have adopted for this research project should be known at the outset. Accordingly, here are the names of the people who have made this research document possible: Allie, Allison, Alexis, Becky, Charles, Janice, Joan, Mariah, Mari-Jane, Perrin, Rebecca Rose, Richard, Snow White, Terry, and Winnie.

Focus: On the Importance of Understanding How Adolescents Make Moral Decisions

A decision can turn out to be a day's expedition,
or a life's journey; that's what makes your decision so important.
(Mari-Jane)

Mari-Jane wrote the above comment at the top of a feedback letter sent to me as part of her participation in this research. Her words suggest that sometimes the significance of a decision is not limited to immediate circumstances. Not only does each individual bring a lifetime of experiences into the act of making a decision, but also each decision may become part of an individual's on-going process of self-discovery. Something that Mari-Jane told me about her own life experiences illustrates this connection between making decisions and developing an awareness of personal identity.

Until she was about ten years old, Mari-Jane spoke very little. "I was like mute," she told me, "like I would say, I'm hungry or whatever but, it

wasn't really important that I never talked to anybody." Then one day, at the dinner table, she began to talk at length because she didn't want her very talkative older brother to do all the talking. This event had important consequences for Mari-Jane in terms of understanding herself.

And ever since then it's kinda been like...I've never really had any *problems* with myself. So when I look at somebody else's problem it's kinda like, "Oh, I'll help you fix that one or whatever." Cause the problems with myself are like minor like, I got into a argument with my sister yesterday, and it was not very hard to go through (*the last words were spoken with a slight laughing tone*). But other people's problems: I like helping people.

While talking with me, Mari-Jane provided numerous anecdotal accounts of the joys and sorrows involved in helping others. These stories were not in response to specific questions: they arose spontaneously, as a natural part of how she talked about herself. When I suggested that giving so much support and assistance to others must be very tiring and asked her what she does to take care of her own needs, she replied by saying, "Well, I do it all for myself, like I, I like it: I like doing it."

Mari-Jane's awareness of herself as someone with a strong affinity for helping others can be thought of as an internalized understanding of self that acts both as a preliminary context for making moral decisions and as a continuing source of influence on how she expresses and renews the moral aspects of her identity. The other adolescents who contributed to this research by talking with me about their moral lives expressed a similar internalized self-understanding.

In brief, the thesis presented here is that the contributors to this research consider a moral decision to be a *freely-chosen* expression of who they are and who they want to become, i.e. as a functional and creative expression of an on-going experience of identity. Accepting such a proposition about adolescents draws attention to the importance of interacting with them in a participatory manner which honours both their capacity to make autonomous contributions to their environments and their need for continuing guidance and support as this capacity emerges within a culture undergoing significant changes in terms of the moral aspects of life. Although I believe this kind of participatory interaction is important in any context, the emphasis in this research is on its importance for educators.

A Rationale For this Research

By definition, moral activity arises out of that which induces people to behave or not to behave in ways that are considered acceptable by the culture of which they are a member. Adolescence is a critical period in moral development because it is a time when individuals experience many physical, cognitive, emotional, and interpersonal changes that significantly alter their interactive presence within their environments. In the midst of these changes, adolescents may have to contend with "contradictions between the moral concepts they have accepted and experiences outside their family and neighbourhood" (Santrock, 1993, p.437). Consequently, many adolescents may

"question their former beliefs and, in the process, develop their own moral system" (p.437).

This research explores the way fifteen adolescents develop their own moral systems. In part, it is motivated by the critical importance of adolescence as a time for moral development, but there is another equally important incentive, and that is the changing moral conditions of our contemporary North American culture. Because of a dispersion of moral authority and an increasing acceptance of moral pluralism in our culture, meaningful information about how adolescents experience their moral choices is a compelling research concern for psychosocial inquiry.

Such a concern is particularly compelling in the context of education. It takes only a casual acquaintance with the "news of the day," or a single discussion with a concerned teacher, to know that there is widespread unease about adolescent violence, and that many adolescents have personal difficulties that can seriously interfere with their readiness to learn. Furthermore, given the reality of multiple family lifestyles and an apparent decrease in religious affiliation, the two traditional promoters of moral development in our culture, (traditional family structures and religions), may no longer be adequate sources of moral information and authority. In this kind of a situation, school communities may be compelled to take a more active role in moral education. (By school communities I mean to imply, students, parents, teachers, administrators at all levels of the education process, school personnel,

concerned researchers, and anyone else interested in how young people are educated.)

Just as it is unwise to ignore substantial changes in one's physical and emotional well-being, it is unwise for school communities to ignore the changing nature of moral activity in our culture. Recently, I was reminded of the fact that educators need to be well informed about the kind of societal values that underlay certain adolescent behaviours if they want to meet the personal and educative needs of their students. As part of a research project I was involved with, a thoughtful, articulate, and concerned high school teacher described how, in her experience, a particular societal value (such as having enough money to purchase what one wants) can seriously damage an adolescent's capacity to learn.

Many, many students do not have sufficient sleep and have quite complex sleeping disorders. They come into your class and they're very, very tired. They'll tell you they can't work because they haven't slept for many, many nights. And the reason. Often it's because of their part time job, which translates as a need for money - a huge need for money. And why is there such a huge need for money? In order to drive cars. Almost every student in my class has a car and works a part time job, and works a 40 hour part time job. It's not just three nights a week.

It may seem like a strange connection - the need to drive a car and a lack of sleep that interferes with a student's ability to work effectively at school - but it illustrates the manipulative power of the values related to the consumerism of our culture, and it illustrates the need for both educators and adolescents to be aware of these and similar values because of the profound

consequences they can have on their moral lives.

Throughout my conversations with them, the adolescents who collaborated with me in producing this research continually reminded me that "morality is not a *subject*: it is life put to the test in dozens of moments...it's life affecting the views of people every day" (Paul Tillich, cited in Coles, 1986, p.16). Continually they reminded me that moral activity cannot be categorized as if it is merely the product of developmental events. More importantly, their descriptions of moral activity characterized it as a functional, developmental *process* embedded in the everyday experiences of life: experiences such as Rebecca Roses's decision not to eat for a week in order to lose weight, or Joan's carefully considered decision to lodge a complaint about unfair treatment at work, or Perrin's decision to withdraw from a group of schoolmates because of a perception that his "morals were under fire."

The more I listened to the contributors and the more I reflected on what they told me, the more I came to believe that a meaningful attempt to understand morality and moral development involves a willingness to accept the *complexity of life* as it is experienced by individuals. This willingness contrasts sharply with the more controlled, rationalistic approach commonly used to investigate moral development by means of examining categories of moral reasoning. Bandura (1991) suggests a reason for this emphasis on moral thought in the following remarks.

Most of the recent psychological interest in the domain of morality has centred on analysis of moral thought. The conspicuous neglect of moral conduct reflects both the rationalistic bias of many theories of morality and the convenience of investigatory method. It is considerably easier to examine how people reason about hypothetical moral dilemmas than to study their moral conduct. (p.46)

The emphasis on examining hypothetical moral thought that has characterized much of the recent study of moral development not only neglects the importance of moral conduct, as Bandura suggests, but also fails to convey the situational specificity and meaning-making capacity of moral reasoning. In effect, the exploration of hypothetical moral dilemmas amounts to an attempt to treat multi-faceted moral processes that are both functional (i.e. situational specific) and creative (i.e. meaning-making) as if they were discrete entities. Coles (1986) describes such attempts, somewhat sarcastically, in terms of "the categorical assurance of some theorists who have moral development all figured out, as if life were a matter of neatly arranged academic hurdles, with grades given along the way" (p.28).

Studies of moral development that focus on a controlled or experimental examination of rational processes have another serious limitation, and this is their lack of ecological credibility. Unfortunately, many studies that investigate the behavioral aspects of morality also use an experimental research design and share the same kind of limitation because they do not consider the real-life interactive context of the processes they are studying. Krebs (1983) observes that naturalistic studies of prosocial behaviours have made it clear that most of these behaviours "are inextricably bound with the context in

which the behaviours occur" and yet "the preponderance of research on prosocial behaviour is experimental", which involves "the necessity of extracting behaviours from their natural context" (p.347).

The above comments suggest that there is a need for more ecologically sensitive research information about adolescent morality, i.e. information derived from descriptions of real-life experiences and the meanings attached to them. The purpose of this research is to provide this kind of information by means of summarizing and reflecting on what fifteen adolescents have to say about how they make moral decisions.

Underlying this purpose is a belief that, although the words of the contributors to this research concern their individual experiences, their meaning concerns us all. Why? Because we live in a world where "there is no possibility of a detached, self-contained existence" (A.N. Whitehead, cited in Dossey, 1982, p.115).

During the time I spoke with the contributors, I kept a research journal and made the following entry about halfway through the initial period of interviewing. This entry concerned my impression that what I was hearing encompassed more than the "specific" events of individual lives and reflected thoughts and emotions that are a part of everyone's experience.

Thinking about my experiences over the last several weeks, I am amazed that the students who volunteered for this research project reflect such a wide spectrum of life. They are all so different, and yet there seems to be so much that connects them. It feels as if I have been given the opportunity to interact with a group of people who reflect the whole of life...like a holographic depiction, each person being capable

of reproducing the entire "picture."

In writing about a similar experience in the context of ethnographic research, Wolcott (1988) observes that a research story "should make a point that transcends its modest origins. The case must be particular, but the implications broad" (p.246). This observation is supported by many kinds of human activity, including the scientific, the poetic, and the religious. Contemporary quantum physics provides a rational context for it by asserting that "the central quality of the universe is a kind of oneness: the whole is contained in the part" (Dossey, 1982, p.109), and poets have been drawing attention to this kind of experience for centuries: "Locations and times - what is it in me that meets them all, whenever and wherever, and makes me at home?" (Walt Whitman, from *Leaves of Grass*). Also, the idea that the experiences of each individual reflect the experience of us all is certainly an aspect of the great religious traditions: for example, a basic principle of Buddhist doctrine is *Shih shih wu ai* which means "between every thing and event in the universe there is no boundary" (Wilber, 1979, p.39).

The research story contained in this document begins with the assumption that there are no "boundaries" in the universe and that, although the thoughts and emotions reflected in these pages are particular to a group of fifteen adolescent contributors, the implications of their thoughts and emotions reach into the lives of everyone.

Two Beliefs about Human Nature That Animate this Research

There are two interrelated beliefs about human nature that, taken together, activate and sustain the activities of this research project. Although these beliefs are implicit in what has been said thus far, they are made explicit here because they are important for understanding the observations and reflections contained in this research report. These beliefs involve each of the major aspects of individual-societal activities: individual experiences and interdependent relationships.

On the Importance of Understanding Individual Experience

The first belief that animates this research project is that the most ecologically credible way of investigating any human process is to try to understand individual experience. Essentially, this belief is reflected in the ethnographic approach to psychosocial inquiry which attempts to discern "how ordinary people in particular settings make sense of the experience of their everyday lives" (Wolcott, 1988, p.191).

Personal experience is the source of an individual's unique contributions to a society, and whether these contributions are considered beneficial or harmful, understanding them is an important part of understanding both the individual and the society. Individual differences are not *simply* anomalies, they are the sources of both the most destructive and the most creative aspects of a society.

Near the end of our second conversation, Winnie made an observation

about individual differences that illustrates why I think it is important to understand human processes through the medium of individual experience. "I don't think anybody can tell you what your morals or your values are," she said, "because everybody's different." A little while later, she reinforced this observation by describing morality as something "you make yourself." If Winnie's choice is something she makes herself, the meaning of her choice is contained in her own experience of it, and that experience is not susceptible to observation apart from her own interpretation of it. As Denzin (1989) suggests, "meaning is contained in experience" (p.91), which is why individual experience is the appropriate context for understanding the purposes that underlie a moral choice.

On the Importance of Understanding Interdependent Relationships

The second belief that animates this research project is that human processes are essentially expressions of interdependent relationships, and do not exist in any meaningful way prior to or apart from these relationships. These interdependent activities occur in the form of either the "internalization of external social experiences," or as the "externalization of internal psychological phenomena" (Valsiner, 1989, p.41). This interactional view of human nature precludes any deterministic conception of human processes, including genetic determinism, and considers the individual properties and competencies of a person's development to be the result of probabilistic coactions (Gottlieb, 1991; Lerner, 1991).

One of the major implications of this interdependent view of human nature is that whatever motivates an individual to act in a certain way always involves a coming together of different sources of influence. This is an appropriate perspective for an investigation of moral activity, because such activity is essentially a process that integrates both intrapersonal and situationally specific societal influences.

When making a moral decision, each of these primary sources of influence may involve a number of different kinds of activities. For example, intrapersonal influences may be in the form of rational and/or emotional experiences, such as when Becky describes making a moral choice as first of all "a gut feeling, and then when you get the gut feeling you really think about it." Societal influences may be in the form of specific cultural conditions or expectations, or time-and-location-related factors of the kind many contributors alluded to when they began their comments and observations with the words, "Well, it depends."

In summary: When an individual accepts, modifies, or rejects a moral standard as part of making a moral decision, he or she is responding to influences from both intrapersonal and societal sources. It is one of the main animating beliefs of this research project that these influences come together as part of probabilistic rather than deterministic coactions, i.e. as part of a process of interdependent activity.

A Brief Note about Naming the Kind of Research Described in this Report

Lofland and Lofland (1984) draw attention to the fact that "social science is a terminological jungle where many labels compete," and that "often...researchers simply "do it" without worrying about giving "it" a name" (p.3). Common names for the kind of research described in this report include naturalistic inquiry, interpretive inquiry, and qualitative research. Also, although it is not ethnography as would be practiced by an anthropologist, it has some similarity to the intellectual underpinnings of ethnographic approaches to research.

Ely (1991) discusses this issue of terminology and favours the use of the term "Qualitative Research" (p.3) to refer to methodologies which have *understanding a lived experience* as a central focus. Sherman and Webb (1988) describe this kind of research as follows: "qualitative implies a direct concern with experience as it is "lived" or "felt" or "undergone"... Qualitative research, then, has the aim of understanding experience as nearly as possible as its participants feel it or live it" (p.7).

This research project shares the same epistemological beliefs and values, and uses the procedures and organizational concerns that are implied by the above description of Qualitative Research. However, in naming the kind of research described in this report, I would like to emphasize not only the importance of understanding individual experience, but also the importance of understanding interdependent relationships (as reflected in these introductory

comments).

This combined concern is a major aspect of this research project, and expressing it implies a sensitivity to both the variety and uniformity of human activities as they are experienced within particular cultural contexts. For this reason I propose to call the kind of research presented here by a name that suggests the diversity and environmental interdependence that I believe characterizes all human experience, i.e. "Cultural Ecology."

In working to create this research document, I worked towards creating a reflective description of how fifteen adolescents described the activities involved in making their moral decisions. This description is essentially a reflection of how their individual moral identities emerge and develop within their environments, which can be thought of as the reflection of a particular kind of cultural ecology.

Because it involves what Smith and Heshusius (1986) call "a never-ending process...of interpreting the interpretations of others" (p.9), the work of a "cultural ecologist" results in the creation of a community of interpreters. This community includes not only a researcher and her or his co-researchers and contributors, but also readers and anyone else who may be affected by the people and activities associated with the research. To say that human activities are interdependent means exactly that: "we live our lives inscrutably included within the streaming mutual life of the universe" (Martin Buber, cited in Zohar, 1991, p.198).

The following observation is made in the context of "doing qualitative research" (i.e. Ely, 1991), but it accurately reflects the aim of a cultural ecology.

We work toward interpretive communities in which many different points of view are accepted. And, as researchers, we work to present the points of view of our participants, to see life through their eyes as well as our own, to attain that transcendent perspective which encompasses multiple interpretations. (Ely, 1991, p.220)

Chapter Two

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

MORAL ACTIVITY AS AN INTEGRATED EXPRESSION OF PERSONAL AUTONOMY AND INTERDEPENDENCE

Contributors to this research talk about making moral decisions both as a means of expressing a newly acquired ability and impulse to make independent decisions and as a means of enriching knowledge about themselves and others which they need to live in an interdependent societal environment. In doing this they depict moral activity as a developmental integration of cultural and individualistic processes. This integrated experience suggests that moral life is both a creation of particular cultural environments and a means of creating the dynamic interdependence that nurtures them. No individual theory about moral activity adequately reflects this kind of experience. Thus, in order to relate the information contained in this document to previous research about moral activity, it is necessary to construct a framework that amounts to a coalescence of various theoretical viewpoints about the nature of morality and moral development.

The first section of this review of psychosocial literature pertaining to morality amplifies the thought that a comprehensive theory of moral activity ought to integrate both affective and cognitive approaches to moral development, as suggested by several prominent researchers such as Gibbs (1991), Kagan (1984), and Rest (1983). The following sections discuss issues related to morality first in terms of interpersonal and then in terms of

intrapersonal processes that affect the moral activity of individuals and of the communities in which they live.

Integrating Affective and Cognitive Theories of Moral Development

Every decision to act in accordance with a perceived moral standard brings together personal, interpersonal, and situational influences in a unique way because our experiences reflect particular moments in time. Until a decision is translated into behaviour, it is impossible to determine what these influences are. However, because we are interdependent people and share common systems of communal and cultural interaction, making moral decisions involves common ways of organizing the various components of an experience. In the research literature of moral development, there are two major theoretical positions about how this happens: one emphasizes the application of cognitive and the other of affective processes.

Kohlberg's (1976) cognitive-developmental theory is the most widely used theory of moral development. It is an extension of Piaget's description of the growth of moral judgment through a succession of stages and suggests that there are three major levels of moral reasoning: (1) a preconventional level, with an emphasis on the avoidance of punishment and getting rewards, (2) a conventional level, with an emphasis on social rules, and (3) a postconventional level, with an emphasis on moral principles.

Each level has two stages which, according to the theory, follow one

another in an invariant and universal sequence. At the preconventional level, decisions of the first stage stem from the value of obedience to a more powerful authority and involve acts aimed at avoiding unpleasant consequences. Decisions of the second stage stem from the value of self-interest and include adherence to rules and agreements that are perceived as personally satisfying. The experience of conventional morality (level two) begins with a third stage in which decisions arise out of values related to the maintenance of close, mutual relationships, such as expressions of trust, loyalty, respect and gratitude towards family and friends. In the fourth stage, people extend these value-expressions into a larger societal context, and moral decisions stem from a "law and order" perspective. In the third (postconventional) level of moral reasoning, the source of moral authority shifts from being exclusively "outside" the individual and involves attaching importance to individual differences. Kohlberg calls the fifth stage a "social contract" orientation, implying that the regulatory conventions of societal life exist for the benefit of all and that, although they are essential for the maintenance of social order, they need not be considered binding if they become destructive and are perceived as seriously interfering with individual human rights. In the final stage of moral reasoning, the shift to an internal source of moral authority is achieved and moral decisions are self-generated expressions of universal ethical principles.

Kohlberg developed his theory by analyzing reactions to hypothetical

moral dilemmas about wrongdoing. Eisenberg (1986) used a similar approach to investigate moral reasoning in terms of the values underlying prosocial behaviour. She evolved five stages of prosocial reasoning: Thinking in terms of (1) self-focused consequences (hedonism), (2) the specific needs of another person, (3) gaining the approval of others, (4) an empathic awareness of others, and (5) strongly internalized values such as maintaining self-respect and believing in the dignity and rights of others. (She also proposed a transitional level between the fourth and fifth stages to reflect a less developed use of internalized norms.)

Although Eisenberg's theory predicts that, at least for young children, "prosocial reasoning is a bit ahead of their Kohlbergian reasoning" (Bee, 1989, p.454), in general it conforms with the major tenets of Kohlberg's theory. Both theories describe moral reasoning first in terms of self-interest, then in terms of interpersonal concerns, and finally as a self-generated expression of internalized values. Also, both theories suggest that adolescents rarely, if ever, achieve the higher levels of moral reasoning. This suggestion is not supported by the information obtained from the adolescent contributors to this research who indicated that they do have internalized values and attach considerable importance to experiencing their moral decisions as self-generated.

When people reason about a moral issue in preparation for making a decision, they use particular values or ethical constructions to guide them. Gilligan (1982) suggests that there are important gender differences in the

values which guide moral reasoning. She maintains that Kohlberg's emphasis on justice and fairness results from the fact that he studied mostly males. Her theoretical position emphasizes that girls are socialized differently than boys, and that an ethic of caring and responsibility for others is a more reasonable focus for considering the way girls reason about moral issues. However, research examining the issue of sex differences in moral reasoning offers little support for this position. Berger (1994) comments on this observation as follows.

Many studies in which males and females are compared find no sex differences at all. Those studies that do find differences confirm Gilligan's hypothesis to some degree: females do focus on interpersonal issues more than on moral absolutes - but the differences are not large. Taking a life-span perspective, it may be that females begin with an ethic of personal relations and males begin with an ethic of principles, but these different orientations converge with experience. (p.401)

Despite their obvious differences, the moral development theories of Kohlberg, Eisenberg, and Gilligan are alike inasmuch as they identify an individualistic reasoning process as the major activity involved in making moral decisions. In contrast, Martin Hoffman organizes his theory of moral development in terms of a process of enculturation, and "views empathic affect and related emotions as the basis for moral motivation" (Gibbs, 1991, p.183).

In answer to the question "where do moral motives come from," Hoffman (1991) replies "empathy" (p.276). He defines empathy as an affective response that is "more appropriate to someone else's situation than to one's own" (p.280), and because "empathic affects reliably dispose people to act on

behalf of others, it follows that empathic affects must be an important type of moral motive" (pp.275-277).

According to Hoffman (1991), there are "five hypothesized modes of empathic affect arousal" (p.277). The first three arousal modes involve behaviours that are largely involuntary and include circular reactions (described in terms of contiguous activities), conditioning, and mimicry. The fourth arousal mode is receiving another's verbal report, and the fifth is putting oneself in the other's place, both behaviours which involve more voluntary control because they require greater verbal and role-taking capabilities. Hoffman believes that the existence of these five arousal modes suggests that empathy is a reliable, self-reinforcing, and universally experienced way of responding to others in distress.

Because the subjective experience of empathy depends on the presence of social-cognitive abilities related to developmental conditions, Hoffman (1991) identifies four stages in the development of empathic affects. The first stage is one of global empathy and involves behaviours that simply match another's strong emotion, as when a baby cries when he or she hears another infant crying. The second stage, described as egocentric empathy, begins when children acquire object permanence and become aware of themselves as distinct individuals. Because of their limited interpersonal experience, children at this stage do not have reliable knowledge about the internal states of others and assume they must be similar to their own experiences. When children

develop role-taking ability and begin to understand how feelings in others may differ from their own, they reach the third stage: empathy for another's feelings. With increases in language and interpersonal skills, a child's role-taking abilities and her or his capacity to be empathically aroused encompass an increasingly wide range of emotions and involvement with abstract situations. Eventually, in the fourth stage of empathy for another's life condition, the ability to experience empathic concern can be extended to include the general life experiences of others.

In general, Hoffman's theory suggests that, as a child matures, empathic responses are "guided less and less by just the immediate, observed emotions and much more by his [sic] inferences or deductions about the other person's feelings" (Bee, 1989, p.438). This means that a developmental increase in the cognitive awareness and use of moral principles contributes substantially to the impact of empathic affects on the process of making moral decisions. Thus, "although empathy plays a primary role, cognition also plays an important role in Hoffman's theory of morality" (Gibbs, 1991, p.204). In the following remarks, Hoffman (1991) illustrates how the importance of considering moral decisions in terms of a co-occurrence of affective and cognitive responses may increase with age.

It should be clear that I do not view empathic affects as an adequate substitute for moral principles or that actions guided by empathic affects automatically qualify them as moral actions...Consider a doctor who cares for and goes out of the way to give all of his or her consulting time to a particular patient, but neglects others who are equally in need of attention. The doctor is obviously empathic and cares

a lot, to the point of setting aside personal needs, but I would have difficulty calling the behaviour moral. On the other hand...I do not go as far as Kohlberg and others who seem to consider acts moral only if they derive from moral principles. The issue is complex, and I do not have an answer except to suggest a developmental criterion. The doctor in question may not be acting morally, but a young child, who, out of sympathetic distress, goes out of his or her way to help someone although others in the vicinity also need help, may be acting morally. Developmental levels of morality, though not morality itself, may thus depend on cognitive development. (p.299)

As Hoffman implies, both cognitive and affective processes contribute to the making of moral decisions, but he clearly associates the importance of cognition primarily with the more mature levels of moral development, in contrast to Kohlberg, who emphasizes cognitive processes at all levels of development.

In keeping with Hoffman's observation, participants in this research project indicate clearly that both affective and cognitive processes are involved in their moral decisions and often speak about age-related increases in the cognitive aspect of these decisions. However, the fifteen participants differ among themselves in terms of attaching primary importance to either of these activities, and what appears to be the distinguishing feature of their moral decisions is the way they organize their emotive responses and thoughts into expressions of personal influence within particular situations. This kind of organization of experience suggests that an integration of Hoffman's and Kohlberg's ideas provides a more realistic theoretical orientation for moral decision-making activity than can be provided by either theory alone. Gibbs (1991) makes a similar suggestion.

Kohlberg was, and Hoffman is, open to the possibility of theoretical integration...As Rest (1983) asks, "What is an emotion disembodied from cognitive referents? What [are] ...thoughts without any feeling component?" (p.559). Although one can find in the literature arguments for both affective primacy and cognitive primacy, the most broadly encompassing stance is Piagetian: affect and cognition are inseparable; if anything is "primary," it is not "affect" or "cognition" but dynamic organizations of experience. (p.209)

The purpose of the following sections in this review of psychosocial literature is to amplify the above observation by examining two categories of experience that combine affective and cognitive activities into expressions of moral influence. The first category involves moral internalization processes and focuses on the inward flow of influence to an individual from her or his environment. The second category involves intrapersonal processes and focuses on the influence or potential for influence they have on an individual's cultural environment. These two categories are not meant to imply mutually exclusive experiences. The differences between them reflect complementary human processes and "can be dissolved if one steps back and considers individuals as *inseparable* parts of their social group, sociocentric from the beginning, yet influencing the group through the way in which their unique characteristics are integrated into the whole" (Graves & Graves, 1983, p.245).

Integrating Ideas about Moral Internalization

Psychologists have long been intrigued with moral internalization, probably because it epitomizes the age-old problem of how individuals come to manage the inevitable conflict between personal needs and social obligations.

(Hoffman, 1983, p.236)

Although initially we may conform to expected moral standards because of the demands of an external authority, the fact that we do not continue to experience these prescriptions as impositions means that they have been incorporated into our personal systems of motivation and self-regulation and have become part of how we characteristically conduct our interpersonal relations. This is what is meant by moral internalization.

The internalization of moral norms may occur at any time in a person's development, but during childhood it is particularly important because it functions as a "vehicle for the intergenerational continuity of values, culture and social order in families and societies" (Kochanska, 1994, p.20). To understand how externally generated moral norms become sources of self-regulation requires, I believe, a blending of ideas from both social-learning and attribution theories of human development.

In social-learning theory, moral conduct is "motivated and regulated by the on-going exercise of self-reactive influence" (Bandura, 1991, pp.44-45). This influence is built up throughout childhood by means of various social learning experiences such as "formulating personal standards, observing the benefits of self-regulation in others, initiating preliminary self-controlling

responses oneself, and estimating one's competence at self-regulation" (Perry & Perry, 1983, p.110). At the centre of this theoretical perspective is a belief that human agency must be considered in terms of reciprocal relations between individuals and environments. A person is not completely autonomous and not completely enmeshed in a mechanized existence (Bandura, 1989). In essence, a person is someone who interacts, and this means that personal cognitive and affective states are brought into all forms of interpersonal activity, including those of a moral nature. When these personal states conflict with the standards and norms dictated by an environment, moral self-regulation is necessary to avoid a serious rift in interpersonal harmony. Thus, from the perspective of social-learning theory, "self-regulatory mechanisms form an integral part of the conception of moral agency" (Bandura, 1991, p.46), and these mechanisms may be considered the means by which moral internalization is accomplished. In the words of a recent study of the development of guilt and conscience, "a child's early self-regulatory ability...may pave the way for the future development of internalized regulators of conduct" (Kochanska, 1991, p.1389).

But there is an important distinction to be made between moral internalization and behavioral compliance. Just because a societal code of conduct is the source of self-regulated activity does not mean that it has been assimilated into a person's interior or self-generated motivational system. It may be that such activity is still motivated by external factors such as a wish to avoid punishment or a desire for approval. Compliant behaviour is not the

same as internalized behaviour, and the distinction between them can be understood more clearly with the help of attribution theory.

Throughout a child's development, conditions that may be optimal for producing compliance may not be the same as conditions that are conducive to internalization (Lepper, 1983). Attribution theory avoids confusing these two conditions by focusing directly on "children's interpretations of social-control techniques applied to them and the attributions they make about their own behaviour" (p.312). By assessing these interpretations and attributions, distinctions can be made between actions that remain under external control (compliance) and actions originating from internalized norms of conduct. For example, from an attribution theory perspective, moral internalization may be inferred when a child expresses a specific intrinsic motivation to be good when conforming in the absence of external pressure to do so.

The integration of social-learning and attribution theory that underscores this discussion of moral internalization can be summarized as follows: principles of social learning theory account for the emergence and maintenance of the self-regulatory processes necessary for moral internalization, and attribution theory clarifies whether or not these processes are extrinsically or intrinsically motivated. From this blended perspective, moral internalization can be thought of as "a learning process by which children come to adhere to society's rules even when they are free of external surveillance or the expectations of rewards or punishments from socializing

agents" (Perry & Perry, 1983, p.105).

With this orientation in place, various aspects of the development of moral internalization can be considered as a way of exploring socialization effects on the way people make moral decisions.

Zigler and Child (1973) define the process of socialization as the gradual development of a child's "specific patterns of socially relevant behaviour and experiences" (p.36). The behavioral characteristics of children are the results of this process, in combination with genetic factors. However, these personal characteristics may be instrumental in shaping the socialization process itself. For example, two recent studies support the suggestion that a child's characteristic moral behaviour is both an expression of and a contributor towards her or his socialization experiences. Kochanska's (1991) longitudinal investigation of the "interplay of socialization and temperament in moral development" (p.1379) points out that a stronger internalized conscience in children may be the product of a socialization experience that combines low-power discipline methods with children who are more prone to fearful arousal. Conversely, a recent study of vicarious emotional responding and prosocial behaviour in children of kindergarten and grade two age indicates that mothers "may adjust their interactions with their children based on their perceptions of children's emotional tendencies" (Fabes, Eisenberg, Karbon, Bernzweig, Speer & Carlo, 1994, p.44), which suggests that individual characteristics of children may influence their socialization experiences in ways

that impact on their moral development.

My intention now is to discuss research about two individual characteristics which have particular importance in terms of socialization experiences related to making moral decisions: an internal locus of control, and emotional responsivity.

Internal Locus of Control

People with an internal locus of control believe that the outcome of their behaviour is contingent upon their own action, whereas people with an external locus of control believe the opposite, i.e. that their behavioral outcomes are not contingent upon their own efforts (Lefcourt, 1991). Belief that a particular moral outcome derives from an internal source implies that there is a relationship between thought, motivation, and action that is mediated by the exercise of a personal moral agency. In the terms of social-learning theory, this mediation is the exercise of a self-regulatory efficacy with regard to moral concerns, which means that an individual believes that he or she is capable of controlling a moral response. When this sense of efficacy is strong, people persevere in their self-controlling efforts and achieve greater success in resisting social pressures to violate their standards. Thus, they become more capable of attributing their behavioral outcomes to an internal locus of control. On the other hand, when self-regulatory efficacy is low, people are vulnerable to outside pressures for transgressive conduct and consequently more likely to make attributions of control to external sources (Bandura, 1991).

Although "there is evidence and theory to suggest that the perception of control may have important consequences for learning and adjustment from infancy" (Weisz & Stipek, 1982, p.251), the kind of locus of control associated with internalized morality requires a relatively long time to develop. Perry and Perry (1983) suggest that "children do not come to think of themselves as possessing generalized prosocial and moral traits until eight or nine years of age" (p.131). This is a reasonable finding considering the many abilities and tasks that children must acquire and perform in order to act in accordance with societal standards in the absence of external influence to do so.

In order for a child to obtain actual control over a given outcome, Weisz and Stipek (1982) propose that two conditions are necessary, (1) contingency, i.e. the outcome must be dependent on the child's behaviour, and (2) competence, i.e. the child must be able to produce the behaviour upon which the desired outcome is contingent, and for internalized, rule-based behaviour, the competency required is the ability to act as the source of behavioral control. Several studies suggest that the development of competency judgments is one of the on-going developmental tasks of childhood. For example, research examining the accuracy of children's self-ratings found that "correlations between children's self-rankings and more objective indices...increased from nonsignificant at lower age levels to highly significant at upper levels" (pp.273-274). Also, "repeated failure has relatively little effect

on ability attributions, persistence, or performance quality in younger (e.g., kindergarten) children, compared to its strong adverse effects on all three activities among older (e.g. fifth grade) children" (p.274). These results suggest that the competency judgments required for internalized morality emerge in middle or late childhood. From this perspective, moral internalization originates, typically, in externally motivated contingencies and develops gradually as children acquire the ability to generate internal attributions for conformity which may assume an increasingly dominant role in mediating moral behaviour (Perry & Perry, 1983).

Perhaps the most obvious externally motivated contingency during childhood is the discipline encounter, and a recent study suggests that the development of an internal locus of control contributes to the effectiveness of discipline as a mechanism for the internalization of moral values. Grusec and Goodnow (1994) propose that discipline encounters have an influence on moral internalization to the extent that children accurately perceive and accept the parental "message" contained in them. The authors suggest that one of the conditions that promote the acceptance of this message is the child's belief that the value in question "has not been imposed, but rather has been self-generated" (p.17), which implies that the child "actually discounts external pressure" (p.15). This suggestion links the influence of discipline encounters on the internalization of a moral value with the development of abilities to act from an internal locus of control.

An internal locus of control is implicated in another common externally motivated contingency of childhood: temptation. Dienstbier (1984) discusses research conducted with identical or same sex fraternal twins (thus allowing for some control of genetic and social background variables) which found that, in situations perceived as detection-free, childrens' emotional responses that were attributable to internal sources (i.e. their own behaviour) played a large, positive role in resisting temptation, as compared with emotional responses that were attributable to external sources.

Implicating an internal locus of control with resisting temptation and effective discipline encounters involves it with a negative aspect of moral activity, but it may be associated with prosocial behaviours as well. Piliavin and Charng (1990) report that, although many studies have found "inconsistent relationships between personality characteristics and prosocial behaviour...a few regularities do occur" (p.31), and one of these regularities is that people high in internal locus of control, self-esteem, and competence "appear to be more likely to engage in prosocial behaviours" (p.31).

In summary: The preceding information suggests that the development of an internal locus of control influences a child's internalization of moral norms through socialization experiences such as effective discipline encounters, resisting temptation, and engaging in prosocial actions. This information can be summarized in the proposition that a person's internal attributions for conforming to the values and norms of a society emerge gradually throughout

childhood as a function of increasing self-esteem and competency to act as a source of behavioral control for the activities related to those values and norms. The adolescent participants in this research provide support for this proposition inasmuch as they attach great importance to the interpersonal values of respect for oneself and others and describe their moral decisions in terms of autonomous activity.

Emotional Responsivity

In a recent analysis of the early development of conscience, Kochanska (1993) states that "anxiety, fear, arousal and discomfort are important mediators of the mechanism of internalizing prohibitions and indeed have been implied as powerful contributors to moral socialization and internalization in numerous approaches" (p.330). The following discussion outlines some of these approaches.

From a neopsychoanalytic perspective, internalization begins with the early affective communication between parents and their children. Researchers of this orientation suggest that anxious children may be more attuned and sensitive to the affective messages of parents, especially the negative ones, and that the internalization of rules of conduct begins early (Emde, Biringen, Clyman, & Oppenheim, 1991). If this is true, the beginnings of moral internalization may be very early indeed, because as Kagan (1984) suggests, "there are good reasons for believing that vulnerability to anxiety is a quality of some infants from the opening days of life" (p.59). In any event, "by age

three, the child's self is a moral self" (Kochanska, 1993, p. 326), at least to the extent that he or she is sensitive to the need for rules of conduct for effective socialization.

In addition to this evidence implicating anxiety with the very early stages of moral development, there is physiological evidence that links anxiety with conscience development. Lytton (1990) reports that deficiencies in the "fear/anxiety system" are associated with conduct disorder in boys. These deficiencies include a lower heart rate in fear arousing situations, lower skin conductance, and lower levels of neurotransmitters thought to be involved in the behavioral inhibition system. The finding that low levels of fear and anxious arousal are connected with conscience impairment suggests that higher levels of these characteristics may be important contributors to conscience development.

In a related study, Dienstbier (1984) provides evidence that links high emotional responsivity with positive social adjustment. He summarizes findings from three branches of research. In the first place, increases in adrenaline and noradrenaline, in the context of stress or challenge, were correlated with many positive characteristics of temperament and personality. Secondly, research involving various indices of the sympathetic nervous system (such as skin conductance and heart rate) found a similar connection between arousal and positive personality dimensions. Finally, several studies indicated that low "arousability" may be associated with psychopathic behaviour. Thus, he states

that "increased physiological responsivity, suggesting greater ease in the learning of emotional responses" may be "positively related to positive personality dimensions and to level of socialization" (pp.505-507).

In the same study, Dienstbier (1984) also proposes a specific relationship between anxiety and the internalization of moral norms. He suggests that anxious children may be more responsive to socialization than non-anxious children because they may experience the internal discomfort associated with transgressions more easily. In this analysis, anxious children are more likely to perceive their arousal as coming from the "inside" because they are prone to arousal even in the absence of parental directives. Conversely, children "with only a slight tendency to experience any negative emotional responses will condition poorly even in the face of strong socialization practices" - a condition that might induce "harsh and repressive measures from parents" (pp.504-505). In summary, Dienstbier suggests that anxious children are more easily socialized than non-anxious children and respond most satisfactorily to less power-oriented discipline strategies.

Kochanska (1991) tested this suggestion and found support for it. In this study, less power-oriented discipline approaches in toddlerhood predicted measures of internalized conscience six years later, but only for more anxious (in the sense of "fearful") children. In a related finding, the same kind of low-power parenting was associated with prosocial moral judgment in both young (5 years old) and older (7 to 8 years old) children (Eisenberg, Lennon & Roth,

1983, p.854). Thus, there may be a link between both the prosocial and the conscience-formation aspects of moral internalization via low-power child-rearing practices.

Additional support for the suggestion that high emotional responsivity may be an important aspect of moral internalization comes from a recent examination of temperament and social behaviour in children by Rothbart, Ahadi, and Hershey (1994). This study proposes that several temperamental characteristics are related to social development. Of particular interest for this discussion is the suggestion that anxiety, as a component of a characteristic called "negative affectivity", may be related to individual differences in a measure of "guilt proneness" (p.34).

Hoffman's (1983) analysis of the affective and cognitive processes in moral internalization offers a fascinating theoretical perspective on the relationship between emotional responsivity and moral development. He suggests that, if affective arousal is too low, a child may ignore socialization attempts, and if it is too high, he or she may store the information related to such an attempt (for example, a discipline encounter) in their episodic rather than in their semantic memory. Thus, if a discipline encounter is experienced by a child as too arousing, it may be coded and stored in terms of a specific event rather than in terms of a general concept (as would be the case with storage in semantic memory). From this perspective, children high in emotional responsivity might be expected to socialize more readily in response

to low-power discipline practices, whereas high-power strategies might be expected to produce deterioration in socialization (Kochanska, 1993). This speculation is yet another indication of how important it is to consider the quality of a child's emotional responsiveness when examining aspects of moral internalization.

In summary: The preceding information suggests that a capacity to respond emotionally to socialization experiences involved in the development of conscience and effective social adjustment has an important impact on the internalization of moral norms. If this is true, it is reasonable to expect that emotional responsivity may also be associated with making the moral decisions that arise out of these internalized norms. The participants in this research provide support for this suggestion inasmuch as they talk about their emotional reactions to moral situations as a major aspect of the way they accept value distinctions and decide whether or not to act on them.

Integrating Ideas about Morality as an Expression of Personal Influence

As the preceding section implies, socialization experiences have a major impact on the way people conduct their moral lives. However, understanding the way people make moral decisions requires more than a consideration of the effects of interpersonal activities on moral development (Kurtines, 1987). It also requires understanding the effects of intrapersonal processes on these interactions.

Many of the activities implicated in the development of principles that are used for moral decisions are also associated with developments in a person's internal ability to think in terms of concepts. The following section outlines some of the major developmental similarities between concept formation and moral development as a way of examining some important intrapersonal processes that affect the way people make moral decisions.

Similarities Between Concept Formation and Moral Development

Vygotsky believed that an important function of his psychosocial research was to make visible "processes that are ordinarily hidden beneath the surface of habitual behaviour" (Cole & Scribner, 1978, p.12). It was not enough simply to understand the effects of habitual behaviour on individual development. To achieve a practical understanding of a behaviour he had to acquire knowledge about its inner dynamics, about how an individual learned to organize and direct the behaviour in question (Vygotsky, 1986). One illustration of this belief was his informative investigation of how people develop the ability to think in concepts, details of which will be used throughout this section as a framework for examining parallel aspects of moral development.

Principles of Behavioral Organization

A major similarity between concept formation and moral development is that the mature forms of both processes act as organizing principles for an individual's activity which ripen during adolescence and may have antecedent

formations beginning in childhood.

When adolescents attain what Piaget called formal operational thought, they begin to use a "capacity to think in terms of possibility rather than merely concrete reality" (Berger, 1994, p.388). Virtually all recent, developmental research identifies this as a distinct change in their cognitive abilities (Bee, 1989). However, there is reason to suspect that this change "is not a radically different *kind* or *form* of thinking, but simply a new *level* of thinking, a new step in a sequence that began much earlier" (p.253). This observation corresponds with Vygotsky's (1986) thoughts about concept formation.

The development of the processes that eventually result in concept formation begins in earliest childhood, but the intellectual functions that in a specific combination form the psychological basis of the process of concept formation ripen, take shape, and develop only at puberty. Before that age, we find certain intellectual formations that perform functions similar to those of the genuine concepts to come. With regard to their composition, structure, and operation, these functional equivalents of concepts stand in the same relation to true concepts as the embryo to the fully formed organism. (p.106)

Just as conceptual thinking, as an organizing principle of thought, appears in its mature form during adolescence, the more advanced expressions of moral behaviour, which act as organizing principles of individual-cultural interaction, appear to ripen during adolescence. However, antecedent processes which involve aspects of both affective and cognitive development, such as the internalization of rules of conduct, may begin as early as the second year (Kochanska, 1993). Although Kohlberg's six stages of the development of moral reasoning are not specifically linked with age, the influence of

maturation on progress through these stages is also implied by basic developmental considerations. Berger (1994) expresses this thought in relation to adolescence as follows:

During adolescence every aspect of growth accelerates the progress of moral reasoning: biosocial development awakens drives and permits actions that were impossible before: cognitive development allows adolescents to think more deeply and abstractly as well as to question the moral strictures of home and church: social development exposes them to a variety of conflicting values: and personal experiences compel them to face ethical dilemmas. (p.398)

Qualitative Development

The remarks of the previous section suggest that developmental conditions during adolescence are such that it becomes increasingly possible for individuals to attain whatever potential they might have for conceptual thinking or the more mature levels of moral behaviour.

Although there is a developmental continuity in terms of expressing a potential for these activities, there are distinctive changes in the way this potential is expressed. A second similarity between concept formation and moral development is that, for both processes, the changes from one level to another are qualitative rather than quantitative in nature. This means that they involve the formation of new ways of structuring experiences rather an increase in previous capacities.

Vygotsky's (1986) study of concept formation reflects the idea of qualitative change by suggesting that "the way from the lower to the higher forms of intelligence, far from being simply quantitative growth, involves

radical changes" (p.109). These changes are characterized by a shift from the immediacy of elementary processes, which are basically associative connections, to more advanced operations that are mediated by signs.

The research literature on moral development also reflects the idea of qualitative change. In this literature, stage theories about the development of moral reasoning, as represented primarily by the work of Piaget (1932), Kohlberg (1976), and Eisenberg (1986), are the dominant influence, and these theories have in common a belief that development involves the "reorganization or the emergence of wholly new strategies or skills" (Bee, 1989, p.12). For example, Kohlberg (1984) clearly implies qualitative change when, in discussing social interaction experiences as "role-taking opportunities", he describes moral development as "fundamentally a process of the restructuring of modes of role-taking" (p.74).

The Coexistence of Early and Late Formations

Concept formation and moral development are similar in terms of a third developmental aspect: the possibility of a coexistence in an individual's behaviour of both younger and more mature formations of these processes.

Vygotsky (1986) compares the presence of developmentally different forms of intellectual activity in an individual to the presence of different rock formations in the earth's crust. He stresses the fact that "even after an adolescent has learned to produce concepts, he [sic] does not abandon the more elementary forms" (p.140) of thinking.

The belief that developmentally different levels of moral reasoning may coexist in an individual is contrary to Kohlberg's claim, which is supported by many others, that moral development proceeds in a universal, hierarchical series of stages, that is, invariably in an "upward" direction. However, there are challenges to this claim. In a study of moral reasoning and political ideology, Fishkin, Keniston, and MacKinnon (1973) report that "not one of the subjects studied employed moral reasoning that was exclusively rated at any single level of development" (p.114). Moreover, there are a number of possible conceptions of morality and moral development that differ sharply from Kohlberg's, such as those described by Phillips (1987) in the following passage.

Instead of conceiving of individuals as moving up a hierarchy, then, one could view them as perhaps randomly distributed between a number of relatively viable alternative positions, among which they move as they find reason to abandon one and adopt another. And it may even be the case that most individuals have come to adopt a stance endorsed by some "significant other"...Another alternative conception, based upon a paper by Henry D. Aiken with which the young Kohlberg was well acquainted, is that there are several levels of abstraction in moral thinking, and everyone uses all of these levels, adopting in a particular case the level of thought that seems most appropriate given the specific circumstances. (p.182)

Considering these observations, it is conceivable and perhaps even probable that "a person typically displays moral reasoning at several levels, not just at one stage" (Mischel, 1986, p.487), and many descriptions of moral activity provided by the participants in this research project support this claim. (Several examples of such "multi-levelled" moral reasoning will be discussed

later in this report, i.e. in Chapter Five.) Thus, the coexistence of different levels of developmental formations may be considered an aspect of moral development, just as Vygotsky considered it an aspect of concept formation.

The Integration of Analyzing and Synthesizing Processes

Another similarity between concept formation and moral development is that they both involve processes of analysis and synthesis.

Vygotsky (1986) describes the development of conceptual thinking in terms of two root processes, (a) thinking in complexes, which is a form of uniting elements (i.e. synthesis), and (b) forming potential concepts, which amounts to abstracting or signalling out elements (i.e. analysis). According to Vygotsky, in genuine concept formation "it is equally important to unite and to separate: synthesis and analysis presuppose each other as inhalation presupposes exhalation (Goethe)" (p.136).

A similar developmental perspective can be applied to processes related to moral development. For example, in presenting a constructivist model for the development of societal relations, Selman and Yeates (1987) suggest that two complementary themes develop: (a) one which stresses the need for autonomy and agency, and deals with self-other differentiations (i.e. analysis), and (b) one which stresses the need for intimacy and sharing, and deals with self-other integrations (i.e. synthesis). A similar perspective is found in the research of Berkowitz, Oser, and Althof (1987) which presents a model for transactive processes, (which are processes that are considered to be

antecedent formations in the development of genuine morality). In this model, different styles of interpersonal orientations are presented: some focus on behaviours that stress separation or autonomy (i.e. analysis), and others focus on behaviours that stress "connectedness" and integration (i.e. synthesis).

It is readily apparent how these two models, taken from research literature pertaining to moral development, reflect views that are similar to Vygotsky's description of concept formation in terms of analysis and synthesis. These models also reflect experiences described by the participants in this research. These experiences clearly show that they use their moral activity for two inter-related purposes: as a means of expressing a personal autonomy (i.e. making self-other differentiations / analysis), and as a means of maintaining effective interpersonal relations (i.e. making self-other integrations / synthesis).

Tools for Constructing Meaning

Yet another similarity between concept formation and moral development is that the mature forms of both processes are essentially meaning-making activities.

For Vygotsky, concept formation is an activity that uses the tools of individual intelligence and interpersonal discourse (i.e. thought and language) to create something that is not determined by these tools (Newman & Holzman, 1993). Thus, a genuine concept represents a new intellectual formation that is not determined by the processes that led to its development,

and once formed, it becomes "the main instrument of thought" (Vygotsky, 1986, p.139). Because it is an independent formation, a concept becomes a means through which an individual can shape or make independent relations with her or his environment. Thus, it becomes a means for making meaning. Newman and Holzman (1993) call this meaning-making ability a "revolutionary activity", and suggest that it is "what makes thinking and speaking uniquely human" (p.51).

There is much about the nature of mature moral behaviour which suggests that it is also a meaning-making activity. In advocating an interpretive/hermeneutical approach to the study of moral development, Schweder and Much (1987) propose that the origin of morality is in the messages and meanings of customary practices, and that morality is a personal construction that carries meaning for an individual. Viktor Frankl (1959) expresses this understanding in the following passage from his widely read book *Man's Search for Meaning*.

Values, however, do not drive a man [sic]: they do not *push* him [sic], but rather *pull* him [sic]...Now, if I say man [sic] is *pulled* by values, what is implicitly referred to is the fact that there is always freedom involved: the freedom of man [sic] to make his [sic] choice between accepting or rejecting an offer, i.e. to fulfil a meaning potentiality or else to forfeit it. (p.157-158)

Morality affects people through their everyday decisions about right and wrong, and it is only when the results of a particular choice are known, that is, only when an individual "can see and articulate the *meaning*" of the choice

that it becomes "a good or bad choice" (Zohar, 1991, p.182). From this perspective, it may be this capacity to create meaning that allows an individual to "grow" in accordance with genuine moral principles, and it may be this same capacity that links individual freedom and creativity. When an act is moral in this *creative* sense, "it is my logic which creates my choices, not my choices which create my logic" (p.179), which is another way of expressing what Vygotsky means by saying that genuine conceptual thinking acts as a primary instrument of thought.

The participants in this research project talk about their moral choices as freely-chosen expressions of who they are and who they want to become. These descriptions suggest that they use their moral choices both as a means of expressing autonomous moral identities and as a way of enriching knowledge about themselves as members of an interdependent community. Moral acts of this sort express both a detachment from environmental controls and a capacity to have an impact on external sources of influence. Such acts, then, have a capacity to create moral meaning.

If conceptual thinking and moral behaviour are essentially meaning-making activities, they are also *transitional modes of being*. The use of a genuine concept or a genuine moral principle signifies the end of a developmental process as well as the beginning of a new one, because old forms of thinking or behaving morally are replaced with new ones. It is certainly not surprising that conceptual thinking and genuine moral behaviour

become viable during adolescence, an age associated with transitional experiences in all aspects of development - biological, cognitive and psychosocial.

Summarizing the Similarities

The following comments summarize the similarities between concept formation and moral development. The mature forms of both processes are organizing principles of activity that ripen during adolescence and may have antecedent formations beginning in early childhood. Also, both processes develop through qualitative changes and may contain both early and late formations. In addition, analytical and synthesizing activities are implicated in the development of both conceptual thinking and genuine moral behaviour. Finally, the essential quality of both conceptual thinking and mature moral behaviour is a capacity to make meaning and to act as a transitional mode of being.

As meaning-making activity, a person's moral behaviour contributes to the development of societal norms, just as these same norms contribute to a person's moral behaviour through the social processes of internalization. In effect, morality is both a creation of human interaction and a means of creating it: "Each of us helps to write the morality by which we all shall live" (Zohar, 1990, p.178).

Moral Activity in terms of a Cultural Ecology:
Summarizing Ideas about Morality
as an Expression of Autonomy and Interdependence

In keeping with the ideas about morality and moral development described in this chapter, the participants in this research project talk about making moral decisions in a way that suggests their moral activity is a developmental integration of cultural and individualistic processes. This integrated activity does not appear to attach more importance to either affective or cognitive processes, which suggests that an appropriate theoretical context for understanding moral activity combines both major theories of moral development, i.e. Kohlberg's cognitive-developmental theory and Hoffman's moral socialization theory.

From a theoretical perspective, the cultural influences on moral activity stem from moral internalization experiences. Important aspects of these experiences include the development of an internal locus of control for value-related behaviours, and the emotional responsivity of individuals in events associated with the formation of conscience and effective social adjustment.

Also from a theoretical perspective, important aspects of the intrapersonal influences on moral activity can be understood by comparing developmental events linked to concept formation with similar events linked to moral development. These similarities suggest that both conceptual thinking and mature moral behaviour are principles of behavioral organization, develop in qualitative stages, contain both early and late formations, involves both

analyzing and synthesizing processes, and are essentially meaning-making activities.

An integration of the theoretical perspectives just described provides a framework for considering the subsequent information contained in this research document about how adolescents determine the right things to do (i.e. Chapter Four). This integrated view suggests that moral life is both the creation of particular cultural environments and a means of creating the dynamic interdependence that nurtures them: in essence, this depicts moral life in terms of a cultural ecology.

Chapter Three

METHODOLOGY

A KINSHIP APPROACH TO RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

To say that we are social beings is to state the obvious: that we live within communities that exist in a network of communities. But to say that we are *essentially* social beings is to state what might not be so obvious: that the social systems we make are not only products of collective human activity, they are also creators of it, because it is through our social acts that we become who we are. The work of George Herbert Mead (1956) is a powerful expression of this world view.

One has to find one's self in his [sic] own individual creation as appreciated by others: what the individual accomplishes must be something that is itself social. So far as he [sic] is a self, he [sic] must be an organic part of the life of the community, and his [sic] contribution has to be something that is social (p.278).

Because I accept this view of human nature, the organization and development of this research project reflects a belief that acquiring knowledge about human activity is essentially an act of co-construction. This belief entails an acceptance of what Bruner (1990) describes as "openmindedness," by which he means "a willingness to construe knowledge and values from multiple perspectives without loss of commitment to one's own values" (p.30).

Research that develops within this kind of conceptual environment reflects a kinship of research participants. In such an environment, knowledge emerges, not as an objective discovery or the confirmation of a preconceived idea, but

rather as the creative affirmation of a "participatory mode of consciousness," as the following passage describes.

Letting go of egocentric concerns, then, does not imply direct access to some "truth," but points to a merging into a larger and more complex reality in which reality is seen in ways invisible before...Concerns about truth and degrees of interpretation are replaced by positing a transformative process of merging, and then differentiation, which results in rethinking the boundaries of self and other in the knowledge of their permeability. Reality is no longer understood as truth to be interpreted, but as mutually evolving...*When one forgets self and becomes embedded in what one wants to understand, there is an affirmative quality of kinship that no longer allows for privileged status. It renders the act of knowing an ethical act...Mutuality and ethicality are at once embedded in a participatory mode of consciousness [italics added].* (Heshusius, 1994, p.19).

To accept that research knowledge is an expression of participatory consciousness is to acknowledge an interdependence between participants and researcher. From this perspective, researchers are people whose job is to produce "texts of experience that reflect their relationship to the worlds studied...to create multi-voiced (polyphonic), dialogic documents that express the interactions between the observer and those studied" (Denzin, 1989, p.91).

The following pages provide information about the people and activities that have led to the creation of this research document: In the first section, I outline the major design features of this research project, and in the second, I introduce its 15 student-contributors.

Enacting What I Value:
Events and Activities Associated with the Research Design

Shortly after deciding to begin this particular research project, I bought a book entitled "Doing Qualitative Research" (Ely, 1991). My purpose was to sharpen and augment my understanding of the procedural aspects of a research process that I felt already committed to from an epistemological perspective. What led me to choose this book was the fact that its format reflected this perspective. In effect, this book is a practical application of the belief that useful research information flows from shared experiences and that the procedures used to obtain this information ought to respect this belief. The book does this by creating a multi-voiced (polyphonic) text about a research methodology that combines the work of several authors with reflections from "student ethnographers" and "more advanced doctoral and postdoctoral researchers" (p.1). In using this kind of an informational texture, this book expresses an admirable congruity between methodology and purpose. In the final paragraph, the book's principal author emphasizes this congruity by depicting her personal commitment to the epistemological assumptions of qualitative research.

This book is not about research as set apart. It is very much about a way of life. In "doing" qualitative research we enact what we value. (p.232)

Although the epistemological context of research varies widely both within and among academic disciplines of inquiry, there are two major requirements for effective research practices: first, the creation of conditions

that optimize the accurate collection of research information, and second, the use of instruments and procedures that can provide an ecologically sensitive means of gathering and interpreting that information. Of course, the practical application of these requirements is linked to specific purposes. The purpose of this research is to talk individually with several adolescents about how they make moral decisions and to reflect and comment on what they say. This purpose implies that the important aspects of research design pertain to the activities of listening to, analyzing, and discussing the experiences of the participants. The following pages contain a summary of the events and a description of the procedures and techniques associated with each of these design features.

A Chronology of Fieldwork Events

The fifteen student-contributors to this research project were enrolled in a grade ten level course dealing with a variety of life-skills, social and developmental concerns, and "guidance" topics. Their involvement with this course meant that they were dealing with issues related to the topic of this research as part of their school studies. This fact moderated the intrusive impact of their participation because it allowed them to experience it as an extension of their daily activities, although it was made clear to them that the project was in no way associated with the school course. This 8-week course was given at a school with an ethnically diverse population of about one thousand students (about 25% native Indian) and which functions as the centre

for specialized needs education in a semi-rural area outside a large urban area on the west coast of British Columbia. For the purposes of this study, this school will be called K.N. Anthony High School, KNAHS for short.

There were two classes, each with 26 students, in this course: One class, taught by a teacher I will call Erin, had 6 female and 20 male students, and the other, taught by a teacher I will call Madison, had almost the opposite distribution, with 19 female and 7 male students. Of the 15 students who responded to the initial call for volunteers, 6 were from Erin's class (3 male and 3 female) and 9 were from Madison's class (all female). Although I had originally planned for only 12 volunteer-participants, I considered trying to augment the number of male participants but rejected this idea because there was no clear reason for doing so considering that previous research has failed to detect gender differences either in moral reasoning (Berger, 1994) or in prosocial responding (Eisenburg & Mussen, 1989).

Both teachers were known to me before beginning this research. I had worked with Madison on a previous research project associated with my University studies, and I have known Erin all her life because she is my niece. However, to my knowledge, there has been no mention of my personal connection with these teachers except for the fact that two participants (Charles and Perrin) were aware of my relationship with Erin (although it was never mentioned during any of our interactions).

I initiated contact with each class on the third day of the course. No

preliminary information about the research was given to the students apart from informing them about my arrival. The procedures involved in describing the research to both classes were the same. After a brief personal introduction, I spoke for about 10 minutes, outlining the most important features of the research in terms of the questions What? Why? and How? In addition to summarizing the purpose and rationale of this research project, I described, in non-technical language, the "philosophical" orientation of qualitative research methods and stressed the voluntary and confidential of the research. Also, I explained the necessity for having two interviews with each participant. Both groups of students appeared to be extremely attentive, and following my remarks, asked questions about such matters as the length of the interview sessions, what kind of questions I would ask, and how I would present the information. Before concluding my presentation I explained and handed out information sheets and consent forms (see Appendices A & B) to students who expressed an interest by a show of hands: approximately 10 in Erin's class and about 16 in Madison's class.

For my second visit to each class I prepared an interview schedule and attached it to a bulletin board. I asked students who were interested in participating in the project to sign this schedule beside their preferred time. The interviews were shown as half hour periods during the regular times for each class. I expected that students from each class would sign up during their own class times, but some did not do this. As a result, many of the time-slots

for students in Erin's class were already taken when they first had the opportunity to sign up for an interview. I avoided this problem for the follow-up interviews by having separate sign-up sheets for each class. However, this organizational mishap may have contributed to the relatively small number of male volunteers because Erin's class consisted primarily of male students and these students did not have quite the same opportunity to sign up for interview times.

The 30 interviews and follow-up sessions which provided the information for this research occurred during an 8-week period. In addition to participating in the interviews, I attended 14 classes (7 with Madison's and 7 with Erin's class) and made extensive observations about my experiences. Although these observations were not the principal focus for this research, they served two important functions: first, they provided information about the immediate school environment of the participants and they kept me actively engaged in descriptive writing.

The fieldwork activities were interrupted by a Christmas vacation which allowed me to transcribe the initial interviews and, by sorting and analyzing this material, prepare summaries of what each participant said and obtain a preliminary sense of the general orientation of the research information. In this way, the progression of research activities moved into a more "guided" form of collecting information, reflecting the constant comparative method of developing theory within a research setting (Glaser, 1978: Bogden & Biklen,

1992).

On the first day of classes after the Christmas break, I met briefly and separately with the two groups of participants in a small adjacent area to their classroom. I thanked them for their initial contributions, informed them about the progress of the research, and discussed arrangements for the follow-up interviews. Also, I handed out voluntary information sheets (see Appendix D) as means of giving them an opportunity to express whatever personal information about themselves they wished to provide. (These sheets were handed in to me at a later date and contained their own choices for pseudonyms to be used for research purposes.) The atmosphere at both meetings was very friendly and informal. Most students sat on the floor and there were some questions and conversational exchanges about their involvement with the research. However, there was no discussion of the content of the research information.

About three weeks after the completion of the follow-up interviews, I contacted all participants by letter (see Appendix E). My purpose was twofold: first, to thank each participant individually and to remind them that I would contact them again in order to get their reactions to my analysis and organization of the research information. Although they had not been told that they would receive anything for their contributions to this research, I included a \$25.00 book gift-certificate in each letter. These gifts were tokens of my personal appreciation to the participants and were not intended as inducements

to provide future comments on the research.

My next contact with the participants was about three months later when I sent them copies of an analytical summary of what they had told me and a "comment sheet" (see Appendix F). Although I asked them to reply to my request for reactions to this material either by mail or by phone, I decided to contact all participants by phone, and over a 2-3 week period I spoke briefly with each one about her or his reaction to the information I had sent. All participants responded with interest (and many with enthusiasm) to my call, and all sent in written reactions to the research information summary (see Appendix G: Feedback Letters).

Because I do not believe that research ends with the production of a research document, it is my intention to remain in contact with the participants about the progress of this research project (as several indicated they wanted me to do) for whatever period of time seems appropriate. In all my contact with the participants, it was my intention to act in a way that respected the fact that the information they were providing "belonged" to them. By respecting the participants' "ownership" of their contributions, the fieldwork events just described reflect a kinship approach to generating research information. The methods used to gather this information reflect a similar approach and are described in the following section.

Gathering the Research Information

Although no one can presume to tell someone's story or to express another's point of view with complete authenticity, it is possible to speak *to* another's story or point of view in a way that can be intellectually useful, and this possibility arises from research methods related to the concept of participatory consciousness (Heshusius, 1994) mentioned earlier. In terms of the research presented here, these methods involve information gathering techniques, such as keeping a research journal and interviewing, which require the researcher to be as "other-centred" as possible. These methods are described below.

I began to keep a research journal approximately two months prior to my initial contact with the participants of this research project. For me, the act of writing about particular topics or events has always been a means of learning about them. In addition, I have always considered writing to be a form of personal therapy, in much the same way that Tyler (1986) considers the writing of "post-modern ethnography" to be an "aesthetic integration" that aims "to restructure experience: not to understand objective reality, for that is already established by common sense, nor to explain how we understand, for that is impossible, but to re-assimilate, to reintegrate the self in society and to restructure the conduct of everyday life" (p.135). The following journal entry illustrates the kind of therapeutic restructuring of everyday experiences that can arise from journal-writing. It comes from a particularly hectic day just

prior to initiating fieldwork activities.

Trying to handle a lot of different items these past few days has reinforced for me the necessity of living in the present moment. This is a wonderful "technique" for relieving stress. Stress is "contained" (metaphorically) in the past or future. In the present there is simply that which can be done.

As implied in the above quotation, I used journal-writing prior to beginning the fieldwork of this research as a means of recording and reflecting on events relating both to the organizational aspects of the research and to what I was doing to prepare myself personally to be its principal, information-gathering "instrument." Writing about this preparatory work not only helped to refine my thinking about the technical aspects of this kind of research, it also helped me to witness my own feelings about doing it. For example, while reading about the interviewing experiences of other researchers, I came across a sentence in which the author described his role as an interviewer in terms of being an "intimate stranger" (Ely, 1991, p.68). This phrase had an immediate impact on me. In evoking a sense of mutual respect, trustworthiness, and responsiveness to particular individuals, it brought together the "other-centred" interviewing skills I had been reading about and the personal qualities I had been reflecting on into a focused personification of the kind of person I wanted to be in the research setting.

After fieldwork activities had begun, I divided my journal into two distinct parts: one part, which I called the research log, dealt exclusively with a descriptive record of fieldwork experiences, and the other part, which I

continued to call a journal, became more of a diary in which I felt "freer" to explore personal reactions to events. Although the style of writing in the log and journal differed, both documents contained notes that I categorized for future retrieval as contextual notes, methodological concerns, theoretical issues, and personal reactions. Because I value the insights of both non-evaluative observation and observation filtered by personal reflection, describing research events in both a "log-style" and a "journal-style" allowed me to feel less restricted in both activities and consequently more able to reflect a broader range of experiences with greater intensity.

A similar combination of detachment and involvement characterized the interviewing activities of this research. In addition to reading, reflecting on, and writing about qualitative styles of interviewing, my preparation for these activities involved carrying out several "mini-interviews" with some of my own teen-age students and family members who were willing to help me. One comment I found particularly useful was the suggestion that I make sure the participants know that they would be educating me. I think that this insight helped me to create an atmosphere of respect for the participants which allowed me to suggest topic areas when appropriate but leave the participants free to explore specific events or ideas in their own ways. To the extent that such an atmosphere was created, the interviews for this research reflected the ideals of participatory consciousness, ideals requiring both detachment and involvement in order to "temporarily let go of all preoccupation with self and

move into a state of complete attention" (Heshusius, 1994, p.17).

One of my major concerns prior to beginning the interviews involved the preparation of specific questions. Many of the young people and other researchers and teachers I spoke with during my preparations strongly suggested that I have "lots of questions" on hand because some participants probably wouldn't know what to say. However, in my own experience I have found that most people enjoy an opportunity to talk freely about something of interest to them, and they need very little encouragement to continue talking apart from active, other-centred listening. Initially, then, I did not want to prepare specific questions for these interviews because I did not want to impose my own agenda on them. Nevertheless, I followed the advice I received and prepared a series of open-ended questions to act as an interview guide (see Appendix C). However, I made every effort to prepare myself not to use these questions as a means of organizing the interviews, but rather as a means of refocusing them, should this become necessary, onto topic areas relevant to the research.

My principal concern about interviewing, then, was to create a comfortable interview-atmosphere in which the participants felt free to talk openly about how they make their moral choices. These efforts were successful inasmuch as all participants provided anecdotal material about the way moral choices fit into their daily lives, and some provided a great deal. However, as illustrated in the following entry from my research journal, I

found that having too many prepared questions too often resulted in a tendency "to lead" participants beyond what may have been required for providing them with support, encouragement, and overall focus.

I can readily see how having a set of questions "on hand" as it were for those people who don't have much to say does NOT help the participant say what is most meaningful to them. Rather, it can easily impede this. For example, when a participant has trouble expressing something, or expresses something in an ambiguous way, my tendency is all too often simply to go on to the next possible item. So, having the "ready-made" questions provides a "disincentive" to genuinely active listening and concern for the participants' words. I must learn to trust that "just being with them" in a concerned way is enough to promote right actions within me. Like many of the participants have said, mistakes are an important aspect of learning. So, I am seeing my mistakes paraded before me as I go through the interviews and I am learning from them.

Another potentially limiting aspect of my interviewing style during this research project was my tendency to use a lot of "closed" questions when trying to clarify what I had heard or trying to encourage participants to elaborate on their comments. On the other hand, my style of interacting with the participants encouraged them to talk about their experiences insofar as it combined a friendly, non-formal manner with an articulate expression of purpose, a perceptive "ear," and a sincere desire to hear what they had to say.

In general, much of what I learned about a kinship approach to gathering research information can be summarized in the following comments about an ethnographic approach to interviewing.

While some believe that the ethnographic interviewee can go in any direction, and that the interviewer is passive, nothing is further from reality. Actually, the interviewer knows the areas that need to be explored and sees to it that this occurs. It is how this is done that

defines the differences between an ethnographic interview and others. The key is that the person interviewed is a full partner in the endeavour and often provides the surprising and useful directions not allowed by other, more researcher-centred interviews.

The tasks of an ethnographic interviewer include providing focus, observing, giving direction, being sensitive to clues given by participants, probing, questioning, listening, amalgamating statements, and generally being as involved as possible. At their most useful, ethnographic interviews are interwoven dances of questions and answers in which the researcher follows as well as leads. Qualitative researchers have added their own twists to the meaning of "involved." (Ely, 1991, p.59)

All 30 interviews took place in one of two locations: in the portable classroom facility which housed the class from which the participants were drawn, or in a large classroom in the main school building that was unoccupied during the times scheduled for the interviews. Excluding preliminary and closing conversation, the average length for the initial set of 15 interviews was approximately 20 minutes and the average length for the follow-up sessions increased to about 26 minutes. Usually, two interviews were held on a single day. However, on some days, only one participant was scheduled. Consequently, there was considerable variance in the amount of time individual participants spoke. The longest session (with Mari-Jane) lasted 46 minutes and the shortest (with Allie), about 11 minutes - this brief duration necessitated by the participant's late arrival.

On some occasions it was necessary for me to go to a classroom in order to accompany the participants to the interview room, and this gave me an opportunity to speak informally with them before beginning the interviews,

although, of course, all interviews were preceded by a few moments of informal conversation. During the interviews the participants and I sat facing each other, either beside a long table or at two adjacent desks. The small tape recorder I used and my notebook or folder were placed to one side, not directly in view. On a few occasions there were interruptions from people wanting to come into the room, but invariably these were very brief.

I entered detailed notes in my research log for each interview, usually beginning them within an hour of completing the session. These notes included references to specific events before, during, and after each interview, along with descriptive comments about the demeanour of each participant which included mention of their posture, facial expressions, gestures, vocal characteristics, and general style of interpersonal conduct. Although much of this information is not directly expressed in this report of research activities, the act of making these notes allowed me to develop a personal awareness of and appreciation for the individuality of each participant. This appreciative awareness was a source of both information and inspiration during the several months I worked at sorting through, analyzing, and reflecting on what they had told me about their moral experiences.

My sense of the individuality of each participant increased dramatically as I worked at transcribing the interviews. I included in these transcriptions references to vocal inflections and pauses as well as all repetitions and vocal mannerisms (such as "ums" and "ah's"). Contrary to what I had expected, I

found this work completely fascinating for a couple of reasons. In the first place, it allowed me to become intimately involved with the informational content of the research. Secondly, perhaps because I am a trained musician and composer, I became totally absorbed in what I called in my journal "the music of natural speech." Often, I would replay sections of a tape just to hear the musical quality of the contributors's verbal style. Transcribing the words of each participant felt "very real" to me, and, in addition to experiencing the different styles of speech as individually "beautiful," I likened the work of preparing the interview transcripts to being "a gardener preparing the soil out of which things will grow."

When it came time to illustrate the various research observations described in the next section of this report (Chapter Four), I was confident that my enthusiastic involvement with the transcription process strengthened my ability to present the words of the participants in a way that reflected how they spoke at the interviews. Although these illustrations often exclude vocal mannerisms that occur at the beginning or end of a quoted passage, such mannerisms are never excluded when they are part of the "flow" of thought being illustrated.

My major concern when using the information gathering techniques and procedures just described was to be as ecologically sensitive to the research environment as possible. This does not mean that I tried to "capture everything" I was aware of in the research setting, because that would be

impossible. However, it does mean that I tried to collect much more information than I could actually use in the presentation of this research, because that would allow me to build my observations and reflections in the context of a wider personal awareness of the circumstances which gave rise to the research information.

Although writing from an abundance of information may induce confidence, no matter how detailed or abundant the written observations about a human activity may be, all such texts are partial expressions of what they depict, because they are expressions of a continually developing reality. However, it is the provisional nature of our understanding about ourselves and others which allows personal and societal growth to occur. Tyler (1991) makes this point in writing about a "post-modern" concept of ethnographic texts: "Every attempt will always be incomplete, insufficient, lacking in some way, but this is not a defect since it is the means that enables transcendence. Transcendence comes from imperfection not from perfection" (p.136).

Analyzing the Research Information

Reaching an analytical understanding of what the participants told me about their moral experiences involved several repetitions of a threefold process of sorting, coding, and categorizing activities, followed by a process of writing about these activities which included checking with the participants

about the accuracy and relevance of the written observations.

The first of the sorting-coding-categorizing processes occurred after I had transcribed the initial interviews and before organizing the follow-up sessions. Using my computer, I prepared two documents which could be used as convenient references throughout the process of analysis. The first document sorted the interview material into 18 topic areas, 7 of which involved concerns that were not specifically contained in the set of questions I had prepared as an interview guide. The second document outlined what each participant had to say about each topic.

With these references in place, I began coding and categorizing the interview material. A code may be defined as the description of a unit of information related to the research issue, and a category may be defined as a cluster of related codes, i.e. a pattern that reflects some regularity in the information. My main concern in writing the codes was to describe what the participants said in as non-interpretive a manner as possible, so as to minimize the potential for bias. Working with the research information in this way builds knowledge "from the bottom up" and reflects one of the principal aspects of ecologically sensitive social research which is that the "basic units of analysis are created by the persons studied, not by the observer" (Denzin, 1989, p.92).

The 73 codes which were derived from the initial interviews were put onto small pieces of paper and manually sorted into 11 categories over a

period of six days. These categories were further organized into three primary and eight secondary headings related to interpersonal, intrapersonal, and internalized influences on moral behaviour, all depicted by using the actual words of the participants. I used this initial analytical "picture" of the research information along with my reference documents to prepare individual profiles for each participant to use as guides for the follow-up sessions.

In addition to the above-mentioned categories, this initial analysis suggested four issues which subsequently became important research considerations. Very briefly, these issues were: (1) The presence of different levels of moral reasoning in the same individual (in opposition to Kohlberg's theory), (2) The issue of altruism, (3) What does it mean to have a conscience?, and (4) The importance of focusing on the process of making a moral decision rather than, or in addition to, the specific variables that contribute to such decisions. Although this last concern had always been the major focus of this research project, it was not until this point that I fully realized that concentrating too much on identifying the various influences that "go into" the making of moral choices might disturb the central focus of trying to understand the structural elements of the process of making them.

The second phase of analyzing research material occurred after I had transcribed the follow-up sessions and after a brief but much needed four day "holiday" from working on this project. I began this phase by re-reading all interviews, journal, and log entries. Obtaining an overview of the research

information in this way led me to the decision to redo the codes for the initial interviews in addition to writing new ones for the follow-up sessions. When this coding process was complete, I had approximately 750 individual codes which I put onto individual slips of paper (in addition to having them in my computer and as part of the research log). Writing these codes and sorting them into what I thought were usable categories took about six weeks. The categories and sub-categories were re-organized three times so as to reflect my ongoing familiarity with the material. I used large envelopes when organizing the coded information slips into categories. Each code had a reference on it to facilitate the location of its source. Unfortunately, I had not numbered the lines in the source material which would have made this location work easier.

Having obtained a workable categorization of what was said during the interviews and follow-up sessions, I extracted relevant selections from my journal and log and inserted them either into the established categories or into a collection of material associated with other aspects of writing about this research, such as potential introductory comments or theoretical and methodological issues. When this work was complete, I was ready to begin the next phase of analyzing the research information, i.e. writing about it.

As mentioned previously, I consider writing about something a principal means of learning about it. For this reason, writing about the codes and categories I had worked out was not merely an act of describing them: it was an integral part of forming an analytical understanding of them. From this

perspective, achieving an understanding of research information is a dialectic process which involves both analysis and description. Wolcott (1990) makes a similar observation when he writes that the link "between description and analysis in the written account is also dialectic - each process informing the other, each helping with the important work of reducing the detail, maintaining the focus, and moving ahead with the story" (p.50).

The initial process of writing about the codes and categories developed for this project took about eight weeks to complete. This work resulted in several important adjustments to the analytical depiction of the research information, reflecting the observation of Bogden and Biklen (1992) that "analysis continues into the writing stage" (p.183).

The final version of the analytical depiction of the research information is summarized at the end of this section. This summary associates three major "thematic aspects" with the process of making a moral decision: an initial phase of readiness, an behavioral phase of building and acting on personal moral standards, and a responsive phase of reflecting on a decision. Several categories of experience are also associated with each of these phases. This organization of information is similar in some ways to George Herbert Mead's discussion of what he called *the social act*. This similarity is expressed in the following words, which pertain to Mead's work, but which explain precisely what I wish to convey about how I think the various activities described in this research document exist in the everyday experience of the participants.

Although the...parts of the act sometimes *appear* to be linked in a linear order, they actually interpenetrate to form one organic process: Facets of each part are present at all times from the beginning of the act to the end, such that each part affects the others. For example, at the beginning of the act, images of later parts arise and influence the subsequent course of the act. (Baldwin, 1986, pp.55-56)

Despite the theoretical connection with Mead, as I wrote about the research material contained in this document my purpose was not to illustrate a theoretical perspective: rather, my purpose was to convey a sense of "real people doing and saying real things, seen through the eyes of another human observer" (Wolcott, 1990, p.49). In working with this purpose in mind, I was supported by strong feelings of respect for the participants which had emerged while talking with them and which deepened considerably as I lived with their words during the various stages of research activity.

Because I believe "it is an advantage to be able to view emotions as a source of strength and to be open to mining one's emotions for their intellectual lessons" (Ely, 1991, p.136), I offer the following excerpt from my research journal as a reflection of my commitment to portraying the information I received from the participants in a manner that respects their experiences.

I have now been involved with five of the follow-up sessions and my emotions continue to "run high" and enthusiastic about doing this kind of research. Listening to others empowers them. Respecting them allows them to be creative in the use of their own resources of intelligence, emotional sensitivity and spiritual awareness (and I use the word spiritual here in the sense of *how a person makes meaning out of the experiences of their lives*)...In thinking about what I am learning as I do this research, this thought came to mind - one doesn't have to read books by so-called great writers and thinkers in order to be inspired by

the insight and beauty of how people make meaning from their lives: it's all around. In talking with H_____ recently I realized how much I consider the participants in this research project "experts" ! They are experts. Their thoughts and words are beautiful and insightful. And this is something I think and feel, and these thoughts and feelings are part of my actions.

As I wrote about my analytical interpretation of what the participants had told me, I often discussed both its form and content with associates, friends, and interested family members. These discussions were a natural expression of my belief that "cognition is embedded within the social and cultural world" (Moll, 1990, p.ix). I did not feel the need to attach more or less importance to discussions with either academically-minded or non-academic people because I wanted my observations, in whatever form they took eventually, to be accessible to anyone interested in the topic of adolescent morality. Especially, I wanted these observations to be accessible to the participants. As a consequence of this, a major concern in writing the summary of research observations (i.e. Chapter Four of this document) was to write in such a way that the participants could understand and accept the observations as being a reflection of their experiences, and have a sense of participatory ownership of the material. However, the more I worked at writing out my interpretation of what the participants had said, the more I appreciated that, in trying to understand the experience of others, one comes into contact with an abundance of information and insight that applies to oneself.

If my insights hold for others, then the task of searching for meaning as one writes begins with the crucial task of discovering ourselves...and our understanding of others in the final analytic presentation can only be as profound as the wisdom we possess as we look inward upon ourselves...one can profit from trying to catch the meaning of one's own life when one strives to catch the meaning of the lives of others...To be personally passive in ethnographic research may be dangerous to the health of what you are doing. (Diane Garner, in Ely, 1991, p. 177)

A Summary of the Major Themes and Categories
Associated with Adolescent Moral Decision-Making

Theme One: Preliminary Phase

Being Ready to Make A Moral Decision:
Having a Sense of Knowing Who You Are

- Recognizing Personal Qualities
- Having Goals and a Purpose in Life
- Attaching Importance to Being Independent

Theme Two: Major Activity Phases

Building and Acting on Personal Moral Standards:
Making Moral Values Your Own

- Having an Impulse to Make a Value Judgment
 - Recognizing Personal Qualities You Would Like to Have as Your Own
 - Feeling Empathy / Understanding and Caring about the Experiences of Others
 - Perceiving a Lack of Moral Concern in Your Environment
- Making Value Judgments
 - Making Value Distinctions
 - Personal Ways of Thinking about Value Distinctions
 - Attending to Priorities
 - Attending to Consequences

- Family Influences on Making Value Distinctions
- The Impact of Social Life on Making Value Distinctions
- Accepting Value Distinctions
 - Personal Influences on the Acceptance of Value Distinctions
 - Learning from Mistakes
 - Responding to Feelings
 - Spirituality
 - Family Influences on the Acceptance of Value Distinctions
 - The Impact of Social Life on the Acceptance of Value Distinctions
- Choosing to Act on a Value Judgment
 - Making a Moral Choice as an Expression of Personal Influence
 - Making a Moral Choice as an Expression of Societal Influence
 - Altruism
 - Mutual Giving and Receiving / Value Reciprocity

Theme Three: Responsive Phase

Responding to a Moral Choice:

Having a Sense of Knowing Who You Want To Be

- Self-directed Learning from Making a Moral Decision:
Knowing Conditions You Want to Promote, Prevent, and Change

Reflecting the Research Information: Notes on the Credibility of this Research

Research that is credible provides a way of looking at a phenomenon that is either immediately or potentially useful to others. Because it is a focused effort to develop an understanding of something, a research process expresses the epistemological belief that animates it, and its utility for another flows from the other's acceptance of that belief. For this reason, the central issue of research credibility focuses on how a researcher constructs her or his understanding of the phenomenon of inquiry.

In positivistic studies, the relationship between a researcher and the phenomenon of inquiry is a matter of establishing a boundary between the knower and a "thing to be known," because in this epistemological view, knowledge is conceived in terms of objectivity. Borg and Gall (1989) describe this approach as one in which "knowledge claims about the world are not meaningful unless they can be verified through direct observation of the world," and such observation requires a separation of the observer and the object of observation: "the researcher's values, interpretations, feelings, and musings have no place in the positivist's view" (p.17).

In research that arises from the kind of cultural-ecological perspective described in this report, there is no boundary between the knower and the known because their relationship is a matter of interdependence. In this kind of endeavour, researchers accept that "multiple ways of interpreting experiences are available to each of us through interacting with others, and that it is the

meaning of our experiences that constitutes reality," which means that reality is "socially constructed" (Bogden & Biklen, 1992, p.34). A cultural-ecologist recognizes "no separation of facts and values" and no "prospect of independent access to an independently existing reality" (Smith & Heshusius, 1986, p.9). Like contemporary quantum physicists, cultural ecologists recognize reality as "a web of dynamic relationships that include the human observer and his or her consciousness in an essential way" (Capra, 1982). Interpretation is the methodological heart of this approach, just as it is in the phenomenological approach described by van Manen (1984) in the following comment.

The point of phenomenological research is to "borrow" other people's experiences and their reflections on their experiences in order to better be able to come to an understanding of the deeper meaning of significance of an aspect of human experience, in the context of the whole of human experience. (p.55)

In light of the above words, the purpose of this research project is "to borrow," from a group of adolescents, their observations about how they make moral decisions in order to come to an understanding of how they interpret these activities. Such an understanding would then become a voice in a continuing, creative discourse about the nature of morality, moral development, and the adolescent experience. In terms of contributing to psychosocial research literature, the credibility of this voice depends on the credibility of the written document that expresses it. This credibility depends on two conditions: first of all, if the material of the research document resonates with a reader's epistemological conceptions, and secondly, if this

material is accepted by concerned readers as a trustworthy evocation of the experiences it describes.

Many criteria have been suggested for establishing the trustworthiness of research documents that aim to reflect the experiences of others (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Ely, 1991, among others). My belief is that such trustworthiness stems from four interrelated conditions that connect researcher, participants, and readers in an on-going process of interpreting a particular human phenomenon in a way that they consider valuable. These conditions are appropriate authenticity, ethicality, thoroughness, and intellectual viability. Each of these conditions is discussed briefly in the following few paragraphs.

Appropriate Authenticity

Because individual experience is a unique event, no reflection of it can ever be entirely authentic. However, we are culturally embedded people who live in communities and share common structures of communication and cultural interaction. Thus, with appropriate feedback from those who provide the research information, a researcher can convey a reasonable expectation of authenticity in reflecting the experience of others. In situations where the participants are willing and able to comment on the content of the research information, appropriate authenticity involves the sanction of this material by the information contributors, i.e. "when source respondents [like people who provided the information] agree to honour the reconstruction" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.329).

In this research, such agreement was obtained on two occasions: during the follow-up sessions which focused on corroborating and elaborating on what the participants had said during the initial interviews, and about four months later when I sent each of them a summary of my analysis of all the research information and asked them to respond to it. The details of their reactions on each of these occasions are provided in the following section (where each participant is introduced) so that readers can judge for themselves if these reactions constitute an affirmative response to the content and organization of the research information.

Ethicality and Thoroughness

In addition to appropriate authenticity, two other indications of the trustworthiness of a research document include the ethicality and thoroughness of the research activities. These two conditions are related inasmuch as the ethics of ecologically sensitive research involving others entails a flexible approach to methodology, and this flexibility implies that thoroughness is not so much a matter of completing a set of pre-determined procedures as it is a matter of being both responsive and responsible within the context of an emergent process. These qualities are expressed most directly through the major activities that generate and communicate the research observations, and they can be inferred by readers who follow the "trail" of activities and observations as described by a researcher.

However, there are two issues pertaining to the thoroughness of this

particular research document that may not be immediately obvious by following this trail of information, because they are incorporated within the general flow of textual material rather than treated as individual concerns. These issues are (1) the so-called "negative cases," and (2) the limitations associated with the research.

Ely (1991) describes "negative case analysis" as "the search for evidence that does not fit into our emergent findings and that leads to a re-examination of our findings" (p.98). In this research document, information that does not appear to "fit" into the general pattern of activities being described is presented as *a part of* the overall depiction of these activities. Because a cultural ecology implies an acceptance and appreciation of both similarities and differences, this research honours the presence of human diversity and does not separate what might be called the "non-typical" from the "typical" experiences. Thus, the use of the term negative cases is not appropriate in the context of this research. However, the presence of "special cases" is mentioned throughout the presentation of the research observations, and is even taken for granted in the sense that, ultimately, every individual is a *unique* expression of whatever phenomenon is being investigated.

There is an obvious illustration in this research project of a so-called negative case being in reality a very special case. Two of the adolescent contributors to this research project (Charles and Perrin) expressed a very strong allegiance to their Christian beliefs, and they spoke frequently about

these beliefs in ways that made it clear they were the central focus of their lives. In talking with them, many issues relating to spirituality emerged that were not a part of my conversations with any of the other participants. However, these issues are incorporated into the main body of research observations because they belong there, not as negative cases, but as very striking expressions of moral activity.

Another issue that pertains to a research document's thoroughness concerns its discussion of the limitations associated with the research activities. Apart from the fact that information is always limited, (because knowledge of any phenomenon can never be complete), the limitations of research practices are ultimately associated with a reader's assessment of the overall credibility of a research document, because the actual activities of the research have no "life" for a reader apart from the document that communicates them. Thus, I believe a researcher fulfils her or his responsibility towards discussing the limitations of a research project by producing a document that is *credible* in terms of its authenticity, ethicality, thoroughness, and intellectual viability. Any document that has these four qualities incorporates both an implicit and explicit awareness of how its own information fits into existing knowledge, and by doing this it expresses both its limitations and its usefulness.

With regard to ethical concerns, I would like to draw attention to a particular indication of responsive and responsible research practices: namely, the occurrence of some kind of personal change within the researcher and

participants. When a researcher accepts the involvement of participants as active co-researchers, he or she accepts the responsibility of working with them so that everyone involved in the process may become, or at least may acquire some potential for becoming, "increasingly knowledgeable, active, responsible, and, therefore, increasingly liberated" individuals (Ely, 1991, p.229). In subsequent sections of this report, there will be several indications of the kinds of personal change that occurred, both in myself and in some of the participants, as a result of participating in this research project.

Intellectual Viability

A fourth indication of the trustworthiness of a research document is its intellectual viability. Because this research project considers individual experience as a starting point for working towards an understanding of a particular human process, it follows a course of inductive analysis and reasoning. Exploring facets of reality in this way has been a part of human activity for as long as it has been recorded. Not only is this method of reflective comment on experience at the root of artistic contributions to our common understanding of reality, but also the roots of empiricism are in the use of inductive processes. These processes create knowledge first of all "by studying a specific case in great detail and then comparing it with other cases studied in equally great detail" (Erickson, 1986, p.130). Documents that communicate this knowledge are intellectually viable when they have heuristic value, i.e. when they make, or have the potential to make, the implications of

specific "cases" relevant in a broader context (Wolcott, 1988). Relevant information about a psychosocial process is information that has social applicability, and it is only through a reader's response that such application can occur. Ultimately, then, the intellectual viability of this research document depends on its capacity to influence another, to make a difference.

Research Credibility: A Summary

In writing about ethnographic documents, Tyler (1986) describes ethnography as a "meditative vehicle" (p.140) that accomplishes its work in terms of a "functional interaction of text-author-reader" (p.132). This kind of interaction is at the heart of my conception of research credibility. In the first place, if a research document is credible it is functional, i.e. it makes a connection between itself and a reader that conveys useful information. Furthermore, the utility of this information derives in part from an epistemological agreement between the researcher and reader, and in part from a determination of trustworthiness on the part of the reader, which in turn derives from assessing the document in terms of its authenticity, ethicality, thoroughness, and intellectual viability.

In considering this research document as a "functional interaction between text-author-reader," its credibility stems not so much from being "a record of experience" as from being a "means of experience" (Tyler, 1986, p.138). In this way, the kinship between researcher and participants which generated this document is extended to include those readers for whom its

information is a meaningful interpretation of how adolescents make their moral decisions.

Introducing the Participants

Towards the end of writing the initial version of the research observations contained in this report (Chapter Four), I had a visit from my sister who teaches at a community college and with whom I had been discussing this research project since its inception. After reading some of what I had written, she said to me, "You are not doing this research, they [*meaning the student contributors*] have done it for you already."

My sister's comment reminds me of the enormous gratitude I feel whenever I think about the participants of this research project. Without exception, they were extremely cooperative, courteous, generous, and in my opinion, insightful as they talked about the thoughts, feelings, and experiences associated with the moral aspect of their lives. In the subsequent chapter of this report, their own words will introduce them much more adequately than I am able to do in the brief descriptions of them offered here. However, I hope these descriptions will provide at least a "glimpse" into some of the personal and environmental characteristics and situations that animate their lives.

Allie

At the time of our conversations, Allie was a 15 year old student who lived with her parents, both of whom worked, two younger sisters, and a dog. On the voluntary information sheet, she described herself as a "friendly,

generous, understanding, fun, and social" person whose interests include, dance, water sports, and travel. At several points during our conversations, Allie mentioned her wish to become a dance teacher, as well as a successful business woman. Also, many of her comments indicated that she enjoys being with people. My general impression of her during the interviews was of a cheerful, sociable, conscientious individual.

During one of the classroom sessions I attended, the members of Allie's class filled out a "perfectionism scale" as part of preparing a "Career Inventory Sheet." I overheard Allie telling someone she thought she would probably "score high" on this scale. She did. However, Allie may also tend to be somewhat forgetful, as she was quite late for our first interview and late in sending in her feedback letter (although she was very apologetic for both incidents).

Allie's feedback letter contained two references to specific aspects of the research information: her strong belief in the importance of "learning from your mistakes," and her belief in the importance of establishing "a sense of *ownership* for our moral actions." Her letter also indicated that, although she found the information I sent her "a tab bit hard" to understand, she "really enjoyed and found it interesting to be included in this project."

Allison

Allison described herself on the voluntary information sheet as "fun and outgoing and a loving person." She identified her career goals in terms of

being either an actress or a psychologist, and wrote that her main interests were "friends, shopping, volleyball, skiing/snowboarding, baseball, and hockey."

Allison was 15 years old at the time of her participation in this research and lived with her parents "and sometimes an uncle." Both parents worked, and her father's occupation required him to be away quite often. When he was home, Allison said that they spent a lot of time together and that they were "like best friends."

During our conversations, I had the impression that Allison would not be reluctant to "speak her mind" about any topic that interested her, and she appeared to be very "open" about her life experiences. However, she did not elaborate freely on what we talked about or initiate new areas of discussion.

In the classroom situations I observed, Allison was usually quiet and task-oriented, although her interactions with other students during joint classroom projects (such as preparing a poster about sexually transmitted diseases) appeared to be very self-assured and at times energetic.

In her feedback letter, Allison wrote that the research information "sounds very close to what I was thinking and feeling," and added that she thought she "learned a little more about myself and my feelings." Also, after mentioning that she is "glad" that she participated in this project, she wrote, "Maybe it would be a good idea to organize something like this for all students. It helps to be more open about the feelings."

Alexis

Although at one point Alexis described herself to me as being "very stubborn" and on another occasion as being "outgoing, energetic, enthusiastic, and fun," my major impression of her overall demeanour was of a very "gracious and poised" individual who interacted with others in a relaxed, unhurried manner. When she told me that her interests outside of school included studying ballet and piano, I was able to identify a source for this impression of natural ease and poise.

Alexis did not identify any specific career goals, but described her immediate goals in terms of doing "as well as I can" in all her current activities. On the voluntary information sheet she returned to me, she listed these interests as "dancing, acting, drawing, helping people, and running." As for helping people: this characteristic was reinforced for me by observing her interactions with myself and others, and from her comments during our conversations.

Alexis was 15 years old at the time of our interviews. She lived with her parents, both of whom worked, and a younger brother she described as "learning-disabled." During our conversations, she spoke very fondly of her family, and in particular talked about how living with her brother has been a source of insight and inspiration for her in learning to deal with value-related decisions in her life.

As part of her response to the research information, Alexis wrote that

she could "relate to it very easily" and that she thought "the material presented was very true, realistic, and right." She added the following comment: "I only answered the questions you asked me because I feel what you are doing is very important. I think it's wonderful that you are asking our input about the project."

Becky

At the beginning of our first conversation, Becky said that she was a "bit nervous." However, at no time during our interactions did she seem reluctant to talk about the issues we were discussing. In fact, the opposite was the case. Although her comments and observations were usually quite brief, they appeared to be the product of a very "focused" intelligence, i.e. she seemed to be able to identify and comment on the most important aspects of an issue quite quickly. On two occasions when we spoke apart from the interview situation, I had the impression that Becky thinks a great deal about the issues related to this research project. However, in her feedback letter, she wrote, "this study really made me think about things I don't usually think about, but are important."

Becky was 15 years old and living with her parents and a younger brother at the time of her participation in this project. Her father worked and her mother "helped out" at the same place of business where Becky herself had a part-time job. On the voluntary information sheet, Becky described herself as "energetic, imaginative, and ambitious" and as someone who "likes people a

lot." Also, she identified her major interests as "acting, making movies, reading, writing, science, palaeontology, and anthropology," and her career goals as being directed towards either palaeontology or the movie industry.

During my casual encounters with students around the school I learned that Becky has "a bit of a reputation for being late," and for being somewhat forgetful.

Becky's feedback letter indicated that she found the summary of research information enjoyable and "easy to read." Also, she mentioned that, since participating in the interviews, her "style" of making moral decisions has changed, from one that relied heavily on a "gut instinct" to one that involves more thought.

Charles

Throughout our conversations, Charles identified his Christian beliefs as the central focus of his life. On the voluntary information sheet, he described his goals in the following way: "To grow spiritually, mentally, and physically, that I may be a good influence and respectful to others." Also, he listed his main interests as "music, sailing, basketball..and the social atmosphere of friends," and described himself as "a tall, self-motivated student, sometimes quiet but not shy."

Charles turned 16 years old just prior to his second conversation with me and lived with his parents and a brother and sister. His father worked and he described his mother's occupation as "artist/housewife."

At our first meeting, Charles said that he would "probably be nervous" during the interview, and although many of his responses contained "false starts," he did not appear to be reluctant to talk about the issues we were discussing. Quite the opposite, in fact. After this initial meeting was "officially" over, Charles continued to talk with me for about 10 minutes in a friendly, animated way, and during our follow-up session, he appeared to be more relaxed.

In his feedback letter, Charles was more critical of the research information than any of the other participants: although he did write that he enjoyed the opportunity to share his beliefs and moral values, and that "for the most part," the "organization and content appears to be very good." One criticism focused on the organization of the information which he found to be "a bit cluttered." Also, Charles objected to placing an emphasis on adolescent independence (although when he talked about his Christian beliefs, he placed considerable emphasis on free-will). I think Charles' main concern focused on the erosion of moral values in our society, and the "haziness" of distinctions between right and wrong.

Janice

Janice gave me a strong impression of being lively and outgoing. She was easily the most talkative, interactive member of Erin's class, and her enthusiastic manner of talking with others extended to her conversations with me. During both of our sessions together she spoke with great animation,

openness, and apparent ease, often accompanying her words with large physical gestures (such as swinging her head back and running her hands through her hair). On many different occasions she offered spontaneous descriptions of herself, such as being someone who is "headstrong" and who "loves getting into heated discussions," and yet also someone who is not really open with others about her feelings.

After each of our conversations, Janice remained to talk with me for several minutes. She asked several questions about the procedures involved in the research process and was the only participant who said that she would like a transcript of her interviews.

On the voluntary information sheet she gave me, Janice described herself as "athletic, social, friendly, and energetic," and listed her main interests as "basketball, soccer, rugby, and volleyball." The goal she identified concerned playing basketball on a University team.

Janice turned 16 years of age just after our second conversation, and was living with her parents, a sister about her own age, and a younger brother.

In her feedback letter, Janice made a number of contrasting remarks about the research information. On the one hand she wrote, "it is kind of hard for me to relate my own experiences to it...because I may have changed since the interviews," and "it was kind of hard for me to understand." On the other hand she wrote, "I loved participating in this project...I felt so much like I

knew myself better," and expressed a strong agreement with the principal summary statement contained in the report.

Joan

At the time of her participation in this project, Joan was a 15 year old student who lived with her parents, both of whom worked, and an older sister, with whom she was very close and who was about to move away in order to attend University in another part of the country. On the voluntary information sheet, Joan described her principal interests as "reading, writing stories, sports, and old movies." She had a job that appeared to take up a large part of her non-school time, and identified her career goal as a desire to become an elementary school teacher.

During our interviews, Joan spoke without any hesitation and considerable "fluency" (i.e. without a lot of vocal mannerisms), which projected an aura of self-confidence. At times, she spoke in what I would call a very "determined" manner, i.e. with a lot of emphasis, both in her tone of voice and in the way she leaned forward and looked more directly at me. Both before and after our sessions together, Joan asked several questions pertaining to the research project, and her manner in doing so was always very "open and friendly."

On the few occasions I was able to observe a classroom situation, I noticed that Joan was one of the students who consistently asked questions about whatever issue was being presented or discussed, although in general,

her attitude in the classroom was relatively quiet.

In her feedback letter about the research information I had sent, Joan wrote that she "had a lot of fun" participating in this project and that, although "maybe a few things" about the information were surprising, for the most part she "found many of the things" she had said were reflected in the report. Joan added a comment that reflected a sense of "common ownership" of the research information among the participants: "The info. that I gave seems to show a lot in your writing, and though it is not only what I said, it is great that *we mostly got our point across [italics added].*"

Mariah

Throughout my two conversations with Mariah, her interest in sports was very evident. Also, on the voluntary information sheet, she indicated this same interest by identifying her career goals in the following way: "To graduate, become a pro physiotherapist, play soccer and sports all my life." Other than sports, her interests included "singing, listening to music, socializing, friends, family, and reading books of supernatural things." Mariah described herself as "easy to get along with, down to earth, laid back, always laughing, having fun."

During our two sessions together, Mariah spoke with an extremely quiet voice - at times quite difficult to hear. Also, she often appeared hesitant about making a comment or response and frequently made a gestural rather than a verbal response, i.e. nodded or "shrugged." By the end of each of our

sessions Mariah appeared to be "warming up" to participating more comfortably in our conversation, and I had the impression that she had much more she wanted to say about the topics we were discussing.

Mariah's very quiet and somewhat nervous attitude at the interview sessions appeared to reflect her manner of interacting in a classroom. On the few occasions I heard her speak to others in a classroom setting, her voice was practically inaudible. Also, I noticed that her teacher responded to her in a much quieter voice than she normally used.

Mariah was 15 years old at the time of this project and lived with her parents and a brother. Both parents worked.

When I spoke with Mariah on the phone prior to receiving her feedback letter, she indicated that she was in considerable emotional distress. We spoke for awhile and she told me that she was receiving professional attention. In view of this situation, I was particularly grateful to Mariah for consenting to read the research information I had sent her and provide me with some feedback comments. These comments indicated that she could relate to the experiences depicted in the information, and that she "found the synopsis very effective." However, she suggested that my summary would have been better if it had contained more concrete examples so as to clear up some points of confusion. She referred to our conversations as "kinda in a way like a counselling session," and added that this "was fine, because "lots of people let out things that were bottled up:" comments which were probably influenced,

at least in part, by her personal situation at the time.

At the bottom of her feedback letter, Mariah drew a happy face symbol and a flower.

Mari-Jane

My conversations with Mari-Jane could have gone on "for hours" were it not for daily scheduling constraints. Mari-Jane spoke with great ease and fluidity at a relaxed pace, and she always illustrated whatever she said with examples from her daily life. I had the impression that she could not talk about anything without referring it to her relations with others. Although her contribution to this research material is extensive, Mari-Jane told me a great deal more than I was able to use in this report.

Although Mari-Jane described herself on the voluntary information sheet solely in terms of her physical appearance (i.e. "5 foot 2, black hair, brown eyes, medium size, round face"), she was very generous in providing spontaneous self-descriptions throughout our two conversations. These descriptions include the following characteristics: "loves helping people...very independent...loves to do things to perfection (when she "gets around to it)...has limited energy....hates computers." She listed her interests outside of school as "playing sports, and going out with my friends," and within the school environment as "drama and musical theatre." Her career goals were to "graduate, become a RCMP officer, and go on to a higher legal position, such as parole officer or investigating officer, etc."

Mari-Jane was 16 years old at the time of her participation in this project. Her father, a native North American Indian, and her mother (who is "white"), were divorced several years ago. Mari-Jane, along with a younger brother and sister, lived with her mother (a University student), and her mother's boyfriend, while an older brother and sister lived with her father and his girlfriend. Mari-Jane talked at great length about her family history and its present situation. However, what she told me cannot be described in a few words. Over the years, a great number of people have lived with her family, and she told me that these family-related experiences have contributed greatly to her ability to help people.

In her feedback letter, Mari-Jane wrote that, although "the presentation was a very long read for a person my age," she "found that the paper made a lot of sense" and that she could "fit a lot of it into my everyday life." Her closing comment was that she "would like to receive more information sometime" and that she would be "more than happy to write" me again because she feels "very lucky" to be able to help me.

Perrin

Perrin's strong allegiance to his Christian beliefs was evident during all my interactions with him. On the voluntary information sheet, he described his interests as "Church, rockets, Ping Pong, books, cars, hiking, sports, and humanities." He identified his goals by writing "To live a full life that meets

my potential." Like Mari-Jane, Perrin responded to the "self-description" part of the voluntary information sheet by listing some of his physical characteristics, i.e. 6'3" ... 158 lbs., brown hair, green eyes. Also like Mari-Jane, Perrin's comments to me during our conversations contained many references to his everyday interactions with others.

My impression of Perrin prior to meeting with him individually was of a friendly, exceptionally courteous, conscientious, and serious-minded student. However, his manner of talking during our conversations was often quite animated. Sometimes he would pause slightly before responding to an observation or question, as if carefully considering his response, and at other times he responded very quickly. Very often, the pace of his speech was extremely fast. During our second session together, Perrin was particularly "bright and cheerful," which at the time was important to me because, on that day, I had a very sore eye and could hardly see, which made me feel somewhat disoriented. I remarked in my journal that there was "something about Perrin's attitude that made me feel comfortable despite the fact that part of me felt like I was stumbling along."

Perrin turned 16 years old shortly after our first conversation. He lived with his parents, two brothers, and a sister. His father worked, and he described his mother's occupation as a former teacher but "now a domestic engineer."

In his feedback letter, Perrin wrote in some detail about his reactions to

the research information I had sent to him. In general, he expressed agreement with this information and many of his comments will be used in subsequent sections of this report. He summarized his reaction by writing "You have done the observation and compilation of my input and that of the other contributors in the project most effectively. Personally, I would like to thank you for allowing me to participate in your research. It has been considerably inspirational by helping me identify the reasons behind my decisions, and therefore gain an understanding of who I am. May God bless you in development and completion of your project."

Rebecca Rose

Rebecca Rose was the first participant I spoke with as part of the interviewing work of this project. She came to this first session despite the fact that she was not feeling well that day (and had considered not coming to school), and despite the fact that it was scheduled for 7:30 a.m.! As expressed in my journal, my major impression of Rebecca Rose was of someone who was "not reluctant to say exactly what was on her mind." She never hesitated during our conversations, spoke quite rapidly, often initiated comments on her own, and asked several questions about the research project before and after each interview, and in general seemed eager to be a participant.

Rebecca Rose was 15 years old at the time of our conversations. Her parents were divorced when she was 7 years of age and she lived with her mother and a younger sister. On the voluntary information sheet, she indicated

that she had a part-time job and that her principal interests were cooking, Steven King books, camping, shopping, and her boyfriend. She identified her goal as "to become a restaurant owner."

During my classroom visits, I noticed that Rebecca Rose was one of the most verbal and physically interactive students in the class, especially in terms of socializing with the students around her (invariably male). At one point during our conversations she had told me that she would be "happy to do away with school," but that while she was there, the Guidance class was "the best class."

In her feedback letter, Rebecca Rose wrote at some length about her reactions to the research information I had sent her. She wrote that I had under emphasized the fact that "when people make decisions they don't really think about it." Also, she drew attention to the fact that the "spirituality part" of the report did not apply to her in anyway. Otherwise, she expressed agreement with the information and wrote that she had "learned a lot myself because I never thought about why I make decisions."

Richard

Richard was 15 years old at the time of his participation in this project and lived with his parents, both of whom worked, and a younger sister. He identified his school interests as "science and computers," and his outside-school interests as "chess, badminton, baseball, role playing games, computers, science, and space." His career goal was to "study physics and

eventually get into space." Richard described himself on the voluntary information sheet as "thoughtful, reflective, fun loving, idealistic but procrastinating," and during one of our interviews he mentioned that he was "shy" and "not outgoing."

My impression of Richard prior to meeting with him individually was of a very conscientious, task-oriented student who worked very quickly at classroom activities and assignments. During our conversations, however, Richard spoke very slowly. Although he appeared to consider his comments very carefully, he spoke with considerable fluency and clarity of expression, often emphasizing particular words or phrases. His overall demeanour was invariably courteous and friendly.

Richard's feedback letter was the first that I received. He wrote that he thought the information was organized "in a very clear manner," and that he found in it "many of the things" that he had mentioned during our conversations. Also, he made the following observation: "It is interesting that the things I said were mentioned by many of the people you interviewed." One of the points that impressed him was the fact that many of the participants, like himself, thought that they had more of a concern for moral issues than the people around them. Richard also wrote that he enjoyed participating in the project and "especially liked getting this kind of feedback" (i.e. the summary of research information I had sent).

Snow White

During our first conversation, Snow White sat with her legs tucked up on the seat of her chair (i.e. in a "lotus position"), and during our second conversation, she sat mostly with one leg up on her chair with her arms around her knees much of the time. She appeared to be very much "at ease," and spoke in a fairly quiet, but distinct tone of voice, at a relaxed pace. Although her general attitude was friendly and open, at times she appeared hesitant about elaborating on specific comments or observations she had made. On two occasions she commented that she had some difficulty in expressing the thoughts and feelings she was experiencing.

Snow White was 15 years old at the time of our meetings. She lived with her parents, both of whom she identified as being artists, and a younger brother. An older brother was away at College. On the voluntary information sheet, she described herself as a person who likes "the woods and short men" and "hates apples." Also, she wrote that she is a "very open, self-confident, kind, humorous, interesting person." Her main interests were identified as acting, drama, visual arts, playing the piano, the outdoors, hiking, canoeing, and most especially, "working with kids." Snow White also wrote that she belonged to "a multi-cultural, anti-racism group." Her goals were expressed as follows: "I would like to travel (backpack Africa especially) and have a career where I can work with people."

Although very brief, Snow White's feedback letter indicated her

agreement with the research information I sent her, along with her impression that it summarized "many individual's qualities, personalities, and traits." Also, she mentioned that the research topic "is a fascinating" one and that she would like to be kept informed about the progress of this research effort.

Terry

Terry was 16 years old at the time of her participation in this project. During our first conversation she told me that she had withdrawn from school the year before, and shortly after our second conversation I learned that she had withdrawn from school for a second time. When I heard this information, I phoned her, and although she was not talkative, she did reply to all my questions and provided me with the kind of information that I obtained from the other participants by means of the voluntary information sheet. She chose not to select a pseudonym for herself, so Terry is the name that I have given to her.

Terry told me that she lived with her mother and that her principal goal was to finish High School by correspondence. She also told me that she had a job and that she was very interested in "sketching." When she described herself as being "shy, straightforward, and stubborn," I was a little surprised because these were not the personal qualities I would have expected from what she had told me about herself during our previous conversations, which included references to such qualities as being "an adrenalin junkie," and liking "to party, smoke, drink, and stay up late," as well as "having a bad temper"

and being willing "to do anything for a friend."

When I spoke with Terry during our first session together, she appeared to be hesitant in responding to my initial questions and comments but gradually "warmed up" to our conversation. She spoke in a very low voice and often quite rapidly, so that portions of some of her remarks and comments were imperceptible. Just prior to meeting with her for the second time, Terry mentioned that she had been up all night. Consequently, she appeared to be very tired throughout our conversation and did not initiate many comments and observations on her own. However, I noticed that, after our session was over, her level of attentiveness decreased dramatically, indicating to me that she had made a sincere effort to be attentive during our conversation.

Terry's feedback letter mentioned that she found the research information both "easy to understand" and enjoyable to read, and that she could relate her own experiences to it. Also, she mentioned that she thought it "covered almost everything about how we make decisions," and that she would "enjoy reading the whole thing" (i.e. the finished report rather than just the summary I had sent her).

Winnie

On the voluntary information sheet, Winnie described herself as "friendly, happy, cheerful, honest, sensitive, and understanding." Other personal qualities, which emerged as part of our conversations, included being "very opinionated" and an ability to tell if someone needs help.

Winnie was 15 years old at the time of our meetings. She lived with her parents and a younger brother, and told me that she also had an older half-sister. Winnie identified her main interests as drama, dancing, baseball, acting, music, roller-blading, skiing, and finding new interests. She identified her goal as "to achieve something I'm proud of."

Although I had a slight impression that Winnie felt a bit "tense" at the beginning of our first conversation, this impression evaporated shortly after she began to speak. Winnie talked with great ease and in considerable depth about every issue that arose during our time together. I had the impression that we could have spoken for hours. Her conversational style was very animated, with many different types of verbal emphasis, such as changing the pace of her talking and the use of an almost "sing-song" quality of voice.

Winnie's feedback letter indicated that she could relate to the experiences contained in the summary of research information I sent her, and that she found this information well organized and "easy to understand." Another comment she made was that her participation in this research project made her "think a little more as to where and how exactly I make the decisions I do."

A Final Introductory Comment

Everything that has been said in this document up to this point has been an introduction to the following chapter which contains the "heart" of this research project: a description of what the participants told me about the way they make moral decisions.

In writing about ethnographic texts, Tyler (1986) remarks that such texts are not "objects:" rather, they are "a means", i.e. a "meditative vehicle for a transcendence of time and place" (p.129). In keeping with this "poetic" vision of ethnographic research, the following sections of this report are offered in the hope that they will be read "not with the eyes alone, but with the ears in order to hear the *voices of the pages [italics added]*" (136).

Chapter Four

A REFLECTIVE SUMMARY OF WHAT THE PARTICIPANTS SAID
ABOUT HOW THEY MAKE MORAL DECISIONS

In brief, my response to all that the participants in this research project told me is that they consider their moral decisions to be *freely-chosen expressions of who they are and who they want to become*. This response implies that these decisions are both a means and a product of their on-going efforts to forge a personal identity. As a means of identity formation, their moral choices involve activities that reflect an ability and impulse to make independent moral decisions, and inasmuch as these choices become part of an evolving compendium of information and understanding about the self, they are also the products of identity formation.

The participants talked about making moral choices in terms of several different kinds of activities associated with three main phases in making a moral decision: (1) having an impulse to make a value judgment, (2) actually making such a judgment by both making and accepting value distinctions, and (3) by choosing whether or not to act on a value judgment. These main activities are preceded by an experience of self-knowledge that expresses their readiness to make a moral decision, and may be followed by a reflective response that expresses an experience of knowing who they want to become.

The following pages contain summaries of what the participants said about each of these activities and the various experiences associated with each.

Preliminary Phase

Being Ready to Make a Moral Decision: Having a Sense of Knowing Who You Are

Although the process of making a decision may begin at a certain point in time, each individual brings a lifetime of experiences to the occasion. Before a person accepts, denies, ignores, or adapts particular values as part of making a moral decision, he or she has an acquired self-awareness that provides a more or less stable starting point for making that decision. For the participants in this research project, having this self-awareness is an important aspect of their readiness to move away from a condition of interpersonal dependency and towards more independent (and eventually interdependent) functioning in their particular environments. They expressed this experience of *knowing who you are* in three major ways: as a recognition of personal qualities, as an expression of purpose, and as attaching importance to being independent.

Recognizing Personal Qualities

Basically in every decision you make...the way you are, like your personality is just there, I mean you can't change it really...and that's just, it's just the way you are and everything you do is gonna relate to your personality, it's gonna be, your personality is gonna show up somewhere in everything you do. (Joan)

Near the beginning of our first conversation, Joan told me about a recently made decision to lodge a formal complaint about unfair treatment she had received from a manager at work. In her own words, she "really had to

think hard about that one because, on one condition I didn't think I had to put up with that, but on the other hand I didn't want him to find out that I had done that and then be harder on me." In talking with her further about this episode I learned that Joan was "very nervous" about making this decision because she considers herself "not really outgoing in those kind of situations." However, she did make the decision, which implies that she recognized her nervousness as a condition that she had to overcome in order to honour her values of fairness and self-respect.

Joan's story illustrates how a perceived need or desire to lessen the impact of a personal characteristic might affect a person's readiness to make a decision about values. Such readiness may be influenced just as much by a perceived need or desire to increase a personal characteristic. Richard observed how, in getting older, his gains in self-confidence allow him to be more certain about whether an action is right or wrong.

A lot of it's a self-confidence thing too...most of the things I do I know if they're right or wrong, and earlier in life, you know some things are sort of like a grey kind of thing, so you don't really know. But now you basically know if they're right or wrong to some degree, but it's a case of having the will-power not to do it or doing it...

Snow White, expressed a similar opinion about the desirability of having self-confidence. Here is her perception of the most important personal qualities she has received from her upbringing.

The most important thing...Mm...I think...it would be self-worth, like, the realization that like I am someone, I can help other people, I can do lots like, even though I'm not like athletic or like, stuff like that, there's stuff I can do and, like I am a person, I have feelings...cause I

think if you don't have like a lot of self-confidence or feel you don't deserve stuff or something, I just think it's not healthy, you know like...you're gonna wind up messed up later on...you're gonna get taken advantage of or something.

There are, of course, any number of personal qualities that people may be aware of and that may have an impact on their readiness to make moral decisions. Here are two additional examples. Winnie described herself in part as being very "opinionated" and said that if she doesn't like or agree with what someone has to say, she will listen to it, but probably not take it into consideration. Also, Janice admitted that, despite having an outgoing personality, she is not really open to others about her feelings.

For one participant, Charles, his sense of self expressed itself not as much in particular qualities as it did in one particular kind of experience, i.e. his relationship with God which he described as "a very personal relationship."

Sometimes a participant's self-understanding expressed itself in terms of knowing how he or she would act in particular situations. Allie said that she would not give advice to people about something she is unfamiliar with, and Perrin observed that he would defend his Christian beliefs even if his actions provoke trouble for himself or ruin his image or reputation.

Some participants expressed an internalized understanding of themselves through descriptions of past experiences that continue to have an impact on their moral conduct. For example, near the beginning of our first conversation, Becky described an early life experience which taught her that it is wrong to steal. Afterwards, she spoke of her efforts to convince some of her

friends not to steal as an "instinct...I just tell them...it's just a feeling." In a related context, Alexis described several qualities that she has acquired as a result of her on-going experiences with her younger learning disabled brother. "Boy, am I lucky to have him," she told me, "because life would be so dull without him...he's very important, and he's influenced me in a whole lotta ways." When I asked her what she thought were "the most important things" she got from this relationship with her brother, she replied, "Well, more tolerance for other people's behaviour. More understanding for the way other people act. And maybe it gives me a better idea of how to deal with things and...so I don't get frustrated right away." And maybe more patience, I suggested. "Yah. Definitely."

Having Goals and a Purpose in Life

Well I have no idea what I wanna be, job-wise or anything, but I wanta achieve something that I'm proud of, even if it's just the tiniest little thing, that, I just wanta feel that I accomplished something even though I probably accomplished lotsa things already, but I just...my main goal is just to maintain being me, have the same thoughts and everything and, I just don't want my thoughts or my feelings or my morals or values or anything like that to change as I get older - they might expand but not change. That's another goal...I have so many little tiny goals. I guess it's just sort of...just to live. (Winnie)

In contrast to many depictions of an adolescent's "quest" for identity, Winnie's statement of her goal "to maintain being me" conveys an impression of having a strong experience of personal identity rather than of searching for one. Her goal is not to discover who she is, but rather to "expand" the person

she perceives herself to be at the present time. This expression of self-understanding and purpose reflects the experience of the other participants in this research project and is a major focus in the discussion section of this report.

At some point, every participant identified personal goals. These goals involved both specific career objectives, such as Joan wanting to become an elementary school teacher or Richard wanting "to study physics and eventually get into space," and more general expressions about having a purpose for one's life, such as Perrin wanting "to live a full life that meets my potential."

In our conversations together and through the information sheet that I asked all participants to complete, Alexis indicated that she is involved with many activities both in and out of school and that her current goal is "to do as well as I can at all of them." In the following words, she expresses a strong sense of identity and, like Winnie, a strong conviction about not wanting to change who she is.

I'm very stubborn...very stubborn. If I think something and somebody's trying to tell me the opposite, I'll tell them what I think, and even if they don't think it after I'm done, it's, it's still a satisfaction for me to know that I didn't just be quiet and clam up and did not say what I meant, so...And if somebody's trying to change me in any way, I'll just tell them right off, I don't wanta be changed.

Particularly strong statements about having a purpose in life came from the two participants, Charles and Perrin, who were most direct with me about the spiritual orientation of their lives. On one occasion, after hearing him talk about consciously applying his moral values to everyday situations, I asked

Perrin if he considered it a personal sacrifice to behave in ways that might jeopardize his popularity among his peers. This was his response.

Well, it all depends what you, what you value and what your goals are. Like a lot of peoples' goals are to become what, popular, have a good reputation...but I don't know necessarily that those are my goals. My goals, you know, as I had stated before, rely more on a spiritual plane and, fulfilment. If I'm gonna be here eighty years, and then, I'm moving on, really, it doesn't make a big difference what happens to me here...on that point, on the social popular level.

From the first moments of talking with Perrin, it was obvious that his life centres around his Christian beliefs. Later, when I asked him explicitly how he views himself as a Christian in his everyday environment, he replied with these words.

What is my purpose? My purpose is to witness to others...I'm in the world basically, you know as, not quite as a shepherd, but to lend guidance to people, you know...if anything to help...

Charles also expressed a commitment to Christian beliefs as well as a conviction that his purpose in life is to act as a kind of "witness" for the spiritual values he recognizes as being centred in Christ. At one point we were talking about whether it was possible for him to be friends with people who do not share his Christian beliefs, and he made the following comments.

Yah, I think so. Cause, well in the Bible, we're supposed to, not, like, keep the salt in the salt-shaker, if I might say that, and just, we're supposed to go out, like not, not separate completely but, you know, to help others...show what we believe...Cause most people look for a goal in the physical world, like I wanta get a big business or, you know, and even Christians do that, a lot of times, myself included, but I think, our goal should be from within the soul, from...Christ...so I think we should let people know, you know what Christ has done for us...and let people know there is a way to be saved from this, binding of sin. And you know, this is the way. You can choose to do it or you

don't have to...

In response to a specific question about how he would like to influence his environment, Charles gave the following response which illustrates that not only does he experience having a purpose in life but also that this purpose stems from a sense of who he is and who he wants to become.

Well just, through love I guess. Through my action, and through things that I do, that people will, will say, you know, well look what he's done you know, this, that's different, I would have done something else. Unfortunately, I, a lot of times I'm not like that, you know. But I wanta be that type of person, I want to build towards that and, you know, show people...show people that, you know, Christ has done this for me, I wanna help you and...show you this way.

Attaching Importance to Being Independent

During this research process I have often had the enjoyable experience of listening to stories about how values and an awareness of them have emerged in the lives of the participants. One of the most vivid impressions I have of what means most to them in terms of being ready to make moral decisions is that they attach great importance to being independent. In my second conversation with her, Mari-Jane provided a good example of this when she talked about two common household situations, doing the dishes and negotiating "curfew" time.

I'm, I basically am a independent, like I live at home with my parents or whatever but...whatever I do, it was up to me. Like mom says...do the dishes. I'll say...when the dishes need to be done I'll do them or whatever and then...I do the dishes right. Cause like, I don't wanta disobey her but, like on my time I'll do the dishes cause...a couple of years ago she said, do the dishes and do it now before you're allowed

to do anything else. And I said...if I get the dishes done, what's the difference, right...because nobody important's coming over, and nothing's really happening. We're all just sitting around and I wanta, like, sit around with you guys. And so, she knows from then, that, like, she lets me just out like, I have to leave her a note where I am, or call her where I am or whatever, but, if I wanna be in at one, or I wanna be in at two she, she knows that...I'll come home see...Like with me...mom says, ten o'clock. I'll say, eleven. Mom says, ten thirty. I'll say, quarter to eleven, or whatever. So that's...we settle on a time.

Sometimes, asserting one's independence involves a difficult choice in terms of maintaining good relations with peers. Here is an episode that Winnie related to me in which she had to determine whether or not it was more important just to be herself or to try to please her friends.

In, when I was in grade five, I was going through a really hard time because, that, grade five's sorta when girls find guys and guys find girls and stuff like that and, I was, I've always been interested in guys, but I just, the turning point for me was later, about grade seven or eight, and my friends, they just sort of...always tried to make me change, and so I was, I found it really hard and I was always caught in the middle because, I didn't know which way to go, like I could be a nerd or I could be...whatever. And then I decide to just be myself, and if people don't like it, then..."See ya."

Joan also had a lot to say about how much she values the importance of accepting herself for the person she is rather than for what others might expect of her. At one point we were talking about decisions regarding whether to smoke or take drugs, and she made the following comments.

They're not really big decisions in my life because, I mean, when I was, I guess three years ago, I started smoking, but that was because I was hanging out with my sister and her older friends and all of them smoked, and I just thought, dude, like you better. I did. So I started smoking. But I've quit now...I just think, if people don't like me because I don't do them, or if people like me because I do them, they're not worth it...you know. Cause there's no point in trying to

change yourself to impress other people...cause it just doesn't work. If they're only impressed with something you do, that is not you...it's not you, so they don't really like you for who you are.

Throughout my conversations with the participants in this research, I was impressed by the way they indicated respect for the differences that exist among people. This indicates to me that the independence they value for themselves is extended to others and adds weight to the importance they attach to it. As an illustration of this importance, I recall an instance during my second conversation with Joan in which she talked about leadership qualities and I had the impression that she would not admire leaders who impose their opinions on others. When I asked her if this was a correct impression she responded in a way that convinced me of her respect for individual differences.

I think that people all have their own thoughts and feelings, and when other people try and force you to believe something that you just don't believe, I don't think it's fair, cause they're trying to make you feel the same thing that they are and every person, each individual is different, so...

Becky also expressed great respect for personal independence and individual differences. "If everybody else respects you," she observed, "or...if you respect yourself, you don't have to worry about being cool with everybody else." (Becky thinks that "being cool" implies doing something because others are doing it rather than "just being yourself.") On another occasion Becky told me that she thinks one person's "impressions of what's right and wrong can be totally different from what another person thinks," and

that many of the videos used at school to stimulate discussions about moral issues are "totally crazy....compared to what, what we think and what we feel about the topic." She elaborated on these comments in a way that shows the importance she attaches to understanding individual differences.

Like, if it's made in the States, some places in the States might have totally different, totally different percentages, totally different views, totally different problems...I think there should be more of an understanding of differences and then, then you can get to the certain topics...Cause unless you're not really biased about something, you can't really listen openly to an issue.

Although the opinions and activities described to me by the participants in this research project clearly support the well-established notion that "adolescents make a strong push for independence" (Santrock, 1993, p.204), one participant objected to over emphasizing this aspect of the adolescent experience. In his feedback letter to me, Charles wrote the following:

Personally, I think that "independence" can go too far. We must realize, as teenagers, that your parents still play an important role in moulding us and teaching us morals. This stage is a stage in which we start becoming independent, but it should not take over fully.

As Charles implies, and as every concerned parent or educator knows, it is not difficult to think of instances when the expression of an adolescent's independence has "gone too far." In keeping with the implication of Charles's observation, the following comment by Santrock (1993) seems appropriate:

As the adolescent pursues autonomy, the wise parent relinquishes control in those areas in which the adolescent makes competent decisions and continues to monitor and guide the adolescent in those areas in which the adolescent is not making mature choices. (p.204)

Being Ready to Make a Moral Decision: A Summary

The actual process of making a decision is part of a person's on-going experience of self. Before each particular process begins, an individual is aware of an acquired sense of self which acts as a personal context for making her or his decisions. If the decision is a moral one, this self-awareness will involve experiences that have particular value for the individual. The participants in this research project described these experiences in various ways, such as a recognition of personal qualities, an expression of purpose and having goals, and attaching importance to being independent. The self-understanding that is reflected through these experiences constitutes their readiness to make a moral decision.

Major Activity Phases

Building and Acting on Personal Moral Standards: Making Moral Values Your Own

Common experience tells us that we are not always aware of the decisions we make. It also tells us that deciding about what is right involves a wide range of experiences, from those we might think of as having very little moral content, such as choosing what to have for dinner, to those that we know have a significant impact on the way we conduct ourselves morally, such as choosing our intimate friends. In her feedback letter to me, Rebecca Rose indicated that she felt I under emphasized these obvious, but important observations in the summary of the research information I had sent to

participants for their comments and suggestion.

I feel something that was under emphasized in the report was that when people make decisions they don't really think about it. Like if I was walking down a beach and I saw some garbage I'd pick it up and put it in to the garbage can without thinking, or if someone looks sad I'd say something nice to try and cheer them up. I don't think a lot of people think about day to day stuff like that. It just happens. I never thought about why I did things until "guidance 10" class started and I still don't know why sometimes I do mean stuff and sometimes I'm really nice. Choices aren't really thought about unless they are really big things.

In reacting to Rebecca Rose's comment, I am reminded that opinions about whether or not they are aware of everyday moral decisions varied considerably among the participants. For example, Richard told me, "I don't think I really consciously think about it: it's just something that happens," whereas Winnie said that she "kinda has to" think about such decisions "because they're like everywhere." This variety in decision-making awareness is understandable because individual participants may be at different developmental stages with regard to experiencing the overall increase in decision-making activity and competence that is associated with the teen-age years (see Santrock, 1993, p.153). Becky suggested in her feedback letter to me that her level of decision-making awareness had increased over the seven month duration of gathering information for this research project. "This study," she wrote, "really made me think about things I don't usually think about, but are important."

Regardless of the degree to which they said they were aware of their everyday moral decisions, all participants spoke with relative ease and insight

about the way they make them. My interpretation of what they said identifies three major phases in the process of making a moral decision, and these phases involve activities related to building and acting on self-generated (i.e. personal) moral standards. In the initiating phase, they have an impulse to make a value judgment. In the second phase, they make this value judgment by differentiating actions in moral terms, and by evaluating the distinctions they make. In doing this, they build personal standards for moral conduct. In the third phase, they make a moral choice by determining whether or not to act in accordance with these standards.

If acting on these chosen standards becomes part of their characteristic behaviour, it is reasonable to assume that the values associated with these behaviours would become moral principles. As moral principles, these values would be an important aspect of the self-understanding which constitutes their readiness to make moral decisions. In this way, morality is not only something they make for themselves, but something they *continually* make for themselves.

Having an Impulse to Make a Value Judgment

Conscious decisions begin with recognizing an impulse to make a choice of some kind, and when the issue is a moral one, this choice involves making a value judgment about something. Participants spoke about this initiating or impulse phase of making a moral decision in three ways: recognizing personal qualities in others that they would like to have

themselves, being empathically aware of others, and perceiving a lack of moral concern in their environments. The following section outlines each of these experiences.

Recognizing Personal Qualities You Would Like to Have as Your Own

Well...I admire their ability to live by what they say. They very much practice what they preach. They have strong values. They have...they know what is right and wrong... and they're honest, honest people you know...want the best for people, you know...and they stand up for what they believe is correct too and...yah I look up to that, definitely. So...I've kinda copied them, so...what they do. (Perrin)

Probably everyone admires certain personal qualities they observe in others. But admiring these qualities does not necessarily imply the desire to have them as part of one's own character. When a person does express the desire to be like someone else in a particular way, as Perrin does in the above statement about his father and grandfather, the admiration involved may act as an impulse for making personal value judgments. In these situations, the admired person is often thought of as a role model.

Three participants, Becky, Janice, and Rebecca Rose, did not identify specific role models during our conversations. However, in her feedback letter, Becky told me that she "liked the topic of role models," and that she wishes she had said more about what she felt they meant to her, because, as she wrote, "I've come to realize they mean and affect me more than I thought they did."

Several participants spoke of their parents as role models. For example, Allie told me how much she respects her mother because "she's a strong

person and sticks up for what she believes in and she tries to help others," and Mari-Jane spoke of her father as "one of my favourite people" because "he always tells me a little thing that will help me through something, or he makes me laugh when I'm sad or whatever, and I wanna be like, like he is now." In a similar way, Terry expressed a wish to be like her mother because of the way she deals with people.

Well, she always goes for like the good in people, and she doesn't look down on people. And that way she like...she's always happy and...has like a lot of friends like because everyone likes her because she doesn't put anybody down. And she doesn't put teenagers down a lot. Like a lot of parents put teenagers down, but my mom doesn't. She like jokes with us...and stuff. So like, all my friends call my mom, mom, stuff like that...they just call her mom.

Winnie was the only person to mention an uncle as a role model, and even though he died when she was quite young, his character has had a continuing influence on her.

He was just...he had a lot of things to say, like, that were true, and stuff like that, cause he went through a lot when he was little...and stuff like that, and he just, I don't know, he talked to me like I was a person, not just someone that they're talking to. He talked to me with feeling, not just with words. So, he had a lotta impact on me.

Sometimes the focus of admiration was on an adult outside the family.

Both Allie and Mari-Jane mentioned particular teachers as people whom they admire for certain personal qualities they would like to have, and here is what Snow White had to say about a recent visitor to her household.

My dad's friend, from back east, came up and visited us this summer and, I really liked her. She was really nice, and she was just like, I was like, wow, I wish I could be like her cause, I don't know, she was really nice...I'm not sure what it was about her, but...Her name was

D _____. She was, she works...not works, she's an artist and she does a thing, she works with kids too. She teaches an art class...with like young kids. And I thought that was pretty cool that they have like a, like their studio, that she works with them in is, like in a garage, and every year she paints the garage door white and lets the kids just do whatever they want on that and leaves it up for a year...I thought that was pretty cool...And she's got lots of neat ideas and different ways of looking at stuff.

Probably everyone can identify with the experience of some participants who expressed admiration for a particular trait in someone which they feel they lack themselves and would like to have. For example, Terry told me both about her own "bad temper" and about wanting to be like her friend, D _____, who is the kind of person who "can't stay mad at anybody." Richard also spoke about this kind of experience.

Well, I think...I look at myself, and look at other people and you really notice the things that they have and you don't. And, with me, a lot of the things that I seem to lack are like person to person skills. Like, I'm more weak and like I'm shy, I'm not outgoing. So I admire people, that you know, speak out, and you know, are good talking to people and that's something I really admire...You know I kinda wish I had but, I really have to work at things like that.

The information gathered for this research project contains many such statements about how the participants would like to have, as part of their own characters, certain personal qualities they admire in others. When Janice spoke with me about this topic, she began by listing several characteristics of the kind of person she would like to be and ended by telling me about how at least one of these characteristics is realized in her day to day activities.

I'd like to be someone who like, has lots of fun all the time, and like, goes around and just, has lots of friends and does all that stuff. And like, someone who also, like gets good grades and is like really good at

sports. And someone who is like honest and, and...like hard-working and stuff, and, yah...like...yah, I want something like prestige and all that stuff. Like successful. I want to be successful. Just like I wanna be a nice person, like, just help, like, sorta totally...what's the word, let me think, you know, give...someone like really giving and generous and like helpful...like I like making people feel good, like when it's their birthday or when it's like, like just, I like writing people letters and making people like feel special, you know, and stuff like that. Like I love doing that. And, I don't know, I just like going making people like feel happy...

Janice's comments provide an illustration of how her desire to be a generous person is realized in her relations with others. This implies that wanting to have that particular quality acts as an impulse for her to make value judgments that affect her behaviour. As an impulse, this experience of knowing who she wants to be, occurs before the activities of actually making a value judgment. One of Becky's first comments to me is a particularly clear expression of this experience. When responding to my initial question to her about making moral choices, she told me that her first reaction is not to classify a choice in moral terms, but rather to consider it in terms of how it might affect her ability to be the kind of person she wants to be and to become.

You mean choices?...Sometimes it's not necessarily whether, right or wrong. Sometimes it's just about, I don't know, how it will affect you. So it's not really right or wrong.

Later Becky made a similar statement when she told me about what she considers to be the most important influence on her when making a moral choice.

How you wanna, how you want your life to be...Like how, how if you do one thing, how it affects your life...If you keep ripping off or something, you get caught, and then...I know what, what I like, what I wanta do, what makes me happy. So, as long as I do something that makes me happy, I'll be fine.

Although all participants talked about personal qualities they admire in others and which they would like to have as part of themselves, my purpose here is not to identify all of these qualities, and certainly not to attach more importance to some than to others. My purpose here is to show that having a role model or knowing the personal qualities that one would like to have as part of one's own character may act as an impulse for making a value judgment that leads eventually to a moral decision.

Feeling Empathy: Understanding and Caring about the Experiences of Others

Webster's dictionary defines empathy as an "identification with and understanding of another's feelings, situation, and motives." Many participants in this research project talked about being aware of others in this way. Mari-Jane, for example, told me that she likes to know people "well enough so that I can feel like what they're feeling so that, I'm not, I don't feel like I'm in, totally in another world when I'm around them." Also, Winnie described herself as someone who "can tell if somebody needs help," and described a certain friend as someone who helped her by "putting herself in my position."

Being empathically aware of someone does not necessarily lead to moral action, but common experience tells us that often it does. Common experience also tells us that there may be any number of events or conditions

in a person's life, such as a strong personal attachment, that might induce an empathic impulse to behave in certain ways. For example, Alexis spoke at length about her deep affection for her younger, learning-disabled brother, and how her sensitivity towards the way he experiences "being picked on" has helped make her "stronger to deal with other people."

Lots of things I learn about how to help him influences me on how to help other kids...Cause, I know when I see kids in the hall getting picked on, just because they're little, it really gets to me because I can just picture my brother being in the same situation...It really upsets me when people pick on him and stuff...I know when I see kids in the hall getting picked on, I don't know what it is, it's just a feeling I get in my stomach, I guess cause I see my brother's pain lotsa days when he comes home, and I just get, I get a feeling in my stomach like, it feels like a feeling that they'd be feeling...And then everybody says, well why are you so upset about it, and like, cause they don't live with someone that's the same and you have to try and explain it to them and you can't, so it ends up getting even more upset...It gives me a lot of strength cause...every day I learn something new with him, and...I think it makes me stronger to deal with other people...

An attachment to another person need not be as deep as that which may exist between a brother and sister in order to arouse an empathic impulse for moral action. When talking about why people sometimes help others even though they may not really feel like doing it, Richard made the following observation.

I don't really know why that happens...It's just something cause, you get attached to people, and it's sorta the desire not to hurt them, right, because, inside you know what you can handle, and you know that if someone did something that it wouldn't necessarily hurt you. But when you look, when I look at other people, and I think, well, they'd be, like...I sort of exaggerate almost what they must feel if...if I disappoint them or something, right...

For both Alexis and Richard, being empathically aware of someone else

acts as an impulse to make specific value judgments about how to relate with others. In the situations they describe, empathy is aroused by knowing and caring about the experiences of another, but empathy can also be aroused by reflecting on one's own experience. For example, Snow White told me about a situation at school in which she tried "to be nice" to someone who didn't "really fit in anywhere" because she knew she wouldn't like it if she was in a similar position.

Charles also related moral actions to empathic feelings aroused from personal experience. He explained why he would help someone in a situation that involved personal sacrifice with the following words.

Well, I think it would be out of love. You know just, certain...well just general love, right...Maybe I should break it down, love as in caring...just understanding and caring...probably, would be that...you just understand their circumstances, and you relate to them, and probably help them out...yah, understanding the circumstances they've gone through probably because you've gone through them as well."

Perceiving a Lack of Moral Concern in Your Environment

When I asked Mariah if she talked about moral issues with her friends she told me that she didn't think they would "really wanna hear about it," especially "if it was in the news." She added, "I wanna learn more about stuff like that, but my friends...don't really care that much...if they do, they don't tell me."

Among the participants in this research, Mariah was not alone in sensing that she is more attuned to moral concerns than others in her immediate environment. Apart from many instances where this heightened

moral sensitivity was implicit in what was being said, several participants mentioned it explicitly. For example, as part of her final comments to me, Rebecca Rose said that she believes her thinking about moral issues is "more than what other people do, and at one point Janice told me that she thinks most of her friends "don't have as much conscience and stuff as I do."

Although such comments may be a form of what David Elkind identifies as "adolescent egocentrism" (see Berger, 1994, p.391), in the context of this research, the perception that one is conspicuously more moral than others might also reflect what Richard observed in his feedback letter: "This could also be a result of the type of people that volunteer for research like this just being more moral than others." However, whether this perception of being more morally concerned than others around them stems from a tendency towards egocentric emotional responses or from a more highly developed moral sensitivity, the fact remains that it is part of their experience and can function as an impulse to make a moral decision.

Of course, by itself, perceiving a lack of moral concern in one's environment does not lead to moral activity, just as believing that a particular action is right does not necessarily mean that a person will act on that belief. Janice made this point when talking about her perception of a general feeling of indifference towards moral concerns.

Well, it's kinda hard because some people don't really, like, if they follow their own standards, like people don't really have high standards. So, they'll just do whatever and, it's, it might not be good stuff that they do...Like people shouldn't like go around like stealing

things, stuff like that. Like everybody knows it's wrong, but like lotsa people don't care if it's wrong...Like they know the morals but they just don't care about them...

As Janice implied, caring about morality involves being affected by it.

The impulse to act according to a certain moral value (such as not to steal) comes, not merely from recognizing the value, but also from interpreting it as a necessary or desirable quality to have as part of oneself. Just as a physical impulse (such as hunger) occurs because of the perception of a physical need, a moral impulse (such as respecting another's property) occurs because of the perception of a moral need. As an example, consider the following comment from Winnie.

I love the feeling of, like I like it when people tell me their prob...telling me their problems because I know that I won't give them any bad ideas...bad advice or whatever. I might not even give them any advice. I'll just listen to them and I won't make fun of them or anything like that. And then they might go to someone else that, that would. And so in a way I feel good, that they came to me.

By noting that some people show a lack of respect for others when they give advice, Winnie is recognizing a certain moral insensitivity in her environment. However, this recognition alone is not the impulse for her actions. Her words imply that she gives advice respectfully because she considers this kind of behaviour a desirable aspect of her character. Her behaviour helps to satisfy a societal need, but it arises out of a personal one.

Like Winnie, when other participants spoke about perceiving a lack of moral concern in society, their words implied that this perception can and often does act as an impulse for their moral behaviour. For example, Snow

White linked her perception of several moral "problems" in today's world with efforts that her generation is making to try to change certain societal values.

I think, there's a lot of problems with racism and stuff like that, I don't think it's right. I think we can try and help get rid of that. And make people feel more belonging, like have more belonging, like they, feel OK like talking to, about whatever and...And our environment I guess is in a lot of danger these days, so maybe we can help change that. And just I guess have people...not change how they think but, sort of you know like...thinking more about helping their, other people and...like doing things not just for oneself...Like sure, certain times you do have to think of yourself ahead of others but, and, there's other times you can kinda think about other people and how they're feeling and what they might be needing.

Snow White's comment that more people ought to think about helping others and not do things "just for oneself" combined with her observation that sometimes "you do have to think of yourself ahead of others" suggests that sometimes a particular action, such as "putting oneself first," may have different motivating circumstances. When I asked her why she might put herself first in a situation, she answered by saying, "I guess so people don't take advantage of you, cause there are some people out there that would." She illustrated this remark by telling me about a recent incident in which people took advantage of the generous nature of one of her friends. These comments and observations imply that Snow White's perception of "people out there that will take advantage of you" acts as an impulse for her to behave in ways that protect her values of respect for oneself and for others.

Perrin indicated a similar need to protect his moral values when he told me about some of the pressures he feels in his school environment.

Well with my position I'm in, like I'm a Christian and I have, at least I follow Christian morals and...well when people are talking, like, basically when I'm with a group of people and they start talking about things I disagree with, and maybe sexual issues or of violence and stuff, I'm often forced to withdraw my presence, I feel, because, I won't want to be interested or influenced by these things, because I like to lead a clean life.

The need to protect one's moral values is only one of many possible reasons for responding to a perceived lack of concern about moral issues. For instance, the desire to promote what one considers proper conduct or the proper understanding of a particular issue may also be an impulse for making value judgments.

Allison told me that, when talking with people who have an opposite opinion about a moral issue, she would "try not to, like put their opinion down." However, she added that she might try to convince the other person of her position if she "believed that they were wrong" or if she thought that "it would benefit them to change their mind." Becky reflected a similar impulse towards promoting what she considers to be proper moral conduct when she told me about her efforts to convince some of her friends not to steal.

In a related context, Becky talked about the importance of promoting a proper understanding of moral issues and expressed concern about how erroneous generalizations may occur because people care so little about trying to understand others. As an example, she mentioned that, despite much evidence to the contrary, many people still think of AIDS as a gay disease.

Charles expressed particularly strong concerns about the lack of moral

sensitivity in society. His response to my first question about how moral decisions fit into his day to day life made these concerns obvious.

Well if we don't have morals, society is already going downhill because of that...in my opinion...I think most of our problems in today's society stems from that...from the lack of, maybe parents...not teaching morals. And because of some more broken homes. Perhaps, you know, the message is not getting across, this is right, this is wrong...you know...And society doesn't really have another method to cope with it...that I know of.

Later in our conversation, Charles spoke of the importance of teaching morals. He said that the Bible provides him with a "base" for establishing right and wrong and that, at one time, it formed a base for moral instruction in schools as well. On another occasion he confirmed that he thought moral issues should be discussed in schools, and added that "all the teachers in the school should be continually guiding the students, from grade one...in whatever class."

Charles demonstrated this belief during a classroom discussion that dealt with the issue of using sexually oriented material in advertising. On this occasion he tried to convince the teacher that she ought to "tell" her students what was morally correct, something she was not willing to do. This behaviour suggests that his perception of a lack of moral concern in his immediate environment acted as an impulse for his own moral behaviour.

Having an Impulse to Make a Value Judgment: A Summary

We are not always aware of the decisions we make, but becoming more aware of them and of how they influence our lives may be characteristic of

periods when significant personal growth occurs. Adolescence is such a time, and one of its major activities is the formation of moral principles which arise out of the numerous decisions that have to be made concerning societal interactions.

At this point, the process of making moral decisions has been described in terms of a preliminary condition, characterized by an experience of *knowing who you are*, and an initiating phase of *having an impulse to make a value judgment*. This research suggests that, for its participants, having such an impulse is experienced in three ways: by having role models and knowing the kind of person one wants to be or become, by being empathically aware of others, and by perceiving a lack of moral concern in one's environment.

Making Value Judgments:

Responding to an impulse to make a value judgment entails recognizing a difference between alternative actions and accepting one of the alternatives as a standard for behaviour. For moral issues, this response involves differentiating actions in terms of right and wrong and determining that what is right should be that which guides personal conduct. In the language of common experience, this means that making a value judgment involves using one's conscience.

Participants in this research project spoke about their consciences in two ways: as a means of knowing, and as a means of evaluating information

about right and wrong. For example, when Perrin described his conscience as something that "does not weigh, or reason, it just says," he identified it as something which classifies actions and provides him with the knowledge he needs to differentiate particular actions in moral terms. In contrast, when Allie described her conscience as something that "fights the good stuff and then the bad stuff," she identified it as something which evaluates and determines whether an action already classified as "good" or "bad" should be accepted as a standard for personal conduct.

At first I considered these different ideas about what a conscience is to be contrasting interpretations of a particular phenomenon. However, now I think it is more accurate to say that they reflect different phases in the process of making a value judgment, and that both phases constitute what is commonly experienced as having a conscience.

In describing how they maintain, modify, or build new standards for moral conduct, the participants in this research talked about activities related both to differentiating and evaluating actions in terms of right and wrong. Before exploring these activities in detail, the following section provides an overview of them by outlining various expressions of having a conscience.

Having a Conscience: Making and Accepting Value Distinctions

I think there is an instinctual feeling of right and wrong. People know it too...I think people know when something's wrong and just know when something's right...inside, they just know. They're gonna hide it, and they're gonna deny it, but I think they know...So I would classify that as their conscience...I don't think the conscience is a judge. I think it's...something that knows, something you have to deal with. But it's

a...it's a finality. It does not weigh, or reason, it just says...and you gotta decide what you wanta do...So. (Perrin)

Although Perrin's observation depicts conscience as that which provides knowledge about right and wrong ("it's something that knows"), it also suggests that a person becomes aware of this knowledge so that he or she can put it to practical use in terms of becoming a motive for behaviour ("something you have to deal with...you gotta decide what you wanta do"). In this way, his words refer to both the knowing and evaluating aspects of making value judgments.

In the following observation, Allie reflects a complementary point of view. She describes her experience of conscience as an internal struggle involving actions that have already been classified in moral terms. However, she adds that, by ignoring her conscience, she is probably not thinking about the consequences of her actions, which implies that she is ignoring important information needed to make those classifications. In this way, her words, like Perrin's, refer to both the knowing and evaluating aspects of making value judgments.

Everyone has a conscience. I think that...it plays a big part in decision making, you know, I guess, I'm not really sure what a conscience is but my feeling of it is that, you know, it's kind of a voice inside, a voice that kinda fights the good stuff and then the bad stuff, you know, what you will get out of it and what you will lose or stuff...But then, I don't know, sometimes...I guess, I, maybe happen to...ignored mine, maybe and, I didn't listen to it. And that's probably what caused me to not think about the consequences, because the voice inside my head kinda disappeared for awhile...So.

When participants spoke about having a conscience, it was often in

terms of an interaction between thinking and feeling about a particular issue. This interaction was expressed in terms of either an opposition (i.e. an internal conflict) or a balancing of these two internal activities (i.e. an internal dialogue). The following comments from Rebecca Rose and Joan illustrate how conscience may be experienced as an internal conflict.

I have a conscience...and whenever I do stuff that's wrong, but most of the time I don't cause, cause there's this little person in me bugging me, telling me not to do it. But I, I want to, but I can't, cause I know that it's wrong. (Rebecca Rose)

If I do something that I know is wrong, it just...like I get...feel sick to my stomach, and I just know I've done something wrong...I don't picture my conscience saying, "Don't do that," I just, it's just something I know, if I do something that I don't wanta do or that I know that's wrong. I can feel it. (Joan)

The following comments from Charles and Winnie illustrate how conscience may be experienced as an internal dialogue.

Conscience. I think that's...just...it's just telling you what's right and wrong...just the way we...kind of a discussion in our mind, in a sense, just saying what we, "Ah, if you do this, these are the consequences but this is what we'll get out of it: if you do this, you know, you may get this out of it but you'll be able to do this." (Charles)

The way you think is here, and the way you feel is here, and your conscience is sort of in the middle and, it sort of just, like it balances your decision that you made, kind of and...it just, whenever you think a decision, you really feel the right one and the wrong one...well for me anyways, I'm like...I just decide which one I feel best in. (Winnie)

As the above comments suggest, whether having a conscience is experienced as an internal conflict or as a dialogue between cognitive and emotive activities, it involves both knowing and evaluating criteria for right and wrong. In all of these comments, the participants refer both to having

knowledge about right and wrong and to working with that knowledge in a way that assesses its importance for personal conduct. Although either of these aspects may be emphasized, both are present in the act of making a value judgment, which is why I think that both should be present in an accurate description of having a conscience.

Acquiring values is part of societal interaction at any age. As people develop, they may change, modify, or come to accept their acquired values in new, more personal ways. To become increasingly able to build standards for personal conduct is to become increasingly able to use what is commonly experienced as a conscience. The first step in building these standards involves recognizing a difference between actions in terms of right and wrong. How the participants of this research project express this experience is the topic of the following section.

Making Value Distinctions

Well I interpret as don't lie meaning don't lie, don't tell a white lie, don't bend the truth. I try to tell the truth all the time...even in circumstances where it may not suit my best interests to tell the full truth, I still try to tell the truth...My values are the same. There could be some way in interpreting them...may be different...I don't know. Like there could be a...a circumstance where somebody has taken something from me say, and I know it's not his, it's mine, and then he has it, would I consider it stealing to go and take it back - sort of thing. So, there the moral may, or the, the value may...two different lights to look at it. So. (Perrin)

Even though his acquired values are firmly established, recognized, and accepted as standards for personal conduct, Perrin's observation implies that they may be open to interpretation because of particular circumstances. Other

participants made similar observations and often began talking about value-related decisions with the words, "Well, it depends." It became obvious to me that simply having certain values was not as important for them as how they apply their values in daily activities.

These daily, practical applications begin with differentiating actions in terms of right and wrong. Sometimes these differentiations are straightforward and relatively easy to make. For example, Rebecca Rose stated that she would definitely refuse alcohol at a party but added that drinking a class of non-alcoholic wine at a family dinner would probably not compromise her values. However, making value distinctions often involves dealing with new experiences and situations that may be more tempting than any encountered previously. In the following words, Winnie describes the first time she was at a party where drinking alcohol was an issue.

I was at a party one night and...my friends...they were drinking and stuff like that and...I was sleeping over at that friend's house and so, my parents wouldn't find out if I was drinking or whatever...but then, I just sorta...I didn't really think about what would happen, well I did but it didn't really stick in my mind because I just thought that I have the rest of my life to drink or whatever...but I'm not gonna spend the rest of my life drinking but...and so I didn't...but they all sorta said, "Oh, come on, wimp, nobody will find out, it doesn't matter, who cares," and I just, I just said, "No, I don't want to," like that. And they said, "Oh, why, your mom won't let you?" And like no, I thought, I just don't want to.

Winnie referred to this incident on another occasion as an example of discovering a rule for herself that she was not aware of having made. "It's weird", she told me, "because...this little thing triggers in you, it's just like,

there's another rule, check it off." Like Winnie, many participants spoke about discovering personal values in the context of their everyday activities. Some, like Becky, spoke about actively seeking their values in such a context. When I asked Becky how she would handle a situation that involved an ambiguous or confusing moral issue, she told me that, rather than seek advice about it, she would "probably wait for a circumstance to happen" that would clarify her own values.

I don't know if I'd go to anybody. I'd probably wait for a circumstance to happen, and then I'd realize...what it really meant to me, what was the most important. Cause sometimes you can think about stuff, and think how you'd react, but when you get, actually get that situation, you probably wouldn't...react the same way if you were in a different, like if you could just sit there and think about what happened, it wouldn't be the same thing as, as actually happened.

Becky's determination to discover or create her values out of the realities of day to day life reflects a common experience among the participants in this research project, an experience which I think is the proper context for considering how they differentiate actions in terms of right and wrong. In this context, knowledge comes, not only as information from external sources, but more significantly as a creation of oneself; in Terry's words, "if you don't experience it then you won't understand it."

This research identifies three kinds of experience which reflect how the participants make value distinctions: the first functions at an intrapersonal level and involves personal ways of thinking about values, the second functions at a micro-societal level and involves family influences, and the third functions at

an individual-societal level and involves interpersonal relations, especially friendship. Although in reality these experiences are interdependent, they are discussed individually because each represents a particular means of acquiring information about values.

Personal ways of thinking about value distinctions

Common experience tells us that thinking about values can occur before, during, or after the activities related to them. It also tells us that people do not always consider the value implications of actions before doing them, and that, as Richard observes in the following comment, in most cases, "it would be different" if they did.

At the moment when you're doing something, it's, like your thinking doesn't...if things are going too quickly for you to think about them, so, like you sort of go by gut reaction and, in those cases you make some wrong decisions that you may not have made, going through it slowly. Or you can make right decisions that you may not have made going through slowly. But it's more...if you just slow down and think about something before each time you did it, what you do would be a lot different, than if you just, like, live with your normal life, not always get a chance.

It is worth noting that Richard uses the words "a lot different" rather than "a lot better" when describing the consequences of thinking carefully about moral actions before doing them. This suggests that, in his experience, the cognitive activity associated with making a value distinction occurs before he attaches value to a particular action. The information gathered for this research suggests that participants have experienced a recent increase in this kind of cognitive activity. Whenever they talked about how their present

decision-making experiences differ from previous years, they said that they are less concerned with what other people think and more concerned about their own thinking. Invariably, they expressed a desire to create their own values rather than simply accept the values they had acquired previously, and this situation implies a greater need for differentiating activity. Janice reflects this experience in the following observation.

I guess lotsa people don't really care about like what their parents or what whoever says, they'll just do whatever they want and, I think most people just make up their own morals. They just decide on their own morals from their own mind. Like they don't just do something just because their parents tell them to like...well I don't anyways. I don't think that many people do. And you have to think about, you know, morals, like for yourself, and decide, like what you want to do.

The first comment that Alexis made to me about the way she deals with decisions about right and wrong was that it takes her "a long time" and she has to do "a lot of contemplating" before she decides what to do. She added, "When I was younger, I'd just do the thing that was the most fun on the list: I wouldn't think about what was more important." This observation about weighing the relative importance of issues and activities reflects one of two major types of thinking mentioned by the participants: the other major type is a consideration of consequences. For example, Rebecca Rose talked about no longer stealing because now she thinks more about her values and wants to preserve and protect them. "When I was younger," she told me, "I just didn't think about it and I just took a candy bar off the shelves and walked out of the store." Then she added immediately, "I have values and...I have to

think about them, so that if I don't want to break them."

Both major types of thinking identified by the participants - attending to priorities, and attending to consequences - are explored in the following sections.

Attending to priorities

Lotsa times I'll sit there and I'll be thinking, well I don't know which one is better to do, and then, I'll start thinking of my values and what, what's most important to me in life, and what would be better for me in life, and that usually helps me come to a conclusion...I think dealing with everything...Like if there's a conflict with my friends, I'm gonna wanta resolve it because I want this friend in the future. Or, and I also want the problem resolved for now. And so...I think it helps me in the present and in the future. It helps me to solve the problems I have.
(Alexis)

In her description of thinking about values in terms of setting priorities, Alexis indicates that maintaining a friendship is more important to her than some other activity, and that she wants to preserve this friendship and solve whatever problems might be interfering with it. In this situation, she uses existing values and the recognition of a purpose as information for making a classification of possible activities.

In her articulation of a similar experience, Joan emphasized the use of existing values when prioritizing aspects of a decision.

A lot of times, when I come into a situation and I have to make a decision about what I'm gonna do, it takes me a long time to make the decision cause I, for every good thing about it I always find a bad thing.

Rebecca Rose told me about an important incident in her life that not only draws attention to the use of existing values, but also to an age-related

increase in the use of reasoning as a means of classifying these values in terms of priorities.

Well, when my parents got divorced I had to choose between them. So I chose my mom because I liked her better. She was nicer to me. So, I think that my life would have been way different if I had gone with my dad. It would have been more hectic and stuff. But I'm glad that I chose to be with my mom...I chose right away...They were standing on the porch and my dad says, "You have to choose right now, Rebecca Rose." "I wanna go with my mom. I'll go with my mom." I was only seven, and I really didn't have time to think about that, but if I was to choose now, I would have to think about it more...Think, think, what would be good living with my mom instead of living with my dad...And like, I think about it more. Like what would happen. What's good, what's bad and stuff.

Sometimes participants emphasized the recognition of a purpose when talking about how they attend to priorities in their decision-making activities. For example, Richard told me that setting priorities about what's important in his life is a way of "simplifying things" in his daily routine, and Terry mentioned that establishing priorities in her life involves thinking about what she must do in order to complete her High School programme.

A couple of years ago it'd be like, well it doesn't really matter and you've got a lot of years left and everything. But now it's like, well I realize that, if I wanna get good grades and get eleven and twelve too, get into University, then I have to get the grades now and things like go to school and, and have to do homework, and things like that. So, start thinking more about the future instead of just right now.

Occasionally, participants spoke about establishing value priorities in terms of large-scale societal issues. Richard observed that considering a specific environmental concern from different perspectives makes it difficult to reach a fair compromise.

Well, you have the big issues, like logging or something, right. Just from the surface, where we're sitting down and my family has nothing to do with...the logging industry or anything, right, so it's easy just to say that we have to totally change what we're doing or that it should be like reduced and everything. But I know people that have, like their dads are loggers or whatever, and for them, they'd see it from a totally different perspective, cause that's their livelihood, and that's, you know, that's how they survive and they need the jobs, right. And so, it's hard to find a compromise cause I guess, long term, it would be best to like, you know, selective log or whatever. But short term, just now, a lot of people are going to be hurt by what'll, what in the long term might be a good decision.

Janice also spoke about societal concerns and about setting priorities for both community and global issues on the basis of specific needs.

I like talking about politics and taxes and environment and, I always think about stuff like, I wonder what it will be like when I get older and...and stuff like, what will the environment be like and that. I always think that, if I was Prime Minister or whatever, I could run everything and I'd be able to fix all the problems, like not all the problems but, like there's so many things that I think I could change, that, if I could, that it would be an awful lot better...I think they spend way too much money on stuff in this school...And they have too much stuff like, wasting...It seems like, there's just a lot of stuff that you don't really need. And things like that. And...And there's like people, like in third world countries who have nothing like this, and we're just, keep on getting more and more and more, and...we don't really need it...I'd like to take all the money and then I'd reach to the people. I'd like put it out there to where I thought were areas would be needed, like where the money would be needed, and then, I wouldn't...and then, if there was extra money, I'd just like, give it back to pay the deficit off. I don't think there probably would be much money left over, but like that's what I would do.

Although sometimes participants appear to set priorities according to their established values, and at other times for specific purposes, the difference between the two activities is undoubtedly one of emphasis rather than of kind. The important point illustrated here is that attending to priorities is one of the

two major ways they think about making value distinctions. The other major type of thinking they use is attending to the expected consequences of their actions.

Attending to consequences

Because we live in societies, we are constantly dealing with the need to differentiate actions in terms of self-interest, concern for others, and concern for our relationships with others. Without these concerns there would be no reason to establish the relative importance of particular actions. Also, because we and the societies we live in are capable of responding creatively to particular situations, we are continually changing, which means that the way we make value differentiations can change. When I asked Mariah if she noticed any recent changes in the way she makes decisions about right and wrong, this was her response.

Pretty much. I think if I'm gonna get in trouble or not maybe...because I used to just do things. I didn't really care. And now I kinda care...I don't want to make the wrong decision. I want more responsibility, yah, responsibility and...trust. You know, parents trusting you.

Common experience tells us that caring about how our actions might affect others may occur at any age and may involve emotional as well as rational processes. However, as we age and become more capable of considering the consequences of our actions in a rational way, it is reasonable to expect that thinking about these consequences may become an increasingly important aspect of how we differentiate activities that pertain to our relationships. For example, as part of her decision to plan for an extended trip

to a foreign country, Mari-Jane mentioned that she thought about the effect her absence might have on her mother and on her boyfriend. "I wouldn't leave my mom at home when she really wanted me to stay at home," she told me, "or I wouldn't leave my boyfriend at home if he had something really important happening or whatever."

At some point during our conversations, most participants in this research project mentioned how they think about the consequences of their actions as part of their decisions about right and wrong. Sometimes they talked about this experience in terms of what they have learned about consequences by observing others. Rebecca Rose said that she decided not to take drugs because she saw how "they wreck lives...and it damages your head and you can't think straight." Also, Winnie mentioned how her expectations about being in High School, which involved "partying every night...driving cars and stuff like that," changed abruptly when she saw "what happened to people" who overindulged in these activities. "Whoa," she said, "I can't handle this."

In addition to what can be learned by observing others, participants also learned about consequences from their own experiences. Allie, for instance, described her decision not to drink or take drugs as follows.

Well...you know, drugs and drinking. It's just something that I've grown up knowing that it's wrong and...I'm not just doing it because, you know, my parents told me to...it's something I believe...that I believe I have to stick up for because there's, you know, I have no interest in doing it right now. But, I guess the first time that I was offered something, you know, like took it, more under peer pressure, and cause my friends did it. So. But I've gotten over that, and even though they do it, I still...don't...do it. While they're doing it I just

hang around and, but...I think now I, I look at the consequences if I did do it and...before...I wasn't as conscious about it, but now, I think really hard about stuff like that.

Allie's observation that she is more conscious about value-related decisions than she was previously reflects an experience that many participants mentioned. While talking about changes in the way he makes moral decisions, Richard offered a focused expression of this experience by saying, "Well, I think as I get older, it involves less unconscious thought and more thinking about it, cause I know from experience what the consequences would be with my decision."

Family influences on making value distinctions

I remember we got caught for stealing in grade seven, and I, like felt really - at first I didn't really care what I was doing. I didn't care, "Oh, who cares." I mean it didn't really bother me at all...And then, like after we got caught, my mom was like totally laying a guilt trip on me. Like she's saying, "Oh, well that raises the prices for everybody." And, cause I guess I only thought of myself, I didn't think, I didn't think of, about like what other people would think, or how they'd feel if their candy got stolen. So now I'm like, I think about how, how I would feel if that happened to me. (Janice)

This brief glimpse into Janice's life highlights the importance of considering human activities ecologically. The interdependence of individual and societal processes has been described as "an ecology of human development" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), and as with other aspects of the human ecology, its moral dimension develops within family or surrogate family life. In recalling the above mentioned experience, Janice implies that she became a person who cares about the effect her actions might have on others, at least in

part through the mediation of her mother. This illustrates how an experience of family life can provide important information to people when they make value distinctions.

Superficially, this information may be perceived as either a positive or negative influence, but this distinction requires a deeper understanding in terms of the effect of the influence. Just as some people are more resilient than others to unpleasant or harmful experiences, other people are less responsive to what might be considered a facilitative, positive family environment. Clearly, the impact of family life on how people make value distinctions depends on particular circumstances and on how individuals interpret their family experiences. This observation is supported in this research by the following remarks which focus on the variety of ways participants talked about family influences on their moral decisions, and on how some of them talked about interpreting difficult family situations.

Adolescence is sometimes characterized "as a time of waning adult influence" (Berger, 1994, p.415), but in contrast to this view, Allie told me that the major influence on the way she thinks about moral decisions is listening to her mother, and sometimes an older cousin, talk about their life experiences.

My mom...Now that we're closer and we talk about a lot more things, you know, she tells me of her experiences and...I, I listen to her and...I just, even like, with my older cousin too, cause she's, she's kinda been in my position so she can tell me and she can help me out if...she doesn't make decisions for me, but she gives me her advice about what's right.

In a related context, Perrin considers his father and grandfather as role models because of the way they have conducted their lives.

I'd probably choose my dad as a role model, or my grandpa as a role model. They lived...ah, I don't...conservative lives I guess. My father was a little more, when he was my age, he wasn't a, he wasn't a Christian. He had, went his own way, you know. Not a street kid but, was rough and into contact sports but, he found his way out of it. And my grandpa all his life has been a very strong Christian. I just look up to them...cause they've run the race and done quite well...So.

Like Allie and Perrin, most participants identified one or both parents as role models, (only Becky, Janice, Rebecca Rose, and Winnie did not do so).

Sometimes participants talked about family influences in terms of being concerned about how family members might react to their actions. For example, after identifying her father and grandfather as major influences on the way she makes moral decisions, Mari-Jane told me, "When I do something, I think, will my grandparents be impressed...will my grandparents like what I'm doing?" Also, when talking with me about why she maintains her interest in moral issues even though her friends appear to be indifferent to such matters, Mariah said that it was because she cared about her family.

Why'd I do that? Cause I care about my family. Like my other friends, like one of my other good friends, she doesn't care about her family at all. She just does whatever she wants. She, she thinks that it's cool to get in trouble or...wanna do other stuff just to, I guess make her feel good and make, think that other people would like her, like she'd be accepted. But I...I don't know...I don't wanta...like fight with my family at all.

Throughout my conversations with Mariah, it was difficult to sense

whether it was more important for her to make herself happy or to make her family happy. I asked her about this explicitly and she replied as follows.

I don't know...that's, that's really really tough, because, like when I do something, I feel great, like I feel really happy for me, and then when, when I do something that's really good for my...like my family feels really happy for me and everything...I don't know. It's kinda weird...It could be for the family or me...it's kinda hard..."

Another family influence on the way participants make value-related decisions involves seeking and receiving advice about important personal issues. There are a great many expressions of this experience in the information collected for this research. The examples given below have been chosen in order to reflect, not merely a common experience, but also the many nuances that are a part of all shared, human activities.

The reasons why people go to others for advice may have both conscious and subconscious aspects. In the following example, Richard speaks about seeking advice when he feels confused about an issue, yet the result he describes pertains as much to building self-confidence as it does to clarifying a particular issue, which suggests at least the possibility of subconscious motivation.

I respect what my parents think...cause, I don't know, they're my parents...and so usually I go to them and see what they think and they try to clarify it for me. Because if I'm confused, it's usually cause I think that person knows more than I do, or you know, has something, like has more background in what they're talking about. And usually it turns out that they really don't know any more than I do. It just seems to me like they do, kinda. And so...it really helps when I understand that's what's happening, you know.

When Perrin talked about seeking advice from his parents, he made a

clear distinction about the kind of advice he seeks from each parent.

I go to either parents for different help. If I'm usually having an emotional problem it'll usually be my mom. She's very, deals emotionally. My dad is more intellectually, he likes to assess the problem and solve it - doesn't want to deal with the feelings that go with it...Where my mom likes to feel why do you feel that way...what could be making you feel like this...sort of idea. So I go to either for different help.

Perrin's words reflect his efforts to understand particular issues. In the following comments from Alexis, the emphasis appears to be on maintaining a feeling of security and support when faced with a moral issue.

My mom often helps me with, with things. She always says, you'll always have to make decisions in your life and you should make this decision by yourself, and then I'll come to her, like, I can't decide what to do, so she'll help me...she's always really supportive and always guides me in the right direction of where I should be going.

I think the relationship with my father...him and I have...an excellent relationship, just as close, as good as my mom's and mine...we basically value the same things so we like the same things, we believe in the same things and...I feel comfortable talking to him about most of the stuff I talk to my mom about because he makes it known that I can come and talk to him about things...He always, he always makes sure that he knows what's going on in my life. And, that he's always a part of what's decided. And...a part of...disciplining me (*brief laughing sound*).

Like Alexis, Allison spoke about her father as someone with whom she has an excellent relationship. However, when I asked her if she would talk with him freely about her decisions about moral issues she replied, "It would depend on what it was...like, if it was something...like sex, I wouldn't talk to him about that...I would talk to my friends about that, but...if it was something different, I probably would."

Although Joan mentioned more than once how much she respects her parents because of "a lot of the decisions they've made in their lives," on one occasion she added, "I find, some things, you just can't, I just can't go to my parents about, but I can go to my sister because she's been through a lot of the same things that I have...so, I really look up to her."

There are, of course, many reasons why someone would not go to a parent for advice. Although Mari-Jane lives with her mother and does not see her father very often, she told me that she would prefer talking with her father about a personal problem, because, in her words, "I don't like to tell my mom what's wrong really cause...she blames it on me... she turns it around so it's all my fault, and I don't like that." In a related remark, Richard also expressed a feeling of not wanting to be perceived in a negative way, but he stated clearly that his reluctance to seek advice from his parents stems from his closeness to them.

Sometimes with your parents, you wouldn't want to ask them for guidance on the subject because, you just, you're very close to them but, you don't want them to be like disappointed in you or something, right. And it's, sometimes it's best then to talk to someone that isn't really close to you, and doesn't know you, right - it's easier to talk to, not a complete stranger but, just someone detached.

Inevitably, problematical situations arise in family life, and several participants talked about difficult family experiences and their effects on making value-related decisions. On one occasion Rebecca Rose told me, "I don't drink because my dad was an alcoholic and I saw what happened to him," and on another occasion she described a decision "not to eat for a week"

because of feelings aroused by negative comments about her appearance from her mother.

She's always saying...when we go shopping, cause we go shopping a lot together, she's always saying, "Well, I don't really think that looks good on you, cause it makes you look fat," or "I don't like that cause it makes your head look too big," or something. And then she's always saying, "Oh, come on, Rebecca Rose, we gotta go, go, go loose some weight, go loose some weight." She's always saying if you don't loose some weight you're gonna grow up to be just like your aunts, and you're gonna gain twenty pounds every year. So it makes me feel really bad. So I go and not eat for like a week. Like I've done that a lot of times, just not eat for a whole week. And then I get sick. And then my mom, she'll say, "Why are you sick?" And then she just nags at me, likes gets into my head, and it just drives me crazy. She's always saying, "You have to loose weight or else you're gonna be fat for the rest of your life." And I always think, "Well I'm not fat. I like the way I am." And I say that to her, and she'll like..."Well you still have to loose weight," and she goes, "I don't want you to gain any more weight. You're gonna be ugly (*slight laugh*)."

Difficult family situations need not be as striking as the one just described by Rebecca Rose in order to have an impact on value-related decisions. Obviously, these decisions are affected by the familiar, everyday problems and concerns that arise continually as part of on-going relationships. Participants in this research project often mentioned two such experiences: a feeling of being misunderstood, and a feeling of not being trusted enough by their parents. Here is what Mariah, whose strong attachment to her family was evident throughout both of our conversations, told me about an issue of misunderstanding with her parents that potentially has important implications for her future academic and career choices.

Well, they don't, they support me sometimes, like, but they don't support me enough. They don't...push me hard enough, which I wish

they would, but...I don't know, I just want...they, they tell me to do stuff but I just really...won't do it. Cause they'll tell me, they'll tell me to get a tutor, and I'll get one, but it's only once a week, and they'll tell me to get another one, but I want them to get it for me. I don't want myself to get it for me...Cause I think...they just...they tell me to do better but, that doesn't really do anything...Cause I wanna, I wanna get a scholarship, for sports or something, and my dad won't push me hard enough with my soccer, or any of my sports.

Undoubtedly, Mariah's experience of not being "pushed hard enough" in her sporting activities will affect the way she makes value distinctions in some way. For example, when trying to determine the relative importance of attending a sports tournament as opposed to completing a school assignment, will she interpret her father's apparent lack of encouragement as an indication that she must find the determination to succeed in sports from within herself, or will she interpret it as an indication that sports are less important to her father (and perhaps, by extension, to others) than to her? These or other interpretations of her father's actions would have different effects on how she classifies her alternatives and ultimately how she makes a decision.

The important point here is that Mariah's classification of options available to her ultimately depends, not on the specific influences acting on her, but rather on her interpretation of them. This is why an understanding of human *processes* and the *purposes* underlying them provides an essential context within which to consider the innumerable variables that influence people's actions. Human activity is not the *product* of specific variables: rather, it is the *process* of interpreting them in a meaningful way (Tolman, 1991: 1994).

During our two conversations, Winnie often spoke about problematical family relations in a way that shows how her *interpretation* of these events provides her with important information when making value distinctions. Many of the family situations she described could easily be labelled as negative experiences when considered apart from her own reflections about them. For example, she talked about family quarrels, about "not getting along with" her father, about "having differences" with her mother, and about feeling "pulled in different directions" when trying to deal with the way her parents want her to live up to their image of who she ought to be: "Sometimes I'm too young for things, I'm too old for things, or sometimes I'm a kid, and sometimes it's like act like an adult." Also, she spoke about how "it really hurts" to feel that her mother does not trust her, and more than once mentioned how much she "hates" smoking and that her mother smokes a lot. As she described these family issues and events to me, I was convinced that Winnie experienced them as a means of establishing what she considers positive values for herself. "I have a lot of high expectations in the way I make decisions for myself," she told me, "because I think I've done pretty good so far." In the following words, she identified what she considers the most important influence on the way she makes decisions about values.

I guess it's just...my parents, the way...they think of me...and stuff like that, and..but then I start to think that, if my parents don't like me, then...like me for who I am...that's not...really right. But I think the main thing is that, I have to live with myself for the rest of my life. Like, if other people don't like living with me then, they don't have to. So I sorta have to do what I think is right so I'll be happy with myself.

So that's basically what it is...cause I wanna keep myself safe, cause I wanna...do a bunch a things.

The impact of societal life on making value distinctions

During one of my classroom visits, a video was shown that ostensibly deals with different kinds of "power struggles" among teenagers. It portrays, in two separate scenarios, how a newly formed attachment between a boy and girl can be put under stress by different groups of friends. In separate incidents, each peer group appears intent on convincing the individuals involved that they are being manipulated or controlled by their new boyfriend or girlfriend.

After this video presentation, students ridiculed its depiction of peer pressure and said emphatically that, even though the actors appeared to be their own age (i.e. fifteen or sixteen), the behaviours shown were a totally unrealistic portrayal of their own experiences. Many students in this grade 10 class identified these behaviours as being typical of grade 7, and some associated them with grades 6 and 5. In a similar way, several participants in this research project identified this kind of peer pressure specifically as an "earlier" experience.

Although all participants talked about being influenced by friends, they did not describe this influence in terms of constraining or limiting pressures, but rather in terms of varied purposes. The purposes most often mentioned were receiving advice and support about their decisions, and being able to share experiences of personal concern. Allison described both these purposes

when she told me that she tells her girlfriends "like most everything" and I asked why she did this.

Like for support, you can tell them something and they like give it, give you advice, and, and try to help you. And it's like partly sharing, cause you wanna tell them something and you know that they'll listen to you.

In general, whenever participants talked about the way their friends influence their moral choices, it was in terms of activities that are freely-chosen rather than pressured. Terry conveys this impression in the following remarks.

Most people rely on their friends, and like, if their friends are doing something, they'll want to do it too, because their friends are doing it. But, it's not actually, if you don't feel comfortable doing anything, then you won't do it...Like you rely on your friend's opinion and you rely on your friends to help you to make decisions but, in the end it's just what you feel comfortable with. But they give you the suggestions or help you or they tell you to do something, but you don't have to do it.

Although Terry's comments reflect my perception of how friendship experiences influence the moral choices of the participants in this research, one participant, Janice, suggested in her feedback letter to me that peer pressure may be a more important influence than many adolescents of her age admit. "I think one aspect left out was peer pressure," she wrote. "Maybe people don't like to admit (it), or maybe don't realize they fall under peer pressure."

In considering Janice's comment, it should be noted that it concerns her perception of others rather than reflecting her own experiences. On more than one occasion during our conversations, Janice observed that she herself did not experience any peer pressure. For instance, after describing a particular

transgression that had been performed in the presence of a friend, she remarked, "But, it wasn't really her that made me do it...It wasn't peer pressure, cause I don't get affected by peer pressure at all. I don't care about that." On another occasion I asked her specifically if she thought her friends influenced her decisions about "what's right," and this was her response.

Not really, no...They don't really influence me that much unless, they like tell me something about, like my clothes or something like, like stuff like that...They don't affect me on my moral values.

Of course, people occasionally succumb to outside pressures and perform actions that compromise their values. Joan mentioned this fact, but she put it into the context of the participants in this research by saying that, in her experience, being forced to do something is not a "big issue" with her or her friends.

I mean, if you have a lot of people pressuring you, sometimes you are gonna give in. I mean, if some of your friends are telling you to, to smoke pot or something, sometimes you're gonna give in, just because everybody else is doing it, you feel...left out. But I personally...don't make that a big, big issue with my friends. Like my friends...know the way I am and they don't make a big issue out of forcing me to do things I don't wanna do. And I mean, if I don't wanna do something, I'm not going to do it. And if I do do it, my conscience just, I have a huge conscience, it just nags at me...until I do something to make it better, so...

Friendship implies an experience of mutual influence, and participants often spoke about it in that way. For example, Mari-Jane told me that she and her boyfriend argue a lot even though they are very much alike, and added that "he talks some sense into me and I talk some sense into him." Also, Perrin talked about his relationship with a close friend in terms of being both a

recipient and a provider of advice and support.

I also have friends who are an influence. I have a close friend who's also a Christian and he influences my decisions sometimes. Where I may want to do something like, oh...I don't know, let me think. Say, there's one time we were after...a rowing party, and we all wanted to go out...to town, you know, just go to town and goof around and, it was quite late and we were tired from rowing that day, and I thought, "Yah, let's go for it." But then my friend says, "Maybe this isn't a safe thing to do; you don't know, you're, you're all wound up and we're tired, maybe we should just go home and play a game or something." And I, I reflected on it and I thought, "That's probably the better idea." And then there are circumstances when, we want to go to a show, and...I'm very strict about what I like to see. I don't want to see anything that will influence me. He's not quite that way, so sometimes I will influence him not to go to these, these shows. It will work both ways.

In addition to providing advice and support in what might be called tempting situations, friends often help one another achieve goals. Becky talked about this aspect of friendship.

If I wanna get an "A" in some class, they'll make sure I do. Depends what friend it is...my best friend always makes sure...We always help each other and...if you've got some kind of goal we always...try to do it together.

When I asked Becky if she and her friend were alike and if it was important to her that they share the same values, her response reflected what several other participants had told me. "Some things are different...You don't have to be alike to still be a friend; you don't have to have everything in common to still like them, and help them and support them." In speaking about the same topic, Alexis mentioned that she learns more about how other people think by having friends with values that differ from hers.

I do have some friends, their values...we agree on some of the same things but we don't on other things. And...we try and avoid the subjects as much as possible so we don't get in arguments or anything. We're always willing to hear each other's side of it so it's not really...it's not really one-sided and that you should believe this... You learn a lot more...well you understand the way other people think better. Like their values...are different from yours so, the things they believe...are probably different from yours too and so...it really expands on...like, yah, expands on everything.

Rebecca Rose also spoke about the importance of understanding the way other people think. Although her remarks did not focus on friendship, they described a certain way she has of dealing with people that provides her with information for making value distinctions relating to interpersonal activities.

I like fighting. Verbally fighting. I like debating...Yah, I love doing that...I just like letting people know what I think....Cause, a lot of the time people say what they want and, I don't really understand, so I wanta know why. So I get them fighting with me, so that I know why. Cause like...they don't have time to think, so they just say what comes to their head. So, they tell the truth...Yah...That's what I do with my mom. So she tells me...stuff, I, I start fights with her, so that she tells me...then she doesn't lie.

Although knowing what others think may be important information when making value distinctions, there is an emotional aspect to this process that should not be overlooked. When faced with the need to differentiate interpersonal actions, it is reasonable to assume that a person might feel more confident about making certain distinctions if he or she feels supported. I think most people would say, as did Janice and several other participants, that it "feels good" to be able to talk with someone about important personal decisions. Joan described how she "tells everything" to her best friend, "cause

she's a really good listener and she just...you know, she knows when to let me say what I have to say and when to try and give me advice." Joan also described what it might be like for her if she did not have this experience of support. "Being able to listen to my problems," she told me, "that's really a big thing for me because, if I didn't have anybody to talk to these things about, I'd like, might be really messed up."

Throughout my conversations with Mari-Jane, it was obvious to me that her life centres around her interpersonal relations. Everything she talked about was in the context of her everyday experiences with people. Although she often spoke about how much she enjoys helping others, she also mentioned that, if she is in a "real bad mood," people around her often make her feel as if she doesn't have a "right to be sad" because she's always so happy. In the following words, she describes this feeling as well as the actions of a particular friend who helps her to cope with it by providing support.

I was sitting in the living room the other day and I said, "I hate guys." And she (*i.e. her mother*) goes, "Mmm." And I'll get in a fight with D_____ (*i.e. her boyfriend*) or whatever and then, she kinda turned it around so it was my fault, the fight was my...and she turns it around so it's all my fault...and I don't like that...Well, B_____, my best friend now, she helps me get a lot...she thinks I'm pretty much straightforward. So when I say, "Oh, I'm so mad at D_____", she goes, "Oh, you have a right to be," or whatever, and it kinda helps me out like...Thanks like.

To summarize this section: participants often talked about their interpersonal relations in ways that suggested they are important sources of information and support for them when making value distinctions. Two brief

comments stand out for me as focused, summary expressions of this experience. The first comment comes once more from Mari-Jane. It is her answer to my initial question to her. "Mostly I don't think about actually making a decision," she told me, "I think about who I'm doing it with or whatever." The second comment comes from near the end of my last conversation with Winnie. "I have a lot of rules for myself," she said, "and they're mixed up with everybody else's."

Making value distinctions: A summary

When a person responds to an impulse to make a value judgment, alternative actions must be differentiated before they can be either accepted or rejected as a standard for personal conduct. The processes of differentiating and evaluating actions in moral terms is commonly experienced as having a conscience, and the preceding section has dealt with the first phase of this experience, making value distinctions.

Participants in this research project talked about making value distinctions in three ways. The first way can be thought of as an intrapersonal experience and involves individual cognitive processes such as attending to priorities (as in weighing the "pros and cons" of various actions) and attending to consequences (as in caring about the effect of one's actions on others). The second way of making value distinctions can be thought of as a micro-societal experience and involves family influences such as listening to parents talk

about their lives, being concerned about how one's actions affect family life, and seeking and receiving advice from family members. The impact of these experiences depends on how individuals interpret them. The third way of making value distinctions can be thought of as a individual-societal experience and involves interpersonal relations, especially friendship. When describing this experience, participants focused on activities such as listening and talking with friends, and giving and receiving advice and support. Also, they spoke about these experiences in terms of freely-chosen rather than pressured activities.

Accepting Value Distinctions

I think that...you know, making your morality and your values come from what you've learned. When you're younger I think it comes more from what your parents...I guess advise you, you know, what to do, what to get into and stuff. But when you grow, start to grow up and mature, I think that it's based on your experiences and stuff that you, you know maybe do research into and learn that...it's not good. (Allie)

Allie describes the making of moral values as a learning process that becomes an increasingly self-generated experience. Her description reflects a persistent theme in this research and illustrates what many participants told me about the way they react to moral information: they want to make their value judgments their own, i.e. they want to be personally responsible for accepting particular value distinctions. In Richard's words:

You can't always take other people's words for it, right. You have to experience some things for yourself to know that this is wrong or that this isn't wrong, you know, or this is good or bad or whatever.

A value judgment occurs when an individual accepts a particular moral distinction as a standard for personal conduct. Just as participants spoke about making value distinctions in terms of intrapersonal, family, and societal influences, they spoke about accepting them in similar ways. Although these are interrelated experiences, they are outlined in this section individually because each reflects a different kind of inducement to adopt moral distinctions.

Personal influences on the acceptance of value distinctions

When people accept distinctions of right and wrong immediately upon recognizing them, they are responding to what they perceive as a rule or law. In this kind of a situation, the judgment that such a distinction is important and should be a standard for personal conduct has already been made and functions automatically as part of a person's moral character. However, people do not always adopt what is considered right as a guide for their immediate behaviour, and their questioning or non-acceptance of a value distinction may be an important step in forming a morality that is experienced as internally generated rather than imposed.

Participants talked about three kinds of intrapersonal activities related to their acceptance of value distinctions: learning from mistakes, using feelings as a guide for making moral evaluations, and responding to life in a spiritual way.

Learning from mistakes

Participants spoke not only about departing occasionally from their moral standards but also about the importance of making mistakes in the formation of their moral character. One of Allie's first comments to me concerned this experience which she identified as a starting point for an increase in her thinking about moral issues.

There'd be times when I just forget about my morals and values I guess and kinda do whatever and I...I do think I've done, you know, I've done things, just rebellious acts or whatever...I just kinda go with, you know, what my friends are doing. But I've learned from those mistakes and I...I think that's really what motivated me to start thinking a lot more about my decisions I made.

Allie talked about the importance of learning from mistakes on several occasions and also mentioned it in her feedback letter. Usually her remarks reflected a sense of being "glad" for the experiences because they helped to clarify how she felt about her values. Charles also mentioned that sometimes he felt a kind of appreciation for going through an experience of what he called being "off track" because it helped him maintain a spiritual connection with God through prayer.

Well it helps me correct situations and...well in my mind I correct them you know, I say, "Well I should have done this maybe." And sometimes I don't even...think about it necessarily, as I just think, "Well you know that was wrong, I shouldn't have done that," but...and then you move on and you don't analyze it completely. But I think it helps if you analyze it...Like if I was in a down, like kind of a down time...it kind of helped me...well, probably more in prayer than anything else...I looked to God and then I think that helped me quite a bit...Sometimes you know you, you get off track again and...you know I think God sometimes brings those down times to help build up...yah, to be closer to God...It [*i.e. prayer*] builds a spiritual connection...Yah,

it builds a spiritual connection and it helps you...well, feel more comfortable with, with certain situations.

For both Allie and Charles, learning from mistakes is a process of reflecting on past events as a means of reaffirming or refining personal standards of conduct. Joan's description of learning from mistakes emphasizes that such experiences help her to establish personal values.

Well, if you just followed the rules all the time you'd never try anything. You'd never, you'd never know what...you can't accomplish it, like get your own values, without doing things. Like.. you could, say you go out and get drunk. Well, you decide you don't like it. So then it's one of your values. You just don't want to drink. But I think it's important that you try things. I mean everybody's gonna try basically everything once...and if you try it and you don't like it, just don't do it again. That's, you know, you don't wanta do it, so that's just against your values. And if you do like it, you do it again...And another thing is your parents. I mean they're not gonna want you to make mistakes, but they've made mistakes in their lives so they have to stand back and let you make your own decisions sometimes. So.

Joan's observation is about forming and understanding the values underlying her own behaviour. When Terry mentioned her belief that "you have to make mistakes to learn from them," she added that this kind of experience is also important for understanding the behaviour of others.

Well if you don't make mistakes and if you don't try some stuff or actually just let loose once in awhile, you won't understand people, and you're like...very naive about a lotta stuff. And, like the world today is like getting really crazy and everything. If you don't experience it then you won't understand it. So you'd have a really hard time learning how to live in the world, cause you're really naive, you know.

Terry's comment suggests that her occasional non-acceptance of value distinctions has a practical benefit for her. Becky talked about this issue in ways that gave me the impression that she thought people actually needed "bad

experiences" in order to develop morally. When I asked her if this impression was accurate, she confirmed that it was and added the following observation.

Because then we might go wondering, "Well what if I had done that." And then you don't actually find out what would happen if you'd done that. But then you'd know for the rest of time what...what you need to do...Almost like you, you're driving and you go down the wrong road. Well then you know for the rest of your life that that road's a dead end.

Responding to feelings

Participants often spoke about both thinking and feeling experiences when describing the way they make moral decisions. Although several people identified one or the other as the major influence, it is likely that both activities function throughout the decision-making process and that the relative importance of each is related to particular phases and how particular individuals respond to these phases.

For example, Perrin made it clear that he believes his ability "to reason things out" takes precedence over his emotions when making moral decisions, yet he added that "emotions do play their part, you know: if you know something's wrong, your emotions are gonna tell you something's wrong...emotions make the world interesting." In this observation, Perrin implied that emotional reactions function as a guide for accepting or rejecting actions after they have been differentiated in terms of right or wrong. He confirmed this implication in his feedback letter when he wrote, "I know that whenever I am faced with a choice, especially when it involves temptation, I instantly experience a "feeling" which informs that one of the subjects of the

decision is ethically wrong."

Joan described a similar experience to Perrin's when she identified feelings about the use of alcohol as indicators of whether drinking should or should not be part of someone's behaviour: "you know, you don't wanta do it, so that's just against your values, and if you do like it, you do it again." On another occasion, she expressed regret about not using her feelings in this way when she was younger.

I guess when I was, I guess in grade eight and grade seven, I did a lot of things that I totally regret now because they just weren't, they weren't something I wanted to do. But now, if I wanna do it, I'll do it. If I don't, there's, I won't. And no matter how much pressure people put on me I won't do it if I don't want to.

Sometimes it is difficult to attach specific reasons for the feelings we have. However, several participants did convey a sense of why they felt as they did when accepting or rejecting value distinctions. Rebecca Rose told me that, when trying to decide whether to go to a class or for a walk with a friend who is upset, "sometimes you just wanna go (i.e. for a walk) cause the class is really boring, or stuff like that." Also, Janice talked about her experiences with taking drugs both in terms of boredom and a dislike of "not being able to think straight."

Like, I used to do drugs and everything and I just, now I think it's boring and it, I don't, I don't like it. And...I don't like what it does to, like I've seen with other people who are totally messed up with drugs and they just...life is just destroyed basically. And...they like act dumb and...but mostly it's, I just don't like it. I just don't like doing it...Just personal, personal feelings I guess. I, I probably, if I did like it I probably would have been doing it more, but I don't, I just don't cause I, I'd rather be straight. You see, I don't like not being able to like

think straight and everything. I don't like that.

Janice's comments suggest that her attitude about not taking drugs has become a fairly stable aspect of her character. However, participants also talked about transient feelings aroused by everyday events as having an effect on the way they accept value distinctions. For instance, Charles talked about watching television in this context.

Well, maybe something on TV or something that's really...grossing you out or you're not, you think, "Well this is kinda sick," and maybe, and it's saying, "Well you know, this is kinda sick, it goes against everything, you, you..." It's kind of an emotion isn't it? And so, it kind of turns you away and you shouldn't watch that, right. You shouldn't. You should turn it off or flip the channel or whatever...Yah, yah. And that's, that's emotions and so it is leading you in the right direction in that case.

Reflecting another kind of everyday occurrence, Rebecca Rose mentioned that a person's appearance or general attitude affects her decisions about interacting with that person. When talking specifically about her relationship with her mother she told me, "she'll be in a bad mood so I'll get in a bad mood at her and then we'll start fighting at each other." In addition to the people around us, certain daily events (like doing poorly on a test) might affect the way someone considers a moral issue. Here is what Becky said about this kind of experience.

I guess my personality affects it...how I feel about myself. And then how I feel about myself affects everything else. So if I did really bad on a test I would think, sorta, so then I'd just go around and not feel the same way about everything...So...so my morals change that way, because I just think, "It doesn't matter anyway." But it does.

Joan also spoke about how personality and emotional responses to daily

situations influence the acceptance or rejection of value distinctions.

I think that everything relates to everything else. So whatever happens it goes back to you and your conscience and your personality and...so even, just like if you're happy one day, and then you're sad the next day, it's just, it's just the way you feel you know...It, it does change though. I mean, if you're in a good mood you're gonna want to go out and do things with your friends. And if you're in a bad mood you're just gonna want to, you know, sit at home and do nothing. But, you know, it, it relates to each person differently. So.

Although we may have personality traits that persist throughout life, common experience tells us that the way we respond emotionally to situations often varies both with age and with our immediate location. Allison drew attention to these variations in the following remarks about changes she perceived in her overall approach to decisions about right and wrong.

I used to live in L_____, and the people there are really different, and you kind of had to be like, I guess, it's kinda like you had to be like sheep there in order to fit it. Like you had to be like everybody else...And it's probably partly because that was a couple of years ago, and that's when everybody's trying to fit in...Yah. And it was like everybody had to have like the "Guess" jeans or the right kind of T-shirt, and they had to do this and like, if they did that, you know, that was bad. But now, it doesn't really matter. Like whatever you do is OK, and like whatever you wear is OK...Yah. Like, and cause I think, I don't know why but, just because we're older, we...it doesn't really matter that much.

Just as age and location can affect the way we respond to feelings as a guide for accepting value distinctions, everyday changes in our moods can affect these responses as well. Terry provided a vivid description of this experience.

Yah, cause like if I'm in a really bad mood or something, or in a really good mood sometimes, I get like...I'm like a, an adrenalin junkie. I do things for adrenalin rushes. Things like drive cars really fast, you know

and...drive on ice, like frozen lakes and stuff like that or...And so, if I'm like you know I gotta do something, I'll do stuff that I wouldn't normally do, because it'll be like stupid and dangerous but I'll just say, "Who cares," and feel like doing it and I'll do it anyway.

As Terry's comment implies, responding to strong feelings may weaken a person's adherence to their normal values, and several participants talked about this experience. For example, Perrin observed how emotional reactions could interfere with interpersonal relations in ways that might affect a person's response to value distinctions.

Well I think our emotions are good and also...they can really disrupt communication, good communications, by becoming very emotional about something you could say things you never should say, you can say things that'll, you know, damage any relationship. Basically, it'll, in a way it makes you speak before you think, your emotions. You start blurting things out and then things go downhill and the other person becomes emotional and pretty soon you know, communication's destroyed.

Charles recounted an incident from his family life that relates to Perrin's observation. In addition to illustrating how an emotional response interfered with his usual standard of behaviour, this incident reflects how Charles used his experience as a guide for future conduct.

Well a couple of days ago I was at the breakfast table and - this is like a confession - I (uh) fought with my brother a little bit, with a cereal box or something. But, you know, that's just another, I looked back at it afterwards and I thought, "That's, that's immature, rather childish," and you know, "Why, why did I make the decision to do that instead of..." I didn't, well at the time, I just kinda reacted...probably more emotional, just because it's, it's so sudden you just, I don't know, suddenly angry with your brother cause he's made a comment or something, you know, you just act on that anger. Whereas maybe the anger, you don't necessarily suppress it, but you don't, you don't carry out an action with it, you know. You can, well, yah don't carry out like...

By describing this incident, Charles illustrated two important aspects of making a value judgment. In the first place, his description of being influenced by his emotions to act contrary to his usual moral values shows that value distinctions do not necessarily result in accepting what is considered right as a standard for immediate behaviour. Secondly, his reflection that it should be possible to experience this kind of emotional influence without acting on it suggests that making a particular value judgment does not necessarily mean that a person will act in accordance with it: that is, making a value judgment is not the same as making a moral decision. However, the cognitive and emotive activities involved in making a value judgment contribute substantially to making the moral decision-making process a self-generating system rather than a series of automatic reactions.

Spirituality

Although several participants referred occasionally to the influence of religious values on either their own or a friend's decision-making activities, Charles and Perrin made this experience the central focus of their contributions to this research in a way that suggested it is also a central focus for their everyday lives. In the following comments Perrin illustrated the application of his religious values within his school environment.

I was in a situation the other day, where we were leaving for a trip, and as we were waiting outside the front of the school, there was a group of guys - there was about four of them - and I was there, and we were talking basketball, and then somehow they started talking about sexual issues and premarital sex, and I told them I disagreed with that and then they laughed at me, and I said, "I think it's the greatest gift

you can give your wife," or whatever. And they...you know, they disagreed with me and they started laughing at me. So there I was faced with - I was in a position where my morals were under fire I guess you could say. So, but I, eventually just withdrew and I started, you know, I walked away and started thinking to myself and let them talk about it.

When I observed that his actions implied there is "a lot of strength attached" to his values, Perrin responded as follows.

The strength comes from my religion. I have to say that. Christ is basically my cornerstone, and I, he is the driving force behind this. So, if I was just on my own, I don't think, I think there are powers in this world that would influence me if I was on my own. But because I have him there and he loves me, I think he guides me in the right direction.

When Perrin referred to being guided in the right direction by Christ, I think he was describing the kind of experience involved in the acceptance of value distinctions, i.e. an experience of being guided towards what is considered morally *right*. Charles referred to a similar experience when he talked about a need for courage when making certain decisions, courage which he identified as coming "from the Holy Spirit."

Well certain kinds of, kinds of decisions need courage, I believe, because, well just the type of decision they are, maybe it's something you don't exactly feel like you want to do, or you don't feel like, I don't know, maybe it's something, you know you should do it, but it's hard, so you need courage to move on with that decision.

As Charles' comment implies, realizing what should be done is sometimes in conflict with personal feelings. In this kind of a situation a value distinction has been made but not yet accepted as a standard for conduct. Both Charles and Perrin talked about being guided in situations of this sort by experiences they call spiritual, and Perrin specifically identified these

experiences as the most important aspect of making moral decisions.

When you're making decisions, yes as I said there were the three parts [*i.e. the intellectual, emotional, and the spiritual*] and I think the spiritual is the most important part of...making your decision. Definitely influences you the most I would say...

When I asked him if he would talk further about the idea of spirituality,

Perrin responded without hesitation.

Your spirit, well, your spirituality is...how do you say, it, it guides you. Mentally you may choose what you think is best for yourself or, but there's that element of, you know, where does "I wanta help others come from?" Where does "I want to, I don't know, earn the respect and witness to others," and you know, where does this come from? And, where does it come from, you know, even though you know stealing's gonna get you ahead, why don't you steal? So, I think, well I think that's basically what the Bible is written for too. The Bible was a book of you know, ethics, right and wrong. It was a book of philosophy, but I think it was basically a book of...talking to your spirit. That's why I need the Holy Spirit to understand it. So it's difficult to say exactly what the spirit is, but it's definitely an element in decision.

Charles also expressed his understanding of spirituality during a part of our second conversation in which he described how his response to "going through a rough time" may result in an improvement to his spiritual life.

Spirituality. I think it's kind of a different, different sense. You know we've got the physical sense, you know where we, where, feeling and we've got, you know, we've got our body. And then we've got the mental sense in which we're actually thinking and intellectually pondering stuff. And we've got the spiritual sense which is, well different, different...it's in the spiritual world, in a sense, and while - you've heard that we each have a soul, I don't know if you believe that or not, but I think that's, that spirit of the soul is in the spiritual world and through it, like in this, I think, through sin we've been kind of disconnected that, like we've kind of...though we're still connected, we're just, you know we're, we're ignoring that in a sense. And so, the spiritual, spiritual world is just, a different realm I guess. I don't know how to explain it...But I don't think we need to know what the clear

definition is. We just need to know that it's there...and that, you know, you have access to it. But we choose to ignore it a lot of times.

Both Charles and Perrin said that access to the spiritual world comes through prayer, and both identified prayer as an important activity when making decisions. Charles described prayer as follows.

It builds a spiritual connection...Yah, it builds you a spiritual connection and it helps you, well feel more comfortable with, with certain situations. And, you know...well, just, well you're, you're kinda confessing things you've done...in certain situations, and asking for help with other situations, which may be hard. And you know it does give you comfort, and it does help you with the situation..to get rid of - it may not always be easy but it will help you emotionally and...and I can't say how...cause well, it's, it's with spirituality...Like you, you read the Bible and then you, you meditate on it and you pray about it. You know, and it kind of builds it into you and helps you, you know...and I need that help...So.

Perrin also talked about needing the help that comes through prayer as a means of dealing with emotional pressures that sometimes act on his values.

Well sometimes like, I'll be, I'll be so down-hearted, I'll be like "Aahh, I can't believe it: I can't put up with this anymore: I can't put up with the world anymore: I'm getting all these pressures." And I'll pray, and then suddenly, I mean, Hey, away it goes. I'm ready, you know. It's there. It's just a feeling...So...

Later, Perrin suggested that the kind of guidance he receives through prayer is needed by everyone in order to come to an acceptance of moral values.

Well, I think, I think man as himself...even though we are very gifted...a very gifted race and we can do wonderful things, I don't think we'll ever pull it together by ourselves. And I think we need the guidance of, you know, the Father. Because, you know, no matter how much we try there's an element of evil in us and there's always gonna be war, so we need the Father to guide us I think...And there are things that are beyond me, that I could never imagine like, that are

very impossible, but with God all things are possible.

Although their experience of spirituality is presented here as an intrapersonal aspect of accepting value distinctions, the way Charles and Perrin spoke about it makes it clear that it pervades all aspects of how they make moral decisions. This observation reinforces the idea, mentioned previously, that all phases of making a moral decision are part of a holistic act, and as such, "facets of each part are present at all times from the beginning of the act to the end, such that each part affects the others" (Baldwin, 1986, pp.55-56). Perhaps spirituality, in its deepest sense, reflects this holistic aspect of human experience: an experience of being connected with a reality that provides a central focus for one's life, i.e. a central meaning.

Family influences on the acceptance of value distinctions

Just as participants spoke about family life as a source of moral information that allows them to form value distinctions, they also spoke about it as a source of influence in determining the personal importance of these distinctions. In making the following observation, Richard talked about the difference between having information about right and wrong and accepting it because of family influence.

I've sorta been thinking that everybody sort of knows to a degree what's right or wrong, but I think your parents and your family life sort of, like depending on the priority they put on it, it, it puts more emphasis on whether you should follow what's right or wrong....Right, because...because I think, by now everybody at least has an idea of what's right or wrong, but they might not, like it might not be an important thing, right.

Richard's comment suggests that making a value judgment about a particular action involves both having moral information and attaching personal importance to what is considered right. Alexis made a similar suggestion when she told me that she would not accept the values she has acquired from her parents if she did not agree with them.

I know lots of my values are the same as my mom and my dad's, because, I don't know, I was brought up believing in them and, if now I decided I didn't agree with them, I would change them but...my mom, my dad's, I don't know, they kind of brought me up to believe in them and I do believe in them, and so I wouldn't change them.

Like Alexis, many participants expressed agreement with the values they have received from their parents. However, several participants also suggested that acting against parental values is often part of acquiring a sense of what is personally important to them in terms of moral behaviour. Allie made such a suggestion when talking about an incident involving alcohol.

I think I did bend my...my morals, you know...I've had a sip here and there before but...I think I got too wrapped up in what other people said. And you know my friends gave it a try too...My parents were, you know, they said, "There will be a time," you know, "when you do try drinking," and you know, but you know, "try and keep it so that you'd have it under control" or whatever. But I think, yah, I bent my morals and, but a lot of people I know do it just because their parents told them, "Oh, you can't do this." So I know a lot of people that I talk to, they rebel against their parents just for the sake of, Oh, thinking that "Oh, I'm gonna be a wimp if I listen to my parents." But I find that going to my parents for advice is a lot better than just ignoring them or rebelling against them.

Allie's reflection on this particular incident, along with statements made at other times, implies that, even though she acted against values derived from her parents, eventually she reaffirmed her acceptance of them. In a related

context, Terry explained that she thinks the religious values with which she was raised still influence her moral decisions despite the fact that she no longer believes in her mother's religion.

Well, you usually get your values from like your parents, or like a religion, or your friends. Stuff like that...I don't know. I'm not, I don't really believe in any religion right now. My mom does. She's, you know, _____. And so she believes in that and everything. But she doesn't force it on me. So it makes me like...I'm not sure about religion. And, but I was raised in that, so my values are affected by that still even though I don't believe in it, still I think, I was raised by that...She's given me an option, right. But she tells me what she believes and stuff and she raised me like that, so I still have sort of her values.

In the above comment Terry spoke about being influenced by her mother's values but also about not believing in them. On another occasion she told me, "The values stay with me," but added "it just doesn't mean you have to believe in it." These apparently contradictory statements may suggest that she uses moral information from her upbringing as a means of differentiating right and wrong but feels that her acceptance of these value distinctions must be of her own making. Terry's mother apparently reinforces this experience by not forcing her religion on her daughter and by acting as a positive role model in the many ways that Terry mentioned explicitly.

As mentioned previously, participants often talked about parents as role models. In addition, several participants identified specific values derived from their upbringing to which they attach particular importance. For example, when Mariah told me that many of her friends "won't really help anybody out but I'll help anybody out," she added this reason, "I guess probably cause of,

cause of my family, cause my family does it." Snow White also spoke about specific aspects of her family experiences which have particular importance for her. In the following comment, she identified her upbringing as the most important influence on the way she makes moral decisions.

I think the way I was brought up, my parents...I always go to them for advice and stuff...I don't know, they just, they never, like take people's word for it, like, always find out for themselves, and they follow their dreams...I've an artistic family. My dad's _____, my older brother's _____, and my mom's _____... I think art affects people...I think that being into some form of art like...it like enhances you sort of. It makes you more...more I guess more open to people and different ideas just cause it's different. And it doesn't follow like the strict pattern of every day that people usually follow like, get into the office building or whatever, nine to five job, it's different than that.

When I asked Snow White how the openness she talked about might affect her interactions with others, she answered by saying that it gives her "more tolerance, more understanding towards people in different situations and...ability to deal with stuff better maybe, cause you're more tolerant."

The impact of family experiences on the way Snow White accepts value distinctions comes in the form of attaching importance to specific values. However, Mari-Jane talked about another kind of family influence that involves attaching importance to a particular method or style of dealing with moral issues. "Like instead of having one big crisis on your hands," she told me, "my family just fixes it." She elaborated on this problem-solving approach to handling moral decisions in the following way.

I used to go to Church. And they have a lot of standards that you have to live up to, or whatever. And basically, no I don't have any moral

standards like I...I deal with it as it comes. Like I don't say, "OK, if I get in this situation, I'll do this," because most likely, the situation will change. So as the problem comes along, I'll deal with it then. But I don't have like...a standard which I'm gonna live up to, like my grades at school or whatever - I have to get an A. I've got a friend who does that - I have to get an A - and she'll stay up to like five o'clock in the morning, morning doing homework. I'm like, "OK, I'll settle for a C: I'm passing, I'm doing OK, I'm only in grade ten: I don't have to impress anybody: As long as I get through school, that's fine with me," and that's my standard. Or...most of the stuff I do is to perfection though. Kinda like my dad. Like when I clean the kitchen, it's like spotless. I only, I don't know, I don't know why I do it, but if it's, if the job's gonna be done, it's gotta be done like right.

Because the value distinctions she makes apply to particular situations and derive from her own application of moral principles rather than from pre-established standards, it is likely that Mari-Jane experiences these distinctions as a personal creation and therefore accepts them as important guidelines for her behaviour. This sense of "ownership" towards her decisions is also suggested by the fact she regards herself as a perfectionist when acting on them. In this situation, the impact of family life on the way she accepts value distinctions comes in the form of an influence on her style of dealing with moral issues rather than on any importance attached to specific values.

The impact of societal life on the acceptance of value distinctions

I watch other people, how they act, and then, if I don't like the way they act or what they do, I won't. I think it basically comes from inside...Yah...sometimes I'll just sit there and I'll just watch other people...doing something wrong...So I just sort of...watch, and I just sorta, if I talk, if I talk to them I'll just say, "If I were you" thing...I would, like it's weird the way I just watch other people and say, "I'm never gonna do that," stuff like that...I've always wanted to sorta grow up and just be this...person that I am, and not have any influence of other people, or anything like that. (Winnie)

Winnie's statement that she wants to "just be this person that I am" without the influence of other people suggests a desire to make value judgments that she considers "belong" to her. As noted earlier, participants in this research often reflect a predilection for ownership over their moral activity, and this idea of ownership requires either giving or withholding their personal acceptance of the moral information they have acquired throughout their lives. Winnie's description of looking critically into the world around her reflects this process of making personal assessments of the way people conduct their lives in order to determine the kinds of value judgments that are important to her.

Mari-Jane described the same experience when she talked about the numerous people - both related and non-related - that have lived with her family. "Everything you watch affects you in some way," she told me, and after talking at some length about various domestic experiences, this is what she said about how they have affected her.

I can pretty much figure out situations that people are in and help them out a little bit because there's so many different people...so I guess everybody, everybody that has ever lived with me gives me a little bit more insight of like what I don't want. Because all of them have gone through really bad things...And I guess that I've, I help a whole bunch a people, getting through situations that they're in, but, I, I'd never want to get into a situation like that personally, like...like it's, it's me that has the problem or whatever.

In the above comments Mari-Jane and Winnie talked about observing others in terms of determining what they do not want as part of their lives. Participants also talked about observing others critically in terms of

determining what they do want as part of their lives. In making the following comment, Richard talked about both experiences and emphasized the importance he attaches to developing a sense of ownership for his moral activity by identifying negative influences as coming from people who do not assert their individualities.

I have some friends that are really moral, and they really do things that, at least it seems to me outwardly that they seem to do just about everything right. Right. And they make decisions and they don't like put people down. They really...they seem to care about other people and they are, they think...they think before they act. And other friends that are negative influences seem to be friends that are themselves easier to influence by other people because they're just sort of, you know, going with the flow kind of thing. And those people are negative influence because you can sorta get sucked into, you know, the sort of...like larger, like, I don't know, lowest common denominator or something.

Whenever participants spoke about their interpersonal relations as an influence on the way they accept value distinctions, it was usually in terms of their importance for personal conduct. However, occasionally they spoke about this kind of influence in terms of its importance for society. For example, Snow White suggested that some adults do not fully understand that adolescents of her generation are trying to change values they believe are wrong. I asked her if she thought that, in general, adults in her immediate surroundings have a realistic idea how people of her age deal with moral issues.

Some people do and some people don't. I find, like the people at _____ [*a youth club*] have a pretty realistic idea, and my parents have...and then some people don't at all... I don't know...I think people that are more set into, like the nine to five job, work in

the office, that type of thing...they're not quite so open to different ideas, aren't quite, like don't have the right idea of us. Also because, I think, our generation is more trying to change what's wrong - like with the environment and stuff like that. And then there's some people that are just stuck in their ways and don't want a change.

A reasonable implication of Snow White's observation is that the maintenance and development of societal well-being requires an understanding of differences which exist among people in the way they consider value-related issues. Many participants spoke about their interpersonal relations in ways that indicated they attach importance to understanding these differences. Moreover, they also indicated that they believe values need not always be considered absolute or may sometimes be interpreted in terms of specific situations. The remaining comments in this section portray a variety of their observations and experiences relating to these issues.

When Becky mentioned that she thought people's "impressions of what's right and wrong can be totally different from what another person thinks," I asked her to provide an example of what she meant. Here is her response.

Let's say some rich kid...they don't have as much, worry about, to like shoplift or something. They might do it just for the fun, cause they have everything they want. But somebody who doesn't have as much money, they do things because they don't have enough money to do something. So it's more...what's, not really moral but how much you really need something.

Becky's remark is about different responses to a value distinction that arise because of socio-economic positions. She implies that both individuals know that stealing is considered wrong but each evaluates a shoplifting

situation in a different way. In a previous section, individual interpretation was associated with influences on making value distinctions. Here, Becky's example illustrates that interpretation may also be an aspect of a person's acceptance of these distinctions.

Richard was the only participant to mention that there may be cultural differences in the way values are interpreted.

We're in the same culture, so you don't really know how other cultures respond to different moral things. Like, like a lot of things like theft and stuff wouldn't apply to people who didn't have like an idea of property and stuff, you know. So there, you know, things like, like just not hurting other people, like physically or emotionally, it could be an evil thing, because it seems to me that just about everybody feels that way. But it, it might not, I don't know.

Like Richard, several participants talked about believing that some values are probably absolute and others depend on individual circumstances.

Mari-Jane observed that "If you set a law you have to keep in mind that you'd have to stretch it somewhere because not everybody is in the same situation."

In her remarks about this issue, she also suggested that the many rules and regulations that are a part of everyday life are not all equally important and illustrated this suggestion with the following comparison.

Say you like run a red light or whatever, and you kept on running every red light. You'd end up killing yourself or somebody else and like, that's just because cars are coming from every direction. Like we're not allowed to chew gum in baseball anymore because somebody in China swallowed a piece of gum while they were playing baseball and died. I mean...but we still drive cars, right, and people die every day in car accidents. And it's like, OK, we're not allowed to chew gum, we're not allowed to do this, we're not allowed to do that. Breaking the rules as in chewing gum is OK. But killing somebody... breaking the rules is not OK...Some rules I don't agree with because

they're just, they're dumb. Because one out of a million people swallows a piece of gum and dies from it. And one out of a hundred people gets into a car accident like, every month or whatever - I don't know the statistics but it's...a lot more - but they haven't like suspended cars or whatever, and it happens everywhere.

For each activity in Mari-Jane's example, there is both a clear understanding of distinctions between right and wrong and a very different degree of acceptance for these distinctions. As indicated by the participants in this research, there may be any number of everyday experiences that have an impact on the degree to which a value distinction is accepted. For instance, Allison told me that if a friend wanted her to do something that she did not want to do, she might become "turned on" to doing it because of the strong feelings of her friend. Terry also spoke about being influenced by friends in this way and added that mood changes may result in changes to the way she responds to value distinctions.

Well, your friends could change the situation you know cause everything's like that but, reaction changes because, you tend more or less, like what mood you're in that day and stuff and...you just kinda like you're in a really good mood you'll like...let it slide, or really bad mood, somebody said something, like really pissed you off, and everybody's really upset and, something like that you know.

On several other occasions Terry emphasized that she deals with value-related choices in terms of specific situations. In considering the following comments about "cutting classes" and not wanting to return to school, it is important to note that, shortly after our two discussions for this research project, Terry decided to leave school for the second time and complete her High School requirements by means of correspondence courses. Looked at

from this perspective, her comments suggest that her reasons for missing school activities may involve aspects of her personality that are more deeply rooted than those implied by daily changes of mood.

I think the broader values like religion and everything, you basically don't wanna change. If you believe in them once, you'll believe in them always. But other values, like cheating on a test or something, it's like, it depends on what situation you are, you might change your mind or, like cutting class or anything, it just depends on the situation. Like you might, one situation, we thought you'd never do that, but then, we're actually in that situation, you ought to think about it and stuff...well just like awhile ago I used to, cutting classes and stuff. We took my friend to the hospital and I went to go visit her. And then I just didn't really feel like going back to class cause I hadn't been there for two days, so I didn't want to go there. And cause again I missed all the homework and stuff. So then I just didn't want to go there, so I just said, "I'll go tomorrow," and then "I'll just go tomorrow," and then I just kinda didn't want to go back.

At one point during my talks with Terry I asked her, in conversational language, if she thinks that some values are absolute. "Kind of not really", she told me: "it's more like you're not supposed to do this, you're not supposed to do that." Terry's answer implies that she considers her response to a value distinction to be a matter of interpretation and acceptance, and in some way, all participants in this research project indicated a similar experience, even those who expressed strong positions with regard to the "firmness" of certain value distinctions.

For example: On one occasion Charles told me that he thinks the Bible "declares" what is right and wrong and that it is wrong for people to try to manipulate situations so that "they can do what they want," but on another occasion he talked about "free-will" as an aspect of how people respond to

value distinctions. Here is a comment that expresses his belief that moral values can be clearly distinguished in terms of right and wrong.

I think they [*i.e. moral values*] should be firm, and they, I think the values of the Bible are firm, you know, they're set in place. They basically declare what is right and what is wrong, you know, and saying that all of us are in the wrong and that we need help to get into the right, you see. I don't think it's coloured. I think we try to, maybe, colour it or mask it or whatever, try to manipulate it so that we, whatever the situation is, we can do what we want. But I don't think that's right.

To illustrate another aspect of how Charles talked about accepting value distinctions, here is a comment he made about free-will. He made this comment in the context of talking about "witnessing," which refers to the various ways he tries to share his Christian beliefs with others. I had remarked that these activities appeared to be very "gentle" and carried out without a sense of pressuring people and he elaborated on my observation in the following way.

Cause, well, the Lord has done that for us...He's given us a free-will. He's told us you know, you can either follow me, I've given you the way, you know, or you can go your own way and, unfortunately, this is what happens if you do that...We're, we're humans, and so we're not perfect, we have a sinful nature...Like we can choose not to, you know we can choose, well I'm gonna do this, I'm, I'm gonna go out and murder someone and I'm not gonna do this right. But in a sense it's free-will...God's not gonna say well...you can't do that, you have to follow me. Otherwise it's not, it's forced love, right...So...I think that free choice is just...yah I guess you have to make the conscious decision "Well, I want to try to do this and I wanta try to make the right decisions." And so in a sense it is free-will to make those decisions.

In our daily interactions with others, we are often made aware of the free-will that Charles talked about when we interact with someone who

expresses a moral opinion that differs from our own. Alexis provided an example of such an experience.

Like my boyfriend and I always talk about things like this. Even if we don't agree on something - he and I are both really stubborn, so we'll argue our point to the very end...Yuh, and well, we'll both end up coming to the conclusion that we both could be right.

In their conversations with me, participants often expressed considerable tolerance and respect for opinions that differ from their own. This attitude reflects their recognition of and concern for the importance of accepting value distinctions in a personal way. Societal experiences have an impact on this process of acceptance by providing people with opportunities to compare their own choices with those of others. These comparisons are important because, in order to accept a value distinction in a personal way, people require some understanding of what to reject. The following comment from Winnie illustrates this experience.

So, when somebody says it's not right or it's wrong - but there's always little forks in the road that can always go, you can do the wrong thing for someone else but it'd be the right thing for you...Like I don't say, "Oo, my God, I'm not gonna do that, look at that person." I just sort of say, "No, that's, I wouldn't do that for me, like that's not what I'm about." I wouldn't say, "Cause that person didn't do it."

Accepting value distinctions: A summary

Participants in this research project talked about accepting value distinctions in ways that resemble how they talked about making them. In terms of intrapersonal experiences, they described activities such as learning from mistakes, responding to feelings, and involvement with spirituality as

influences on their acceptance of value distinctions. At the micro-societal level of family experiences, they described influences from activities such as acting against parental values in order to establish a sense of ownership for their moral actions, and attaching importance to specific values or styles of dealing with moral issues derived from family life. At the macro-societal level of interpersonal relations, they described experiences such as observing others critically in order to determine value distinctions that have personal importance, and considering values in terms of situational applications of free-will.

These experiences reflect the second phase in the act of making a value judgment. In this phase, actions that have been differentiated in terms of right and wrong are evaluated in order to determine their relative importance for personal conduct. The making and accepting of value distinctions in this way is commonly experienced as having a conscience, and although a person's awareness of this experience may vary, it completes the preliminary activity for making a moral decision.

Choosing to Act on a Value Judgment

As noted earlier, our awareness of and commitment to the decisions we make varies considerably, as does the extent to which we consider them to be moral decisions. At the beginning of my conversations with the participants of this research, I wanted to give them an opportunity to establish the parameters

of what they mean by a moral decision. Consequently, my first question to each participant did not mention the word "moral" but rather asked them to describe how making decisions about what is "right" fits into their day to day lives.

Allison responded to this question by saying that she thought it was important to make "good decisions" and then told me about her recent decision to break up with her boyfriend. Choosing to have or not to have a relationship with someone may affect one's moral life in various ways, but in the context of adolescent experience, such a choice probably has considerable impact because this period of life is associated with important developmental changes in the ways individuals relate socially with one another.

Allison's description of breaking up with her boyfriend is presented at this point for two reasons: in the first place, because it draws attention to the importance of considering moral decisions in terms of what is morally meaningful for an individual, and secondly, because it illustrates the three major phases of making a moral decision, i.e. having an impulse to make a value judgment, making such a judgment by means of differentiating and accepting alternative actions, and finally, choosing to act on what has been determined as the right thing to do. Here is the way Allison described her decision.

Last night I made the decision to, I broke up with my boyfriend...It was, it was really hard, cause I wasn't sure if I, I was going to or not. But then I, I just kind of felt like I, like did want it. So I just, I did it and I feel really bad cause I think he's really upset now. But I thought

it would be better to do it and, like not just go on, cause it would be harder later I think...I talked with my friends and I thought about it on my own, to decide what to do...I think I thought more about it. I just, I didn't really feel like I wanted a, like a, a relationship right now. So I was thinking about, like deciding whether I was, I did want one or I didn't, and I decided that I didn't really.

The impulse phase of making her decision is suggested by Allison's comment that she didn't feel that having a relationship was part of who she wanted to be at the time. The differentiating phase of making a value distinction is suggested by her comment that she reached a determination that "it would be better" to break up with her boyfriend. Her description of talking with friends and thinking on her own suggests the evaluating phase of moving towards either an acceptance or rejection of the value determination she had already made. Finally, her comments suggest that even after having made a value judgment she was still uncertain about whether she would actually make a decision based on that judgment. This third phase in her decision-making process, i.e. choosing to act on a value judgment, is explored in the following pages.

When the participants in this research project spoke about choosing to act on a value judgment, they did so in ways that suggest a blending of cognitive and emotive activities. For example, here is how Allison described making a moral decision.

Usually it's a feeling of, that I know that that's what I should do and what I want to do, and that I think it's the right decision. Usually that's kind of what it feels like to me.

Although participants often distinguished between thinking and feeling

about a moral decision, these distinctions did not suggest mutually exclusive but rather interrelated activities, i.e. they spoke about making a moral decision in terms of an organization of experience which has both cognitive and emotive aspects. Moreover, attaching a relative importance to either the thinking or feeling aspects of a decision, appeared to be an important way of expressing their individual identities.

As a self-generated organization of experience, a moral choice is, in effect, a creative functional process. Participants talked about this process in terms of two complementary streams of influence. The first kind of influence reflects an individualistic orientation and focuses on the flow of moral influence from the individual into her or his environment. The second kind of influence suggests a cultural orientation and focuses on the flow of moral influence from societal experience to the individual. This suggests that the motivational aspects of making a moral choice stem from both individual and societal sources. The following sections explore each of these sources in turn.

Making a Moral Decision as an Expression of Personal Influence:
Moral Styles, Autonomy, and Having a Moral Impact

In contributing to this research, participants often talked about the process of making a moral decision in terms of a distinctive pattern or personal style of organizing its cognitive and emotive aspects: for example, emphasizing one or the other aspect, or using a particular sequence of activities. Because these styles indicated a use of formal operational thought (i.e. an ability to consider experiences in terms of abstract possibilities), they

also indicated a capacity to think about future decisions in terms of personal influence. Thus, the way the participants talked about their individual moral styles was an important indication of their capacity to experience the making of a moral choice as an autonomous activity, capable of having an impact on their environments.

Of course, these styles will undoubtedly change as developmental events and situational factors influence them. However, the important point to consider is that a person's style of making a moral choice is an observable expression of her or his current moral behaviour: as such, it provides information that individuals can use to evaluate their own moral activity, and that others can use when interacting with them. The more obvious moral styles described by the participants are summarized in the following few paragraphs.

Becky described making a moral choice as a definite sequence of events and appeared to place equal importance on both cognitive and emotive activities.

I think it's a gut feeling, and then when you get the gut feeling you really think about it. It's not something you think about and then when you get the gut feeling it's like, "Oh yah, there it is." You get the gut feeling and you think, "Well, what is it? "

In contrast to Becky's style, other participants identified either thinking or feeling as the major influence on the way they make moral decisions. For example, Richard observed that "as you get older...it's more the mind," and added "still you feel inside what's right and what's wrong." Alexis also emphasized cognition. She told me that "if I have more of a reason to do

something, then I probably would, but if it's just a feeling that I should do something else, then I'd probably go with the reason." Charles was even more emphatic about asserting the greater importance of cognitive activities.

Your emotions play a big part in decision making...and I think that we have to overpower that with our thinking and with our, you know, "Well, that's wrong." In other cases the emotions may lead you in the right direction, you know. And so you have, you have to think it out. You have to override those emotions and say, "Well, I, is it leading me in the right direction." I think that's what you should do. That's not what you always do, you know.

Snow White is among those participants who identified feeling as a dominant influence when making moral choices. "I think I rely more on my gut feeling," she told me, "and like I think stuff through too but usually I follow my gut feeling...usually my gut tells me what to do." Mari-Jane also indicated a preference for relying on her feelings and gave a practical reason for doing so. She observed that "if I say OK, I'm gonna do this because I wanna do it, then the only person that I can blame is myself and that keeps me out of a lot of trouble." Winnie also expressed a reason for allowing feelings to guide her moral choices.

If I make a decision on like what, what I thought, then I'm gonna always be thinking that, if it turns out to be bad or something because, you know, when you do something it's constantly in your mind and everything. And so that's why I usually make decisions on how I feel because feelings will heal or whatever, and they'll, you'll get new feelings and stuff. So I just, it's just sort of my way of, you know, protecting myself and stuff, because I've been hurt a lot lately, like in the last year and a half or whatever. And so, I sorta learned that I'm not gonna, I don't do anything that would, is gonna seriously affect me in the present.

In talking about their personal styles of making moral decisions,

participants displayed an ability to consider their actions abstractly. This ability gives them the potential for acting as autonomous agents capable of influencing their environments through their moral activity, and throughout their contributions to this research, they emphasized the importance they attach to exercising this autonomy, as in the following observation from Winnie.

Like people tell you something, like, like my mom, my mom will say, "Your rule is, your curfew's eleven thirty, be home." And they can tell me that but it doesn't, it's not in me, it's just sorta something that I'm thinking, like just thinking, "Oh-oh, my mom's gonna, my mom's gonna kill me," but you don't feel it...I don't think anybody can tell you what your morals or your values are because everybody's different...My mom, she'll tell me, or she'll act or she'll just do something but, I know that she's wondering or she doesn't really trust me on something. And that's hard for me to do because I don't want to do something when my mom doesn't trust me because that meant a lot to me and stuff. And she really hurts me when she says she doesn't trust me. And I just said, "Mom, it wouldn't matter what you said, it would not matter because, if I'm gonna go out and do something, I'm gonna do it for me. If I go out and...like a party or whatever, I'd do whatever I did for me. But I'm not gonna do anything bad or I'm not gonna do anything like that could hurt me or stuff like that, because I don't want to. It's not, you can tell me all you want but I'd still, but I could still do it. But I actually don't want to.

Like Winnie, Joan talked frequently about wanting to exercise autonomy over her moral activity and on one occasion she did so in the context of acknowledging that she still respects the moral values inherited from her parents.

I really respect my parents cause of a lot of the decisions they've made in their lives. And I know that, as I've been growing up I've gone to Church, I've done all that, but I still find that there are decisions that my parents can't make for me and no matter how much guidance they try and give me, I'm gonna have to make those by myself. And so, I get a lot of them from my parents but I mean, you have to get some of your own values from inside yourself.

In making her comment, Joan talked about two self-generated processes: making decisions by herself, and getting the values that underlie them from "inside." Her words reflect the orientation of the research observations contained in this report inasmuch as they suggest that making and accepting a value judgment does not automatically result in choosing to act on it. Making such a choice as an autonomous agent rather than as part of an acquired mode of behaviour is obviously a relatively new experience for the participants and involves various idiosyncratic thoughts and feelings. Allison described this kind of experience as "kinda weird" when she talked about satisfying her "curiosity" about drugs.

Well I have tried pot before, and that was, kinda, like real, a weird thing to decide to do. I kinda decided because, I either heard people like talk about it and, and stuff, and so, I just decided it might be something that I should just try. So, one of my friends does it quite often, so I just went with her one day...and it was, I don't know, it was something I kind of just did...like at the time my other friends didn't, had never done it before. But it was like, no peer pressure or anything like that. But I just decided like, for myself, that I thought I, like I kinda wanted to try it. So I did...I was curious and just wondering what it was like.

Like many of the moral choices described by other participants, Allison's decision about taking drugs illustrates an inclination towards developing a sense of autonomy with regard to moral action. By experiencing such autonomy, individuals are able to consider their moral activity as a genuine contribution towards the creation and maintenance of their moral environments rather than as a product of them. Participants often reflected this experience when they spoke about their efforts to help others. Perrin talked at

length about one such incident which appeared to mean a lot to him in terms of expressing a way he can make a moral impact on his environment.

It was in grade eight one time and I was, we were, we went on a run. Our teacher said, "OK, we're going on a run." So we went on a run and we ran, and this other fellow said, "Hey, you know, let's cut across here, you know, there's a short cut." And it was of course across someone's property, right, so I said, "No, I don't think that's a good idea, let's not do that." "So, I'm gonna do it." So, you know, he ran across the property, right, and then he came with me on the other side and we, we finished the run. And then when we got back there of course and somebody had phoned the teacher and said to the teacher, "Look, there's somebody who ran across the property here." And of course this fellow, he was going to get into big trouble, big trouble. Well, when the teacher, who had dealt with this person a little bit, was gonna make, really punish this person, well, I stood up with this person and said that I also ran through there. And in a way I lied, but in a way I didn't cause I attempted, you know, I was tempted myself. But of course that person from then on, who, he got off the hook quite lightly cause I said that I'd gone through with him and that. The teacher respected me so I guess I, for that reason I, he got off the hook a lot lighter. Well, he really respected me from there on in, and still to this day he asks me how it's going and about my life. And you know, I think I witnessed to him in a way. It's an interesting way of witnessing.

On several occasions Perrin talked about "witnessing" to others as a means of exemplifying and sharing his Christian beliefs and practices. In this instance, his creative response to a situation allowed him to experience having an impact on the moral life of another. When I asked him if he had a sense of whether his decision involved more thought or emotion, this was his response.

Well actually I'd be tempted to say it was both. Because, you know, to tell you the truth, I felt sorry for the guy, you know, for getting in this trouble. I also felt, you know, a little ashamed of myself for even, you know, I thought myself, "Hey, maybe I'll do this," and finally, "No, I'm not going to do it." So I felt a little ashamed of myself. And then in the back of my mind, [I thought] "Hey, I'm gonna say that I did it too, and earn the respect from this fellow." ...It was a combination, as most things are I think.

Perrin's comment that he believes most decisions involve a combination of thought and feeling reflects a major theme of this research. This theme suggests that the important intrapersonal feature of making a moral choice is not whether thought or feeling is more important, but that both activities function as part of an individual's style of responding morally to specific situations. By recognizing and using their individual styles, people develop an ability to act as autonomous moral agents capable of having a moral impact on their environments. These personal contributions interact with societal influences to form the fabric of moral life in a community.

Whenever Charles talked about sharing his Christianity with others he did so in a way that illustrates such a blending of individual and societal influences. Although spreading his religious beliefs involves acting on behalf of a specific kind of societal influence, he left little doubt that he considers his own and others' acceptance of Christianity to be expressions of free-will.

I think we should let people know, you know, what Christ has done for us...you know, this is the way: you can choose to do it or you don't have to.

We're all supposed to be united in the body of Christ, so we should all be united and spread the gospel to people who haven't heard of it...and give them a chance to make their decisions.

Making a Moral Decision as an Expression of Societal Influence: Altruism and Value Reciprocity

I like to help people because I like it when people help me, and...I'd rather go to a person who wanted to help me so that I could get the help and not so that, you know, like they have the satisfaction

themselves. So I think I, I enjoy giving advice to people, but I don't think of it. You know I think, you know, I think that's a good quality that I have, that I don't...I don't use it to my own satisfaction...Course I do stuff, you know, good things like, you know, if I wanta go out I'll help my mom extra with chores, but with helping people...I help them because I want to do it. And there's, if there's, if they come to me with something that I'm not familiar on, I wouldn't give them advice if I'm not sure about, just because I know I might be wrong and I would be doing it for the sake of helping them I think. (Allie)

In making the above comment, Allie talked about having a personal impact on her environment by helping others. Her words suggest that the decisions involved in these helping activities have been influenced by two kinds of societal experience. In the first place, her reference to the satisfaction she receives when others help her reflects involvement in a process of mutually sustaining a societal value with regard to helping others. Secondly, her observation that she does not use her helping activities as a means of obtaining personal satisfaction reflects her involvement in a process of overriding self-interest in favour of concern for the well-being of others. The first of these processes is an expression of a value reciprocity and the second is an expression of altruism.

Like Allie, participants in this research often talked about the impact of societal life on the way they make their moral choices in terms of altruism and value reciprocity. As altruists, they spoke about activities focused on the well-being of others without expectation of personal benefit. As people engaged in a reciprocal exchange of values, they spoke about activities focused on maintaining good interpersonal relations which implies a natural expectation of

personal well-being. Becky summarized both experiences when she told me "I don't think getting something in return is a really important thing, but you do, usually: If you give up stuff, things usually come back."

As the remarks by Allie and Becky and the observations of this research imply, human experiences are seldom, if ever, expressions of a single psycho-social process. In real-life situations, human experience is a "texture" of interwoven activities and although understanding the individual strands or components of this texture contributes to the understanding of the whole fabric of experience, their meaning resides in the context in which they are found. Snow White drew attention to the importance of considering moral action in terms of its context in a remark that also reflected her involvement with altruistic motivation. "Like sure, certain times you do have to think of yourself ahead of others," she told me, "and there's other times you can kinda think about other people and how they're feeling and what they might be needing."

Snow White's observation implies that her moral choices depend on her interpretations of specific situations. The following comment from Alexis describes why she might interpret a situation as calling for an altruistic response. After telling me that she does not mind "putting herself out" for people once in awhile, I asked her why she would do this.

For caring about someone, that's one thing. For wanting what's best for someone is, is definitely another thing. And, I don't know, sometimes people just need to know that they are important, and that it's not always someone else's choice on what to do, like they have a say on what goes on and stuff, and so they are, their opinion is valued...I think everybody should be important.

Understanding a person's interpretation of a situation is important not only for understanding their motivation but also because actions may not be what they appear to be. For example, Mariah told me that often she "takes the blame" for activities that are not her fault, an activity that outwardly appears to be altruistic. However, when I asked her why she would do this, her response suggested a reason that is oriented at least as much towards avoiding an unwanted personal experience as it is towards benefiting another person.

I just feel that...I'll just take the blame, cause I don't really want them to get in trouble...I just think that it'll be more complicated if you bring all, other people in towards it. So I just figure, just take the blame and it won't get too complicated...I'll just take the blame because if it gets, because then the person could start, if I say it's the other person or something, they could start to whine or get total complicated or...I just deal with it.

Despite the fact that actions are not always what they appear to be, participants spoke in ways that left little doubt that altruism is often an important aspect of their moral choices.

One indication that an action may be motivated primarily by concern for another is when the benefactor has unpleasant, unwanted, or even dangerous experiences during the delivery of a prosocial act. Several participants talked about helping their friends and acquaintances with personal problems and often mentioned the personal difficulties associated with this kind of activity. Winnie told me that "when people come and talk to me about their problems and stuff, I just, I don't think about what I'll be like after and everything, I just sorta deal with it and then it all catches up on me." Also,

Mari-Jane, whose many stories about helping others included one that involved making a considerable personal sacrifice for a friend who had experienced a devastating personal tragedy, told me "I like doing it but sometimes it's like, Oh just leave me alone or whatever." In making the following comment Richard also spoke about making a personal sacrifice for someone in a way that clearly suggested his belief in altruistic motivation.

Well I think it, it's really, I think people are doing something for other people. I don't think it's a totally self thing. It's - cause when, when you do something for someone that puts you in a bad spot or whatever, it's at least when you're doing it, it's not to get satisfaction out of it. It's, it's really, it is to help the person.

Of course we are often rewarded for giving help or performing other prosocial acts. Sometimes these rewards come directly from the people who benefitted from our actions, and sometimes they come from other sources such as the admiration of those around us or our own sense of maintaining high moral standards. From whatever source, these rewards provide incentives for the maintenance of the moral values that underlie and sustain the societal life of a community. This experience of mutual giving and receiving reflects a value reciprocity and is the second major aspect of how the participants in this research talked about societal influences on their moral decisions. Becky reflected this influence in the form of the following expectation.

You can't expect to be given something without giving something up. You can't expect somebody to support you without...you giving support in return...give and take sort of stuff.

Terry provided a real-life illustration of the kind of "give and take"

situation that Becky described.

Well I know that like I'll do anything for a friend. Like if they want me to do something I'll do it, you know. If they need something I'll get it for them, or if they need something I'll buy it for them, or if they can't afford it I'll buy it for them. Like I just bought a friend a, two hundred dollars worth of insurance, cause he had no insurance so he couldn't drive his car at night to go to work. So I gave him the two hundred fifteen dollars that he needed. But I don't expect it back like, it's just like, because, you do that to your friends and like, and stuff like that, they'll do it back to you. So like you know that when you're in trouble, it doesn't matter what kind of trouble it is, you can just go to your friends and they'll put you out of it, or anything like that.

Terry's comment expresses a belief that her act of helping out a friend is part of a societal process that has clear benefits for her as well. This belief in a mutually beneficial exchange of values functions as an inducement for her to act prosocially. This kind of belief may also function as an inducement not to act antisocially. Rebecca Rose recounted an incident that suggests this function. In the following comment she described her decision not to do something that would harm another because she was aware of the harm she would experience if a similar act was directed towards her.

This one time my sister's purse was open in her room and she wasn't home, and she, she had like a hundred dollars in her purse. And I was gonna go shopping and I only, like seven or something. So I said, "Here, I'm only gonna take twenty, she'll never notice." But then I thought about it, and she worked so hard for that money cause she was working at _____. I thought that she worked really hard for it, but I really wanted it, but I didn't take it. Cause I know that she has done that to me and it really hurt me. It bugged me, and I was willing to strangle her...Cause I don't want people to do stuff to me, so I don't do stuff back at them.

In making a decision not to steal from her sister, Rebecca Rose thought in terms of maintaining reciprocal value relations with regard to stealing. This

kind of thinking involves considering not only how she would like to be treated but also how other people act and the consequences of interpersonal actions. Thinking of this sort presupposes a considerable amount of interpersonal expertise and implies an ability to consider situations abstractly. A comment from Janice about her remorse for not thinking about her actions in terms of reciprocal relations suggests that this kind of cognitive activity is an ability that she has acquired only recently. While talking with me about some incidents of stealing with which she was involved she made the following observation.

I guess it's something that comes with age, you get a conscience...I've never had a conscience before, except for now, like, I, just, just like, it just hit me, just awhile ago, cause I'd been thinking about like, if that happened to me [*referring to an incident of stealing*], like, what, what'll happen...I think it's because I never used to think of things from "if it happened to me." I just, now I think, "Well, if it happened to me" ...I just try to put myself in the position of the person that would be hurt in this, and then I think, "Well, if that happened to me that'd be really awful." ...I think about it from their point of view.

When she spoke about putting herself in the position of another person as a way of evaluating her actions, Janice implied not only that she attached importance to the experience of the other person but also that she attached importance to the maintenance of similar values as standards for interpersonal conduct. This kind of experience suggests a use of value reciprocity as an inducement to evaluate one's past interpersonal behaviour in addition to its role in promoting prosocial and inhibiting antisocial behaviour.

In talking about their involvement with reciprocal influences,

participants in this research often spoke in terms of two experiences: a tolerance of contrasting moral opinions, and association with people of similar moral values. During a time of life, such as adolescence, when people consider it particularly important that their moral choices be self-generated, it is reasonable to expect that the application of value reciprocity in everyday situations would express itself as a tolerance for contrasting moral opinions. The belief that moral action is a freely chosen expression of one's character implies having respect for the right of people to act according to their own moral principles even if these principles differ from one's own. It is equally reasonable to expect that the expression of a self-generated morality would involve experiencing a sense of isolation were it not for association with people of similar moral values.

Most participants indicated their tolerance for contrasting moral values by saying that, although they and their friends usually share the same moral values, this was not a necessary condition for friendship. Several participants told me that they had friends with very different personalities and different attitudes towards moral issues. For example, here is how Terry described the differences between herself and a close friend.

Like I smoke and drink and stuff and party a lot and stay up late and everything like that, and I'm just like that. But my best friend, D_____, she's been my best friend for eleven years and she's, she goes to Church every Sunday. She's really religious. She doesn't smoke and she doesn't drink. She...you know doesn't really date guys that often and stuff like that but we're still best friends.

When I asked Terry if she ever felt influenced to adopt the values of

friends that differ from hers, she replied as follows.

I don't feel any kind of pressure like, cause if they did they wouldn't be friends. Like, like well, I have friends like, different religions and still go to Church and I mean, like R _____, she's like a really good friend of mine, she's a _____, and so her religion's really strict. And, but I don't pressure her to do anything and she doesn't pressure me to do anything.

When Allison talked about her relations with friends and acquaintances who have different moral standards, the influence she described clearly expressed her involvement with a reciprocal process. "I try not to like put other people's ideas and stuff down," she told me, "because I don't really, like I don't like when people try to do that to me." When Alexis talked about similar experiences she also spoke in terms of maintaining mutual respect.

I do have some friends, their values, we agree on some of the same things but we don't on other things. And, we try and avoid the subjects as much as possible so we don't get in arguments or anything. We're always willing to hear each other's side of it so it's not really, it's not really one-sided and that you should believe this.

In addition to talking about her involvement with maintaining reciprocal values of respect for contrasting moral opinions, Alexis also talked about having friendships with people of similar moral values and how that experience nurtures her moral life.

They're all very supportive. If I decide like, we're going out to do something one night and I say, "No, I have to study for this test," they'll like, "Oh yah, that's more important, you can go out another night." And nothing seems to stand between our friendship if it's - all my friends and I get along really well. We all are basically the same, like, we all have the same interests and everything. We all know what's more important. We all have mostly the same values too, like friendship and family... You always have your own opinion. There's never anybody who's going to look down on you for your opinion or

anything. They all, like respect your opinion.

In making these comments, Alexis implied that she considers it important to have respect both for her own moral position and that of others. Having respect for oneself and others in this way suggests that one is less concerned about making decisions on the basis of how they appear to others than might otherwise be the case, and the comments of many participants reflect this experience. Whenever they spoke about being influenced by "what other people think," invariably, they associated this experience with an earlier age. Here is what Becky had to say about this topic.

When you get up to the middle, or high school, and everybody's in different classes, cause of what they wanta do when they grow up or what their interests are, it doesn't matter, [*i.e. what other people think*], cause everyone in that class has the same interests, and everybody respects everybody a bit more. So, if everybody else respects you, or vice versa, if you respect yourself, you don't have to worry about being cool with everybody else. So...Cause you can't expect everybody to like you. But as long as you like yourself.

Like Becky, many participants spoke about recognizing and experiencing among their peers the presence of a value reciprocity with regard to having respect for one's own values and those of others. As an example of how such an experience of mutual respect might affect a moral choice, here is Winnie's recollection of an important decision in her life concerning her relationship with a boyfriend.

We went out all last year and we were really close. We were, we were best friends, and stuff like that. And he, he brought up the topic of sex and stuff like that and we...he asked me what I wanted to do, and I think he was scared that I would say I'd wanted to. And then I knew that if I wasn't honest with him, that would get us both into trouble. So

I just said, "No, I don't want to." Not well, I don't want to right now and stuff...cause his guys are like, "Hey, come on, didya get her yet," type thing, and he'd sort of, he'd be going along with it. But he, it was just I could talk to him. He, he talked a lot, and he told me how he felt and stuff. So it was, it was good. I felt...he was the first person that I trusted in a long time.

Winnie's comments suggest that in making a mutual decision to abstain from sexual relations, she and her boyfriend shared an experience of respect for one another that was a "good" experience for both of them. In this kind of reciprocal experience, people both give and receive moral influence and it is reasonable to expect that such experiences have an impact on future moral decisions by reinforcing the benefits of value reciprocity.

Throughout their involvement with this research project, participants talked about their interpersonal relations in terms of both giving to others in a prosocial manner and receiving reinforcement for their actions in the form of personal satisfaction. However, as discussed earlier, they also talked about acting prosocially towards others not because of the satisfaction they might experience but solely because of concern for the well-being of another person. These two kinds of activities need not be considered mutually exclusive categories of experience because they are both aspects of making a moral choice. Moreover, because making a moral choice is a creative and functional activity, individuals undoubtedly interpret particular situations as requiring a greater emphasis on either altruistic or reciprocal values.

To conclude this section, here are two summary illustrations of the altruistic-reciprocal nature of making a moral decision in the lives of the

participants of this research project. The first example comes from Perrin's feedback letter.

It is true that "altruism is one form of social influence on the way [I] make moral decisions." However, as you touched upon, I expect, usually subconsciously, some sort of return which will give me satisfaction. For instance, one evening, during a "get-together" with my friends, I won a chocolate bar in a long and strenuous, strategical warfare game. Upon winning I felt empathetic towards my friends, and decided that it would be high minded to share the victory loot. Perhaps this was considered an unselfish gesture, but I did derive satisfaction from sharing when in a position of power.

Charles provides the second example in the following comment he made in response to a question about why he helps others in situations that involve personal sacrifice on his part.

You get more happiness from giving in the long run than you do from taking, I think. Like, I don't always follow that rule, I have a lot of trouble with it and I'm sure most people do, but, in the long run, it's...I don't think that should be the motive for helping people, but I think, you know, you do get it...well usually when you're doing it. I don't think you think of the satisfaction you will get. I think you're just thinking, "Well, I'd, you know, this person is in need and I'd better help them." And afterwards you see how they've progressed from that help and you know you say, "Well I helped them," and I guess that's kinda neat. So...it would help you next time to make those type of decisions.

Making Moral Decisions: A Summary

The process of making a moral decision has been described in this research in terms of three major phases: having an impulse to make a value judgment, actually making the value judgment by means of differentiating actions in moral terms and accepting one alternative as a standard for personal

conduct, and finally, making a moral decision by choosing to act on a value judgment.

Participants talked specifically about making a moral decision in terms of interrelated cognitive and emotive activities influenced by both intrapersonal and societal experiences. The important features of intrapersonal influence include the emergence of individual moral styles, and the ensuing experiences of autonomy when making moral choices and having a moral impact on one's environment. The important features of societal influence include overriding self-interest in an expression of altruistic concern for others, and involvement with a reciprocal process of maintaining mutually beneficial societal values. Participants often expressed their involvement with reciprocal influences in terms of a tolerance of contrasting moral opinions and association with people of similar moral values.

Responsive Phase

Responding to a Moral Choice: Having a Sense of Knowing Who You Want To Be

I try to think about things and I try to make the right decisions, but sometimes it's, you lack guidance and it's, it's really hard to try and make decisions. Especially when you feel that one way might be the right way, but the other way's so much easier. And in the short run, you know, one way's a lot, it would make your life easier, but in the long run, if you do things that are right, eventually it'll become easier to do things like that, you know, because the more things you do right, the easier, or most used to it, I guess you are. (Richard)

Richard's observation that making right decisions becomes easier implies that the values underlying his moral choices may eventually become

characteristic aspects of his behaviour. When this occurs it is reasonable to identify these values as moral principles that function as part of his self-understanding and, as such, part of his readiness to make moral judgments. However, the habitual or near-habitual quality of these values develops only over time and with continued usage, which suggests that reactions to moral choices must be considered as part of one's overall moral activity and as an important phase in the development of moral character. The following section explores this phase briefly in terms of a process of self-directed learning that stems from making moral decisions.

Self-directed Learning from Making a Moral Decision:
Knowing Conditions You Want to Promote, Prevent, and Change

I always want to, I, I like to know that I've made like a, the right choice from things. Cause then, if like sometimes you make the wrong choice then, like, I don't know, like something bad can happen or just something like that. (Allison)

As Allison implies, one reason for reacting consciously to our moral choices is the prevention of unwanted experiences. Another reason for such a reaction is the recreation of desirable experiences. In this research, participants mentioned both kinds of self-directed reflection. When talking about either their prosocial actions or particular transgressions, they often expressed feelings of either satisfaction or dissatisfaction in ways that suggested that such feelings may function as inducements to recreate or avoid the conditions which gave rise to them. For example, here is what Snow White had to say about why she continues to volunteer her time at a particular youth club.

Cause you know that you're, I know I'm like doing something to help other people. And then there's the, like a sense of belonging. I walk in and I get there after everyone else cause school ends later, and everyone's like "Oh, Hey, _____, how's it goin'?" And like I get hugs from people and everyone's like, "Oh, how's your week: guess where we're goin today." Like everyone's excited to see me and, makes me feel good.

In addition to reinforcing the recreation of desirable and preventing the reoccurrence of undesirable experiences, paying attention to how we respond to our moral choices may also be important for the detection of behavioral concerns that involve one's general well-being. For example, Janice often referred to feelings of guilt associated with stealing, but at one point she mentioned that these feelings have nothing to do with the way she makes a moral decision.

Like awhile ago we found a wallet...we just watched it and then I would..."Should we take the money out of it?" And she goes, "Yah," and so I did it again. And I was like, and then like I still think about it. I still think, "Oh, that could have been someone's Christmas money," or something like that. And I just feel so terrible. And then my mom, like giving me money, and just...I don't deserve that money when I like stole money, and I don't know.

This doesn't really have anything to do about how I make a decision, but sometimes I'll do something and I don't, I guess I don't think about it before, while I'm doing it, and then I'll just do it and then after I always feel really bad that I did it. And then I can't really do anything about it. Well I can but I just, I just don't usually. And, stuff like that, like I don't.

When Janice talks about her experience of guilt in terms of being both able and unable to "do anything about it," she is suggesting that there are aspects of her life which seriously interfere with her usual expression of morality - aspects which deserve and may require some form of therapeutic

attention.

In the absence of serious interference with moral processes, people may use their reactions to what they consider moral transgressions as a learning experience that helps them to know conditions they would like to prevent, promote, or change. Allie mentioned an incident in her life in a way that reflected these interrelated purposes. In making the following remarks she talked about her reaction to an episode of drinking alcohol in terms of reminding herself of the importance of considering the consequences of her actions in order to avoid remorse for not living up to one's usual moral standards.

Usually I do that [*i.e. think about the consequences*], but I don't think it really occurred to me, then. I think I got too wrapped up in, not, more or less peer pressure. And that's something that I really kinda paid for because, you know, it came to me afterwards that well, you know, I did think, you know, "This isn't, this isn't me, this isn't what I usually do like." That's a lot of, you know, I didn't think about the consequences but I, I learned again that, if you think about the consequences before as well as, you know...I think that, I think that if I had been caught or whatever for, you know doing, drinking or whatever, I think I would of regretted it a lot more. But I still do regret it. And that I guess if I did get caught I would have thought about it and said, "Well the only reason I'm upset is because I got caught," and, but I'm still upset now because of just the way it made me feel and how it kind of, you know, that it was, it was always on my mind. I was thinking about how, if it wasn't me and how just, the nothing, you know, I didn't think about the consequences beforehand. But it was an experience that I learned from.

By describing this incident as a learning experience, Allie implied that she benefitted from her evaluative response to it. Also, because her reflections focused on a critical awareness of her past, present, and even potential moral

behaviour, it is evident that she would experience this benefit as an enriched understanding of herself and that such understanding would become part of her readiness to make moral decisions in the future. In this way her reflective response to a moral decision became an experience of "knowing who she is" which both completes and begins a cycle of moral activity.

The Circle of Moral Activity: A Summary

Participants in this research often indicated that their moral choices are associated with a relatively new and valued sense of autonomy which allows them to move away from a behavioral mode of interpersonal dependency towards a more independent expression of themselves as responsible people. Self-knowledge is an implicit aspect of this kind of autonomous behaviour because without it actions could not be experienced as self-generated or self-governed. It is not surprising, therefore, that when talking about making moral decisions, participants spoke frequently about their perceptions of who they are. Knowledge about themselves not only provides them with information they need to begin making autonomous moral choices but also provides them with a goal for this activity.

On one occasion Becky told me that the personal qualities she values most are "respecting myself and knowing who I am." She continued to speak about these qualities in two ways: as if they are values that function as instruments for making moral decisions, and as if they are the outcome of

these decisions. For example, she told me that, "You can't fulfil everybody else's dreams of yourself as long as you don't know who you are and don't respect yourself," which implied that these values function as a means of achieving her interpersonal goals. Also, she added that, "Maybe you're this person to somebody else, but if you're not that person to yourself, it doesn't matter," which implied that she considers it more important to be aware of who she is than to know what others think about her.

Like Becky, many participants reflected an experience of self-knowledge as both a means and an end in the process of making their moral decisions. Furthermore, like Allison in the following comment, they frequently conveyed a sense of pride in the autonomous nature of this experience.

Making your own decisions is like knowing that it's yours and you do it because you want to, but not for anyone else I think...Yah, it like kinda makes you proud, knowing that you made your own decisions, and you didn't let anybody else, like take over. So...and like gives you pride and everything.

Perhaps because adolescence is a time when developmental events give rise to the need for making numerous decisions, the participants in this research spoke with ease and insight into the way they make their moral choices. They talked about these choices in terms of an autonomous activity consisting of three major interactive phases preceded by a preliminary condition of self-knowledge and followed by a reaction phase of reflective self-awareness. Although these phases have been presented here in sequence, it is not my intention to suggest that they function solely or even primarily in a

linear fashion. Rather, these phases reflect strands of activity that are interwoven in a texture of experience, much like a contrapuntal musical composition. This means that the various aspects of each phase may affect other aspects of the entire activity at any time throughout the process.

The participants of this research talked about the condition of readiness to make a moral decision in terms of recognizing personal qualities and goals, having a purpose in life, and attaching importance to being independent.

They spoke about initiating the decision-making process in terms of having an impulse to make a value judgment about particular actions. These impulses involve experiences such as knowing who they want to become, being empathically aware of others, and perceiving a lack of moral concern in their environments.

Responding to these impulses requires making a value judgment and this was described in terms of making value distinctions about the morality of actions and accepting these distinctions as standards for personal conduct. In describing these activities, participants identified various influences derived from intrapersonal, family, and societal life. Taken as a whole, these influences appear to reflect what is commonly known as having a conscience.

When a value judgment has been accepted as a moral standard, a person is ready to make a choice about whether or not to act on it. Participants spoke about making these choices as expressions of both personal moral influence and allegiance to societal values concerned with the well-being of

others (i.e. altruism) and the maintenance of harmonious interpersonal relations (i.e. value reciprocity).

In talking about their reactions to these choices, participants often suggested that by reflecting on their moral behaviour they come to a greater understanding of conditions in life they would like both to prevent and to promote. In this way, responding to their moral choices becomes part of learning about themselves which in turn provides knowledge that becomes part of their readiness to make moral decisions in the future.

Towards the end of her second conversation with me, Winnie talked in conversational terms about experiencing her moral behaviour as self-generated and self-regulated. She added that, "Sometimes I don't even know the rules I set for myself are there until I'm in that position, and then I sort of wonder, Hmmm, where'd that come from, where'd I think of that." I wanted to confirm that my impression of her remarks was accurate and so I began to form a question with these words, "You would probably agree then that morality is something that..." Winnie completed the sentence for me with words that summarize the way participants in this research experience making their moral choices. "You make for yourself," she said.

Chapter Five

EXPLORING ADOLESCENT IDENTITY, MORALITY, AND EDUCATION

Working on this research project has focused my attention on three areas of concern relating to the understanding of an adolescent's experience: (1) the nature of adolescent identity as an functional experience of self as opposed to a theoretical entity, (2) the nature of adolescent morality as a means of balancing personal freedom and societal responsibility, and (3) the importance of providing school-based opportunities that foster adolescent moral development. In the following pages, I discuss these areas of concern first in terms of an exploration of adolescent moral identity, and then in terms of education as a moral enterprise.

Adolescent Moral Identity: Theoretical Entity or the Self as Experience?

Typically, psychosocial literature describes the teen-age years as a time when "aspects of psychological development can best be understood in terms of the adolescent's quest for identity, that is, for answers to a question that never arose in younger years: Who am I" (Berger, 1994, p.412).

Erickson's description of the search for *identity versus role confusion* during adolescence is the cornerstone of theoretical perspectives on the developmental activities of that complicated age. Santrock (1993) calls Erickson's depiction of identity "a comprehensive and provocative theory" in which "the development of an integrated sense of identity is a long, complex,

and difficult task" (pp.344-348) involving several dynamic, experiential dimensions.

A widely used elaboration of Erickson's ideas is Marcia's (1980) theoretical formulation of four "identity statuses" (identity achievement, moratorium, foreclosure, and identity diffusion). These statuses "have often been viewed as discreet types whose characteristic content is determined by a fixed underlying ego structure" (Stephen, Fraser, & Marcia, 1992, p.283). Such a perspective fosters a conceptualization of identity in terms of an object, i.e. something that can be "reified" and therefore (somehow) "found." Although recent studies employing the identity status approach claim that "identity is not fixed" and that "the identity statuses are open, mutable, and subject to reworking" (p.285), the methodologies used by these studies are not consistent with an experiential or process conceptualization of identity. This inconsistency arises from the fact that these studies attempt to categorize an identity-state by the use of measures (such as Marcia's "Identity Status Interview") and statistical inferences that separate, or at best, distance an individual from the real-life contexts in which identity is actualized. Because it is based on responses to pre-formed questions and hypothetical scenarios, this methodology treats identity as an entity rather than a functional process inasmuch as it locates, examines, and makes inferences about identity in terms of fixed, pre-determined conditions (i.e. the conditions established by the researchers). In such an objectified condition, the functional, creative potential

of *identity-as-experience* is "minimized" because its situationally-responsive interpersonal nature is trivialized. Tolman (1994) expresses the limitations of such research methodology as follows:

Not only is the human subject, whose most important characteristic is the capacity to create conditions, methodologically de-subjectified into a non-subject who merely reacts to conditions: to the extent that human subjectivity is simultaneously intersubjectivity, it, too, is eliminated by these methods. (p.132)

Apart from these concerns about its methodology, the identity status approach has been criticized in terms of not accurately reflecting Erickson's ideas about "crisis and commitment" during adolescence.

For example, concerning crisis, Erickson emphasized the youth's questioning of the perceptions and expectations of one's culture and developing an autonomous position with regard to one's society. In the identity status approach, these complex questions are dealt with by simply evaluating whether a youth has thought about certain issues and considered alternatives. Erickson's idea of commitment loses the meaning of investing one's own self in certain lifelong projects and is interpreted simply as having made a firm decision or not. (Santrock, 1993, p.350)

In contrast to the identity status approach, the observations and ideas arising from this research project draw attention to a conceptualization of identity as experience. While listening to and reflecting on what the participants in this research project told me about their moral activities, it became obvious to me that an individual's identity is not some "thing" that he or she is looking for, and much less something that can be categorized in terms of a status. Rather, I came to look upon having a sense of personal identity as a conscious and reflective (i.e. dynamic) organization of experience

that aims to keep, modify, or change various aspects of one's life in response to individual circumstances. This understanding of identity characterizes it not as a developmental objective but rather as a functional developmental process, i.e. as an experience.

The following section provides support for the idea of identity as experience by briefly outlining various theoretical ideas about individuality in the context of the individual-societal relationship. Subsequently, the information generated by this research project is discussed as a practical illustration of these theoretical ideas.

Identity as Experience: Theoretical Perspectives

In the first of his *Essays in Radical Empiricism*, William James asks this question, "Does Consciousness Exist?" He answers "in the negative, except where consciousness is taken to stand for a *function* rather than an entity" (Robinson, 1982, p.186). A similar question can be put with regard to identity: "Does an individual's identity exist?" Various theoretical views, along with the research presented here, suggest that an answer similar to James's can be given: identity exists only insofar as it can be understood as a functional process rather than as an objective reality.

This view of identity as experience rather than entity is both old and new: old, because of its connection with antecedent psycho-philosophical, spiritual, and artistic thinking, and new because of its connection with contemporary developments in theoretical physics, genetics, and related

sciences, including psychology. These connections are briefly discussed below.

Robinson (1982) characterizes the qualitative distinction between entity related connections and process related activities in terms of "colliding billiard balls and the world of human history...One is the world of mere matter, the other the world of *idea*." (p.133). Also, he draws attention to the tradition of thought that emphasizes this distinction, beginning with Aristotle and including Leibniz, Hegel, Reid, and the man who many textbooks call the founder of modern psychology, Wilhelm Wundt. In this psycho-philosophical view, human activities cannot be understood by using mechanistic principles associated with the natural sciences because they are processes which involve creative interdependent persons.

Valsiner and Van der Veer (1988) advocate a similar orientation for contemporary psychology. "There seems to be two focal topics that underlie the crisis of contemporary psychology," they write: "the intentional nature of thinking and acting human beings, and the interdependence of individual consciousness with its social context" (p.117). This contemporary view reflects an opinion that was current at the time Psychology became an independent field of inquiry, (although it was soon overshadowed by mechanistically oriented thinking). Robinson (1982) quotes the following passage from Wundt's *Lectures on Human and Animal Psychology* of 1861 in which he expresses his understanding of the qualitatively different nature of natural and societal phenomena.

An attempt to construct the history of a nation or of mankind [sic] at large on the laws of natural causation would not only be vain in practise: it would be wrong in principle...For historical events and for the voluntary actions of an individual we can only adduce determining *motives*: we cannot prove constraining *reasons*. (p.133)

Wundt's distinction between natural causation and socio-historical (i.e. human) activity suggests that mechanistic descriptions can provide adequate accounts of natural phenomena but are unsuitable for accounts of socio-cultural processes because of the voluntary nature of human activity. However, developments in twentieth century physics, contemporary genetics, and related sciences suggest that even natural phenomena can best be understood in terms of probabilistic rather than predetermined structures and functions, and this implies that a mechanistic world-view is no longer a tenable position. In the following remarks, Capra (1981) makes this point while writing about the impact of contemporary physics on biomedical science.

...while biomedical scientists elaborated mechanistic models of health and illness, the conceptual basis of their science was shattered by dramatic developments in atomic and subatomic physics, which clearly revealed the limitations of the mechanistic world view and led to an organic and ecological conception of reality. In twentieth century physics, the universe is no longer perceived as a machine, made up of a multitude of separate objects, but appears as a harmonious indivisible whole: a web of dynamic relationships that include the human observer and his or her consciousness in an essential way...The conceptual revolution in modern physics foreshadows an imminent revolution in all sciences and a profound transformation of our world view and values. (p.x)

Contemporary ideas about genetic development support the "organic and ecological conception of reality" outlined above by Capra. From conception onward, new structures and functions emerge as part of a genes-

behaviour-environment system of individual development, and recent genetic studies indicate that experience can have a canalizing effect on this process (Gottlieb, 1991). This means that development itself is "probabilistically determined by active interactions among its constituent parts" (p.7), and these interactions are by no means limited to events "under the skin." Lerner (1991) makes this point as follows:

Genes do not by themselves produce structural or functional characteristics. Variables within the organism (e.g. cells, tissues) and extraorganism contextual variables reciprocally interact with genes, making the changing organism-context relations the basic process of development. (p.27)

Lerner's use of the words "contextual variables" is unfortunate inasmuch as they imply a form of mechanistic connection between an organism and its environment. Tolman (1991) draws attention to the potential for misunderstanding the nature of human interactions when they are presented in this way, and he does this by distinguishing between organism-environment interactions that are "social," and specifically human interactions which are "societal." Essentially, the difference is that social interactions involve direct stimulus-organism-response connections, whereas in societal interactions, "the human's relationship to the environment is almost always mediated," and "the most important mediation category is *meaning*" (p.14-15). Because human actions are for the most part activities mediated by meaning, "we do not respond to things as such, but to what we make them out to be" (p.15). Thus, because of an ability to create meaning, the nature of the human individual is

not that of a pre-existing entity that can be shaped directly by environmental influences, i.e. by variables. Rather, human individuality is essentially the expression of a functional process.

The sociological theories of George Herbert Mead (1977) reiterate this view of human individuality in terms of a functional process. In this perspective, a person's sense of self involves both a being-aspect and a becoming-aspect. The being-aspect of self is what Mead calls the "me" and it refers to "the self we see as an object when we observe our self from the role of the other" (Baldwin, 1986, p.115). It can be thought of as the objective self and its purpose is to be a "vehicle of self-regulation and social control" (p.117). The becoming-aspect of self is what Mead calls the "I" and it is the creative part of the self, the part that acts. It can be thought of as the subjective self and its purpose is to be "the source of spontaneity and innovative actions" (p.117).

Mead's theory of self, along with the psycho-philosophical and scientific ideas briefly described earlier, suggest that a person's identity is a functional process that combines subjective and objective activities in a meaningful expression of an individual-societal relationship, i.e. an experience. However, artists and religious leaders have communicated this understanding for centuries, although they have had to exist in apparent opposition to a scientific view of reality that separates subjective and objective categories of experience. Fortunately, developments in contemporary physics are "paving

the way" for a rejection of this dualism.

In summary: Because it is the nature of reality to be a system of relationships and the nature of identity to be an on-going expression of an individual-societal experience, it is unrealistic to suppose that one's identity can ever be found, achieved, or categorized in terms of a status. Buddha looked for his "self" and never found it! I believe we ought to learn from this kind of psychospiritual experience because from it comes a more realistic interpretation of life activities that results in a more practical understanding of ourselves in relation to others than is available by means of objective knowledge alone. Such an understanding reflects "the kind of knowledge that individual human beings need in order to expand their real possibilities for meaningful participation in the collective regulation of the conditions governing their own lives" (Tolman, 1994, p.144).

Adolescent Morality as an Expression of Experiential Identity

In the summary of research information sent to all participants (Appendix F), I say that my major response to all they told me is an impression that they consider "making moral choices to be a freely-chosen expression of who you are and who you want to become." In saying this, I imply that their experience of identity is one of involvement with an on-going process of self-understanding and that they use their moral choices as a means of communicating this self-experience to others. This observation is supported

by the participants inasmuch as they express in their feedback letters to me (Appendix G) their overall agreement with and ability to relate their own experiences to the summary. Two participants, Janice and Perrin, make explicit statements of agreement with my summary sentence about their moral activity as an expression of experiential identity.

Your observation "making moral choices is a freely chosen expression of who you are and who you want to become," is a remarkably truthful summation of the process of making a moral decision. (Perrin)

I really think what you said about "making moral choices is a freely chosen expression of who we are and who we want to become" is very true. (Janice)

[Note: Janice uses of the word "we" rather than "you" which seems to indicate her sense of a "collective ownership" by the research participants of the idea being expressed.]

In his feedback letter to me, Perrin expands on his agreement with my summary observation about making moral decisions by offering his own description of this process, and his words suggest a strong self-awareness that expresses itself in dynamic, on-going, interactions.

As described in your research, I have several personal qualities that greatly influence my moral decisions. The guidelines of my reasoning, regarding an issue, are determined by the values I have accepted through Christianity.

I believe one's moral decisions are a testimony to others in society. Individuals, knowingly or not, judge a person's worthiness, and establish the person's reputation by the person's actions.

Perrin's description of making moral decisions depicts the formation of an individual-societal relationship that is self-generated, activity-oriented, and

interdependent. In this kind of relationship, his experience of identity emerges in the activities associated with creating it (i.e. in a process): it does not exist as a sense of self "logically prior to the social process" (Mead, 1977, p.242) he describes. This identity experience begins with an awareness of personal qualities arising from past activities (i.e. his acceptance of Christianity). Zohar (1991) refers to this being-aspect of the self as that "part of my identity that is in dialogue with myself across time" (p.106). However, Perrin's acquired awareness of personal qualities is not the same as an identity because this awareness has no meaning for him apart from its actualization in his interpersonal relations (i.e. his "testimony"). The becoming-aspect of his self means that his self-awareness functions as part of an interactive process. Thus, the personal identity implied by Perrin's words is a sense of his self-as-experience which arises within an activity that has meaning for him in terms of his on-going relationship with others. In Zohar's words, "to know fully the person that I am, I must understand the relationships that I am" (p.106).

Participants in this research project clearly speak of both the being and becoming aspects of identity. The following passage is taken from the summary of research information I sent to them and briefly outlines my interpretation of their sense of "being" in relation to making moral decisions.

Although the process of making a decision may begin at a certain point in time, each of you brings a lifetime of experience to the occasion. Before you decide to accept, deny, ignore, or adapt particular values for yourselves, you have a sense of who you are that provides a more or less stable starting point for making moral decisions. My impression is that this experience of knowing who you are expresses itself in the

three main ways outlined below...Recognizing personal qualities...Having goals and a purpose in life....(and) Attaching importance to being independent.

By outlining the three ways the participants express their sense of "who they are," I do not mean to imply that they are representative categories which describe how all adolescents express their readiness to make moral decisions - or even that they are a complete representation of this condition for the participants, because there may be other forms of expression and influences untouched by the experiences described in this research. The forms of expression that "make up" a moral process along with the various influences that "go into" it undoubtedly change both from person to person and within an individual from time to time. However, a continuity of shared experience flows from the fact that the process of making a moral decision begins with a sense of knowing oneself in some way.

As Mead (1977) observes, the being-aspect of self is constructed from past experiences and emerges within a context of societal relations, but as soon as this "state" is achieved, the individual is immediately involved in an "act" of becoming, because, as discussed previously, it is the nature of the self to be in relation to environmental conditions. In this research, the becoming-aspect of self is expressed in the many activities and meanings associated with building and acting on personal moral standards, and responding to moral choices. As with the being-aspect of self, the specific activities and meanings identified with each of these phases of making a moral decision are not

intended as representative categories, but rather as possible components of a process. What is important for an understanding of adolescent morality and its purpose is a realization that moral decisions are a means of interpreting one's life in the context of relations with others. This means that moral activity is a functional process, and like any functional process, the specific content that "makes it work" varies depending on individual circumstances. The following passage from my summary of research information illustrates how I tried to convey this idea to the participants.

As all of your comments imply, human experiences are seldom, if ever, expressions of a single activity or process. In real-life situations, human experience is a texture of interwoven activities and although understanding the individual strands or components of this texture contributes to the understanding of the whole fabric of experience, their meaning resides in the context in which they are found. Morality seems to be an important way we have of interpreting that context for the well-being of ourselves and others.

In summary: As implied in the above statement, the participants in this research use moral activity as a means of interpreting experiences related to the quality of their interrelationships. As functional processes, their moral decisions are expressions of "who they are" and "who they want to become," i.e. their being and becoming aspects of identity. The sense of identity that emerges from this understanding of the moral process is not that of a fixed set of personal qualities that can be objectively described at any given point in time, but rather that of a coming together of personal qualities in a process which is informed by self-awareness and directed towards self-understanding by meaningful activity. Identity exists as a system of information which is not

limited by the sum of its components because its nature is not that of an entity, but rather, that of an experience.

Because having an understanding of identity is a functional aspect of living in a society, understanding it in terms of entity or experience implies very different purposes. In the following section, these purposes are discussed briefly, and it is suggested that understanding identity as experience leads to a kind of participatory interaction with adolescents that both honours their emerging identities and fosters their moral development.

Participatory Interaction: Honouring Adolescent Moral Identity

Sometimes, decisions are made because there is a perceived need for prediction or control, and for these decisions, knowledge is considered as an object. A fixed entity-related understanding of identity implies the scientific "urge" to objectify knowledge about oneself or others so that there is some amount of certainty attached to interactions. In this research project, the objectifying (i.e. predictive and controlling) aspect of moral activity is illustrated by the way participants evaluate the personal qualities they observe in themselves and others and in the way they express the autonomous nature of their moral choices, i.e. in the way they differentiate value distinctions in order to create self-generated choices. These activities are expressions of moral reasoning.

At other times, decisions are made because of a perceived need for belonging or integrating oneself with the experiences of others, and for these

decisions, knowledge is considered as an interpretation. A fluid experience-related understanding of identity implies an interpretive urge to "evoke" reality (Tyler, 1991). This kind of understanding suggests a purpose directed towards creating shared meanings about oneself and others as a means of promoting personal and societal development: in more poetic terms, as a means "to provoke an aesthetic integration that will have a therapeutic effect" (p.125). The interpretive-integrative aspect of moral activity is illustrated in this research by the way the participants express the societal influences on their choices, i.e. in the way they accept established values, act altruistically, or participate in a process of value reciprocity. These activities are expressions of moral empathy.

In their daily activities, individuals, like societies, use both objectifying and interpreting methods for understanding themselves, others, their environments, and the interactions that make up their individual experiences. Moral activity, as an expression of interpersonal relations, encompasses both these activities inasmuch as it involves processes of both analysis and synthesis (Selman & Yeates, 1987; Berkowitz, Oser, & Althof, 1987), or, in terms of the predominant theories of moral development, both reasoning (Kohlberg, 1976, 1984) and empathy (Hoffman, 1983, 1991).

However, it is important to understand that the objectifying (i.e. predictive/controlling) activities which relate to establishing one's self-awareness as a moral *being* are subsumed in the interpretive (i.e.

probabilistic/integrative) awareness of *becoming* a moral person. Why?

Because, as discussed previously, an individual's experience of self is always an experience of self in relation to others: in Tolman's (1994) words, "subjectivity *is* intersubjectivity...the standpoint of subjectivity thus does not exclude objective conditions: rather, it *includes* them" (pp.136-137).

Furthermore, one's sense of personal identity is essentially an *act* because "everything about reality is and remains a matter of probabilities" (Zohar, 1991, p.11) and because "meaning is a continuous creation" (Brown, 1966, p.247).

Thus, it is an experiential (i.e.interpretive-integrative) concept of moral identity that I would like to propose as a guiding principle for adults in general and educators in particular as they interact with adolescents. In the following section of this report, I discuss some education-related implications of believing in this concept of moral-identity-as-experience. However, as a prelude to those remarks, there is an important point to be emphasized about the consequences of not believing in such a concept, namely, that it situates the educator-student relationship in a context of power emanating from "the top down" rather than from within an interactive experience.

If an educator derives her or his practical knowledge about a student primarily from objective information, the student is placed in a passive position, i.e. in the position of someone being observed. In such a position, the student may experience a sense of being inhibited from influencing the

relationship and hence, vulnerable to the educator's capacity to exercise authority, thus creating a top-down power situation. This kind of relationship seriously limits the ability of an educator to understand the nature of her or his interaction with students because there is a lack of the empathic participatory links which provide essential information about how individuals interpret the meaning of their interpersonal relations. The result is a lack of effective communication which curtails the potentiality existing in the relationship.

One of the participants in this research told me about a school-based incident that illustrates how a student's perception of being in a subservient position can weaken the potential for her or his creative self-expression and thus weaken the potential for creative educator-student dialogue. In the following remarks this student reveals a strong reaction to a school principal's expulsion of several students for stealing school property, and although this reaction was expressed in a letter to the principal, I learned later that it was never sent.

I wrote a letter. I haven't given it to him yet. But it basically says that, like cause half of my friends from last year have been kicked out this year. Cause there was [*at this point details of the incident are given*]. So, he kicks them out of school, and I told him in the letter that, what's the point of kicking someone out of school cause, they're the people that you see on the streets, are the ones that got fired, or the ones that got kicked out, or the ones that aren't in his little circle. He talked about a basketball circle at the beginning of this year: how if you're not in his circle, and you step outside of it, then you're out of here, you don't, you don't have a second chance. And I said, "Well, I'm not sure if I'm in your circle - I'm not sure if I want to be in your circle - but I still do all my work, and I still hand it in and I still come to school: then what are you gonna do to me," right. Like, give them a chance or whatever... [*brief description of the students accused of*

stealing] Like right now they're going, "Yes," right, "I don't have to go to school." But in twenty years they're gonna be, "I should've done something else cause this is not what I planned for my future" whatever. So. And it really bugged me about, him talking about being inside the circle, and outside the circle because everybody is different. And that's what I believe and I don't think...I think the circle was a really bad way to put it, because not everybody's inside the circle.

I find it particularly ironic that the symbol used by this principal to describe the educator-student relationship was a circle, a symbol traditionally associated with participatory rather than top-down power structures, i.e. structures that promote rather than limit interpersonal and intergroup communication. However, as everyone knows, appearances are often deceiving: the apparent use of a particular concept or methodology does not always convey an accurate impression of the actual meanings contained in experiences, which is why a participatory form of interaction is so important.

Previous studies have drawn attention to the negative consequences associated with top-down relationships in terms of authoritarian styles of child-rearing (e.g. Baumrind, 1972) and autocratic leadership styles in small group processes (e.g. Lewin, Lippit, & White, 1939). Also, in his popular book about several major changes taking place in North American culture, Naisbitt (1982) wrote that "the ethic of participation is spreading bottom up across America and radically altering the way we think people in institutions should be governed" (p.159). Furthermore, a shift in the interactive style of many modern organizations from "hierarchies to networking" (pp.189-204) indicates that many people are becoming increasingly intolerant of top-down

"strategies," which they associate with "frustration, impersonality, inertia, and failure" (p.192).

These studies and societal trends lend support to the suggestion that educators are well advised to use a participatory-interpretive approach to interacting with students, i.e. an approach that respects the experiential evolving nature of their individual moral identities. In the following section, I discuss how the use of this approach enhances the capacity of both educators and students to address the moral concerns that are arising out of contemporary cultural experiences.

Education as a Moral Enterprise

As a major environmental influence, school experiences have a major impact on the way an adolescent learns to use her or his moral capacity as a means of interacting with others. This learning occurs because it is embedded in the societal processes operating within a school. Damon (1988) points out that moral values are "implicit in every procedure and demand of the school setting, and are taken from the culture that has produced the school" (p.131). This research-based observation, reinforced by a common-sense understanding of societal life, makes it clear that morality cannot be excluded from a classroom because a classroom cannot be excluded from its cultural environment with its distinctive moral standards. However, because we live in a time of rapid cultural change, at least one important feature of the moral

standards operating within our culture is their mutability, and out of this fact arises the necessity of school communities to examine their moral role in society.

During a child's development, concerned parents do not ignore the "growing pains" of their children as they try to cope with complicated, challenging and often confusing developmental changes. Rather, they actively seek ways to use these growing pains as a means of helping their children mature into healthier people. A school community ought to do no less, not because it ought to assume a "parenting" role, but because the education of people is an activity concerned with the formation of socially responsible persons and therefore, a moral activity in its own right.

Although the moral character of educational experiences may be expressed in different forms, such as in specific religious or ideological orientations, all schools are concerned with instructing and guiding students in ways that are considered right and good both for the students and for the communities which built the schools, as Soltis (1989) observes in the following comment.

...education is, at base, a moral enterprise. Education is ultimately about the formation of persons. It is about developing and contributing to the good life of individuals and society. Even though we may disagree about the specifics of what constitutes the educated person and the good life, it is toward these high moral ends that the human enterprise of education in a democratic society is negotiated and directed. (p.124)

Educators who believe that their everyday encounters with students do

not have moral consequences must also believe that they do not convey their own values through their actions, and such a belief is a denial of Ferguson's (1984) informed common-sense observation that "our values come consciously out of our understanding - or unconsciously out of our conditioning" (p.337). This denial becomes part of the experience of students when educators do not acknowledge and act on the responsibility inherent in being in a "morally charged" relationship with their students.

In order to establish a cultural context for discussing the practical implications of being in such a relationship, the following section outlines the changing nature of contemporary morality and discusses the need for educators to make responsible adjustments to their own roles in this evolving moral environment.

Responsible Education In the Context of a Changing Moral Environment

Participants in this research project mention two interrelated conditions that indicate the changing nature of moral activity in our (North American) culture: a dispersion of moral authority, and an increasing acceptance of moral pluralism.

In addition to many references during our conversations to a societal drift away from traditional Christian values, Charles refers to this trend specifically in his feedback letter to me. "Unfortunately, the distinction between right and wrong has become quite hazy in our society," he writes. "People no longer are clear as to what is right and wrong. I suppose this is

happening as our society deviates from Judeo-Christian morals." Richard also refers to a shifting moral atmosphere in a comment about an adolescent's need for moral guidance in an environment where the traditional sources of such guidance, family life and religious traditions, are not always available or personally desired. His comment also suggests that this environment often compels educators to accept a responsibility in responding to this need.

I don't really think it's the school's responsibility to deal with the moral issues or internal issues. But sometimes it has to cause it's the only place that someone can look for guidance, right. Because, either, sometimes with your parents you wouldn't want to ask them for guidance on the subject because, you just, you're very close to them but, you don't want them to be like disappointed in you or something, right. And it's, sometimes it's best then to talk to someone that isn't really close to you and doesn't know you, right. It's easier to talk to, not a complete stranger, but just someone detached...The school as, it has to play a role. I guess, for a lot of people, churches and religion can take over that role a lot better than the school could, but it, not everybody has that resource.

The situation described by Charles and Richard is complicated further by the fact that our society appears to be placing an increasing value on the importance of having multiple options (Naisbit, 1982), which means that it may be moving increasingly towards a moral pluralism, i.e. an acceptance "of multiple moral worlds...found in and maintained through the ordinary conversations of everyday life" (Schweder & Much, 1987, p.199). Joan reflects this orientation when she talks about leadership qualities in terms of people who would not impose their own beliefs on others.

And people who are able to lead a group. I really respect people like that, but without being bossy or whatever, you know...I think that people all have their own thoughts and feelings, and when other people

try and force you to believe something that you just don't believe, I don't think it's fair, cause they're trying to make you feel the same that they are and every person, each individual is different, so.

Joan's comment illustrates a tolerance for multiple opinions from the perspective of people who act as leaders within a community. A comment from Becky reflects a similar attitude but from the perspective of people who do not allow themselves to be led in ways that deviate from their own perceptions of who they are.

And people I look up to are...[people] who've always maintained who they are. And even though, some may, may not like them for what they do, or what role they played, they still, they're still who they are. They don't let anybody affect who they are as a person.

Joan and Becky's comments reflect the value-emphasis they and other participants of this research project place on being independent and having respect for contrasting opinions. In the context of this research, these qualities are considered as part of two major aspects of making moral decisions: first, as part of an expression of self knowledge, these qualities contribute to a person's readiness to make a moral decision, and second, as part of the maintenance of effective interpersonal relations, they constitute a societal influence on the way a person chooses to act on a value judgment. Although these qualities of independence and mutual respect combine with other influences in a moral act, their prominence suggests that one of the major functions of adolescent moral activity is to learn how to balance an expression of personal freedom with societal responsibility. This is an important understanding because it places moral activity in a developmental context. In

such a context the relatively strong emphasis adolescents put on self-related concerns and tolerance for the self-expression of others can be appreciated as part of a natural progression towards mature moral activity.

Brown and Solomon (1983) suggest that the "increase in self-centredness and self-indulgence" that characterizes American culture in the second half of the twentieth century creates "a serious problem in achieving a proper balance between personal freedom and social concern and responsibility" (p.277). They observe further that a change in the value orientation of individuals can result in the need for a culture to redefine or perhaps even transform the way it organizes itself. These observations imply that the "serious problem" signified by the various expressions of self-focus in our culture are best considered in terms of a developmental period of transformation, both at the individual and at the societal level.

Because they are developmental, living systems have within them a capacity for transformation and this capacity arises from disturbance, not equilibrium. This principle is at the heart of Prigogine's 1977 Nobel prize winning theory of dissipative structures which establishes both a theoretical and practical link between biological and socio-cultural fields of inquiry. Dossey (1982) discusses this theory as it applies to human health concerns, but his comments apply equally well to concerns about the cultural expression of morality: "Structures that are insulated from disturbance are protected from change. They are stagnant and never evolve toward a more complex form"

(p.84).

Because the moral practices of a particular culture define the quality of its interpersonal relations, the cultural expression of morality is a structure arising from the ongoing involvement of both personal and socio-cultural identities. At times of transformation within such a structure, it is reasonable to expect both a dispersion of moral authority and the presence of a trend towards moral pluralism, just as it is reasonable to expect a combination of self-focus and a mutual tolerance for self-expression in adolescents in the midst of a personal transformation that "is probably the most challenging and complicated period of life" (Berger, 1994, p.367). However, acknowledging the existence of a developmental transformation is only the first step in responding to it in an appropriate way. For school communities, this period of change in the moral climate of our culture means that they must consider carefully their role in this changing environment with regard to the promotion of moral values.

For example: In an incident described earlier, Charles expressed concern about his teacher's reluctance to tell her class that the use of sexually-oriented material in advertising is morally wrong. He appeared to want her to exercise the role of a "giver" of correct morals, yet she chose to exercise what she described to me later as the less intrusive role of a facilitator of moral discussion.

Although there is research that suggests students are led towards a

higher level of moral reasoning (in the Kohlbergian sense) when a teacher openly expresses a moral opinion rather than simply clarifies various options (Damon, 1988), I believe that this issue requires much more examination. In the first place, moral behaviour involves more than moral reasoning, so it is simply inaccurate to try to assess a moral response in terms of reasoning alone. Secondly, a moral response is a response to a specific situation and what is important are the meanings generated by the participants within that situation. What may be appropriate for one circumstance may not be for another. Ultimately, I believe that the issue of whether teachers should be "open" about their own moral opinions is a matter of teachers "being" morally responsible people. But how does a teacher's membership within a school community affect this responsibility? That issue, I think needs to be addressed, preferably jointly, by all participants of the school community, students, their parents, teachers, administrators, and concerned researchers and community members.

Another obvious role-conflict issue for contemporary educators involves responding to the various personal needs of students which may seriously interfere with their abilities to function effectively at school. During my involvement with this research project, I spoke about this issue with various concerned individuals because it became clear to me that it has a profound effect on the moral climate of a school and therefore on the moral experiences of those within it.

One teacher illustrated her concern by asking me, "What am I to say to a student who has just told me that she hasn't slept in three nights, and more importantly, what am I to do?" If students are beset by personal concerns that limit their readiness to learn, are teachers expected to involve themselves with them? If so, how far? When does concerned involvement become interference with, or even a replacement of traditional family responsibilities? Where is the "line" between teaching adolescent students and taking part in raising them? Where does school-based instruction begin for students who may be "derailed" by personal difficulties? Teachers are routinely faced with situations like these. What should they do: ignore them, become involved, or transfer responsibility for helping students to professional counsellors not involved with them on a daily basis?

In the following remarks, Mari-Jane comments on her perception of a lack of sensitivity for the personal problems of students in her school environment and implies that making an effort to understand the reasons underlying these problems is part of an educator's responsibility.

But I think that, basically if somebody has a problem, you get picked at from like the teachers or whatever like, "Why were you late today?" or whatever. And it's like right up in front of everybody it's "Tell me now or you're staying after school," or whatever. Like lots of people have problems. You see people coming in here [*i.e. the classroom where we are having the interview*] after school because they're on the pink sheet or whatever. I mean obviously they have a problem, at home, or something's wrong up here or whatever [*pointing to her head*]. But I think if you just left them alone, make sure they do like the basics or whatever. Like if they're coming to school, if they're doing their work. But, when I came in here to write a test the other day I saw one of my cousins was sitting over there, and he had all his work

done, he had done all his class work, just, they, he was staying in because he had missed a coupla classes or whatever, and I know personally that he has a lot of problems. And if you miss a coupla classes, I mean, and like, you find out why he did. Maybe like give him a chance at explaining. Cause most of the people I saw in here were ones with problems. There was a boy sitting right there. And he obviously had a problem. I mean, he wasn't any normal kid. He was squirmish. He (um) had all his work done and he wouldn't stop talking right, and it's supposed to be like a quiet time, you're just supposed to come and sit in here and, and it was just, I don't know, if you find out the child's problem, then maybe you can put them into like different courses where they can learn how to deal with it...It's kinda like, you've been bad, so you're gonna have a detention. But maybe it's not bad to that person and maybe it's not, like maybe they did the right thing.

Mari-Jane's comments reflect the importance of putting oneself in the other person's position when trying to help her or him. This requires time, not to mention patience, understanding, compassion, self-confidence, genuine respect and acceptance of another as he or she is at a particular moment, and many other qualities that would pertain to particular situations. How can teachers respond effectively to the disruptive personal needs of their students and (in the words of one teacher I spoke with) "still deliver the goods, academically speaking?" Clearly, this issue is another important matter to be considered by all members of a school community.

In summary: Given the erosion of traditional sources of moral authority and the emergence of new ones within our culture, it is inevitable and probably necessary that school communities experience conflict with regard to their role or roles in promoting moral values. But, like the culture of which they are a part, the participants in this research are also in a period of

transformation with regard to their moral behaviour, and understanding their experiences may help concerned educators focus on important issues during this time of change.

For the participants in this research, their moral activity involves efforts to balance an expression of their personal freedom with an acceptance of their societal responsibilities. These efforts often involve making mistakes and taking the risks inherent in forming new kinds of relationships. However, both the mistakes and the risks are part of the creativity of their moral actions: without them personal transformation could not occur.

I think that much the same can be said about the efforts of school communities to understand and express their moral identities and the societal responsibilities associated with them - these efforts are inevitable in a time of change and they are both conflictive and creative. Just as the participants in this research project strive to express their moral values in a personal way and respect the rights of others to do the same, school communities ought to make a committed effort to understand their own moral purposes in the context of an increasingly pluralistic moral culture.

The preceding remarks about the cultural context of adolescent morality suggest that educators must address the moral concerns of their students as part of the expression of their own identities and societal responsibilities. The following section discusses how this can be done.

Fostering Moral Development in School Activities

Developmental events require many adjustments to the way adolescents relate to the moral aspects of their lives. School communities can assist them in making these adjustments in two important ways: first of all, by providing opportunities for them to reflect on changes in the way they make moral choices, and secondly, by providing constructive ways for them to use their emerging capacities for personal moral influence. Not having these opportunities may seriously limit an adolescent's potential for developing into a mature moral individual. In turn, this may seriously limit her or his potential for contributing to the moral life of society.

Before discussing these two areas of school-based assistance, two important points need to be emphasized about the preliminary conditions required to make such assistance meaningful: namely, that individual school communities need to be well informed about the experiential nature of adolescent morality and firmly committed to creating localized conditions that foster its development.

Understanding that adolescent moral activity is by nature an emerging process that tries to balance personal freedom and societal responsibility is extremely important because it acts as an antidote to the widespread tendency to stereotype teenagers. Stereotyping can be used as an extreme form of objectifying individuals for the purpose of predicting their actions and thus controlling our interactions with them. This is inherently an ineffective way to

promote mutually beneficial interactions because it separates those involved in them. In effect, educators who stereotype teenagers are insulating themselves from them, and one must ask the question why this would be done other than to avoid the responsibilities and risks involved in trying to understand their experiences. Such avoidance might stem from a number of different sources, such as being unwilling or unable to interact in a truly participatory manner, or the perception that such a style of interaction is inappropriate. Whatever its source, the tendency to stereotype teenagers and not interact with them in a participatory manner has serious consequences for the individuals involved and by extension for their communities. In the following remarks, Winnie comments on her perception of stereotyping teenagers and its effects.

Well I think some people, depending on what, the type of person they are, they stereotype. Because the majority of, well not the majority, but there's a lot of teenagers, the ones that they run into anyway, they're, they're trying to be something they're not...Like I know lots of the older people, if teenagers are walking down the street, they'll just sorta casually turn, sort of pretend they're like walking the other way, even though they were coming this way. People have done that to me and I feel bad because I'm not that kind of person, and stuff. Like I open the door for these people the other day, cause I was coming out of a building: they just sorta stood there...I don't, I...Like they don't know what to expect from people, because teenagers are so unpredictable. Like one minute they'll be sitting in a class and then the next minute they'll be like jumping around, throwing airplanes and stuff. But, I think teachers, they sort of need to understand what's out there because it's a lot different these days. Cause there's so many more things out there that people have to deal with. And so, I think teenagers are sort of "ignore-it-all" and don't really think about it. And so that's why they're sort of, just "floatin" (*previous word spoken in a kind of "sing-song" voice*) or whatever...And they just find something to grab onto, and whatever they grab onto, and that just keeps 'em from floatin' away somewhere. So.

Winnie's image of "grabbing onto something to keep from floating away" depicts both the adolescent's efforts to "belong" somewhere and the presence of alienating pressures that tend to inhibit this from happening. Where do these pressures come from? In part, I think, from a lack of constructive opportunities to use their emerging capacity to act as autonomous, responsible people.

Common experience tells us that people of all ages need and want to know that what they do among others makes a difference, but this is particularly important during adolescence because new personal capacities and societal expectations make the formation and understanding of new individual-societal relationships a matter of almost daily concern.

When I asked Snow White why she enjoyed working with young children at a youth club, her answer focused on feeling a "sense of belonging." Later, when discussing how her generation would like to change certain aspects of contemporary life, she identified having a sense of belonging as being an issue of major importance: "and make people feel more belonging," she said, "like have more belonging, like they feel, OK like talking...about whatever."

As I consider her comments, I am reminded of the fact that Snow White was the only participant to mention spontaneous prosocial acts in response to my initial question about how trying to decide "what's right" fits into one's daily life. I think there is a strong intuitive link between having a

sense of belonging and being disposed towards prosocial actions, but cross cultural studies also support this connection. For example, in an examination of the cultural context of prosocial behaviours, Graves and Graves (1983) suggests that the most significant factor in developing such behaviours is growing up in a large, extended family in which it is necessary to perform responsible, prosocial acts, usually towards younger siblings. This observation implies that individuals may become disposed towards prosocial acts by having a sense of belonging to a group where one's presence within it does make a difference.

It is respect for an adolescent's capacity to make a responsible contribution to her or his community which I would like to emphasize as a guiding principle for educators in their efforts to create localized opportunities that foster adolescent moral development. Having such a capacity emerges as part of an individual's development, but integrating it effectively into personal life situations emerges as part of one's experience, and of course, schools create the context for much of an adolescent's experience. The practical ways that adolescents can contribute to the daily instructional, administrative, and maintenance operations of a school community are limited only by that community's lack of belief in the value of responsible adolescent participation in school activities. School programmes undertaken without a belief-based commitment from the people operating them (as might occur if they were imposed unilaterally by an educational authority) are hardly examples of

responsible moral behaviour and thus hardly likely to instill or promote such behaviour in others.

The following sections discuss opportunities that school communities can create to make their environments truly responsive to the moral needs of their adolescent students.

Providing Opportunities to Explore Moral Concerns

Participation in this research project offered a group of fifteen adolescents an opportunity to examine the way they make moral choices. In their feedback letters to me, many participants expressed not only their appreciation for having the opportunity to talk about how they make moral decisions, but also their perception that having this opportunity was a learning experience for them, i.e. it changed them in some way.

For example, in his feedback letter to me, Perrin, who had previously described himself as someone who attaches more importance to thinking than to feeling when making a moral decision, drew attention particularly to the emotional component of making moral decisions. On the other hand, Becky wrote in her feedback letter about an opposite kind of change that she notices in her own moral behaviour. "Now I don't rely so heavily on a gut instinct," she wrote. "I take longer in my decisions and I weigh the possibilities." Other participants indicated that their participation in this project was also a learning experience for them. Here is a brief selection of some relevant comments.

(Note: Complete texts of all feedback letters are provided in Appendix G.)

I think I learned a little more about myself and my feelings. I am glad I participated in this project...Maybe it would be a good idea to organize something like this for all students. It helps to be more open about the feelings. (Allison)

I loved (*the word "loved" is placed in a "square"*) participating in this project. I felt so, so much like I knew myself better. (Janice)

It was kinda in a way like a counselling session, which was fine because I think lots of people let out things that were bottled up. (Mariah)

Personally, I would like to thank you for allowing me to participate in your research. It has been considerably inspirational by helping me identify the reasons behind my decisions, and therefore gain an understanding of who I am. (Perrin)

I feel that I learned a lot myself because I never thought about why I make decisions, I just always did them, and even now I do stuff without thinking. (Rebecca Rose)

I really enjoyed helping you. It's made me think a little more as to where and how exactly I make the decisions I do. (Winnie)

I think that the level of appreciation expressed in the feedback letters of this research project indicates that participation in it provided an opportunity for the student-contributors to address a personal need to be more aware of their moral activity. If a similar need exists among adolescents in general, the question must be asked, how often do they have opportunities to examine the changes which are occurring in the way they make moral choices? If these opportunities do not occur in the context of family life or religious affiliations, are they likely to occur in peer group interactions: and if not in such groups, are they likely to occur anywhere else? The changes will occur whether

individuals are aware of them or not, and because we are societal beings, a time of change is a time when guidance and support are particularly necessary, otherwise, the quality of both societal and individual life may be seriously compromised. School communities have a societal responsibility to provide opportunities for adolescents to examine the way they make moral choices because they exist in a society that is changing in ways that necessitate such prosocial acts.

Several participants in this research project spoke about the issue of whether moral concerns ought to be considered explicitly as part of a school's curriculum. Although opinions varied concerning the need for and possible design of a specific programme to address these concerns, their comments suggested that the style of dealing with them ought to be non-authoritarian and participatory. In practical terms, such a style would involve the discussion of personally relevant moral issues and everyday moral activities. For example, when talking about this issue, Becky suggested that students would be "offended" by any approach that did not respect their individual experiences.

It would depend how, how it was run. Because if, if it was run how everybody had to give certain answers on a test and, and give you their opinions in a certain way, I don't think that would work at all. I think people would feel almost offended. Because some people have different experiences, different ways of saying things. So you couldn't, you couldn't do it that way. It just wouldn't work. People would, would just be angry almost...More, more of a, just like discussions. And just finding out people's opinions and stuff. And then maybe if people could think of each other, how they make choices, and what happened and how they make their decision, that would, that would work.

When Allison talked about discussing moral issues in school, she

pointed out a need for doing so arising from the observation that some students lack moral guidance from their family situations.

I think it's a pretty good idea that they talk about it [*i.e. at school*]. Maybe, like I don't really think they need to, but I think it's a good idea that they do. Because some kids don't like, their parents don't talk to them about stuff like that or they don't get a chance to know about it. So like through school some people like get, like more knowledge about these kind of things...So...I think it's good for like, for like families to talk about that but...I, Hmmm, I think it's also good to like hear it in school and everything. I'm pretty, like liberal about like...if people want it in the schools then I'd go for it, and if they didn't, then I'd probably be OK with that too...A coupla years ago we had a, we were debating in school and we did a debate about abortion. And that was, it was kinda bad, cause like everybody just got right into it, and like everybody was yelling and screaming about it...But it was, it raised like a lot of emotions in people. Cause we had a girl in our class that was adopted, and like, so it was, it was really hard on everybody... I think it's really good to do stuff like that. I think, last year and this year we've done a few, like debates about stuff like that. I think it's really good, you know. I think it helped people...

Allison's remarks draw attention both to the importance of addressing personally relevant moral issues at school and to the practical difficulties associated with doing this in the context of a pluralistic society. Not all educators would be comfortable or competent in handling the kind of heated controversial debate Allison described, which implies that addressing moral concerns ought to be reserved for "specialists." However, not all participants who talked about this issue thought that moral concerns ought to be dealt with as part of a particular class. For example, Charles said that "all the teachers in the school should be continually guiding the students from grade one...in whatever class," and Janice, who described herself as someone who "loves" talking about "big" issues that have moral significance said that, "like I don't

think we need like a big, like a, just a programme just with that, just talking about moral issues." These comments suggest that the ability to integrate discussions of moral concern into daily school activities ought to be part of every teacher's training not in spite of the fact of living in pluralistic society but because of that fact.

Snow White mentioned two other concerns with regard to classroom discussions of moral issues: student's sarcasm and student's inhibitions.

It could be a good thing but a lot of people wouldn't take it seriously, and just like joke about it and stuff...Like when you're having a serious discussion and people are like sitting in the back like just making sarcastic comments and stuff. And like sometimes you don't hear them, you just like kind of know what they're saying, hear them back there. I mean it's not happening so much anymore, but I know last year it happened...Some people like won't talk up about how they're feeling, like in front of a big class like that...I think, like with a big room of people, you're gonna like, you don't wanta say anything. Like a lot of people are kind of worried about what other people will think, and don't wanta speak up. But [around] their friends they will, cause usually your friends share the same opinion, "Yah, I know what ya mean." They get support then...

Although the difficulties Snow White mentioned exist for many kinds of classroom discussions, they may be compounded when the issue is a moral one because teachers may be uncomfortable about the material and unwilling or uncertain about how they ought to deal with it. Teachers are exposed and vulnerable to the same societal conflicts and confusions surrounding moral issues as their students, but how often does a school community acknowledge and express itself as being a "moral community," i.e. one that offers its members the kind of guidance and support needed to address their moral

concerns in a reasonable and compassionate manner? Without receiving explicit guidance and support in their training and as part of their on-going professional lives, educators can hardly be expected to be capable and confident about integrating discussions of moral concern into their daily school activities.

Such discussions were an intrinsic part of the two "Issues in Adolescence" classes from which the participants for this research project were taken. Although these were structured courses, they were both varied and flexible, with topics ranging from adolescent sexuality to career planning, and with built-in opportunities for student input and interaction. Although these classes were not an area of focus during my discussions with the participants, occasionally reference was made to them, and as would be expected of any course that attempts to be responsive to various needs, opinions varied considerably about the importance and relevancy of particular course topics.

The major difficulty associated with this type of class is, of course, trying to balance the personal and the more general needs of its students.

Richard expressed this difficulty as follows:

Well, I think the problem really with the Guidance class is that it's not a personal thing. It's more for, a wide-spanning thing that tries to encompass all the people. But it's more directed at the people that might be having more difficult choices and bigger problems in their lives. But, it's just not as good as a one to one thing where you can address, or you know, the issues that people are having trouble with...But, also because a lot of people that are having troubles would have, would, couldn't go, like or wouldn't have the confidence to go talk to it. So since you have to go to your Guidance class, that's good too...It's there. You don't have to go and, go in and you sign up and

make your appointment or whatever.

In addition to covering a wide range of topics in a participatory, student-oriented environment, one of the classes associated with this research project always began with an activity that illustrates a teacher's attempt to create a "person-centred" atmosphere in her classroom aimed at fostering the self-esteem of her students. It is just such an atmosphere that one would expect could also foster the sense of belonging mentioned earlier as possibly an important aspect of predisposing people towards prosocial actions. Here is how I described this classroom activity in my research journal.

Prior to my introduction, _____ (*i.e. the teacher*) began the class with what she calls a "standing O", which stands for a standing ovation. Apparently, she begins all her classes this way. At the beginning of each term, each student writes out a brief description of herself or himself and gives them to _____, who reads these descriptions to the entire class on individual days throughout the term. The class tries to guess the name of the individual and when this name is revealed, the person comes to the front of the class and gets a standing ovation. _____ expressed the purpose of this procedure as reinforcing the fact that everyone in the class deserves to feel good about themselves, and worthy of everyone's friendship and esteem. When I asked about the potential problem of some students being embarrassed because no one would guess who they were, she indicated that the teacher has to be able "to carry it off" and not let this happen - the idea is to make everyone feel good about themselves, and if the teacher feels this strongly, it will work. I agree that _____ has the kind of personality to make this work - she is an extremely outgoing, "social" person, and seems to draw her strength, vitality and values from her relations with others.

Fostering a sense of self-esteem is an important aspect of creating a school environment in which adolescents can sense that their presence makes a difference. But creating such an environment also involves giving them actual

responsibilities in carrying out the day by day activities of a school. Concerned parents recognize a child's on-going need to develop towards responsible behaviour and provide concrete opportunities for her or him to act in responsible ways. It makes little sense for school communities not to exercise a similar concern for this need, because socially responsible behaviour is what makes non-authoritarian societies possible. The following section discusses how schools can provide opportunities that foster the development of responsible moral behaviour in adolescents.

Providing Opportunities to Give Something Back to One's Environment

An example of a relatively recent attempt to construct a morally responsible community within schools is the voluntary school democracy programme called the *Just Community* initiated by Kohlberg and his associates in New York and Boston area High Schools. According to Kohlberg and Higgins (1987), it is one of the developmental functions of the adolescent years to build "a general moral self" and in order to do this a "moral culture is needed to create conditions of interindividual cooperation and dialogue" (p.127).

The *Just Community* programme flows from the idea that "responsible moral behaviour is a function not only of individual psychological disposition...but also of shared group norms and a sense of community"

(p.104). Each community typically consists of about one hundred students and five teachers and operates within a school on the democratic principle of one person, one vote. These communities plan their own activities and policies, make their own rules, and administer their own disciplinary practices. They do this through weekly community meetings as well as through the work of smaller advisory groups.

The *Just Community* approach agrees with Piaget's rejection of the teacher, or for that matter, the school or society itself, as the foundation of moral education (Kohlberg & Higgins, 1987), but it is more structured than the typical Piagetian approach which relies heavily on spontaneous peer relations: "While the center of our democratic school approach is peer interaction in small groups and community meetings, teacher structuring and teacher advocacy play critical roles in this process" (p.125). However, the nature of teacher "structuring" and "advocacy" is at the heart of the way such an approach would influence an adolescent's moral development and the parameters of such influence might vary from a position of virtual control to one of being a detached role model, depending on individual teachers and the cultural influences acting on them. This observation implies that the adequacy or success of any attempt to promote the moral development of adolescent students in a school environment depends on two interrelated conditions. First of all, it depends on how a particular culture understands both adolescent moral processes and the role of teachers as participants in those processes, and

secondly, it depends on how particular school communities actualize that understanding in the training of teachers and the organization of day to day school activities.

Because the bulk of psychological research aimed at understanding moral development has concentrated specifically on understanding moral reasoning, innovative programmes such as Kohlberg's *Just Community* rely extensively on cognitive moral processes as a matrix for their activities. (Even the name, *Just Community*, implies a conceptual framework arising from rational principles.) Such an approach is problematical because moral reasoning alone does not provide an adequate context for understanding moral activity. This observation is supported by the depiction of adolescent morality in this research as a multi-faceted (i.e. cognitive and empathic) expression of an individual-societal relationship. There are two specific aspects of this depiction that I would like to signal out as being particularly important in terms of understanding adolescent morality and creating effective school experiences to support its development: The first relates to the variety of moral reasoning that occurs within individuals, and the second relates to the presence of both empathic and reasoning processes in moral activity.

In the first place, contrary to Kohlberg's claim, the same individual may reason at more than one of the levels he describes (see Fishkin, Keniston, & MacKinnon, 1973; Phillips, 1987, p.182; also, Mischel, 1986, p. 487). Consequently, to look for consistency in the motivating aspects for moral

thought is an unrealistic expectation and one that situates moral activity within a hierarchial structure (i.e. up/down, higher/lower) that fails to convey a sense of its essentially creative and situationally specific nature.

To illustrate multi-levelled reasoning in a single individual, here are three examples from the information gathered for this research project. Of course the interpretations as to the level of Kohlbergian moral reasoning are my own, but I believe the examples can "speak for themselves."

(1) At one point during our conversation, Becky talks about the moral support she receives by talking with her friends and about how difficult it is for her to speak with people who don't have goals. "So, it's hard talking to somebody without goals," she says, "because they don't, they don't have the same aspect of what it takes to get to a goal, or what they want or what they need, so they can't really say, Oh yah, I'll come here with you, find out more about that, because they don't know what it's like to have a goal, really to strive for something." Her reasoning here suggests what Kohlberg calls level 2, stage 3, i.e. conventional morality in the form of mutual interpersonal expectations, relationships and interpersonal conformity (see Bee, 1989, p. 448). On another occasion, Becky talks about different reasons why a person might steal in terms that suggest a level 3, stage 5 category of moral reasoning, i.e. the postconventional or "principled" level associated with "social contract or utility and individual rights" (p.448).

Cause let's say some rich kid, they don't have as much, worry about, to like shoplift or something. They might do it just for the fun of it,

cause they have everything they want. But somebody who doesn't have as much money, they do things because they don't have enough money to do something. So it's more, what's, not really moral but how much you really need something.

(2) When Richard talks about whether or not his values and standards change from situation to situation, he answers in a way that suggests a level 2, stage 4 category, or perhaps more precisely, an intermediary level between stages 3 and 4, i.e. his reasoning appears to be emerging from a level based on "interpersonal relationships" towards one based on "social system and conscience" (p. 448).

...depending on the situation, things might change. Like loyalty, like what's more important. Like if a friend does something wrong, like is my friendship more important than what they did wrong, or something like that. Then, you have to think about what, what's, what takes priority in your decisions. But, I know what's right and what's wrong most of the time...I've never had friends that have done major things, but like minor things, like you know, like just if something's lying around and your friend, you know, picks something up that you know isn't theirs - I've had things like that happen, where, usually I don't say anything, but, you tend to think about it later on and, you know, think, maybe I should have done something. So.

On another occasion, Richard clearly reasons in a manner that suggests a level 3, stage 5 category, i.e. the "principled" level that concerns "social contract or utility or individual rights" (p. 448).

Well, you have the big issues, like logging or something, right. Just from the surface, where we're sitting down and my family has nothing to do with the logging industry or anything, right, so it's easy just to say that we have to totally change what we're doing or that it should be like reduced and everything. But I know people that have, like their dads are loggers or whatever, and for them they see it from a totally different perspective, cause that's their livelihood, and that's, you know, that's how they survive, and they need the jobs, right. And so, it's hard to find a compromise cause I guess, long term, it would be

best to like, you know, selective log or whatever. But short term, just now, a lot of people are going to be hurt by what'll, what in the long term might be a good decision. [*Myself: So, no easy answers.*] No, no easy answers.

(3) Janice is someone with strong opinions about many issues, and I believe the way she talks about them illustrates moral reasoning at several different levels. For example, when talking about relationships with her friends she speaks in terms of what might be called a level 1, stage 2 category, a stage that has been called the "looking out for number one" category (Berger, 1994, p. 399).

I'm headstrong. Like I don't always, I don't just like go along with whatever everyone always just says, "Oh, I feel like, Oh I wanna go do this." I'm like, "OK, well [*slight laughing sound*] you go for it. I don't wanta do it cause it's just, like if it's something boring that I don't, that I don't wanta do, like I just, I don't like, feel like giving up all my time just to do it if I don't feel like wasting my whole day.

In the following remark, I believe Janice talks in a manner that reflects the principled moral reasoning of Kohlberg's level 3, stage 5, i.e. the "social contract" stage at which someone "is aware that there are different views and values, that values are relative" (Bee, 1989, p.448) and that laws and rules can be changed "if they become destructive" (Berger, 1991, p. 399).

...but I like, like getting into conversations about stuff with, that's really deep and stuff like (um) scientific stuff and everything with, like heated discussion and stuff. I like those...I'm interested...like how long they should keep, trying to keep someone alive, and like all the pers-, the suicide things and all that...Like I totally agree with (um) suicide for people who are terminally ill. Because like, they're gonna, like die anyways, and so they might as well die with dignity I feel. Like they might as well just have their last wish in life. So...it's their life anyways, so I think they should probably do whatever they want. Cause they're gonna die anyways, so, and there's no, there's nothing but it's

just costing the government money to keep them alive. And, if they wanna die, what's the point?

Although I have included only three examples of multi-levelled moral reasoning in this report, my conversations with the participants in this research project could yield many more. Also, I believe a careful examination of my own or anyone's else's daily moral reasoning could do the same. Why? Because moral activity is both a functional (i.e. situationally specific) and a creative (i.e. meaning-making) process. If the moral process is by nature creatively functional, it is only reasonable to expect that the reasoning process that supports it is not organized in a hierarchical manner (as Kohlberg and others suggest), and that individuals would adopt "in a particular case the level of thought that seems most appropriate given the specific circumstances" (Phillips, 1987, p.182). Just as the developmental attainment of conceptual (i.e. meaning-making) thought does not preclude the use of more elementary forms of thought such as associative thinking (Vygotsky, 1986), an adolescent's ability to use what Kohlberg calls principled reasoning (i.e. postconventional morality) does not preclude the use of previously developed reasoning based on social rules (i.e. conventional morality) or principles of punishment and reward (i.e. preconventional morality).

The functional co-existence of different levels of moral reasoning in an individual suggests that efforts to direct adolescents towards increasingly "higher" levels of moral reasoning, as Kohlberg's *Just Community* programme attempts to do, may not reflect either a realistic or useful conception of moral

activity.

A second major concern with regard to creating school experiences that foster adolescent moral development also stems from a conception of moral activity that over emphasizes its reasoning processes. This concern focusses on the observation that "moral behaviour results from a complex of influences, of which the level of moral reasoning is only one element" (Bee, 1989, pp.458-460). Thus, the question might be asked, is a "just" community also a caring and compassionate one? It is my belief that, as Hoffman (1991) suggests, empathic feelings are an essential aspect of moral activity, and that thought and feeling operate as a "team" in the process of making moral decisions.

The participants in this research project clearly attach importance to both cognitive and emotional activities when making moral choices, indicating that their moral judgments are not simply a matter of moral reasoning. In my summary of research information to the participants, I summarized this observation in the following way:

Although many of you said that you attach more importance either to thinking or responding to your feelings, the important observation seems to be that both activities are always involved in making a moral choice. My impression is that your individual style of combining thinking and feeling into a moral choice is your way of expressing both a personal influence on your environment, and the way your environment influences you.

As implied by the above statement, it is the nature of responsible activity to involve both the giving of personal influence and the receiving of environmental influence. Being responsible for an activity required by a group

implies both having the competence to perform it without external control and being held accountable for that performance in terms of the behavioral standards of the group. Mature participation in any group entails this kind of activity because it actualizes both the group's acceptance of an individual and the individual's acceptance of inclusion within the group. In this way, responsible behaviour signifies an individual's "ownership" of her or his place within the group and becomes a means of mutually beneficial actions. This ownership implies the freedom either to accept or not accept established group standards, and this freedom is important because it protects both individuals and groups from systemic abuses within group functioning, and it promotes an on-going creative development towards more evolved expressions of our human potential.

As part of her contribution to this research project, Winnie mentioned two activities that provide opportunities for adolescents to act in responsible ways, i.e. ways that involve both a giving and receiving of influence: One is the peer-counselling programme, and the other involves the instruction of younger students in "guidance topics" by adolescents. Both these activities are of a kind that is often associated with large or extended family experiences, and research suggests that it may be the absence of extended family environments in our North American culture that has contributed to a decline in prosocial activity (Krebs, 1983).

At the time of our conversation, Winnie was not well acquainted with

the peer-counselling programme: "It's not really well advertised" she told me. However, she expressed her agreement with the idea of this programme and many of her comments suggested that she was involved with it in a "natural" way: "like I don't know if any kids use it or whatever," she said, "but I know my friends do because they all come to me."

On another occasion, Winnie extended the idea of helping out her friends with personal issues to helping out younger students as they prepare to enter High School. She told me that she thinks it is easier for teenagers to relate with younger students because they are used to changing, whereas adults are not.

But I think in middle school, like six, seven and eight, I think, it's, for me, and I've noticed other kids in middle school and stuff like that, it was hard to ask the teachers questions about things. So I think it's better if they had people from K.N.Anthony (*i.e. her school*), a coupla people from nine, ten, eleven, twelve go to...G_____ (*a nearby school*) like or, or whatever...because that's the closest school and just sorta teach the guidance classes or whatever because...a lot of my friends and stuff, when we were in grade eight they were like "Ah, I wish we had some teenagers teaching, "you know and everything like that because, it's really awkward because...the adults say, "Uuhhh, we never went through this stuff when we were your age," and they didn't. And they don't understand it, and they're not on the same, adolescence. Like I can think, for me, I can think at a buncha different levels. Like I put myself in people's positions and stuff and...I just, it's easier for teenagers because they are used to changing. But adults sorta, just, they're, they're adults, they...so.

In addition to providing opportunities for the kinds of direct responsible involvement with the concerns of other students that Winnie talks about, school communities could provide opportunities for adolescent students to have responsibilities in connection with the administrative and maintenance

operations of a school. Because they live in an environment that gives them so much in terms of material goods and services, adolescents of today may not have sufficient opportunities to give back to their environments, and making personal contributions to one's immediate interpersonal group is an important part of being a responsible member of such a group. Of course difficulties arise with regard to having adequate time for these kinds of responsible activities. However, the allocation of time reflects priorities, and because of the changing dynamics of moral activity within our North American culture, fostering the moral development of adolescents needs to be taken seriously as a priority within school communities.

Morality and responsibility are inextricably linked because it is by making moral decisions that individuals express their responsibility as members of a group, i.e. their freedom either to act or not to act in accordance with group standards for behaviour. Adolescence is a critical period for establishing this link within the concrete experiences of daily life because it is a time when individuals move from a position of dependent child to autonomous interdependent adult. One reason why schools have a vital role to play in fostering this morality-responsibility link is because the time required to make this transition has increased considerably in our modern society, as Mischel (1986) points out in the following words.

For example, a century or more ago adolescence was not the phenomenon it is now. Beginning fairly early in childhood most people worked long days and were quickly thrust into adult roles with little transition. In modern times, the prolonged period of schooling required

for training highly skilled people in Western industrial societies has postponed the time at which most young people have to bear adult responsibilities. This period of enforced delay provides a fertile ground for many conflicts by placing the adolescent in an interim status - not really autonomous adult, not really dependent child. (p.502)

The fact that adolescence provides "fertile ground for many conflicts" is confirmed on a daily basis by both concerned interaction with teenagers and by accounts in both research and general societal literature of increases in serious adolescent behavioral problems. Clearly, the devastating consequences of not creating sufficient opportunities for adolescents to develop as responsible moral individuals is all too apparent. Of course, as any concerned parent or educator knows, there are risks involved in creating conditions that foster adolescent responsibility, but they are risks that must be taken. Whoever thinks that personal and societal growth can or should occur without problems is not living realistically. Both order and disorder are natural conditions of a creative process, as many scholars and poets have suggested throughout time. The ancient Chinese poet-philosopher Chuang Tzu makes this point in the following much-quoted passage.

Consequently: he [sic] who wants to have right without wrong,
 Order without disorder,
 Does not understand the principles
 Of heaven and earth.
 He [sic] does not know how
 Things hang together.

Summary Comments and Reflections

On Adolescent Identity

By listening to the participants of this research project talk about their moral activity, I listened to them talk about their individual identities, because they used their moral choices as a means of expressing "who they are" and "who they want to become." The understanding of identity that emerged from this listening, and from reflecting on what was said, is not that of a developmental objective that can be found, achieved, or categorized in terms of a status, but rather that of a functional developmental process that continually creates a person's interactive presence within a community. This process is informed by self-awareness and directed towards self-understanding by meaningful (i.e. interpretive) activity.

This interpretation of adolescent identity as experience is in harmony with contemporary developments in quantum physics and many centuries of spiritual, artistic, and psychophilosophical understanding. For many contemporary thinkers, the separation of subjective and objective categories of experience is no longer a tenable world view. This is a time when physicists agree with mystics that reality is not so much a complex of distinct "things," but rather a unity of interwoven "aspects." The apparent boundary between the objectifying work of the scientific mind and the integrating work of the interpretive mind has been dissolved.

Understanding adolescent identity as experience provides both a

warning and a suggestion. The warning concerns the danger of objectifying individuals. An objectified person is a person who is separated from the observer, and separation is used for the purpose of being able to control one's experience with an "object." In terms of interpersonal relations, exposure to this kind of situation can easily lead to an experience of alienation and a breakdown in effective communication. Why? Because there are no empathic links to inform the people involved about the meanings each individual attaches to the relationship. The consequences of not fostering such empathic links among adolescents are all too apparent, as Santrock (1993) points out in the following comment.

...in older children and adolescents, empathic dysfunctions can contribute to antisocial behavior. Some delinquents convicted of violent crimes show a lack of feeling for their victims's distress. A 13-year-old boy convicted of violently mugging a number of elderly people, when asked about the pain he had caused one blind woman, said, "What do I care? I'm not her." (p.450)

The suggestion implicit in understanding adolescent moral identity as an experience is that interactions with adolescents ought to provide opportunities to form meaningful empathic relationships, which means that they ought to be participatory-interpretive interactions. Parents and educators who adopt a top-down, authoritarian style of interacting with adolescents risk alienating them, and such alienation seriously diminishes the potential for creative personal and interpersonal development which exists in human relationships.

As parents and educators we can provide adolescents with opportunities for a participatory style of interaction only by being empathic in our relations

with them, and it is only from within this kind of participatory relationship that we can come to an understanding of their specific needs. Thus, fostering our own capacity for empathy is an essential first step in understanding the particular needs of adolescents, and because we live in a world of relationships, by understanding their needs, we understand our own as well.

On Adolescent Morality

In her feedback letter to me, Allie draws attention to the importance she attaches to morality as an expression of personal autonomy. "I strongly believe," she writes, "that it is important that, as you stated, we establish a sense of *ownership* for our moral actions." In contrast to this emphasis, in his feedback letter to me, Richard draws attention to the importance he attaches to morality as an expression of interpersonal relations. "I would be interested," he writes, "in your views on *societal* moral behaviour and the perception of morality in others." Combined, these two points of view reflect the creative function of adolescent morality as expressed by the participants in this research project, i.e. balancing an expression of personal freedom with societal responsibility.

Learning to use their moral choices as an expression of both autonomy and societal interdependence is one of the critically important developmental activities of adolescence. In this developmental context, it is reasonable to expect that a relatively large portion of an adolescent's time and energy would be directed towards self-related concerns, i.e. exploring the possibilities

inherent in their newly acquired capacity to have a moral impact on their environments. Also, it is reasonable to expect that adolescent values would reflect a strong emphasis on tolerance for this kind of self-expressive activity in others and intolerance for styles of interaction that are considered unreasonably authoritarian.

Because of the relatively long period of time required to make the transition from dependent child to responsible adult, the potential for an over-indulgence in self-focused activities during adolescence is considerable. Thus, it is important that adolescents be exposed to situations that foster both the autonomous and societally responsible aspects of their morality, and school communities have an important role to play in creating these situations.

On the Moral Nature of Education

In the first half of this century, John Dewey (1933) drew attention to the fact that all schools provide moral education, whether or not they offer specific programmes in it, because all schools have a *hidden curriculum*, i.e. a pervasive moral atmosphere. Although the atmospheres of some school communities are deliberately imbued with particular ideological or religious orientations, every school community is concerned with promoting the development of responsible persons capable of contributing to the cultural environment of which the school itself is a member.

Given the erosion of traditional sources of moral authority (i.e. family life and religious affiliation) and the emergence of new ones within our culture

(i.e. an increasing acceptance of moral pluralism), school communities are faced with a compelling need to respond in a responsible manner to these changes in cultural moral activity. This response entails addressing various issues in two interrelated areas of concern: role-expectations for all members of the school community, and creating conditions that foster moral development.

With regard to role-expectations, there are at least two major issues. In the first place, teachers must respond on a daily basis to students who come to school with often debilitating personal problems that seriously limit their capacity to learn - to what extent is a teacher responsible for addressing these concerns? Secondly, because it is important that discussions of moral concern be integrated into daily school activities, how are teachers to deal with conflicting opinions about moral issues among their students and between themselves and their students?

With regard to fostering moral development within schools, there are at least two important ways of doing this. One way is to provide adolescents with opportunities to reflect on and to discuss with their peers and concerned adults the changes that they inevitably encounter in their moral activity. Another way is to provide adolescents with opportunities to make a responsible and personally meaningful contribution to a community, preferably through activities that are part of the everyday operations of that community.

Responding to the issues mentioned above and creating the

opportunities just described is the responsibility of individual school communities. Just as individuals express their moral values in a personal way, each school community ought to make a committed effort to do the same, i.e. strive to understand its own moral purposes in the context of its particular cultural environment. It is by engaging in this kind of responsible behaviour that both individuals and school communities nurture their capacity to use their personal and institutional freedom for creative purposes.

Ultimately, the adequacy or success of any attempt to promote the moral development of adolescents in a school environment depends on how a particular school community uses its freedom to act as a responsible member of a cultural community.

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Appendix A

Information Sheet About Participation in a Study of Moral Motivation

This research project is part of my programme of studies towards a Masters degree from the Faculty of Education at the University of Victoria. My aim is to listen to what you have to say about the topics raised in your "Issues in Adolescence" class and to talk with some of you individually about these topics. Also, once you become familiar with the purpose of the study, I would like to invite you to contribute to it in whatever way that you think might be personally meaningful for you.

If you choose to contribute to this project in a personal way, I would be asking you to explore some of the thoughts, feelings or circumstances that influence you when you have to decide whether or not a particular action is the right thing to do. The main reason why I am doing this research is to listen to what you have to say about how you make these kinds of decisions, so that I might be able to learn something useful about how young people make their moral choices and share this information with yourselves and others interested in this topic.

One reason why I think this is an important topic is because moral choices are part of a person's identity. When people make a decision about the rightness of an action, that decision becomes part of how they appear to both themselves and the people around them, and I think it's important for people to be aware of this kind of information.

Another reason why I think this topic is important is my belief that people ought to be aware of whatever influences their moral choices. When someone decides that a particular action is the right thing to do, he or she has been influenced by some value, or standard of behaviour, which may or may not be in agreement with the values of others. I think it's important to know what our values are and how we got them so that we can either reinforce the ones that are important for us or change the ones that we may not want or that may be harmful in some way.

There have been many previous studies about how people make moral choices, but not many of them have asked people to talk about their real-life experiences. For example, many previous studies of this topic have presented various stories involving moral conflicts and then asked the participants how they would act in similar situations. Other studies have conducted experiments by setting up particular situations and then observing how people react.

The research project I am proposing to you differs from most previous studies of this topic in at least two important ways. First of all, the information that we collect, analyze and, I hope, share with one another, will be taken from your real-life situations, not "hypothetical" ones. Secondly, because the topic is about *your* experiences, I would like you to consider yourselves "co-researchers" with me. Actually, I think of my role in this project as primarily a "learner" - my job is to learn what you have to tell me about our topic, reflect on it, and make a summary that I hope will be of use to yourselves and to anyone else interested in how people make their

moral choices. As co-researchers, you would be asked whether or not this summary is an accurate reflection of your contribution and your suggestions or comments about participating in this research would be added to the final written version of the study.

If you choose to be a personal contributor, you will be asked to sign a "consent form" which basically tells you, essentially, that your participation would be totally voluntary, confidential and would not affect your school grades in any way. Your contribution could take several different forms.

(1) Talking with me about the topic (either privately or with others). The time required for these sessions could vary, depending on how much you want to say and on our personal time schedules. However, I would ask for your consent to two things: first, to have these talks tape recorded and transcribed so that I can be sure not to miss any important information, and secondly, to arrange a follow-up session so that I can check with you about the accuracy of my summary of what you said.

(2) You could keep a "research log", that is, a record of the situations in your daily life when you are aware of having to make a choice about whether a particular action is the right thing to do. This would involve identifying the particular issue (which may or may not seem like a "problem"), and trying to recognize the influences that make you decide one way or the other what to do about it. These influences might involve such things as your personality and particular interests, your background, expectations that you may have about how you or others might react to your decision, or aspects of a particular situation (such as whether or not you are with friends, adults, younger people, or in a place that makes you act in a certain way). Offering this kind of information to the study would be an extremely valuable contribution, and I think, might help you in understanding an important aspect of the way you see yourself and the way others see you.

(3) You could write something about the topic of making moral choices - perhaps a short story, a letter, a poem, or even a song.

If you have any questions about this project, please do not hesitate to contact me.

With many thanks for whatever interest you show in this project,

Paul Crawford
1758 Bay Street,
Victoria, VC8 2C1

(370-6057)

Appendix B

Letter of Informed Consent for Participants

I would like to invite you to make a personal contribution to a research project that will be studying how young people make their moral choices, that is, how they determine the right things to do. This would involve agreeing to meet and talk with me about some of your thoughts and feelings about how you decide what to do when you have to determine whether an action is right or wrong.

We would have at least two meetings. The follow-up session (or sessions) would be for me to check with you about the accuracy of my summary of what you told me at our first meeting, and for either you or I to mention anything about the topic that may be of further interest to us. Our sessions would be tape-recorded and later transcribed to ensure that all of the information you give me is accurately preserved. The location and length of each session would be arranged according to what is convenient for each of us.

Near the end of the research project, when I have written up a summary of all the information in the study, I will arrange a time and place for an optional, informal meeting of all participants to discuss the work.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary, which means that you may withdraw from it at any time, without having to explain your reason for doing so. You have complete authority over your contribution: that is, I will only use whatever information you want me to use.

Also, your participation will be completely confidential and will not affect your school grades in any way. This means that fictional names will be used to refer to all participants in the study and that the tapes and transcripts of our meetings will be kept private - no one will have access to them unless you give your explicit permission. Someone other than myself may do the actual transcribing of the tapes, but this person will be screened for confidentiality. When the study is completed, the tapes will be erased.

By signing this consent form, you are indicating that you understand all the information contained on it and agree to it. Also, your signature will mean that you have read the "Information Sheet" associated with this project, and taken all the time you think you need to consider whether or not you would like to contribute to this research.

If you have any questions or would like to make any comments or suggestions about the research, please call me, Paul Crawford, at 370-6057.

Many thanks for your participation.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Letter of Consent for Parents or Guardians of Participants

I am inviting several young people at your child's school to participate in a research project that is studying moral motivation in adolescents. This research is part of my programme of studies towards a Masters degree at the University of Victoria.

My research involves attending several of the "Issues in Adolescence" classes throughout the current term, and meeting with some of the students individually. My purpose is to listen to what these young people have to say about the thoughts, feelings and circumstances that influence them when they make their moral choices, that is, when they have to decide whether a particular action is the right thing to do.

I think that participating in this study will be of educational value for the students because it will offer them an opportunity to explore an important aspect of their personal and social lives. Also, the information they provide should be useful both for other students, teachers, and anyone concerned with trying to understand how personal values influence adolescent behaviour.

If a student consents to contribute to this study by means of a personal interview, I would ask that he or she agree to meet with me at least two times. These meetings would be arranged for a mutually convenient time and place and would probably last from between 20 to 30 minutes and take place at the school during regular school hours. These sessions would be completely voluntary, confidential, and would not affect their school work or grades in any way. Also, students could withdraw at any time without giving any reason for doing so, and they would have complete authority over any information they provide. I would only use whatever information they want me to use. In order to ensure that what the participants say is recorded accurately, the sessions would be tape recorded and later transcribed. However, this material would be kept private, and no one other than myself would have access to it unless the student gave her or his permission. At the end of the study, these tapes will be erased.

I have enclosed a separate "Information Sheet" that summarizes my research project in a little more detail, but if you would like further information, please do not hesitate to call me. I have also enclosed a consent form for you to sign if you agree to have your child contribute to this research.

With many thanks for your consideration of this request,
Sincerely,

Paul Crawford (370-6057)

Consent Form

I acknowledge that I have read the letter and information sheet provided about the research on adolescent moral motivation which is being organized by Paul Crawford, and that I agree to have my child _____ interviewed as part of this research. It is understood that participation will be completely voluntary, confidential, and will not affect school grades in any way. Also, it is understood that participants may withdraw from contributing to the research at any time without having to explain their reason for doing so.

Name & Address: (please print)

Signature:

Phone #: _____ Date: _____

Appendix C

Interview Guide

(1) How does choosing the right thing to do fit into your day to day life?

Would you say that making decisions about what's right plays an important part in your day to day life...is it something you're aware of very often?

What about some things that may have happened at home or at school recently...can you recall any incident or situation when you were thinking about whether something was the right thing to do?

Have you ever had a time when choosing the right thing to do suddenly became more meaningful or important for you?

How would you say the way you make these kinds of decisions had changed over the years?

Do your own personal standards about what's right change in certain situations?

(2) What are the major influences on the way you determine what's right?

Who or what is the major influence on you when you're deciding about what's right?

Do you have any particular people in your life who act as role models for you when it comes to making decisions about what's right?

Do you think your friends influence the way you decide about what's right?

(3) Where do the values that influence you come from?

When you're dealing with something or someone who expresses an opposite opinion about what's right, where do you find your support?

When you're confused or uncertain about whether something is right, where do you go for guidance or support?

Do you have any concerns or observations that we haven't talked about that can help me understand how you decide what's right?

Appendix D

Voluntary Information about Participants

Name:

Pseudonym:

Address:

Postal Code:

Phone:

Personal Information

Age:

Birthday:

Job:

Interests

At school:

Outside school:

Goals:

Self-description:

Family Information

Father / Occupation:

Mother / Occupation:

Siblings:

People living at home:

Appendix E

Thank-you letter to Participants

February 19th. 1995

Dear,

It's been a few weeks now since I spoke with you at _____ School, and this letter is meant to thank you for your contribution to the research project I am involved with, and to let you know how it is progressing.

At present, I am in the midst of going over all the information that I talked about with you and the other students who participated in the project. I am enjoying this work a lot, because the issues we discussed are of great interest to me and it is easy for me to admire and be thankful for the openness and insight with which all participants shared with me their thoughts and feelings about how they make their choices about what's right.

This process of analyzing, reflecting on and finally writing about all the information I have received will take several months - probably two or three at least. I did not want to wait that long to thank you in some tangible way for contributing to this project, so I am enclosing a small token of appreciation which I hope will be of some use for you.

As I mentioned to you when we last met, I will be writing to you when the process of going over all the information of the study is nearly completed because I would like to share the results of my work with you. This letter will contain both a summary of your personal contribution and a synopsis of the overall findings of the study.

After you receive this letter, or in fact, at any time, I would greatly appreciate your comments and suggestions about any aspect of your participation in or reactions to this research. In a very real sense I would like you to feel as if you are a co-researcher with me in this project. You could write to me at the address below, or I'm sure Miss _____ and Mrs. _____ would be willing to pass along to me anything you care to send.

In closing, I want to wish you the very best of good fortune in all your activities and thank you again for meeting with me. Talking with you was both an informative and enjoyable experience for me and one for which I am very grateful.

Sincerely,

Paul Crawford
1758 Bay Street
Victoria, B.C.
V8R 2C1
(Phone: 370-6057)

Appendix F

Checking with Participants: Summary of Research Information: Feedback Sheet

May 15th. 1995

Dear

I am very happy to be writing you again in order to share the information that has emerged so far in the research project about moral motivation to which you contributed a few months ago. Although summarizing everything I heard has taken longer than I anticipated, I have enjoyed doing it and am very grateful for your personal contribution.

As I mentioned before, I believe that research of this type belongs to those who contribute to it, which means that I think your reaction and comments about how I have summarized and plan to present the research information is a very important part of determining the credibility and usefulness of my work. As it stands now, my summary is quite long (over a hundred pages, double-spaced), and so I don't expect you to read all that (although you may certainly do so if you wish). However, I am enclosing a briefer summary of the research information (6 pages) in the hope that you will take the time to read it through and make a few comments about it. You can use either the enclosed "comment-sheet" or a separate sheet of paper. I know how busy the life of a student can be, so if it would be easier for you to call me by phone, that would be fine (best times are between 8:30 and 11:00 pm). Your reaction is important to me, so in whatever way you respond will be much appreciated.

I plan to continue working on this project throughout the summer months so that I can develop and refine my thoughts about what you have told me and put it into a form that will be useful for people interested in the topic. The final version of my research paper should be ready by September and will be my Thesis for an MA in Educational Psychology at UVIC. In order to keep this work "on track" I will have to hear from you as soon as possible, hopefully by the end of May. Please feel free to call me if you have any questions. If I do not hear from you, I hope you don't mind if I try to contact you by phone, as I consider your reactions an extremely important aspect of this research.

Once again, a great many thanks for being a contributor to this research, and best wishes for your present and future activities.

Paul Crawford
1758 Bay Street,
Victoria, B.C. V8R 2C1
(Phone 370-6057)

COMMENT SHEET

After you have read the enclosed information, please comment on it as you see fit. You can use the questions on this page as a guide or simply say what you want to say in your own way on a separate sheet of paper. Please feel free to be as brief or as detailed as you would like to be. I am interested in getting your reaction both to the content of the research information and your own participation in this project. Whatever you have to say is important and will be incorporated into the research.

What is your opinion about the way the information is organized? Can you relate your own experiences to it?

What is your opinion about the actual material presented? Has anything of importance been left out, over or under emphasized, or has anything been included that you think does not apply to the way people of your age make moral decisions?

Please comment on how you have experienced your own participation in this project. Do you have any comments or suggestions about how research like this should be organized?

Any other comments? (Please let me know if you would like to receive more detailed information about any aspect of this research.)

Information for Contributors to the Research on Moral Motivation

You may like to have some background information about this research and how it is being carried out. There are fifteen contributors to this project, all grade ten students from your school, and as you know, the topic is how people of your age make decisions about what is right.

After talking twice with each contributor, I transcribed the taped interviews and then went through these transcripts, line by line, and wrote a brief description of what was said. I put all these brief descriptions on small pieces of paper and then began to organize them into groups that seemed to reflect similar experiences. There were several hundred of these little bits of information, so this took a very long time, not to mention a lot of *hard thinking*. When I thought that the information had been sorted out in a sensible way I began writing about it. Having done this, I am now checking with you to give you a chance to comment of what I've done so far. Whatever you say will be very valuable to me and will be part of the final write-up of this research project.

Please remember that, as many of you suggested, people are not always aware of making moral choices and not always certain about the extent to which they can be considered "moral." So, the following remarks apply to instances when there is a definite awareness of choice between right and wrong.

Also, many of you drew attention to the fact they "we are all different." Naturally, the way each of you make your moral choices is a unique expression of your individuality. However, we are social people and live in communities and so we do share common structures of communication and social interaction. The process described here is an attempt to depict such a structure. It is meant to reflect an overall picture of the process of deciding the right thing to do. Of course, each of you experience the various phases of this process in your own way, and in the final version of this research your experiences will be depicted by using your own words. The purpose of getting your reaction now is to determine if you can relate your own experiences about making moral decisions to the overall process described in the following pages.

The General Picture

My major response to all you told me is the impression that you consider **making moral choices is a freely-chosen expression of who you are and who you want to become**. I sensed that it is important for you to believe that your moral choices "belong" to you. You appear to use them as a way of expressing your ability and right to make independent moral decisions and as a way of enriching your self-understanding.

I thought that you talked about making moral choices in terms of several different kinds of activities associated with three main phases in making a decision: having an impulse to make a value judgment, actually making such a judgment and finally choosing whether or not to act on it. These main activities are preceded by an experience of self-knowledge that expresses your readiness to make a moral decision, and may be followed by a reflective response that expresses an experience of knowing who you want to become.

The following pages contain brief summaries of what was said about each of these activities and the various experiences associated with each.

KNOWING WHO YOU ARE: BEING READY TO MAKE A MORAL DECISION

Although the process of making a decision may begin at a certain point in time, each of you brings a lifetime of experiences to the occasion. Before you decide to accept, deny, ignore or adapt particular values for yourselves, you have a sense of who you are that provides a more or less stable starting point for making moral decisions. My impression is that this experience of knowing who you are expresses itself in the three main ways outlined below.

Recognizing Personal Qualities

You described many different personal qualities that may have an impact on your readiness to make moral decisions (such as stubbornness, shyness, being very opinionated, not being very open about feelings and having a deep commitment to your religious faith, etc.).

Some of you expressed self-understanding in terms of knowing how you would act in particular situations, and some expressed it through descriptions of past or on-going experiences that have an influence on being ready to make moral decisions. Also, some of you talked about wanting to lessen or increase the impact of one of your own character traits as having an influence on the way you deal with moral issues.

Having Goals and a Purpose in Life

At some point, every participant identified personal goals. These goals involved both specific career objectives, and more general expressions about having a purpose for one's life.

Attaching Importance to Being Independent

One of the most vivid impressions I have of what means most to you in terms of being ready to make moral decisions is that you attach great importance to being independent. Also, I was impressed by the way you indicated respect for the differences that exist among people. This suggests to me that the independence you value for yourselves is extended to others.

MAKING MORAL VALUES YOUR OWN: BUILDING AND ACTING ON PERSONAL MORAL STANDARDS

The following information outlines the three main kinds of activities that appear to be involved in making your moral decisions, along with various experiences associated with them. Please remember that, although these activities are presented here in sequence, it is not my intention to suggest that they function solely or even primarily in a linear way in real life. More likely, they are interwoven in a "texture" of experience, much like the various parts of a musical composition. This means that each activity may affect the others throughout the whole process of making a moral decision.

(1) Having an Impulse to Make a Value Judgment

Our decisions begin with an impression that we need to make one. For moral decisions, this means recognizing a need to make a value judgment about something. Although we are not always aware of the decisions we make, I sense that you are experiencing an *increase* in your awareness of decisions about

right and wrong or in your thinking about these decisions. During our conversations, you seemed to express this awareness in the three ways described below.

i) Recognizing Personal Qualities You Would Like to Have as Your Own

Although some of you did not identify specific role models, everyone talked about admiring personal qualities in others, and often did so in ways that suggest this kind of admiration may act as an impulse for making value judgments about actions which may lead eventually to making a moral decision.

ii) Feeling Empathy / Understanding and Caring about the Experiences of Others

Webster's dictionary defines empathy as an "identification with and understanding of another's feelings, situation and motives." Many of you talked about being able to put yourselves in someone else's position and know when he or she needs help or sense how your actions might affect others. When your empathy is aroused, very often this seems to lead to making a value judgment about doing something for others.

iii) Perceiving a Lack of Moral Concern in Your Environment

Many of you mentioned that you believe you are more attuned to moral concerns than others around you. By caring about moral issues, you are more likely to be affected by what you perceive as "moral needs" in your environments, and just as a physical need (such as hunger) provides an impulse to do something to satisfy it (such as eat), your perception of moral needs prompts you to act morally.

(2) Making Value Judgments

For moral issues, making a value judgment involves recognizing a difference between actions in terms of right and wrong and accepting what you consider right as a standard for personal conduct. In the language of common experience, this means that making a value judgment involves using your conscience. You described this experience of making and then accepting value distinctions in many ways which are briefly summarized below.

i) Making Value Distinctions

When listening to you, I often had the impression that simply having "inherited" values is not as important to you as applying them in real-life situations. The first step in applying your values is using them to make a distinction between right and wrong, and you identified several kinds of influence on the way you do this. Here is a summary of them.

Personal Ways of Thinking about Value Distinctions

This kind of influence involves attending to priorities, as in "weighing the pros and cons" about something, and also attending to consequences, as in learning about how actions affect various situations either by observing the experiences of others or by reflecting on your own experiences.

Family Influences on Making Value Distinctions

I heard about a great variety of family experiences that influence the way you make value distinctions, both pleasant and not so pleasant. The impact of these experiences seems to depend on particular circumstances and on how individuals interpret them. Some people are more resilient than others to unpleasant or negative experiences, while others may be less responsive to what might be considered facilitative, positive family environments. Either way, family life is certainly a "big" influence.

The Impact of Social Life on Making Value Distinctions

You often talked about listening to and talking with friends as if these activities are important ways for you to get both information and support for making value distinctions. However, you emphasized that these experiences involved freely-chosen rather than pressured activities.

ii) Accepting Value Distinctions

A persistent theme in the way you talked about making moral decisions was the importance you attached to experiencing moral choices as "your own." This experience is most obvious in the way you spoke about accepting value distinctions, and here is a summary of what you said about influences on this activity.

Personal Influences on the Acceptance of Value Distinctions

Learning from mistakes: Many of you talked about learning from mistakes as being an influence on the way you accept value distinctions, and several of you said that making mistakes or undergoing difficult moral situations is an important way to confirm your own values to yourself.

Responding to feelings: Just as "thinking" appears to be an important part of making value distinctions, "feeling" appears to be an important part of accepting or not accepting them. Some of you talked about responding to feelings that are a fairly stable part of your character, and some of you emphasized the kind of transitory emotions that are aroused for various reasons in everyday situations. Both kinds of emotions were identified as having an effect on the way you accept value distinctions.

Spirituality: Being connected with a spiritual reality provides a central focus for life, and for those of you who mentioned it, your spiritual life as guided by prayer is obviously the most important influence on all the activities described in this report and will be presented as such. I am referring to it specifically at this point because the way you talked about it with me involves a belief in "free-will" which seems to be a central aspect of accepting values.

Family Influences on the Acceptance of Value Distinctions

Just as family experiences are a source of information when making value distinctions, they are also a source of influence in determining the personal importance of these distinctions which naturally affects their acceptance. Many of you expressed agreement with the values you have received from your parents and attached importance to specific values or styles of dealing with moral issues derived from family life. However, some of you mentioned that negotiating with parents about certain activities, and in some cases acting against parental values, is often a part of establishing a sense of "ownership" for your moral

actions.

The Impact of Social Life on the Acceptance of Value Distinctions

Social experiences provide opportunities to compare your own moral choices with those of others, and you talked about observing others critically in order to determine the kinds of value distinctions that have personal importance for you. Many of you suggested that some values (such as not harming others) are probably absolute while others may depend on individual circumstances and on the way you interpret them.

(3) Choosing to Act on a Value Judgment

Although many of you said that you attach more importance either to thinking or responding to your feelings, the important observation seems to be that both activities are always involved in making a moral choice. My impression is that your individual style of combining thinking and feeling into a moral choice is your way of expressing both a personal influence on your environment, and the way your environment influences you.

i) Making a Moral Choice as an Expression of Personal Influence

Because you can talk with ease and insight about your style of making moral choices, you are able to talk about *possible* moral decisions in ways that suggest your ability and desire to have a moral influence on your environment. In this way you can consider your moral activity as a genuine contribution towards the creation and maintenance of a moral environment rather than simply a product of it.

ii) Making a Moral Choice as an Expression of Societal Influence

Altruism is defined as "selfless regard or concern for the well-being of others." Many of you spoke about activities focused on helping others without expectation of personal reward, which suggests that altruism is one form of societal influence on the way you make moral choices.

However, most of you also talked about receiving personal satisfaction for the prosocial activities that you do. You seem to feel this satisfaction either because others treat you the same way you treat them or because you observe the benefit your actions have or may have on others. Experiencing this satisfaction suggests a second kind of social influence on your moral choices in the form of participating in a mutual giving and receiving of values that promote harmonious interpersonal relations.

One of the interpersonal values you seem to emphasize is having respect for one's own opinion and that of others, which involves both a tolerance for contrasting moral opinions and association with people of similar moral values.

KNOWING WHO YOU WANT TO BE: RESPONDING TO A MORAL CHOICE

Some of your comments suggest that by reflecting on moral choices you come to a greater understanding of conditions in life you would like both to prevent and to promote. In the absence of serious interference with moral processes, responding to your moral activity in this way becomes part of learning about yourselves and increasing your understanding of the kind of person you want to be. This learning process appears to provide you with knowledge that forms part of your readiness to make moral decisions and completes what might be called a cycle of moral activity.

Closing Comment

As all of your comments imply, human experiences are seldom, if ever, expressions of a single activity or process. In real-life situations, human experience is a texture of interwoven activities and although understanding the individual strands or components of this texture contributes to the understanding of the whole fabric of experience, their meaning resides in the context in which they are found. Morality seems to be an important way we have of interpreting that context for the well-being of ourselves and others. Synopsis follows.....

A Synopsis of the Way You Described
The Activities Involved in Making a Moral Choice

Knowing Who You Are:

Being Ready to Make a Moral Decision

- Recognizing Personal Qualities
- Having Goals and a Purpose in Life
- Attaching Importance to Being Independent

Making Moral Values Your Own:

Building and Acting on Personal Moral Standards

- Having an Impulse to Make a Value Judgment
 - Recognizing Personal Qualities You Would Like to Have as Your Own
 - Feeling Empathy / Understanding and Caring about the Experiences of Others
 - Perceiving a Lack of Moral Concern in Your Environment
- Making Value Judgments
 - Making Value Distinctions
 - Personal Ways of Thinking about Value Distinctions
 - Attending to Priorities
 - Attending to Consequences
 - Family Influences on Making Value Distinctions
 - The Impact of Social Life on Making Value Distinctions
 - Accepting Value Distinctions
 - Personal Influences on the Acceptance of Value Distinctions
 - Learning from Mistakes
 - Responding to Feelings
 - Spirituality
 - Family Influences on the Acceptance of Value Distinctions
 - The Impact of Social Life on the Acceptance of Value Distinctions
- Choosing to Act on a Value Judgment
 - Making a Moral Choice as an Expression of Personal Influence
 - Making a Moral Choice as an Expression of Societal Influence
 - Altruism
 - Mutual Giving and Receiving / Value Reciprocity

Knowing Who You Want To Be:

Responding to a Moral Choice

* * * * *

Appendix G
Feedback Letters from the Participants

ALLIE (*letter style*)

I feel that the information sent to me was very detailed. At times, it was a tab bit hard for me to understand but only because of my lower calibre of language and writing skills. The information was organized which made it easier to understand. I strongly believe that learning from your own mistakes and from your own experiences is important in making moral decisions. I strongly believe that (in regards to accepting value distinctions from family influences) it is important that, as you stated, we establish a sense of "ownership" for our moral actions.

I really enjoyed and found it interesting to be included in this project. I wouldn't mind seeing a final copy or being updated on how your report is coming along.

Best of luck and sorry for the inconvenience,

(Note: apology concerns sending in feedback letter later than asked for)

ALLISON (*on comment sheet*)

I thought the way the information was organized very well. It sounds very close to what I was thinking and feeling.

The material was accurate and seemed to be what I said and I don't think anything was left out. It was very thorough.

I think I learned a little more about myself and my feelings. I am glad I participated in this project.

Maybe it would be a good idea to organize something like this for all students. It helps to be more open about the feelings.

(happy face symbol)

ALEXIS (*on comment sheet*)

I think the information was very well organized. I can relate to it very easily.

I think the material presented was very true, realistic and right. The people our age don't only confine themselves to these ways we gave you. Making the right decision is very important and everyone has their own way of making that decision. The way we described our decision making as you know is not the way everyone thinks and feels.

I only answered the questions you asked me, because I feel what you are doing is very important. I think it's wonderful that you are asking our input about the project. I couldn't suggest any way of organizing the research. I'm not very good at organizing research. The project seems to be progressing nicely. I'm only glad I could help.

BECKY (*letter style*)

I really enjoyed reading the summary of what was said during your research. Not only did it make me reevaluate what I said and how I've changed but how others come to decisions as well. I liked the layout. I found it easy to read and thought points taken for sub-topics were good ones. I liked the topic of role models. I'd wished I'd said more about what I felt they meant. I've come to realize they mean and affect me more than I thought they did. In a way I felt embarrassed by what I read in the summary because of the changes I've gone through. I still have the same morals and I still think that the decisions I make now will affect how and what I become in later years. But now I don't rely so heavily on a gut instinct. I take longer in my decisions and I weigh the possibilities. I look forward to seeing the completed work; this study really made me think about things I don't usually think about, but are important.

CHARLES (*letter style*)

Dear Mr. Crawford

I have read over the material that you have sent me, and find that for the most part your organization and content appears very good. There are a few things that I may point out, however. For one, I speak in regard to the section on "Attaching Importance to being Independent." Personally, I think that "independence" can go too far. We must realize, as teenagers, that your parents still play an important role in moulding us and teaching us morals. This stage is a stage in which we start becoming independent, but it should not take over fully.

I also disagree with some of the moral distinctions being made between people. In my own opinion, I think there can be a distinction in what you value, but the difference between right and wrong should be clear. Unfortunately, the distinction between right and wrong has become quite hazy in our society. people no longer are clear as to what is right and wrong. I suppose this is happening as our society deviates from Judeo-Christian morals.

One last thing I would like to mention is in regard to the organization. I find the distinctions of the headings a little vague and with so many different headings and subheadings, the writing seems to get a bit cluttered. Otherwise, it appears that you shall do quite well.

I enjoyed the opportunity to share my beliefs and moral values. I hope that your research will prove beneficial, not only for yourself, but for all who read it.

Sincerely,

JANICE (*on comment sheet*)

I like the way the information is organized, but it is kind of hard for me to relate my own experiences to it. This might be because I may have changed since the interviews. It was kind of hard for me to understand the report, so that may have been a factor.

I think one aspect left out was peer pressure. Maybe people don't like to admit, or maybe don't realize they fall under peer pressure. I think that most teenagers don't do things because there is a lack of moral concern around them. This is because (Blank space)

I loved (*the word "loved" is placed in a "square"*) participating in this project. I felt so, so much like I knew myself better. Right now I haven't really been thinking about who I am or what I stand for, so I do anything without a conscience. Except when it involves hurting someone I know or something I can relate to.

I really think what you said about "making moral choices is a freely chosen expression of who we are and who we want to become" is very true.

*Could you please send me a transcript of what was said in our interview? I'd love that, to see if I've changed and see if I can identify with it. I can also use it to figure out who I am.

JOAN (*on comment sheet: at top of page - If you would like more info., please contact me*)

While reading through your material I found many of the things I had said. I think that many people may feel the same as I do about choices.

Maybe a few things were surprising, but all round I found that you put emphasis on the most important issues that affect teenagers.

The info. that I gave seems to show a lot in your writing and though it is not only what I said, it is great that we mostly got our point across.

I had a lot of fun and it's neat to see my opinions on an important paper. It was great.

P.S. Thanks for the book certificate.

MARIAH *(on comment sheet)*

I can relate the experience but I think a good thing would use examples. I find that everything is well organized.

The material presentation is good but with some things I got confused with the words or just confused. Ex. moral choices, I know I'd get it if there were examples.

Yes, I think it was fine. It was kinda in a way like a counselling session, which was fine because I think lots of people let out things that were bottled up.

I found the synopsis was very effective. Everything was good but I still don't have a good understanding of what this was for.

Thank you very much
Mr. Crawford

(small sketch of a flower and a happy face at bottom of the page)

MARI-JANE *(letter style)*

(at top of page)

A decision can turn out to be a day's expedition
or
a life's journey, that's what makes your decision so important.

Comment Sheet - Answers

1. I liked the way it was organized because if I had to take a break from reading I could go back and start wherever I wanted, because everything wasn't all tied in together. I found that the paper made a lot of sense and I could fit a lot of it into my everyday life.
2. The presentation was a very long read for a person my age, so the material was spread out. There was a lot of information in the paper so I don't think you left anything out, and if you did leave something out it obviously is not of great importance or I missed it.
3. I have enjoyed the experience in participating in this project. When you talked to me last I was failing all of my subjects. Since then I have put myself on a pinksheet that helps me stay in class and do my work. I am now a B average student. So as you can see I have been very busy. I have exams and baseball playoffs this week also. So I am really sorry this took so long.
4. I would like to receive more information sometime, and I would be more than happy to write you again. I feel very lucky that I can be a person to help you.

Thank - you

PERRIN (*letter style*)

Dear Paul Crawford,

I apologize for the lateness of this response, and hope that it has not caused any hardship. I have read your information concerning *moral motivation*, and found it both accurate and impressive. Your observation "making a moral choice is a freely-chosen expression of who you are and who you want to become" is a remarkably truthful summation of the process of making a moral decision.

As described in your research, I have several personal qualities that greatly influence my moral decisions. The guidelines of my reasoning, regarding an issue, are determined by the values I have accepted through Christianity.

I believe one's moral decisions are a testimony to others in society. Individuals, knowingly or not, judge a person's worthiness, and establish the person's reputation by the person's actions.

As you mentioned, people begin the decision making process by evaluating, or in some cases acting upon immediately, their initial impulse. From personal experience, I know that whenever I am faced with a choice, especially when it involves temptation, I instantly experience a "feeling" which informs that one of the subjects of the decision is ethically wrong.

It is true that "altruism is one form of social influence on the way [I] make moral decisions". However, as you touched upon, I expect, usually subconsciously, some sort of return which will give me satisfaction. For instance, one evening, during a "get-together" with my friends, I won a chocolate bar in a long and strenuous, strategical warfare game. Upon winning I felt empathetic towards my friends, and decided that it would be high minded to share the victory loot. Perhaps this was considered an unselfish gesture, but I did derive satisfaction from sharing when in a position of power.

You have done the observation and compilation of my input and that of the other contributors in the project, most effectively. Personally, I would like to thank you for allowing me to participate in your research. It has been considerably inspirational by helping me identify the reasons behind my decisions, and therefore gain an understanding of who I am. May God bless you in development and completion of your project.

Your truly,

REBECCA ROSE *(on comment sheet)*

The information is all covered except for my comment on the back of this page. I think what stuck out at me the most was about the family situation because when I think about it, it's so right.

I'm actually not sure what was meant by the "spirituality" part of the report because it doesn't apply to me. But I did go to church once but God doesn't have any influence on me.

I feel that I learned a lot myself because I never thought about why I make decisions, I just always did them, and even now I do stuff without thinking.

I would like to know what your grade is on the project when you get it back, also and updated reports you have time to send I'd be interested in reading.

- Good Luck -

(on the back page)

I feel something that was under emphasized in the report was that when people make decisions they don't really think about it. Like if I was walking down a beach and I saw some garbage I'd pick it up and put it in to the garbage can without thinking, or if someone looks sad I'd say something nice to try and cheer them up. I don't think a lot of people think about day to day stuff like that, It just happens. I never thought about why I did things until "guidance 10" class started and I still don't know why sometimes I do mean stuff and sometimes I'm really nice. Choices aren't really thought about unless they are really big things. Morals are installed in each person and I'm sure there is a reason each person does certain things like kill. So what I'm trying to say is people have the way they look at things and no one can change that so if someone asked me to do drugs I'd say no because I know it's wrong where as other people would say yes because they think it's right.

RICHARD (*on comment sheet*)

I think the information is organized in a very clear manner. In your research I found many of the things that I mentioned. It is interesting that the things I said were mentioned by many of the people you interviewed.

You wrote briefly about the people interviewed believing that there is a lack of moral concern in the environment. I think that, considering the fact that many people thought that everybody else had a lack of moral concern, it is not that there is a lack of moral concern, rather a lack of the perception of moral concern and perhaps less moral behaviour and more moral theorizing. This could also be a result of the type of people that volunteer for research like this just being more moral than others.

I really enjoyed participating in this. I especially liked getting this kind of feedback. I think this was very well organized.

If possible I would be interested in your views on "societal" moral behaviour and the perception of morality in others.

I hope this isn't too late. Thank you for your very generous gift certificate. I used it to buy "Virtual Light" by William Gibson and a novel by Kathleen Kerr.

SNOW WHITE (*letter style*)

Dear Mr. Crawford,

The summary you sent was very interesting and I see nothing lacking at the moment. I am impressed at how you are combining so many individual's qualities, personalities and traits. Your research is a fascinating topic and I am interested in reading the final product. Keep me posted and good luck.

(sorry it's a little late)

P.S. Thank you very much for the gift certificate for Munroes. I love books and very much appreciate the gift.

Sincerely,

TERRY (*letter style*)

Your thesis is very well organized and I liked the way you wrote it. It was easy to understand and I could relate my own experiences to it. I don't think anything was left out but I don't have a good memory and I hardly remember exactly what we had discussed. I know I found it interesting and enjoyed reading it. I would enjoy reading the whole thing. I think you covered almost everything about how we make decisions.

WINNIE (*on comment sheet*)

The information is organized extremely well. It was easy to understand. You worded it in a way to which I can relate to my own experiences.

The actual material presented was very good. It allowed me to see what you were trying to present. Nothing was left out everything fits where it's supposed to be.

I really enjoyed helping you. It's made me think a little more as to where and how exactly I make the decisions I do.

I think your thesis is going to be an A +. I wish all the best luck. Please keep me posted on how things are going.

* * * * *

Appendix H

Chronology

- Summer '94 Preliminary research: exploring the literature of moral development / preliminary proposal for a project to investigate adolescent moral activity.
- Sept. 22 '94 Began writing Research Journal (which continues intermittently throughout entire duration of the project)
- Sept 22 - Nov. 24th. '94 Organized Advisory Committee / Prepared and presented research proposal / Prepared and presented summaries of research proposal for UVIC Committee on Research with Human Subjects and the ----- School Board / Prepared and presented application for a research grant from the committee for Education Renewal.
- Also: Made all necessary preparations for the research fieldwork, such as speaking with teachers and school officials, preparing consent forms information sheets, and continuing to read material relevant to doing qualitative research in addition to "Personal/interior" preparations.
- Nov. 24 - Dec. 6th. '94 Initial observations in classrooms. Introducing research project to students, obtaining consent forms, and organizing time for volunteer interviews.
- Dec. 7 - Dec. 15 '95 First interview sessions with all participants. Began transcribing taped interviews.
- Dec. 16 - Jan. 8 '95 Finished transcribing interviews. Sorted information from interviews so as to obtain an initial, very tentative analysis of the material which would allow me to organize the follow-up sessions and prepare a brief summary (profile) of what each participant said. Also, prepared voluntary information sheet for participants.
- Jan. 5th. '95 Began organizing times for follow-up session. Began handing out voluntary information sheets. Some classroom observation.
- Jan. 9 - Jan. 23 '95 Follow-up sessions with all participants. Began transcribing all sessions.
- Jan. 25th. '95 Completed picking up information sheets from students. Final day of classroom observation.
- Jan. 26 - Mar.20 '95 Completed transcribing follow-up sessions (Feb. 6th.) Wrote up brief descriptions of "all" information in interviews and follow-up sessions. Began organizing this information in large, general groups and gradually into more specific groups. Coded and categorized the material three

different times.

Note: Unforeseen increase in personal work. I took a break from the research, in order to organize new workload (Feb. 7-11).

- Feb. 19th. '95 Sent "thank you" letter and gift certificates to all participants (including Teachers)
- Mar. 20 - 23 '95 Wrote descriptions of all relevant material in journal, log and miscellaneous notes collected during previous work sessions. Then, I categorized them on their own. Those that seemed to fit into the categories already established were inserted in the relevant places and others were sorted out to be used in various parts of the proposed thesis (such as comments suitable for the Introduction, Methodology or Discussion sections).
Note: This time corresponded to Spring Break, so I was able to devote much more time to the project.
- Mar. 24th. - May 15th. '95 Wrote first version of "Results" section.
- May 15th. 1995 Sent summary of research information to participants along with comment sheet.
- May 16th. - June 17th. '95 Phoned participants re. summaries & obtained verbal authorizations about research information.
Wrote "Lit. review" and "Method" chapters.
- June 7th. - July 5th. '95 Wrote "Reflections: Implications" sections.
Prepared initial Thesis paper.
- July 6th. - (indefinite) Individual thank-you letters to participants, along with research update re. discussion material

VITA

Surname: Crawford Given Names: Paul Duncan

Place of Birth: Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Educational Institutions Attended:

University of Victoria	1990 to 1995
McGill University	1967 to 1971

Degrees Awarded:

B.A.	University of Victoria	1993
B. Mus.	McGill University	1971

Honours and Awards:

The President's Scholarship, University of Victoria	1992
David Scott Memorial Award (From Nelson & District Arts Council)	1990
Canadian Federation of University Women Golden Jubilee Award	1972
Canadian League of Composers Award	1972

Publications

Many musical compositions deposited with the Canadian Music Centre

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Title of Thesis: How do Adolescents Determine the Right Things to Do?

Author:



Paul Crawford
Sept. 12th. 1995