

FEB 1988

Supervisor: Dr. D. Knowles
**Guided Imagery Process in Counselling:
Pathway to Exploration of Personal Meaning**
Carolyn May Farr
B.A., Boston University, 1968

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

in the Department of
Psychological Foundations
in the Faculty of
Education

ACCEPTED
CULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
DEAN
DATE: June 1988

We accept this thesis as conforming
to the required standard

Dr. D. Knowles

Dr. R. V. Peavy

Dr. G. Van Gyn

Dr. B. Zuk

© Carolyn May Farr, 1988

UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA

1988

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

Supervisor: Dr. D. Knowles

ABSTRACT

This descriptive study provided an account of the experiences of individuals using a specific guided imagery process designed to facilitate the generation of spontaneous imagery. The extent to which the procedure facilitated the discovery of meaning and awareness about the personal issues and concerns of the subjects was examined. Five women participated in four guided imagery sessions which were held approximately one week apart. Data obtained by means of a post-session interview and the observations of the researcher over the course of the sessions were thematically interpreted.

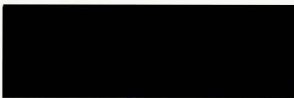
The experience of the imagery sessions and changes over time for all participants were compared. Effectiveness of the imagery process in facilitating affective exploration, awareness of the meaning of the imagery material, and understanding of the relationship of the imagery material to life issues were described.


The descriptive analysis showed that the guided imagery process facilitated the discovery of personal meaning and increased understanding for participants about their inner and outer lives. Subjects found that the imagery experiences enabled them to quickly discover and explore affective material that was related to important life experiences, issues, and relationships, and to renew a connection with inner personal sources of wisdom and creativity. At a one month follow-up, subjects reported continuing awareness and understanding of the experience.


The elements of playfulness, lack of intellectual blocking, and powerful vividness of the images were mentioned as specific positive aspects of the process. In addition, it was observed that subjects' sense of control and ability to make relevant decisions in relation to the imagery increased over time, with subsequent ability for some subjects to transmit this learning into daily life situations. Suggestions for using the imagery process as a counselling tool were discussed. The limitations of the present study and implications for future research were also addressed.


CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE


Examiners:


- 


- Dr. D. Knowles 


- 

- Dr. R. V. Peavy 

- 

- Dr. G. Van Gyn 

- 

- Dr. B. Zuk 

CONTENTS

Abstract	ii
Contents	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vii
DEDICATION	viii
CHAPTER 1: STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM	1
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	6
The Role of the Therapist	7
Relaxation	9
The Unconscious and Conscious	10
Non-verbal, Non-intellectual, Non-analytical Focus	11
Affective Exploration	13
Techniques and Examples	14
Meaning-making	17
CHAPTER 3: METHOD	20
Pilot Study	21
Selection of Participants	22
Subject Screening and Orientation	22
Instruments	23
Betts' QMI Vividness of Imagery Scale	23
Subject Profile	24
Post-session Interview	24
Procedure	25
Data Analysis Part One: Individual Interviews	27
Data Analysis Part Two: Guided Imagery Sessions	27
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS	29
Individual Descriptive Accounts	30
Patricia	30
The Sessions	31
Session one.	31
Session two.	31
Session three.	32

Session four.	32
The Experience	33
Awareness/Meaning	35
Associations with Life (events, people)	40
Tracey	44
The Sessions	44
Session one.	44
Session two.	45
Session three.	46
Session four.	47
The Experience	47
Awareness/Meaning	52
Associations with Life (events, people)	55
Donna	58
The Sessions	59
Session one.	59
Session two.	59
Session three.	60
Session four.	61
The Experience	62
Awareness/Meaning	65
Associations with Life (events, people)	69
Sarah	72
The Sessions	73
Session one.	73
Session two.	73
Session three.	74
Session four.	74
The Experience	75
Awareness/Meaning	78
Associations with Life (events, people)	83
Jocelyn	86
The Sessions	87
Session one.	87
Session two.	88
Session three.	88
The Experience	89
Awareness/Meaning	92
Associations with Life (events, people)	96
Thematic Analysis of Results	100
Experience of the Guided Imagery	100
Awareness/Meaning	101
Associations with Life (events, people)	103

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION	105
Implications For Counselling	112
Limitations of the Present Study and Implications For Further Research	113

Concluding Comments	115
REFERENCES	116
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	
Appendix A: ADVERTISEMENTS	123
Appendix B: INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS	125
Appendix C: BETTS' QMI VIVIDNESS OF IMAGERY SCALE	127
Appendix D: SUBJECT PROFILE	131
Appendix E: POST-SESSION INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	133
Appendix F: CONSENT FORM	135
Appendix G: RELAXATION AND GUIDED IMAGERY SCRIPT	136
Appendix H: FOCUSING RESPONSES	138
Appendix I: PATRICIA: VISUAL REPRESENTATIONS OF THE IMAGERY ..	141
Appendix J: DONNA: VISUAL REPRESENTATIONS OF THE IMAGERY	143
Appendix K: SARAH: VISUAL REPRESENTATIONS OF THE IMAGERY	145
Appendix L: JOCELYN: VISUAL REPRESENTATIONS OF THE IMAGERY ..	146

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis has been born again and again over the months as I worked on it. I am deeply grateful to my thesis supervisor, Dr. Don Knowles, for his careful and caring assistance in this birthing process. I also extend thanks to my committee members, Dr. Geri van Gyn for her attention to details I often overlooked, and Dr. Vance Peavy for his ability to clearly elucidate the whole.

Thanks to the following people who read and edited the manuscript, and who gave invaluable personal suggestions as readers: Jacqui Beck, Jean Farr, Margo Farr, Maggy Soos, and Brenda Wilson. I am also grateful to my friends for their patience and support as I moved through my own explorations; to my family who continue always to encourage me in my challenges; to my daughter Shana, for her playful ability to distract me from my mental intensity.

And most especially I would like to thank the participants, who made this study possible through their willingness and enthusiasm, and who continue to remind me of the depth and beauty of personal process.

DEDICATION

Whoever you are: some evening take a step
out of your house, which you know so well.
Enormous space is near, your house lies where it begins,
whoever you are.
Your eyes find it hard to tear themselves
from the sloping threshold, but with your eyes
up, so it stands against the sky: alone.

This thesis is dedicated with great love and appreciation to my daughter Shana,
whose delight in fantasy and the imaginative process continues to inspire me with
insight into its endless potential.

(translated by Robert Bly)

CHAPTER I

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Whoever you are: some evening take a step
out of your house, which you know so well.
Enormous space is near, your house lies where it begins,
whoever you are.
Your eyes find it hard to tear themselves
from the sloping threshold, but with your eyes
slowly, slowly, lift one black tree
up, so it stands against the sky: skinny, alone.
With that you have made the world...

-Rainier Maria Rilke
(translated by Robert Bly)

CHAPTER 1

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

As humans we are essentially 'image forming' beings whose ability to discover, understand and create new meanings...depends largely on our ability to form and recognize the significance of inner images and their sensation and feeling tones. (Beverly Galyean)

The ability to generate images, mental pictures of people, objects, and things which are not immediately available to the senses, and then to reshape these into new and complex forms (Richardson, 1982), is thought to be a specifically human capacity. Singer (1974) has suggested that this ability may be evolution's greatest gift to humankind, because it can be a powerful constructive tool for living, for self-fulfillment, and for shaping the future. The recognition and use of mental imagery is ancient, and has been an intrinsic part of the internal process of poets, musicians, artists, and healers (Samuels & Samuels, 1975; Singer, 1974). However, because of the difficulty in objectively describing the internal processes involved, the imaginative process until recently has been largely unresearched in the field of science.

During this century, an acknowledgement of the importance of internal experiences and the growing possibility of studying these phenomena has led to an increase in objective research in this area. The purposeful use of the imagination appears to be a most effective and fruitful means to explore inner processes. In recent years numerous techniques utilizing mental imagery have been developed.

Crampton (1978) described these as methods for exploring the unconscious by using the imagination under the direction of the conscious intellect and will. ✓

When used in this disciplined way, mental imagery offers the integrative possibility of exploring the unconscious while maintaining contact with verbal faculties (Crampton, 1978; Crocker, 1984). Crampton (1978) stated, "We are able to shift gears back and forth, at will, between the direct experience of our inner world--including its affective components--and a more rational, analytic framework from which to consider such experience" (p. 140). This shifting allows the subject to work directly with the imaginal material by relating it to particular feelings and experiences, understanding the meaning and causes of the feelings, and recognizing those that are repressed in order to effect conflict resolution. ✓

Although a large amount of research has centered on the ways in which images are produced, the ways in which thought processes operate, and the value of imagery in memory and cognition, little attention has focused on the process by which people associate meaning to the images they produce. Combs (1982) and Combs and Avila (1985) state that the discovery of the personal meaning or the personal significance of experiences is the very essence of both perception and learning. ✓ A literal image represents its real life counterpart, and suggests only what is observable, identifiable by its characteristics. The possibility of assigning new or additional meaning to the obvious and immediate meaning of an image may be possible by exploring the associations, feelings, and memories that that image evokes. Research in this area has primarily focused on dreams, and the unconscious material which they express. The use of guided imagery in a relaxed state is believed to tap similar areas of awareness (Achterberg, 1985; Progoff, ✓

1963). Images accessed in the receptive state which the relaxation and guided imagery procedures engender may provide a channel for exploration of deeper meanings within a person's awareness.

In recent years, guided imagery therapies have been used extensively in counselling and personal exploration work. The term "guided imagery" refers to a process which utilizes particular relaxation and mental-visual exercises to facilitate and encourage exploration of an individual's response to certain themes through the generation of mental images (Galyean, 1981). While images may draw on previous memories, the mind appears to be able to combine previous experiences so as to produce the images as new content (Bagley & Hess, 1984). The technique of guided imagery has been used increasingly to explore affective responses and inner processes as individuals seek to expand their self-understanding, their awareness, and their capacity to make positive changes in their lives.

Although guided imagery has been well-documented as a successful tool in exploring inner processes, most of the research contains a general description of specific techniques and a superficial discussion of unrelated cases. Little research has focused on the dynamic qualities or functions of imagery utilized in psychotherapy. There are no available reports of individual accounts being followed through session by session to examine the process, observations of the exploration and awareness of particular issues through the guided imagery process, or comparisons of the experiences of different individuals.

The purpose of the present study was to examine the experiences of individuals during guided imagery sessions, as well as to explore the extent to

which they could discover and understand the personal meaning of the images themselves. The focus of this study was on the deepening process of the exploration of these images, and the value of using this process to increase personal understanding, perception, and awareness.

This study was a descriptive account of the individual explorations of five women during this process, and the personal meaning which they found through it. The investigation was accomplished in two ways: through an evaluation, based on interviews with the subjects at the end of four sessions, of each individual subject's experience of the process, and through the researcher's description of what she observed happening session by session.

The following research questions were addressed in this study:

1. How does each subject experience this guided imagery exercise and exploration?
 - What is it like?
 - How does it change from session to session?
 - Was anything surprising to her?
 - What difficulties, if any, did she experience?
 - How does it compare to other therapy experiences she has had?
2. How do these images help each subject gain meaning or awareness about herself?
 - Are they valuable for this purpose?
 - Do they yield previously undisclosed feelings/issues/concerns?
 - Do they help redefine or elaborate a feeling/issue/concern?
 - Do they help provide further alternatives for exploration?

3. In what ways are these images associated with each subject's life experiences, life issues, or relationships?

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Thinking in pictures approximates more closely to unconscious processes than does thinking in words and is unquestionably older than the latter both ontogenetically and phylogenetically. (Sigmund Freud)

Although in ancient times the ability to create mental images was venerated as a gift from the gods (Singer, 1975), the culmination of scientific thought and rational thinking in the 17th century relegated imagination and inner processes to the area of primitive and inferior experiences. It was not until Freud's work in the early 20th century that imagery and internal experiences were given serious consideration, and even then they were studied mostly for content and as manifestations of conflict or defense, pathological symptoms rather than creative possibilities (Amaglio, 1965; Hillman, 1976; Singer, 1974).

Freud can be credited with bringing the study of inner experience back to the attention of Western clinicians at a time when it was considered outside the scope of scientific research. However, American and British psychologists were reluctant to pursue this type of investigation, and the early research was done in Europe (Sheikh & Jordan, 1983; Shorr, 1974; Singer, 1974; Singer & Pope, 1978), where clinicians viewed images as the direct voice of the unconscious. Jung's work with the symbolic elements found in dreams, fantasies, and myths, and his active imagination technique, which seeks to translate images from the

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Thinking in pictures approximates more closely to unconscious processes than does thinking in words and is unquestionably older than the latter both ontogenetically and phylogenetically. (Sigmund Freud)

Although in ancient times the ability to create mental images was venerated as a gift from the gods (Singer, 1975), the culmination of scientific thought and rational thinking in the 17th century relegated imagination and inner processes to the area of primitive and inferior experiences. It was not until Freud's work in the early 20th century that imagery and internal experiences were given serious consideration, and even then they were studied mostly for content and as manifestations of conflict or defense, pathological symptoms rather than creative possibilities (Assagioli, 1965; Hillman, 1978; Singer, 1974).

Freud can be credited with bringing the study of inner experience back to the attention of Western clinicians at a time when it was considered outside the scope of scientific research. However, American and British psychologists were reluctant to pursue this type of investigation, and the early research was done in Europe (Sheikh & Jordan, 1983; Shorr, 1974; Singer, 1974; Singer & Pope, 1978), where clinicians viewed images as the direct voice of the unconscious. Jung's work with the symbolic elements found in dreams, fantasies, and myths, and his active imagination technique, which seeks to translate images from the

unconscious into conscious awareness, had widespread influence in Europe. It seems likely that most of the mental imagery techniques that were developed first in Europe and then in the United States, grew out of the work of Desoille (1938, 1945, 1961), who developed the "waking dream" technique which utilizes a systematic method to direct the subject's imagery.

The various techniques which use mental images to explore inner processes have certain similarities:

1. The therapist functions as guide or helper, rather than analyst.
2. They use a guided imagery exercise in combination with relaxation.
3. They involve the active stimulation of the unconscious in various combinations with conscious integration.
4. They tend to bypass the verbal, intellectual, analytical process of many traditional therapies.
5. They provide an abundance of affective material in a short amount of time.
6. The discovery of personal meaning or significance of the images is important for personal awareness to take place.

The Role of the Therapist

Although the therapist may be directive in the relaxation and initial imagery script, in most guided imagery techniques, the therapist plays a passive role in working with emerging imaginal material, interfering to clarify and point out the development of awareness, but not to analyze the material. Jung (1964) remarked that individuals rarely integrate another's analysis as well as their own, and that,

because of the nature of the unconscious itself, individual interpretation is most valuable. Hillman (1978) agreed, adding that there is no "right" interpretation of the images. He stated, "A good interpretation does not ~necessarily` 'click' but ~rather` 'ferments' or 'stains' or 'illumines' or 'wounds'" (p. 156).

Gerard (1974) concluded that an attitude of acceptance, openness, and suspension of judgment on the part of both therapist and client is necessary in order to "resonate" with the images and understand their specific meaning. He believed that the client should be given as much responsibility as possible for the direction and speed of the work, stating, "There appears to be an inner pace-maker whose influence over the...process can be invoked" (p. 16).

Most researchers agree that the role of the guide is of utmost importance. Because of the personal nature of inner events, it is crucial that the guide be sensitive and alert to the experience of the imager. Assagioli (1965) quoted Friedrich Mauz as saying, "The therapist mixes ~him or herself` into a common solution with the patient" (p. 313). The guide must be caught up with the process of the client, and be sensitive to the limitations, as well as the possibilities for further awareness. It is essential, therefore, that besides being able to exercise technique or skills, the therapist be competent in developing a safe relationship (Assagioli, 1965), and also be able to remain in close contact and empathy with the imagery of the client (Singer & Pope, 1978).

...and more absorbed in the relaxation, he or she will often spontaneously generate existentially significant images which relate to important personal issues or areas of conflict. Although individuals may be able to access such areas anyway, Fromm & Shorr (1979) asserted that affective exploration and integration of issues seem to be more powerful in a relaxed, focused state.

Relaxation

Guided imagery is usually used in conjunction with relaxation, which helps to eliminate motor responses, thoughts, and external stimuli. Leuner (1969) concluded that in a state of induced relaxation, which is similar to a meditative state, the mind functions differently than in situations of alert consciousness. Although the level of relaxation produced is below the usual state of mental activity, it appears to be neither a hypnotic trance nor a hypnagogic reverie state (Fretigny & Virel, 1968).

Crocker (1984), Galyean (1983), and Samuels and Samuels (1975) noted that in a state of deep relaxation, an individual is very receptive, and focal attention is prominent while peripheral awareness recedes far into the background. This state, in which a person is removed from the usual preoccupations with sense data and thoughts, involves a lowering of conscious mental activity (Watkins, 1976). Crampton (1978) stated, "The mind takes an expectant attitude--one which is simultaneously receptive, relaxed, and yet goal-directed--much like listening for a faint sound...." (p. 141).

Imagery appears to operate within multidimensional, subjective time, which is different from clock time, and contains many patterns of possibility, so a great deal can be experienced imaginably within a short time span (Houston, 1982; Watkins, 1976). As the individual becomes more and more absorbed in the relaxation, he or she will often spontaneously generate existentially significant images which relate to important personal issues or areas of conflict. Although individuals may be able to access such areas anyway, Fromm & Shorr (1979) asserted that affective exploration and integration of issues seem to be more powerful in a relaxed, focused state.

The Unconscious and Conscious

Many therapists who use the mental imagery process believe that these processes are similar to dreams, in that they stimulate the unconscious to produce spontaneous images which are affectively related (Doll, 1982; Horowitz, 1970; Jung, 1964). In the past, much of the research done on unconscious processes has focused on dream work. Jung (1964) understood the dream to be an integral and personal expression of the individual unconscious which can be utilized to explore possibilities which may lie beyond the day to day awareness. Imagery work employs this same principle, but facilitates conscious awareness of the unconscious material. Mintz (1979) has found guided imagery to be useful in eliciting unconscious material from individuals who are unable to report dreams. The advantage of the waking dream is that the individual maintains closer contact with and control over the imaginal material, and is able to immediately report and explore it actively (Crampton, 1978; Hannah, 1981; Progoff, 1963; Watkins, 1976).

Doll (1982) suggested that the unconscious can only be apprehended in an "as-if" manner, through personification, metaphor, or symbol. She suggested that the goal is not to figure out the images, but to figure them in: to see, in other words, the meaningful figure each image makes. The sense, the meaning, surfaces from the exploration of the images as representations of something more than themselves.

Non-verbal, Non-intellectual, Non-analytical Focus

Because the procedure of imagery-making appears to avoid rational, semantic processes in which many clients become unproductively blocked, guided imagery may offer an excellent method to directly access the underlying problem, issue, or concern. Assagioli (1965) and Jung (1964) concluded that the source of a large part of psychological maladjustment lies at an infantile or primitive, and mostly pre-conscious level, where thinking appears to take place in a "symbolic language." Thus they suggested that unresolved conflicts are most easily expressed and treated in metaphorical or symbolic, non-analytical terms. The image can reveal that which is being experienced, but which may not yet be grasped or translated into words (Watkins, 1976). Achterberg (1985) stated that images are pre-verbal manifestations, and without a language base, and Houston (1982) concluded that they are not bound by the mechanisms of time, space, and conscious awareness that may retard the flow of verbal thought.

Reyher and Smeltzer (1968) found in their clinical work that visual imagery more easily taps into repressed material than do verbal associations. They reported that during imagery work individuals are less likely to use cognitive processes and are thrown back on more subjective media which enable them to tap into primary process. The spontaneous nature of mental imagery seems to incorporate both resistances and the contents defended against, thereby partially bypassing the resistances (Shorr, 1983). In this way, guided imagery techniques may be able to "open up" an individual to affective experiences that are outside his or her rational awareness.

Commenting on the intensity of feeling and emotion that the imagery evokes, Gallegos (1983) stated, "Feelings are much closer to images than they are to words or descriptions" (p. 129). The use of imagery seems to create the ability to bypass an individual's usual verbal editing process, because it is difficult to anticipate the effect or meaning the imagery will have.

In fact, in many imagery techniques, intellectual analysis is not used. Frederking (as quoted by Assagioli, 1965) and Gerard (1964) believed that deep transformations can be effected solely through the experience of the imagery itself, and that the explicit meaning of the imagery does not need to be analyzed. Leuner (1969) and Desoille (1961) concluded that it is the imagery itself, with its unfolding metaphors, which is the healing factor, and that the more traditional analytic work is not essential.

Scheidler (1972), however, did not believe the experience of the images alone is sufficient to effect healing. Instead, in his work with children, he used images to open the way for more directed discussions about the individual's issues.

Many therapists use the inner imagery work in combination with verbal discussion, role-playing, and intellectual integration. "One inch of imagery may elicit a yard of associative imagery," Shorr (1974, p. 14) remarked, without producing the same degree of defensiveness as in traditional verbal reporting. Shorr maintained that verbal association used with imagery can aid the therapeutic process. Gendlin & Olsen (1970) stated that images alone do not give an experiential shift, but that in combination with words, images can facilitate release of specific emotions.

Leuner (1969) used an integrated combination of imagery work and verbal discussion in a single session in order to allow the individual to move between feelings and concepts. Discussing or processing the imagery experience helps clarify and reinforce learning as well as facilitate integration of the images into a new perception (Gunnison, 1982).

Crampton (1978) reported that a thorough intuitive interpretation of the images is a useful way of extracting their meaning. For example, an image will often remind an individual of a concrete association (i.e., event or person she or he has known), but the exact meaning may not be clear. As the individual associates with and talks about the feelings, memories or thoughts which occur around a particular image, awareness and integration of new or additional elements of the issue often occur. "It is a process of deepening the image," stated Hillman (1978). "The depth of an image...is endless ~and` the truths that come are many" (p. 158). This process may take place during or after the imagery experience itself.

Affective Exploration

Imagery has been connected with the emotional meaning individuals give to experience (Forisha, 1979). A number of investigators have observed that images have the inherent capacity to uncover or arouse complex and intense affective reactions (Horowitz, 1970; Sheikh, Richardson & Moleski, 1979; Sheehan, 1972; Singer, 1979) and to take individuals into deeper emotional exploration.

Over the last twenty years, many mental imagery techniques have been developed to facilitate individual exploration of psychological inner space.

Because imagery allows memories to be more accessible, and because the combination of visual thought and its metaphorical codings of information are so diverse, conflicts, issues, and concerns are often readily accessible through imagery techniques (Houston, 1982). Bettelheim (1977) observed, "Free floating fantasy, which contains in imaginary form a wide variety of issues encountered in reality, provides the ego with an abundance of material to work with" (p. 119). On a deeper level, imagery can move personal exploration into symbolic, more universal formulations which are relevant to the individual's life and concerns.

Techniques and Examples

Many therapists employ imagery methods to guide their clients in profound inner exploration. Johnsgard (1969) used a method which elaborates Jung's active imagination technique into a symbolic imagery voyage. He described a case in which this method allowed a man to realize that his frightening and recurrent nightmare represented his own anger, and he was then able to accept responsibility for it. Johnsgard concluded that this feeling of increased control and choice allowed his patient to effect a marked behavioral and personality change.

Hammer (1967) documented a profound cognitive and emotional experience in which a 30 year old woman followed her imagery to create a story through which she experienced a vivid and passionate reliving and re-examining of her relationship with her mother and its effect on her own self-concept. Crampton (1968) cited another example of a woman who used an imaginary journey to make contact with her inner awareness. As she imagined moving through the layers of her personality and her body, the woman encountered and interacted with various

images and figures (a Cheshire cat, a snake, a little man). In Crampton's opinion, the imagery became increasingly symbolic, ancient, and mystical, culminating finally in a very vivid and affect-laden image from early adolescence. In his examination of imaginal processes, Durand (1971) stated, "Visions and dreams give direct access to the world of meaning... which is removed from the world of fixed time and the limitations of space" (p. 98). Houston (1982) employed this transcendental focus in her work, which used imagery to allow the individual to tap into the wisdom, knowledge, and power of her/his unconscious inner world. Houston viewed the visual-imagery process as an essentially creative one, which can lead to an expanded awareness with great problem-solving capabilities.

Shorr (1972) believed that "imagination lies at the central kernel of our consciousness" (p. 11), and that through their imagery, his patients were able both to relive actual situations, and to enter a particular fantasy situation which could reveal major problem areas in their lives. Shorr used imaginative situations in a "rapid fire" technique, which encourages interaction between therapist and subject.

Imagery techniques have been found to be particularly useful with individuals who are resistant to or blocked in the therapeutic process (Scheidler, 1972; Shorr, 1972). Singer (1974) suggested that an individual who is at an emotional impasse may discover an effective breakthrough by shutting his/her eyes and allowing an image to appear. Reyher (1963) and Reyher and Smeltzer (1968) found that their technique facilitates the production of a set of clear images in sequence which may begin slowly, but which gradually take on a more lively or "hot" quality as the individual's defenses weaken and powerful associated affect occurs.

A number of specific imagery techniques have been developed in order to facilitate dramatic confrontation of an individual's critical issues. Crocker (1984) stated that "The primary goal of such fantasy is to help emotional content emerge so that it can be dealt with" (p. 28). Allen (1969) utilized imagery to allow the freeing of repressed material from various stages of childhood. He observed that the vivid images recalled in this way often lead to memory of objects, people and events previously unremembered.

Imagery techniques which facilitate personal exploration fall into two general categories: free imagery procedures (in which the subject goes with whatever images come into her/his mind), and directed methods (in which the therapist guides the subject through specific structured imagery activities). In onirodrama, for example, Fretigny & Virel (1968) allowed the imagery to unfold as freely as possible once they suggested a direction. Assagioli (1965), Desoille (1945), and Leuner (1969) used highly structured imagery themes to direct the individual exploration. Desoille (1945) reported that his waking dream technique allows the individual to tap into various inherent tendencies, and to learn to control and free his or herself from unconscious patterns, thereby resolving personal conflicts and transforming limitations.

Leuner (1969) concluded that his ten symbolic imagery themes (such as meadow, mountain, stream, house, dark forest, swamp) elicit particular affective responses or repressed patterns. And Schultz and Luthe's (1959) autogenic training method allows a person to experience a symbolic representation of unconscious ideas, feelings, people, moral questions, etc. Although these images may be understood by the individual only abstractly, Schultz and Luthe explained that they can allow the psyche to make unconscious tendencies symbolically visible.

Assagioli's (1965) psychosynthesis explores levels of the human personality in order to reconstruct and shift it into a higher state of awareness. Gerard (1964) adapted Assagioli's method into symbolic visualization, which uses imagery to explore psychophysical tensions and affective states such as anger or anxiety. The therapeutic focus is on change or growth of the individual through the imagery experience. Gerard (1964) described the case of a woman's imaginary trip through the sea in which the experience of particular images with tremendous emotional affect was deeply meaningful to her.

Meaning-making

It was Jung who first looked at the meaning qualities of imagery, seeing within the imagery process of the unconscious the manifestation of creative human possibilities (Durand, 1971). Because Freud equated imagery with regressive, repressive functions, he denied the likelihood that it could promote positive, personal awareness (Progoff, 1963; Sheikh & Jordan, 1983; Shorr, 1974; Singer, 1974).

Houston (1982) described the visual-imagery process as essentially creative, tending to gather meanings and seek out potentialities. Introspection demands a turning inward to uncover possibilities, and by reflection, meaning can be discovered within this material. Combs and Avila (1985) and Snygg and Combs (1949) suggested that the discovery of the personal significance of a phenomenon is the very essence of learning, and that the more deeply a person understands the meaning of the information to the self, the more profoundly is behavior affected.

"Meaning is achieved as the imager becomes engaged in an interactive relationship with some aspect or feature of the image," stated Bagley & Hess (1984, p. 3). In their view, meaning results when the visual picture generates some type of emotional response, and meaning leads the imager to a new understanding and a new perspective about the content.

"Visions and dreams give direct access to the world of meaning" (Durand, 1971, p. 98). As the image grows, as its pattern becomes more profound and involving, the meaning becomes clearer (Hillman, 1977). In fact, Jung (1960) stated, "Image and meaning are identical...the pattern...portrays its own meaning" (p. 402). The image can be felt and understood directly on its own terms, as long as the individual is willing to be open to its message (Progoff, 1963). Any image has endless meaning possibilities, depending on the person examining it. Once an image is examined beyond its everyday simple appearance, "it becomes bottomlessly layered...an inexhaustible source of insights" (Hillman, 1977, p. 80). Rather than insisting on one particular interpretation, the exploration of the multiple analogies which an image encompasses allows it to remain alive and fresh.

The use of imagery creates another living space, an "alternative environment" in which to perform, to respond, or to process information (Singer, 1981; Watkins, 1976). Shorr (1974) viewed the imagination as an individual's way of organizing reality. Once meaning has been discovered, the individual has the option of acting to change attitudes, behaviors, and patterns (Galyean, 1981; Houston, 1982; Singer, 1981). In assigning new meanings to the images, the therapist and client create the possibility of facilitating new awareness, and

perhaps, effecting individual change (Meichenbaum, 1978; Shorr, 1974; Singer & Pope, 1978).

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

Our world of images reflects and represents our being-in-the-world and we can...understand a human being as an individual and as part of humanity when we grasp the imagery of her existence. (Joseph Shorr)

In recent years, an expanded focus on the personal emotions and inner experiences in the lives of individuals has increased the importance of finding a method to systematically and effectively explore inner processes. Woolsey (1986) remarked that methods of research which focus on quantification and experimentation are often inadequate to explore many of the issues in counselling.

People experience what Singer (1975) referred to as a certain "mystery" that has a special and exciting quality and about which they want to learn more.

Proffitt (1963) noted that in dealing with inner experiences, the primary material is always a quality of experience, rather than of intellectual ideas. Identifying and describing this experience is crucial in understanding its impact on individuals. In undertaking research, Foshay and Morrissett (1975) quote Maxine Greene, who suggested that the self as participant, as inquirer, as creator of meanings, should be honored in such a way that the individual experience remains central.

Descriptive studies are designed to describe what exists; to obtain information about a situation without treatment control or hypothesis testing. For this reason, a descriptive design is ideal to reflect participants' experiences of

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

Our world of images reflects and represents our being-in-the-world and we can...understand a human being as an individual and as part of humanity when we grasp the imagery of her existence. (Joseph Shorr)

In recent years, an expanded focus on the personal emotions and inner experiences in the lives of individuals has increased the importance of finding a method to systematically and effectively explore inner processes. Woolsey (1986) remarked that methods of research which focus on quantification and experimentation are often inadequate to explore many of the issues in counselling.

People experience what Singer (1975) referred to as a certain "me-ness" that has a special and exciting quality and about which they want to learn more. Progoff (1963) noted that in dealing with inner experiences, the primary material is always a quality of experience, rather than of intellectual ideas. Identifying and describing this experience is crucial in understanding its impact on individuals. In undertaking research, Foshay and Morrisett (1975) quote Maxine Greene, who suggested that the self as participant, as inquirer, as creator of meanings, should be honored in such a way that the individual experience remains central.

Descriptive studies are designed to describe what exists, to obtain information about a situation without treatment control or hypothesis testing. For this reason, a descriptive design is ideal to reflect participants' experiences of

a phenomenon. In the present study, a descriptive design was utilized to study the experience of imagery and the personal meaning gained through it. In order to examine the phenomenon of the imagery experience as systematically as possible, participants' subjective descriptions of their experiences were combined with the objective observations of the researcher, a method suggested by Snygg & Combs (1949).

Pilot Study

To ensure the effectiveness of the guided imagery process, a pilot study was conducted. This pilot study was used to determine the details of the relaxation and induction exercises, specific imagery likely to be invoked by them, types of responses and interactions likely to occur between researcher and subjects, length of time for sessions, processing of the material, and possible problems.

Subjects in the pilot study were four women who volunteered to take part. They had all had some previous experience with the imagery process and were interested in using it. Three women received one session; one woman received four sessions, and was then given the post-session interview questions to determine if they were understandable and comprehensive.

The guided imagery procedure used in the sessions which formed the main study and the post-session interview questions reflected the experience of pilot study subjects. As a result of the pilot study, changes were made in the wording of the relaxation and guided imagery exercises, and in the post-session interview questions. The length of the sessions was confirmed at one hour, and the necessity for a check-in time before sessions and a debriefing time after them was established.

Selection of Participants

The decision to use only women in this study was based on the assumption that their issues and outlook would be more similar than if both women and men were involved, thus providing a more homogeneous sample. The five women chosen had some familiarity with the technique of imagery, but were not so experienced that they might be influenced by their pre-conceptions of the process. In addition, they had an openness to and some familiarity with self-awareness exploration, as well as a willingness and ability to express themselves and communicate openly. The subjects came from varied backgrounds and included two single women, two married women, and one divorced woman; two were professionals, two were students, and one was an artist. Ages ranged from 20 to 44 years.

Subject Screening and Orientation

The study was advertised in a local newspaper and by posters on the University campus and selected areas in town (see Appendix A). Out of 30 calls received, some were eliminated over the phone because they were not interested or had a time conflict. The others were given basic information about the nature of the study and a meeting time arranged. Applicants were met at the researcher's home. The nature of the study was explained to them (see Information for Applicants, Appendix B) and they were given two questionnaires to fill out: the Betts' QMI Vividness of Imagery Scale and the Subject Profile (see Appendix C and D, respectively). After completing the questionnaires, each applicant took part in a ten to fifteen minute interview which included a

discussion of her interests, present life issues or concerns, and reasons for applying. Nineteen women attended the meetings and completed the questionnaire and interview. The questionnaires and interview were used to determine each applicant's ability to visualize easily, her comfort with exploring personal issues for a limited time, her ability to articulate clearly, her willingness and ability to make a time commitment, and any concerns or questions she might have about the study. Each applicant was informed by telephone whether or not she had been chosen and a session meeting time was set for those women chosen as subjects.

One subject dropped out because of a time conflict after the first session, and was replaced by another applicant. The replacement subject chose for personal reasons to complete only three sessions, but was retained in the study.

Instruments

In order to determine subject suitability, two instruments were used.

Betts' QMI Vividness of Imagery Scale

The QMI Scale (Sheehan, 1967a) (see Appendix C) was used to determine imaging ability. Although there is no positive way to be certain that imaging ability is being accurately measured, the evidence of internal and test-retest reliabilities and construct validity implies that this 35 item questionnaire is useful in measuring vividness of imagery. The internal reliability of this test is $r=.95$ to $r=.99$ (Juhasz, 1972) and the test-retest reliability has ranged from moderate to high (Evans & Kamemoto, 1973; Sheehan, 1967b; White, Ashton, & Brown, 1977). Factor analysis has been used to measure the high intermodality correlations and to support the construct validity (Richardson, 1969; Sheehan, 1967a).

Subject Profile

The Subject Profile (see Appendix D) was developed by the researcher. It consisted of 11 questions designed to determine demographic characteristics (such as address and phone number, occupation, age, marital status, children) and to provide a subject profile of previous experience with the processes, life issues or concerns, willingness to explore these issues, willingness to be videotaped, availability, and reservations or questions about the study.

Post-session Interview

In addition to instruments used to select participants, a post-session interview (see Appendix E) was developed by the researcher in order to discover (after the sessions ended) what the imagery process was like for each subject in relation to the research questions. The interview, which was constructed under the guidelines of Good (1972), was nondirective within a structured format of questions. This allowed each subject to take the discussion in the direction she chose while using the research questions as a guideline. The interview was designed to facilitate disclosure of each subject's experience from session to session, her overall impression of the sessions, their value in enabling her to gain awareness, meaning, or new alternatives about specific issues or concerns in her life, and the connection of the imagery to events or relationships in her life. The interviews, which were audio-taped, lasted one hour and were held in a quiet room with minimum distractions.

The audio-taped interviews were transcribed verbatim. A transcript copy of her interview was given to each subject with instructions to check it for accuracy and to add any necessary clarification.

Procedure

The guided imagery procedure consisted of four individual one hour sessions for each subject, approximately one week apart. Sessions were conducted in a quiet room in the researcher's home, and a comfortable mat, pillow, and blanket were provided. The entire session was video-taped.

At the first session, subjects were given a consent form to sign which guaranteed anonymity and the right to withdraw at any time (see Appendix F). They were informed that the researcher would be available between sessions and after sessions ended if they needed support or feedback. The procedure was explained simply, and the session was begun. Subsequent sessions began with a ten minute check-in time during which subjects could discuss any concerns or awarenesses from previous sessions, and any important events or feelings which had occurred since the last session. The subject was then instructed to lie down, and the relaxation and guided imagery exercise were begun (see Appendix G for entire relaxation and imagery script). In order to maintain consistency, all women received the same relaxation and imagery scripts and the scripts were the same each session.

The imagery script and exploration were developed from a combination of relaxation and guided imagery techniques (see Appendix H). Following the suggestions of Cohen and Twemlow (1981), Gerard (1963), and Shorr (1974), no attempt was made to predetermine the form or sequence of subjects' imagery after initial relaxation and starting image (the "Open the Door" imagery, see Appendices G and H) were given. During the imagery exploration (which took approximately 30 minutes), the researcher followed the recommendations of

Assagioli (1965), Desoille (1961), and Leuner (1969) in acting as guide, with minimal interference in or interpretations of the imagery process. Counselling responses followed Egan's (1986) first level format (which uses encouragers, empathic responses, open questions, focusing, and advanced empathy) in order to facilitate subject exploration of images or the issues they evoked. Specific imagery focusing techniques were used to intensify exploration of or interaction with the images. (Please see Appendix H for a list of focusing interventions). A debriefing period of approximately 15 minutes followed each session, during which the subject was encouraged to share further awarenesses or concerns, to discuss any issues and to ask questions.

Watkins (1976) suggested that continuing to visually or mentally work with the images during daily life enables individuals to grasp and experience them more deeply. Subjects were asked to keep a personal journal during the study in order to record any perceptions, feelings, or experiences which related to the imagery. In addition, they were encouraged to create or find any material (poems, songs, drawings, pictures, etc.) which related to their personal process during the time of the sessions. One week after the fourth session, subjects were interviewed individually at the researcher's home. At this time they shared any additional drawings or pictures they wished (see Appendices I, J, K and L for selected samples). After one month, subjects were contacted and asked to submit a written follow-up to describe any additional awarenesses or experiences which related to the imagery sessions. Some subjects initiated further phone contact with the researcher periodically over the five months after the sessions ended.

Data Analysis Part One: Individual Interviews

After the audio-taped interviews were transcribed and corrections made, the researcher analyzed the transcripts in order to find units of meaning or descriptions of themes according to the research questions in the following way:

1. The researcher read through each interview transcript to get a sense of the whole.
2. The transcripts were reread more slowly and marked at each place that a meaning theme was perceived, creating a series of meaningful units of the subject's actual expressions.
3. The meaning themes were then notated according to the research questions to which they pertained, and copied onto index cards which were grouped according to the research questions.
4. The researcher reflected on the statements, and using the research questions as guidelines, synthesized and integrated the meaning themes into consistent descriptions of the experience as each woman perceived it. Redundant or irrelevant information was eliminated.

Data Analysis Part Two: Guided Imagery Sessions

In order to take into account the actual session by session experiences and changes that each woman underwent, the video-tapes were also analyzed. The researcher viewed each subject's video-tapes session by session, making transcriptural notes of verbal exchanges and non-verbal behavior. The researcher then analyzed these transcripts in the same manner as the audio-taped transcripts, creating meaning themes in relation to the research questions. The individual

descriptive accounts contained within the Results Section were obtained by using the integrated descriptions from both the individual subjects' impressions in the interviews, and from the researcher's own observations of each video-taped session. Pseudonyms were used for all subjects. The final thematic analysis was compiled in accordance with the research questions. Each participant was given a copy of the completed descriptive material to recheck for accuracy and asked to make any additions she considered pertinent.

The majority of this chapter is devoted to the five individual descriptive accounts which resulted from the two-part analysis of data. In writing the results, the researcher attempted to integrate both the impressions of the subjects about their own experiences, and her own observations. Most often these were similar or completely the same, but at times, the researcher relied on her own observations because information from the subject was not available. The styles of Allport (1965) and Cottler & Klingberg (1974) were used as models for the presentation of factual and subjective material from an objective viewpoint.

Each individual account has several components which are presented in the following order: Introduction of subject, description of the four guided imagery sessions, and descriptive analysis of data from session and post-session interview. The descriptive analysis follows the three research questions: Individuals' experiencing of the process, awareness or meaning gained, and associations with real life relationships or events. Following the descriptive accounts, a thematic analysis of the results integrates the five accounts into main themes organized according to the research questions.

Individual Descriptive Accounts

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

That is the case with any fantasy image; one concentrates upon it and then finds that one has great difficulty keeping the thing quiet; it gets restless, it shifts, something is added, or it multiplies itself; one fills it with living power and it becomes pregnant. (Carl Jung)

The majority of this chapter is devoted to the five individual descriptive accounts which resulted from the two-part analysis of data. In writing the results, the researcher attempted to integrate both the impressions of the subjects about their own experiences, and her own observations. Most often these were similar or completely the same, but at times, the researcher relied on her own observations because information from the subject was not available. The styles of Allport (1965) and Cottle & Klineberg (1974) were used as models for the presentation of factual and subjective material from an objective viewpoint.

Each individual account has several components which are presented in the following order: Introduction of subject, description of the four guided imagery sessions, and descriptive analysis of data from sessions and post-session interview. The descriptive analysis follows the three research questions: Individual's experiencing of the process, awareness or meaning gained, and association with real life relationships or events. Following the descriptive accounts, a thematic analysis of the results integrates the five accounts into main themes organized according to the research questions.

Individual Descriptive Accounts

Patricia

Patricia is a quiet, soft spoken 25 year old artist who has participated in meditation studies and an art therapy workshop. She has been married about a year and is very much involved with her husband and their relationship. When Patricia filled out her application form she stated that her most important life issues were those of "quality": goal setting, personal growth and growth within her marriage. One of the themes which Patricia explored during the sessions was a search for a sense of herself within the world and within her relationship.

It became clear during the first guided imagery session and in subsequent discussions with Patricia that it was difficult for her to make choices or commit to one thing in life. She described herself as a perfectionist who found it hard to follow through on the exciting dreams and plans she had because she often discovered something "not quite right" about them, or because another, more attractive possibility distracted her.

For Patricia, the four sessions evolved into an exploration of her indecision and hesitation about accepting power and control for herself. During this experience, she moved from immobilization and inability to act on her own, make choices, and interact with the images in the first two sessions, to confront her fear, create powerful yet nurturing images in the third session, and finally to interact consciously with them and make her own choices in the fourth session. In addition, Patricia was searching for a "place of her own," a safe and solid knowing of herself, which she felt she found in the last session.

The Sessions

Session one. Patricia's initial image was of an endless, infinite space, which seemed too perfect and too open to her. It was painfully difficult for her to decide whether to enter into this space, and she observed it from the door for some time. The space itself was scary to Patricia, and she felt she would be extremely exposed there. When she finally entered it, she felt herself lifted up high into the air, and became stuck again, frozen and immobilized so she couldn't get down.

During the session, Patricia felt self-conscious, wondering if she was "doing it right." She admitted that she often criticizes herself for the way she is doing something, and then feels immobilized, unable to make any decision or to initiate action.

Session two. The focus of this session was Patricia's exploration of her imaginary space and her gaining of strength and clarity about her choices. This began a process of willingness to look more closely at the issues of indecision and personal wholeness.

Her first image was of a heavy cloud which covered the entire scene and made it difficult for her to see. As she focused on it, she recognized that it was a storm, which she called "confusion." Patricia was able to tell this storm to go away, thus uncovering a hidden pool which she called "youth," and which she bathed in, finding strength, clarity, and rejuvenation. As she moved on, she saw a desert which she avoided, saying she was not prepared for it. Patricia appeared to be wandering and searching for something throughout the session, a "home base," a place of safety and wholeness, which she could not as yet find. Instead she

returned to the pool, where an "imp" tried to pull her down, interfering with the experience of peaceful clarity she had begun to feel there.

Session three. During this session, Patricia touched on some deep feelings of sadness and pain which she had not felt in some time, and which created confusion about the shifting of the sessions from "fun" to something more emotionally serious.

In the imagery, Patricia had the choice of exploring some caves or going "up into the world." After a brief hesitation, she made a firm decision to enter the caves. This decision to explore inner rather than outer places seemed to be a turning point in her process. On entering one cave, she discovered the image of a woman, whom she described as a "mother figure." This woman performed a ritual with her, in order to "teach her how to take care of herself." When she held Patricia in her arms (see Appendix I, "Mother Holding Child"), a great wave of sadness, pain, and tears engulfed Patricia. She was surprised and overwhelmed by the intensity of these emotions, and felt herself dissociate from the images.

Session four. Patricia began the session with confusion about how to integrate the previous week's work into her life. Although she was scared of stirring up more pain, she felt she was just beginning to trust the process and feel the validity and power of the images.

In the first scene, Patricia, although fearful, passed through a thick, murky sea. Then she became stuck between a barren desert and a harsh rocky land. She wanted to cross the desert as an explorer, but knew she needed water. There was a cave nearby, but again she felt frightened. After exploring some alternatives, she decided to enter the cave. There she found a great stone creature, a bear-like

thing trapped in a pool (see Appendix I, "The Bear in the Cave"). Her fear turned to pity, and she freed him. He carried her across the desert to a fertile valley, which she claimed as her own, feeling safe and whole.

During this session, Patricia became willing, for the first time, to allow interaction with an image and maintain the contact. Although she was frightened, she made firm choices, risks which she discovered she could sustain. In this session, Patricia seemed to be able to make things happen, rather than just feeling they "should," and to recognize and accept her needs, making choices that allowed her to discover a sense of wholeness for herself.

The Experience

During the post-session interview, Patricia expressed appreciation for the structure of the four sessions which had helped keep her focused on specific issues, and resulted in a feeling of completion. This completion, however, did not imply that she felt "finished" with either the issues or the specific images themselves. She continued to be aware of them in her daily life.

In Patricia's experience, the deep relaxation combined with the imagery process allowed her to bypass her analytical mind and its terminology, so she was able to enter a more expanded awareness. She recognized this happening by the kinesthetic experience which she described as a "tipping of her body" to a 45 degree angle. In this awareness, she was not screening, analyzing, or hiding her feelings or output: thus they were more available to her. However, at times this experience was overwhelming (i.e., session three).

During the interview, Patricia looked back over the sessions. She described session one, where she felt stuck, overwhelmed and paralyzed, as a "minimal

experience," just herself alone within a barren, lifeless landscape. During this session, she felt tense and disoriented, almost out of control, and unable to act with conscious intention.

Patricia described session two as the "least meaningful" one, because she felt self-conscious, as though she might be contriving its events. However, a number of important issues seemed to surface in this session (i.e., not knowing where she was going, looking for a home base, and avoiding decisions). As well, for the first time, Patricia visually created characters and living things (the storm, the pool, the imp) and began to interact with them.

The powerful and painful third session was a turning point for her. Earlier she had been content to enjoy and play with the images, in a way that she compared with finger painting. But after this session, she felt she needed to begin to "make her paintings look like something," to begin integrating the material, so it could be related to her life in a concrete, meaningful way.

Patricia felt hesitant at the beginning of session four. She expected it to be anti-climatic after session three, but felt it turned out to be the most meaningful session. She stated in the interview that she realized in this session that she could have a positive relationship with the images, and that this could somehow help her to further explore the intense emotional experience of the third session. In session four, Patricia saw elements of nearly all the earlier landscapes. This session seemed to her to encompass all the earlier sessions and to complete the entire cycle, but also to stand alone, a journey in itself. When she compared the last session with the first two, she felt she had more awareness, more control, and could recognize and make choices, rather than feel confused and paralyzed. This was her favorite session.

A number of things surprised Patricia. The first was the intensity of the emotions in the third session, and the way she had allowed herself to be so open and vulnerable. "I had very much a feeling of something sneaking out, that all those feelings and that 'bigness' are very much inside me, but they just snuck out!" Another thing that surprised (and delighted) her was the ability to "play" with the images, so that even the intense emotional issues became manageable. She was also surprised that the images seemed always able to maintain freshness, a moment by moment life of their own, partly because the researcher did not impose intellectual interpretations on them. This made the work seem open and somehow safe for her exploration.

Awareness/Meaning

Patricia felt the sessions were extremely helpful in bringing her back into a focused awareness about her own issues, particularly the issue of indecision. During the four weeks, as Patricia struggled with decision-making in the sessions, she became increasingly aware of her difficulty in making decisions in her life. She began to realize that she did have the ability to make a positive decision, and to feel confident enough to say, "So that's what I have to deal with, so what am I going to do?" and then do it, rather than avoid it. She developed a sense that she has choices, and that she can deal with them effectively. As she became clearer about how she avoided making decisions, she was able to talk about her fears of making "wrong" choices, and her need for perfection. This turning point seemed to be represented by her choosing to enter the cave in session three.

Four months after the sessions ended, Patricia phoned to share a sudden awareness she had had. For years she had vaguely considered the idea of suicide

when she felt particularly overwhelmed. One day she had been thinking of this "way out" when she realized her thoughts and feelings about the act of suicide were identical to what she had experienced as "going up" in the first and third session imagery: a shutting down, a desire to escape, to avoid dealing with overwhelming issues, to move away from responsibility. This realization helped her gain another perspective on her defenses.

During the interview, Patricia felt the third session, where she was held by the mother image, was the most powerful. She was impressed by the deep emotional impact of this image. "It was like I was somewhere, and all of a sudden, a knife came down and touched something in me that was deeper than everything else. And it hurt. I didn't expect it." She felt then how much she wanted to be held, loved, and cared for in this way, and how alone she felt. During the days following this experience, she realized that the mother image could be herself, and that she could care for and nurture herself in this way. "I had that feeling of her being me and that I loved myself, all of a sudden like I loved myself."

Although Patricia felt she could easily put an analytical meaning to this experience such as, "It means I can nurture myself," she preferred not to interpret it intellectually. She wanted to keep it "special" until a later time, when she was ready to explore it further.

At the one month follow-up, it was the image of the bear that remained the clearest. Patricia said, "The feelings that session evoked for me have come to symbolize hope, success, and positivity." The bear image seemed to finally merge many of the same issues as the mother image: decision-making, self-nurturing, and sharing. However, by the fourth session, Patricia seemed to be more aware of these issues and able to talk about them more clearly.

Patricia felt the sessions helped make her alternatives clearer. During the sessions, she found she had certain alternatives with respect to interacting with the images. For example, she could make her body smaller, or simply avoid dealing with the subject matter by leaving. She realized that these are also alternatives she employs in difficult life situations. By the fourth session, Patricia felt she was able to choose not to follow these types of avoidance alternatives, which tend to keep her safe, but do not foster growth. In her opinion, this change helped her realize that she could have different choices in her life as well.

Patricia began to see herself as an "explorer" in the spaces she imagined. She had a sense that she would be on her own in her exploration, and "would not be following anyone else to be there." The exploration itself would involve taking risks. Although the spaces began by being so large that they were inaccessible to her, by the fourth session she was feeling confident enough to take these risks.

In the fourth session, Patricia wanted to go across the desert, a trip she felt unprepared for in the second session. She knew she could get water in the cave, but she was afraid to go in. When I asked her how she could take care of herself so she could get what she wanted, she wondered about getting small (a technique she had discovered before), so she wouldn't be noticed. She realized, however, that although she would be safe, she wouldn't be able to carry the water. She became aware at that point that there was no way she could make it safe, but needed to take the risk and go into the cave. There she found a powerful, positive guide. When she looked into his eyes, she saw gentleness, but also viciousness, his ability to protect himself if needed. With surprise, she realized he could protect

her too. Although Patricia went through some indecision and resistance to Bear leaving, she was able to let him go and still feel a sense of her own wholeness. This wholeness was a new and powerful feeling for her, and helped her understand that often she uses another person's needs to sabotage her own plans to do something.

A month after the sessions ended, Patricia summed them up by saying, "They gave me an outline for decision-making." Besides decisions about problem-solving issues, she also became aware of issues about her own growth and awareness, which she termed "quality" issues, as opposed to issues of "survival." In the last session, she felt she was finally able to clearly and firmly identify her own needs. Much of the exploration done in previous sessions reached a point of "resolution." Although this resolution did not extend to her life, Patricia saw the next step as a going out on her own, using the information from the imagery in her life.

Patricia felt that the sessions helped her re-connect with a part of herself which was important to her, but which she had lost touch with. She said that the imaging brought her own personal richness to the surface, a richness she could draw on within herself for strength and personal understanding. She marvelled at the depth and diversity of beauty within her. "Even the barren, the ugly, the fearful were so precise and so beautiful. It gave me a very good feeling to think that it came from me, that I had all that richness available to me."

Although Patricia felt the images themselves were important and meaningful, she was unsure of the exact meaning or how to integrate it. She described the emotional experience in session three as "unlike anything she had experienced before." She stated that it was the "feeling" around the image, rather

than the image itself that seemed most meaningful. These "feelings" reminded her of issues which she felt were important to her in her life.

During the third session, a number of very painful issues surfaced for Patricia, and she felt scared and overwhelmed. She realized how much there is inside her that hurts, and how much work she has to do. Many of these issues were old ones which she had chosen for years to avoid. Her initial feeling was, "I was doing fine, why should I deal with this now?" and "Oh, this is too much! I can't do it!" It was Patricia's realization that these painful issues were the very ones of quality she had wanted to explore which allowed her to continue. She became aware that although these inner places may be painful and overwhelming, they contain a great rich and positive potential for growth. She said, "I suddenly realized the best is also the most difficult, and that's what's worth working the hardest for. That is the beautiful part." The imp and the bear both came out of the pool, and Patricia agreed they might present these two sides of herself: the difficult, negative aspect which interferes, and the positive, creative aspect which nurtures.

Besides gaining an outline for decision-making, Patricia felt she had learned the necessity of taking responsibility for the task ahead, and to appreciate the immensity of Life and its choices, without being overwhelmed by them. She learned she could love, nurture and care for herself, as well as help others, and allow herself to be helped without giving up her independence. She concluded her follow-up remarks by saying, "Perhaps someday I will be able to write my whole life by the guidance of the Bear."

Associations with Life (events, people)

It seemed to both Patricia and the researcher that her images during the four sessions resonated with a number of personal issues in her life. Immediately in the first session, Patricia began dealing with two major life issues. These were her difficulty with decision-making (represented by her paralysis and inability to act) and her need to always do the right and perfect thing. The space itself seemed too "perfect," like a trick, and part of her paralyzation came from her fear of not being able to act "perfectly."

The "stuck" feeling she experienced in a number of sessions was also a familiar one. It occurred when her possibilities seemed infinite (like the infinite space), and she became afraid she would miss something. Then she felt unwilling to commit to any one thing, thus missing every thing, or waiting for someone or something else to decide for her.

After session three, Patricia discussed her family life, describing herself as the "bad seed," the one who always "did the wrong thing." She had often felt overwhelmed and inadequate to handle the responsibility she was burdened by. She imagined she was to blame for, yet had "no control" over, the difficulties in her parents' marriage and between her parents and herself. In her own marriage, she often blamed herself for problems that occurred, "real" problems, but also the "creation of problems where there are none" (just as she had created Bear's needing to leave because of his family).

As the sessions went on, Patricia began to feel more comfortable taking control of the images, instead of being a powerless observer. In session two, she felt the storm, "confusion," had the power to keep her from having something she

wanted (clarity, strength). In her own life, she stated that this happened when she got caught between her confusion and her "intimate knowledge of what is," ending in a paralyzed state. By being able to choose to speak with authority to the storm and tell it to go away, Patricia thought she had created the possibility of finding the "inner place" she was searching for.

The imp in the pool seemed to interfere with her enjoyment of this peaceful knowing. He reminded her of "something that comes along when everything is perfect," when she is feeling strong and clear, and interferes. She had been enjoying the pool in the same way she enjoyed working alone on creative or personal projects, and felt the same irritation she feels when she is interrupted. Patricia admitted that often her own excuses to avoid the work took the form of blaming another family member or outside interference, even though in actuality it was her own resistance to take responsibility to carry through on the project.

In the third session, the feelings of pain which were brought up by the nurturing of the mother image also evoked feelings of inadequacy, loss, and guilt. Patricia felt the guilt was related to her opening to this "other," thus betraying her own mother. She also mentioned that she had experienced very low energy during the week past, and had felt a "loss of something she never had." She saw a similarity between this intense tiredness and the intense weariness she had experienced during previous therapy, when she was overwhelmed by feelings of transference toward her therapist. Patricia said she had not been able to accept the possibility of another person caring deeply for her, yet having expectations on her. She stopped therapy at that time. During the third session, Patricia felt inadequate to deal with her vulnerability and the disappointment of comparing

herself with the ideal mother image. As the fourth session began, Patricia was questioning her ability to integrate this work, especially the feelings of vulnerability and pain, into her life.

She initially described the "story" in the fourth session as being about making friends, admitting that she is generally shy and reserved with first efforts at friendship. Yet as we continued to debrief, it became apparent that she saw further connections between the imagery and her life. During the session, Patricia had a fear of losing her friend Bear, either because he would die or leave her. She felt further concern that her desire to be with him was interfering with more important things he had to do. She was afraid that she would be responsible for some catastrophe if she insisted on what she wanted.

Often when a subject has vivid imagery involving another person or an animal, there is a connection with a personal relationship or attitude in her life. As we talked, Patricia described her difficulty in imagining a relationship in which the other person could be completely happy. Years ago, she said, when her boyfriend had left her to travel and find adventure, she had encouraged him to go, despite her own needs and feelings of pain. Her dad had left for a while when she was 13, and her mother and brother had left to travel soon after, refusing to let her come because of a disagreement. She was told in anger at that time that she "wasn't part of the family." Patricia also mentioned that she often feels alone and resentful when her husband goes off to help his family. In relationships Patricia sees herself giving up her needs for the other. However, in the imagery, when Bear left, she left as well, choosing to allow him to leave and to take responsibility for his own needs, rather than being left herself. Because Patricia

was able to make decisions confidently within the imagery, she began to believe that it would be possible to do this in her life as well.

Patricia stated that during the sessions she had been reintroduced to a part of herself she had lost touch with, and that she missed. During this time, she saw her focus shifting from "we" (herself and her husband) to "I" (herself). Up until then, Patricia felt she had been more concerned with the "we" aspect in her marriage. In the fourth session, she recognized a deep sense of aloneness within herself. During the imagery experience, she felt she made an "emotional separation." Bear needed to return to his family, and Patricia, although sad, was able to let him go and still maintain a sense of herself. Later, she wondered whether she had used his family as an excuse to create a space for herself to be alone. During the interview, she talked about a similar sense of separation occurring within her marriage, a separation which she described as a coming back into herself and recognizing her needs as a distinct individual, while encouraging the marriage to remain intact. This may have become possible after the recognition in the third session that she could care for and love herself.

In terms of integrating the images with her life, Patricia felt that at first they remained separate. Making drawings of the most powerful images helped her be willing to "invite" them into her life, feeling them, speaking with them, and keeping them familiar. It seemed to her that it was up to her to "ask" the images to be part of her life, and that she wanted to do so.

When Patricia looked back after a month, she felt that although indecision had been a crucial and sometimes difficult day to day issue at that time, it had also taken her into a period of change, of bloom, and of growth.

Tracey

Tracey is a 33 year old creative writing student and single parent with a 6 year old child. During the time of the sessions, she was working full time as a secretary. She had taken part in assertiveness training and some marriage counselling, and indicated that she wanted to develop a sense of self-worth and self-confidence.

As the sessions unfolded, it became apparent that Tracey had felt badly hurt and rejected by her family, leaving her with a sense that she was unlovable and worthless. For years she had had difficulty breathing, and felt overwhelmed and separate in social interactions, usually choosing to be alone or with her son.

Tracey's exploration involved opening up her boundaries and demanding her right to take up space in the world without feeling frozen by her fear of making mistakes. In the sessions, her fear of doing the wrong thing initially manifested in her nervousness and her desire to please the researcher with the "right" kind of images. Tracey struggled to clarify aspects of herself she often hid behind a protective facade, aspects which included her ability to express her pain and joy and to find hope within her life. During this process, she was able to become clearer about recurrent images of a terrifying catastrophe.

The Sessions

Session one. Tracey's images began in a pristine mountain landscape, a positive, secure place where "things don't happen." The people she imaged there seemed familiar, yet separate from her. The woman (whom she described as an ideal image of herself: wise, strong, and sure) was speaking with a little girl. Tracey insisted this child was not "real," but seemed to be the ideal child she had

wanted to be: easy, lovable, and beautiful. At this point, Tracey expressed wariness about sharing too much and despoiling this pure place, and the mountain scene fogged out and was replaced by a busy Paris bistro. Tracey felt caught between these two scenes, unable to choose between the safety of the mountain (where nothing was happening) and the more exciting scene (which she imagined was what was expected of her). During the debriefing period, she talked about her own internal judgment which demands that she entertain people so they will like her. On the mountain top she felt safe, but was isolated.

Tracey described her fear of making the "wrong" choice and "getting into trouble" as a familiar feeling which warned her of the possibility of a catastrophic happening ("I might die, people will despise me"). While discussing her difficulty in breathing during the session, Tracey described herself as an unwanted child who had stayed out of the way and had always felt hopeless about her life. This memory brought up sadness and tears.

Session two. During this session, Tracey discovered some positive, powerful images. These discoveries surprised her, since many of her previously remembered dream and fantasy images had been negative and threatening. Tracey's voice had been dull and flat during the sessions, but as she began interacting with these images, it became more dynamic and humorous.

Her imagery began without boundaries, and she felt panicky and unable to breathe, as she floated helplessly through the air, afraid because she had nothing to hold on to. However, with encouragement, she found a ladder image, and then a number of positive, supportive guiding images (she called them "welcomers" or "way showers"). One of these was an old, white-garbed man named Roger, who

shared messages with her about the truth and appropriateness of her growth and experiences. They laughed together.

It seemed that in this session Tracey reached a balance between the safe places and the action: she had both safety and movement. She was able to breathe more easily after this. On the way back to the path, she was able to spontaneously lighten the cave (which she had found scary before) and fill it with jewels.

Session three. Tracey began this session feeling wary and nervous; during the week she had felt frightened and distraught. The imagery began with her recurrent image of a terrifying mountain of water. She felt frantic, afraid she could not escape, unable to breathe or move. With support, Tracey was able to stay with this fear, and to discover another male guide image, also named Roger, this time dressed in black. She was amazed and relieved to discover that he could help her escape from this terrifying situation, and to realize that it was, in fact, her own creation. Crying at this point, she remembered the terror and loneliness of being a child, the confusing messages she had received, and the anxiety of trying to stay out of trouble.

Tracey then discovered a female image, a lioness she called Sarala, who was very nurturing, yet fierce and protective. Sarala led her to a white light, which was beyond the facades and the fear, and where Tracey felt her own truth and knew herself. Sarala then helped her attack her family with a bucket of ice water. Tracey was able to laugh at the situation as her family retreated, and then to tenderly embrace the lioness. During this session, Tracey moved through a tight wariness into the panic and terror she usually avoided. By staying with these

feelings, she discovered a deep sadness and rejection, and was able to proceed beyond these to find strength, humor, and finally, tenderness and warmth.

Session four. In the final session, Tracey appeared to be wrestling with her own resistance to the process. Her images kept fogging out and she refused to go through the door. She felt like a child of seven or eight, and saw the image of a scary, "amorphous" monster, who kept the other children in the scene away, saying, "Enough! No more hurting!" She called this monster a "bag of wind," who, like herself, appeared to be scary, but was actually frightened.

She also saw a beautiful, protective tree, which she identified with herself. Children were playing in this tree, and Tracey stayed separate, neither able to join them, nor to ask them to leave. Remembering her mother's warnings, she believed telling them to leave would be "rude or selfish," and felt she did not have the right to demand back this space which was hers. After an intense inner struggle, Tracey was able to look closely at the strongest boy, and tell him that they could play there until 6:00, but then they must leave. This boundary-setting appeared to be a positive acknowledgment of her needs and her space.

The Experience

In the post-session interview, Tracey stated that each session seemed to approach her central issues from a different aspect, continuing the exploration from the last session. Each time she thought she would have nothing to say, no place to go to, and each time she discovered issues that were deeply meaningful to her. She was impressed with how powerful the images and their language were, and how much they could say with so few words.

Tracey described herself as an "intellectualizer," a person who tended to look at a problem, pull it apart into pieces, and analyze it mentally in order to understand it completely. Although doing this might bring her some intellectual understanding, she was never sure if she had really looked at all the aspects of an issue, or if she had instead used her intellectual ability to put up barriers against seeing the whole problem.

In the guided imagery process, her inner analyzer or "critic," was less likely to take part because it was feeling rather puzzled about what was going on, and very unsure of what any of it "meant." She had not felt the need to "slot" her imagery experience; she wanted to leave it alone to develop on its own. She described the process as going beyond, or perhaps bypassing, the verbal, intellectual levels of her mind, allowing her to make non-verbal or pre-verbal contact with her issues.

This connection process seemed to her to happen by itself, regardless of any conscious manipulation she attempted to impose on the images. "I couldn't force the images into the direction I thought they should go. They appeared to have a life of their own," she said. She thought that even if she had not consciously accepted the process she experienced, she still would have been able to benefit by unconscious changes.

Allowing the images to develop on their own increased Tracey's willingness to relate to them even though they touched on some very painful emotions. She was able to maintain a playful attitude toward them, so that the emotions did not continue to go around and around within her after she left the sessions. The painful feelings didn't seem to remain with her, although the excitement about

exploring them did. She had a sense that some "strange integration" continued to happen as the weeks went by. However, by the fourth week so much inner movement had taken place, that she wanted more time to integrate it, and would have preferred taking a break from the imagery work. However, Tracey appreciated the pace of the sessions, and the researcher's willingness to let her move at her own speed, have her experiences without feeling judged.

Around the third session, Tracey was more willing to trust in the process and less anxious about whether she was doing it right or wrong. This change coincided in the imagery with her willingness to experience her terror of the water and to move through her deep feelings of rejection and pain to find some tenderness and acceptance. Tracey described the images as becoming more vivid at this time.

Because she didn't feel pressured to produce or to say something intelligent or insightful as she had in talking therapies, Tracey found this process very non-threatening. "I could play with being very young, and because I was young, I could release those needs to be adult and mature and insightful." She called this "playing with the landscape of my mind." She felt she could create there whatever she wanted, and that if something scary happened, she could just open her eyes and be out of it. She said,

In a way, I just couldn't take it that seriously. It was still only images, only a fantasy, and yet, it was serious, because it was coming from inside me. But I wasn't responsible for how it looked since it was just a fantasy, a daydream, so I could be playful with it. In order to be able to do this, however, it was extremely important to have someone there she could trust.

The thing that surprised Tracey most was the "realness" of the images, the way they had a "life of their own." She felt as if she were accessing genuine and

deep levels of herself, without being in a trance or hypnotic state, just very relaxed.

The most difficult aspect for her was being able to stay with the images when they started to fog out. She felt that as her trust grew, she was able to relax more, and the images stayed clearer. In the last session, her struggle with the fogging process was most intense.

Tracey had a number of issues which underwent changes during the sessions. The most significant ones were inter-related: her struggle to feel in control, her tendency to dissociate, breathing difficulties, and her desire to please. Tracey had a tendency to fog out, dissociate, or lose touch with the images and to have trouble breathing at moments of crisis in her exploration. She seemed to have difficulty breathing whenever she felt anxious or threatened, her fear choking her. In the first session, Tracey fogged out the mountain scene, stating it wasn't "good enough," or exciting enough for the researcher. She felt it was hard to breathe through the entire session, stating, "It feels like I could die." This struggle seemed to coincide with her concerns about producing the right images, about taking up too much space, too much air.

From the second session on, breathing difficulties seemed to pinpoint specific places of anxiety, often correlating with the experiences of the fog and the darkness. In session two, the fog took on form as an image which choked and terrified her, leaving her alone and adrift. In the third session, the dissociated feeling intensified into darkness and danger, and again Tracey felt like she was choking, yet her positive guides were able to help her through it to find a place of clarity. In the fourth session, the images kept fogging over and out as she

struggled with very deep feelings of pain and rejection (for example, when the monster said, "Enough hurting!" Tracey lost touch with the image).

During each session that Tracey was able to stay with her terror and pain, she seemed to come to a point where she could breathe more easily. By the post-session interview she had realized that she was able to hold the air inside her, and that it was hers.

Tracey's tendency to want to do the right thing continued throughout the sessions. In the first session, she deliberately stopped the imagery because "nothing was happening to work with." During the second and third sessions, she openly criticized her own images as banal, unoriginal, and boring. In the fourth session, although she seemed to engage with the images and the feelings they brought up, she stated that she was having "trouble taking this seriously."

Throughout the sessions, Tracey continued to ask the researcher if she was being boring or irritating. As the sessions went on, Tracey's feeling of being out of control, at the mercy of unseen, evil powers which could annihilate her, increased (peaking in the third session with the water). Tracey felt that in the second session, when she was able (by making a simple decision) to move from floating helplessly in mid-air to having her feet on the ladder, she discovered an important aspect of her own ability to have control. At this time, she said, something in her clicked, allowing her to believe that it could be so. During the third and fourth sessions, Tracey was able to look at her fear of being overpowered by others, and to begin to experience some willingness to fight back and to demand her own space.

Awareness/Meaning

In the post-session interview, Tracey described the sessions as an "exciting exploration." She said during the sessions she had the sensation of things falling into place and gained awarenesses about important issues in her life. One important change that she felt would remain was that for the first time she felt loved and loving toward herself, and able to parent and care for the Child within. Another change was that she had become aware of how often she felt as if she couldn't breathe, and was trying now to consciously catch her breath when this happened, and then hold it. When she held it, she would feel the space it took within her, and think about what it felt like to be full of air, appreciating that it was all hers: "It's my air and it's inside me and nobody else can have it." In this way, she was able to define her boundaries and her own space.

Tracey felt that she had gained a new focus and interest in exploring her inner self through the sessions. She had wanted to do this for some time, believing that as a child she had a stronger connection with her own curiosity, energy, enthusiasm, and creativity. The experience of having "imaginary trips," and coming back with so much "newness" and knowledge about herself excited her greatly. She felt that spending more time communicating with and writing about the images, would help her continue to expand this inner part of herself.

Through the imagery experience, Tracey also discovered how much she used "fogging out" and pulling back as modes of coping in her life. She said she became aware that she had been keeping a large part of herself dissociated, in order to feel safe. For a long time, she had imagined that she was a "rotten person," and that other people would know, once they got to know her, how worthless and

despicable she was. She tended to avoid intimate relationships and often felt numb or dissociated during conversations when she felt out of control. Tracey described an experience in which she observed this process in her life. On the day of the post-session interview, she had a meeting with a supervisor. On the way to talk to him, she prevented herself from dissociating from her feelings by acknowledging her own terror. During their talk, she felt herself beginning to fog out and devalue herself, then realized that, in fact, it was he who was not addressing the situation. Being able to stop and acknowledge her feelings brought her back into focus.

Early in the morning on the day of the third session, Tracey experienced what she described as "a tremendous inner quake," at which time her sense of herself in the world shifted completely. Immediately after this shift, she visualized a Hindu beggar woman, crouched, covering her face, and realized that this image described herself in the world: separate, hiding, and powerless. While discussing this experience she said, "I have a very barren life, in a way. As long as I remember, I was never powerful enough to take back anything that was mine. I've lost everything important that way." The experience that morning was so powerful that Tracey felt it had changed her life.

She believed that the sessions had opened the way for this change to happen. During them, she had become more accepting of her own inner, imaginative world, and the wisdom it contained.

Tracey felt she would continue working with the images she had found, saying, "If I can access them in imaginary form, then I can give their qualities more solidity, more trust in my day to day life." Some of the images, like Roger

and Sarala, were valuable to her because they liked and accepted her, and would protect her. She greatly valued these qualities of friendship, which she had not experienced much in her life. At the time of the interview, she wanted to view them as "external friends," entities separate from herself, rather than as parts of herself. However, in beginning to love and parent herself, Tracey admitted that she had touched parts of her own strength and self-acceptance. At the one month follow-up, Tracey said she had partially integrated the lioness image, and realized that she had many of the qualities she associated with lionesses.

These changes in awareness seemed to correspond to changes in Tracey's ability to feel in control of her life, rather than at the mercy of evil, unseen forces. The tunnel in the hill in the guided imagery script was initially a place of anxiety for her because she had a phobia about darkness and enclosed spaces. But after the second session, she realized she could control this fear by telling herself, "I'm not going to be afraid of a tunnel. I'll lighten it and make it how I want it to be." After that, Tracey was able to keep the tunnel light and fill it with jewels when she was in it. With the help of Roger and Sarala in the third session, Tracey began to see how her own frightened and negative beliefs kept her in a state of anxiety and withdrawal. With the help of these images, she was able to make powerful choices to support her own needs, rather than remain a victim of outside forces.

For Tracey, having the support of the researcher during these experiences was extremely important. She stated that the researcher's acceptance of the images, particularly of the child, the part which is frequently frightened, which fogs out, and which tries to hide, helped her to see that she could come to terms with this fear.

At the one month follow-up, Tracey recounted an experience she had one evening after the sessions ended. She had decided to stay with the feelings of sorrow and heaviness she was experiencing, and vividly remembered being a small child, standing at a window, watching her mother leave without looking back. Inside her heart, she felt herself crying, "Mommy, mommy, don't leave me!" She was overwhelmed by a feeling of rejection, abandonment, and hopelessness, and wept like a small child, completely giving herself to her sorrow. In her opinion, being able to reach this image, which had been hidden from her for so long, could be directly attributed to the power of the imagery sessions. She wrote,

For many years, I've felt that at the bedrock of my being was complete hopelessness, from which sprang the feelings of sorrow, worthlessness, and a sense that I should die for being so despicable. Being able to see this, was due to the path being opened gently and safely, to the language of symbol, creativity, and play (which I understand best), and especially to being able to remember the child-before-eight. To remember who I was.

Associations with Life (events, people)

Tracey stated in her post-session interview that every image that occurred had corresponding meaning in her life. She described the experience as if something "magnetized" the images and drew them in so she could access them and then connect them up with the other images and with events in her life.

"What happened in session four was a good symbol for my life," she stated, seeing herself as inclined to give whatever she could to someone in need. The problem, she said, was that when the time came to stop giving, she couldn't stop. Even if she wanted to keep something for herself, someone else could take it from her, and she would withdraw and watch, just as she did in the tree imagery. Tracey related her interaction with the boy in the tree to a process she is working

on in her life. Although she often feels sick with terror at confrontations, recently she has been able, with great difficulty, to go and speak with the person involved. She saw the interaction with the boy in the image as helpful, in that she was "practising" doing something that feels terrifying, thus releasing some of the fear, rather than having it stay trapped inside.

Her father was an alcoholic, in and out of jail, who threatened to, and eventually did, kill himself. He left the family when Tracey was born. Her mother struggled to raise nine children, and Tracey felt she could never do enough to help, and repay the debt she owed just for being born. She lived with a fear of being abandoned, of doing the wrong thing, and of being somehow, inexplicably, "bad." She had carried with her all her life a sense of hopelessness that she would ever be more than a despicable being.

Since session four, Tracey said she had a strong feeling of "being" the little girl. She has always had a feeling that something happened when she was about eight years old, an overwhelming experience that caused her to withdraw and become "dead," losing touch with herself and with the memory of the preceding years. In the imagery of the tree, the little girl was seven. Tracey felt that since the sessions began, she had been re-connecting with the parts of herself she had dissociated from, before age eight. She identified the amorphous beast in session four as a part of herself, the assertive yet aloof facade that kept other people at a distance, so she didn't get hurt. "People think I'm super strong and intimidating," she said, "but inside I'm seven years old and scared."

She saw the mountain scene/Paris street scene as familiar in her life as well: the theme of being stuck between a safe, isolated place, and the need to actively

entertain other people so they would like her. Tracey felt safer to be on the mountain where people don't come, but then she imagined she wasn't being entertaining. This represented a bind she feels in her life. When she was a child, she deeply wanted to please people, but never seemed able to. She imagined that if she had been different, she would have been able to please them and make them love her, and blamed herself for being rejected. As an adult, Tracey still finds herself trying to please other people, often wearing a facade to do so.

One of the most powerful and terrifying images Tracey explored was the great mountain of water. She had experienced this image for years, and she felt at its mercy, unable to protect herself from it. The feeling that an outside power would destroy or annihilate her, and that nowhere was safe from it, seemed to be a recurring and frightening theme in Tracey's life. At times she had suffered from severe depressions and withdrawn from social contact, feeling alone and hopeless, making herself as inconspicuous as possible in the world. She felt her family had given her the message that if she was too powerful or took up too much space, someone would get mad and destroy her. Her brother, in particular, had frightened her with his rage, and she had a sense that her mother despised her and her weakness and withdrawal. She felt unwanted as a child, as though she had made a terrible mistake even in being born, and spent much of her life avoiding further pain and hurt. She feared that her mother would get angry with her for showing any emotions, so she learned to "fog" them out. She felt negated, a core negation of her being, which she described as being "dead" or annihilated, and which manifested itself in catastrophic imaginings.

Donna

Donna is a 43 year old elementary school teacher who is devoted to her work, her family, and conservation issues. She and her husband have had a number of relationship problems which have intensified over the years, causing Donna to feel confined, angry, and confused. At the start of the sessions, she was questioning whether to remain in the marriage.

Donna had a tendency to verbalize during the imagery sessions, often analyzing her images as they occurred, and questioning what she said or did in terms of the project's needs rather than her own. Many of her images contained actual people and places, rather than metaphorical fantasy images, and she tended to go off on intellectual tangents which took her out of the imagery. As the sessions went on, direct focusing reminders helped Donna remain connected with her inner process.

During the sessions, Donna struggled to understand and integrate the images, in order to allow them to be there, instead of trying to "consciously" create them. In the last session, she allowed her imagination to open up and was able to connect with her own fantasy abilities, an experience which she found immensely valuable and enjoyable.

Donna also grappled with her confusion about whether to stay with her comfortable, pleasant imagery or to go deeper into highly charged emotional issues, such as negative dream images, the encroachment and destruction of the things she held dear, and the destruction of her marriage. Tears of sadness, loss, and anger resulted from her explorations.

The Sessions

Session one. During the first session, Donna seemed tense and excitable, anxious about producing the correct responses and fearful of allowing herself to relax too deeply. The cave was very scary for her. Inside the door she saw a number of other doors, behind which she observed (with a quick peek) skeletons, bones, and other objects which embodied feelings of terror and death. She felt certain that she didn't want to explore these, and was encouraged to trust her feelings and continue until she found a more comfortable image.

She then saw a beautiful, vibrant, untrampled garden, safely protected behind a walled boundary. Donna felt afraid, however, that this space would be violated by others. She compared the garden to an older friend of hers, presently very ill, who was strong, courageous, and able to make her boundaries clear. Donna described her own struggle to define boundaries with her husband and mother-in-law, both of whom she experienced as demanding and violating. During the session, Donna felt sadness, frustration, and joy.

Session two. Donna explored her feelings of anger and sadness toward her husband during this session. She also examined her need to hold on to her own beliefs.

The image which facilitated this exploration was deeply powerful for her. It was of strong, yet vulnerable roots beneath the earth (see Appendix J, "Roots"). For Donna, they exemplified the life force of the earth, the mysteries of life, and the harmony and support she felt within her family of birth. She described her need to protect these things from being destroyed, particularly by her husband.

Her imagery then focused on a purple light which led her to a beautiful marsh where she watched the sun rise from a small boat. The appearance of the boat in this serene scene reminded her of the conflicts between her husband's need to escape, and her own joy of life and sharing about her inner self. Feelings of anger, then sadness, surfaced as she realized the ways he had dominated her, and how little understanding was left between them. Donna was then able to experience the marsh scene with joy and excitement, and to reaffirm the power of the roots, saying, "When I need replenishing, I can get it for myself."

Session three. Donna appeared to be more relaxed during this session. She had decided over the last week to initiate a separation from her husband, and was feeling strong and confident about this decision. Focusing on the images during this session helped Donna stay with her feelings rather than move off on analytical tangents.

Donna had images of four different houses. The two most vivid ones were an old farmhouse and its garden at harvest time, where two loving old people (her ancestors) lived, and an old stone house, a dark prison-like place where her husband's grandparents had actually lived. The man and woman in this house were bitter and non-communicative. Interacting verbally with them brought up first anger, and then sadness for Donna, as she recognized the similarities between their situation and her relationship with her husband. However, as she looked into their eyes, she was also able to acknowledge the trapped and lonely condition of their lives. This allowed her to recognize and accept the pain and loneliness behind the stony exteriors of her husband and her mother-in-law.

In the end, she chose to destroy the old stone house in the imagery, and to release some of her negative feelings toward her husband's family, admitting, "Some things need to be clipped back, or else they'll destroy you." This left her feeling exhausted, but calm, cleansed, and clear. It seemed that in this session, Donna began to create her own boundaries and to acknowledge that at times destruction is a necessary process.

Session four. Donna came to the session feeling strong, clear, and rooted within herself. Breathing deeply, relaxing, and focusing seemed to take her imagery into deeper fantasy levels.

Her imagery began with a tranquil, "promising" sunrise. As she relaxed, she let go of more superficial images, and the image of a unicorn trapped behind a fence occurred. She wanted to let him out, but was afraid of getting caught. Finally after checking with herself about what she wanted, she released him. She was awed by his beauty and magical powers, and decided that she could ride him. From a hill she saw a phoenix rising with the sun, bringing a message of continuation of life (see Appendix J, "The Ride on the Unicorn").

After a pleasant ride during which other people could not see the unicorn, she rode into a shopping plaza and the unicorn turned into a stuffed toy. Understanding that this transformation was necessary within the real world, but that she could call him back, she returned him to a safe, mythical world.

During the debriefing, Donna described the unicorn as the fantasy part of herself which she knew as a child, a part she had cherished, yet ignored for years, because other people in her life had rejected it.

The Experience

In the post-session interview, Donna talked about the value of the sessions in providing a safe method of reaching into another part of her being, away from the personal chaos around her. She said that she was able to reach a very different level, a deeper level of consciousness than she reached in ordinary conversation. In this way, the sessions helped Donna see her inner world more clearly, and gave her a process to use on her own to enter it. This enabled her to have access to what she called "long thoughts," a dreamy state which previously had been accessible only on rare occasions when she was totally relaxed and free from pressures and intrusions.

Donna said she was able to access deep feelings during the sessions, and to reflect on the images after the sessions, thus finding a focus that helped her sort out and resolve mixed feelings and random ideas which might otherwise have been overwhelming. She believed it was because of the emotional intensity of certain images that they remained so accessible to her after the sessions had ended. At the one-month follow-up, Donna wrote that she was still using the roots imagery for support and clarity in her life.

Donna described her images as very real. Although she saw herself as a good visualizer, and had done "closed-eye" sessions before, her previous images had often been fragmentary, and rarely of the depth and emotional intensity of these.

During the post-session interview, it became clear that Donna felt some contradictions about whether to follow some of the more frightening or "negative" images or to stay on safe ground. The first session was the most difficult for her, partly because she didn't know what to expect, and was concerned about doing it

"right," and partly because the cave and the death doors were so terrifying for her. She felt that images like these would be too hard to deal with, so she focused on ones that would feel more comfortable. Although she was encouraged to follow her own comfort level at this time, in subsequent sessions, she seemed more willing to explore "negative" issues. In sessions two and three, she was able to connect with deep feelings of sadness and anger, to acknowledge feelings of dread and fear, and to admit that at times destruction is necessary.

At the time of the interview, Donna stated that the most difficult aspect was looking at some of the more frightening images, and feeling the emotions that came up for her. For example, acknowledging the feelings that came up for her at the stone house, fighting it out with her husband's family, and wrecking the house were things that she would have seen as very disrespectful in her real life. Although it was difficult for Donna to experience these things, she saw them as being positive, in that processing them increased her clarity.

As she struggled in the first three sessions with the dissolution of her marriage, Donna maintained a strong analytic interpretation of her images. Her verbalization tended to take her away from her feelings, so we worked on keeping her focused on the imagery. Directions such as "Look deeply into her eyes. What do you see there? What would you like to say to her?" and "Take a deep breath. How does the image feel?" seemed to increase her ability to stay in the present with the images.

As a person who often wanted to please others, Donna had some difficulty with the open-endedness of the door imagery, putting pressure on herself to produce acceptable images. She stated that she sometimes thought, "Behind that

door could be anything, any image I want. What if I can't come up with anything?" She often asked if her imagery was "okay," or if it was all right for her to make choices about how to respond to it. During the last session, it seemed that she was able, with encouragement, to consider her own wishes and make firm choices for herself (for example, to let the unicorn out and to ride him).

Although Donna was eager to do a good job for the sake of the project, she was also aware of her need to work things out on her own. She compared the sessions to therapy, saying they gave her a place for self-discovery, but in a "non-threatening" environment. Donna imagined that therapy had a stigma attached, a sense that "You need help, dear," with which she felt uncomfortable. In these sessions she appreciated the opportunity to figure things out for herself, with the researcher present as guide. In this respect, she felt that the element of trust was very important.

In the fourth session, Donna felt she had nothing particular on her mind to prove or solve, and was able to just let things happen. She was able to let fantasy images flow spontaneously, and enjoyed this session immensely. Donna described this as a sensation that "It's all right to have wild and crazy images," images which allowed her to find personal meaning that she could hold on to. For her, this was an important positive aspect of the experience.

The images seemed to stay very much with events that were happening at that time in her life, particularly issues that were heavy on her mind on any particular day, as opposed to childhood events. The exception was the unicorn, which connected with her childhood fantasies about how she wanted the world to be: magical and peaceful.

Donna described a kinesthetic experience she had as "vibrating feelings," a very strong experience of warmth "like a little diamond sparkly type of thing, almost a molecular movement." This created an inner state different from her usual awareness, a state which seemed to occur along with very intense emotional reactions, such as in the roots or stone house imagery. Donna said she had experienced this before, but had been afraid to explore it further.

Donna was most surprised by the fact that she cried during the sessions. "I was shocked that I could feel so deeply, so strongly, and that I would let someone else know that," she said. She was impressed by the intensity of this expression, and also by the simplicity and the effectiveness of the process: just by focusing on the images, so many awarenesses came. She had not expected it to be so effective.

Awareness/Meaning

Donna stated in the post-session interview that the sessions gave her a focal point to look at issues in her life. Because the images were so tangible for her, they helped organize and clarify vague or confused feelings she already had. For example, she had already been exploring alternatives about her marriage, but none of them fit exactly right. After the roots imagery, Donna decided that following the separation, she wanted to stay in the house she and her husband had shared, saying, "It just seemed so absolutely firm and strong: 'I'm staying. I'm rooted here. Others can make their choices, but I know my way.'"

After one month, Donna was still using the relaxation to explore "what ifs" about her separation. Many of the images had retained their vividness and become impressed on her inner awareness. She wrote, "They have taken on an almost

tactile, solid structure, and when I am weighing decisions in my presently changing life, these images quietly assert their presence and offer guidance."

When the sessions began, Donna was trying to balance the demands of her marriage with her teaching career. But during the sessions it became clear to her that "There really was no contest, and that the marriage was at the root of the conflicts, and causing constant tension." She believed the sessions helped her to realize how fragmented she felt, and to begin to embark on a unified path of change. She began to do this by reaching into a deeper part of herself, beyond the chaos of her personal life.

The heightened awareness and deeper feeling she found within herself was not without its difficulties. On a day to day basis, Donna described herself as "showing only a Polly Sunshine face," always acting as though things were fine. The depth of emotional intensity, such as the anger she experienced when destroying the stone house, surprised and frightened her. The result, however, was positive. "The effect of demolishing the image was that I'm not part of it anymore, nor is it part of me. It has no more effect on me," she stated. She had not realized the depth of, nor given vent to, these emotions previously, and felt a tremendous release in each of the first three sessions. This positive experience allowed her to confirm that it was okay to express intense emotions.

Seeing the death imagery was especially difficult for Donna. Even though she avoided interacting with these images, seeing them brought up some new awarenesses. "I've never been peaceful about death in some ways," she said in the interview. "But because I was able to choose to go on to the garden image, which signified growth and rebirth and life process, I felt comforted. And the issue of

death actually resolved itself in the last session, with the phoenix which stood for a continual cycle."

Although Donna stated she was comforted by the resolution of the death images into a cycle of continuation, she admitted she tends to avoid murky or ugly aspects of her awareness because it does her no good to wallow in them. "I didn't want to go into the death room," she said, "because it would have been going too deep, too low. Once you go that route, you tend to get into so many murky things. I don't need that." She had a strong sense of choice, that she could put aside an image that was too difficult for her, and carry on with a "better" one.

For Donna, the experience also reconfirmed what she called her "spiritual side," a deeper part of herself that often got crushed by other people. When she felt closed in like that, she couldn't have her "long thoughts," which would take her into deeper inner realms than her ordinary existence touched. She described this part of herself as being very strong when she was a child, with a sense of wonderment and at-one-ness with creation. The guided imagery experience reconfirmed her belief that she could retreat to this wonderful world and get renewed strength when she needed it.

She particularly felt this strength in the fourth session. The power, the understanding, the gentleness, the magic of the unicorn reminded her of her childhood belief that anything is possible: within the imagination there are no boundaries to what can be. This session was integrative and healing for Donna, since she had felt so exhausted over the previous four weeks in dealing with painful issues. Although Donna enjoyed this session immensely, she felt very selfish and guilty enjoying herself.

The roots image reminded her of how much she cared for her own family and its traditions, and provided a focal point for acknowledging her own needs as she dissolved and reformulated relationships with her husband's family. The message of the roots was: "Love and protect me. Let me go on growing." Donna interpreted this as a message to hold fast to her family and its traditions, and also to nurture her inner life and self growth. She felt she needed to protect these things from her husband. She realized the necessity for her to hold fast to her own beliefs.

Donna also gained a new understanding by comparing the image of the harsh stone house with the safe, warm house of the loving couple. She recognized the difference between her family and their beliefs, and the attitude of her husband's family. In a more positive direction, the imagery helped Donna gain a new perspective about her own willingness and ability to relate to her husband's family. She found that the direction to look into the woman's eyes was a turning point for her. "In making that connection with her," Donna said, "she became a real person instead of a stony authority figure, and something changed for me. I've always taken a defensive stand before." The woman's warning that Donna not allow herself to become trapped like that reminded her of her own priorities.

The roots imagery, the stone house, and the boat in the marsh helped Donna gain a new perspective on her relationship with her husband. She began to see how much she had been giving up, and how angry she felt since (like the old man in the stone house) her husband always "called the shots." She compared the garden imagery (natural, vibrant and with clear boundaries) with her impression of the women in her husband's family: submissive, yet dominant, and without access to

their inner world of imagination. The strong realization that she did not want to become like them reinforced her belief that she could, in fact, be the person she wanted to be.

Associations with Life (events, people)

During the post-session interview, Donna talked about the relationship of the images to the issues of her family, her marriage, her husband's family, and her own spiritual reawakening. She stated that, like a web, the images tended to weave together the issues she was already dealing with on any given day. Although she was aware that she had made a choice not to explore some of the more frightening issues, specific images seemed to be very vital to what was going on in her life, particularly in terms of her relationship to her husband and his family.

As already mentioned, Donna felt closer to her mother-in-law after the stone house imagery, and this manifested in a better relationship between them. The image of the sullen old man described Donna's impression of the men in her husband's family. Before she looked into his eyes, asking him to soften up and be more gentle, she said she had had only disdain for these men. By seeing the fear and aloneness behind his hard exterior, Donna was able to gain a new understanding of her husband. The stone house did actually exist, and seemed to Donna to be symbolic of the oppressive, linear, concrete block type of thinking she had experienced in these men.

During the stone house imagery, Donna felt an incredible amount of anger. She described talking with the inhabitants and destroying the house as getting down to things that had been bothering her, and doing something about them. She

observed that this paralleled her life, because she was taking action in real life at about the same time.

Donna thought the death imagery might have been related to her friend and her uncle, who were both very ill at that time. She stated that, because she had been able to choose not to dwell on the morbid sense of death, but to go on to the cyclical image of the growing garden, she was more accepting of her uncle's death shortly afterward.

Donna thought the roots imagery was directly related to her conflict about the relationship with her husband. After experiencing that image, she realized how important it was for her to follow her own path, to root herself firmly in her own needs, rather than doing what her husband wanted. In some ways, this imagery allowed her to compromise an initial impulse to break off the relationship entirely, and instead to maintain a supportive connection with him.

In Donna's opinion, the boat in the marsh also related to her relationship with her husband. He had spent much of his time over the last years on his boat, a space that was cold, damp, and uncomfortable for Donna. He had been urging her to sell the house and move onto the boat permanently, but this idea had appalled Donna. In the imagery, the boat was hers, it was in a beautiful, sheltered marsh, where she was able to feel safe and peaceful. The marsh also reminded her of the garden image, which represented for Donna her desire to be near the earth, to nurture and support growing things, and to maintain a sense of her own control. She compared the feeling of "being where I belong" to the discomfort and helplessness she felt within the marriage. Because she believed her husband could not understand the idea of the roots or the feeling of interrelatedness they

embodied for Donna, her response to him had for years been to withdraw in silent resentment. As she began to acknowledge her feelings, she realized that she could no longer remain in this situation.

Relating to the old man in the stone house, Donna was at first unable to tell him how she felt: "It would be useless," she said. "There's no way to speak to that kind of man." Finally, by imagining some magic that would allow him to listen, she was able to ask him to soften up, to give some love to his family, and she was even able to feel some tenderness toward him. She recognized the resemblance between this man and her husband, both closed off and wary of other people, but really wanting love.

She also saw a resemblance between the old woman in the stone house and her mother-in-law, both lonely prisoners who could not reach out to their family. She realized that she herself had been a prisoner in her marriage, and that for awhile she had become like the old woman: lips grim and set, feelings cut off, always being practical. As she saw how much she resisted becoming like the women in her husband's family, she seemed to become more aware of the way she wanted to be, to define her boundaries in a positive way, and to follow her creative imagination. In order to manifest these things in her life, Donna felt certain she needed to stay in her house, but move away from the relationship with her husband, while still maintaining a connection with him and his mother. The final session, with the unicorn and phoenix images, reinforced her confidence that she could find creative and spiritual strength and support within herself.

Sarah

Sarah is a self-assured 36 year old sessional lecturer with a master's degree. She and her husband separated about five years ago, and her two children live with her. She had had some experience using visualization in sports. In past years, Sarah had taken part in a number of women's support groups and stated that her most important life issue was to become more comfortable and "centered" with herself.

An interesting contradiction made it difficult to analyze Sarah's process. While on one hand, personal exploration seemed to be a major focus for her, on the other hand she overtly resisted exploration of the meaning of the images. Although she felt the sessions were valuable, it wasn't until months later that she was able to integrate their meaning into conscious awareness.

The basic issue that Sarah examined was her own integrity and wholeness which had been undermined through her relationships with her parents and husband. Sarah appeared to be searching for a missing part of herself, represented by an outside presence which seemed familiar but unreachable. She felt a deep sense of mistrust, coldness, and distance which seemed to be exemplified in her inability to relate to the images, and her apparent need to keep them separate and "outside" herself. Sarah had a tendency to experience many images, coming and going in a chaotic field, and had difficulty focusing on any particular one.

She also experienced intense physical sensations such as rocking, spinning and coldness during the sessions. At these times Sarah appeared to be floating away, in another awareness, and it was difficult to maintain verbal contact with her.

The Sessions

Session one. The experiences during this session seemed familiar to Sarah, but from a dream state rather than a normal waking awareness. As Sarah entered a relaxed state, her vision got darker and darker. She could not get through the door, and felt apprehensive. On the other side of the door was blackness which contained a ball of light shaped like a heart.

As the space got brighter, she had the sense of the color blue, soothing her like water. This led to an intense kinesthetic experience of rocking and spinning. Although Sarah felt safe, she was reminded of previous similar sensations which had been frightening.

She had the visual impression of herself on a dock, observing an eagle or hawk-like bird, a sun, and a burning triangle. These images were crystal clear to her, but just beyond her understanding. She felt "cut off," empty, as if she were waiting and longing for something or someone she knew long before, but had given up hope of finding.

Session two. In this session, Sarah's resistance or inability to interact with the images appeared at first to increase. However, she was able to hold one image long enough to relate to it.

Sarah visually described darkness, emptiness, and chaos, with fleeting images shifting too quickly to catch. She again felt as if she were an observer, a role she stated she preferred.

The next image was clearer, as Sarah imagined herself looking down on hundreds and hundreds of sharp mountain peaks, a place which drew her, yet frightened her. The image then shifted to a heart-shaped organ, which was both

pulled apart by an outside force, and held together by an opposing inside force. Although apprehensive, Sarah went down into the jagged mountains, to find a door from which a cold wind blew, chilling her deeply. Suddenly she became aware of a warm positive energy entering her head, flowing into her body, warming her. Sarah felt a deep sense of sadness and loss in ending this experience. On returning to normal awareness, she felt cold, tired, and vibrating with intense emotions.

Session three. Sarah's difficulty in interacting with the images seemed to reach a climax in this session when her resistance initially increased. However, later in the session she experienced her first "friendly image."

At first the imagery was again chaotic, with shifting patterns and designs. This time, Sarah was aware of a large, quiet solidness behind the busyness, which seemed to be embodied in the image of a huge mountain. She was, however, unable to focus clearly on either the images or the feelings behind them. She became aware of a body of water, and realized that she could swim. She emerged onto a beach, and experienced the kinesthetic rocking again.

Sarah refused outright to talk with a bitchy, impatient green woman, and dismissed images of a lock and key as "not important." She felt physically and emotionally cold. Near the end of the session, Sarah met, mounted, and rode a gigantic wolf image. Although their meeting was brief and they never spoke, Sarah experienced him as warm, safe, and supportive. She felt disappointed and sad when he left.

Session four. Sarah was late for the last session, and unenthusiastic about it. She admitted she preferred to observe the images and had felt apprehensive about her more intense involvement with the wolf image in the previous session.

her. At the start of the session, Sarah again experienced darkness and anxiety. The imagery began in heavy water. Sarah felt herself as a watcher again. She felt anxious and nervous, however, as she walked through a dark forest (see Appendix K, "The Path in the Forest") to an oval doorway, behind which was blinding light. The doorway and light seemed to engulf her, and after some hesitation, she decided to enter it. She sensed blue and a spinning sensation which seemed to take her outside herself, separate from her body, yet which she described as "feeling more whole, more hopeful."

A sense of bitter cold again engulfed her, and she was aware of a powerful being outside herself, and then of a circle of emptiness within her abdomen. She visually described a "sun" image which she knew would fit that hole, but she was unable to speak with it or ask it to warm her because if it refused, she might not survive the intensity of her despair, grief, loneliness, and anger. Sarah described her next images as herself as a puppet, and herself as cold and dead, wrapped up tight like an Egyptian mummy.

After the session, Sarah's body was hurting, and she held back tears. She noted her fear of letting her intense emotions overpower her, yet indicated that somehow the wholeness she sought was reachable through the grief and pain she denied.

The Experience

In the post-session interview, Sarah described the experience as often being frustrating while she struggled to understand her process, and at the same time resisted it. She stated that she would have preferred eight sessions instead of four. The reason for this was her confusion about what had actually happened for

her, and her belief that she still had a tremendous amount of sifting to do to understand her experience. Sarah found it difficult to process her images immediately after the sessions, and felt exhausted when she left, often ill or in physical pain for several hours.

Although Sarah had seen counsellors in the past, she had always felt disappointed and empty afterwards. She indicated that this was because the therapy had been on an "intellectual level," a level where she felt comfortable during her day to day life. Although she had been able to recognize some patterns intellectually, she had not been able to experience them in the moment, on a feeling or emotional level. "For me," she said, "there seems to be a real split between the intellectual and emotional. So that kind of counselling didn't help."

And yet she said the most difficult aspect for her was trying to find the language to describe what was occurring in the imagery. Because the events were so visual, she considered them very much out of the realm of language or the intellect, and often resisted putting them into language. During the interview, she stated that she preferred not to use a thinking or "talking about" level during the imagery, even though in her everyday life she most often related from this level. She wanted to push deeper and deeper into an awareness where she could lose touch with her body, and be unable to identify her experience in words. She seemed to feel that this was the best way for her to access deeper information, but the problem was that she was unable to decipher what it was. Efforts of the researcher to keep Sarah verbally in touch were often perceived by her as a bother and a distraction.

However, Sarah felt that she was able to access a deeper emotional place than she ever had before in counselling. She often had to struggle to reach this deeper emotional level. She admitted that she resisted this movement because she did not want to feel the pain or to "upset" herself, yet she realized how much energy it took to avoid these feelings. The incongruity of wanting very much to explore her growth process, but also wishing to avoid the pain, was part of Sarah's difficult process.

Because of the exhaustion and her desire to avoid the pain, Sarah sometimes felt reluctant to come to the sessions. But she also saw them as a great adventure. There was a sense for her that the "visions" (what she called her images) came directly from the center of her being, and were connected, integrated with a very deep, knowing part of herself. She believed that once she could begin to understand the information with her mind, she would be able to integrate it into her life. At the one-month update, Sarah stated that this integration was beginning, and this clarity continued to grow over the following months.

Because Sarah continued to describe and interpret the images as outside herself and as unapproachable, she had little sense of control. She felt annoyed by having to stay conscious enough to relate her experiences to the researcher or to interact verbally with the images. In the first two sessions, Sarah had great difficulty holding on to any images; they moved chaotically across her awareness and seemed to disintegrate when she attempted to focus on them. In the third session, Sarah allowed herself to touch and be touched by the great wolf, which brought her a sense of safety and support, but also sadness. Sarah remarked that

this image seemed to flow "from" her, rather than from outside her. In the last session, Sarah seemed to recognize her own despair, and to admit her great fear that the image of the sun might not respond to her and "all hope would be lost." She was not willing to take that risk.

Sarah's kinesthetic or bodily experiences were very intense during all sessions. These sensations, which included rocking, spinning, losing touch with being in her body, and feeling icy cold, seemed to increase Sarah's inability to understand her images, or to go deeper into the feelings they evoked.

When she returned to the room after each session, Sarah said she felt very vulnerable, as if she had peeled off all her layers to reach one very raw spot. The transition period of returning to her normal awareness, closing herself up, and putting the layers back on was physically painful. The after-effects of the process sometimes lasted for hours, and during that time she was unable to discuss her imagery experiences.

Sarah stated in the post-session interview that the thing that surprised her most was the intensity and vividness of the images. Even months later, she remarked that she could recall some of them with as much clarity as any trip she had actually made. She described their "reality," however, as very much outside her everyday thinking or experiencing.

Awareness/Meaning

Although Sarah stated throughout the sessions and in the post-session interview that the guided imagery experience was valuable in that it focused her toward looking at her patterns and alternatives, she expressed confusion as to "what " she had actually learned. She felt it would take time to understand the

meaning of the imagery, and believed that her challenge was to continue exploring the channels that the sessions had opened. Because of Sarah's confusion, and her apparent inability to explore the issues which came up for her by interacting with the images, it was extremely difficult to answer this research question based on the information she was able to give. It was in the last session that Sarah came closest to being willing to explore these issues. Interestingly, although the session had a tremendous impact on her immediately afterwards, by the post-session interview she was unable to remember its content.

In the interview, Sarah described herself as "at the end of a chapter" in her life, needing to move on, yet hesitating to. This seemed to refer, at least in part, to her relationship with her husband, and her hesitation to move beyond it and to take responsibility for her own life and happiness. In the sessions, while she remained separate from the images and their meaning, she seemed to somehow avoid taking responsibility for the information they represented. It appeared that this was one reason why she chose to view the images as "outside" rather than "inside" herself, and resisted asking them for information or help.

Throughout the sessions, Sarah experienced a sense of "deja vu," a feeling that the sensations and images were familiar to her from long ago, vital, yet somehow outside her understanding. This "deja vu" feeling began during the first session on the dock. At that time she stated, "Something is really missing," as though some part of her had been cut off, and that the being for whom she waited could somehow reconnect her, if only she could find him. This longing for reconnection occurred again in session two when the warm energy filled her, in session three when the huge wolf carried her, and reached a climax in session four,

when she was unable to ask the sun to warm her. Each time she was unable to consummate the experience, finally admitting in session four, "If I asked and it didn't work, it would be so much worse."

In session two, she described her apprehension of asking questions of the images, because if she got answers, if she was "connected" again, she would be responsible for her knowing, and could no longer "pretend" she didn't know. Although she said she had a strong drive to understand the personal meaning of the images, she had an equally strong desire to stay separate from them. Although Sarah often stated that her reason for avoiding interaction was that language seemed foreign to the imagery experience, she also seemed to be afraid that interaction might take her to a place she wished in some ways to avoid. For example, in the second and fourth sessions, Sarah described waiting for someone or something that she feared would never come, saying that she did not "deserve to meet them." She compared this feeling to the hopelessness of a child in a toy store, desperately wanting a toy, but not asking for it, because she knew she would never get it.

In session two, Sarah stated that she didn't want to go down into the mountains, because it would hurt very very deeply. She described the descent as "losing pieces of her outside veneer, the part that held her together." She commented that this had something to do with the responsibility she was avoiding. The image then switched to a heart that had been whole, but was being torn apart. When Sarah was urged to look closely at this image, it faded, causing her to comment, "When I try and control it, it's not the same." After the third session Sarah stated, "All my life, as soon as I exercised any control, I lost that thing."

In session three, Sarah's resistance to reconnecting seemed most intense. She overtly refused to talk to the green lady, suggesting that the researcher talk to her herself. After the session, she admitted there was some resemblance between her own irritation and the irritation of the green lady, but she seemed disinclined to explore it. In the post-session interview Sarah observed that she felt irritated by being drawn back to pay attention to the images, and that "the irritation started out feeling like it was mine, but very quickly it wasn't me, it was coming from outside me." During the session three debriefing, Sarah described the green lady as harsh and unyielding, and explained that she needed to be on guard to placate her, for there would be some danger if she pushed her. This seemed to fit with messages Sarah had learned from her family.

Many of Sarah's images appeared to be distant, and she had a sense of being on her own. The ones that seemed potentially warm or helpful were experienced by her as being out of her reach. For example, Sarah felt a warmth and caring from the huge wolf, yet was disappointed because he left so quickly. She was unable to ask the sun for the warmth which she so strongly wanted. The theme of having no control, and thus no responsibility or commitment, and no right to ask for assistance, seemed to recur throughout Sarah's sessions.

In the fourth session, which she was unable to remember at the post-session interview, Sarah seemed to come closest to some clarity about this process. The imagery of the heart led Sarah to talk about her own wholeness, and the part of her that was missing. When asked to explore that wholeness, Sarah was able to stay with the imagery, and to visually image the powerful being and herself with a black hole in her center. As she continued to stay focused on the imagery, Sarah

saw herself in a flat open field, with the cold wind blowing through her, an image which she stated described her. She knew the sun could fill the hole, but she avoided speaking with the sun, saying, "My head hurts," then "I feel stupid talking to it," and finally, "If I ever allowed myself to feel that despair, how would I ever stop it? I have to be strong and that means not letting myself feel it." This statement seemed to represent a tremendous admission of Sarah's own needs, and the deep pain she had covered up when she chose to be available for other people. She compared her great cost in giving to others with the powerful being which seemed able to give without losing anything. "I had to give up lots," she admitted. "A huge part of me was killed, a big empty hole." Sarah could not imagine that she would ever be lucky enough to have the sun fill that black hole, and that if she asked, she wouldn't get it, because she did not have the right to express these needs. Her final image was of herself as an Egyptian mummy, bound tightly and dead.

Through the image of the empty hole, Sarah seemed to have finally reconnected with the part of her which was missing, and touched, if only briefly, the pain and despair she had been unable to acknowledge. Perhaps her reluctance to verbalize or interact helped her avoid finding that painful place until she was ready. The empty hole may have represented the overwhelming feelings of despair, sadness, and anger from which she had actually cut off. Unable to deal with the intensity of these emotions on her own, afraid she would be unable to find help, she may have shut down these feelings in herself.

To acknowledge that this anguish was inside, rather than outside her, was terrifying. Sarah admitted it would be difficult for her to accept the statement,

"I deserve to be warmed, held, whole." At the end of the fourth session, although Sarah felt exhausted and extremely vulnerable, she also recognized a sense of strength that might be available to her. She summed this up as "the message of the sun," and thought the following lines from a song by Jennifer Warnes (1986) expressed it:

No one believed...that there were sorrows to be healed, and mercy,
mercy in this world...

I just want to hold you--won't you let me hold you?
have this joy inside my breast, to think that I did not forget....

Associations with Life (events, people)

Although Sarah had a difficult time during the sessions and during the post-session interview ascertaining the "meaning" of the images or their relationship to people or events in her life, a few months after the sessions ended she phoned and discussed their impact on her. At this time she stated that many aspects of the imagery which had seemed too "close" at the time of the sessions had begun to fit together for her. In looking back, she felt that the last session particularly had helped her to let go of her relationship with her husband. Experiencing the warmth and wholeness of the sun had helped her clarify the things she wanted in a relationship with a man, and she felt unwilling to settle for another unhealthy relationship. Sarah also said the guided imagery experience had helped her see that "...my being very verbal gets in the way of my being able to work through issues, and I have been allowing my thinking to be more visual... when I respond from the images I 'see' they are usually right."

Although in retrospect Sarah described her focus for change as a relationship issue, it seemed that a number of underlying points contributed to her ability to

change in this way. One important focus was Sarah's exploration of her own ability to be whole. In the fourth session, the interaction with the sun seemed to represent the conflict Sarah felt in relation to the parts of herself she had split off (parts which were extremely painful for her to acknowledge), and her reluctance to reclaim them.

In the post-session interview, Sarah described a sense that she could function in the world in a healthy way, but only on a superficial or intellectual level. She recognized that people saw her as a warm, giving person, but that those qualities did not connect through to the center of her being, where she had compacted safely away a number of unresolved emotions. The feelings of exhaustion, which had been similar to the emotional exhaustion she felt when she and her husband first separated, had come in part from a sense of being overwhelmed by the resurfacing of these feelings. She stated that her inability to access those emotions was holding her back from understanding and integrating the things that had come up in the sessions.

After the third session, Sarah stated, "Whenever I try and exercise any control over something, I lose it." This statement seemed to refer both to her interactions with the images and to her relationships with her mother and husband. She said she had learned as a child that it was dangerous to interact with other people because they might get angry, so she usually stayed distant, as a watcher, so she could placate them if a problem arose.

Sarah described her mother, father, and husband as similar in that they were all distant, unsupportive, and unable to respond to her needs. Her mother was an alcoholic, and Sarah was expected to take care of her, placing her own needs, even

as a child, as secondary. Her father, who was withdrawn and undemonstrative, interacted with her mostly as an authoritarian figure. She felt powerless and unimportant in the relationship with her husband, whose needs seemed more pressing than hers. When they did interact, it was often painful for Sarah. All of these people tended to be moody and irritable, and Sarah felt responsible to alleviate their irritability.

Sarah described herself as often irritable with her children when they pushed her with demands, but guilty when she denied them. At the beginning of session four, Sarah remarked that that morning she had felt irritated with her daughter, and that her irritation reminded her of the green lady. She reflected that the irritation usually came out of her inability to take control or make a clear decision about what she wanted. She agreed that she had felt this same irritation during the sessions when pressed to explore or interact with an image. Although Sarah stated she was comfortable describing the images, there seemed to be no feeling involved. As soon as she was urged to go further, to move into her feelings, she seemed to resist. Although this resistance to touching feelings appeared to be in contradiction to Sarah's statements in the interview that the imagery work allowed her to access deep emotions, it seemed to represent an aspect of how Sarah related to the world around her. She moved within a strong emotional milieu, but was unable to deeply touch or really experience the emotions.

During session four, Sarah experienced a kinesthetic phenomenon she often had as a child. She described this as feeling separated from her body and out of control. This experience had been terrifying to her as a child, and she had felt

powerless, wanting to scream, believing that even making the sound would release her from the powerlessness, but was unable to do so. She felt that if she had been able to regain some control, she would somehow have been able to find that part of herself that was missing. When asked to allow an image of that energy, that missing part to come up, Sarah invariably saw it as another person, outside herself, for whom she was hopelessly waiting.

During the post-session interview, she talked about her romantic vision of finding the man who would fill that empty space within her. She believed he would be like the sun, that she would recognize him by that feeling. She admitted that in this fantasy, she allowed her sense of her own wholeness to be dependent on another person, but added, "I'm hoping that I've learned that isn't the whole story, that there's something about myself that goes beyond the other person out there." She said that waiting for someone else to complete her would be giving up her responsibility to herself, and that would leave her as a "half-made person" for the rest of her life.

Jocelyn

Jocelyn is a 20 year old student who has focused on personal exploration for a number of years. She had taken part in workshops dealing with eating disorders, sexual abuse, and transpersonal psychology, and participated in Bioenergetic therapy. At the time of the sessions she was involved in a new relationship.

Jocelyn described herself as very visual and was easily able to interact with the images, creating an interior blueprint of rooms which recurred in each session. Her issues were related to her difficult childhood and her early separation from

her mother. Although she presented herself in the world as a strong and capable adult, inside Jocelyn was a small, hurt and angry child who was deeply afraid of rejection. During the sessions, she examined her inner "center," and her ability to feel powerful within herself, without having to have power over someone else.

Jocelyn participated in only three sessions, choosing not to do the final one. She had just returned from a visit with her mother, whom she had seen only once since she was a small child, and was apprehensive that the fourth session might bring up painful material she would not be able to resolve on her own.

Jocelyn's voice and manner remained flat and emotionless even when discussing intense emotional situations during the first two sessions. However, in the third, she experienced a strong kinesthetic "shift" and moved into an emotional exploration of her relationship with her grandmother and mother, which enabled her to express some deep inner pain and guilt.

The Sessions

Session one. In this session, Jocelyn visually imaged what she interpreted as two different aspects of herself. The images appeared within a clear visual diagram of rooms.

The images began in a black room where Jocelyn lit a candle for light. Another room was off to the side, and in it sat a young girl reading. This child, who looked like Jocelyn when she was about six, was detached, poised, and adultlike. She acted irritated that Jocelyn had intruded on her special place and told her to leave. However, after Jocelyn looked into her eyes, the child approached her, and they hugged. Hand in hand, they walked to the other side of the room and entered a translucent plastic tube. It seemed to Jocelyn that she

was looking down on a city. No one responded as she screamed, "Look at me!" and she felt frustrated and isolated. However, at the same time she felt safe and protected within the tube.

They then entered a "cone-shaped" space, icy blue in color, with sharp crystals sticking up all around. In the center of the cone a powerful dragon rested (see Appendix L, "The Dragon"). As Jocelyn spoke with this dragon image, she felt awed by and drawn to its power and majesty, its "hidden energy," but also frightened of it.

Session two. The imagery took place within the same arrangement of rooms, beginning again in the dark room, with the little girl calmly reading in a room off to the side. This time, however, the space turned red, and seemed like "a horror movie," with fists violently punching walls, blood dripping, knives flying, and clawed hands grabbing at Jocelyn. Although hesitant, she decided to follow the clawed hands to another room under the wall, where she could "find out more." This room was smelly and evil, yet Jocelyn had the sense that she could enjoy doing something there which she "shouldn't" do.

Jocelyn discovered that the claw hands were attached to a little monster, who was wearing a mask of self-assurance, and attempting to intimidate her; but when she looked closely at him, she knew he was actually covering his fear. Jocelyn realized that he was like her father and like her, but that she also had a strong, powerful core like the dragon.

Session three. During this session, Jocelyn explored old pain about her family relationships, particularly with her mother and maternal grandmother. As the imagery began, again in the same arrangement of rooms, Jocelyn observed a

panoramic view of other images from previous sessions. She then visually imaged herself swinging in a parachute-like contraption which was hanging from a tube. While trying to decide whether to go down into the city she saw below or to go back up into the tube, Jocelyn suddenly experienced an intense kinesthetic "shift." The image of a room full of old people, around whose feet she was carefully stepping, took over her total awareness, and for a moment, she lost touch with herself and the room in which the session was occurring. One old woman with only half a face, who reminded Jocelyn of her grandmother, stood out most strongly. In a flat, matter-of-fact voice, Jocelyn described her grandmother's illness, death, and funeral when she was three. However, as she began talking with the image of her grandmother, Jocelyn became aware of the guilt and sense of responsibility she had felt for her death, and also her intense love for her. These memories brought both anger and sadness to the surface, and Jocelyn began to cry.

At the end of the session, Jocelyn observed the scene again, but this time it was like a polaroid photograph that she could put down, rather than a picture taking up her entire field of vision, and she felt strong and grounded.

The Experience

In the post-session interview, Jocelyn observed that the sessions sequentially complemented each other, giving her a greater understanding of the whole picture each time. She explained that the image of the dragon in the center of the blue space in the first session represented her central issue: her own core place of being. As the sessions went on, the images "around the edges" came into focus as she explored them in connection with this central image. Shapes such as the cone, the tube, and the layout of the rooms itself repeated through the sessions.

Jocelyn stated that she had some concerns initially about not knowing the researcher, but she stopped thinking about that as she became relaxed. She remarked that sometimes she found it difficult to focus on the images before she got to the door, and she would consciously think through things she might see after she opened it. But she never did see those things.

The first session was the easiest for her, because it contained material she felt comfortable and familiar with. The second session was more difficult because it dealt with emotional material that was deeper and harder for her to accept, such as her enjoyment of doing something she "shouldn't" be doing.. The third session, when she lost awareness of the room, seemed to Jocelyn to move into a different and deeper state of awareness, which took her entirely by surprise and frightened her with its abruptness. She compared this sudden shift to the moment of falling asleep when images appear and then the dreamer is jolted back awake in confusion.

Jocelyn remarked in the interview that she did not find talking therapy effective, because it is too easy for her to just talk superficially and not get anywhere. She described the guided imagery as different because she didn't have to "think up" answers or feelings: they were easily accessible in the deep state of relaxation. Although sometimes she observed herself in the imagery, at other times she experienced herself within it in a very real, emotional way.

Jocelyn also commented that the experience of going into a deep state of awareness in the imagery was beneficial because it allowed her to reach issues she was usually too defended to explore. She felt that when she touched on something with the imagery, she was able to access and deal with it almost simultaneously.

With the help of a therapist/guide asking her questions, Jocelyn confirmed that she could "intuitively" find answers. She added that by intuition, she meant that she got a "gut feeling" which she couldn't always explain consciously, but which helped her know whether she was on track or not. Instead of a verbal or intellectual focus, this intuitive level allowed her to "see" or "visualize" the issue, taking her to a deeper level than just talking about it could.

In this deeper level, Jocelyn suggested that she could pass beyond the barriers that often kept her from reaching information in a fully awake, conscious state. "When you're relaxed," she said, "some of it just flows up. It shows up in some form, but not always obviously, so you have to work through that form to find out what it is, like in a dream."

Jocelyn compared the imagery work to Bioenergetic body work, in which she often found it impossible to act out physically some of her emotionally intense feelings. "There's a lot of value in making the picture in my head and acting it out in my imagination first because it gives me a clearer idea of what's going on," she remarked. She suggested that working it out visually might eventually make it easier for her to act it out physically.

Jocelyn asserted that the imagery had helped her realize how often she sees pictures in her head, using the visualization process unconsciously in her day to day life. During the post-session interview, she explained that she seemed to be able to use this mode more consciously to pull issues into clearer perspective since the sessions.

The thing that surprised her the most was the phenomenon of losing complete awareness in the third session, the intense body sensations she

experienced at that time, and the intensity of her involvement in the imagery. Even though this occurrence frightened and confused her, she did not see it as a negative incident, adding that she would like to do it again to see what would happen.

Awareness/Meaning

In the post-session interview, Jocelyn stated that the sessions gave her new things to think about as well as insight into some of the issues she was already looking at in her life. For example, she noted that she had a longstanding familiarity with the little girl, although she had never seen her as a clear image before. She described her as the serious, demanding, but scared part of herself, which was always tugging away inside her. "That little girl exists nowhere but inside me," she added. "Yet the infinite size of her in my life!" Jocelyn felt she was able to better understand and integrate this aspect of herself by "seeing," focusing on, and confronting her in the imagery.

The image of the little girl in session one seemed to be related to Jocelyn's exploration of her own power. After session one, she called the little girl "the little me," and the dragon "the big me." The little girl was acting adultlike and mature, but was actually cut off, isolated, and alone. The dragon, who was powerful, in control, and responsible, was an image Jocelyn had recently discovered. During session one, she was able to get clearer about her desire to manifest this aspect of herself, but also to recognize her fear about the dangers this power could involve. "Taking control of things, not letting other people tell me what to do, can be very frightening," she explained. She interpreted the center place where the dragon rested, as the "core" of her being, her most

powerful place. Yet many things kept her from experiencing that strength. After session one, Jocelyn talked about her fear that power could be dangerous, because it could be used as "power over" and hurt another person. She admitted that she had a tendency to feel superior to some people.

During the post-session interview, Jocelyn reported that the sessions had helped her to accept and integrate the "little" and "big me" parts of herself, and had allowed her to see that she didn't have to be afraid of her power. She realized through the process that she was trying to learn to use the dragon's "hidden" power to be a strong, yet caring person.

In session two, exploration of this issue continued. Jocelyn agreed that she often presented a strong, self-confident mask to the world (like the little clawed monster), which allowed her to feel in control. The little monster enjoyed feeling more powerful than Jocelyn, tearing at her legs with his claws. He could take on whatever form he wanted, and resisted when Jocelyn looked too closely at him. At that point, she recognized that underneath he was a scared "wimp," a pouting child.

While wearing his in-control mask, the monster remarked mockingly, "I told you you'd like this!" She interpreted this to mean she would enjoy being in the room where she could do things she shouldn't do. Jocelyn added that this referred to that part of herself which enjoyed feeling more powerful than others, even though this might hurt them. But although this felt good, she also felt guilty misusing her strength in that way. "The little monster is telling me that I can take off this mask," she stated after session two, "but that I also enjoy wearing it. But there are consequences to acting like that." Jocelyn said she was trying to

find the place where she could feel strong and self-confident without being a "monster" to someone else. The little monster, she realized, was just pretending to be powerful, whereas the dragon actually was powerful.

In the red room, where the horrific things were happening, Jocelyn observed, "The claws hurt, but I can't feel it." While describing the scene, her voice and manner remained detached and emotionless. In the room under the wall, she knew she could easily take on an "evil" personality or get angry and rip out the walls. In the other room, the little girl sat, detached, and calmly reading. Jocelyn believed she had to go into the room under the wall if she wanted to "find out more," but part of her wanted to run into the little girl's room where she could be "safe."

This choice to explore some of the "evil" and possibly more emotional-feeling parts of herself or to remain safe, but detached and feeling-less, was a recurring theme in Jocelyn's imagery. She described the tube image as representing a shield between herself and the world, a place where she could remain protected, but separate and alone. Although other people often assumed she had no problems, Jocelyn admitted that in her life, as in the imagery, she longed to be recognized for who she was, even if that included some negative aspects. On the other hand, in order to appear "okay" to other people, she had to keep some strong feelings hidden and under control. While describing or discussing the imagery, Jocelyn's voice was often flat and emotionless, even if the content was heavily laden with emotion. For example, the horrific imagery in session two and her grandmother's death in session three were described in a matter-of-fact tone.

During session three, Jocelyn repeated a number of times that she felt confused and overwhelmed. She sounded almost numb, but underneath, there seemed to be the voice of a scared child. When she began to talk directly to the old woman, emotion began to surface. She expressed anger toward her grandmother, as well as guilt and responsibility for her death and for her mother's desertion. She was able to remember how hard she had tried as a three year old child to do everything right for her grandmother, and the awareness that she had failed to do enough. Jocelyn's voice became shaky, then broke during this interaction, and she began to cry deeply.

Although Jocelyn expressed deep and intense emotion during the session, when she returned to normal awareness she smiled and nonchalantly shrugged off the experience saying, "I'm okay." She seemed to be presenting a "don't worry about me" attitude, and her voice regained a tone of flatness.

At the conclusion of the imagery, she imagined picking up the photograph of the room that had earlier taken up the whole field of her vision. "It seems like it doesn't take up the entire picture anymore," she remarked. It seemed as if the issue was no longer so overwhelming, and she could see it in perspective.

Although Jocelyn had done previous work about her issues with her mother, she had not explored her feelings toward her grandmother before, and stated in the post-session interview that she believed her relationship with her grandmother might be very important in her search to understand herself. People had told her that these events were in the past and she should forget them, yet she still felt the effects were very much a part of her attitudes.

In terms of new alternatives, Jocelyn stated that the sessions "...made me realize there were things I had to accept and take responsibility for. I was accountable for...the times I get off on being in power, and I have to recognize when that's okay and when it isn't, and not just avoid it by feeling like I'm being 'bad.' It's a choice I have to make." She also stated that this exploration may have brought her closer to the point where she would have to make a decision about how much power she was willing to acknowledge within herself, and that she found that decision frightening.

In regard to choosing not to do the last session, Jocelyn admitted in the post-session interview that she might have been avoiding further exploration of this decision. She also acknowledged that intense feelings might have been further stimulated by her visit with her mother, feelings she didn't want to look at just then, particularly since it would be the last session.

"Learning how to own and take responsibility for my strengths and weaknesses, standing up and being who I am, and not letting people tell me who to be or what I want, is difficult," she admitted. "The sense of strength has to be within." Jocelyn added that the discovery of that powerful central place and the realization that it was a part of her was the most positive aspect of the guided imagery experience.

Associations with Life (events, people)

On the Subject Profile and in the post-session interview, Jocelyn stated that her "mother issue" was the central focus for her personal exploration. She explained that this issue was related to her self-identity and her search to find out who she was and who her mother was. She stated that discovering the central

place and the dragon in session one had been an important part of this exploration process. "Knowing that's a part of me, a very beautiful, strong, graceful part that's mine, is very important," she said. "It gave me a sense of who I am, but even more than that, I liked that sense."

Jocelyn's childhood was difficult and complicated. Her father had left when she was very young, and her mother had felt unable to care for her. She lived with her maternal grandmother until her illness and death when she was three, and then she was sent to her paternal grandparents. Her grandparents were old and impatient with the energy of a young child, often warning Jocelyn to be "good" or else her grandmother would have a heart attack. Finally at age five, Jocelyn went to live with her father and his second wife. From that time on, she saw her mother only once until their reunion during the time of these sessions.

Jocelyn believed that when she was young and shipped from relative to relative, she never had an opportunity to develop her own decision-making strength. But, she stated in the interview, "Now it's coming back. Knowing that I have the power to do this is so important."

During session three, the image of stepping around a circle of old people's legs reminded Jocelyn of her grandparents. In particular, the old woman with half a face reminded her of her maternal grandmother, especially during the time she was in the hospital, dying of cancer (when Jocelyn was three). Jocelyn described this image as "an imposter" and "inhuman." She was reminded of her grandmother's face through the bars of her hospital bed, her head bald, inhuman-like, crying Jocelyn's name, and reaching for her with her skinny arms. "She looked strange and I was scared of her," Jocelyn recounted. At the funeral her grandmother looked normal again, confusing Jocelyn even more.

When asked during the session to explore the word "imposter" Jocelyn was uncertain to whom it referred. On the one hand, she saw her mother as a phony who was unwilling to be honest with her or to take responsibility for her. On the other hand, she saw her grandmother as an imposter who had taken over her mother's nurturing role. In addition, Jocelyn had ended up trying to nurture her sick grandmother as a small child. She clearly recounted an event she had forgotten up till then: standing on the bed, dressing her grandmother, trying with great difficulty to take care of her and do everything well enough to make it all okay.

During the session, Jocelyn was able to re-experience feelings of anger toward her grandmother for not stopping her mother from leaving, for hating her father and driving him away, for not being able to give her the answers she so desperately sought, and for dying and leaving her. As she talked to the image of her grandmother, Jocelyn was also able to express her deep love for her, and her fear that she had been responsible for her death, for her mother leaving, and for the arguments in her family. Finally she was able to realize, "I did the best I could."

Jocelyn indicated in the interview that there might be something in her relationship with her grandmother that she had not focused on before, but which might help resolve her issues about her mother and her own identity. She was able to look at the responsibility she had taken on as a young child, her feelings of guilt about being "bad" (like the experience in the red room) and causing problems in her family, and her love and sense of loss about her grandmother's death. Although she had responded to the events by becoming detached and

self-disciplined (like the little girl reading), inside her pain and anger had continued to grow. Jocelyn was able to remember the terror and helplessness she had felt as a young child trying to make everything right for the adult who was actually her primary caretaker.

Jocelyn reported that her mother had indicated during their visit that there had indeed been "unidentified troubles" between Jocelyn and her grandmother which Jocelyn had not remembered. After one month, Jocelyn wrote that seeing her mother had enabled her to put her feelings into a better perspective, so they no longer took up the enormous amount of space and energy which they had. This seemed to be similar to the photograph in the imagery which lost its overwhelming immensity at the end.

Jocelyn also remarked that the interactions with the little girl, the dragon, and the little monster represented different aspects of herself in the world. She had indicated during the session that the monster reminded her of her father as well as herself, because her father too presented an attitude of being "real cool and tough," but was passive underneath. Like her, the tough role he played enabled him to remain safe.

Like the little girl, Jocelyn characterized herself as having been a very "good" kid, self-disciplined and a good student. Although she had sometimes been rebellious, she said she had never enjoyed it the way she was able to enjoy her "badness" in session two. In her present relationship, Jocelyn felt in control and "superior" to her partner, both enjoying her powerful position, and feeling guilty about causing pain. Although she described her partner as "weak and sappy" at times, she did not like this unequal relationship. She admitted that although the

situation of superiority allowed her to stay distant and safe, it also kept her separate from the intensity of her actual feelings.

In the months following the sessions, Jocelyn commented that she had begun to notice that all of her explorations seemed to be similar to the imagery in the first session. She was aware that she experienced her inner strength like the blue center with the dragon, as "a strong core feeling, with a sort of tube idea forming a protective shell" around her. The sharp crystals which surrounded this center always prevented her from easily accessing the strength it contained. Jocelyn also asserted that she was beginning to acknowledge her reluctance to care deeply or to open to another person, and to recognize her fear of rejection, her inability to trust, and her need to avoid being hurt.

Thematic Analysis of Results

The following themes recurred through the individual descriptive accounts:

Experience of the Guided Imagery

Although the experiences of the five subjects varied (e.g., kinds of images, willingness to interact with them, physiological phenomena) certain similarities were found. The method appeared to facilitate the generation of vivid images for all participants, who commented on their "realness," "freshness," and "life." In addition, all women were perceived by the researcher to be emotionally engaged during the process, an observation which was confirmed by the participants. Three subjects indicated that the presence of a supportive, trustworthy, nonjudgmental therapist/guide was crucial in allowing them to engage deeply in exploration.

Kinesthetic body reactions varied, but all subjects experienced some physical phenomena. Kinesthetic changes included tiredness, dizziness, rocking, spinning, tilting, breathing difficulties, coldness, and disorientation.

Three participants indicated that they appreciated the "playful" or "fun" quality of the sessions, which allowed them to engage in the process without feeling overwhelmed by the intensity of the experience of emotions. In addition, each woman emphasized that the lack of intellectual, analytical focus was an advantage in allowing her to access feelings more directly than by using only verbal methods of therapy.

The quality of the imagery space landscape changed during the sessions and over the course of the sessions for all subjects, in most cases moving from a generalized exploration of the "space" to more concrete individual images. Also, ability and willingness to engage in decisive interactions with the images or within the imagery increased during the course of the sessions for all individuals.

Subjects were most surprised by the powerful intensity and realness of the images, the ability of the process to take them quickly into deep emotional exploration, and the personal richness which they identified during the process. Although some participants felt initially apprehensive, no one reported difficulties in the imagery process itself, or offered any suggestions to improve the process.

Awareness/Meaning

The amount of understanding and awareness of the meaning of the material from the imagery process varied, but all subjects indicated they had been able to learn more about themselves and their individual issues through the sessions. The women all acknowledged that important issues were addressed through the

imagery work; in every case, the issue stated on the subject profile sheet as the participant's most important life issue was accessed by the imagery process. Although all subjects felt they had gained personal meaning or increased awareness through the imagery process, three women indicated they were unsure of the specific meaning of some of the images, and one of these felt confused about the meaning of the experience of the imagery itself.

The subjects all stated they were able to generate more alternatives, new alternatives, or some alternatives (where they had seen none before) about their issues or concerns. In addition, all participants reported that they were able to see issues more clearly, more completely, or in a new perspective.

The experience of the imagery promoted affective release or expression (tears, sadness, grief, guilt, anger, joy, etc.) for all participants. The imagery also facilitated the recovery of old, sometimes forgotten concerns and/or memories for all women.

All subjects encountered an image of a friendly, positive or helpful "guide" image at some time during the process. When participants interacted with these images, there appeared to be a shift in their attitudes about themselves or their imagery. Interacting verbally with the images also led the subjects to increased understanding or a change in attitude or perception. Looking directly into an image's face or eyes appeared to increase awareness or shift subjects into a more positive interaction with the image.

The experience of the imagery appeared to carry over into the women's personal lives. For three subjects, accessing qualities or experience through the imagery facilitated a belief that they could manifest the same things in actual life (i.e., the "feeling" was the same as someone or something).

life. During the time of the sessions, all participants experienced some sort of "turning point" of awareness or integration either within or outside the sessions.

All women gained information or awareness about the way they operated within the world. The way in which subjects created, interacted with, and responded to the imagery appeared to reflect feelings toward themselves and others, patterns of relating, and emotional responses within their worlds. In particular, each subject stated that the experience facilitated an acknowledgement of her own needs and/or a feeling that she could love and care for herself. All participants were observed to experience increased feelings of control over the generation of and interaction with the images which resulted in a sense of personal empowerment.

An important aspect of the process for all the participants seemed to be a new or increased interest in exploring the wholeness of her inner self or inner life. Every subject commented on her appreciation of the opportunity which the sessions gave her to explore rich, creative, deeper aspects of herself. Three women indicated that these inner aspects were vital parts they had lost touch with. All subjects reported that their awareness of the imagery process continued to increase over time (i.e., one month follow-up and subsequent contacts).

Associations with Life (events, people)

The sessions generated connections with real life events and relationships for all participants. Images were perceived as being representative of events and relationships within the past or present life of the subjects in varying ways. At times, these connections were direct (the image was the same or directly reminded the subject of someone or something); at other times, the connections were indirect (i.e., the "feeling" was the same as someone or something).

All women reported that some of the images visualized related to "real life" people, places, or events. In addition, some of the images either directly related to or reminded each subject of childhood or family events or issues.

Although it was observed that the experience of and interaction with the images related to participants' way of operating in the world, three subjects additionally indicated that changes over time in the imagery coincided with changes in their lives, such as an increase in feelings of control, improvement in decision making ability, or increased perception about themselves or their relationships. All subjects indicated that they intended to continue using the images or the information from the imagery on their own after the sessions ended.

This chapter is a report of (a) the results in terms of the research questions and previous research, (b) the significance of the findings for counsellors, and (c) the limitations and the implications for future research.

The use of this particular relaxation and guided imagery exercise was found to enhance the discovery and exploration of personal meaning through the examination of specific images. These images appear to relate either directly or indirectly to issues, feelings, relationships, and/or events in the subjects' lives. These findings are consistent with the work of other therapists using the guided imagery process.

Although the specific experiences of the five participants varied, a number of similar changes occurred for all subjects during the course of the sessions. The quality of the imagery landscapes seemed to move from a generalized "space" to more concrete images of people, animals, and objects. As the sessions continued, the subjects appeared to increase their ability and depth of decisive interactions with the images and within the imagery landscape itself.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The image is a vehicle in that we can move in it, but its space has no terminus...only unending depth. (Mary Watkins)

The purpose of this study was to examine and describe the experiences of individuals using the process of guided imagery in order to explore the extent to which they could discover and understand the personal meaning of the images. This chapter is a report of (a) the results in terms of the research questions and previous research, (b) the significance of the findings for counsellors, and (c) the limitations and the implications for future research.

The use of this particular relaxation and guided imagery exercise was found to enhance the discovery and exploration of personal meaning through the examination of specific images. These images appear to relate either directly or indirectly to issues, feelings, relationships, and/or events in the subjects' lives. These findings are consistent with the work of other therapists using the guided imagery process.

Although the specific experiences of the five participants varied, a number of similar changes occurred for all subjects during the course of the sessions. The quality of the imagery landscapes seemed to move from a generalized "space" to more concrete images of people, animals, and objects. As the sessions continued, the subjects appeared to increase their ability and depth of decisive interactions with the images and within the imagery landscape itself.

Physical reactions varied, but all subjects experienced some kinesthetic changes during the imagery experience. The kinesthetic reactions seemed to result in a shift of some kind, either a deepening into the emotional experience (with an accompanying movement away from the analytic faculty) or a resistance to deeper exploration of "hidden" material. The resulting dissociation may have served to move the subject away from potentially anxiety-producing material. The kinesthetic experiences may be one manifestation of the exploratory experience itself, or the result of individual defenses which can be utilized for further exploration. Focusing on the kinesthetic experiences themselves may uncover additional information about the ways in which individuals view themselves in the world or protect themselves from experiencing distressful material.

An encounter with a positive or helpful guide image seemed to occur spontaneously at some point for all subjects. This encounter appeared to facilitate a shift in individuals' attitudes about themselves or about their imagery process. These positive guide images all had qualities of strength, wisdom, and protectiveness. Through their interactions with these images, the subjects were able to feel supported and to see their own potential ability to incorporate these positive qualities within themselves.

Taking a deep breath, focusing on, interacting verbally with, or looking directly into the face or eyes of an image also appeared to facilitate a shift. In some cases, this focusing seemed to increase individuals' awareness and understanding of meaning. In other instances, the interaction showed evidence of changing an attitude or perception of a situation or relationship in a positive direction, especially when the subject had some resistance.

All subjects were able to deeply engage in emotional exploration through the imagery process. This was most likely facilitated by the relaxation process, which allows individuals to move quickly into a deeper state. Although a similar level is attained during dreaming, the remembering and translating of dream images into waking language is often difficult and confusing. Because conscious contact is maintained during imagery work, it is easier to recall and explore the images produced. Although all subjects agreed that the imagery had been significant to them,

Singer (1981) noted that the imagery process allows the individual to identify major motivational patterns and orientation through self-reflection and the growing awareness of recurring imaginative themes. The results of the present study suggest that the guided imagery method is particularly useful in facilitating the disclosure and exploration of deeper emotional material that may not be uncovered for many sessions by verbal interaction alone. The experience of the imagery promoted emotional release or expression for all subjects, often surprising individuals with its intensity and ability to go directly to the feeling of the issue through release of tears, sadness, grief, guilt or anger.

The strength of the imagery process appears to rest partly in its ability to bypass intellectual blocking which many clients are liable to engage in, and to move quickly into deeper, underlying areas of concern. The ability to engage emotionally in the process, to bypass the analytical mind, to avoid getting tied up in language which might obscure or "screen" the feelings themselves was enhanced by the imagery process. This finding supports the work of other clinicians who have researched the imagery process. Singer (1981) noted that in the stream of consciousness there is a complex mix of memory material, abstract meaning

structures, and associated affective responses. Researchers like Achterberg (1985), Assagioli (1965), and Jung (1964) used the process to move individuals into deeper, pre-verbal areas of awareness. Others, like Crocker (1984), Forisha (1979), Horowitz (1970), Sheehan (1972) and Singer (1979) observed the capacity of the imagery to arouse intense affective reactions that were meaningfully related to individuals' issues.

Although all subjects agreed that the imagery had been significant to them, two remarked that they were unsure of the exact meaning of the imagery itself. Some subjects felt a reluctance to analyze the meaning of the images, leaving them in a double bind. If the images are verbally taken apart, it may destroy the person's ability to integrate their meaning. It seems to be more important to encourage the individual to "feel" the images and to spontaneously associate them with personal issues, rather than to try to extract precise meanings from them. Watkins (1976) stressed that the emphasis needs to be on the experience of the imagery itself, not on the interpretation of the imaginal material. The act of generating the images appears to facilitate the creation of meaning out of the experience itself in an organized pattern which comprehends and clarifies what might otherwise have been diffuse and unclear.

The individual imagery landscapes which subjects visually create can also be used to explore pertinent individual issues. Gerard (1974) indicated that a therapist is able to quickly gain an overview of the main dynamics and concerns of the individual by observing his/her imagery. He stated, "The effects of therapy...will be manifested in transformations in the landscape(s)...and in changes in the ways in which other themes are manifested in the...imagery" (p. 14). Jung

(1965) remarked that like a dream, the image can begin anywhere, but it appears that the initial "space" in which subjects set up their imagery makes a comment about the way they presently view their world. This assumption is supported by Shorr (1974) who indicated that a person's imagery is an indication of how she/he organizes her/his world.

One of the most valuable aspects of this process seems to be its capacity to bring subjects into a closer, more trusting connection with their own inner creative process. The imagery procedure appears to facilitate an acknowledgement of the valuable role of inner knowledge, understandings, feelings, and experiences. This inner life, as Progoff (1963) described it, contains innumerable potentialities for the expression of individual meaning, purpose, and growth. The image itself may be one of the most direct means to access, unfold, and express inner patterns of meaning for the individual. The acknowledgement of this inner world seems in turn to enhance the individual's belief that she is capable of finding her own answers, to increase her conscious awareness and her sense of control, first within the inner imagery experience itself, and then within her own life. In imaginal space, the individual is free to move differently than in her daily roles, so she is able to experience new possibilities or alternatives, which in turn influence the way she moves in daily life. Attitudes and perceptions about personal qualities (such as decision-making, inner strength and power, and the ability to care for and nurture oneself) and eventually the behavior which is manifested from these attitudes, may be enhanced during this process. As the sense of self becomes more positive, individuals appear to be willing to engage in the imagery process more deeply, which in turn results in increased awareness and personal meaning.

As the subjects realized that they could control the images, they began to practise creating positive interactions within their imagery, and to experience the fact that they were not merely victims of outside circumstances, but producer and director of their own creations. Achterberg (1985) and Houston's (1982) research supports this finding, suggesting that imagery-making appeals to the sense of taking charge and enhances the feeling of being in control. Thus it can be utilized to help an individual gain a sense of mastery within her own life.

Achterberg (1985) described this process as a growing fluidity between the "known" self and the "unknown" self, a breaking down of barriers during which the imagination is able to reach out beyond the intellect. This process seems to happen most readily when the individual is able to "actively" participate with the imagination. If the person remains an observer or refuses to become involved with the imagery, integration of the material into the conscious life may become difficult or confusing.

In order to facilitate this integration process, which Achterberg indicates will eventually manifest in attitude and behavior change, the individual needs to invite the images into her life, to work with them as much as possible by visualizing them, dialoguing with them, drawing them, seeing their reflections in her own life. The individual may never "be done" with the exploration of the image, for images, like personal awareness, have the capacity to always continue to multiply and develop further. That is why intellectual interpretation can never completely capture the meaning of an image. But experiencing and interacting with the images (both within and outside imagery sessions) appear to promote understanding and integration of their meaning within the individual's life.

The imagery experience seemed to be associated with the lives of the subjects in several ways. All subjects found connections between the imagery and real life events and relationships (past or present). Some subjects were able to see direct connections with people or events in their lives, while others described the "feeling" of the images and events or people in their lives to be similar. The generation of the images enabled subjects to explore the events or people they were reminded of more deeply. Many of the images related to childhood feelings (in many instances, pain, loss, and grief; in other cases, a sense of "wholeness") or actual childhood experiences, sometimes previously forgotten.

The transference of awarenesses discovered within the sessions to daily life has already been discussed. In addition, all subjects indicated that they intended to continue using the images or the information which the imagery had evoked on their own. It seems evident that the process was easily utilized by the subjects and, in fact, was able to stimulate them to continue using it because of the increased and gratifying experience of personal awareness it evoked. Subjects indicated that they were deeply affected by the imagery itself, and acknowledged its power to touch and move them. Perhaps because of this deep effect, the imagery continued over time to remain clear and strong for participants.

After the sessions ended, subjects continued to report an increase in their perception and comprehension of the meaning of the images. At the one month follow-up, all subjects reported continuing increased awareness and understanding of the process. The deep impact of this experience was expressed by the fact that some individuals maintained contact with the researcher of their own accord, phoning to discuss new awarenesses periodically. Combs (1982) noted that the

discovery of meaning comes about through a process of increasing differentiation of experience. It looks as though most inner process work, the perception and meaning of the images increases over time, especially if the individual continues working actively with them.

Implications For Counselling

It appears that the guided imagery process can be used effectively during therapy to uncover major issues or to break through a therapeutic impasse by moving beyond intellectual or analytical blocks. The process seems to be effective at any point in the therapeutic process, but particularly when deeper exploration of an issue is desired. Imagery may be used in counselling to disclose the client's situation by revealing her/his attitudes, strengths, and conflicts. It may also be valuable in enabling the client to contact and express his/her inner world in a creative, supportive way. In addition, it may facilitate an ongoing participation by the individual in expanding awareness and perception, which can ultimately result in more positive behavior patterns.

Caution is recommended in using imagery with schizophrenics or seriously depressed clients. The tendency of any client to have difficulty differentiating between reality and imagination can present an obvious problem in using these procedures. In such cases, additional skill and knowledge would be required.

The greatest integrative value appears to be gained from a combination of imagery generation and verbal processing of the extensive material which is often elicited. Imagery may be used in every session, but some clients might benefit from a single imagery session followed by a period of integration time during

which they work with particular images outside the sessions and discuss and experience the images in different ways within the sessions.

The imagery process may be used in greater or lesser detail depending on the therapeutic situation. For example, a simple imagery procedure may be utilized during a verbal session to introduce the client to the relaxation and imagery process, or to quickly deepen exploration: Ask the individual to close his/her eyes, take a few deep, relaxing breaths, and allow an image to come up; exploration is then directed by the client, with the therapist providing focusing cues. The technique of focusing on a body part, another person, or an emotion, and allowing an image to arise spontaneously can also be easily utilized in any therapeutic situation. For deeper, more extended explorations, the particular imagery exercise used in this study is recommended. The "Open the Door" technique seems to be valuable with clients who tend to consciously direct their imagery, because "opening the door" seems to facilitate more spontaneous imagery.

Limitations of the Present Study and Implications For Further Research

As a descriptive study, an important function of the present research was to provide a systematic investigation of the subjective experience of the guided imagery process for the participants. Follow-up studies executed at a one year interim would help establish the lasting effects of the process, as well as determine subjects' ability to continue using the images on their own.

Since the subjects were women, additional research which systematically explores the experience for male subjects would be valuable. A comparison between male and female subjects of the types of experiences, types of images,

ability to interact with the images, and ability to gain personal meaning from the images would contribute to the understanding of this process.

Subjects in the present study were all relatively well-functioning adults who were seeking to learn more about themselves. The present study does not permit generalization to individuals with specific psychological problems.

Because the guided imagery process was administered by the same person who analyzed the results, it was difficult to determine the effect of personal researcher bias on the process itself. It was also impossible to separate the impact of the guided imagery process from the effect of the interaction between subjects and researcher. Future research which compares the results of the process on subjects working with different therapists would help determine confounding effects and investigate more precisely the effects of different variables.

In this study, attempts were made to describe the process of the guided imagery procedure, but not necessarily to discover changes. Although quantitative studies of the effects of the guided imagery process would be valuable, because of the subjective nature of the experience they might be difficult to execute. An external criterion to measure changes in perceptions and attitudes toward self and others after using the guided imagery process would be necessary.

A more effective way to describe these changes might be gained by further descriptive studies. Four sessions is a modest amount of time to spend exploring in depth any personal process. A single case study approach which followed the imagery experiences and the changes it facilitated over an extended length of

therapy would contribute to an understanding of the procedure as a long-term tool. One area of investigation would be a systematic examination of a number of images over a period of time to discover the specific ways in which the meaning that is found through the images translates itself into the daily world of the subject.

Concluding Comments

The experience of five women using a relaxation and guided imagery procedure was examined in this study. Although four sessions represents a modest amount of exploratory time, it appears that this process helped to bring the subjects to a deeper exploration and awareness of themselves and their issues. The imagery seemed to tap into areas that were deeply meaningful to participants, and to relate either directly or indirectly to events, issues, and relationships within their lives. These results are consistent with the findings of other researchers who investigate the use of imagery and the guided imagery process.

The success of this process in tapping into meaningful areas of exploration appears to be due in part to the ability of the imagery procedure to bypass the analytical processes and take subjects into a deeper level of awareness where affective exploration is possible without the interference of the rational intellect. For this reason, the results indicate that this guided imagery procedure can be used effectively to generate emotional material, to explore self-awareness, and to facilitate the discovery of meaningful patterns of relating within the world.

REFERENCES

- Achterberg, J. (1985). Imagery in healing: Shamanism and modern medicine. Boston: Shambhala Publications.
- Allen, D. T. (1969). The crib scene: A psychodynamic exercise. Psychotherapy, 6, 206-208.
- Allport, G. W. (1965). Letters from Jenny. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc.
- Assagioli, R. (1965). Psychosynthesis: A collection of basic writings. New York: Penguin books.
- Bagley, M. T., & Hess, K. K. (1984). Two hundred ways of using imagery in the classroom. New York: Trillium Press.
- Bettelheim, B. (1977). The uses of enchantment. New York: Vintage.
- Bly, R. (Ed. and Trans.). (1980). News of the universe. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books.
- Cohen, J., & Twemlow, S. W. (1981). Psychological changes associated with guided imagery: A controlled study. Psychotherapy: Theory, Research and Practise, 18(2), 259-265.
- Combs, A. W. (1982). A personal approach to teaching: Beliefs that make a difference. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, Inc.
- Combs, A. W., & Avila, D. L. (1985). Helping relationships: Basic concepts for the helping professions (3rd ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon, Inc.

- Cottle, T. J., & Klineberg, S. L. (1974). The present of things future. New York: The Free Press.
- Crampton, M. (1968). The visual "Who am I?" method: An approach to experience of the self. Psychosynthesis Research Foundation, 23, 19-40.
- Crampton, M. (1978). Answers from the unconscious. Synthesis, 2(1), 140-151.
- Crocker, S. F. (1984). Gestalt and deep relaxation. Gestalt Journal, 7(2), 5-30.
- Desoille, R. (1938). Exploration de l'affectivite subconsciente par la methode du reve eveille. Paris: D'Autry.
- Desoille, R. (1945). The directed daydream. Diamond Springs, CA: Psychosynthesis International.
- Desoille, R. (1961). Theorie et pratique du reve eveille dirige. Geneva: Mont-Blanc.
- Doll, M. (1982). Beyond the window: Dreams and learning. Journal of Curriculum Theorizing, 4(1), 197-201.
- Durand, G. (1971). Exploration of the imaginal. Spring, 84-100.
- Egan, G. (1986). The skilled helper: A systematic approach to effective helping (3rd ed.). Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole Publishing Co.
- Evans, I. M., & Kamemoto, W. S. (1973). Reliability of the short form of Betts' Questionnaire Upon Mental Imagery: Replication. Psychological Reports, 33, 281-282.
- Forisha, B. L. (1979). The outside and the inside: Compartmentalization or integration? In A. A. Sheikh and J. T. Shaffer (Eds.), The potential of fantasy and imagination (pp. 1-9). New York: Brandon House, Inc.

- Foshay, A. W., & Morrisett, I. (Eds.). (1975). Beyond the scientific: A comprehensive view of consciousness. Boulder, CO: Social Science Education Consortium, Inc.
- Fretigny, R., & Virel, A. (1968). L'imagerie mentale. Geneva: Mont-Blanc.
- Fromm, E., & Shor, R. E. (Eds.). (1979). Hypnosis: Developments in research and new perspectives (2nd ed.). New York: Aldine.
- Gallegos, E. S. (1983). Animal imagery, the chakra system and psychotherapy. Journal of Transpersonal Psychology, 15(2), 126-135.
- Galyean, B. (1981). Guided imagery in education. Journal of Humanist Psychology, 21(4), 57-68.
- Galyean, B. (1983). Mind sight: Learning through imaging. Long Beach, CA: Center for Integrated Learning.
- Gendlin, E.T., & Olsen, L. (1970). The use of imagery in experiential focusing. Psychotherapy: Theory, Research and Practise, 7(4), 221-223.
- Gerard, R. (1963). Symbolic visualization: a method of psychosynthesis. Topics and Problems in Psychotherapy, 4, 70-80.
- Gerard, R. (1964). Psychosynthesis: A psychotherapy for the whole man. New York: Psychosynthesis Research Foundation.
- Gerard, R. (1974). Symbolic apperception and integral psychology. Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics, 24, 471-481.
- Good, C. (1972). Essentials of educational research (2nd ed.). New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts.
- Gunnison, H. (1982). Fantasy door approach: Merging the left-right hemispheres. Personnel and Guidance Journal, 60, 403-406.

- Hammer, M. (1967). The directed daydream technique. Psychotherapy, 4, 173-181.
- Hannah, B. (1981). Encounters with the soul: Active imagination as developed by C.G. Jung. Boston: Sigo Press.
- Hillman, J. (1977). An inquiry into image. Spring, 62-88.
- Hillman, J. (1978). Further notes on images. Spring, 152-182.
- Horowitz, M. J. (1970). Image formation and psychotherapy. New York: Jason Aronson, Inc.
- Houston, J. (1982). The possible human. Los Angeles: J.P. Tarcher, Inc.
- Johnsgard, K. W. (1969). Symbol confrontation in a recurrent nightmare. Psychotherapy, 6, 177-187.
- Juhasz, J. B. (1972). On the reliability of two measures of imagery. Perceptual and Motor Skills, 35, 874.
- Jung, C. G. (1960). The structure and dynamics of the psyche. Collected works, 8. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Jung, C. G. (1964). Man and his symbols. New York: Dell Publishing Company.
- Leuner, H. (1969). Guided affective imagery: A method of intensive psychotherapy. American Journal of Psychotherapy, 23, 4-22.
- Meichenbaum, D. (1978). Why does using imagery in psychotherapy lead to change? In J. L. Singer and K. S. Pope (Eds.), The power of human imagination (pp. 381-394). New York: Plenum Press.
- Mintz, E. E. (1979). Look in the box: A fantasy technique. Psychotherapy: Theory, Research and Practise, 16(2), 325-406.

- Progoff, I. (1963). The symbolic and the real. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company.
- Reyher, J. (1963). Free imagery: An uncovering procedure. Journal of Clinical Psychology, 19, 454-459.
- Reyher, J., & Smeltzer, W. (1968). Uncovering properties of visual imagery and verbal association. Journal of Abnormal Psychology, 73(3), 218-222.
- Richardson, A. (1969). Mental imagery. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Richardson, G. E. (1982). Educational imagery. Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas.
- Rico, U. (1979). The rainbow goblins. New York: Warner Books, Inc.
- Samuels, M., & Samuels, N. (1975). Seeing with the mind's eye: The history, techniques and uses of visualization. New York: Random House.
- Scheidler, T. (1972). Use of fantasy as a therapeutic agent in latency age groups. Psychotherapy, 9, 299-303.
- Schultz, J. H. & Luthe, W. (1969). Autogenic methods. New York: Grune & Stratton, Inc.
- Sheehan, P. W. (1967a). A shortened form of Betts' Questionnaire Upon Mental Imagery. Journal of Clinical Psychology, 23, 386-389.
- Sheehan, P. W. (1967b). Reliability of a short test of imagery. Perceptual and Motor Skills, 25, 744.
- Sheehan, P. W. (1972). The function and nature of imagery. New York: Academic Press.
- Sheikh, A. A., & Jordan, C. S. (1983). Clinical uses of mental imagery. In A. A. Sheikh (Ed.), Imagery: Current theory, research and application (pp. 391-435). New York: John Wiley & Sons.

- Sheikh, A. A., Richardson, P., & Moleski, L. M. (1979). Psychosomatics and mental imagery: A brief review. In A. A. Sheikh and J. T. Shaffer (Eds.), The potential of fantasy and imagination (pp. 105-118). New York: Brandon House, Inc.
- Shorr, J. E. (1972). Psycho-imagination therapy. New York: Intercontinental Medical Book Corp.
- Shorr, J. E. (1974). Psychotherapy through imagery. New York: Intercontinental Medical Book Corp.
- Shorr, J. E. (1983). Psychotherapy through imagery (2nd ed.). New York: Thieme-Stratton, Inc.
- Singer, J. L. (1974). Imagery and daydream methods in psychotherapy and behavior modification. New York: Academic Press.
- Singer, J. L. (1975). Navigating the stream of consciousness: Research in daydreaming and related inner experience. American Psychologist, 30, 737-738.
- Singer, J.L. (1979). Imagery and affect in psychotherapy: Elaborating private scripts and generating contexts. In A. A. Sheikh and J. T. Shaffer (Eds.), The potential of fantasy and imagination (pp. 27-39). New York: Brandon House, Inc.
- Singer, J. L. (1981). Towards the scientific study of imagination. Imagination, Cognition and Personality, 1(1), 5-28.
- Singer, J. L., & Pope, K. S. (1978). The use of imagery and fantasy techniques in psychotherapy. In J. L. Singer and K. S. Pope (Eds.), The power of human imagination (pp. 3-34). New York: Plenum Press.

- Snygg, D., & Combs, A. W. (1949). Individual behavior: A new frame of reference for psychology. New York: Harper & Brothers.
- Warnes, J. (1986). Famous blue raincoat. Toronto, Ontario: Attic Records Limited.
- Watkins, M. M. (1976). Waking dreams. New York: Gordon & Breach.
- White, K., Ashton, R., & Brown, R. (1977). Measurement of imagery vividness: Normative data and their relationship to sex, age, and modality differences. British Journal of Psychology, 68, 203-211.
- Woolsey, L. K. (1986). The critical incident technique: An innovative qualitative method of research. Canadian Journal of Counselling, 20(4), 242-254.

POSTER

APPENDIX A

ADVERTISEMENTS

ADVERTISEMENT FOR "MONDAY MAGAZINE" CLASSIFIED

GUIDED IMAGERY AND PERSONAL MEANING

A GRADUATE RESEARCH PROJECT

GUIDED IMAGERY AND PERSONAL MEANING

Grad student looking for women to take part in 4 guided imagery sessions as part of research project.

For further info., contact CALLY FARR 383-2577.

POSTER

APPENDIX B
 INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

GUIDED IMAGERY AND PERSONAL MEANING

The following information was given to interested subjects during the first individual meeting:

A GRADUATE RESEARCH PROJECT

"Thank you very much for your interest in my study. The purpose of this study is to look at the ways that people use the guided imagery process to find and explore the meanings of personal images, and how they relate to their life issues. I would be like for you. The study will consist of four sessions of approximately 1 hour which will be held in my home about one week apart. These sessions will be videotaped only so that I may view

-WOMEN ONLY THIS TIME PLEASE

-FOUR FREE INDIVIDUAL SESSIONS WITH EXPERIENCED GRADUATE

STUDENT USING GUIDED IMAGERY TO EXPLORE LIFE ISSUES

-STARTING IN EARLY JULY

-IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN TAKING PART IN THIS PROJECT OR WOULD

LIKE MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE PHONE

CALLY FARR

383-2577

Subjects will be chosen based on their experience with the guided imagery and personal exploration process, their ability to form clear images, ability to articulate, and their willingness to participate. If you are not chosen to participate, you will be notified in the next week. If you are chosen to participate, you will be notified in the next week to set a time for the sessions. However, you are under no obligation to do so, and may choose to withdraw from the study at that time or at any time during the study itself with no negative effects. You will be asked to sign a consent form which guarantees your right to withdraw from the study, and also guarantees complete anonymity for you during your participation. A protocol will be used for you in all data and no information will be used which could disclose your identity or that of anyone you mention in these sessions.

Are there any questions? (Questions will be answered).

In order to determine if your participation would be beneficial for both you and me, I would like you to fill out these two questionnaires. The first is a Vividness of Imagery Questionnaire which will help me get an idea of your ease with the imagery process. The second is a questionnaire to give me vital information about you, as well as a sense of your previous experiences with this process, your interests, and concerns.

APPENDIX B INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

The following information was given to interested subjects during the first individual meeting:

"Thank you very much for your interest in my study. The purpose of this study is to look at the ways that people use the guided imagery process to find and explore the meaning of personal images, and how they relate to their life issues. I am interested in what this experience would be like for you. The study will consist of four sessions of approximately 1 hour which will be held in my home about one week apart. These sessions will be video-taped only so that I may view them to monitor the process. No one else will see these tapes, and they will be erased after the study is concluded. During the sessions I will lead you in a relaxation and guided imagery session which may bring up personal images for you. We will explore any images that come up by using reflections and open questions. No interpretations of your images will be made by me; you may interpret and explore them as deeply as you wish. During this time I will ask you to keep a journal of your experiences and feelings, and to make drawings or find other media that relate to the images you discover. At the end of the four sessions, we will meet for an additional hour so that I can ask you certain interview questions in order to find out what the experience was like for you. This session will be audio-taped. We will meet once more after this so that I can recheck my interpretations of your responses to make sure they are clear and true. At this time you can add to your responses if you wish. After one month, I will contact you for an update of your impressions.

Subjects will be chosen based on their experience with the guided imagery and personal exploration process, their ability to form clear images, ability to articulate, and their willingness to participate. If you are not chosen to participate, you will be notified in the next week. If you are chosen to participate, you will be notified in the next week to set a time for the sessions. However, you are under no obligation to do so, and may choose to withdraw from the study at that time or at any time during the study itself with no negative effects. You will be asked to sign a consent form which guarantees your right to withdraw from the study, and also guarantees complete anonymity for you during your participation. A pseudonym will be used for you in all data and no information will be used which could disclose your identity or that of anyone you mention in these sessions.

Are there any questions? (Questions will be answered).

In order to determine if your participation would be beneficial for both you and me, I would like you to fill out these two questionnaires. The first is a Vividness of Imagery Questionnaire which will help me get an idea of your ease with the imagery process. The second is designed to give me vital information about you, as well as a sense of your practical experience with this process, your interests, and concerns (if any) you may have."

Instructions for doing this Questionnaire

The aim of this test is to determine the vividness of your imagery. The items of the test will bring certain images to your mind. You are to rate the vividness of each image by reference to the accompanying rating scale which is shown at the bottom of the page. For example, if your image is "vague and dim" you give it a rating of 5. Record your answer in the brackets provided after each item by writing the appropriate number. Before you turn to the items on the next page, familiarize yourself with the different categories on the rating scale. Throughout the questionnaire, refer to the rating scale when judging the vividness of each image. A copy of the rating scale will be available for easy reference in front of you. Please do not turn to the next page until you have completed the items on the page you are doing, and do not turn back to check on other items you have done. Complete each page before moving on to the next page. Try to answer each item separately independent of how you may have answered other items.

RATING SCALE

The image aroused by an item of this questionnaire may be	
Perfectly clear and as vivid as the actual experience	Rating 1
Very clear and comparable in vividness to the actual experience	Rating 2
Moderately clear and vivid	Rating 3
Not clear or vivid, but recognizable	Rating 4
Vague and dim	Rating 5
So vague and dim as to be hardly discernible	Rating 6
No image present at all, you only "know" that you are thinking of the object	Rating 7

An example of an item on the test would be one which asked you to consider an image which comes to your mind's eye of a red apple. If your visual image was "moderately clear and vivid" you would check the rating scale and mark "3" in the brackets as follows:

ITEM	RATING
3. A red apple	(3)

APPENDIX C

BETTS' QMI VIVIDNESS OF IMAGERY SCALE

Instructions for doing this Questionnaire

The aim of this test is to determine the vividness of your imagery. The items of the test will bring certain images to your mind. You are to rate the vividness of each image by reference to the accompanying rating scale which is shown at the bottom of the page. For example, if your image is "vague and dim" you give it a rating of 5. Record your answer in the brackets provided after each item by writing the appropriate number. Before you turn to the items on the next page, familiarize yourself with the different categories on the rating scale. Throughout the questionnaire, refer to the rating scale when judging the vividness of each image. A copy of the rating scale will be available for easy reference in front of you. Please do not turn to the next page until you have completed the items on the page you are doing, and do not turn back to check on other items you have done. Complete each page before moving on to the next page. Try to answer each item separately independent of how you may have answered other items.

RATING SCALE

The image aroused by an item of this questionnaire may be:	
Perfectly clear and as vivid as the actual experience	Rating 1
Very clear and comparable in vividness to the actual experience	Rating 2
Moderately clear and vivid	Rating 3
Not clear or vivid, but recognizable	Rating 4
Vague and dim	Rating 5
So vague and dim as to be hardly discernible	Rating 6
No image present at all, you only "know" that you are thinking of the object	Rating 7

An example of an item on the test would be one which asked you to consider an image which comes to your mind's eye of a red apple. If your visual image was "moderately clear and vivid" you would check the rating scale and mark "3" in the brackets as follows:

ITEM	RATING
5. A red apple	(3)

Now turn to the next page when you are ready and begin.

2. Characteristic poses of head, body, etc.

3. The carriage, length of step, etc. in walking

4. The different colors in some familiar clothing

Think of seeing the following, considering carefully the picture which comes before your mind's eye, and classify the image suggested by the following question as indicated by the degrees of clearness and vividness specified on the Rating Scale.

5. The sun as it is sinking below the horizon

Think of each of the following sounds, considering carefully the image which comes to your mind's ear, and classify the images suggested by each of the following questions as indicated by the degrees of clearness and vividness specified on the Rating Scale.

6. The whistle of a locomotive

7. The hum of an automobile

8. The mewling of a cat

9. The sound of a stream

10. The clapping of hands in applause

Think of feeling or touching each of the following, and rate the image which comes to your mind's touch, and classify the images suggested by each of the questions as indicated by the degrees of clearness and vividness specified on the Rating Scale.

11. Sand

12. Linen

13. Fur

14. The slick of a pin

15. The warmth of a tepid bath

Think of performing each of the following acts, considering carefully the image which comes to your mind's body and classify the images suggested as indicated by the degrees of clearness and vividness specified on the Rating Scale.

16. Reaching upwards

17. Springing across a curb

18. Drawing a circle on paper

19. Reaching up to a high shelf

20. Kicking something out of your way

Think of some relative or friend whom you frequently see, considering carefully the picture that arises before your mind's eye. Classify the images suggested by each of the following questions as indicated by the degrees of clearness and vividness specified on the Rating Scale.

ITEM	RATING
1. The exact contour of face, head, shoulders and body	()
2. Characteristic poses of head, body, etc.	()
3. The carriage, length of step, etc. in walking	()
4. The different colors in some familiar clothing	()

Think of seeing the following, considering carefully the picture which comes before your mind's eye, and classify the image suggested by the following question as indicated by the degrees of clearness and vividness specified on the Rating Scale.

- | | |
|---|-----|
| 5. The sun as it is sinking below the horizon | () |
|---|-----|

Think of each of the following sounds, considering carefully the image which comes to your mind's ear, and classify the images suggested by each of the following questions as indicated by the degrees of clearness and vividness specified on the Rating Scale.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----|
| 6. The whistle of a locomotive | () |
| 7. The honk of an automobile | () |
| 8. The mewing of a cat | () |
| 9. The sound of a stream | () |
| 10. The clapping of hands in applause | () |

Think of feeling or touching each of the following, and rate the image which comes to your mind's touch, and classify the images suggested by each of the questions as indicated by the degrees of clearness and vividness specified on the Rating Scale.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----|
| 11. Sand | () |
| 12. Linen | () |
| 13. Fur | () |
| 14. The prick of a pin | () |
| 15. The warmth of a tepid bath | () |

Think of performing each of the following acts, considering carefully the image which comes to your mind's body and classify the images suggested as indicated by the degrees of clearness and vividness specified on the Rating Scale.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----|
| 16. Running upstairs | () |
| 17. Springing across a curb | () |
| 18. Drawing a circle on paper | () |
| 19. Reaching up to a high shelf | () |
| 20. Kicking something out of your way | () |

Think of tasting each of the following, considering carefully the image which comes to your mind's mouth, and classify the images suggested as indicated by the degrees of clearness and vividness specified on the Rating Scale.

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----|
| 21. Salt | () |
| 22. Granulated (white) sugar | () |
| 23. Oranges | () |
| 24. Jelly | () |
| 25. Your favorite soup | () |

Think of smelling each of the following, considering carefully the image which comes to your mind's nose, and classify the images suggested as indicated by the degrees of clearness and vividness specified on the Rating Scale.

- | | |
|----------------------------|-----|
| 26. An ill-ventilated room | () |
| 27. Cooking cabbage | () |
| 28. Roast beef | () |
| 29. Fresh paint | () |
| 30. New leather | () |

Think of each of the following sensations, considering carefully the image which comes before your mind, and classify the images suggested as indicated by the degrees of clearness and vividness specified on the Rating Scale.

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-----|
| 31. Fatigue | () |
| 32. Hunger | () |
| 33. A sore throat | () |
| 34. Drowsiness | () |
| 35. Fullness after a big meal | () |

4. What do you consider to be your most important "life issues" (problems, interests, issues you wish to work with) at this time?
-

APPENDIX D

SUBJECT PROFILE

5. Are you willing to explore this material in greater depth?
6. Are you willing to have these sessions video-taped? _____
7. Do you feel comfortable knowing some personal issues may be brought up these sessions and possibly left unresolved at the end of our four sessions?
- NAME _____ DATE _____
- ADDRESS _____ PHONE _____
- OCCUPATION _____ AGE _____
- MARITAL STATUS _____ CHILDREN _____

Please answer the following questions in the space provided.

1. Please specify your experience, if any, with the following:
- Guided imagery, guided fantasy, or visualization _____

 - Images, symbols _____

2. How would you rate your own vividness of imagery:
- Very vivid _____
 - Average _____
 - Not very vivid _____
3. Have you taken part in any personal awareness groups, individual growth work, or personal therapy? _____

Please explain. _____

4. What do you consider to be your most important "life issues" (problems, interests, issues you wish to work with) at this time?

5. Are you willing to explore this issue(s) in greater depth?

6. Are you willing to have these sessions video-taped? _____
7. Do you feel comfortable knowing some personal issues may be brought up by these sessions and possibly left unresolved at the end of our four sessions?

8. What are your reasons for wanting to be part of this study?

9. Do you have any reservations about taking part in this study?
If so, please explain. _____

10. Do you have any questions? _____

11. Are you available for the next four weeks? _____
What is the best time(s) for you to meet? _____

APPENDIX E

POST-SESSION INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Tell me as much as you can about the process of taking part in these guided imagery sessions? What was it like for you?
2. What differences or changes (if any) did you notice in your experiences during the first, second, third, and fourth sessions?
3. In what ways did this guided imagery process help you to locate specific and/or meaningful images? (Examples?)
4. How would you say that this process was different from other types of sessions (i.e., what made it more or less valuable?)
5. What surprised you most?
6. What was the most positive aspect of this experience? The most difficult aspect?
7. What difficulties did you experience during this process?
8. In what ways was this experience valuable for you?
9. In what ways did the images you discovered have particular personal meaning for you? (Examples?)
10. In what ways did these sessions enable you to become clearer about your feelings around specific issues or concerns in your life? (Examples?)

11. In what ways did these sessions enable you to explore new alternatives about this issue (or issues)?

12. How were these sessions of value to you in gaining awareness about yourself or your life?

13. Was your initial issue as stated in the first questionnaire addressed during this process?

14. What relationship (if any) do you see between these images and your personal life (relationships, experiences, issues, etc.)?

15. Would you like to add anything else?

I understand that my involvement in this study will be kept in strictest confidence. In order to ensure this, resulting transcripts will not include any information that will reveal my identity (such as name, address, physical description, etc.) nor that of any of my relatives or friends.

I understand that I will be given a full description of the purpose of the study as well as opportunities to discuss any questions or concerns I have with the researcher.

I am aware that my participation in this study is strictly voluntary and that I may withdraw from the study at any time without any unfavorable consequences.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX F

RELAXATION CONSENT FORM GUIDED IMAGERY SCRIPT

I, _____, consent to being part of this study, which explores guided imagery and personal images.

I am aware that I will take part in four individual guided imagery sessions in which I may access personal images and explore their relationship to my own life situations, and that these sessions will be video-taped. I am also aware that at the end of these sessions I will be asked certain questions about my subjective experience during this study by means of an in-depth audio-taped interview with the researcher.

I understand that my involvement in this study will be kept in strictest confidence. In order to ensure this, resulting transcripts will not include any information that will reveal my identity (such as name, address, physical description, etc.) nor that of any of my relatives or friends.

I understand that I will be given a full description of the purpose of the study as well as opportunities to discuss any questions or concerns I have with the researcher.

I am aware that my participation in this study is strictly voluntary and that I may withdraw from the study at any time without any unfavorable consequences.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX G

RELAXATION AND GUIDED IMAGERY SCRIPT

"Close your eyes and begin to allow your body to relax. Feel your body lying on the floor, and become aware of any places of tension. Feel your body relaxing more and more with each breath (pause). As you exhale, feel your whole body relaxing more with each exhalation (pause). Letting any tension go...Letting go more and more (pause). Now become aware of your feet and toes, and as you breathe out, allow any tension to leave your feet and toes with your breath, feel your feet and toes becoming warm and heavy and relaxed (pause). Now breathe out any tension in your ankles and calves, feel them becoming relaxed as you breathe out. Allow any tension to let go with your breath (pause). (Relaxation continues up the body with knees, thighs, pelvis, buttocks, sides, back, abdomen, chest, shoulders, arms, hands, fingers, neck and throat, head, and face.) Letting your thoughts go with your breath, letting your mind empty (pause). You are now very relaxed. Very very deeply relaxed (pause).

"Now imagine that you are on a forest path. As you walk along it, notice everything around you--vegetation, shapes, colors, sounds, smells, the ground, the sky, the temperature. Notice everything around you and how you feel (pause). Feel your feet on the ground as you begin to walk along this path, walking down the path, noticing everything (pause). Now up ahead you see a hill. In the side of

the hill is a cave-like opening, and you notice its shape and size and color. Approach this opening and when you are ready, walk through it, noticing everything around you, what it's like and how you feel you (pause). Up ahead you see a door. Look at it carefully to see its color, shape, style, size, texture (pause). Notice the handle if there is one. In a few moments I will ask you to open this door and to walk through it and perhaps to discover an image, an image which may be important to you (pause). Now when you are ready, open the door and see what you find there. And begin to describe what you see to me."

At the end of the guided imagery exploration, the researcher informs the subject that it is almost time to go back to the door, and checks to see if there is anything she wants to do before she returns. After the subject has returned to the door, the researcher guides her back through the cave-like area, the hill, and the forest path, until she is back at the point from which the guided imagery began.

The researcher continues: "When you are ready, take three deep breaths (pause). Begin to become aware of your body in the room. Allow your breaths to bring you back into an awareness of the room (pause). Wiggle your feet and hands, move your body, and begin to be aware of my voice (pause). When you are ready, open your eyes."

A short debriefing time follows the exercise. Crocker (1984) found that it is important to process the material from sessions in an ordinary state of awareness. During the debriefing session, the subject has an opportunity to discuss any concerns or problems, to ask any questions, and to discuss the images or the experience in order to facilitate the integration process.

Describing the scene in great detail:

(Crocker, 1984; Leuner, 1979).

For example, "Tell me what the mountain is like."

APPENDIX H

Associating the imagery:

FOCUSING RESPONSES

(Crocker, 1984; Leuner, 1979).

Allows the subject the free and spontaneous development of images to continue through to an understanding.

Following is a list of focusing responses and their research sources. These responses were used during the sessions to facilitate interaction with and exploration of the images.

For example, "Tell me what you are aware of," "What is the feeling behind

Relaxation exercises:

Achterberg, 1985; Bagley & Hess, 1984; Crocker, 1984; Galyean, 1983;

Gerard, 1974; Leuner, 1979.

Specific guided imagery exercise:

(The path, the hill, a tunnel through the hill).

(Gunnison, 1982; Leuner, 1979).

Leuner states that the dark forest or the dark opening of a cave tend to bring up deep, unconscious material.

Specific door imagery:

(Assagioli, 1965; Gerard, 1974; Gunnison, 1982).

Gunnison states: "Behind the door...the client encounters that portion of the world that has frustrated and inhibited growth" (p. 403). Mintz (1979) uses a similar technique called "Look in the Box."

Approaching the image, looking into an image's face/eyes

(Crocker, 1984; Leuner, 1979).

Describing the scene in great detail:

(Crocker, 1984; Leuner, 1969).

For example; "Tell me what the mountain is like."

Associating the imagery:

(Crocker, 1984; Leuner, 1979).

Allows the subject the free and spontaneous development of images to continue through to an understanding.

Association of images and feelings:

(Crampton, 1978; Crocker, 1984; Leuner, 1979; Shorr, 1974).

For example: "Tell me what you are aware of." "What is the feeling behind that image?" "What one word would describe that image?" "What is the specific meaning of that image to you?"

Identification with an image:

(Crampton, 1978; Crocker, 1984; Gallegos, 1983; Gerard, 1974).

Speaking from the viewpoint of the image in order to see its relationship to the subject. For example: "Imagine that you are that person." "If you were the storm, what would you say?" "How would you feel if you were the limitless space?" "Be the garden and see how that feels."

Dialoguing with an image:

(Crampton, 1978; Crocker, 1984; Gallegos, 1983; Gerard, 1974; Jung, 1960):

Active interaction with an image, giving a voice to an image, even if inanimate. For example: "What would you say to her?" "What would the image say?"

Approaching an image, looking into an image's face/eyes:

(Crocker, 1984; Leuner, 1979).

For example: "Look closely at her. Can you see her face? Look into her eyes. What do you feel?"

Linking imagery with past or present events or situations:

(Crampton, 1978; Leuner, 1979).

The link is the shared feeling-tone. For example: "Does that remind you of anything/anyone?" "Have you seen/felt that before?" "How does that apply to your life?"

Asking for a message:

(Gallegos, 1983; Leuner, 1979).

Using a (positive) image as a guide. For example: "Ask him if he has a message for you."

Confronting frightening images:

(Leuner, 1979).

Holding ground, speaking to the image, staring at the image, describing the image in detail will often lead to its transformation into a benign image.

Intensifying the experience:

(Crocker, 1984; Leuner, 1969).

For example: "What are you doing in this house?" "What are you feeling right now?"

Directive responses:

(Crocker, 1984).

If stuck, more directive information can be suggested. For example: "I want you to listen and see if you hear anything." "Walk over to the stairs and see what happens."

APPENDIX I

PATRICIA: VISUAL REPRESENTATIONS OF THE IMAGERY



Mother Holding Child (Drawing by Patricia)



The Bear in the Cave (Drawing by Patricia)

APPENDIX J

DONNA: VISUAL REPRESENTATIONS OF THE IMAGERY



Roots (Three Dimensional Applique by Donna)



The Ride on the Unicorn (Print from "The Rainbow Goblins" by Ulde Rico)



The Path in the Forest (Print of "Forest, B.C.")

On the Coast (by Betty Carr)

APPENDIX K

SARAH: VISUAL REPRESENTATIONS OF THE IMAGERY



The Path in the Forest (Print of "Forest, B.C.")

Oil on Canvas, by Emily Carr)

VITA

Surname: Farr Given Names: Carolyn May

Place of Birth: Jersey City, New Jersey Date of Birth: Oct. 22, 1946

Educational Institutions Attended, with Dates of Entering and Leaving:

<u>Boston University</u>	<u>1964</u>	to	<u>1968</u>
	<u>Summer</u>		
<u>Salem State Teacher's College</u>	<u>1968</u>	to	<u> </u>
<u>University of Victoria</u>	<u>1984</u>	to	<u>1985</u>
<u>University of Victoria</u>	<u>1985</u>	to	<u>1988</u>

Degrees Awarded, with Dates and Names of Institutions:

<u>B.A. (cum laude)</u>	<u>1968</u>	<u>Boston University</u>
<u>Teacher Training Certificate</u>	<u>1968</u>	<u>Salem State Teacher's College</u>
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

Awards:

President's Scholarship for Part-time Undergraduate Students

Soroptimist Foundation of Canada Grant

PARTIAL COPYRIGHT LICENSE

I hereby grant the right to lend my thesis (the title of which is shown below) to users of the University of Victoria Library, and to make single copies only for such users or in response to a request from the Library of any other university, or similar institution, on its behalf or for one of its users. I further agree that permission for extensive copying of this thesis for scholarly purposes may be granted by me or a member of the University designated by me. It is understood that copying or publication of this thesis for financial gain shall not be allowed without written permission.

Title of Thesis:

**USING A MODIFIED RELATIONSHIP ENHANCEMENT METHOD
TO INCREASE CONSENSUS PROMOTING INTERACTION IN MARRIAGES**

Author: _____

Carolyn May Farr

April, 1988
