

THE EXPERIENCE OF CHANGING TO A NEW WORLD VIEW:

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE EMERGENT PARADIGM SHIFT

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ABSTRACT

What is the experience of changing to a new world view? This question provided the focus for dialogal interviews with five men and five women co-researchers in a study exploring the phenomenon identified in the literature as the paradigm shift (Capra, 1982; Ferguson, 1980; Walsh & Vaughan, 1980). This change of consciousness is a move away from a mentality of hierarchy and separation, to a view of humanity as a part of the interdependent web of mind and nature. The aim of this inquiry was to uncover the structure of the process involved in the change to this new consciousness.


New paradigm approaches to research (Reason & Rowan, 1981), including phenomenological and hermeneutical principles, guided the study. Narrative verbatim accounts of the participants' experiences comprise the body of the dissertation. The researcher has incorporated autobiographical material, including her history, values, presuppositions and self awareness, to provide a context for the interpretation. Seven themes, embodied in each narrative, describe the essence of the phenomenon. Literature, especially from transpersonal psychology, frames a conceptual discussion of the meaning of these elements.


Consciousness change was described by participants as evolutionary, involving separation from one's routine patterns of awareness, transcendence of ordinary patterns and a mindful willing participation in the process. The validation of one's new perceptions was critical to integration of the change, as fears of being labelled "crazy" or


"wrong" were an ongoing pull to the old paradigm. A new sensibility was described in spiritual terms, portraying a universe of pattern and meaning. This was expressed as a guidance beyond the self, recognized through experiences of synchronicity and a sense of destiny, and prompting one to make a commitment to healing self, others and/or the earth. Change, for these participants, is an individuation process set in the framework of the emerging paradigm, which embraces the integration of personal destiny with a sense of interdependent responsibility for all life.


Guides for educators and counsellors are suggested, and include the call for the promotion of an expanded framework of human nature; one which encompasses recent discoveries in all fields and recognizes the spiritual as integral to nature.


Examiners?



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To Harry, my companion all along the way, who through his unconditional love has supported me in making this project a labor of love; and to Mike and Ann who through their childlike sense of wonder have always inspired me to treasure an open mind.

What separates beings
in the universe is not
space but consciousness.
- W. I. Thompson

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCING THE STUDY

We are called to a task greater than that demanded of any generation in human history: to preserve our planet and our species. In accepting this challenge we are also called to recognize, develop, and redirect the awesome power of our minds, and to consciously choose and create our evolution (Walsh, 1984, p. 93).

This study is an exploration of the lived-experience of persons who are among those choosing to accept this challenge. The change occurring in Western consciousness as a response to this call for creative evolution has been defined in the literature as the paradigm shift (Capra, 1982; Ferguson, 1980; Walsh & Vaughan, 1980a), a radical transformation in perspective, from the view of humans as separate from and dominant over nature, to an ecological world view which recognizes our embeddedness in nature. The aim of this inquiry is to identify and describe the underlying structure of the process involved in the phenomenon of this consciousness change.

A declaration heralding the need for this shift in consciousness is being expressed by a growing number of writers in a common theme: that humanity is at a turning point in history, an unprecedented time in terms of the magnitude of the crises facing us in all facets of our existence (e.g., Berman, 1981; Capra, 1982; Deshusses, 1982; Drengson, 1983; Rifkin, 1985; Robertson, 1978; Roszak, 1978). The central thesis of these scholars is that all contemporary crises, from the

environmental degradation that threatens our life support systems, to material and spiritual poverty, disease and social breakdown, are aspects of a more fundamental crisis in the way in which we have viewed the world and ourselves. These writers are unanimous in calling for a new global consciousness that can move us away from our fragmented picture of reality toward a world ethic based on a recognition of the interrelatedness of all life.

Out of this need, along with the discoveries and understandings occurring in all fields of study, the new holistic paradigm of reality is emerging. Kuhn (1962) identified a paradigm as a constructed world of perception and conception. Paradigms are assumptions about reality that provide the foundation for our reasoning, feelings, values and actions. A paradigm shift, then, is a change in consciousness - a change in one's capacity to be aware, to pay attention. The evolution of our contemporary paradigm shift is a response not only to the obvious planetary crises, but is also an answer to the call from within ourselves to more fully develop our potentials as human beings. As McWaters (1982) wrote: "what we wish for ourselves turns out to be exactly what is needed for the whole" (p. 9). Themes of this new paradigm, therefore, encompass notions of participation, cooperation and interdependence. Weiss (1985) has expressed the meaning of the new paradigm thus:

This newly emerging paradigm could help us to perceive reality in a more comprehensive way and to deal with reality in a more enlightened pattern, cooperating with nature

rather than trying to dominate and exploit it, (and leading) us to value again man as a human being with tremendous psychological and spiritual growth potentials (pp. 204-205).

This study was conceived out of my own view that the paradigm shift arising in the culture provides humanity with a vital hope for healing the crises of our era. Understanding more of the nature of this change of mind, and consequent change of being, I believed, could provide one with information that could be useful in developing ways of guiding others toward such a shift in consciousness.

DESCRIBING THE NEW PARADIGM

The paradigm which has dominated Western consciousness for the last few hundred years has been marked by its focus on scientific materialism, a mechanistic view of the world that has led to separations of humans from nature, of spirit from matter and of theory from lived-experience. With this dualistic mentality, an objective, hierarchical way of relating to nature, and to each other, has engendered the eminence of individualism, competition and separate egos. Missing from this cultural paradigm, then, have been themes of spiritual immanence, "feminine" relatedness, the context of experience and a developmental understanding of life processes.

An orientation to process is at the heart of the shift to a new paradigm; it is a move from a substantive way of thinking to a relational way of apprehending the nature of the world. This consciousness is one that embraces intuitive understanding as a

complement to rationality. The inclusion of masculine and feminine energies, spiritual immanence and transcendence and subjective and objective ways of knowing marks the "both/and" nature of the new paradigm. Inherent in this process paradigm is a view of life as open-ended and ever-evolving; relating to life in this paradigm involves an empathetic, celebrative attitude of joining with the rhythms of change.

Some of the conceptions which are embedded in the new paradigm were initiated through discoveries in quantum physics. A central concept of this new physics is a view of the universe as a cosmic web of dynamic relationships (Capra, 1982), a network of events (rather than objects), in which no part can be separated from the whole. Themes of unity, dynamism, interpenetration and indivisibility describe this relational model of the world.

One key revelation of quantum theory, that the consciousness of the observer changes that which is being observed, is leading to a new assumption that consciousness is an integral feature of everything in the universe (Capra, 1982; Jones, 1982; Raschke, 1982). Modern physics' message, according to Jones, is:

there is no ultimate material reality and...whatever it is we are describing, the human mind cannot be parted from it (p. 208).

Some theorists and researchers are suggesting that ultimate reality is nothing but consciousness (Grof, 1981; Raschke).

Many conceptions of this new paradigm of reality are also being gleaned from studies on consciousness, which have increasingly

included explorations into "paranormal" and "supranormal" realms of experience. From such inquiries, an understanding is developing that behind the manifest world - the world of separate objects and beings - lies another dimension of existence. This domain has been referred to by various terms: the collective unconscious (Jung, 1959); the clairvoyant or transpsychic (LeShan, 1975); the trans-individual (Ring, 1976); the implicate order (Bohm, 1980); and, in metaphysical traditions, the spiritual. Awareness of this realm, which reveals the unity of life, has been interpenetrating the ordinary consciousness of increasing numbers of people via purposeful altered states of consciousness, incidents of synchronicity and intuitive knowing, or spontaneous transcendental experiences, such as the near-death phenomenon described by Moody (1975), Ring (1980; 1984), Sabom (1982) and Grey (1985).

Changing conceptualizations about reality are also arising with the new myths that are becoming manifest in our culture. Larsen (1976) outlined five mythogenic patterns of integration and renewal that are becoming "foci of images, feelings and energies" in our time (pp. 161-229):

- 1) "Whole earth - whole body": themes of interdependence and interrelationship;
- 2) "Dialogue": theme of I-thou relating with all beings and nature;
- 3) "The Myth of the Crippled Tyrant": theme of the egoic power urge that has outlived its usefulness;

- 4) "The Mythic Androgyne": theme of emergent feminist consciousness to balance masculine energy; and
- 5) "The Sorcerer's Apprentice": theme of transpersonal ventures - experiences of transcendence, bidden and unbidden.

These myths embody the key themes of relatedness, sharing and self-empowerment that are integral to the emerging paradigm of reality.

MANIFESTATIONS OF THE PARADIGM SHIFT

One of the principal manifestations of the growth in the phenomenon of the contemporary paradigm shift is the increasing number of publications addressing the issue. Works on this subject are emerging in all fields, marking this phenomenon as an interdisciplinary one. The following table (Table 1) is an illustration of the diversity of fields in which scholars are exploring new perceptions and conceptualizations, along with ways to apply their evolving understandings. This table is not intended as an exhaustive survey of the literature in this field, but is rather a selective sample of some core works that have formed the background for this study, ordered sequentially by year of publication. Categorizing these works was difficult, since often the authors were writing from an interdisciplinary perspective. In most cases, the field identified relates to the author's background, except when the work is clearly outside of that area of study.

TABLE 1

CONTEMPORARY WORKS ON THE PARADIGM SHIFT

Author	Field of Study
Castaneda (1972) Holbrook (1981)	<u>Cultural anthropology</u>
Myers (1985)	<u>Education</u>
	<u>History:</u>
Argüelles (1984)	Art
Roszak (1975; 1978)	Cultural
Thompson (1978)	
Thompson (1973)	Philosophy
Berman (1981)	
Houston (1980)	Psychological
Ferguson (1980)	Social
Bookchin (1980)	
Deshusses (1982)	<u>Human ecology</u>
Pearce (1974)	<u>Humanities</u>
Deloria (1973; 1979)	
Highwater (1981)	<u>Indians of North America</u>
Joy (1979)	
Moss (1981)	<u>Medicine</u>
Dossey (1982)	
Siegel (1986)	
Larsen (1976)	<u>Mythology</u>
Krieger (1979)	<u>Nursing</u>
Needleman (1965; 1982)	
Barrett (1979; 1986)	<u>Philosophy</u>
Courtois (1981)	
Skolimowski (1981; 1984)	
Drengson (1983)	
Grosso (1985)	

(TABLE 1, continued)

Author	Field of Study	
Capra (1975)	<u>Physics</u>	
Zukav (1979)		
Talbot (1980)		
Bohm (1980)		
Jones (1982)		
Fromm (1976)	<u>Psychoanalysis</u>	
Grof (1976; 1981; 1983)	<u>Psychiatry</u>	
	<u>Psychology:</u>	
Rogers (1980)	Humanistic	
Leonard (1972; 1978)	Social	
Slater (1974)		
Walsh (1984)		
LeShan (1975)	Transpersonal	
Walsh & Vaughan (Eds.) (1980a)		
Samples (1976; 1981)		
Wilber (1981; 1983)		
McWaters (1982)		
Singer (1983)		
Ring (1984)		
Vaughan (1985)		
		<u>Religion:</u>
Raschke (1982)		Philosophy
Smith (1982)		
Fox (1983)	Spirituality	
	<u>Science:</u>	
Slater (1977)	Natural	
Sheldrake (1981)		
Salk (1983)		
Watson (1986)		
Schumacher (1977)		
Bateson (1979)	Philosophy	
Capra (1982)		
Russell (1983)		
Hayward (1984)		

(TABLE 1, continued)

Author	Field of Study
Rifkin (1985b)	<u>Social</u>
Satin (1976)	<u>Social/Political</u>
Schumacher (1973) Robertson (1978) Weiss (1985)	<u>Socio-economics</u>
Catton & Dunlap (1980)	<u>Sociology</u>
Christ (1980) Spretnak (Ed.) (1982) Starhawk (1982)	<u>Women's Spirituality</u>

Ferguson (1980) and Rifkin (1985) have both called those people involved in proposing and developing new ways of thinking about ourselves and the world "conspirators". Social movements of the 1960s and the widespread interest in understanding more of human consciousness in the 1970s have both led to what Ferguson defined as an "historical synthesis: social transformation resulting from personal transformation - change from the inside out" (p. 18). Through a large number of personal meetings and a written survey sent to over 200 people, she corroborated that the paradigm shift was a phenomenon involving individuals in North America from all walks of life, and was manifesting in a growing number of groups and networks as resources for change (pp. 418-428). Rifkin, who identified the same roots of the emerging change in consciousness, perceived the phenomenon as a movement centered in a scattered group of individuals in the intellec-

tual community:

They are a new generation of scholars...Their effort is truly monumental and without parallel; to redirect the very consciousness of the human species, to chart a fundamental new path for the human mind (1985b, pp. 81-82).

In Person/Planet, Roszak (1978) identified three phenomena that are contributing to changes in our perceptions of social reality and of the self: the situational network (various liberation movements and groups); the new therapies (expanding the view of human possibilities); and an increase in the number of helping professionals who are honoring the needs of the person for self-empowerment (pp. 9-23). Fox (1983) also outlined a number of similar phenomena as illustrative of the manifesting of change in the culture (pp. 15-26). In particular, justice and liberation movements, the feminist movement and ecological, creation-centered spiritual movements were heralded by Fox as paths that lead to a new mentality of "harmony, balance, justice, and celebration" (p. 18).

The impact of the paradigm shift on most of the disciplines represented in Table 1 was discussed in some depth in Capra's (1982) work. When describing the role of the various situational networks that have become an integral part of our culture, he focused on the significance of their educational function (pp. 409-410). It is in these citizen movement groups, far more than in formal academic settings, that a "restructuring of information" is occurring, according to Roszak (p. 409). It is for this reason that he remarked that "the new paradigm is better understood by individuals and small communities

than by large academic and social institutions" (p. 408).

TRANSPERSONAL PSYCHOLOGY

While my interest in studying the phenomenon of the paradigm shift is interdisciplinary, my own background of study is most closely related to the field of transpersonal psychology as a theoretical foundation for practice in both education and counselling. Themes from this field, therefore, provide a specific background for this study.

It is toward the sphere of the possibilities of consciousness that the field of transpersonal psychology has directed its attention (Boucavalas, 1980; Kuetzer, 1982; Sutich, 1976; Walsh & Vaughan, 1980a; 1980b). This field is continuing in the tradition of studies in human consciousness, developed by such key figures as James (1958), Jung (1916 - 1952), Maslow (1968; 1971) and Assagioli (1965; 1973), that supports the conceptualization of a transpersonal, transcultural dimension of human nature. Theories of these men centered around the potential for wholeness in human beings, including the capacity for transcendence of ego-consciousness. A core concentration of transpersonal psychology is to further this study of the basic nature and structure of consciousness, including facets of awareness that transcend cultural conceptions of space and time, and that transcend the boundaries of the separate ego (Walsh & Vaughan). Jung (1961) defined this self which is beyond the ego as the center and "the whole

circumference which embraces both conscious and unconscious" (p. 398).

Boucavalas considered transpersonal studies to be a fruitful way to understand and contribute "to the developmental process of consciousness, including humanity's place in the evolution of the planet" (p. 41). In writings on evolutionary theory, which is a view of development as a process of increasing differentiation and complexity, a central tenet is that the expansion of consciousness is the goal of human life (Argüelles, 1984; Babcock, 1983; Bruteau, 1974; Grosso, 1985; McWaters, 1982; Ring, 1984; Russell, 1983; Salk, 1983; Samples, 1981; Skolimowski, 1984; Wilber, 1981). The assumption underlying this thesis of the evolution of consciousness is that as human beings become aware of their transpersonal, transcultural dimension, the conflicts that arise out of a false sense of separation will no longer exist, that transpersonal consciousness is a forerunner of social harmony.

Maslow (1971) termed this transpersonal, transcultural awareness transcendence:

the very highest and most inclusive or holistic level of human consciousness, behaving and relating, as ends rather than means, to oneself, to significant others, to human beings in general, to other species, to nature, and to the cosmos (p. 279).

This transcendence, or empathy, represents that which is most nearly divinely human, and is therefore the goal of evolution according to Babcock's thesis, for it is empathy that is "in touch with reality in all its depths, in touch with love in the most profound sense" (p. 25). In Hill's (1980) dissertation on transpersonal integration,

transcendence is defined as a return to wholeness, to a rediscovery of a unity and harmony with the universe, to an unconditional love for all of creation.

Envisioning the potential for this transcendence is critical in terms of humans willing and choosing a path toward an expansion of consciousness, according to the views of Aurobindo (1960) and Teilhard (1959). Teilhard (1964) wrote that the vision itself can "play an essential part in the building of the future, if only by creating the atmosphere, the psychic field of attraction" within which humanity can unite (p. 268). Vision, itself, is a shaper of self-fulfilling prophecy.

STUDIES

Some of the ways change has been conceptualized in the field of psychology have been in its precipitation by illuminative experiences (e.g., Bucke, 1961; Maslow, 1968; Ring, 1980; Sabom, 1982), in the context of its intentionality (Tough, 1982) or as a personal journey or process (Allen, 1979; Wolter-Gustafson, 1984). A tradition of phenomenological inquiries has developed in relation to exploring possibilities of human consciousness. Since my own study centers around a change of consciousness, Table 2 focuses on the literature of those consciousness studies that have influenced my research thinking. Table 3 provides an outline of a few studies on change that have relevance to my study.

TABLE 2

PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDIES OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Researcher	Theme	Information source	Significance of Study
Bucke (1961; first published in 1900).	Cosmic consciousness.	Personal acquaintances and texts.	Seminal phenomenological investigation into possible states of consciousness. Phenomenon described as experience of enlightenment and intellectual illumination, resulting in personal transformation visible to others (pp. 65-66).
James (1958; studies of 1901-1902).	Religious sense.	Personal acquaintances and texts.	Key early work in consciousness studies. Identified two realms of consciousness - manifest world and spiritual universe (p. 367). Corroborated Bucke's description of mystical states of consciousness as ineffable experiences of supranormal cognitions (pp. 292-293).
Maslow (1968).	Peak experiences.	Interviews and written responses.	Contemporary landmark study focusing on possibilities of consciousness. Focused research question elicited descriptions of peak experiences. Peak experience described as state of Being cognition: non-evaluative knowing; merging of subject and object; and ego-less sense of wholeness (pp. 71-79). Noteworthy after-effects of B-cognition: a change in one's perception of self and view of reality (p. 101).

(TABLE 2, continued)

Researcher	Theme	Information source	Significance of Study
LeShan (1975).	Paranormal states of consciousness.	Interviews and texts.	Identified four core features of an alternate reality (Clairvoyant Reality) existing outside realm of structured physical order: unity and relationship; time an "eternal now"; non-evaluative knowing; knowing gleaned through being part of whole (pp. 64, 84-88). Structure of experience of paranormal state confirms some aspects of the view of reality described as the new paradigm. Description of paranormal state confirms Maslow's description of Being cognition. Focused research question evoked description of essential structure of experience (p. 133).
Moody (1975); Ring (1980; 1984); Sabom (1982); Grey (1985).	Near-death experience.	Informal interviews. Structured interviews with questionnaire.	Experience defined by its similarity to other peak and transcendental experiences of consciousness in its qualities of ineffability and paranormal cognition (Moody, pp. 25-84). Transformative after-effects parallel other transpersonal experiences: changes in attitudes about life, death and the nature of consciousness and reality (Moody, pp. 88-93; Ring, 1980, pp. 140, 165; Sabom, pp. 124-125). Hypothesis (Ring, 1984 and Grey): findings suggest collective evolutionary thrust toward expanded consciousness.

TABLE 3

STUDIES OF CHANGE

Researcher	Category	Theme	Information source	Relevance of Study
Tough (1982). Neehall (1983).	Type of change.	Intentional change.	Structured interviews; questionnaire. In-depth Interviews.	Conviction that professionals can be more helpful in facilitating intentional than unintentional change (p. 23). Greater benefits reported from intentional changes than unintentional change.
Welches (1982).	Pattern of change.	Transcendental change.	Theoretical literature; loosely structured interviews.	Focus on change of belief, value or system of beliefs and values as constituting psychological change (pp. 102). Constructed theory of spiral change pattern: from homeostasis, through tension and a "special release" (<u>from</u> or of something), to a new transcendent homeostasis (pp. 13-18). Transcendent change can be motivated by positive or negative feelings or experiences, or occur spontaneously without an existing state of tension (pp. 19-20).
Allen (1979).	Process of change.	The nature of awakening.	Loosely structured interviews.	Intent: to describe process of consciousness change. Conclusion: awakening is an enlargement of consciousness to a new paradigm. Findings presented in journey framework modelled on Campbell's (1949) "hero's journey". Peak experiences identified as pre-awakeners (pp. 103-104).

(TABLE 3, continued)

Researcher	Category	Theme	Information source	Relevance of Study
(Allen continued)				Central episode of awakening (<u>journey</u> phase) experienced as ego-dissolution or disintegration: death-rebirth (pp. 124, 185). Mythic modes of perceiving and intuitive knowing helped initiate consciousness shift (p. 125). Subjects' recommendation: dissemination of framework of consciousness that includes nonordinary experiences (p. 172).
Wolter-Gustafson (1984).	Process of change.	Women's lived-experience of wholeness.	Focused dialogal interviews.	Utilized research methods congruent with emerging cultural paradigm. Presented in context of new paradigm. Women's experience affirmed themes inherent in new paradigm: a both/and perspective on life - transcendence <u>and</u> immanence, mind <u>and</u> body, human <u>and</u> nature (pp. 216-229). Search for essential structure of process followed phenomenological method. Study arose out of researcher's view of need for expanded picture of human nature (p. 1).

INTENT AND ORGANIZATION OF STUDY

This study follows the tradition of the phenomenological studies of consciousness in its exploration of a lived-experience of consciousness - in this case, the change to a new world view. As in the studies highlighted in Table 2, my interpretation of the information from this inquiry is a description of the underlying structure of the experience. To this end, I followed an example of Maslow and LeShan by formulating one core research question. This question, "What is the experience of changing to a new world view?", was designed to elicit a common body of stories of consciousness change from which I could systematically uncover the basic themes of the phenomenon. Finally, the identification and description of paranormal and/or transcendent states of consciousness, which formed a central part of the studies reviewed, provided a background picture of one avenue that has been significant in leading persons to changing their perceptions of self and reality.

Studies of change provided the following relevant background for this study:

- 1) Intentional change reaps greater benefits than unintentional change, and professionals can be helpful in facilitating intentional change (Tough; Neehall);
- 2) Transcendental change can be identified in terms of a spiral pattern, and in terms of positive or negative motivation or as a spontaneous occurrence (Welches);

3) The intent - to describe a process of consciousness change - was closely parallel to my study (Allen);

4) Methodology, context and findings of study were all grounded in the new paradigm and information was presented in narrative form (Wolter-Gustafson).

Each of the above investigations contributed to the clearer conception of this study. I did not, however, discover in my literature search any structured study exploring the nature of the paradigm shift across cases. I did uncover autobiographical accounts of changing to a new world view, "how to" books outlining a variety of paths to transformation, theoretical works on the paradigm shift and, finally, journalistic-impressionistic studies of the phenomenon.

It has been my conviction that a change in consciousness is an essential forerunner to a change in one's way of being, that an integration of the knowledge of one's interdependent relatedness within nature is a key to choosing a lifestyle appropriate to harmony and balance. Fox (1983) described this kind of change, "to compassionate living - to simpler lifestyles and the letting go of surplus things", as an obvious sign of the occurrence of the transformation (p. 305).

Such a process of consciousness change must be the result of a direct living experience for, as Polanyi (1964) stated, "all knowledge is ultimately personal" (p. 8). The systematic study of this direct experience of persons who have undergone a change in the way they perceive the world, and who are involved in making changes in their

lives congruent with this attitude change, presents a fruitful approach to formulate ways to foster and facilitate processes of such change.

This study of the paradigm shift also has the potential to add to what Berger and Luckmann (1967) termed the common stock of knowledge; the identification and description of such a phenomenon as it is lived by a number of persons can render the experience:

accessible and, perhaps, strongly relevant to individuals who have never gone through it...It becomes an objective possibility for everyone, or at any rate for everyone within a certain type (pp. 68-69).

Berman (1981), perceiving that our evolution toward the kind of change of mind implied in the term paradigm shift "is inevitable", wrote that we need an appropriate context for its "healthy flowering" (p. 292). His fear was that persons making the journey to a new mode of living are vulnerable to gurus, to confusing the message with the messenger (p. 288). Learning more about this phenomenon can serve as one aid in discovering ways to provide the kind of context advocated by Berman.

A major supposition underlying this study is that humankind's survival and development at this turning point in history is dependent on this evolution of consciousness. As one of the tasks of psychology is to understand mind, it is appropriate at this time to probe and question the processes that are involved in the changing of one's mind. Any progress made on this subject is another step in the direction of creating a more hopeful future reality.

In Chapter II, a thorough outline of the nature of this study is presented, including a literature review of the methodology selected, a history of the conception of this study and the procedures utilized to complete the research.

Stories of the lived-experience of the ten participants in this study are presented as Chapter III. These narratives, while shortened considerably from the original transcripts, remain primarily verbatim accounts.

Chapter IV contains the interpretation of the phenomenon, the common underlying themes delineated from the participants' stories that describe the process of changing to a new world view. Relevant literature is incorporated in this discussion. Finally, in Chapter V, a framework for guiding the change process is presented as an outline of ways counsellors and educators may contribute to the cultural paradigm shift.

CHAPTER II
METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

LITERATURE REVIEW

The truth of man is not discovered; it is uncovered, disclosed (Keen, 1972, p. 89)

The purpose of this study is to move to a fuller understanding of the essential structure of the experience identified in the literature as the emergent paradigm shift, to uncover more of the nature of this phenomenon as it is meaningfully experienced. To achieve this purpose, methods and procedures were chosen for this study that are consistent with the principles inherent in the new paradigm.

Qualitative methodologies are essential when studying any process of personal change, since the various aspects are so profoundly interrelated in their complexity, and flow in such a way, that to try to break them into units to study would be to lose or transform their basic nature. Processes, then, must be described as wholes. While change can be assessed by a researcher and described in behavioral terms, the understanding of a person's life-world - meanings, feelings, motivations - must be grounded in the "actor's subjective point of view" (Schwartz & Jacobs, 1979, p. 5).

To understand the shift in consciousness underlying a change process experienced by a person, it is especially necessary to explore

"inside the mind's reality". Such exploration requires a specific kind of qualitative research methodology: the phenomenological inquiry. This kind of examination leads to an understanding of the essential structure of the processes involved in consciousness change. This approach is introduced in the context of new paradigm research.

New Paradigm Research

Rist (1982) postulated that methods of seeking knowledge necessarily evolve from the beliefs one holds about reality. To create meaningful findings from a search for knowledge, there must be a relationship of congruence among problem, paradigm and method (Guba & Lincoln, 1982, p. 239). My world view and research question are both aligned with the emerging paradigm of reality previously outlined; therefore, I am choosing a research method in congruence with the new paradigm described by Reason and Rowan (1981).

New paradigm inquiry encompasses ideas of collaboration, process, participation and reflexivity (Reason & Rowan, p. xx). The thesis of this research paradigm is that:

a true human inquiry needs to be based firmly in the experience of those it purports to understand, to involve a collaboration between 'researcher' and 'subjects' so that they may work together as co-researchers (Rowan, 1981, p. 113).

What particularly distinguishes this paradigm as "new" is its focus around the concept that knowing is primarily relational (Heron, 1981, p. 25). The relationship between researcher and respondent is

marked by cooperative interaction. With this reciprocal relationship, both researcher and subject become co-researchers and co-subjects (p. 30). This new framework transcends all divisions on which hierarchy and domination have been based, and advocates a paradigm of power that is integrative and synergistic - a being with the other that empowers both self and other. In this paradigm, emancipation and harmonization of the social world become possibilities.

In a model of cooperative inquiry, subjects are valued as autonomous and intelligent agents who can function optimally only when "privy to the research thinking" (Heron, p. 22). This ensures that the subject's choice to become involved in a research project rests on familiarity and concurrence with the rationale of the study.

When both "co-researchers" have a mutual commitment to engage in a process of generating new understanding, the ground has been prepared for a genuine encounter of I to thou (Buber, 1958). This dialogue creates the potential for both investigator and subject to be changed through the relationship between them. Through this interaction, the researcher becomes a co-subject, a part of the process and product of the research (Babcock, 1982; Myerhoff, 1982).

Other core themes that can provide a guiding framework for the researcher in new paradigm inquiry include the following (Reason & Rowan, pp. 107-112).

- 1) considering relevance to life, to humanity;
- 2) remaining aware of political and social implications;
- 3) choosing a method congruent with the research question;

- 4) considering the context;
- 5) allowing for serendipity;
- 6) maintaining an engagement and commitment to the process;
- 7) remaining open to one's own experience;
- 8) including self in the data; and
- 9) allowing the data to "speak" for itself.

Closely connected to these themes are the axioms underlying a naturalistic paradigm in research (Guba & Lincoln, 1982, 1985). A core tenet in this framework is that process needs to be studied holistically; "to dissociate the wholes is to alter them radically" (1982, p. 237). Understanding, therefore, evolves from studying patterns of interaction in their natural contexts.

Central to the new research paradigm is a concern with validity (Patton, 1975, p. 18). This is defined as a valid representation of the data, as the data are the "here and now" truth of the respondents (Patton; Tandon, 1981; Von Eckartsberg, 1983). Ways the researcher can ensure this accurate presentation are: staying close to the data; remaining sensitive to qualitative distinctions; maintaining a holistic perspective; and focusing on participants' meanings (Patton, p. 19).

When reality is viewed as process,

any notion of validity must concern itself both with the knower and with what is to be known: valid knowledge is a matter of relationship (Reason, 1981b, p. 241).

Trustworthiness of knowledge is based on "we knowing" or intersubjectivity (Reason, p. 242; Filstead, 1970; Rogers, 1964).

Questions of validity relate to description, usefulness and potential for meaning. The focus is on "contextual validity" (Reason, 1981a, p. 185). This implies that research questions must be well-defined.

Steps advocated by Guba and Lincoln to assure that data are trustworthy - meaningful and verifiable - include: peer-debriefing; rechecking with subjects; including a thick description of data; and making researcher assumptions explicit (1982, pp. 246-250). A thick description includes context, emotion, meaning and relationships (Denzin, 1983; Geertz, 1973).

At its best, phenomenological research qualifies as exemplary of new paradigm research as it:

offers the possibility of a 'radical empiricism', returning to the phenomenon as it emerges, and moving beyond the presuppositions of the researcher (Reason & Rowan, p. xxi).

Phenomenological Inquiry

For Husserl (1970) phenomenology was a method of inquiry in which experience was seen as the only valid source of data on which to found knowledge. To know, we must "turn to the things themselves" (Giorgi, 1970, p. 82).

Phenomenology is the study of essences and accordingly its treatment of every problem is an attempt to define an essence of perception, or the essence of consciousness (Merleau-Ponty, 1956, p. 83).

Existential phenomenology is the application of this study to human existence.

An assumption that underlies this method is that the richest of all sources of data is a person's self-knowledge. This inner perspective implies a basic trust in a person's ability to know self and formulate meanings from one's own life-world, and "to know and understand others through 'sympathetic introspection' and 'imaginative reconstruction'" (Filstead, p. 4).

Phenomenology is a process of attending to the phenomenon as it presents itself, a bracketing of one's preconceptions and theories and seeking what Sadler (1969) described "a childlike openness to encounter" (p. 377). Its underlying premise is that to discover something about the life-worlds of people, one must ask them about their experiences; one must enter their conceptual worlds to discover their constructions of meaning (Bogdan & Taylor, 1975). In McConville's (1978) view, "for phenomenology...meaning is the starting rather than the ending point" (p. 117).

Central to this conceptual framework is the research purpose of understanding. This tradition of understanding leads to the creation of meaning (Dilthey, 1962). Husserl's (1977) assertion was that the key to this understanding was description. Because psychic life is a unity of one nexus of internally interwoven states, the task is to describe this structure (pp. 5-6).

'Structure' designates the complex intertwining which belongs to every concrete phase of the streaming psychic life (p. 6).

Primary research concepts of phenomenology are defined in terms of the discovery and understanding of the essence and meaning of this

structure of an experience. The assumption providing the foundation for these concepts is that phenomena contain invariant or essential structures which can be discovered and clarified through careful descriptions and interpretations (Giorgi, 1979).

In the existential phenomenological framework, the I-thou dialogal interview is a choice way for understanding life-worlds (Bogdan & Taylor; Colaizzi, 1978). The dialogal relationship facilitates a reflective process for both researcher and "story-teller" which elucidates themes and reveals patterns of meaning. For Colaizzi "objectivity is fidelity to phenomena; ...a respectful listening to what the phenomenon speaks of itself" (p. 52). This requires that the researcher recognize and affirm both the experience of self and other in a researcher-subject relationship that is a partnership of "Caring Companions" (Bogdan & Taylor; Massarik, 1981).

Knowledge is perspectivistic. Rogers (1964) defined phenomenological knowing as interpersonal - an opening to a new viewing point by expanding on subjective knowing (one's own world of meaning), and objective knowing (observations interpreted by one's own world of meaning), through getting inside another's private world of meaning. Polkinghorne (1983) elaborated on the nature of this experience:

As we interact with the other person our experiences become interlocked. In these "we-relationships", one person comprehends (versteh) the other person's subjective meaning (p. 209).

Interpersonal knowing evokes empathy toward the other and an openness to new information. In this atmosphere of acceptance, an opportunity is provided for persons to reflect on new and deeper insights about their own experience. Through such dialogue, research becomes a means of raising fresh questions, creating many feedback loops in an ongoing living process of uncovering relationships and constructing meaning. In this way, the research process, itself, creates data.

Genuine human research, by seriously including the trusting dialogal approach, passes beyond research in its limited sense and occasions existential insight (Colaizzi, p. 69).

Dialogal research integrates inquiry and intervention -processes of knowing and changing - for through our interactions, we are always both in-the-world and changing it (May, 1961; Tandon). In this frame, declarations of presuppositions and acknowledging one's involvement validate the reality of encounter as a living process.

The existential phenomenological researcher recognizes that we live in a negotiated reality; therefore, context is relevant to any inquiry. What, how and who are interrelated in terms of any experience (Guba & Lincoln, 1982). This perspective "affirms an interpenetration that is situated in a particular culture, and in a particular moment in history" (Titelman, 1979, p. 187). The researcher, as part of this context, is the first and most important source of data as the research question comes out of his/her own lived-experience (p. 189). As the researcher is "subject #1", it is important for a phenomenological study to begin with a personal

reflection to identify presuppositions. Titelman advocated keeping an ongoing log of ideas, feelings and assumptions throughout the research process (p. 189).

Context is the critical factor in discussing reliability in any investigation that is interactional, for it is increasingly being understood in the field of social science research that context is a phenomenological construct co-created by researcher and participants, one which is continually changing throughout the process of the research (Briggs, 1986). Context can never be replicated, but by including a thick description of the researcher's background and assumptions in the written account, research findings can be assessed in terms of being reasonable within the framework of the context. Procedures, if well outlined, can make it possible for another researcher to replicate the approach of an interactional study. With the same co-researchers, posing the same research questions, researchers should find that the core thematic structure of an account would remain consistent across studies. Different emphases in participants' narratives, and in researchers' interpretations of the information elicited, would occur, however, because of the changed context.

Hermeneutics is an art of interpretation that is aimed toward a deeper comprehension of a phenomenon by recognizing that understanding is an historical process (Rowan, pp. 132-133). Its focus is on arriving at a greater understanding of a phenomenon through uncovering hidden meaning behind apparent meaning. Knowledge derived from this

interpretive process has been defined by Polkinghorne as "assertoric": it is perspectival, relative to time and space (p. 13). The goal of the interpreter is to refine assertions according to their value.

Kolkelman's (1975, in Polkinghorne) framework for ensuring an intersubjective validity of data interpretation includes the following guidelines (pp. 236-237):

- 1) The source of meaning is the phenomenon, which should not be forced into preconceived frameworks;
- 2) the goal is to discover interpretations that make the phenomenon reasonable;
- 3) the researcher needs to acquire the greatest possible familiarity with the phenomenon;
- 4) understanding involves moving back and forth between parts and whole; and
- 5) meaning of the phenomenon needs to be shown for present historical situation.

Since this understanding is derived not only from the perspective of the phenomenon under study, but also from the perspective of the interpreter, it is critical that the researcher explicate "the meaning of the phenomenon for his(her) own situation" (Rowan, p. 134). Understanding and interpretation of others needs to be interrelated with an understanding of self.

Hermeneutical interpretation involves a spiral path to understanding, increasingly moving to deeper levels of meaning, as it encompasses:

relationships between whole and parts, between what is known and what is unknown, between the phenomenon itself and its wider context, between the knower and that which is known (Rowan, p. 134).

The ultimate goal is to arrive at an interpretation that is intersubjectively valid for a particular moment in time.

The final aim of this interpretive process is to formulate an: exhaustive description of the investigated phenomenon in as unequivocal a statement of identification of its fundamental structure as possible (Colaizzi, p. 61).

The focus of this descriptive statement is on understanding a phenomenon in its essential structure across persons.

RATIONALE FOR CHOICE OF METHOD

My rationale for choosing existential phenomenology as the approach for my inquiry is grounded in its appropriateness to address my research question, in its congruence with a paradigm of reality that frames this question and my life perspective, and in its fit with my personal way of being-in-the-world.

It became increasingly clear to me, through an investigation of qualitative methodologies and the process of refining my research question, that phenomenological inquiry was the choice method for studying processes of change in consciousness. Merleau-Ponty's definition of phenomenology as the study of essences, and my core issue, to understand the essence of a particular consciousness change, are in harmony.

Phenomenology is attuned to a process model of reality. As such, it is in accord with the mythogenic patterns of holism, transcendence and androgyny arising in the culture. The emergent feminist consciousness embedded in the androgynous viewpoint holds life to be not a finished structure, but a living process (Stanley & Wise, p. 189). Integral to both existential phenomenology and this new world view is the theme of I-thou relatedness.

This I-thou theme within a process paradigm of reality has guided the development of my research focus, as well as my philosophy of counselling and education. The expansion of consciousness has been, and is, the guiding myth of my life journey and a model for being with others. For me, then, the following assertion of Stanley and Wise has truth-value:

'Consciousness' is, in a sense, all we have. It is the entirety of what we know and do and how we know and do it. And so it must be, visibly rather than invisibly, not only the focus of feminist research, but also the medium through which all research is conducted (p. 189).

I specifically stated, "for me", when embracing the meaning of the previous quotation, because I have come to understand that my preferred conscious functioning, intuition with feeling, has profoundly influenced my view of the world and, concomitantly, my path to seeking knowledge. Mitroff and Kilmann (1978) developed a typology of scientists, based on Jung's (1921) psychological type theory, that confirms this connection. In their classification, the combination of intuition and feeling characterizes the scientific methodology of the Conceptual Humanist: conceptual inquiry via human dialogue (p. 76).

Other categories identified in their schema include: the Analytical Scientist (sensing with thinking), who embraces the traditional scientific research paradigm; the Conceptual Theorist (intuition with thinking), who develops speculative theories - e.g., Carl Jung; and the Particular Humanist (sensing with feeling), who prefers case study methodologies.

Following is a brief sketch of the theory this schema is founded on, including a short description of an instrument designed to delineate psychological types:

According to Jung, there are two key dimensions of the conscious personality: irrational and rational functions. The rational functions, which Jung identified as either thinking or feeling, involve evaluation and decision-making, while our "so-called" irrational functions allow us to perceive the world, either through our senses (sensation) or through a more inner perception (intuition). Because these functions cannot operate concurrently, persons develop most strongly the function which is most natural constitutionally: "it becomes the dominant function and gives the conscious attitude its direction and quality" (Jung, 1921, para. 958).

In addition to developing a dominant function, a person also develops an auxiliary function. If the dominant function is a perceiving one - for example, intuition - the auxiliary will be one of the judging (rational) functions, and vice versa. Extraversion or introversion - the basic attitude or direction of the psychic energy - also affects the conscious functions: if the dominant function is extraverted the auxiliary will be introverted, and conversely.

A self-report instrument, the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), was designed by Myers (1962) and Myers & McCaulley (1985) to identify this attitude preference of extraversion or introversion, and the basic preferred functions of perception and judgement. Developed as a means of implementing Jung's theory of the dichotomous nature of the attitude and functions, the instrument is comprised of items paired as polarities to "force" choices. Four separate indices reflect these choices. The scores on these indices result in identifying one's basic type preference: a configuration of the elements consisting of the preferred pole of each element.

On the basis of this indicator, along with my own conscious awareness of preferences in perceiving and making assessments, I have identified my dominant function as intuition and my auxiliary as feeling. The dominant function is extraverted, so my "type", according to the MBTI, is ENFP (Extraverted - Intuitive - Feeling - Perceiving): "one concerned with the human aspects of problems...see(s) possibilities as challenges...like(s) to see new patterns and relationships" (Myers & McCaulley, p. 37). Mitroff and Kilmann's description of the Conceptual Humanist embodies these preferences (pp. 75-93).

Promoting human well-being on the widest possible scale is defined as the ultimate aim of science for the Conceptual Humanist. Conceptual inquiry that involves a mutual cooperative relationship between researcher and subject is the preferred method of study. It is deemed important that this inquiry enhance human growth - both for

self and others - as authenticity is one of the perennial issues for the Conceptual Humanist.

It is my concern with authenticity that has inspired this treatise, which has been an attempt to describe the links among paradigm, research question, modality of inquiry and self as context that form my personal world view. Enframed in this rationale is my conviction that it is critical for a research topic to coincide with one's intrinsic interests. This creates an I-thou relatedness with one's work that ensures an ongoing commitment and investment of energy; an energy that will continue to be generated if the research is deemed significant, not just for self, but for the larger social context. This is my definition of living research.

RESEARCH PROCESSES

According to van Manen (1984), the methodological structure of phenomenology can be reduced to four key interrelated procedures (p. 3):

- 1) turning to a phenomenon which seriously interests us and commits us to the world;
- 2) investigating experience as we live it;
- 3) reflecting on the essential themes which characterize the phenomenon; and
- 4) describing the phenomenon through the art of writing and rewriting.

Utilizing these core processes as an organizational schema, I begin by describing the evolution of my own shift in world view, along with my growing interest and commitment to this research project. This is in keeping with the proposals of Titelman (1979) and Rowan (1981), that as the first subject of the study, the researcher needs to locate the meaning of the phenomenon in her own life-world and reflect on the presuppositions that have arisen from this lived-experience. Procedures I utilized for generating data of others' lived-experience, for extrapolating essential themes from this information and for writing the phenomenological description constitute the remainder of the research processes.

The Call to the Phenomenon

(The) starting point of phenomenological research is largely a matter of identifying what it is that deeply interests oneself and of identifying this interest as a true phenomenon, i.e., as some experience that human beings live through (van Manen, p. 9).

I recall my own beginning of shifting from a conventional world view as occurring on Christmas eve in 1965, while reading a poem (Abraham, 1965) that touched me profoundly. The long lament vividly contrasted the grim realities of the lives of human beings around the planet with the Christmas gluttony of North Americans. It was in that moment of feeling the pain of humanity, and my own connection with its roots, that the seed of social consciousness began to stir. I was not

quite 29 years old - comfortably married with two babies, and (almost) comfortably middle-class - when I awakened to a world beyond my relatively sheltered existence as a citizen of the U.S.

Unable to ignore the feelings of social responsibility aroused by that one poem, I began to read voraciously from media and books that were not mainstream sources of information in the culture - and I questioned everything. Each question spawned several more, and each one opened me to wholly new perceptions. Taken-for-granted beliefs crumbled and dissolved like so many sandcastles being washed to sea. A Pandora's box had been irrevocably opened.

Throughout this period of change, I began to feel the pain of increasing alienation from old friends and extended family. Fortunately for me, my husband shared this searching experience, and together we reached out to encounter new friends. This was the era of the Civil Rights movement and a growing opposition to the Vietnam War, so it was relatively easy to find a community of fellow questioners who were deeply committed to pacifism and a social justice grounded in caring.

From 1967 to 1972, I was involved as a volunteer in a variety of social action groups, and all during that time I pondered the mystery associated with the animation of the will to change one's mind. I experienced the expanding polarization of viewpoints and feelings within families, within neighborhoods, within churches. I saw that education, in the sense of spreading new information and ideas, did not necessarily change minds. Something more seemed to be needed.

Meanwhile, feeling increasingly disheartened by the continuation of militaristic policies in the U.S., and conscience-stricken about our implicit consent and support of these policies via taxation, we made a decision to emigrate and move to Canada.

What this move meant to me was a second "turning point" in my own evolution of consciousness change. This was a turn in the spiral back to a focus on self-awareness, which was precipitated by my entrance into graduate school to study social work. Historically, this was a time in the culture when the human potential movement was having considerable impact on practices in counsellor education. In learning to facilitate the growth and development of others, I first was to be confronted directly with the question of my self, a self-inquiry that was ultimately far more painful than my previous questioning of the culture. After the initial anguish of turning the searchlight on my own "blind spots", I surprisingly discovered that I loved the ongoing mystery inherent in uncovering novel facets of my being. This, then, was the beginning of an introspective path and a self-transformation that has since complemented my focus on social change.

In subsequent years, the integration of self and social consciousness became both my ongoing focus and a central theme in my professional work as a social work educator. I also perceived a need for this joining of the personal with the social as I began to experience dissonance during my work in various social movement groups. For example, in peace groups, means were often incongruent with ends, and the development of strategies was valued over the

nurturing of harmonious group relationships.

Always the question remained: "What really is involved in the changing of one's mind?" I continued to see a need for change all about me: ecological, economic and personal relationship crises abounded. My own change continued, with new ideas spreading like ripples out from a central belief that stood out when the Pandora's box was first opened: that everything is connected to everything else. How could one facilitate awareness of these connections?

The luxury of being a "perpetual student" in a university environment fostered an ongoing broadening of my own world view. It was through reading - which has always been a dialogal process for me - and lively exchanges with students and colleagues, that I was led, by the mid-1970s, to an awareness that I had totally shifted my perceptions and beliefs about the world. I had become aligned with a wholly new paradigm, which was being termed ecological or holistic or "new age" thinking in the literature (e.g., Capra, 1975; Satin, 1976). I also witnessed similar changes occurring for friends and associates as they discarded a world view marked by fragmentation.

With the recognition that my view of reality had changed so dramatically, I opened my mind to the probability that I would always be "changing my mind". This knowing led me to experiences that I can only describe as numinous, including vivid dreams and an awakening to the frequency of events of synchronicity in my everyday life. Some of these episodes were directly related to a profoundly meaningful participation in my mother's life during her five month dying

experience. My world view became grounded in a felt-sense of the spiritual dimension, the most critical turn of the spiral to date.

During this period, my work as a counsellor and teacher offered me unending opportunities to become what Siegel (1986) referred to as a "privileged listener" (p. 30). My increasing attunement to experiences that transcended an ego-orientation to reality enabled me to grant permission to clients and students to share about their own paranormal experiences. This kind of openness led to collaborative relationships in the processes of healing and learning - and in the process of experiencing connections.

While the mystery remained as to how precisely minds do change, I felt much less impatient about dispelling the mystery. I became more comfortable with just appreciating the process of perceptual and belief change as a mystery. At the same time, I was committed to integrating my own change of mind at ever deeper levels, so as to continue to be as open and accepting as possible in all my relationships with clients, students, family and friends. This was, to me, the meaning of love, which I had come to see as the essence of the mystery of my own shift in consciousness. An entry in my journal in the spring of 1980 reflects a growing patience about the change process:

Change only occurs "through the heart". I don't know how it happens. It is a mystery - but knowing that it is a mystery frees me to do "my part" without expectations.

Raising the Question

Letting go of the "need" to solve the mystery opened the door for me to explore it further. I was called by my role as an educator to further my formal education in a doctoral program. It took me some time to recognize my chosen research emphasis, but one day in the spring of 1982 I was speculating that, in spite of all the research that had been done in the counselling field, it seemed that there was still an incomplete understanding of the mystery of what sparks a person's will to change. This seemed to me to be essential to the process. "For all we know", I thought, "an encounter with someone on a bus on the way home from a counselling session might be the turning point for change. Perhaps the most we can espouse to know that we do in counselling is to prepare the ground for openness to such an encounter". Serendipity then entered the picture: as I was riding home on the bus that same day, these ideas for a research project raced through my mind:

I can explore the factors that lead to and nurture a shift of consciousness by interviewing others who have opened to a new paradigm of reality. What was the grounding that created this openness? What significant events either precipitated or nourished such a change? What external resources were important to this expanding of vision?

While sharing this idea with a close friend, we both became aware of the potential value of such interviews as stimuli for participants to reflect anew on their own life patterns and meanings. Shortly after this time, I wrote of my growing commitment to such research:

The important consideration for me is that such an endeavor (Ph. D. studies) have some value relative to serving others.

Raising a research question requires that one "live" the question - "become" the question, in van Manen's view (p. 11). For me, mystery has always excited me, has always pulled me ever onward and inward. It has both precipitated my search for deeper understanding and sustains it. van Manen wrote that the object of research into a phenomenon is "not to dispel its mystery, but rather the object is to bring the mystery more fully into our presence" (p. 16).

Personal stories of transformation, which have long been a focus of my journey in reading, have both illuminated more of the mystery of change and inspired me to new paths of development. Possibly, the reflection of others' experiences in opening to a new world view, presented in this research, can also animate imagination in those who will read them.

While the basic aim of my study has remained constant throughout four years of study and preparation, as I moved closer to knowing what I wanted to uncover, I distilled my original questions to one question - a question that can reveal the essence of the experience of transformation: "What is the experience of changing to a new world view?"

Presuppositions: Reflections Prior to Research Process

My own experience of consciousness change, in retrospect, seems

to have formed a spiral pattern initiated by the first "frame break" of twenty years ago, and has then moved through several turning points, with a shedding of old beliefs and an opening to fresh perceptions at each turn. Empathy, first felt as a connection with all of humanity, then with self, then with all of life, and finally with the invisible spirit energies, has created the "felt shifts" as described by Gendlin (1973). These felt shifts sparked my will to pursue a learning path in life that I now perceive as never-ending.

Throughout this journey, networking with fellow travellers has nurtured and sustained me. Discovering a sense of community with others has been critical, as always on this path I have experienced pangs of alienation from the larger culture. At each turning point in my own journey, then, it has been the affirmation of my questioning process and of my budding change in world view, either by writers or companions, that has fostered an integration of new ideas.

That this experience is one that others live through has never been in doubt for me, as I have encountered a growing number of people, professionally and socially, who are attuning to a new world view and a new way of being. Meetings with these others have consistently been experiences for me of discovering kindred spirits. In dialogues with such persons over the years, I have been aware of the effervescence of speech that frequently enlivens the sharing of their own stories of change. It has been this note of excitement that led me to believe that people are not only willing, but eager, to share their experiences of consciousness change.

While each story I had listened to was rich in its uniqueness, I wondered if there might be a number of common threads that would emerge clearly if such stories were explored in a more structured way. One difference in experiences of which I had become cognizant related to a time factor. Some people seemed to experience sudden, dramatic shifts in perception and feelings, while others, like myself, have lived through a gradual evolutionary change over a period of years. I wondered if the time factor affected the essence of the experience.

The key assumption underlying my research was that, regardless of the unique factors that shape the experience of consciousness change in individual persons, some invariant themes across cases would ultimately characterize the essence of the experience, identifying it as a phenomenon of lived-experience. It was this assumption that served as a foundation for my commitment to pursue a phenomenological study of the emergent paradigm shift.

This commitment was not always unwavering. A number of times I was plagued with questions of self-doubt: Is what I am studying really of value? If so, to whom? What difference does it make? To me? To my life? To others? Hasn't it all been said before? Do I really have anything original to contribute? At one of these times, I wrote the following:

Trust the restlessness,
the vague stirrings that come -
The time of unknowns,
no plans, no sense of purpose -
These times are the beginnings

of a new turning point in the spiral of growth,
of increased differentiation,
of increased fulfillment of the seed of becoming-

Let go and rest at times of darkness -
Wait for the spark of light to focus;
the spark illuminating the next path
to the next part of the journey -

Life is a paradox:
without restlessness, the journey could not continue -

Life is an ebb and flow,
of remembering and forgetting,
from moment to moment, and from birth to rebirth.

It is this knowing, that all through life one is both being and becoming, "remembering and forgetting", that kept me from looking for persons for my study who had "arrived" in terms of consciousness change. I was rather interested in finding persons who had experienced a change of consciousness and, as a result, are envisioning ways of being and relating to the world from a new understanding of reality and the possibilities of consciousness. These persons who, like me, may keep forgetting, nevertheless, have opened in such a way that this forgetting is temporary and their deeper knowing is of being on a path of changing and being changed. More specific criteria used for the selection of persons for this study are outlined in the following section.

Investigating the Experience

We gather other people's experiences because it allows us, in a vicarious sort of way, to become more experienced ourselves (van Manen, p. 26).

To generate accounts of lived-experience of the phenomenon of the paradigm shift, I chose to interview people willing to share their personal stories of consciousness change. Verbalizing reflectively about one's experience is an optimal way to return to the original feelings and meanings, and to remain as close as possible to a phenomenon in question. In order to create a climate conducive to such personal sharing, it was important for me to engage in a mutual collaborative relationship with interviewees. I will, therefore, refer to these collaborators as co-researchers or participants.

Co-researchers

In this study, co-researchers comprised a purposive sample as defined by Selltitz, Jahoda, Deutsh and Cook (1959): that is, they were selected on the basis of specific criteria, with no attempt at randomization. Persons were chosen who had the experience in question, could articulate their experience and could, therefore, contribute understanding to the research question.

An obvious criterion that you may apply in choosing research subjects is whether or not they are the 'kind' of people in whom you are interested (Bogdan & Taylor, 1975), p. 102).

The kind of people I was interested in choosing as co-researchers were those I identified earlier as "kindred spirits", those with whom I felt a "fellowship in consciousness" as described by von Eckartsberg (1979). The world view of such spiritual companions was expressed in the form of a coherent whole. This gestalt has been pictured as a "mandala of eco-philosophy" by Skolimowski (1981), a comprehensive paradigm encompassing the following identifiable personal elements:

spiritually alive; committed; life oriented; health mindful; tolerant to trans-physical phenomena; socially concerned; politically aware; and environmentally and ecologically conscious (p. 30).

It was when I heard this web of connections being expressed in a beginning dialogue that I imagined that the person in question might offer a meaningful contribution to this study. By asking questions that further elicited features of one's picture of reality, including how this vision had arisen, I attended to the language of the responses that would reveal a nexus of social, ecological, self and spiritual consciousness. Thus, I listened for descriptive words or phrases that are linked to a sensibility of "the pernetarian vision" as described by Drengson (1983):

organic metaphors; intrinsic values of nature; participant in nature; processes; appropriateness; community; cooperation; diversity; and open possibilities (pp. 115-116).

Because the emergent paradigm described in this study is marked by an open consciousness, an additional requirement for collaborators in this study was that they were pursuing an open-ended path of wisdom. Finally, in selecting participants, I made a judgement that,

in my view, a co-researcher was living by values congruent with the espoused world view.

Participants who were chosen for the research fulfilled the aforementioned criteria, were willing to reflect on their experience of change and share freely in an interviewing process, and were committed to a co-research process. This commitment implied an interest in the subject and purpose of the research, and a willingness to recheck transcripts of the interviews and provide feedback.

With the above criteria in mind, I selected ten co-researchers - five men and five women - to participate in the study. Attention in the selection process focused on discovering persons with a wide variety of life circumstances and experiences. Rationale for this latter criterion came from Ihde's (1977) "variational method" (p. 39).

In its simplest form, the use of variations requires obtaining as many sufficient examples or variations upon examples as might be necessary to discover the structured features being sought (p. 40).

On the basis of reviewing phenomenological studies in the literature, as well as my overall study of the paradigm shift, I determined that ten persons with diverse experience would be sufficient to reveal the essential features of the phenomenon.

One method for the selection of co-researchers was a traditional method of anthropology called "snowballing", a process that began with a participant who made a referral, and so on. In one instance, a particular co-researcher was recommended by two or three people. I selected several co-researchers during the course of conversations,

when a high level of interest in the research was indicated and the person fulfilled the participant criteria. I met several of the co-researchers in connection with work, at courses and at workshops. Others were referred to me as friends of friends.

All but one of the co-researchers were known to me prior to the study. However, I did not know any of their life stories well enough to create interference in the process of hearing them as if for the first time. In other words, when I knew some of the outlines of a person's story, it was mainly in terms of knowing a sequence of events rather than the meaning of the lived-experience.

Identifying characteristics of each co-researcher are included in introductions to the stories, but an overview of the general demographic features of the participant population is illustrated in Tables 4 and 5.

TABLE 4

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF WOMEN PARTICIPANTS

Pen-name	Age	Educational Background	Residence	Occupation	Family Relationships
Marni	34	Master's degree: French literature.	Alberta	Homemaker; Writer.	Married; two young daughters.
Serendipity	35	Bachelor's degree: Social Welfare.	Alberta	Social Worker.	Married; one school-age son.
Raechel	37	Bachelor's degree: Psychology; Post-graduate courses: Environmental studies, psychology.	Vancouver Island	Service occupations; Craft-work.	Single.
Amy	44	Bachelor's degree: Nursing; Post-graduate work.	Vancouver Island	Mental Health: Community Nurse.	Separated; two young adult children (female and male); reconciliation with partner in process.
Carrie	69	Bachelor's degree: Human Services.	Quebec	Counsellor, private practice.	Married; four adult children.
Cynthia*	37	Bachelor's degree: Psychology; Certified Piano Instructor.	Alberta	Piano teacher; Researcher.	Single.
Nancy**	49	Master's degree: Social Welfare; Doctoral studies.	Alberta	Counsellor; Educator	Married; two adult children (male and female).

* Pilot participant, transcript of interview in Appendix C.

** Researcher; actual name.

TABLE 5

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF MEN PARTICIPANTS

Pen-name	Age	Educational Background	Residence	Occupation	Family Relationships
Donald	37	Bachelor's degree: Fine Arts; Teaching certificate.	Alberta	Merchant craftsman.	Separated; one school-age daughter.
Pipe Carrier	45	High School; Military: two years mid-manage- ment; two years preventive medicine.	Alberta, rural.	Retired military; Farmer; Writer.	Married; two young adult daughters; one school-age son.
Tony	46	Bachelor's degree: Physics and Mathematics; Presently registered in university computer courses.	Alberta, rural.	Student; Former maths teacher.	Married; two pre-school children (male and female).
Nimrod	46	High school; License in surveying; Presently registered in university degree program in Psychology.	Alberta	Student; Former surveyor.	Married.
Joel	60	Bachelor's degree: Engineering; Post- graduate work in Environmental studies.	Alberta	Environmental planning.	Married; three adult sons.

Contracting with Co-researchers

Once a co-researcher was selected, a thorough explanation of the nature of my study was provided as an orientation to the research. This description in dialogue was followed by a written statement outlining the purpose and design of the study (Appendix A). I also made the research proposal available to participants who expressed an interest in a more in-depth understanding of the study. Two of the participants, Tony and Marni, did choose to read the proposal for the purpose of assessing the appropriateness of their involvement in the study. The proposal that was shared included an introduction describing the paradigm shift, along with an outline of the methods and procedures to be utilized in the study. The decision to make this in-depth description of the proposed study available to potential participants was based on my concurrence with Heron's (1981) view: that in a collaborative inquiry, co-researchers, as autonomous actors, need to be aware of the researcher's thinking.

Following the rather informal introductory process, co-researchers were seen for an additional period of time which was devoted to the development of rapport. These informal dialogues are critical in existential phenomenological research, as the establishing of a trusting relationship is crucial to an open, honest sharing of one's experience.

A second meeting provided an opportunity to clarify the contractual arrangements for the core research interview. A consent

form was signed at that time, once the participant had reached a point of concurring with the aims and methods of the study (Appendix B). Issues discussed during the contracting phase of the relationship included the following:

- 1) confidentiality, including the choosing of a pen-name for the study;
- 2) choosing a time and place for the research interview that met the needs of the co-researcher;
- 3) provision of opportunity to listen to the audio-tape of the research interview and/or read all data derived from the interview;
- 4) freedom of the co-researcher to withdraw from the process at any time;
- 5) freedom of the co-researcher to change or delete anything in the written work; and
- 6) provision of an opportunity to debrief any feelings provoked by the interviewing process.

Participants who had not completed a Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (Myers, 1962; Myers & McCaulley, 1985) prior to this study were invited to do so during this contracting session. My original plan had been to use the results of this self-report instrument as a means of establishing a common language to reflect on the processes of perceiving and arriving at conceptualizations about the world. For participants who had already completed this questionnaire in a previous context, the identified preferences in psychic functioning

had become an integrated part of their self-understanding. Because this information was no longer in the forefront of consciousness for these participants, it was not a relevant way to discuss the process of change. The one person who found this information particularly valuable did share its meaning during the research interview.

In situations where this instrument and the information about typology was unfamiliar, the exercise became a meaningful way to develop further rapport. Even in these instances, however, there was no follow-through in terms of relating this understanding to the stories of change. In keeping with the underlying principles of existential phenomenology, I abandoned my plan to discuss the change process in the language of preferences in psychic functioning as soon as I became aware that this was an agenda that was not relevant to the central aim of the study or to the co-researchers.

One in-depth, focused dialogal interview constituted the central method of gathering the data for this study. Time for this interview, which was tape-recorded, was unlimited in order to allow the participant to tell the story in his/her own way. The core taped interview generally lasted approximately 1 1/2 hours. Time spent before and after the interview usually added another 1 1/2 hours to a session.

Follow-up meetings to check completed transcripts of the audio-tapes sometimes generated additional information. These subsequent sessions were geared to responding to the needs of the co-researchers, as well as to the needs of the research. A commitment to a process of

collaboration formed the rationale for all decisions during the interviewing and follow-up phases of this study. The number of follow-up sessions varied greatly depending on participants' needs. A couple of the co-researchers chose to listen to the tapes and share the experience with marital partners, for example. This kind of interest and involvement on the part of the co-researchers led to additional dialogues.

Interviewing Guide

Empathetic knowledge is the knowledge of relationships, the knowledge of mutuality, the knowledge of a shared spirituality between all living things...based on respect for things as they are (Rifkin, 1985a, p. 46).

Throughout thirteen years as a counsellor, I have been guided in my relationships by this philosophy of empathy, of listening to "things as they are". This attitude, in my view, is also basic to the existential phenomenological approach to research, and is an underlying premise of the I-thou encounter described by Buber (1958). Because I was the instrument in this study, I will elaborate on my understanding of the I-thou dialogal meeting which framed my interviewing process.

In the co-research relationship, as in any human relationship, the I-thou encounter is basic to whole-person knowing. A way of being that prepares the climate for this knowing between persons embodies

the qualities of congruence, unconditional positive regard and empathy, as defined by Rogers (1961).

Congruence means to me a commitment to stay with my own experience in an interview, conveying my genuine feelings and awareness in the process of dialogue. It also means that I kept none of my research agenda hidden from a co-researcher. Such authentic being I saw as essential in nourishing and sustaining an atmosphere of trust.

Accepting another with no conditions creates an ambience of permission for an honest accounting of one's story. This openness to receiving a person and his/her experience "as is" ensured hearing accurately the co-researcher's story, rather than screening it through a filter of my own judgements and perceptions of the phenomenon.

When I am able to allow my feelings of empathy to be freely communicated in a dialogue, I am aware that the other senses an invitation to reach to the depths of an experience being shared. To me, true empathy is feeling with another, while accepting the unique identity of the other. An empathic response would never be, "I know just how you feel", as this would violate the singularity of a person's feeling experience. One way that I consistently convey empathy is by acknowledging attunement to another's narrative with frequent "um-hums" (see Appendix C for example of transcribed research interview). I am also aware that body language of attendance, through leaning with openness toward the other, and by maintaining eye contact, is a more powerful message of empathy than any verbalization.

The I-thou relationship is a true peer relationship, a meeting from center to center which is a communion between equal human beings. In an I-thou encounter, one is open to the unpredictable, the surprise in each moment. Sadler (1969) wrote that it is "in the I-thou that the I becomes real through sharing" (p. 105). It is through this sharing, this meeting in true dialogue, that a person becomes free to reveal the essence of lived-experience. By remaining true to the principles of the I-thou dialogue - by listening to others without suggestions, reframing or judgements - I enabled co-researchers to share their stories in a way that they could reflect on them anew and open to their potential meanings. Donald, one of the co-researchers, expressed his appreciation for this method:

Sharing this, I'm getting all kinds of new information about it, as well. I mean, just describing it! I've never, ever shared all this with anyone before, so I'm seeing it differently, as a result. I'm glad you've set your structure out this way, so that there is this operative...

Interviews for the study were framed by the core research question, "What is the experience of changing to a new world view?" Further questions, evoked in the process of the interview, focused on the "whatness" or "essence" of this core experience. Clarification questions, repetition of statements in a hesitant voice and reflective silences were all ways of inviting further exploration. Simple "um-hums" and non-verbal cues also generally facilitated a continuing reflection on lived-experience.

Interviews, then, were both focused and open-ended. The fundamental structure of the interview was maintained by the central

question. As long as both the co-researcher and I were mindful of the original question, the interview kept centered on the lived-experience. Patton's (1981) view was that this general interview guide ensures that the orientation in interviews is similar enough to elicit fundamentally parallel information across accounts. In addition, it provided enough flexibility for participants to reflect on their own processes and create new meanings. In this way, the interview provided a means for ongoing change. Both the uniqueness of each person's story, and the threads that joined the stories were, in fact, illuminated by utilizing this "both/and" approach.

This, then, was the personalist framework I used for the process of interviewing. I agree with Wolter-Gustafson's (1984) reflection on the meaning of this approach:

In the realm of personal scholarship, the researcher risks immersion in the life of dialogue with no prepared security. She further trusts that to the degree she has entered the dialogue fully, what is preserved will be the essential nucleus as a residue for crystallization (p. 37).

Interpretation of the Experience: Reflecting on Essential Themes

Discovering an essential orderliness implies the trust that such orderliness exists (Wolter-Gustafson, p. 34).

The need to understand underlies a need for order. It is this need to order knowing, to make sense of experience, that necessitates a structure in the research process. A focused interviewing process

in phenomenological studies can set the stage for this ordering of experience; explicating essential themes describing a phenomenon elucidates its pattern and meaning. As noted by Berger, Berger and Kellner (1974), even though the consciousness of an experience is a subjective phenomenon, once its significant elements are shared, it can be described objectively and systematically because "it is organized in patterns" (p. 14).

A first step in the process of ordering the information in this study was the typing of a complete verbatim transcript of each audio-taped interview. Listening to the tapes and typing between twenty and twenty-five pages (single-spaced) per tape involved approximately twelve hours for each taped interview. Each transcript was then read by me as a whole for a gestalt impression of the lived-experience. I then typed a three to four page "stream of consciousness" summary of each transcript.

This beginning intensive process was a way for me to begin to perceive intuitively the existing patterns in an account. Notes of these first reflections were kept in a file, along with the interview transcript. While an overall sensibility was sifting through my consciousness, I gave a copy of the typed transcript to the participant for a member-check on its validity and completeness. When a transcript was returned to me, along with any changes or additional reflections, I began a more systematic search for themes that might describe the essence of the phenomenon.

To begin to uncover themes that revealed the core structure of

the experience, I read the transcript a number of times to look for relevant descriptive phrases or statements. These descriptions were circled and/or underlined with colored ink. van Manen termed this procedure "highlighting" (p. 31). Careful attention to including all descriptions of experiences relevant to the core research question guided the process of uncovering the fundamental structure of the phenomenon. In this initial phase of "highlighting", all phrases that described the phenomenon were given equal attention. This "horizontalizing" of phenomena is described by Ihde as a hermeneutic rule that keeps one from deciding prematurely that one thing is more basic than another (p. 37).

A complete transcription of a pilot interview, along with some beginning steps in ordering information and distilling core themes is included in Appendix C. Rather than reduce the accounts in the straight-forward shortening of the original transcript that is shown in this appendix (Step #4), however, I used a story form of reduction. I chose to present the information from this study in story form because it is a relatively complete way to present accounts, and is a way of rendering a person's experience understandable and believable.

Once I had encircled all possible parts of a transcript that might either be relevant to a person's overall story of change (see Appendix C, Step #3), or as a descriptive statement to illustrate a possible essential element of the experience, I cut up the transcript into segments no larger than a half-page, and taped these sections onto 5" x 7" cards. I then organized the cards from each person's

transcript in a manner that would facilitate the creation of a coherent story that embodied the lived-experience. Each card was labelled with potential themes in the right-hand corner, so that when the stories were completed, I would have a filing system developed for locating invariant themes across experiences. Co-researchers were again invited to assess the truth-value of the edited stories. In a few instances, changes in the ordering of material were suggested by co-researchers, so that the flow of the stories would accurately reflect their original meanings.

Once the stories were completed for each individual participant, a process that took approximately two months, a second phase in ordering the information began: the identification of the structural or invariant aspects of the experience of the paradigm shift. A card with a descriptive statement that was illustrative of a particular theme became part of a separate file established for each theme that had been noted. In this way, recurrent patterns began to emerge that illuminated the central features of the phenomenon.

Uncovering a patterned order provided the guiding framework for my data interpretation. Within this structure, an intuitive and organic process of discerning themes was ongoing. Whether I was waking or sleeping, the stories had a central place in my consciousness. I remained receptive to this intuitive process, so as to be open to the creation of new meanings that continually emerged through the course of the lived-experience of this study. Receptivity, following intense focus, was an optimal pattern for me to

create a synthesis of meaning from the data. The actual process revealing the meaning in the information, then, was a perpetual movement between the phenomenon of experience and the reflections it invoked.

Writing

My role as interpreter is to illuminate the form that is already in the narratives, to describe the structure in a way that makes it visible to others. To this end, my presentation of the information generated from this study follows the format of Wolter-Gustafson's dissertation: the ten stories in reduced and edited form are presented as one chapter. These mini-stories are then followed by the explication of themes which are deemed to constitute the essential structural features of the phenomenon. Each theme is illustrated by a number of verbatim examples from individual transcripts that verify its selection. I have chosen enough examples from the accounts to document a point about an element, and to demonstrate the commonality of an element across persons. This discussion of themes embodies the core of the phenomenological description, which van Manen defined as "an example of examples" (p. 36).

If, in reading the mini-stories and the examples elucidating each theme, the invariant nature of the phenomenon becomes visible to the reader, the appropriateness of the themes - of the phenomenological description - will be validated. My attempt in this presentation,

therefore, has been to report the original accounts with enough elaboration for a reader to be able to assess the congruence between the communications of the participants and my interpretation.

In phenomenological analysis "the comprehension and elucidation of the meaning of the data involves interpretive judgement" (Ricoeur, 1971, p. 548). Therefore, I have tried throughout to include information about my own impressions and biases.

A discussion of the themes in light of key themes from other literature will locate this interpretation in a wider context. The discussion culminates with a chapter of implications for education and counselling.

Reflections on the Research Experience

This research required a high level of commitment in terms of time and energy. For me, this commitment also necessitated ongoing excitement generated through an intimate connection with the project. In addition to the two to three years that was invested in the preparation stage of this research, the time I spent interviewing, transcribing each audio-tape and synthesizing each transcript into a story form totalled about four months of intense work. Finally, writing the last two chapters took over a month of focused attention.

The approximately six months of living with the narratives, including my intermittent contacts with the co-researchers, was really a journey. I recognize that this kind of involvement in one's

research project is probably not always practical, however, this method was very meaningful for me. For example, I felt very strongly about transcribing each tape verbatim, and doing the entire job myself. I found that listening to these tapes, over and over, was an important step in allowing the "feel" of the story to penetrate my consciousness. This kind of in-depth concentration with each transcript was a significant part of the focusing process. I did not count the number of times I read each transcript, or, after editing the accounts, each story, but I know the ten histories almost as well as I know my own story. This kind of familiarity aided me in a process of reflecting on the essential nature of the experience that was invariant across stories.

Throughout this latter six month period, I continued to read relevant literature (primarily in evenings when I could no longer concentrate on my writing). I found a core principle of hermeneutics invaluable: the reminder to stay with the accounts. Allowing ideas from these accounts to grow and avoiding the temptation of fitting the information to some preconceived theoretical constructs was very significant for me, because I am constantly reading something new and getting enthusiastic about some novel framework. Allowing the stories to speak to me, to show me the underlying themes, was an exercise in receptivity.

Overall, the interviewing experience worked well, and followed the guidelines I had established. There was a naturalness about the process that seemed to be aided by the clear-cut expectations as

predefined by the contract, by the comfortable atmosphere of the egalitarian relationship, and by the deep meaning that this particular lived-experience held for each co-researcher. During the months of my relating to the co-researchers, a level of trust was developed that meant that validation of the information was truly a co-research process. When words or phrases had been either misheard or misunderstood by me during the transcribing of interviews, participants were able to quickly clarify the nature of their actual messages.

Feedback about the value of the process for participants was shared during the research interview, as well as at the time of the follow-up session. One participant, Marni, commented on how important it was to her to have the opportunity to synthesize her learning of the last few years. Another co-researcher, Joel, described the process as one of preparing a very detailed resume, an activity that was particularly valuable for him at this time. The structure of centering the interview around one basic question elicited an in-depth account of the process of change. All of the co-researchers found this structure very meaningful in terms of sharing what was of central importance in their lives.

In accordance with my original plan, I asked one of the co-researchers to interview me. Although I had written the beginning sketch of my own shift in world views, my trust in the value of the I-thou dialogue as a singular means of evoking the essence of lived-experience led me to a wish to experience the process as a

participant. These are some of the reflections I wrote following the experience:

The intensity of our connection was so powerful that I had no awareness of time; it was truly an experience of being in the now.

I was continually surprised throughout the session at the kinds of discoveries that Serendipity (a co-researcher) was able to facilitate by "bringing" the threads of my life from the past to bear on the current experience I was describing. It was an experience of "creating a weaving" of my life story. I found it a moving experience to share my life story from the core perspective of my view of life. It was like being able to talk about that which has had central meaning, using life events only to describe the vehicles of my path; to recognize that that was what life events were - carriers of the experience that has always been my path. Each new idea or experience has been "right" for the moment in time that it has appeared.

I was really glad that I decided to include my own experience of having an interview. I am not sure how much of my story I will share, but experiencing the process has been important as a means of knowing from the inside what it feels like to synthesize one's experience using one focusing question. It felt very effective as a way of further understanding self, making sense of a whole life path, and feeling a renewed excitement about the future.

Another thing I was aware of in the interview was how important the skilled interviewer is in a dialogue; that something was literally created for me in terms of "seeing

my life story" anew by having a mirror reflect back my experience.

I have chosen not to include information from my own transcript. The story is essentially the one that I have included as one of the research processes. One of the reasons for omitting my narrative is very simple: ten transcripts generated all the information that I was able to include in a satisfactory manner to me. This, then, is also the rationale grounding my decision not to include information from Cynthia's story (Appendix C) as additional examples of the essential themes of the change process. In spite of this lack of inclusion, the basic themes do apply to Cynthia's journey (see Appendix C, Step #5) and also to my own. Cynthia continues to center her ongoing change on integrative processes. She has been taking courses, reading and becoming involved in affinity groups as ways of validating her experience and extending her frame of reference on the transformation.

As a researcher I am unable to keep apace with the perpetual movement integral to change. As Marni said on returning the transcript:

...by one month later I reread it, and all of a sudden, it had become such distant past information, as if time had telescoped. My perspective had shifted so dramatically!

In spite of this continual change in participants' lives, and in one's self, a researcher must finally put boundaries around the work, knowing that the "real work" never ends. It is this reality that has sustained the relationship between me and this dissertation. This

relatedness has been the heart of "living" my study, with each participant's story adding enrichment to my own journey of change.

CHAPTER III
STORIES OF LIVED-EXPERIENCE

The doctrine of reflexivity argues that you are free...to enjoy the wisdom and companionship of your 'subject' (Bannister, 1981, p. 199).

I have chosen to present the stories of lived-experience in the order in which they were told to me. This choice was made by me in the hope that readers might capture a fraction of the excitement I experienced on my journey with these "companions".

One unique feature I noted about the stories was that all of the men identified experiences with nature and with Native Indian traditions as meaningful elements in their change processes. It seemed to me that the connectedness with the earth might reflect a relatedness to the "feminine ground" as a fundamental part of the men's experience in changing to a more holistic world view.

In the dialogues, my speaking is identified with the initial N., except in Nimrod's story, when I use, N.D. My speaking inclusions are edited, and are often used so as to facilitate the flow of the story. In the summary and transition paragraphs, all material in quotation marks has come directly from the original transcript in question. All underlining in the narratives denotes the participant's emphasis. I have used a row of asterisks to denote a break between an original transcript and any follow-up information. Aside from this guidance for reading, each story speaks for itself.

Amy

At the time of our first meeting, Amy was in her early forties, and the single parent of two late teen-age children preparing to leave the "nest". A nurse of many years, Amy was pursuing an advanced degree to expand on her knowledge of the healing arts. Since that time, both of her children have successfully separated from home, she has begun a trial reconciliation with her partner, and she is working in the mental health field. Amy is a warm, vivacious person who seems to delight in in-depth discussions; hence, she invites dialogue. In one of our encounters, I was sharing with her the general thrust of my studies, including my core research question. Her immediate response was a conviction regarding the precise beginning of her own shift in consciousness. Tentatively, she began telling me the outline of this story that she subsequently related in our taped interview:

- A. My children were five and six, so I would be about 27, and I was in the hospital having surgery, and there was a botched-up operation. They didn't realize until it was time for me to be going home, when I could no longer move out of bed and was losing consciousness, that there was some problem. And so, I was given a lot of blood - eight or nine bottles. Then my kidneys began to shut down, and they realized that I required emergency surgery. I recall the doctor coming in, Friday night at midnight, saying, "she won't make it until morning...if we don't operate now!" I also know that I was near death, in that years later, I met a nurse who recalled me as a case, and said, "Oh God! Don't tell me you were

that nurse that wasn't going to make it?!" And all those years later she remembered! And I know that when I went into the operating room at midnight on Friday, it was wall-to-wall interns. So, these are the things that make me realize that it had been serious. I was not aware of how serious my condition was. I was not aware. I was hemorrhaging internally. That's why my kidneys shut down. They'd forgotten to tie off major arteries. And of course, they weren't aware of it until I began to lose consciousness. But to tell about the experience, itself: what happened to me the day or two before I was to have this emergency surgery is what I would say was the "near-death experience". I wasn't consciously aware of the state that I was entering, but I'm very aware - in looking back, in retrospect - of the qualitative shift that occurred in me. I mean, I know I was near death, but for other reasons! Not for all the concrete facts. I know. The doctor knew when he looked at me; he knew from looking at my changed being that he'd better operate, and operate now! And that's because of this changed thing in me, which is really hard to talk about, but, what happened was my relationship to my children and my husband, my relationship to the staff, my relationship to the three other patients in the unit, my relationship to life, my relationship to the past.....was totally unlike anything I'd ever experienced before. And that tells me that I knew. I didn't have any need to get up and say, "Look after me - something's wrong". I was beyond that. I had entered another state where that all didn't matter; it didn't matter at all. I became totally accepting and I entered another consciousness level where I became really peaceful. I saw and heard things differently. Instead of seeing things unidimensionally, I was seeing them from all sides. I had been critical and analyzing toward

the staff's care of the three other women with me. Now I knew they'd be all right; they'd be O.K. I became loving, very loving, not just to the patients, but toward their families and the staff who attended them. I didn't know what was happening to me. I was just laying there, taking all this in, and things just didn't matter anymore that mattered before. I saw them differently. I saw my children differently. They were my whole life, and suddenly, I just sort of knew that everything was going to be just fine. I let go! I let go of everything!... without knowing what I was doing or why! And I let go with a peace that I had never known before. Talk about letting go! I was letting go of my life! I mean, when I look back at it now, I should have been fighting, but I had gone past the point. I was just letting my life go, and yet, I was never as much alive as I was right then. I was totally perceptive. It was like I was all over the room, seeing it from all angles, and my life seemed terribly insignificant. When the doctor came in and sat on the bed I remember that hardly a word was spoken, but I sensed that it was my acceptance of everything that made him realize the seriousness of it all. I was awake. I wasn't unconscious, but it was like all of this stuff was on another reality level, in a different state. I think he picked up on this 'otherness' that I was experiencing. I felt that I had totally matured. I could be 98; not physically, not feeling old and tired. In fact, I was feeling no pain - and I was not on medication. How can I say? It's like I wasn't on the bed. I was more spiritual than physical. That's what it was. I, the body there on the bed was so insignificant, so small. I was much bigger, much fuller; that body was a limitation. Why would I be bothered saying, "Get somebody; I think I'm on the way out"? I felt like I was on the way in! Like, I recall letting go of

these two little children who I loved absolutely dearly; I let them go...It was like a releasing. And it was nothing that was going on in my head, because I didn't think anything was wrong with me. It was happening without my awareness.

I'm very happy. That was fifteen years ago...and that has stayed with me. I mean, I won't forget that experience, and from then on, anything that has major ties and threads in my life from then, ties into that experience in some way...or comes from that experience. I do think that was a major turning point in my life. It was a qualitative shift in my whole experience, and it wasn't something that I had deliberately sought or consciously thought about. It just happened, and then, in retrospect, is when I date what I suppose I could call my spiritual growth.

N. It's like an experience that happened without any seeking...

A. I definitely feel that it happened outside of me because I had not been reading any of that kind of stuff. The whole '70s "spiritual evolution" had not started. So, it isn't like I'd been reading. It was outside of religious influence. And yet, it was probably my most religious experience. There's no question about that in my mind. And it wasn't just a momentary thing. It had gone on for - well, let's call it a day - because I lost track of time.

That was another thing. There was no time. None! There was enough time to see the relationships from completely different angles. I had time to check that out, to look at that, to feel it. That's a better word, because at the time, I wasn't thinking about it.

N. It sounds like you were more in an intuitive mode than a thinking mode.

A. I wasn't thinking at all. I certainly was a thinking person when I went in, but in those last couple of days - I mean, there was no thinking about it. I was just there - part of the whole mechanism - and in a sense I felt that I was bigger than the whole thing, and in another sense, I wasn't even part of it. I was outside of it. And yet, I was in it. It's really fantastic!

Amy recalled that she didn't reflect too much on this experience right away, because when she went home she was preoccupied with her physical recovery and taking care of her family, and "life was back in its black and white reality". It was at the time of another operation a few years later - a point at which she more consciously faced death - that she reflected back on her near-death experience. Part of this focus on her own mortality was related to the fact that she was facing menopause at age 33 as a result of the earlier surgical procedures and complications.

A. I began to look at life, at the temporariness of it all. I feel that through circumstances and accident, I've

been forced to really look at this life of ours and how absolutely short it is... and, how suddenly it can change.

It took a few other critical times in Amy's life to reexperience the kind of acceptance and letting go that was integral to her "near-death" experience, and after that, she began to "purposely seek" similar experiences.

A. The more I opened myself up to that realm, I found how powerful it is. A couple of times it happened to me unannounced and uninvited and unsought, but after a while I couldn't ignore the power in that any longer. I don't count for that original experience being too much except that it gave me the hint of what is there. It gave me the realization of this other realm. It's like a historical fact. It's like birth, but it was just the tiny, tiny first step, and after that it's kind of up to me to begin to open myself deliberately or consciously to making that kind of change on a more ongoing basis. So, it's a beginning, just a beginning. If you think of spiritual growth in terms of life development, then that was like a birth. Then there were a couple of other occasions when I was really at a bad point in my life, where again, there were experiences.

N. Were the next experiences similar, or...?

A. Not death experiences...it wasn't death, although it was a social kind of death. It was more a psychological death, a loss. But I entered into this euphoria, this

realization that if I just let go that there was this other awareness, this other power, really, that can totally alter things...and did! It did, it does!

A second experience occurred one winter when Amy was living in a small town on the prairies. As a single parent with two small children, she described herself as: "kind of an outcast for the first time in my life". Her alienation and loneliness were healed by "a kind of religious experience in the solitude".

A. I hadn't really been pursuing anything consciously, and one day, just really, really briefly - a split second - again, it happened. For the next year I went through a state of such strength and elation that I have never had before. Just that one brief experience enabled me to just get it all together in that town and hold my head up, without consciously doing it. You know, I literally flew. You know, John Denver's song about wings, "Sweet Surrender"? It's exactly what it was. I was up. I surrendered. What was happening, was I rose above: I had this wisdom that didn't come from reading. It just swept over me. I just felt like I was protected in some sort of cloud for the next several months, and in reality, it wasn't a cloud, because I was working and managing and had the children and everything. I feel like it was a repeat of that original experience in the hospital room, only on a much grander scale. I loved and understood all the people of that little town. I understood they were to be pitied. I had real and total compassion for them, while deep in the midst of their persecution of me. I had the same loving acceptance I'd had

in the hospital, but it was for many more people, and the effect sustained me for months to come.

N. So, you took the hints and clues, and made a conscious choice?

A. Yeah, after two or three of these uncalled-for events, I just said, "Yeah, I'll seek that out". Although, I've found it's a lot more successful if it isn't sought out. It's harder to kind of purposely go, you know, consciously seeking it. I feel that I was really fortunate to experience it, to be overcome with this sense of being somewhere outside what was happening - outside of reality. And it just keeps pointing me in that direction, which, for me, is strength and happiness and so much...it's just so much!

It was like I couldn't avoid it anymore. It's like it was right there in great big letters that if you go this way you don't have to keep bumping your leg and falling and breaking your neck in this kind of reality. I mean, you can see why I don't talk about this. I mean, this sounds perfectly hallucinatory.

An experience that Amy was certain sounded "totally hallucinatory" happened when she was watching the wedding of Princess Diana and Prince Charles on her black and white television. In describing the experience, Amy emphasized that she had not been a fan of royalty.

A. I began to totally be there. I wasn't thinking; I was meditating in the experience. It was just unfolding - and there was no TV set - I was just there in England. I was experiencing this. I was not drinking or smoking or eating. I was just sitting there. Suddenly, I remember hearing the minister's words so clearly, and it had such impact and meaning that I realized I was really getting into this in a very non-critical fashion. And just thinking, "Wow, he's speaking to the whole world", and "this is really right on" - totally non-critical, and I was loving the whole of what I saw. It was just, "This is beautiful!", like, "God, this is no more violence", you know, the war and all that - "This is beautiful! This is a fairy tale, but it's beautiful!" Anyway, the music started to happen, and along with this glorious music, the camera was sweeping the top of the church and the murals in the church, and it was just kind of going along with the music in total synchrony...perfect! Suddenly, without any thought or anything - and it wasn't until it was over that I realized it had happened (the scene was Christ's ascension and there were angels around, and he had a long white skirt on) - I noticed that the clouds were moving and it was in pink and blue...in color. And it wasn't until quite a bit later that I realized it was a black and white set, and the minute that I realized that, it was black and white again. So, what I was hearing was the music, and what I was watching were the clouds and him rising out of the clouds. There was pink and yellow and blue, and it was moving. And then I say, "This is a black and white set. That's a wall mural. Why are those clouds moving?" And the minute I did that, it all stopped and went back to normal. I was very awake, and I stayed awake. I had a surge of energy, excitement, happiness.

- N. You certainly entered another dimension, didn't you!?
- A. I did, and yet it was still the scene. I mean, it wasn't different from the actual painting. Painting, yes...I made it real! And I feel normal and healthy. I do not feel a psychiatric case! I wouldn't talk about it to anyone. I'm very defensive about this. If I talked about the moving murals, somebody would scientifically say, "Oh well, you were tired", and not get it into the perspective that I know it was in...that I know it was in. It was where it had meaning for me...and on another level.

I haven't talked about it because...well, I've been a psychiatric nurse, and I'm sensitive to the kind of talk that professionals do. You know, what is a vision and what is hallucination? I feel, that for me, because of when these experiences have occurred, and the short length of time, and the fact that I've never felt I was out of control, that they were not hallucinatory experiences. They were meaningful, significant changes of consciousness, when I was willing to let it happen. I can't force it, but I can get myself into an accepting position. Of course, the goal, once I've experienced that, and have experienced the strength that comes out of that, is to get into that state a lot more. You know, everyday life is kind of "let's get this out of the way so I can really get fuelled up". I was not like this before, at all.

Each experience, following the initial one, was more powerful, because I was more aware of what was happening and could relate to it in much more meaningful ways. As my consciousness increased, so did the impact of an experience on my being and my life.

N. It sounds like this is pointing you in a certain direction...

A. Oh, it's gotten to the point where, to me, spiritual growth is the one, number one most important part of my life. I want to get to the stage where I open myself up everyday to that, because in the early years, it only happened when I was at the "end of the old rope", and then, it was kind of a relinquishing, and suddenly, a whole new understanding, a wisdom, not an understanding in the head. In the wedding of Diana and Charles, there was no pain, and it wasn't a critical turning point, so I guess I have come to the point where I can just kind of let go and something may happen.

You have to let it go...I am determined about that. It's almost an unawareness. You're awake, but your mind is no longer "dot-dot-dot", doing its processing. It's not doing its processing. Like, I enter the scene. It's getting right into it - entering it for whatever it is - the whole, and not trying to make sense of it, but letting go of

that and kind of accepting it. I think it helps to appreciate it.

Amy's search for a framework to validate her experience took her to the church. Even though she had questioned, and then left, the church as a young adult, because of her cultural roots, Christ had more meaning for her than Zen Buddhists, for example. The institutional church does not welcome hearing about visionary experiences, and as she was not involved in the church at the time of her experiences, they were especially "questionable". Some of the non-traditional expressions of Christianity she investigated tended to be "very literal" and did not "put any thought" behind what they did, so her quest finally took her to an exploration of the spiritual writings of Christian mystics.

A. I almost feel a sense of communion with those writers. It's interesting to me that the best, most classic, writings in the whole area are by people who had a lot of trouble fitting into the institutional church. They're readings to meditate on: The Cloud of Unknowing and those kinds of writings. And the Bible has its moments of glory. I mean, open the Bible and find something that applies directly to my situation right now. I mean, even in a dream I've been given a reading when I wasn't even reading the Bible. All these little threads and ties have helped keep me on the path. I am sensing more and more a transcendence of history and time as I read these people. Simone Weil, who wrote

Gateway to God, was outside the church - a French philosopher - a woman who just...ah! I read her stuff, and she is exactly where I am, and I just feel this, "Wow!, Simone, write some more!" So validating! So, you read these people and you go, "Yeah, I'm not on the wrong track".

So, I have deliberately sat and tried to pick up threads, and the change has been for me that I'm a much happier, much more secure, much more understanding kind of person. As a young adult I was bitter, angry, anxious, suicidal. Since the time of the operation, I have had an understanding and a clarity of perception that I never gave myself credit for, because I had been doing a lot of running.

I have a powerful reinforcer, because I never am on this other path and feel bad. All I know is spiritual experience causes such strength and such happiness that it then predisposes me to accepting it again, and even seeking it. I will actively seek it for the rest of my life, because I know that the energy and the growth is in that area. Losing that and stepping away and just pursuing ordinary existence, as I call it now, means I am in a mess in no time.

I'm like other people in that way. I have my times of suspicion and doubt. Belief in stuff that you can't see is always problematic. I mean, my God, in my rational mind it

sounds like I'm the most naive and gullible person! So, I've had these experiences now for fifteen years, and I'm still plugging along step-by-step.

There's the need to take these steps yourself, as I am a lone traveller. It's a very personal walk. I had this incredible dream, actually, about three or four years ago, which I think is my world view: the end goal is to become like the divine...whole and part of. We're all too human most times, and you have to pursue this other...So, the dream:

It was three murals: two black and white ones and, in the middle, a colored one, and I was walking along. I mean, this was my life history, and I didn't understand it until I went to analyze it later. The center one, which was the present - the others were the past and future - was me on a road, and above me is a very lush green hill with a figure of light - shining light on it, you know, with a few figures around. The sky was a deep purple. It was the most gorgeous color I can imagine, and stars were just kind of coming out. It was Mount Zion and that was sort of Christ up there on the hill. There I was, on this path on the bottom of the hill, and I kind of became aware of this figure up there and it dawned on me - "This is He!" I mean, this is it! This is my God figure, right? I remember wanting desperately to just sink right down, you know, and pray, right? In awe! And what did I do? I looked around to see if anybody was watching, because I would be embarrassed. And I found out that I was standing in marshy water. Suddenly, it was marshy around me and I would be wet, and I looked around to see if anybody would watch. As

soon as I made that decision - to be embarrassed about other people - the figure of Christ faded and went. It was gone, and I moved on into the future panel, which was black and white...and my death, I might add. But, what I became aware of when I woke up and looked at that dream, was it was my path and nobody else was even aware of me. I mean, it was within me. It was my dream. No one else was on that same path to even watch me or know what I was experiencing. No one was even present in that part of the dream to witness me, praise or be in awe in the presence of this spiritual energy, so why did I worry?

I've been dealing with that, with the need for people's approval.

N. And your need to stay on your path.....?

A. My path...my destiny...And to be not ashamed of it. What I'm sensing now is this opening up, this total motivation to get on with it, to get myself involved in this 100% so that my work and my spirituality combine and become one, and I just feel right at the doorway. I want to get out there and apply it every day with everybody I see, because I know that is going to fulfill me, that that's my total meaning.

I saw it work right in front of my eyes when I worked with old people in the hospital. I was really seeing people and touching people and I didn't even have to say anything, and I saw the difference. Healing...healing...that's what

happened, and I saw it. So, my spirituality and my work will have to go hand-in-hand. I think that's the meaning. I don't care where I am. The whole world is my community, so I'm leaving myself open. I'm not really planning it. I know that I'll be where I should be. Doors have opened for me that never would have opened before, and I'm always constantly amazed by it. Because I don't think it's coming from me anymore.

For Amy, the "near-death experience" has become part of the "fabric" of her life. She noted that, if one looked at the externals of that incident, the focus would be on the botched operation - the problems - but that "was just a small, tiny part of it", because the transformation from the experience was such that she does not feel she's "been the same person since".

A. I became a loving person as that happened, as it was happening.

N. Well, it sounds like you were love...

A. Yeah, I became an idea...as I stepped out of the body. Interesting...Love is important.

Following a reading of the completed transcript of the taped interview, Amy reflected that the recent changes in her life were "not changes so much as a deepening of those beginnings". She has become more committed to meditation and contemplation, practicing as much as

possible the art of "silencing the self". She also attends a weekly meditation group and finds that her "rootedness in the world" is now "much surer, stronger because of her connectedness to people". In addition to her validating network of spiritual writers, she has found supportive companions in the here and now. Amy has also been able to fulfill her career aim: the integration of her spiritual understanding with her knowledge of mental health.

Amy concluded: "The goal, for me, is not so much to recapture those broad, large visionary experiences as much as it is to know the little miracles whenever I've taken the time to listen and to see inwardly".

Raechel

Raechel is a woman in her mid-thirties whose aura is one of a quiet, centered presence. She came to our meeting having organized her thoughts, and bringing a journal in which she had recorded a numinous dream of several years ago. Sharing her story was, for her, a meaningful experience; one in which she was willing to invest some energy. Our dialogue proceeded at a leisurely pace in a motel room in the Western Canadian city where Raechel lives. It was both a renewal of our connection that had been initiated in an earlier educational context, and an exploration into fresh domains of understanding. Raechel began by describing the central theme of her journey: a pattern of several profound transcendent experiences that have been difficult to integrate into her everyday life.

R. For me, it's almost like a series of what I would call "peak" experiences. They were out of the ordinary, and so therefore, I couldn't take those experiences and bring them back into, "Oh, this is normal, this is just a part of life", because they didn't fit into my life. They didn't fit into any of my experience around me.

The initial one was when I was traveling. Going to a different culture and beginning to question some really basic things caused an opening in my mind to think, "Maybe there are entirely other ways of being". I remember traveling through Europe and finally making it down to Greece, and when

I was living in a village on Crete, we had come to rest. It was the first time we had actually come to rest, so I realized a lot of time and a lot of things had fallen away.

I was traveling with a pack, so you couldn't carry much. You would usually have a book to read, and when you finished, you would pass it on and somebody would pass you a book. So I was sitting on this place on Crete. It was like a natural bay, and on one side was a huge rock-face cliff, and there were caves carved out of it where people used to live hundreds of years ago. We were sitting in the mouth of one of these caves, and a well-educated Swiss man gave me Siddhartha. The way it was written was very calm and peaceful. It was about water. We were around water, and for some reason, that story caused an opening in me, and it brought about an experience, a dream. It was in the winter-time and the rhythm of the water was very regular, and I realized that after I'd been there three weeks, I had taken on the rhythm of the waves. So I was having profound experiences as a result of being by water. I wrote down the dream, so I'll read it:

I am a male,...large and strong in stature, gentle in nature. I am walking along through a wood...a mixture of sand and pine, and leading a mule carrying supplies and tools. I am a prospector, not in search of precious gems, although I do find them, but in search of the Latrina

River...the river of eternal life. The quest is within an atmosphere of happiness and peace, without hurry, as time is of little consequence on an eternal voyage. (And I remember in the dream getting a feeling that it was like there was no death; the journey went on forever, and I had done it for eons.) I continue to walk throughout the wooded land, singing and playing wooden instruments, and sustaining myself and the mule on the food that the environment provides. I sense, by the growing grey in my hair, that a number of years has passed since the beginning. Yet, the same situation exists, with a deepening of the original qualities: peace becoming tranquillity; happiness becoming acceptance and love for all of life; patience...eternal patience. I have not met another human being since the beginning of my quest, and yet have not felt lonely as the animals and plants satisfy all desires for companionship. Finally, I come to the edge of the wooded land. It is a high sandy clay hill. A voice inside me tells me to build a house three-quarters of the way up. There are no ledges, no trees, no support, but I do not question this; I just begin. Then it becomes completed - suspended in the hill as in mid-air. I live there - continue to be happy there - and wait here for what is next. One day, as I walk onto the outdoor porch overlooking the wood, I hear a great rumbling above me. The ground is shaking as the earth is rearranging herself. From out of the hill, above my cabin, emerges a great rush of water. The water continues to pour out, forming a waterfall over my cabin, composed of light and transcendent water. And then, I become the eternal observer, looking at myself and watching. My face is calm and peaceful - joyful, accepting - and then it begins to change, becoming the face of others whom I have known and others who I would never know. The faces begin to change

more quickly...the child...the mother...the grandfather... the brother...all different forms; only the eyes remain the same. They were eternal. As I looked into my eyes, I saw the river reflected back. As part of me drew back into this observer position, I saw the ever-changing face and the immortal eyes through the finely attenuated and luminous material representing the water...and the face smiled. I was laughing - not at me - but at the paradox of all life; that the eternal search is truly an inner quest. I laughed joyfully and radiantly. I was transfixed upon the face. The eternal quality had moved out from the eyes and incorporated the entire face, irradiating it. Then the book closed. And the face became immortalized on the cover of the book titled, Latrina, the River of Eternal Life.

N. It's so much like the ending of Siddhartha, isn't it?

R. I was struck with that, and it left me feeling almost in another world for quite a while, and not knowing what had brought about that experience, whether it had been the book or that I was living a lifestyle completely alien to my own. It was day-to-day life. It was just very simple, being out in nature.

As I was traveling, that was the only experience I had of really knowing that there were other things than this material, solid, white and black reality; that beyond everything apparent was something completely different.

N. It sounds like this was a feeling experience...

R. It was beyond a thought. As I was reading Siddhartha I

was feeling feelings, but the dream really made me realize that it was more than an intellectual process or a theory or an idea that I was having; that those particular thoughts did generate an experience for me. And, it generated in me feelings I liked - peace and harmony and unity and timelessness; space, opportunity, freedom - so it depicted what I was wanting. It unlocked more of what I was wanting throughout my life.

This was the beginning of a search for Raechel to make sense of her experience. She felt a need to discover how she might recreate this kind of transcendent awareness. In spite of the uniqueness of this experience, she also had a prior knowing that there was something more to life than our ordinary existence. The actual lived-experience activated a whole host of questions in Raechel's mind.

R. As for what generates an experience, I have no idea. I don't know what the formula is. I don't know what causes experiences of another consciousness. I don't know if the "mark of Cain" idea in Hesse's Demian is there - that you already know and for some reason you're reawakened - or whether it's something that I, myself, had done; that I caused these experiences - or whether they were generated on an inner level; that it was almost on a time clock and I just happened to be alive long enough for that time to go off. All I know is that it was good for me, because there was something in me that knew this, but I could never really

understand it; just there was more. I didn't know if it existed in other places. I knew in myself there was something that existed that I wanted to discover, and traveling, at that point anyway, provided that vehicle. I'd gone to university and I'd studied psychology, hoping that studying the human psyche would give me a clue, but it didn't really. So then, traveling somehow did that.

Raechel's quest led her to books of esoteric knowledge, Eastern traditions and philosophy, and to sacred texts. She also chose to travel further, since exposure to a foreign culture had precipitated her first experience. While in the Middle East, she did have a couple of additional experiences where space and time were temporarily transcended, though neither was as profound as her initial experience. Back in Canada, a period of study preceded a second major experience, one that was artificially triggered by taking LSD.

R. I'd never done drugs of any nature, and I took a very small amount. We went to a public garden:

I was aware of the incredible magnitude of the color and the odor and all these things on a physical sense level; it was so beautiful! And the experience was so much here and now. That was all that really mattered...being in the here and now. And as I would walk down a path and I would come to a fork in the road, I just started laughing, because at any other time, I would sit there, and get in my mind and think, "Well, should I go to the left or the right? Which is going to be the best?" But, I was so here and now, I knew it didn't matter. I didn't even have to go anywhere, and I was

struck with that awareness, which generally I don't have. And I remember also going to the top of a hill and looking out over a valley and seeing the valley change: buildings there that weren't there. I felt like they were very much like what must have been there, tipis and all kinds of things. And things would just rise and then they would change and they would be in different places. It was a whole other reality, and I was seeing things out of a time context that I generally see things in.

So, how can I interpret that? That gave me an experience, that time,...that what I experience as normal reality isn't the only one that exists. I really felt that I could see things be there and disappear, and I got the feeling of time and space being very different than my normal idea. It seemed normal, and within me there was no reaction of fear, just, "Oh, yes, of course; how could it be any other way?!" So, for me, that LSD provided another way into another dimension that I knew existed, but I very rarely could get into. It was a very spiritual - very opening - experience for me. And I never did drugs again. I knew that I could never equal that experience.

N. It sounds like a flood of a new way of seeing.

R. Yeah, but the contrast was always there with the normal. It was like there was a part of me that was just me that was watching it all, and that could provide me with an indication of how different it was, this form of perceiving.

At one point, I just got to the side of the path at the fork, and I watched other people approach it, and I could experience some anxiety and trepidation in them to make the right choice. And I felt so free, because I didn't have any of that - wanting to do the right, or the most appropriate thing or the best - and it was all gone; all the judgement was gone. And there was another part of that day when I was walking along and I found these two old people - an old retired couple - and they were so happy, so childlike and so free. They were really in love, and they were the only people that I naturally gravitated to. It seems like this really opened my heart, and I was very drawn to who were in their heart, and these two old people were just great!

After that experience, Raechel plummeted into a depression. She had gone from the heights of ecstasy, in transcending her ordinary daily experience, to a real valley of despair in returning to normal life.

R. I got into my first real depression after. I came down with a bang. It had opened me up to such an extent that my ordinary reality just didn't make it, and I didn't know how to get back, and I felt the most incredible sense of loss. And it was..., it was like finding a place where you really felt comfortable and it all makes sense, and then not being able to get back. It was almost like a "through the looking-glass" kind of thing. And I couldn't get back into the other world. I didn't have a key. I just felt like

there was something missing, and that was the predominant awareness.

Raechel's depression vanished as soon as she connected with a person who could understand her experience.

R. As soon as I began to communicate with this woman that I met - she and I were both suited to each other in so many ways - as soon as I was able to communicate, I moved out of that depression, and I moved into a whole new way of being. She and I ended up getting a place - a beautiful house. It was the right "everything", and it all started fitting into place. And then, all of these people would start walking into my life at the right time and the right place. There was a synchronicity. People would drop in as we thought about them. We'd moved out of the normal time dimension through our own process, so it had become an organic thing at that point.

N. Being able to communicate it, then, freed you.....?

R. Yeah, it gave me an acceptance which I didn't have. For a while I didn't know whether I was crazy or what because I didn't have a framework to fit that experience in. Even though I had had the one or two before when I was traveling, this was vaster and different. And then once I realized I wasn't really crazy, or I took it out of any kind of negative framework, and as she and I would start talking about it, the feelings would again be generated. There would

be something generated through the communication, and a different sense of timing. There was some kind of thing going on that we could alter time, and that things would happen.....as we thought about them; there was a synchronicity. We were aware that thoughts were real and they had power and form, and the unreal became real in the regular, during that time period. I could just see how all these things really did function. It also created a whole spiritual thing, because we realized the responsibility involved with awareness.

After her friend moved on, to return to school, Raechel went to live in a community in California for six months. In this community, people who were "exploring the edges of consciousness studies" presented talks and workshops on an ongoing basis.

R. These talks were very stimulating, and I remember at one point having a very stimulating conversation with two people in the kitchen.

I don't know if you've ever experienced it, but sometimes, for me, when I've been talking about things which are really close to the truth, the air takes on almost like a crackle effect. It's so clear that you know what you're saying is "right on". There's just more life. There's a force there that's not in normal conversation. And I remember feeling this when I was talking to these two people. And I had the feeling that the molecules in the floor were opening up, and there was space between these real solid things, and then I moved my position and I leaned against the fridge, and even

though I could feel the solid part against my arm, it wasn't really solid either, and I had the feeling of everything becoming permeable, and as I walked outside, the ground became this undulating mass, and it was almost like it was waving like the ocean. And I remember getting to the top of the hill and looking over, and this voice in my head saying something like, "Sometimes the veil between realities is very thin". And I remember feeling it very clearly - almost like a doorway.

And there was another experience I had there. I was talking with someone. We had this really good conversation in this tipi, and it was like that other time - very clear and there was a lot of crackling.

During that day, earlier, I'd put on a tape of Indian chants while I was making dinner, and that had been playing while I was in there, and then in the evening, as I came back to where I was staying, this friend gave me Gregory Bateson's Man and Nature, and as I started reading I was finding the wording quite intellectual, and my mind wanted to not exactly be with it. I remember putting the book down, and all of a sudden, that chanting was playing - the Indian chants - and I realized it was almost like on a wave-length. It was playing eternally. It would always play. It had been set in motion and it was. And I had somehow tuned into it. My mind just went "plop", and there it was. It was right in this whole belt where that chanting tape was, and it was exactly as it had been played. And then I went - my mind kind of went into the conversation that I'd had that night, and it was going on too.

N. So, again, sort of the eternal....

R. Again, that realities do exist all the time, and that you can pick your reality, you know, whichever one you want to live in, because they're all there. It's just there for whoever wants it, always. Almost like the collective unconscious; just tune into where you want. But it's not really having, not really knowing what the keys are, although finding that these conversations would do it for me. And then I came back here, and I didn't have experiences...so I'm wondering.

Raechel's central struggle is integrating her awareness of the potentials of consciousness with her everyday reality in a way that brings her an ongoing sense of "being at home".

R. I really need to communicate, and I need to find people that are on that dimension (aware of other realities), because I guess there's a tendency in me to feel alienated, or to feel alone with it. It's important to me to have that kinship or that network...like, it facilitates my own growth incredibly. Having other people around really helps me to live it and be it, and it feels, for me, necessary. Maybe it's because I'm in such an infantile stage with it. I often get stuck in the old way, which is like, taking things at face value. I feel for me that that's the biggest thing I need to work through - is not buying into what is apparently there. And I think that's what all these

experiences are for; just to tap me on the head and say, "Don't buy into it; don't believe it; there's more than you think; just remember that". I think these experiences try to help me remember. And I need people for that too.

N. If you're in a network, then it reminds you of this other...?

R. It's much easier, because there's so much out there in the modern world to take things as they appear to be, and it's very hard to hold onto a thought contrary to that. I think there's a conflict in wanting the things normal people want, and yet not finding them fulfilling. There's a reluctance in me to accepting that "living on the edge" like in California, because it was difficult getting enough money. I feel safer here, but I don't feel inspired.

It's like having a foot on each side. It's like seeing one way and wanting it, wanting to choose it, but not feeling like you're quite able to, because the old way is more familiar; it's more habitual, more ingrained, it's easy, you just kind of flow into that one, and yet it doesn't have it anymore. So the new way is attractive. It has more potential, more promise, but the other way is more reinforced, and so the struggle is there.

In order to choose the new, there has to be another amount of energy or people or support - something pulling you into this new way of being. If my mind is on something

that I seem to be going toward that doesn't fit into the conventional mode of thought, then I experience some kind of conflict or a break between what I'm feeling and what is normally established, and so that creates some kind of a tension and a lack of "What is reality?" ... "What's going on here?" ... a bit of a split. So, in order to bridge that gap, I need extra support - something to "pop" me through the old experience and into the new, some energy or momentum in order to get me to change state - and that's what I would define as inspiration..or intuition...some kind of force which gets you into something else, something unusual, something new and different.

Once the change is established, it kind of glides on its own momentum until it comes time for another change - almost like changing in steps. You need help to get up into it, and then you kind of cruise along, and then when it's time to make another change, another added burst of energy from something is needed, and then it sustains itself and carries you, and then you need to exert energy again. It's like swimming. It's really crucial to know that moment where you can glide on your own momentum, but you have to know when you have to again "stroke" a little. I think that's partly what I've been learning here - is timing, because I have missed a lot of "cosmic clicks". But I know part of that is by having a belief. See, when I travel I

don't have a belief. I feel beyond the belief structure of myself because it doesn't fit where I'm going, and I feel free that I'm not involved in that one, because I'm not of that place, so I really am free.

I guess when I've had these types of experiences that they have enabled me to step out of the area of limitation and into the area of possibility. There's a feeling of space, of spaciousness. But the thing for me that I like the most about all of that is the overwhelming feeling of being energized. I can't have it and just sit and be. I have to do with it, because it's much more than I am. I can't contain it. Ultimately, I would like to do some kind of service. What I am still in the process of doing, at this point, is dropping - letting go of things. And I think that this North American way and all it represents - my past, my upbringing, my conditioning - is what I am still working on. It feels like the most massive thing I have to do in order to be free.

N. Just letting go of more stuff....

R. Yeah, so that I can allow that energy to come through, and it won't be so limited in how it can enter me and leave. It will just be more spontaneous and in the moment - more space for it to be.

On follow-up, Raechel reported being back on the "right track", recognizing that she "gives the meaning to everything" in her life.

Carrie

Carrie is a woman of quiet enthusiasm. With a measured enunciation, she described herself as a "late bloomer" in terms of consciousness change. Her university education in the human services field began when she was 54, after she had raised four children and had led an active life as a community volunteer. She presently has a small private counselling practice. Nearly blind from her early teens, she had a natural propensity to explore "invisible" dimensions of reality.

Carrie was on a holiday from her home in Eastern Canada when she called me to volunteer as a research participant. She came to me as a friend of a friend, and was most delighted to share her story, as it has been relatively rare for her to discover an interested audience. She cited a university course as the setting for an early experience in opening her to a new paradigm of reality.

C. I used to hear stories as a kid about ghosts and so on, and I sort of half-believed, and then, as I got older, of course, the scientific world got to me and reality was the order of the day, and so, of course, that was nonsense to believe. But I think what really tripped the trigger was an experience at school when I was taking physiology of the brain. When I became aware of the marking of the EEG - of wave-lengths from the brain coming out on the paper - I started thinking about radio and television, and all the

other things that were emitting energy into the world. And then, I started to think, "Well, this must be what ESP is all about".

From then on, I started to see the way things were sort of going in my own life, and one of the things was, my kids used to say, "Mom, you've got radar". For example, my son asked me to get a book out of the library, and the librarian went to see where it would be, and by the time she got back - I didn't even know the name of the book - I had a book out of a shelf, and she said, "Oh you found it, didn't you?" Now, you see, I have a vision problem - I have less than 10% vision - so there are some things that it would be impossible to see, yet I knew about them. I mean, my reading is certainly limited, but somehow, information came in through osmosis, or whatever. A lot of people say, "Well, you've got a good memory". Well, maybe, but I don't think that's the whole story. I think that there's a lot of assistance around.

N. So those kinds of things gave you a message that there's more operating...?

C. Exactly! More operating to help me, to make my life easier - that there must be almost a kind of a guardian. And, you know, I really believe that. Like, for instance, my bicycling in Europe. I always feel like I can just feel all these spiritual forces around me, helping me. So, all

these things started to add up to me.

N. So, you've really developed a trust...

C. A very great trust...a very, very great trust. I trust that, you know, the spirit lives; that people's spirits live. I can't imagine that all this knowledge, information part of our personality, our growth, our development, sort of dies with us. I just feel that there has to be an energy force that moves on to another plane, another level.

N. Prior to that university course, had you thought about consciousness living on?

C. No,.....not so much. A lot has just happened since that course. I mean, I went back to school in '71, so it's really relatively recent. I had had a sense of being lucky. I always, ever since I was little, had a positive feeling about how my life was going to work out.

If I'm thinking positively, positive things are going to happen to me...and as I've come along through my life and living, I've thought, "Oh, well, this is my mission in life, and this is where I'm supposed to be", and then, all of a sudden, something else opens up for me, and then I move on to that and have thought, "Oh, that's nice, and that's really nice", and then, well, before I know it, something else more interesting and exciting opens up to me. So, I mean, it's just....it's like a "Wow! experience". Every plateau is another sort of growth, and another something

that I never imagined could ever be. So, I see that as part of the self-fulfilling prophecy that positive things are going to work out in a way that is useful in my life.

Now I interpret that in terms of a growing system, now that I've been introduced - or introduced myself - to sort of psychic energy. I believe that maybe this period of my life here, this is my growing period - my growth and development - and somewhere along the line, my vision problem is here for a reason; you know, that there is a pattern to the fact that I've done things and taken risks about doing things and going places that sighted people would never even dream about. I mean, I've gone in with both feet, you know, and everything has come out O.K. I organized those trips to China. I mean, I did it all! It was just like....a knowing or a feeling that, "Well, I'm going to try. If I fail...", but there must be other forces around that are helping me along this journey. I guess there was a lot of determination that I wasn't going to let life pass me by, to let this handicap get in the way of my living my life.

While this growing sensibility of energies beyond the material realm were strongly felt by Carrie, it was a series of courses in parapsychology sponsored by a local university that validated her feelings, and opened her to a body of knowledge in the field of psychic energies and unexplained phenomena.

C. It gave, you know, a little more understanding - and more openness - to my point of view that, "Yes, these things do and can happen". I mean, it just makes you feel, "Well, you know, I've got to open my head to these things. These things are happening, and if I don't open my head to them, I'm missing out on a certain dimension in my world that... that would be disastrous!" And that's how I got sort of to thinking and reading, and, you know, then....whenever possible (there weren't too many people that I could even talk about these things to, certainly not among my friends), whenever I had the opportunity, I would talk about these things to anybody that I could, because I was just really interested. And then what happened to me was....and I think it's not a coincidence...I think it was my destiny:

I had finished school, and I was looking for a job, and I couldn't get a job. Who was going to hire somebody at 61, you know? And I went through all the ordinary channels, and I saw this fellow, and he said, "Well, you know, if you want to - if you have a big house - open up your house to senior citizens". I mean, that kind of thing, and that was the last thing I'd want to do, and then he said, "otherwise, maybe you'd like to work as a volunteer", and I was furious! I mean, here I was, working as a volunteer all my life, and then I go through all this torture of getting a degree, and then I've got to go back to being a volunteer. So, I burst in - I was seeing this sort of vocational guidance counsellor - and I had been seeing this fellow once or twice before - and I burst into his room and I started to cry. He

sort of calmed me down, and he said, "Well, listen, you know, maybe that's not a bad idea to take that volunteer job. Maybe it'll lead to other things", and I was furious! I left - I mean, even he was betraying me - and I left this place and a couple of days after - or a week or so - I calmed down, and I thought, "Well, what else have I got to lose, you know?", and I volunteered at this hospital. It was in a rehabilitation center and there was a person in charge of social work, and she was a real disaster. I mean, everybody knew her as a disaster. And it was just a terrific opportunity, because I just moved in and she was quite willing to let me do a lot of her work. So, one of the first clients - it was my second client - was this woman. She was sitting in a room, convalescing. She had one eye, couldn't walk, very short and quite distorted, and here she was, sort of in the midst of - there were two other beds in the room - and she was just full of life and love and joy, and bringing happiness to the other people in the room, you know. And I got very interested in her case. Here she was; living on welfare, crippled from birth - I don't like to use the word, "crippled", because she wasn't - I mean, she was physically unable to walk, and had had many operations. She was living with an alcoholic brother older than herself, and a retarded sister older than herself, and out of this....sort of dreary world, she emerges the bright and sunny and sparkling personality. So, I really took to her, and I said, "You know, you're really very beautiful!", and she looked at me like, "nobody's ever said that to me before", and I said, "Well, you have a beauty that comes from within you", and of course, I really felt that was true,...so, we became friends, she, like officially. I was sort of her social worker, and then I made a house visit - officially, I made a visit to her home, and met this

alcoholic brother. It was just dreadful! I mean, she would stay in her room, and it was just a terrible, terrible, terrible time, and I became her friend. Well, I would call her every day. I was one of the few outside contacts she had. Eventually, this is her end of the story: in one of our long conversations on the phone, we got talking about life after life, and it was then that she told me that she was a medium. And then I said, "Well, how did I get into...how do you account for my getting into your world?", because she lives in a working-class area and her lifestyle and her interests and the people that she knows are just totally different to anything that I have ever encountered. And so, she proceeds to tell me this story, which I think is fascinating...Oh, her mother, too, was an alcoholic, and her father was her dear friend. Her father she adored, and he loved her very much, and although I think he was very hard and cruel to her on many occasions, she still loved him and he spent a lot of time with her. What happened was that she went to a school for crippled children and so on, and she did a bit of work out in the world, but not too much, because of her situation. And she always would ask her father, "where could she find a friend?" I mean, "if only she had a friend, besides him, that she could call her own". The girls in the neighborhood and from school and so on weren't quite what she was looking for. And he said, "Well, when you're worthy, and when the right person is around, you will have that friend", and then her father got sick, and he died in '47, and before he died, she said to him, "When am I going to get this friend that you promised me?" And he said, "You be patient. You'll have your friend one day, when you're worthy and when I find the proper person", and he outlined certain qualifications; I mean, she can outline every last one of them to you. When I walked into her room

at the hospital, I stood in the doorway, and she saw a rainbow over the top of my head and her father standing beside me, smiling. And she said, when she saw that, she couldn't make any sense out of it whatsoever, but she said, "After we got talking, and got acquainted and how things have developed",...she knew that I was that friend...So, I have become her friend, and I speak to her almost every day, because I feel that it's important that I bring some of the outside world to her present situation. She got introduced to our family and she'd come for Christmas dinners and things like that, and our kids really like her and she likes them, and she's kind of, you know, part of the family. And Veronica's exactly my age! She's four days younger than I.

- N. So, this was from taking this volunteer job...
- C. Yeah...well, subsequently I did get a job out of taking that volunteer job, because they knew me and knew what I was able to do. I was in charge of recreation and social activities for two years. If I hadn't taken that volunteer job, I wouldn't have gotten the other job, which was another stepping stone in my learning, in my experience, in my development - and, I would never have met Veronica. So, that's another thing that there's a certain sense of destiny involved in - where I should be, at what point in time. And what made me decide? I was so angry! I can't begin to tell you how hurt I was, and yet, something was placated inside of me, and I just decided, "Well, O.K., something's saying, 'go for it'", and I did.

Veronica told me that I was going to get that job in the hospital, and I thought, "Come on now"...; I couldn't believe that. So, you start to see all these things happening, and the fact that Veronica's father told her I was going to get this job. Her father is constantly...like, I know that he's there for me - and other people, of course - but, I know that whatever it is, that he has a love and an affection for me, in whatever way that you can say it, to have chosen me to be his daughter's friend. Of all the people in the world, he just singled me out to be his daughter's friend, and made the circumstances such, that first I would meet her, and secondly, that I would be her friend, and that I would continue to be a part of her life - and she helps me and I help her. It's really started me wondering. I mean, how could he have maneuvered me in such a way? But, I feel good about it. I mean, I don't feel manipulated. I feel very comfortable in the knowledge that he's looking after me.

I'll say to Veronica, "Tell your father I'm going on a trip", and she'll come back and say, "He says to watch your purse". (Laughing, because her purse was just stolen on her trip). So, to me, what does that mean? That only means to me that, "Listen, kiddo, you better take a real lesson from this; you better listen to what messages you get from the spiritual world, because they're not fooling around".

That's what that tells me, so I think having lost my wallet was probably a very positive...

N. Because it confirms...?

C. Absolutely...absolutely, it confirms that there are forces and energies around working that I have to learn to trust, even more, and pay really strict attention to them. So, I don't know where that's going to take me...

N. So, things like the courses and meeting a friend who's a medium have reinforced this. Did you seek out reinforcement, do you think, or did it just sort of come your way?

C. Well, I don't know...I just think that, like my openness makes people come to me. I sort of automatically am open to new people - I can't tell you where the forces are. I can only imagine that it's not a coincidence. You know, people come my way, and they come my way for certain reasons, and whether it's to reconfirm or affirm my own belief system, or carry me one step further, I really don't know.

Another experience that was significant for Carrie was a communication with her deceased mother through Veronica's mediumship. While Carrie had worked through much unresolved anger toward her mother via therapy some years earlier, this particular communication seemed to completely heal the relationship.

C. She said that she felt that she should never have been

a mother; that she wasn't the kind of person to be a mother and give her children the kind of love and affection and understanding that children deserved, and that she was very sorry that she had caused me any pain and discomfort. So, you know, I have nothing but love for her. So, between having vented the anger against her through therapy, and now hearing his, I'm totally at peace with her.

N. It seems like since you met Veronica, you've been actually experiencing things you were beginning to explore before.

C. Oh, yes! I mean, it's very much a part of my life.

N. So, you started out by hearing something that was concrete - the brain waves showing on a piece of paper via the EEG? There was some kind of a link there from your scientific background...?

C. That's right..yes..yes..I think that was the biggest factor, and since then, you know, I like to speak to people about their near-death experiences, and have when I was leading groups in the hospital. That seems more in the ESP kind of linkage...Well, I don't even like to put names to anything. I mean, I think there are energies beyond words. Like, there is an energy that is coming into me to make me dream something. I mean, these are just areas in which I can imagine, but what about the untold areas that I can't imagine...and that I can't put words to?!

One way that Carrie developed an understanding of energies in the universe was by seeing things in a framework of nature. A concern with nature and health, she thought, may have naturally taken her "to the other levels of consciousness".

C. In the natural flow of things, I think that maybe my love of nature took me to the - I was going to say - supernatural, if that's the word we want to use. Of course, we have to assume that the cosmos and so on is just an extension of nature. So, I sort of incorporate little things as I gather along the way, into my belief system.

There's a tremendous excitement around all this. It's almost like, "I know something you don't know", and I just can't raise these questions, or talk about them at all, with some people. I guess in my daily life, through my clients, is more where I have the opportunity to draw on this, as a tool. So, maybe that's my mission. I don't know. I can only say that I keep thinking that, and I keep going on to other things.

N. Has asking questions always been a part of your being?

C. No, this has been an evolvment, because I grew up wanting to be loved by everyone - like I always felt I had to agree with other people, otherwise they wouldn't like me. I guess I'm just a late bloomer, because I think it's maybe in the last twenty years - and I'm going to be 69 next week - that I've evolved a little more into my own person. But,

somehow there was always this positiveness; like, I always saw myself as sort of a person in a long white flowing robe with a jewelled crown, with a long wand, and whoever I chose to touch, or whoever came into my world, would have very positive things happen to them. So, there was that thread at play all the time. I'm starting to think that the time of birth has something to do with temperament, so that, again, if we're talking about energies, the spirit itself has got to be an energy that comes into a body at birth, and life here is a growing and learning process. There are a lot of dimensions there, and I have no answers...and more questions; I can't say, doubts - I can't use that word - because there are just my wonderings. I am certainly very curious about them and open to them, and I just hope that I have the energy and time to sort of explore more.

Pipe Carrier

Pipe Carrier is a pen-name that reflects both the individualistic persona and the spiritual path of this participant. The pattern of change in Pipe Carrier's life has been marked by a questioning approach that has often kept his mind from adhering to beliefs, and has also, at times, kept him hovering between possible paths. At the time of the interview, he was in a reflective, waiting mood, synthesizing the feelings, ideas and experiences that had been generated in the past year through his beginning apprenticeship with Sun Bear, a Native Indian medicine man. Pipe Carrier is in his middle forties, and since retirement from the military, has been concentrating on developing skills as a writer.

The setting for our meeting was appropriate to the ecological consciousness that is at the heart of Pipe Carrier's world view: an expansive country environment that has recently become home for him and his family. He was eager to join in the dialogue, recognizing it as an opportunity to further refine his latest questions. He began immediately to respond to the core research issue.

P.C. Well, that very subject is very close to my heart, because whenever I'm awake and not involved in doing active things that occupy my mind, usually I'm preoccupied with that question, you know, and related ones...it's always been involved with the question of, "why?". I've always had a lot of rebelliousness in me - not really actively, although

inwardly. I was the maverick sheep that kept straying off. I feel different from other people, ...and that's always been so. Actually, I've been a loner a lot, for most of my life. It's been uncomfortable. I feel more now, than I ever have, that it's important to be a part of - not just a group - but a part of the world, but I still seem to select the areas of my life in which I ought to be an outsider.

N. So, you've felt different, in some sense, all of your life?

P.C. Yeah, and I think that was probably placed there. See, my heritage is that we were Frisians who had moved to the main part of Holland, and that can be likened, in a way, to a Newfoundlander living in Toronto. They had been a fishing and farming community, and there was a fierceness and pride in the Frisians, which became even greater than had they been in their own environment. So, my feeling of difference was...unhealthily superior almost.

Also, I moved myself from Holland to Canada, when it was quite conventional to immigrate as a young fellow. I was still quite alone, because I was in a new country, and that was a fine experience. And when I arrived here, I got involved in upgrading my education. This particular school environment played up the thing of being skeptical, and not buying everything that you hear or listen to, and I think that added some legitimacy to my looking askance at many

commonly accepted things. That gave me a lot of respect for the Canadian system: the tolerance of "otherness".

After about five years, I joined the military, and if there's one salary earning area in life that allows you to still be different, it's the military - in Canada, at least. In modern society, you're so caught up in the profit motive that you really do have to perform, and very little time can be spent on yourself, while in the military that was not true. You could be a philosopher, and if you enjoyed teaching, you could, in fact, teach that philosophy, and I did that very often.

Pipe Carrier reflected on several threads that had been a part of an "evolutionary thing" forming the philosophy he incorporated into his teaching: maternal influence; a trust of his own judgement; an empathy with the animal kingdom; a break with the parochial thought of the church; and the embrace of a generalist approach to understanding the world, including its invisible dimension.

P.C. My mother's side of the family, with one exception, are all very light-hearted, "vlot" people. In Holland, the word vlot means to be flexible, spiritually flexible - and emotionally and mentally flexible.

My father's side of the family isn't at all. And I recall a talk I had with my father's youngest brother, who is a priest. I do remember being oversensitive, and I really kind of overreacted, and still do, to cruelty to

animals or any living being that cannot defend itself. Anyway, I must have been in my teens when I argued with my uncle about the issue of souls, and I stated - probably quite adamantly and rebelliously - that I believed that we were no different than animals: they had souls, we had souls, or we had no souls and they had no souls. I'm essentially animal-oriented, and I regard us, rather strongly, as animals, and so it's in that context that I also have empathy for the people race, but I've always felt very strongly that we're just a part of things. This talk stands out as an important thing - and also as a sad thing - because it created a rift...which never really closed.

Of course, this happened during an age when I was naturally asking questions and chucking all kinds of authority anyway, but that was a milestone in my thinking about a number of issues - in my thought about the clergy for one thing. My uncle is an extremely well-studied man - has a Ph.D. - but, in my opinion, he is unfortunately slanted in the unidirectional thing that allows him not to see the rest.

N. So, trusting your judgement at that time really meant that you could throw out some other authority that didn't fit...?

P.C. In fact, I've not only never had any problems doing that, I think my trouble's been the other way around...

Another thing that comes to mind that made me feel kind of frustrated with parochiality is when I taught public health. I think that, first of all, the business of spirituality and the global village and ecology and so forth are actually not far apart; they essentially work the same way. In this particular case, in industrial health, we studied the science of smokestacks. This whole rationale of getting rid of fumes, only looking at keeping the smoke out of the immediate surroundings and not even wondering what the global effect, or even the regional effect, is, just staggered my sense of our stupidity.

So, I soon - but I already had some basis of that - had a great lack of faith in the scientific community, the scientific ethos. It was too specialized; it looked at specific items...and at the expense of looking at the whole picture. Of course, my employment years were in an era of specialization, and I was not a specialist; I was a generalist. And so, in a way, I kind of didn't fit in again.

Also, I've always sort of had an interest in things psychic. I certainly believe there is a dimension there that we don't know enough about. So, I've always had a great interest for the things that we can't see, and the scientific community seems only to be interested in things that you can see, that are tangible. But, it's the

intangible things that make life so complex, the subtle little things that enter into family dynamics, for example, that are...utterly fascinating.

N. Have you done much reading in these areas over the years?

P.C. Much, I think, is not the word: a fair bit. Rightly or wrongly, the kind of basic belief that I hold is that all knowledge that is there to hold and to have is already in you, although you can learn techniques through literature and courses. So, it's this intuitive pool of knowledge, or this communal, collective pool that I believe I'd like to tap more. Perhaps I haven't done enough reading, but I feel that it's important that I don't be in the head too much, but kind of...feel the knowledge. And it's - I must say - during the times that I let go of the head, and go into the feeling mode, that those kinds of things come to the fore, and any quasi-psychic experiences that I may have had or witnessed, took place during those times...and not when I studied a book.

One of these experiences was when an aunt of mine appeared on several occasions within the first year of her death, and actually visited me, and very clearly gave me guidance. I could see her embodied in our home, usually in the bedroom at night.

N. I'd like to hear more about this spiritual part of your

life, your quest...including your experience with Sun Bear.

P.C. Well, I'm sure at one time, maybe a decade ago or so, I thought I had the wisdom to be convinced that at age fifty or so we have found the answers, and the rest of your life is led with no more question marks, to speak of - and of course, that's totally untrue. But, so I was always searching, and I was in a kind of a rush, and it's only really in the last five or ten years that I've become comfortable with questions, and I've resigned - more than that - I'm feeling fairly comfortable with the fact that questions will always remain, and that more, in fact, seem to come up as you go on, while others fall by the wayside because they're inconsequential.

One thing I feel kind of a little mixed up about is the issue of travel. I think it's a fantastic experience for a person to move in different cultures, but at the same time, it makes you rootless, and then, depending on the state of mind, the rootlessness is an advantage or disadvantage. You know, it kind of allows you to leave the confines of being too parochial, but at the same time, at Christmas-time it's bloody nice to have all these tens of generations of things that you can steep in and wallow in and thoroughly enjoy without questioning - including lapping up the whole church ritual business. I think it's at times of weakness or at times of need of comfort that culturelessness becomes a

void....an uncomfortable void.

When I return to Friesland, which is a place which is laden with folklore and kind of a grim, unhappy past - a grey world, with all the mists and fogs and the sea close by - it is a tremendous magnet for me, and from my core, you know. And so, that stops me from being a spiritual, world citizen, whenever that is with me. At other times, I think, "Yeah, we're just all together, we're spirits - we've come from a spiritual pool, and my soul will just go back when I'm finished, and come back again in another corpus". But that's my intellectual thing; that's not integrated.

Another difficulty I have in my personal philosophy is that ever-standing question that I have not answered, and that is, "Should we meddle at all?". It is kind of a basic belief that is strengthened the more I detach the body from our being. Because the body really doesn't matter then; it is just the vehicle, which moves us around and gives essence and so on, and keeps the soul here...the spirit here.

But, somehow in my philosophy,...somehow I know that I'm influenced, and I'm following, those who maintain that the world is heading for disaster. We seem to be on that path, and I don't think we're going to turn it around. I think, then, that we've been "barking up the entirely wrong tree", and that, in fact, we're better off without technical advancements. However, that's not true for things of the

spirit. Primitive peoples have a vastly greater knowledge of things spiritual than we seem to have. So, for that reason, and for others, I've become very interested in Native mythology and Native spirituality.

There's none of that in Europe; in fact, they're more materialistic than we are. So, I've become very interested in that part of things here, and it's possible, because there is a Native spirituality, which is a viable entity, a viable thing that's never died. I have some aunts who are nuns, who have been involved in Zen Buddhism, but it involves things of the spirit that are not rooted in Europe; they've been imported. And when Zen was imported into North America, it became like pasta cuisine that's imported from Italy; they're just not Italian meals anymore. They take on different hues. The same is true for spiritual things, so the North American spirituality held more genuine things for me, I thought; and I still do.

In my military days, I had a number of good Native friends, and I had a feeling that I could never really understand them. There was always something there that kept us miles apart, and that you couldn't even talk about, because you couldn't put it into words. But, I have been very strongly attracted to their ideas. So, an opportunity came up that there happened to be one medicine man by the name of Sun Bear who was open - who says he has a mission -

to teach the White Man now, and so I approached him, and I'm still involved in apprenticeship with him. And it was... everything I expected.

The biggest difficulty I have is that it's still foreign to me. For me to hug a tree is all well and good, but the doubts, you know, whenever you get into the head - the doubts get sometimes so strong that you are willing to deny and chuck out the whole ethic. But, that hardly ever lasts - that is, the moments of weakness and doubt. My overall conviction, then, is that there is an awful lot there that we have to communicate with, and the only way we can do that is by getting out of our knowledge mode and going into really feeling the vibrations that are there.

It was an important thing for me to attend, although it was only a few weeks long (the actual apprenticeship lasts beyond that). It was important because I finally had contact with a whole bunch of people who legitimized my whole set of vague ideas about other living things, about spirituality and spirits, and accepted the ideas that I had where they differed from their own, as long as they weren't totally opposite. I think what made me accepting of theirs, of all the things that went along with seeing the animal kingdom as just another part of the whole life embodiment, was the fact that they were tolerant of things other than their own immediate beliefs. So, it added legitimacy to the

ideas that I'd held for a number of years.

What Sun Bear is trying to set up is a network, an ever-spreading network of people who support each other in "the path of balance". I don't share his vision with spreading this to the whole world. I believe that the only way that things are going to be changed in the world is individuals changing themselves, and of course, that is also held by them. I think that people cannot be coerced, or even encouraged, into changing "en masse". At the same time, it added to my conviction that things happen quietly, indoors and inside of individuals. It gave me some comfort to know that really what matters is the inner thing. It also made me doubt the necessity or usefulness of all institutions, much as I had doubted them as a teenager.

None of the changes that came about as a result of the apprenticeship were solely because of those weeks there. I feel that there's a kind of synchronicity involved there that that was the kind of thing that was needed at that time to give it some body and solidity. And I felt very good about it.

My main trouble there was to get out of the head. That was the problem then, when you hugged a tree, or when you buried yourself in the ground and you felt the earth mother. That was the trouble then, and of course, it's the trouble now...now that I'm physically away from it. It makes it

difficult to get back into that way of being. But, I have no doubt at all that if all of us lived those ideas, and the being spiritual in those ways, that there wouldn't be the problems in the world that we have today, on individual and collective levels.

Pipe Carrier elaborated on this conflict of paradigms, including his struggle to stay on his spiritual path.

P.C. I feel inadequately in touch with my spiritual side, so my quest is, then, to overcome the obstacles that stand - that I put - in my way of becoming more spiritually valid.

N. Do you have some fears about opening to your path?

P.C. I think I have some fears, and I have some doubts, but I'm already sliding away from that; I've reached the worst part. One thing is the fear of barking up the wrong tree; one doesn't like to be made a fool of. I'm also torn with a tremendous skepticism - perhaps the way the car works and finding a new bearing for the front wheel is, in fact, what life is all about.

Also, I don't want to be moved by running away from something. I think that's the important part of where I'm at now, and I need to stand still and not do something actively when there isn't the right motivation behind it. Attitude and motivation have to change first. It's not enough knowing - I know with my whole being what the path is that I have to follow. It is there, and I can see it

clearly. The path is essentially the one that I've seen there for a long time - to not follow the general trend of the world today, as highlighted by the authorities, the powers. It is a path of true respect for all living things, of recognizing the innate spirituality of myself and of all beings, including the animal, and perhaps even including some form of spirituality of the inanimate things.

But, hell, I'm so deeply rooted in my raping of that spirituality. For example, I built a medicine wheel near the tipi a couple of weeks ago, and while you're supposed to get to know each stone, personally, that is still beyond me. I go through the motions, but I'm not integrating that, and, you know, I'll pick up a rock and take it away from its place (where it probably hasn't lain for thousands of years, because it was probably put there by a bulldozer four years ago). So, I take that away and it's an inanimate object, and I put it in a place where it symbolizes some kind of thing - but it should be more than that. So, that's a hurdle that I'm trying to overcome, and it's a hurdle that is magnified by the fact that I'm not totally believing that it has a spirituality. So, I'm a disbeliever. I'm being too skeptical and a little too cynical.

I should be more open, less cynical, which I find very difficult to do, because, how does one accommodate that, or couple that, with being shrewd at a farmer's auction so as

not to pay too much for that shovel or that cow that you're buying? You do have to have a bit of both worlds in you. To try and become more spiritual I find the more difficult of the two routes, so that slipping back into the more easy way is always there; the danger is always there, and at this point in my life, I find that I'm suffering from a shortage of energy. I think it's a matter of attitude. You know, some of the weakest little bodies that run around, run around in spite of everything. There's a will there, and I have to recultivate that.

I sense that that decision is fairly close by - that resolve to follow the belief system of the whole realm of spirituality - because of the fact that I know that you can't sit on the fence for too long, and some things are happening that point to a kind of synchronicity. I'm getting communication from people who are on the right path, while others who are rooted in the other way have kind of fallen by the wayside. It is kind of a passive man's way of going, but it is there; whether I follow it or not, it seems to be there. But I'm not at a standstill; I feel that there's water moving underneath the ice. I feel that very, very definitely. I also know that if I follow my intuition, I'll be O.K.

Following a certain path also takes on shades of right and wrong, some colorings of morality. For example, if one

path will eventually reduce me as a person, and it will disallow further growth in a certain area, I must follow the other path - even though, practically, it may not make that much sense at that time. It always takes on some shade of doing wrong to my spirit, to my spiritual gain.

I have regrets about wasting time...in the spiritual quest. I should have devoted more energy to that, instead of philosophizing, perhaps. I also feel that things are not complex; things are actually very simple. In the totality, there are only a few things that we need to remember, and one is, that everything works very well, and everything works very simply, and that everything is all right. The disadvantage to believing in that - and I strongly believe that - is that it gives me some complacency in what I do. It's not a matter that it doesn't matter, but things are happening the way they're happening, and for me to be an advocate for active change in other people, or even within myself, is kind of futile. It's applying that Western kind of energy to making things happen, and I don't need to do that, because things will happen as they do.

The other thing is that I have difficulty devoting myself wholeheartedly to one thing, and that's from being a generalist, again. I think it's very important for me as a person to not develop too one-sidedly. You know, when I say to you that I'm kind of sorry I spent so much time - wasted

so much time and energy on things that were of no consequence in my life - I also kind of know that that's not entirely true. Certainly at twenty or thirty I wasn't ready for the same kind of ideas, attitudes and stance that I now have, so yeah...things are probably unfolding the way they ought to.....

Marni

Marni and I were meeting to share experiences and ideas about our mutual interests in writing, research and women's experience, when I became fascinated with her description of opening to a new awareness of self and reality. Without hesitation, she contracted to become a co-researcher for this inquiry. Marni is a woman in her early thirties who is beginning her own writing project by gathering data about her maternal grandmother, an early settler in Western Canada. Marni is intrigued imagining what this woman's inner life might have been like, in the face of an outer life "which was full of change and risk". This is an opportune time for her to develop her writing discipline, as she is home much of the time with her two small children.

We met in her home for our interview, a place with an earthy comfort. This feeling is especially conveyed by the Native Indian prints hanging on almost every wall of the central living space. The session began with Marni's description of a key self-change that occurred as a result of her understanding about psychological differences in terms of psychic functioning. This learning had taken place over a year earlier when she was engaged in a counselling process.

M. For me, just in everyday living, the most useful change has been to be able to separate myself from other people, and accept that they're not the same as I am. I kept always

imagining that people were all the same, and that it was just a question of communicating really well to uncover that. Of course, with that belief, lots of relationships were going wrong.

You know, I had tried to logic it out for years and years and years, and I never reached that awareness that I got just from the process of doing that test (the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator), and for once and for all, seeing that I was not the same, that the way I operated in the world was not the same, as say, my husband.

I think I also had not really looked at myself. I was so outward focused, and spent all my time using my good mind to find out what other people want, need, like..., and then trying to provide it. So, I was in a frenzy of outward production. But, I was angry at the world for not meeting my needs. And just coming to terms with the idea that I can nurture myself and I can approve myself was a really important part of changing my outlook. That was the beginning of it.

Like, I think the beginning of the change was that I was so uncomfortable in myself, I couldn't bear it any longer, but then, once I did start to inject new information through reading and through dreams, I could gradually take in more information that didn't fit with my old structure. Analyzing my dreams was so helpful to me, because I was

getting information about myself that I had not looked for or listened to, ever before.

And..., it went much further than I ever expected or intended, because what I set out to do, I thought, was to get individually comfortable. My objective was a simple, selfish, personal, psychological one; like, I want to feel more comfortable. And this year, it started to shift, without me even being aware of it. But, the reading I was doing was shifting, and now, all of a sudden, it occurred to me that...my objective is not the same as I originally thought, that what I thought I was aiming for was only the beginning of a quite different journey - more of a spiritual thing. All of a sudden, I feel pulled to reach beyond me, and even beyond individual relationships. I always felt quite Christian in my beliefs, but I suddenly realized that I'm in a whole new ballgame. I'm standing in a huge stadium, looking around, and for the first time, realizing thatwell, it's a different world. It's much bigger than I realized.

- N. When you say you've always felt Christian, would that have been more in a traditional sense?
- M. It was really a sort of a super-imposed thing. It was duty and obligation and following set prescriptions. Now I don't see it that way at all. I see it more as openness to sort of the potential of things, and being trusting enough

to sort of experience it and wait and see what it will bring..., and examine it and be with it, not control it or plan ahead or decide in advance what the allowable parameters are. It really feels different. The change is that I'm exploring things, and not trying to fit them into the original specs that had been established...I don't know by who...

N. How did this happen for you? This exploration into more openness?

M. I think it just built from early in counselling, when I realized that my body was completely not a part of myself. I had ignored it, and trying to integrate that aspect of myself in my thinking and being, I guess, just opened a notch in my brain to make me perceive other things that were not included either. Like, it just struck me that if I could so totally exclude that obvious a part of myself, then clearly my subjective view of the world was not the total picture. So, I began trying to let in what other people are saying or seeing or describing in writing, without deciding in advance that they are right or wrong. I have such an overactive critical function, that I have to hold it in abeyance in order to see reality, because I had limited reality to my brain and not my feelings or physical self. And what was very important was that the counsellor gave me permission to read, to go ahead and nurture myself.

N. What were your feelings in becoming aware that there was more?

M. I felt excited, but I had to put away anger at myself, anger for having cheated myself of 32 years of living without all those other available things. It was exciting, but it was frightening, and I felt very vulnerable, and I think that was most obvious in my dreams. I had so many dreams about birth, about miscarriage, and I couldn't believe how accurate my dreams were in reflecting my feelings.

Marni shared the learning that came from working with these significant dreams, which she recognized as messages heralding her rebirth. Her voice was filled with emotion as she recalled the power of these images.

M. This I wrote in my journal at that time:

Last night I dreamt I looked in my throat - dark, cavernous. Among several lumps, was an organ-like blob of tissue. I coughed it out - like vomit, like childbirth - and it was so large in my hand. I said, "Dad, what is this?" - that, the block, the control stuff that I have to examine. I've been choking it back, but it's born now, and maybe me with it. Why did I ask my Dad?

When I first looked at the dream and revisualized that image, I perceived it as a fetus that had been aborted, and I was heart-broken, because I felt like I was aborted, and then when I examined it in a counselling session, I saw what

I had not seen before, which was a tiny sprout growing out of the fetus, and recognized that it was not dead. It was alive, and had the potential to grow, but it needed nurturing. That was a powerful learning for me, because the image carried such emotional weight, I couldn't deny it.

Now, my dad has always represented authority for me. He is very intellectual, very reserved and totally out of touch with his feelings. I would question him on any fact, and have total confidence in the answer, so that's what I was doing in the dream, "Dad, what's your answer?" Well, I know damn well what his answer to me is. To him, I am a brain - an unbodied brain - and I often had an image of myself as a disembodied brain, sitting in a jar. And that's how I operated in the world. I thought about it, looked at it, processed the data, but didn't involve myself - not physically, emotionally - I just stayed in my jar. But, after I had that dream about the fetus, then I had a whole series of very revealing dreams of weddings and childbirth and pregnancy. And then, quite a bit later, I had another dream which was a continuation of the theme of....bearing myself:

I dreamt a house was being sealed off - being renovated; the building of a new structure. Part of the old was being sealed. It looked familiar. I remembered seeing a familiar toddler wandering in an earlier dream, and two toddlers had been playing in an undiscovered part of the house. They had

gotten in and saved themselves by staying hidden. As I walked down the stairs, I suddenly put together where I had seen that youngster before, just as the wall of the stairway burst open beneath my feet. And through the seam of broken wood, burst a child - an infant - covered in sawdust. I was horrified, realizing I had sealed them in just as truly as if I had done the building myself. I knew they were there. I was responsible for seeing they got out, before the passageway was closed. Even if they weren't supposed to be there, they were survivors. They found that place, and they got out before it was too late, in spite of my forgetfulness, my failure as a guardian. They were hardy, vulgar, rough little things. They made me uncomfortable. Did I even want them? Maybe I deliberately entombed them. But, they were beyond my control. They got there on their own. I became aware of them, but forgot and only remembered when their lives were threatened. But, I didn't save them. They saved themselves. And while I was relieved of not being responsible for their death, I was faintly galled at their survival. Now I would have to do something with them - raise them, train them out of their crudity, educate them, let them grow, nurture them. What part of me are they? Children of my heart or mind? Lost parts of me that toughly lived on...How horrified I felt when I realized I had neglected them! Then, when I remembered they existed, and could have been walled off forever, I was glad to see that little ruffian thrust himself through solid wood. He knew the way out. He knew he had to get out.

That dream really touched me, because I felt that part of the thing was, that it wasn't me orchestrating or directing, but I was out of control; things were happening.

And it was good in a way. It was good to know that I wasn't in control, that I couldn't suppress myself entirely.

Marni described the process of "reading, writing and reflecting" on the information being generated as a very inspiring and exciting one.

M. I felt that I could speed up my process so dramatically by fostering that, so I would concentrate on images before sleep, hoping to trigger more information. Even now, I'm so deeply emotional about this. It's a sadness because I feel I wasted time.

N. So, some grieving over...?

M. Yeah..., and I still feel grief...., and maybe I feel fear, too, like a sense of, having unearthed this richness in myself, I cannot neglect it. So, I feel really called upon to produce something.

I accept that I am on a journey. It means, to me, like a calling, like a vocation or a mission. I have such a need to synthesize and study and examine and reflect and clarify. I feel that I'm called upon to identify what is of value, and direct my life to things that fulfill those values. I think some of the objectives are in everyone's life to be less bound by materialism, and to maintain some kind of integrity about what you use on earth and what you build with, that goods must be used to create something that has value or meaning for the world for its continuation, and for

what lies beyond this world.

I wish to write and record some of my thinking and experience, but I don't think I'll necessarily leave a lasting testimony that will enlighten minds around the world for generations to come. I feel like the job is just so simple; it's to simplify - just to work daily at cleaning out your thoughts and your feelings, so that you don't contaminate the world. I mean, it's more mental. Of course, you have to take care of the material and physical things. You can't litter and overuse them, but you have to keep even your thoughts from littering. So, it's a cleaning up process, a refining, a developing. My spirit operates in this world with God's plan, and my job is to let it be felt in some way that builds and doesn't destroy.

I hope that living, trying to purify and simplify, will lead to me being able to focus more energy and more time on something that has true value. Maybe at the end of my life, all I will have achieved will be to see that I stood for that, maintaining my right to an inner life that was not controlled by the external pressure to impress people as an accomplished "yuppie". The pressure is so strong to live out everything in a material way, you know, physical pleasure, convenience, comfort - and to deny that real happiness comes from just simple human contact and sharing, or a simple task done.

When I am dying, I know that I will have widened the scope of what I am aware of, and my thoughts will be left in the world, and they will be evolved from where they were. The evolution, from my grandmother to my mother to me to my daughter, is where it is very real to me. Maybe it will just be that, that chain of learning or evolution. In every life there is a natural arc of change, but I feel like the arc of change can be helped along; it can be pushed and guided. And, in every life that you touch, you're able to foster that.

There are probably umpteen paths ahead, but it's funny, I have great faith in myself, and in this world, and it all adds up to faith in God. I feel now that there's such a wholeness about my sense of God being involved in everything, and that when I understand it, it will be quite beyond anything I had ever projected in my own imagination.

I'm tempted to run out and get a job, and I want to do a service job, you know, but I think I still need to assess myself and figure out where my talents can best be used in the real world. I have urges that are so powerful to rush out and wear a placard about nuclear war and....all sorts of frenzied attempts to make a statement. When I start to flail in that frenzied way, I try to remember that always I have made my decisions by the kind of intuitive process where I wait: I gather data, and I gather data, and I wait.

So, I feel if I can keep purifying and simplifying and clarifying, then whatever answer comes will be right for me.

N. So, it has to do with continually remembering to trust your intuition....?

M. Other people can operate by another process, but I cannot. I spent so many years trying to be other people. I just felt sick at heart, because I knew I was not true to myself, but didn't know what I was doing wrong. Actually, that typology - and the book, Please Understand Me - really helped me to have a structure for understanding it.

One process that aided Marni in helping her trust her own process was that of working on the integration of the various parts of self. She described an activity of drawing a mandala, that incorporated aspects of self, as a powerful medium for creating images of significance.

M. And it really was an integrating of parts of myself: the sort of dancing, floating, creative part and the earthy, controlled, sort of concrete part...and the cold, analytical, judging part. They're now "like a family". I like me, and I didn't like me before.

N. When you started, you were saying that your whole spiritual connection had just opened...

M. Exploded!...I think it was opening myself to that subconscious information. I'm convinced that we block out huge segments of reality. I'm now able to recognize more of

reality - you know, invisible, immeasurable parts of reality that you could just exclude from your consciousness. But, you see examples constantly of synchronicity - of grace flowing from one person to another; of healing touch; of being there when someone needs the words that you are able to say; of giving a book to someone , and it answering a question; or, of having a book on my bedside table for two years, and finally wanting to read it, and then finding there the answer to the issue I'm asking myself about - all of those things that I see mean that we have such a poor appreciation of what reality includes. When we open our eyes wider and open the picture, we will be able to describe a structure that is entirely different.

N. Earlier, you were reflecting on what it was like for you to read some of these books that explored novel ideas.

M. Oh, like reading Original Blessing by Matthew Fox...I couldn't read the words, because I couldn't enter them into my brain. My structure was so rigid. I couldn't physically enter those thoughts. Somehow, when I reached up for that book, after letting it sit there for two years, there was just enough of an opening to let in some of the ideas, and as they came in, it was like I could feel the opening, that letting in those ideas allowed me to let in more. Like, I was physically building new channels, and so, I would read a chapter and just relax and think, "Well, I'm going to enter

this while I sleep", and I did get some of it in, and the more I got in, the easier it became, until I was just whipping through that book, and just devouring it, absorbing the information so readily. It was like reading Who Dies?; you know, Levine's "letting go" idea, ...his idea of just being with something, and so I just lived with those ideas for a while, and sure enough, they have worked their way into my understanding of the world. I mean, when Fox summarizes the differences between creation-centered theology and fall-redemption theology, it's just a summary of what rigid structures had to be broken or opened for me to let in real notions about life and the world and myself.

That book was wonderful for me! For the first time in my life it allowed me to accept sexuality. Fox uses the expression of sex as union. Do you know, in all of my life, I had never thought of sex as union! How obvious! Of course human beings want to reach out and be that close and touch each other in a way that goes far beyond their bodies. And it's sort of at the same time, I experienced it for the first time in reality.

N. It's almost like your union between the parts of yourself...

M. You know, maybe I couldn't have experienced that with my husband, without experiencing it with myself.

After Marni reviewed the original transcript for validation, we had a follow-up taped interview. Her story of change continues:

M. When I first read the transcript, I still felt very attached to it, and yet, by one month later I reread it, and all of a sudden, it had become such distant past information, as if the time had telescoped. My perspective had shifted so dramatically! I think that just the whole process of reading the transcript and thinking about it and responding to it in my own mind from the way I felt then, all helped to make it part of me in a real way. The feelings I felt about it were so...wild, you know. I felt really proud of it, and really...grief-stricken about the past - really high emotions. And yet, it was like a catharsis to go through that, and then I didn't have to keep regenerating that same feeling.

And, I just find it absolutely an astonishing example of synchronicity that I also get pregnant at that time. All of a sudden, all this seems to have settled down and shaken down in my whole consciousness, and I get pregnant. And I just wonder, how much power we have over our body; like, when your mind and soul are at peace, your body does what fits. I feel like there's a real mystery here.

Part of Marni's new perspective she credits to a beginning study of A Course in Miracles, a course which is designed for the purpose of

changing one's mind.

M. I got the book, and when I started reading it, I started doing the lessons, one each day, and within about ten days, I started to feel like I had really shifted my attitudes - about time, for example. It impresses me so much that the exercises are a technique of entering new - not only new data - but new structure, ...or, like in a computer, it would be the hardware, not the software - you know, new patterns for thinking. So, I think that is very, very useful. I think that if the Western world could shift its rigid structure of thinking, you know, we wouldn't have nuclear war to contend with, or third world poverty. We would... change our thinking. We have to change our thinking. I think the answer is education: introducing new data and forming new patterns.

N. It seems that has been the process that has been helpful to you.

M. Yes, and you know, I feel like the big news for me has been that I'm not in charge of the job. Right from the beginning, I haven't been in control. I thought I was, but so much has happened by gift. I would have to say that what is happening is far beyond me, and I am just trying to hear it, you know, and see it as it comes. I'm not the author. If it's coming from me at all, it's only the part of me that's in touch with sort of that universal body or spirit

or something, and that all I'm doing is listening to a tune that's probably been playing all along.

Serendipity

Each new step in this woman's transformation has been experienced as a "gift of finding valuable things not sought for"; hence, the pen-name chosen: Serendipity. Our connection has been a professional one: Serendipity is in the field of social work. Her own path of development has included the aims of becoming more comfortable on the planet and clearing her own issues so as to be a more effective helper. Serendipity welcomed the opportunity to participate in this study, as she has been interested in the project since its inception. She began her story by reflecting on the meaning of her initial opening to embracing a new world view.

S. It brings tears, you know, because then you remember back. I think in thinking about this, and in thinking about the question now, it's freedom. I think what happened to me, in that university class four years ago, was the freedom to be. It was spending a life-time - thirty years of not fitting - of trying to conform, of feeling like my own ideas, if I did express them clearly and cleanly, were bizarre, weird, amusing sometimes, but never taken seriously. I had no awareness that there was anyone else that thought like I did, and all of a sudden, there was freedom to be, and I had a very radical awareness that I was at the crossroads of life and death. I became aware of how I was dying - and really died - and now I'll call it a

spiritual experience, but I didn't know what it was then. And I had an opportunity to live, and I had to have the courage, because I knew it was going to be a painful process, because I had to get rid of all that I had taken on.

I think, looking back, that was necessary to my life. Because I consider myself more closely connected with the spirit, I had to experience life at its most basic: the realities of the world's perceptions of being in relationship, and the cruelty and the disharmony and the stupidity. I think had I been in an environment that nurtured who I am, I never would have connected with that, so that gave me a background. But, now I look at it through my own eyes and feel free to criticize it and trust my own knowing.

A large part of the process is reconnecting with the Self; that in dealing with - I'll call it "that world" - the whole Self is denied, and for myself and anyone I know who's entered the process, it's "coming home". You have to reconnect, and a lot of the grief in it, is remembering. We never forget. That's why we know to go back, but there's a tremendous amount of grief in having been away so long.

N. The lost time...

S. Yeah...yeah, and for me there was a period of extreme anger. I came into the world in innocence. I came into it

in love...and that was abused and taken for granted and dismissed, ...and used. I think that the ordinary world bleeds lovers. When you finally connect with that, as you connect with your own inner strength, you experience rage...absolute rage. Once you've found - you know the direction to home, being with the Self - there is a strong temptation to just skip this whole show...altogether.

I think the freedom is in discovering that it's done in ignorance. They're still responsible, but they don't know. And this is part of the loneliness when you start honoring what is; you're surrounded by people who don't know, and don't want to know. Are there people really attached to it? And like any new wisdom, your reaction, when you get over being mad at them, is you want to share it. So, you spend two or three years trying to save them from their peril. And it's like in the Tao Te Ching: the sage attracts them by his light...

N. Rather than proselytizing...

S. Because then you look like them. One of the things is that I have at least been able to laugh at myself, but there's a constant awareness of how your perceptions may change, your beliefs or absence thereof may change, but we have so many of the behavioral habits. We grow up in a violent world. I hate violence; I abhor it, but there's a lot of violence in my behavior.

- N. In the wanting to share this, sometimes getting overzealous... and really imposing on someone else's boundaries...?
- S. Yeah, ...and the thing is, I don't know what is, but I know what can be, just more and more and more and more and more...
- N. So, the loneliness is that you spend a lot of your life around people who are in a different frame of mind than you?
- S. And I guess we all have that need to connect with someone where you don't need words for everything, where you don't have to describe every tidbit of experience and concretize it all.
- N. And knowing that there are a few people that you can commune with in a different way...?
- S. An intimacy that you'd only dreamt about...the intimacy that you experience with those of like thought...I mean, there's nothing like it!
- N. So, when you came to that class, that was your first glimmer that there might be some others who had a different world view?
- S. Um-hum, and it was interesting, because it was on child development, and, at that point in my life, the only people I could really connect with were children, and I always ended up in work situations where I was having to advocate for children. And then I walk into a child development

course where the books are about the right and left brain, and children are "light", and the magic of childhood, and... I nearly died! And the possibility of human growth and that "children are power in a society", and "that's where life begins" and "it should be treated with reverence"...I nearly died! And I literally did, you know. At the outcome of the joy was tremendous pain, as though I'd landed on the wrong planet when I was born. That was it! So, the synchronicity is fantastic, because it happened to be in something that I had some confidence in. I trusted my beliefs about children.

From my own experience, I really have a powerful connection to victims, because I know their strength. To help them loosen the power that other people are using and not even acknowledging I guess I'd call my path. If I hadn't had the experience - if I'd been raised by mystics - I wouldn't be able to understand. So, I'm grateful for every moment in my life.

I think why I believe what I believe is because of meeting people who have been through hell, and have experienced about every human cruelty that one person can do to another, and there's love left. That never ceases to blow me away. I mean, that's the miracle of life!

After this initial opening, Serendipity began a period of intense search: exploring frameworks that affirmed her way of seeing; finding

groups for a sense of belonging; and discovering more about her own patterns of perception, belief and behavior that blocked her harmony. She had become a Catholic at age 26 because she knew that there were miracles in the world that couldn't be explained, and she "needed to belong to a club that believed in miracles". Her search at age 30 took her back to the spiritual, which this time was not limited to the church.

S. I started exploring things like Ram Dass and Krishnamurti and Thomas Merton and those who talked about possibility, but who always honored the spiritual. I went through a period where the spirit world - God - was all there was. I remember at one point being so angry at my parents - "Why did it all happen? What's it all about?" - and I had a clairaudient experience, one of my only clear ones: "They didn't raise you, I did!"

N. Quite an "ah-hah" experience!

S. So, that said there's a home to go to, so I was really working with God, but very much from a childlike perspective, still a patriarchal view of it. I became suicidal in a different way: I didn't want to die; I wanted to live, and couldn't live here, which is maybe the real essence of suicide. So, I started having some spiritual experiences: visions - the third eye started opening, but it scared the hell out of me! But, I became aware in the process that I could only step as far spiritually as I had

done here, so it was...one step for the spirit, and then one step for the self. So, I was always cleaning house.

At one point, I was involved with a spiritual circle, and was having very clear visions. I'd been told by a medium that I was going to be a medium, and I was quite attached to this. I mean, that meant I could even make a living away from this world. I never had to interact with it at all. But, again, it came back that I had work to do here, and the circle wasn't acknowledging the human aspect - the fact that we're human beings here, and unless we clean our own stuff, we can't see clearly. So, I left the circle.

I really felt isolated, because I had no idea who to go to at this time. There was no teacher appearing, and so I really went into the self, became very isolated, very reclusive, ...and then I started to connect. There was something more that came out - like, it starts to build like, you know, a cat gets fluff balls - and I went to see a friend who does hypnosis. She took me down, using an image I'd had of two frightened children, and then, all of a sudden, someone came through me. It was...she identified herself as Kwan Yin (the name of a Goddess with a symbolic meaning parallel to Christ or Buddha). Well, it scared the hell out of both of us! It was very wonderful and very frightening, ...and now I really didn't fit. There was something in that she came here; I didn't go there, so I

knew I was really stuck here. So, I started channeling.

Anything that even sniffed of channeling and that kind of thing frightened my friend very badly, so again, I was left to my own resources. But, what happened, is through that, Kwan Yin taught me a lot about channeling.

N. So, Kwan Yin became your mentor...?

S. Yeah, ...and then later, my friend came back from a trip and was ready to connect again. So, the synchronicity-like people give you gifts and they give you healing, and the awareness that they get, "gifts" out of it. So, Kwan Yin came as a teacher, and as a partner. Like, it's been through her that I've let go of my child. She's forced me,...no...I have agreed in her company, to work through that child perception of the spirit world. The spirits are here. We are spirits, and there's a reason why we are here in bodies, because we communicate with those in bodies, ...but it's a partnership.

The next part of Serendipity's journey centered on her core issue: working through the "powerless/all powerful" dichotomy. This was an intense process - much of it a solo path - finally culminating in a transcendence of the polarity in an embrace of her own inner power.

S. So, I was doing readings - God, the responsibility! So, I was giving myself away. I mean, "Channeling is something you have to do for people 'cuz it's going to

help". But, Kwan Yin's way isn't to create dependence. My way was, ...you know, still hanging onto that old belief, "We're here to save the world", right? "That's your role in life - to serve - and serve means save. You make Mommy happy, because she's not responsible", that childlike innocence, where you don't acknowledge other people's responsibility to be themselves. So, I was doing readings, and people were doing nothing. They were waiting for the next reading. So, I stopped.

Meanwhile, magical people are coming into my life. It's opportunities and possibilities, and it's very frightening. It's everything that you've dreamt about, and yet it's rattling your whole world, because, you know, being married and with a kid, you are still stuck in some aspects of the old world. So, I went out to Gabriola to a Satir workshop, and part of her work is to work with the past. But, it wasn't just her - it was the experience of the love and the connectedness and the being seen - and I went back to the point when I started to be aware that "I" was denied. I can tell you the moment at age ten when I didn't fit here, that I wasn't being accepted. And I felt very safe, and I just let her go.

- N. So, you were able to clear out..unfinished business?
- S. Open it up. The clearing has taken place since. So, I was out there trying to be mature and grounded, and she said

to me, about rescuing the world, "I'll give you a lot of gold points", but all of a sudden, she said, "You know, I've been in that place". And I just went to pieces. And I'd thought I'd dealt with that. And she said, "Do you think you can decide to live life, rather than just promising not to die?" What happened is she opened things and gave me the strength to go forward. I think she works with the soul; she calls it self-esteem. But, what I felt in that moment is my soul entered my body - that there had been a separation.

What I've been dealing with since then are the issues where I would have closed the door. It's moving into the place of power, the power within - stepping into the place of power, which is a place of choice. What are my attachments? What are my real commitments? What are the real risks? Just, like working through the Maya - pulling away the veil, and in that, owning the dark side. I had a sense that I was going to be facing a choice that I had turned down for many lifetimes, and that choice was to own my own power.

But, I was getting no visions, no clear messages from people, and I was looking for rescue, and then finally, last week, I experienced really connecting with it, seeing clearly and living through it. The whole idea that we're responsible for our own path is so many words, until you

really connect...with your responsibility, and feel up to it, ...and also your power. I think that's one of the problems; they always talk about responsibility. They don't talk about power. And for me, the most difficult thing to accept has been my own power.

N. And so, really afraid of owning power...?

S. And it's interesting, because the night before my 33rd birthday (I remember that, because Chapin has a song, "And now I'm 33, the year sweet Jesus was set free"), I had a vision. I was meditating, and I went out of need. You know, sometimes you know there's something there for you to see. And I had a vision of all the people that I had ever hurt, and it wasn't just this lifetime. I mean, they added up to thousands...and it just came through so clearly..."And that's your power too". Before I really opened up to my power, I had to know. I had to face that...and I just cried...and it was an awareness that, "Now you'll never again be able to act and say you didn't know", which is part of coming into your own power.

This is why you have to work through all those issues. You know, until you deal with all the perpetrators in your own life, in your own role in acting out your pain on others, you can't see clearly. I really don't have a feeling about evil anymore. I see it as pain, ...just projected pain. I mean, I worked with psychotic kids, with

rapists and murderers, and fell in love with those kids, despite what they'd done. So, that connection with violence was an important beginning - to know way back then, I'd loved a rapist.

N. So, with the perpetrator, being able to see...

S. ...the heart in them. So, Saturday night was the final stage of seeing clearly that there is nobody writing a plan for me - ...finally connecting with that. The experiencing is totally different than the word, but the words describe it, so you think you know. The head knows, and what you get used to, is as soon as your head finds out something you know, in a few months you'll experience it. But, the experience...really connecting...and the grief and the pain in the awareness, and also the joy. But life, for me, has just been a series of childbirths. I mean, there seems to be the pain and the darkness and the tunnel and...you know, light's on the other side.

You see, the grief has been feeling it's my responsibility to do something about it. Like, I would go to God and say, "Show me how. Why do you make me watch and give me nothing to make it stop?" It was like watching like a helpless spectator.

N. So, connecting with your power, finally, you don't have to keep saying, "What do I do?" You can laugh - the paradox is there.

S. Right, and recognizing my own power, I recognize that every other person has it, that it's not my role to save them...It's just a matter of putting out your stuff, and they do with it what they will, ...and I had no conception of that. I didn't know what that meant. Everything I learned I had to be able to translate into how I could make somebody else hear. You know, I finally know that whole thing of responsibility as "ability to respond".

And it's the same thing with that change of behavior that goes with the change of belief, because when I connected with the belief of individual rights, self-determination, human potential, I couldn't use my coercive, savior methods anymore, so I was in a total dilemma, so what I was doing was, I was guilty of therapeutic abuse. I'd do two or three hour counselling sessions, ..."Here's some more, here's some more and here's some more, ...but I'm not intruding on your power; ...you just pick one", ...but I'd give them 3,000 options. So, all this new experience I'd acquired had been still acquired with that fundamental belief, which goes back to being an infant - "my role, it's up to me".

N. Your script had just really immobilized you...

S. And to talk about it would be an ego trip, so you couldn't share it. You just lived with it and learned to swallow pain.

N. Now I understand.

S. And now I understand. Until we become clear with ourselves, we can't understand another's experience. Like, I couldn't understand someone who wasn't working all the time. I mean, how can you not, if that's your gift?!

But, I had to be ready. And that's why we just put it out. I call it rattling chains. You need key people in your life who rattle chains, and stay with you during that process. But, that's why humility is so critical, because you don't know when it's going to integrate. You don't know whether they're up to that one. I couldn't have handled this one four years ago. It fits, too, with the idea that innocence is what heals and changes. And see, the savior and martyr is just another power tripper. It's not the clear use of gifts, and that's why I'm glad to be rid of it. The freedom!...But, I also knew it was wrong and I didn't know what else to do. I'm ready to begin helping others discover their freedom, helping people connect with their freedom, with turning on their light...and that's got to be gentle, because people are afraid of the light. People are afraid to dream.

N. So, that's what you're hoping to do more...?

S. That's what I'm going to do. I think that's what changes, is you start to take more responsibility. No, it's commitment versus hoping. And it just becomes clear, and

you open it up to the universe, and the universe delivers.

Wishing and hoping keeps you in the same place.

Tony

I first met Tony several years ago when I brought a group of social work students to the Indian reserve where he was teaching maths. Since that time, Tony and I have encountered each other, periodically, at workshops addressing themes of cultural alternatives. Because Tony has been living a very simple lifestyle congruent with his ecological sensibility for many years, he seemed a likely participant for a study on a new world view. In fact, his search to attain ever greater understanding of consciousness and reality is at the core of his life, so he was delighted to share about his journey.

Tony is married, with two small children, and, in his mid-forties, is at a stage in his life where he is in the process of exploring a career change. While much uncertainty about his ultimate goal surrounds this change, he is currently enrolled in university to expand on his background in mathematics. He described this venture, which includes a job as a tutorial assistant, as a way of opening up the possibility to "join and deal with my own world". This is significant for Tony, as he has been outside the mainstream of the dominant culture since he was a small child. In responding to the key research question, he began the interview by speaking of this alienation, and its connection to his spiritual quest.

T. Well, two things I'm thinking of, circumstance and temperament, led me to feel that I didn't fit in...at all.

I had a lot of intuition, and I was imaginative and thoughtful. I grew up entirely with my mother, almost in a monastic existence, until I was over six, because it was during the war, and my father wasn't there. So, it was very much my mother - and a lot of other women: grandmothers and great-aunts and so on, and not much male influence. I was also sick a lot as a child, and didn't attend school much, so I think I've had a natural inclination to explore the non-physical world and the spiritual.

I'd go to school, not feeling that I fitted in; this world was not the same world that I lived in. I just felt I didn't fit in a world, where to children it's all so physical, isn't it? You know, "Can I fish as well? Can I jump as well?" - and largely I couldn't.

So, I put a lot of energy into the spiritual and the intuitive, and I think because of that, I've gone a lot further than other people who've not had the same incentive. In thinking about things that occurred later on in my life - the four or five Bucke-type "cosmic consciousness" experiences - they were very surprising, and I didn't know how to categorize them and fit them in, but they certainly substantiated my desire to believe in a world other than the obvious physical world.

Tony's life on the physical dimension led him to a career in teaching mathematics in various countries and settings, from Africa to

England to Canada, mostly continuing to align with his path as an outsider.

T. I've always done an unusual path. I went to university and did maths after finishing my courses at tech. I did maths because I lived in my head a lot. I loved ideas, like Yentl in that movie, turning an idea over in my mind in three dimensions and looking at all...its leaves and its flowers and its roots...its everything. But, the reason I specifically did maths was that the first teacher I ever had in tech was a maths teacher who was unusually good, and was just a great guy - a great person - and I got top marks from the beginning.

N. So, finding a mentor was important.....?

T. Yes, ...yes, ...that's right. Oh, very much! I think I was looking for a father most of my life, you know, or various versions of a father figure that could validate me - an older male. Bert, you could say, fulfilled that. (Bert was a mutual friend of ours who Tony met while working on the Indian reserve). It was a tremendous interaction with Bert, because he could validate me. You know, maybe would he have been my age it would have been so too, but it seems an additional component was his long and deep experience in counselling. Here were all my funny feelings and funny ways of doing things, and here's someone who not only can say, "Far out!", but he's the same or similar. You see, that was

wonderful!

N. That helped you to validate yourself?

T. Definitely!.....Anyway, as a young man, I spent three and a half years in Africa and loved it. We climbed Mt. Kenya and the Ruwenzori Mountains. It was a big adventure - a very outdoors, tremendous experience with a very broad cross-section of interesting people, some of whom would be like myself, exiles from a way of life they couldn't fit in. We were very interdependent and forced to rely on one another far more than here inside Western society. I got on very well with the black people. I really loved them. I felt very...you know...at one with them.

When I taught in Africa I was teaching the English school system, but it was largely diluted. We did it, but there was enough of the surrounding forest and the animals and the lives of these black people and everything else that you couldn't forget about. Whereas, in England it seemed you're so immersed in the system that it was very easy to forget. It's one long series of forgetting layer upon layer about our own reality, living, historically speaking, in a very narrow veneer of existence, you know, forgetting about our roots. So, when I came back from Africa, I taught in a school in England, and it was incredibly destructive, ...to me. It was as though everybody was dying, ...everybody was starving. It made me feel, "I've got to go somewhere else."

See, the illness I had as a child was asthma, which means I couldn't breathe. And I felt I couldn't breathe ...the air that everyone else breathed, or that I couldn't breathe what was available there. I mean, one of my associations when I think of schools is, ..."ach!", ...being choked, like some root stock of experience is not available here, you know. And here we are: we're being paid to bury the deepest needs of life, you know - to breathe - and talk about superficial things, you know, $x = y$. And of course, I love that intellectual stuff and a lot of its philosophical implications and how it fits in with the patterns and so on, but that's hard to communicate, and you're not paid to communicate that anyway.

So, I just couldn't live in that, so I came to Canada. I wanted a situation where I could join very powerfully with a group of people. So, I worked with Indians. You know, they're exiles too. They don't fit in, and I could be bizarrely different in culture from them and I would be acceptable.

N. So, you have had an empathy with people who weren't a part of this culture...?

T. Yes,yeah, I don't feel a part of it, and it's wonderfully coincidental to find books on ecology and read all kinds of things and hear all kinds of discussions, and find that my own odd way of looking at things is

tremendously substantiated: thinking of our grandchildren instead of thinking about only tomorrow; thinking in depth rather than shallowly; you know, thinking of the spiritual and human and the social, rather than just the purely superficial and material.

You know, like when Bert came along, that was by far the most happy and productive and fruitful teaching experience I've ever had, from every point of view - the work experience, the person, the after-work experience - you know, working on multi-levels at the same time. And, I felt we were being productive with the Indian people, helping them get a grip on the white man's world (in a social work course), and a "leg up over", doing grade nine maths.

An earlier experience in teaching that was meaningful to Tony, in a similar way, was in Ontario in an alternative community with "people who didn't fit in". He taught "so-called" juvenile delinquents math, and before each class, he and they would contribute to a few minutes of poetry or music.

T. Once I had a tape of Chief Dan George singing and chanting. I felt alive, and felt like the other people in the room were alive. Then we'd say, "Well, we've got to do this math", and so we would do the maths, and ended up having some very inspired math sessions, where I talked about meta-mathematics - you know, the structure behind mathematics - the patterns - and that was really fruitful.

That was validating. We were co-workers on the planet. You know, it aerated; it allowed for the possibility that here is someone who had just been born, who's just incarnated, and he's a high being, and here he is, he's just been a juvenile delinquent because it's his way of demonstrating this system is up the creek. I loved it!!! We were validating each other.

N. When you are able to be validated in being yourself, is when you're truly in tune with life and

T. And I'm most fruitful and helpful...Actually, I think one of my dreams in this life would be to be actively involved in one or more communities as a solution to our ecologically disastrous situation on this planet.

N. I'd really like to hear your experience of "cosmic consciousness".

T. One experience was a very powerful experience in a workshop on perception in 1972 or '73:

It was a slow process we were experiencing, of slowly raising the level of vibrations - going up a scale as it were - until, unknowingly, after three or four days of being with these people, you're at a plane. I think some music was being played. I didn't know it was going to happen. It was unexpected. This music had been played, and then there was quiet, and nobody said anything, and it was just like peace seemed to envelop everyone. And I remember looking around. Through the window you saw the mountains. It was very serene, and I remember looking at the people - first of

all, the women - and I was so awe-struck seeing their faces. It was like my...my eyes were like a valve, and the valve had been opened up to an unprecedented level - like a shutter in a camera or something, and...and there was so much light and...maybe beauty is more accurate - so much intense beauty coming out of each face of these women, that I could not stand it! It was painful. I had to, ...I would look, for say, three seconds, and I would close my eyes. It was so...painful. I could not, I did not, have the capacity to receive it, as it were. And then, I would open my eyes again after getting over this - after, you know, thirty seconds - and I would look at another person, and that face was so powerful, it was so incredible, that I, again went through this cycle. And after, maybe five minutes, I then realized that only women had I been looking at, and I started to look at the men. There were only a few, as usual - and I began to see the same kind of this immense power coming from their faces, and that was absolutely, you know,a totally new fact of experience. And since then, many times I've thought, if my eyes - you know, Blake's "doors of perception" and all that - if my eyes, the valves in my head could open again, I would be seeing students in a room, people in a dentist's office, the same way! And I would be awe-struck and incapacitated.

It only happened once since in a major way, but two or three times in the last year, with my wife - we'd be eating supper, suddenly, I'd be looking over my dish, and I'd look into her eyes and I'd just be, again, awe-struck, and the power in the eyes was so immense I would again have to close my eyes.

Now, another very significant one that was different was when I was with a woman, who I still know and have an empathy for. I'd gone to Ontario to be with her, thinking that maybe we could be married, and I think that wasn't realistic, but anyway, that was eight or ten years ago, and we still have a strong empathy. She was doing her Master's degree in religious studies, and she said to me that I was more spiritual than most of the people doing this degree, and that was a connection between us. I was finally leaving her at the airport; I was coming back west:

Suddenly - like, I was so distressed - it was not hell that I was going to, but it was like the desert, and here I was with a wonderfully fruitful human being and all this interaction and someone who understood me, I felt, and we had so many levels we communicated on, and I was leaving. It was such as axe coming down. Tears were coming down my face, and it was so painful, the prospects of the desert, and suddenly, her eye,her whole face... was radiant with light. It was just like, ...just, light was just pouring out of her face, and it was like something cracked inside me - you know, broke - or something - and all this light was pouring out of her face.

In the first experience, it was a steady, over three days, mounting, as you go into the mountains slowly, up onto a plateau, and then you climb a little more with a group and become more cohesive, and then you rise to another plateau, and that was painless. In the second case, it was pain, and

a very sharp pain, as it were.

These experiences are very important to me, very important things to examine. So, I wrote to a very spiritual Jesuit priest I'd known many years before, enumerating, paragraph by paragraph, some of these experiences, probably wanting him to incorporate them, from his point of view, into some picture - some overall direction - which he was not able to do. He was very sympathetic; that's all. And now, like so many things, once I express them, it seemed to, itself, help quite a lot. It seems more a normal event, like, you know, after you've shown the slide show of your trip to friends, it eventually becomes part of your experience.

I still kind of say, "Well, how does it fit in?" I have an immense need to believe, and to know - to go even beyond believing to have concrete evidence of another world. There have been other things, but this is like, tangible; ...you know, it's not in a book. Another whole raft of things is, you're reading a book and you say, "Oh yes, of course that's true. Oh yeah, I've always thought that", and in reading Bucke and Ring, it all fits. And there's a vast and tremendous energy in me to know what it was, ...why I'm here, why we're all here, what it all means, and to get to the underlying processes in order for me to live better, to know the direction I should be going in, to be more.

- N. Did you look at things differently from that point?
- T. It just seems a slow, gradual development. The steps in life are all on a continuum, you know, an evolution, with little jumps here and there, and, like I don't feel I've had a transcendental experience quite like Bucke talks about, but it all fits together. It's a wonderful thing, but, it's as though, we all know it, all these things, but we have to be reminded of them, and then we say, "Oh yes, of course". It seems as though there is a deep inner source of evidence, but it's hard to prove on a brick wall or something. If I think of a tangible thing, I also think of probably the way I was with Indian people; the way I did not seek power from - or take power from - but shared power with them. To enhance each other's power would be a deep motive.
- N. Did these experiences stay with you, ...as far as feeling...?
- T. It floated back into the ocean waves of my consciousness - you know, the big wave suddenly subsides, but it's still there somehow. I mean, I think my way with the Indian people had a lot to do with this, and going to the hospital and choosing to work with people dying of cancer was a specifically thought of and determined thing I did for seven or eight months.
- My main pain at the moment is, how do I keep faith with my inner, slowly growing knowledge of myself and a spiritual

universe, and deal with the world in order to feed my family? I'm very concerned to grow and evolve and get on with it. I don't see the process of being stuck or stopped; it's just delayed and slowed down, because in the fabric of things, there are no coincidences.

Tony described a number of things he would like to do as part of this ongoing process. All of his ideas are encompassed in the wish to continue an "investigative process" relating to his spiritual search, for the ultimate purpose of integrating his way of being with his work in the world.

T. But why? You know, ...but in order to? I think one of the things when I say, "why?", is, especially on the Indian reserve, you're so bang-up against the pain and the suffering, and it's my own suffering which has so clouded my life and is so painful, that it helps me feel I want to honor a co-human being basis to help to heal, ...to heal the suffering that I see. And I think for an optimal society - a society that is going to the Omega point - there ought to be a place for people like me; for what I have, feel and see and know in this world. You know, I have sought out a few individuals so that we could long commune into the night and validate each other, but there ought to be a valued place for people like the way I am.

I think most of my life I've been looking for a father, a mentor, but also, I was looking for a wife. I had to work

myself through this to make a decision, and I read once, "it's not so much the content of the decision, it's the making of the decision that's important". And that was an immense new idea to me I never conceived of, because it was always the contents, you know. Like, for instance, had I gone to one of these spiritual centers or met more people or lived longer on a commune, I would be constantly looking for what I now have. So, the family, to me, is wonderful, an endless joy. We spend a lot of time with our children, and that's vital.

N. You were mentioning about how there aren't any coincidences...

T. It fits in - the pattern - the flow of things, the Omega point and all the rest of it - that there is a guide. All I have to do is try to be open to it, and that is enough in the moment. All you've got to do is try - to wish to be open, to knock and the door will be answered. If you're willing to put energy into something, enough, it will work - just have faith that it will work.

 But, I have that feeling that there is a pattern and a flow and I can only be open to it. It's almost like a fabric that you can tear - of life - a flow of events. I've noticed quite a few times lately, how if I've lost something, and I put energy into expressing that loss, and wanting to know where it is, that there it is, in front of

me. What is lost and my need, as it were, both exist simultaneously, and both are aware of each other, and both somehow come together at that point that I articulate it. And it's as though everything exists and is all aware of each other.

It seems like the steps in life are all on a continuum. There's no giant leap, you know, where it's broken. I remember reading a phrase in a book by Jampolsky about that leap of faith - that life would work out if you trusted. To me, that's unbelievably exciting, but I would like to have more faith in myself.

A few years ago, I went to the mountains with my dogs, and of course, the dogs are silent, Zen monk-like beings. I went for quite long, enduring hikes, and we worked a lot of energy out. And there are places in the mountains where there's no evidence at all of people, and it's looked this way since the ice age - great walls of granite reaching up into the sky, ...and rain-marks on the rock, and primevalness. I got to know those dogs. Those dogs touched me in a very deep way, and there was a new connection. That made me think, "My God, what could happen with people? Indians lived like this all the time". Then I took my son to the mountains, and it came to me more clearly than before: ...the answer for me is to be able to go inside in some quiet way, a meditative way, in some very primeval place.

That would be a valid place to sort some things out, because it's out in the wilderness where the only always available validating experiences can be had.

Donald

Donald is an artist-craftsman, and his living space advertises this in a patterned arrangement of rocks, crystals, paintings and symbolic artifacts. In the last year, he has synthesized his ideas, along with his talents and tools, including astrology, and has developed a workshop format he has named Earth Shamanism. He stated that he sees this medium as a way to "ground the information" relating to a new paradigm. We met for our interview in the midst of the rocks and crystals, seating ourselves on pillows next to his hexagonal-shaped coffee table. I had met Donald only a few weeks before our interview through attending a conference he had organized for José Argüelles, the author of Earth Ascending. Rapport had quickly developed during our contracting session, so we were able to engage comfortably in the dialogue centering on the research question. The importance of space - the environment - to Donald, is evident by his generous use of space metaphors to describe his process.

D. I guess I see it as a process that is ongoing; that, although maybe my central core "belief's operator" is fully into the new paradigm, parts of me are still coming through. The whole shift has taken many years. My parents encouraged independence in me, and I went for that, and I had a paper route when I was young: I'm just getting the idea of opening doors - like, when you're a paper boy, you do open doors into many different homes, and you get to look into

each one. So, I think that helped expand my sense that every family has its own unique pattern of operation, and hence, its own world view.

Where my biggest changes of outlook came were during university, but not as a result of the curriculum - more as a result of the social interaction of that time, you know - other people experimenting with different ways of looking at things. Some artist friends of mine embraced a different world view much more quickly than I, because I was very egocentric back then. My values shifted considerably in the next year or two. Anyway, these friends got me opening up through their art, and through the Bohemian lifestyle that they lived. I incorporated a lot of that into my own space. I had empty space in the basement, and I actually created my own environment in a very unconventional way. I surrounded myself with color and I used egg cartons on the ceiling, and on the walls I'd have this kind of sound dimension. It really was a wild environment, but it was very nurturing of my shift from, ...you know, very conventional consciousness and home, into something that was totally an expression of my reality. So, I regard that era as quite fundamental.

I had an experience in that room actually, and although I was experimenting with marijuana at that point, I had a non-drug experience that was really more profound than anything I've ever experienced otherwise. I was in a very

depressed state about the state of society as I saw it. I really felt that there was a real disharmony in industrial society and a lot of what surrounded me, and I just felt that my identity was squashed by it. I'd had a rough experience at work - an affront to my long hair or something - that really got the emotional part of me going, and this was my particular experience:

I was in my room and I had some music on, and I was sitting, head down, and just feeling down. But, there was a part of me wanting to come up. And I had this experience of a beam coming down, just like that, right through my head. At that point, I rotated around, and it was like I could see a pathway that led upward, and from that point on, I reoriented my life. Like, I just grabbed hold of knowing that I could change my whole way of living, my whole outlook, ...everything, and I feel like I've been on that beam ever since.

- N. Wow!...Was it just a recognizing that there's a path that leads...?
- D. Toward light: a sense of beam and light and movement - you know, consistency on the beam. It wasn't a blinding light, but there was almost like a physical sensation of it right through the back of my head. Life directing, you know, and it's guided me through many, many transformations. That would have been about in 1970. I've got a whole suitcase of journals. I developed what I called a "beam" book. I would draw circles on each page with yellow ink, so

you actually had a beam going through the book. That was the first step, and then, day by day, I would enter whatever information came for me on that day. One of the very first things I entered was a quote from Carlos Castaneda about the path with heart. I wrote it concentrically in one of the circles. You've got to rotate the book, and you've got to get on the beam, in order to read it. So, you have to be involved in that process.

Even before that, I had very powerful experiences just welling up inside me. Because of some of the reading I had been doing, I really began to question the whole educational system. Then, there was a government sponsored program, Opportunities for Youth, and I was inspired to get something happening. I called it "spontaneous learning", and I see now that it was really opening to the "feminine". So, I called a meeting. I had this big idea, you know, but to try and convey just what I was experiencing was really difficult. From that experience, because it was so difficult to share my sense of this new learning path I was on, I resolved to actively study that kind of material so that I could convey an understanding beyond just my personal experience.

I saw society as very structured, very rigid, and so that's where I really began to question, "Does society have to be that way? Can it be changed?", and if so, "How do we

go about it?", you know, "What part do I play?"

I left the university half-way through a year in fine arts. Like, a lot of shifts happened for me in that era, and one of the things I realized was that the university structure wasn't working for me. The first book that I really connected with, in that new space, was The Brothers Karamazov. I remember Father Zossima represented for me one of the old cronies of the direction I was heading in, so it was like I got immediate connectedness on that spiritual dimension.

- N. Leaving the university was part of being on a new beam?
- D. Yeah, ...yeah, ...self-empowered. At that point, we started to see bookstores like Laughing Rooster. I mean, it was such a joy to go into a bookstore like that with some money - and bang, bang bang; these interest me - and go out with this armful of books, and for the next month, you know, I'm just totally immersed. I consciously worked out a life-style that allowed me freedom to explore and to read on my own. So, Marshall McLuhan was an early mentor; another was Buckminster Fuller, certainly, whose life reorientation experience was similar to mine; then Dane Rudhyar, who has really had a profound influence on me; and John Lilly. Actually, Lilly before Rudhyar, and that was good, because he really got me established as an explorer - you know, the whole one about "beliefs unlimited".

Then, the significant connection with Dane Rudhyar: the very first book - and this was at Laughing Rooster downtown - and I still remember, standing, facing east, picking this book off the shelf, and it's called Lunation Cycle. Just the graphics on the cover set off so many intuitive responses; like, it was a physical, metaphysical, integrated connection - and that was my first connection with Rudhyar. Reading that made me realize how Western society is predominantly structured according to the linear world view, and here's Rudhyar bringing forth this cyclic, holistic world view, with a tool that can be embraced in my life, and it integrates with the beam so well.

So, a lot of self-directed study, once I realized that I was self-empowered, and it's been a steady process. Recently, it's really begun to mushroom. Like, a lot of the material I got into never came back out of me, even until this year. Things just started coming together, all these different streams. So, I feel my days are getting bigger and bigger! The view is just getting broader and broader, but that has been the continuous thread all the way through. I'm glad you've set your structure out this way. Sharing this, I'm getting all kinds of new information about it as well. I've never, ever shared all this with anyone before, so I'm seeing it differently. I'm seeing how long that spiral has been developing.

Meanwhile, Donald had married his childhood sweetheart in the early '70s. Her expectations of life, and of Donald, diverged markedly from his own unfolding vision. She always expected Donald to "rise in the socio-economic sphere", so encouraged him to pursue formal education that would lead to a professional career. Her family was very materialistic, and she was an only child, so there was always money available to the young couple.

Donald tried many different jobs and a couple of starts at university after his B.A. degree, but finally came to a point of "burning two bridges": one, the university and the school system (he'd been in the B. Ed. program), and secondly, "working for somebody else". The experience of returning to the university as a mature student to a "curriculum meant for people who didn't want to question things", combined with a student teaching experience where he was given "the axe" because of trying to facilitate the integration of Indian and white children as a two-way process, led Donald to a knowing that he would never teach in the school system. It was after this that he bought a little rock shop and began to develop his skill as a craftsman.

For some time, Donald and his wife were able to accept one another's paths in life, in spite of their conflicting world views. When Donald began to get more involved with groups, including inviting people from his expanding network into his home, his wife could no longer accept the way he "was beginning to manifest" in his life. For her, bringing people into her home was an "invasion"; for him, it was

a fulfillment of the "beautiful space" they had in the country.

D. My development got to the point where I just couldn't live within that narrow confine. We had separated in '82, so that was where all the really emotional stuff got dealt with. (Buying mugs for each year of their marriage was a tradition they had initiated on their honeymoon). In '82, right at the exact day of the Pluto-Saturn conjunction - O.K., so these mugs represent Saturn, the form function, and Pluto is that which shatters and regenerates form - my mug for that year broke. That was the only mug of that whole collection that ever got broke. I mean, the timing and everything. It was like, that's what tradition is for; it gives you information. And that moment was devastating! I just knew at that point that it was the end.

They did eventually reunite; their daughter was still quite young. Finally, this year, Donald had "overcome the emotional attachment" and the differences became too vast, and so they have again separated.

D. She is not accepting of the larger me, and I'm not willing to sacrifice that. At this point, it's been flowing very well.

N. I'm sure not without pain,with a little child.

D. She's accepting of it. She's got her room here. I mean, she's the one who's going to be a bridging person. She's experiencing both sides of the paradigm, really.

She's coming right up the middle, and she's coming out beautifully.

And, you know, having moved to this space, like there's a magic in this house. Did I mention the peak, the 64? There are 64 rosettes up top there...(64 is significant, as there are 64 hexagrams in the I Ching, with the same configurations as the 64 codons of the DNA molecule. This information is a part of Argüelles' book, which is forming a central part of Donald's self-study at present). I've learned to take whatever information comes to me as relevant, in the moment. Everything means something,...if you've got your eyes and ears open.

N. So, really in tune to the connections with everything in your environment...?

D. Yeah, exactly! That's one of the reasons I've enjoyed connecting with José's material in Earth Ascending, because at the core of the models is the Shamanic core, the total psychosynesthesia, where all information coming into the common center is being processed in a synergistic kind of manner. This is very empowering; there's a real energy source as a result of that. That's been my experience. It gets funneled back out, with a radiance of some kind. So, I'm now in the place of drawing on the cosmic energies as they manifest through these different cyclic events, like a solstice-full moon connection. I mean, the natural energies

are there for us to draw on if we align our consciousness with them.

N. Would you like to share more about this synthesis of the past year?

D. Yeah, ...I think I can pinpoint that to José's book. When I first saw the ad for it in the Shambhala catalogue, it was a similar connectedness to what I had with Rudhyar's book - like this vivid "Bssst" - just knowing that that material was going to be right for me, and there was an excitement, you know, as I ordered it, and I just knew beforehand that this was right up my alley, and that it would take me into a much broader realm. And, boy, when I entered that book, it was like just knowing I was into a new territory and that it was all going to hang together.

I found it very difficult, initially, because I had to start thinking in new ways, and stretching. But, I really got into it. I just allowed myself to go with it, and I just knew so deeply that this was important. I think my first reading took me three or four months, because I was taking it in with such intensity I could only assimilate so much information at a time. It was just like having this plate of information, and I could only "eat" so much, and I just had to put it away. It was just totally altering in my structure, really. It was really working me over that way.

N. You could really feel things changing?

D. Yeah, and then looking at my life, and my family, and everything, and really questioning it, and saying, "Like, what am I doing? How much am I doing in terms of this greater planetary work?" It really was a spark for me to do more, and to align myself more and more closely with that higher vision. This lifetime lunation work that I do traces this whole spiral of development, and I was aware that I was coming into a time of expression and clarification.

José's book really helped, because it made the new paradigm that much more vivid. So, one day I just, "Hey, I'm going to make this personal connection", so I called, and actually talked to Lloydine, (José's wife) and there's the introductory sort of thing, and then, all of a sudden - I distinctly remember - it was almost like "the beam" was connecting us, and then there was the rain of information; it just came down, it was just like Aurora, hitting the telephone line and sending this information. There was a real connection there.

That connection led to plans to ground this information through holding meetings and beginning to "help nurture the whole tide of information" and to provide a "matrix" for evolving the vision of hosting an Earth Ascending workshop.

D. That would act as a catalyst to really ground this world view into a community expression.

Differences between Donald and his wife came to a head in the

course of the planning of this event. He recognized, more clearly than ever, that fulfilling conventional ideals was not "right" for him. His experience of trusting that there would be a way to bring his dream to fruition helped him in the separation.

D. Like, in just knowing that if I feel really truly drawn on this path, my needs will be looked after, ...one way or another, and that you don't proceed by formula. Embrace!, you know, and then, this space opened up at just the right time. Actually, the journey from marriage to separation was like going through a barrier. Actually, Lloydine said, "You know, we shouldn't call it separation, we should call it expansion", and that's exactly what I experienced. It was a physical - again, like the beam - again, to a whole new realm. I think of a huge sphere - a membrane - and actually, going through the membrane and there being this "whush", you know? It was really, really something, and a knowing that I was in a fundamentally new place: light and bright and harmony and joy. Like, joy, ...I was in an expanded state of joy for a week.

I had the freedom to spend this time with the move, just day-to-day, to bring things in, and as I brought things in, I integrated them into the space. So, everything was complete as I went along. I feel much more completely into a very clear and grounded sense of who I am and what my values are. It's like this place is a full expression of my

values.

N. Part of that expression seems connected with an affinity with the Native people you've had for some time...

D. Yeah, ...when I was young my parents took on boarders, and I remember this Indian fellow who'd lived in the Yukon. Like, he had come from somewhere way out there that seemed really fascinating to me. So, that was an early connection to that kind of energy - maybe the very first connectedness. I had an affinity; it was just the simplicity and the color that I enjoyed within the Native expression.

But in '76, through a networking operation that I was involved with, came a message from the Hopis that they were doing an earth healing ceremony at the Habitat conference, so that came to me as a challenge to do something here. And Mount Yamnuska just loomed into my consciousness, so that connected me with the Stony. I sought a Stony guide and asked him if he knew of a pathway up the mountain. So, we go on this trail and ended up... not on the very peak, but about two peaks down, and right at nine o'clock, there we were, sitting cross-legged on the edge of the mountain. And you're sitting there, knowing that 800 miles to the west there are people sitting at exactly the same time in a healing circle, and that a few thousand miles away in the other direction, there's a guy who's climbed Mount Stallion in Germany, and he's doing the same thing. And, wow, this

is a wonderful kind of way to relate to the world! I mean, that's what Hopi did for me, at that point: it was really grounded and focused within me what an earth healing ceremony is about.

N. To write, to pay attention, to become self-aware - that seems to have been something that's given you great joy; that you really made a conscious decision about a long time ago...

D. Yeah, ...if we encompass my deepest concern under the phrase, "healing the earth", I realize that it starts from this very core and works out, and that's where I can contribute. I've got to start with myself, and I'm vividly aware that that's correct.

Nimrod

I first met Nimrod in 1981 when we were both participants at a Progoff Journal Workshop. As those workshops go, there was not much dialogue, as the process is mainly a solitary one. I did remember Nimrod sharing with the group his feelings about connecting with Carl Rogers through his writings, a connection that was a significant stepping stone in Nimrod's life. I recall this incident clearly, because although Nimrod was a man in his early forties, his manner was strikingly similar to Carl Rogers': it was a moment of seeing congruence. It was the memory of this experience of resonance that guided me to seek out Nimrod as a possible co-researcher. His response was immediate and affirmative, and our interview was scheduled for the following day at my home. Our dialogue seemed to generate an intense amount of energy between us, and in the background, atmospheric energy was creating lightning/thunder, ...and the dogs barked. All of this was recorded on the tape, so I experienced these feeling of energy over and over during the process of transcription.

Nimrod began our session by describing his transformative process as one comprised of four basic changes:

N. I think I changed to a different world view when I was about fourteen/fifteen when I first got interested in Eastern studies, and then I changed again in the late '60s when my interest in mysticism came in contact with the

humanistic psychological process - Rogers, Perls, Maslow - and then, a reversal in my late thirties, going back to more conventional concerns, and another change about 1983 when I let go of those security issues to take a plunge into going into higher education. Part of what's also going on with that more recent change, is there's an attempt to reconnect with the spiritual stream. I have moved to more of a Jungian orientation, where I seek integration as a total process, a more complete balance. So, those are some of the dips and valleys of that whole process.

N.D.* Would you like to talk about each of those periods of your life, say right back to when you were a teen? What led you away from sort of the norm of the culture?

N. Yes, ...very much so. I was brought up in the north of England, a fairly working class kind of culture; the local pub and soccer games were part of the theme of life. And I was not a part of that: it wasn't something that interested me at all. One of my things that I remember being interested in was serious classical music, and I was a real oddball, you know, with my peers. So, I was already a bit out of the mainstream, and then, I started getting into the outdoors, going hiking every weekend, and that got me into a kind of nature-mysticism during that period. During that

* Refers to author as means of differentiating from Nimrod.

time, as many adolescents do, I started questioning basic assumptions about what life was about - "What is the purpose of this whole deal?"

I was not enjoying school, finding it irrelevant, and I find that has always disturbed me about schooling. I did find studying geography tremendously exciting, because of its relationship to the real world. And, I started to ask some questions, and then, as often happens with these sorts of things, I met an intriguing character about three or four years older than me, and he was concerned with the same sort of life issues. And one of the ways we expressed that, was going into Spiritualism.

While Nimrod had a number of friends in hiking, in school "there was a certain sense of alienation", and he had a number of experiences of actually being "ostracized". He, therefore, pursued his real interests outside of school. At home, Nimrod's mother was affirming of his way of being, having had similar interests in exploring "life/death issues", but his dad was a "conventional" man who had little empathy with these interests. When Nimrod was about fifteen, his older friend, who was also interested in Eastern Philosophy, "introduced" him to a yogi in the Himalayas by giving him an address. Nimrod pursued this connection and became a serious student of yoga.

N.D. It sounds like that fellow was very significant in affirming...

N. Yes, ...he was the one that kind of connected me with

that whole stream. I basically went much further than he did with the whole thing, but he was a catalyst, obviously, to that change, to pointing me in the direction that had significance.

N.D. So, very early you had a vision of life being far more than...?

N. Yeah, ...I must have been more in the intuitive. The hiking helped to ground me, and it was getting into my surveying work that made me more practical than I would have otherwise been. It did ground me.

When Nimrod was seventeen, his family emigrated to Canada. They first went to Ontario where his surveying work began. To continue with this work in Ontario would have required further schooling, so Nimrod chose, instead, to move to Western Canada where he could fulfill the requirements for licensing as a surveyor without returning to school. This was in the late '50s, a time when very few North Americans were involved in studying Eastern philosophy and yoga, so when Nimrod did meet some of those "few" people, it was a "significant experience" for him.

N. There was some conflict at that point, between continuing to pursue my career and getting into the "quote" spiritual life - you know, meditation and so on. It all seemed very magical and romantic. I used to spend weekends with this spiritual community. Like, it was a haven for me, feeling a bit like a fish out of water in the culture I was

living in, because the whole oriental approach to things was not yet developed. I often look back now, and say, "Yeah, that was a very different time. I didn't feel at home". Now I can, ...I do feel at home, because so many people are into the values of the ecology of that somehow. So, you can talk about, "What is life about?", or "What does it mean?", or "What is our purpose here?" The kind of context in which I was raised, you would have been a nut to talk about that sort of stuff. I was very guarded about who I talked to. Part of the reason, was when I was about fifteen I'd had a hiking buddy, and I started sharing with him some of my interests in mysticism, and he just thought I was completely nuts, and that was the end of our relationship.

So, during those first few years in Canada, this yoga community was like a way of meeting the right kind of people, ...and, where I had the first really significant spiritual experience:

On the last night of my first visit there, I was sort of praying - to a picture of Jesus, actually - and then, all of a sudden, this wave of energy came over me, and I felt as though I was being totally overwhelmed by a very blissful kind of...wave of love or whatever. It was really quite an experience, and I was really quite bowled over by it. And, I guess for me, it was at that point that it was a confirmation that this was the place to be at the time. "These are the right people to be with."

This decision began a dozen-year commitment to the spiritual life, to a dedication of service to others and to personal spiritual development. Shortly thereafter, Nimrod, along with the spiritual leader of the community and a few others, moved to a place in the country where they began a yoga retreat center, developing it "from scratch". Building such an establishment required intensive energy and financial resources, so part of this contribution involved Nimrod continuing with his surveying work. One of the early "incongruencies" experienced by Nimrod involved this dual life of work in the world and spiritual development.

N. There wasn't a lot of opportunity for spiritual practice. I always had difficulty with the combination of all the responsibilities I had. Looking back, I can say, "It was an impossible mixture". I actually had a very responsible position, responsible for the running of the place in a managerial sense, and for the provision of money. I was playing out very much of a father role in that community, and I would sort of take that on in a spiritual way.

I guess my way of having spiritual experiences was more of a collective process. I found that most of my experiences - and I had a number of them - were usually related to a kind of group energy thing happening, and I seem to be quite skilled at manipulating that energy. It was almost an unconscious thing. I just did it out of

something deep inside of myself. Some of those types of experiences would be almost like Kundalini kind of experiences:

We'd be chanting and would be having a sense of this kind of energy among us, sharing it in a certain way - we'd do a ritual or something - and I'd feel tingling...and, ...almost as if my head was flattening down to the bottom of my spine. Very inspirational type of things! And I found that kind of experience, not only in terms of my own experience, but in the sense of real community, was one of the most important experiences of that time, to me.

Other people, including the leader of the community, thought of spiritual experience in terms of solitary meditation, ...and asceticism. We had been doing studies on Kundalini, and there are all kinds of visualizations you can do around this work, but, for me, those experiences were spontaneous, and came about as a result of a different focus. I think I was very much more of a communal person, and had a real connection with people, in a certain way.

But, dealing with that in a more intimate, human sense was missing, and I think that where the incongruencies began to really get to me was when I started reading Rogers. What Rogers suggested to me was that normal human experiences are important existentially, while in the yogic way of looking at things, they are viewed as weaknesses that get in the way of spiritual development. Now, as I got more into Jung and

Rogers, I began to appreciate that those human experiences - of hurt, anger, whatever - in their own right, were precious, that there is beauty in humanity. That was Rogers' gift to me, and it just hit me - it was just like a revelation to me.

So, I had become very transpersonally oriented, and this was a way of restoring balance, you know. I had been trying to get rid of the ego before I'd really developed it properly, and that's where the Jungian concept of integration was very helpful to me: the idea that you cannot really transcend something you haven't fully experienced yet.

So, actually, what happened is that the spiritual leader was moving along a fairly rigid line - the yogic line - of being committed to individual development. For me, it was like all this other stuff was a tremendous ferment - not only in terms of the humanistic psychology stuff, but the whole "Beatles" thing, the whole issue of ecology, the Vietnam War. I began to see how all these things were connected. There was a way that all that fitted together, and I began to get a different sense of what our retreat could be as a community. But, it didn't fit for the leader, and gradually there was a split. Also, there was a split because of the incongruity of her wanting to develop the center to a certain point where she began to manipulate

people to achieve and to get money, and I was moving more in the other direction, saying, "We've got to treat people like human beings".

N.D. You were opening to the world more, weren't you?

N. Yeah, ...that's right, but I don't think I was able to make the complete leap until I actually left there. And in our early years, I think it was really beautiful: it was a really wonderful dream and wonderful experiment that we were trying to carry out. I guess as I developed, came into my own, began to get a sense of my own integrity and started to question things, there was a shift. I got into a Gestalt therapy group one time - you know, "Perls' no-holds barred"- and I realized that I was really compromising myself, that I was choosing the incongruencies within myself and within the situation. I had to question some very fundamental beliefs.

See, I didn't have a sense of choice. When you believe that you're called to a certain position in a certain place, sort of buying into the Karma idea, those kinds of values create a belief system that leads you to "believe your choice away". Gestalt therapy forced me to say, "You're making that choice of believing that. It may or may not be the truth".

It's very difficult, of course, to question the integrity of someone you've implicitly trusted for a number of years, and where there's all kinds of spiritual

rationalizations. You talk to her about your feelings, and she explains it very beautifully, and you say, "That's good; I must be crazy to even question it"; you know, working this and working this, until eventually, you feel that the incongruencies are so glaring...I was basically getting close to breaking. I felt my integrity was being distorted. I wanted a break. I needed to get out of there and go visit some friends in Ontario. And when I went, I was basically told not to return.

Nimrod had not wanted to leave, as he "had too much invested in the place", so being thrown out was an incredible shock to him. What was even harder to take was the fact that the woman he had trusted for years began a process of "character assassination" to "justify" what she had done. Nimrod described the whole experience as "very painful and frightening", like going into "free-fall".

N. I think what was wrong for her is that you cannot, in a Jungian sense, develop the spiritual dimension of yourself without putting in those building blocks of your humanity, and dealing with your personal issues. It's as if she has not dealt with the shadow, and she's projected that onto everybody else. She was playing a lot of games and using spiritual stuff to do it. Looking back, it's a realization of the end of innocence: a learning that, "the world is not a nice place; not everybody is nice; you can't trust everybody".

What "saved" Nimrod at the time was his humanistic position and a very supportive network of friends. He was left with nothing of a material nature, so it was a complete "starting over". He became a college teacher, teaching yoga and groups - doing what he'd "always wanted to do". Also, he went into therapy to try and make sense of his experience, and discovered "absolutely amazing parallels" between the relationships with his mother and his spiritual leader: he was always the "helper", the "confidant".

Another very significant part of this new life for Nimrod was the beginning of romantic-type relationships with women. His relationship with his present wife "developed gradually and was a beautiful part" of his life. This was a stage of getting married, "settling down" with career and home, focusing on building up some of the material things in life. A move back to Western Canada was part of this move to "conventional concerns".

After several years of building up a land surveying business, during which time his wife finished a Master's degree, Nimrod began to grow increasingly dissatisfied with his work as a professional surveyor, which was never a "vocation" for him: it was a way of earning a living. He also began to recognize the illusory nature of security. It was at that point, in 1983, that he began to explore ways of fulfilling his aspirations to work with people. He knew that returning to school was the only way to establish credibility, but after all of his life experience, he found that taking beginning university courses "was not going to work". Last year he found a

degree program of humanistic studies in the States that has honored his life experience.

Nimrod reflected on the meaning of all these changes in his life as "a continual thread of exploration of different things":

N. For example, for the last few years we've been involved with Centerpoint, which is a Jungian study thing, and I got interested in shamanism for a while - I got some Indian drums and I've done some sweats, and I got interested in men's groups. In terms of my own process, something is always going on. There's always a growing edge in some way.

I think, still for me, in terms of the spiritual orientation, there's a strong sense of the contact with the natural world as a kind of basic foundation, but even there, there's been a significant change. I've become aware of the natural world, not only in Wordsworthian terms of the beauty and the flowers, but in a sense of the danger and the reality of the natural world - sort of the sobering side, you know. I don't think I have dealt very adequately with the shadow side of things. So, I think I'm gradually looking at that more clearly - seeing the beauty, but also seeing there's a darker side too, the shadow of life. So, I think that my connection with the natural world is also maturing, becoming more full, more complete somehow.

I've also realized that, yes, security is nice; ...it's nice to have a home and all these things, but they're not

worth it in spiritual terms, or in terms of where I put my life energy. It's like I have a sense that I'm much more on my soul's path doing what I'm doing now. So, it's like letting go of my dad's script, really. Now I can go the next mile, ...take the next stage, you know. And of course, that was all tied in with dealing with my issues as a man. I have been a person whose feminine side has been well developed, so it's like the rounding out of the psyche.

In this past year, Nimrod was confronted with the fatherly, over-responsible side of his helper identity in two arenas: a counsellor training program and his marriage. A short separation was a growing time for both Nimrod and his wife - a time for Nimrod to come to grips with "the need to be clear about what" his own "needs are".

N. It's like the spiral's come back to some levels I was working on in the early '70s, you know, but it's coming back at them at a different level. In a way, leaving the retreat center felt like a divorce. That was like a sobering, growing experience. Yeah, it was like a real paradigm shift at that point, you know. Leaving has enabled me to continue my development in terms of balancing the human and the spiritual.

N.D. Well, it seems as if that was the point where you really opened to maintaining an open consciousness.

N. Yeah, ...that's right, yeah, ...yeah....

N.D. When you left, were you more aware of the feeling of

being free or of being kind of lost without the structure?

N. The immediate impact was of feeling lost, and feeling very rejected. Again, things happened, as they often do in my life. Gradually, I began to experience the freedom, and also things clicked, you know. Just, connections were made and it was almost like it all fell into place, and I just found that very affirming. I had this instinctive feeling, "I've got to go to the other end of the country and have a complete change" - geographically, you know, a sense of, "I have to remove myself to really understand this". There was a sense in which it was right because things worked. It was very confirming, and I think a thread that runs throughout my life is that when those types of things start to happen, I have a sense of, "O.K., we're on track", and when they don't happen, I have a sense of real self-doubt.

 There are many uncertainties right now and I sort of feel, "O.K., I'll just have to trust that life, if I tune in right, will show the way". I'm realizing that, "Yes, I should have done (these studies) years ago", but I guess I wasn't ready at the time. Certain things weren't played out completely. I just have a sense that I'm on the right track now. I know it's an important step, and I think once you get that sense, it's incredible how that builds up. It's almost as if the new paradigm emerges like a mandala - if we just tune into it - of that unfolding vision.

What comes to mind is an encounter I had with a cougar about two years ago when I was hiking along a trail in Waterton Park in the middle of winter. This cougar was about ten feet away from me, and I turned about and faced it, and sort of crouched down and backed up, and there was a baby kit on the trail that I had just come up ...Anyway, the message of that incident to me was a mixture of, "Oh, my God!", and a sense of, "This was an incredible gift!" And I guess what comes to mind, is that in viewing life symbolically, in its fullness, there is that mixture of wonder and fear at the same time, and I think paradigm shifts are like that. They are a combination of, "something wonderful is happening", but it scares the hell out of you! There's a sense of knowing you're on the edge of something - of discovering something important - when that happens, and it isn't a comfortable process; it's a living process. And I find that what I need to do is be sensitive to those symbols or those meetings or those connections that speak to that process.

Joel

My interview with Joel was held in his home. His photographs of nature scenes gracing the living room wall, and the meditation music playing softly in the background, served to create an ambience conducive to our dialogue. Joel was a keen participant, seeing this as a timely opportunity to synthesize his thoughts as part of a present process of questioning his career path, "like writing a very detailed resume". His story of change includes several major turning points: times when old patterns were shed and he opened to new information, ideas and forms of living. Joel began the session by responding to the key research question:

J. I guess I would say, rather than changing to a new world view, just changing to a world view, ...'cuz I don't think I had one before. I grew up in a very safe kind of community with not much in the way of great concerns about what was going on in the world. I was very independent and I was going to be my own person, but I had no great concern. When World War II came, I was just so sure that that was what I should be involved with. I was so straight as far as that was concerned. I volunteered and went in the Air Force and was just champing at the bit to get over, completely without any sense of the way the world was so completely out of whack. I was only in for about a year, and then the war was over.

Joel had grown up with the notion that the only way to assert one's views and gain a sense of power was to overcome others physically. Meeting his wife's mother, who was a Quaker, was the beginning of turning this view completely around.

J. She had been a pacifist in World War I, and I mean, talk about unpopular! It was just what she said - the way she talked about Gandhi and the possible, positive results from taking a moral stand and being strong in turning the other cheek. It wasn't cowardly. I became aware of the fact that it took a great deal more courage to do that. There was just an immediate clicking between the two of us. Jennie's mother was just a very strong person, a person who was able to articulate her ideas well. So, it was rising out of that influence that I began to get involved in peace activities - and this was back in the '50s.

We were living in the States at the time, and there was a big push for fall-out shelters. I felt that was not where energies should be put: they should be used to attempt to get the nuclear arms race eliminated. And that was another thing .. Jen's mother just inundated me with information, so then I would read this stuff and agree, and have the wherewithal to speak out and say what I thought, and support it with some documentation.

Joel and his family, which included three sons, lived in a small community through the late '50s and 1960s, and during those years,

were a part of a Unitarian church fellowship. In addition to providing an educational program about the religions of the world, this fellowship concentrated on philosophical issues relating to current world concerns. Most of all, it was a place where people who "felt pretty much like" Joel and his wife could congregate. As the U.S. became more involved in the Vietnam War, Joel became more involved in peace activities. He also participated in actions that supported the Civil Rights movement. He reflected on what this experience was like for him:

J. It felt right. It seemed to be that that was, you know, the only way to go, and of course, my father and I were at sword's points the whole time. But, I think you have to do what your conscience sort of ...won't let you do anything else but...

A significant turning point in Joel's life involved making a decision to leave the United States and this involvement, and move to Canada.

J. We were responding to a lot of these social problems, and I guess, to a degree, maybe we had some influence. But, the Vietnamese War became more and more oppressive to us and to our sons who were approaching draft age. I'd gotten involved with the counselling of conscientious objectors, and Jen had also been working in the office of the same draft counselling agency. So, we were doing those kinds of things. I guess we finally had our fill of it, and it was

the Vietnamese situation, and our feeling of ineffectiveness in getting the representative from our government to respond to these ideas that just caused us to say, "Hey, the United States is bankrupt as far as we're concerned". As I became more informed, I realized that those in control were a bunch of people who were completely without any humanity or concern for the United States: they were a bunch of vested people strictly interested in the bucks - not in any philosophy or ideology. So, we got thinking more and more, "What are we going to do if our boys get drafted?"

It became apparent that we were in a rut in this beautiful little town. I was with a company making a product that I could put my whole belief system behind, doing something that had integrity, but it was the wrong country, and so Canada seemed to be the place to go. We came up here on a trip and saw the mountains and the potential that was here, and said, "You know, we can't make a change like this for all negative reasons", and we began to look to Canada as a really exciting place to be. So, we began looking, and in 1970 I got a job. We moved up and we made the commitment, at that time, to participate fully in it, so decided to become citizens as soon as we could,...which we did. I was very angry, for many years, with the U.S.: I didn't even want to go back. It took me a long time to get over that anger.

Crossing the border opened doors to change that shook up the traditional framework that had guided their family life in the States.

J. There was another shift in consciousness with coming to Canada, because we set aside pretty much everything we had in the States. We got out of that community where we were very comfortable, we began reaching out for new contacts, and then Jennie went to university, which was another shift, because she was no longer the housekeeper, the mother. There was a whole reassessing of our relationship with her going to university. I urged her to do it. I wanted her to do it. At the same time, I was scared. She was meeting other people, her whole value system of relationship with other people was changing, and I was scared.

I guess it was about that time that we read On Becoming Partners by Carl Rogers, and that was an incredibly influential book. It introduced the whole concept of attachment. We also read some other stuff on attachment and the importance of letting go, and the idea of being free to come to a relationship because that was what you wanted, not because you felt obligated. So, we thought, "Well, we do have a relationship that will withstand being open with others", and so we decided to try an open relationship, which we did for about four years. And it was the most incredible turmoil - the agony and the fear and the awful experiences that we went through - and all the processing.

And there was a lot of commitment to the relationship, but sometimes it was "comme ç*ı*, comme ç*a*", I felt,...but we always managed to work it through.

We met some incredible people and had some really diverse experiences. Many of the people that we encountered in our open relationship brought in new ideas, and for that reason, you know, it made all kinds of sense: "My God, here's a richness that we have through these new relationships that are exciting". There was a lot of energy expended, and it was something that I think we both learned a great deal from,...and so we hung in with it for a while. Intellectually, it made all kinds of sense; emotionally, it just ripped me up!

Around this time, another life event that created emotional upheaval was the leaving home of one of their sons, a leaving home that involved his joining a cult that prohibited communication. Through searching for their son, Joel and his wife eventually met William David, a spiritual teacher who has provided insight about the cult, and has also introduced them to a helpful philosophical framework.

J. It was a time for beginning to explore the esoteric, and William David has been someone who has given us a great deal of information and understanding in the life scheme of things. We became pretty much convinced that the whole concept of reincarnation had validity, that it explained

some things that somehow other processes didn't seem to, and so we began to grow in that aspect. We hadn't really explored the philosophical aspects of the world's religions to any great extent, and we began to find in this approach a viewpoint of life that made some sense, and helped us through really trying times, as our son continued to remain out of touch.

This view has also been aiding Joel with his current life focus - the issue of vocation. He has learned many skills, worked in a number of different kinds of settings, returned to graduate school at one time, and currently has a responsible government position. This career path has recently given him little satisfaction, and, in fact, has led to what he described as burn-out. Because of this, he has taken time away from work to regenerate and to reevaluate his career needs.

J. I think maybe that what's happened is I'm headed in a direction that is not where I want to go. I don't know what I want to be when I grow up, and my God, I just turned sixty last week! I know there is ...something that I am to do. I feel very strongly that my real life's work is yet to happen. This whole burn-out thing that I'm involved with right now - the moving to change - has been a going through just all kinds of different interactions with myself. What I want to do is use this time to get in touch with my soul, because I know that inside there is direction, and that I

just need to find it and unloose the energy that's just champing at the bit to get at it and do it, ...but it's not there yet. I'm trying to stay in the now, and be and just flow, and I think that's what this whole burn-out resting period is. I believe it will end at the point where I am able to flow and let go.

N. Have you had any clues along the way in this sort of esoteric exploring you've been going?

J. Well, I've gotten them, but...you know, the Myers-Briggs test indicates I'm intuitive, and yet I fight that so. I resist it. I did have a really neat dream, an incredible dream! I was telling Jennie about it, and she said, "Well, let's work it through", and so we used the Gestalt thing with chairs, but there wasn't a need to do that. The whole thing - I sat there without even changing places, without Jennie saying anything - the whole thing unfolded, and I dealt with all those many sides that were me, and it became very apparent that I will know, and it's going to become apparent, and there won't be any problem with my getting involved and taking off and doing it, but what it's going to be, I don't know...

N. I'm wondering if you've been aware of what things have been helpful when you're ready to take a new leap? Have you found reading...?

J. Yeah,...yeah,...I think it's been my firm conviction

that when I get into particular situations, the appropriate books will become apparent to me, and it's always been the case. Books have always been very important to me. I seem to, intuitively, select books at periods in my life when what their messages have to say to me are very critical to my evolving.

N. So, there is a certain synchronicity you're aware of in your life?

J. Oh, no question in my mind about that - that there is guidance out there - and if I can but tune into it, I will be given some appropriate information and direction. I also believe the Karmic concept, of things being pretty well planned out, and it's just a case of me finding out what the hell the damn plan is! When adversity comes, the idea that there are life fragments in my past that I'm perhaps completing, or that there's something in a relationship that has had root in a previous lifetime, kind of helps to make sense, and gives me a feeling...that I'm not completely out of control. Not that I'm in control, but at least things are unfolding as...in a reasonable way, or in a way that is leading me somewhere.

It just seems reasonable. The conservation of energy which we see everywhere has to have some relevant, similar approach in the meaning of life. But, it's not the idea that I have been who I am before, but that my soul is an

entity that has been around a long time - and it isn't necessarily time-oriented at all. My soul can be incarnate in lives now, or past or whatever: ...the whole concept of time just does not exist...in this...

This is basically a comfortable answer for me to help me accept a lot of things that happen, although I get very angry with the idea, ...and it seems sort of dumb for such a supposedly intelligent entity to choose these idiotic ways of giving me the experience that I'm having. Why do we have to learn that way? It would be so much easier to read a couple of books and then be done with it, you know!!!! But, we can't do it vicariously, I guess.

Joel returned to the theme of some of his difficulties with letting go of control, with attuning to his intuition.

J. So, I've gotten involved with a lot of this spiritual, sort of esoteric kind of thing, and I'm incredibly skeptical about all of it, and William David and I have always been at odds. I realize that there's a lot in what he has to say; it's very wise. But, I've been brought up on the empirical approach, you know. You must prove it in a laboratory before it can be believed and is for real. And I realize that that's a totally bankrupt idea, but there it is in my background.

I meditate a fair amount and get some insights from that. Again, I question my own insights, because, you know,

"Well, geez, that's me, of course; I'd want to slant it that way". I've been involved in a men's group and have gotten some really meaningful insights. We had a "sweat", an Indian sweat, which is very demanding and forces you to turn inward and view yourself, to come to terms with who you are. I guess it was about the second or third sweat that I was in - I was almost, just perched on the edge of falling over, and I was so scared that I was going to go into this...abyss of awareness. And I backed out. I just didn't give in, and there was something there so strong, saying, "For God's sake, let go!"

One of the things I've got to do is just let go and let it flow. I'm so controlled. I need to let go, and it's so hard. There's this thickset straight part of Joel that says, "No way, ...you're going to live it through as your father's son".

The natural world has always played a key role for Joel in terms of flowing with life. He described himself as one who was always at home in nature, having grown up playing happily in woods behind his small town home. He recalled that as an "idyllic time" when he was "free to be".

J. Well, certainly as I'm in the woods, in the mountains, there's an awareness that it has to be flowed with. Skiing, in particular, and mountain climbing and hiking, to a degree, have been sharpeners of awareness of myself. With

skiing, I could go right to the edge of life.

Being on the shore of a lake or a stream in a setting that is idyllic is so regenerating, just being in a state of awareness of all these things being there to touch and to be.

N. I've been wondering if you've always sort of been open to experimenting, trying on new ideas, exploring?

J. As I think of our life before we came to Canada, it was pretty traditional. There was involvement and concern, but within the framework of society. I think I began "stepping outside" when the vehicles became available, as they did when we moved and things started opening up. My wife has been very important: she's probably been the opening wedge, or introduced the opening wedge, for a lot of ideas, and I think my growth has been stimulated by my relationship with her. One of the other entrees to new ideas and new things has been our sons, particularly with diets they would bring home. We'd try them, and if something made sense, we'd incorporate it into our way of eating. We've also had Indian and Chinese people live with us, so we've had a real potpourri of diet or approaches to eating.

So, I've been through a lot of these different awarenesses, the looking for insights into yourself, kind of thing. Each one has something to offer,...but they're all out there. I've got to collect them all together and sort

of say, "O.K., there's the resource, the raw materials; now, what are you, inside, going to do with it all?" Right now I need to synthesize. I need to really reach down inside of me and find out what it is that all this preparation, all this incredible wealth is for,...and I think it's all been for a purpose to get on with the real purpose of why I'm here.

CHAPTER IV

PATTERN, PROCESS AND EMERGENT PARADIGM

After the journey of living with the transcripts and stories - with editing, organizing and reorganizing - I began "the return", the process of distilling essential themes from the narratives. While working on the stories, I entertained at least nineteen different themes through a horizontalizing process. For several days and nights, after completing the initial drafts of the stories, I simply allowed possible fundamental elements to sift through my consciousness. A process of synthesizing possible elements then took shape in my mind, and by sorting the cards of information according to these potential elements, the basic ones emerged quite naturally. I continued to search for a format for the presentation of these themes, because they did not all seem to fit in the same category. Finally, through the processes of finishing the literature research and delving into word meanings, I recognized that the essential elements belonged in a triple framework: pattern, process and paradigm.

Pattern:

1. Evolutionary nature

Process:

2. Separation from routine patterns
3. Transcendence of ordinary patterns
4. Mindful willing participation

5. Validation
6. Integration versus pull to familiar patterns

Emergent Paradigm:

7. Sensibility of a universe of pattern and meaning

While these elements will be presented in the above order, this order does not reflect the actual lived-experience of the process of change for these participants. Rather, as an organic process, concepts such as simultaneity, ebb and flow or an interplay of active and receptive energies are needed to convey its fundamental nature. Because of the interpenetration of many of these elements in the narrative descriptions of particular experiences, there is often an overlapping of themes, especially in the discussion of process.

According to Metzner (1986), "the myth of each life is a unique configuration of elements" (p. 8). It is this uniqueness that has led to the great variations in form that exist in the stories just told. At the same time, there are deep underlying structures that tie these stories together in a common pattern of meaning. It is this meaning that matters, and that will be the heart of the discussion in this chapter.

PATTERN

- 1) Evolutionary Nature

The process of transforming one's world view is evolutionary. Features that mark it thus are its:

- a) gradual nature of change;
- b) spiral or step-like pattern;
- c) directional nature; and
- d) purposefulness.

The key to evolving is movement, movement in the process of learning. Each facet of this movement will be discussed in the light of this study, with examples from the participants' stories included in tables and text.

a) Gradual Nature of Change

TABLE 6

GRADUAL NATURE OF CHANGE

Participant	Exemplary Statement from Narrative
Tony	It just seems a slow, gradual development, you know, an evolution, with little jumps here and there.
Pipe Carrier	It's such an evolutionary thing.
Carrie	It's been an evolvment. I'm going to be 69 next week, and I think it's maybe been in the last twenty years - fifteen to twenty years - that I've sort of evolved a little more into my own person.
Nimrod	It's not as if I've been going along, and all of a sudden there's a big change. There's been a lot of changes, really.
Donald	The whole shift has taken many years.

(TABLE 6, Continued)

Participant	Exemplary Statement from Narrative
Amy	(The near-death experience) was just the tiny, tiny first step. If you think about spiritual growth in terms of life development, then that was like a birth.

In Jacobi's (1965) outline of several variations of the individuation process, she included "a gradual development consisting of many little transformations" and "a continuous development extending over the whole life span" (p. 79). Such descriptions of a long, slow process were characteristic of all the accounts of changing to a new paradigm. While some literature mentions the possibility of sudden transformation (Jacobi; Metzner, 1986; Moss, 1981), in these accounts, even when a sudden illuminative experience initiated a change process, continued evolving and integration necessitated the person's ongoing participation.

b) Spiral Pattern

TABLE 7

SPIRAL PATTERN

Participant	Exemplary Statement from Narrative
Donald	The view is just getting broader and broader, but that has been the continuous thread. I'm seeing how long that spiral has been developing.
Nimrod	It's like the spiral's come back to some levels I was working on in the early '70s, but it's coming back at them at a different level.
Carrie	All of a sudden, something else opens up for me ...every plateau is another sort of growth, and another something that I never imagined could be.
Raechel	(It's) almost like changing in steps. You need help to get up into it, and then you kind of cruise along, and then when it's time to make another change, another burst of energy from something is needed.
Serendipity	It was...one step for the spirit, and then one step for the self. So, I was always cleaning house.
Tony	It seems like the steps in life are all on a continuum. There's no giant leap, you know, where it's broken.

(Evolution) is a process of continuous articulation...Each articulation is a process of creation. Each articulation changes us in the process (Skolimowski, 1984, p. 162).

A pattern that conveys the essence of this ongoing process of

changing and being changed is held within the spiral form. Concepts of broadening, deepening, expanding, including - a continual adding to one's awareness - are all implied in portraying this change in terms of the spiral. Bateson (1979) referred to this spiral pattern as a metapattern: "a pattern which connects - a dance of interacting parts" (p. 13). The spiral is an open-ended pattern, retaining "its shape as it grows in one dimension by addition at the open end" (Bateson, p. 13). Welches (1982) described the spiral form in terms of transcendence (pp. 17-18). The "release aspect" in his framework could be compared to the notion of steps described by several persons in this study. This theme of ongoing movement and opening to new awarenesses was integral to each participant's story.

Another way of picturing the process of changing in steps is in terms of a serial addition of wholes. Rudhyar (1979) referred to this as a holarchical pattern, wherein each new whole contains all component wholes (p. 86). Skolimowski saw the process rather as new wholes of a higher order being created from a reorganization (p. 118). Both notions are compatible with the developmental schema of the spiral pattern, as it is in the space between the wholes, from one step to the next in the turn of the spiral, where energy can build for the next change.

McWaters' (1982) theory also encompassed a notion of wholes. His belief was that the progression of change begins with self-harmonization, then opens one to seeing the self as a part of a larger whole, and ultimately leads to social awareness and a commitment to

service. This theory of an orderly progression of transformation was not borne out with this research. While the three facets of change were always components of the overall picture of growth, awareness in these dimensions did not generally proceed in a linear fashion. Often one's attention was on all dimensions of awareness simultaneously. As Ram Dass (Goleman, Smith, Dass, 1985) said of the path, "(it's one of) keeping going in a spiral of work on mind, heart, body, relationships" (p. 207).

One of the participants who most closely paralleled McWaters' theory was Marni. Her initiation to a more expanded spiritual dimension of reality was a direct outgrowth of integrating more facets of her being and nurturing her own personal growth. This did finally lead to a renewed desire to be of service to others, minus her earlier "duty" motivation.

Nimrod and Tony both began developing the spiritual side of their natures at a very early age. Nimrod's particular path has traversed the phases of spiritual and social-humanistic development, to a present focus on a self-harmonization that embraces all the polarities of life. While a spiritual and social consciousness are both part of this current work, the emphasis is on balancing his psyche. Tony's search for self-knowledge has always been framed in wanting a greater understanding of the spiritual dimension, including discovering "why" he's here. Raechel also has focused much of her attention on transcendent experience, only recently beginning to work through unfinished issues from childhood.

Serendipity, Carrie and Amy all came from backgrounds of social commitment, Serendipity as a social worker, Amy as a nurse and Carrie as a mother and community volunteer. A conscious commitment to spiritual and psychological development evolved later for them out of their life experiences. For example, the spiritual search for Serendipity became one of harmonizing the world of her spirit with the world of her personhood grounded on this earth; one level of evolvment could not proceed without the other.

Joel, Pipe Carrier and Donald began their processes of consciousness change through their concerns about social and environmental issues. Lengthy commitment to these issues, along with a continual exploring of new ideas, eventually opened them to the spiritual dimensions of life. For Pipe Carrier and Joel, self-harmonizing is a current focus, a time for "synthesis" in Joel's word, and a time for Pipe Carrier of being in the attitude of the Tao - waiting. Donald has pursued a very active path of self-development beginning with his "beam" experience, and has also continued his commitment to ecological issues.

All of the spheres - the self, the social and the spiritual - are a part of the fabric of each participant's life. For a time, one facet may stand out, while another is in the background. The process of self-harmonizing, however, is ongoing, and, as in the spiral, the leading edge is always open.

c) Directional Nature

TABLE 8

DIRECTIONAL NATURE OF CHANGE

Participant	Exemplary Statement from Narrative
Serendipity	I know what can be, just more and more and more and more and more...
Donald	So, a lot of self-directed study, once I realized I was self-empowered...Recently it's really begun to mushroom.
Amy	(Awareness of) this other power that can totally alter things...just keeps pointing me in that direction, which for me is strength and happiness and so much...
Joel	It felt right. It seemed to be...the only way to go...you have to do what your conscience sort of...won't let you do anything else but...
Carrie	If I'm thinking positively, positive things are going to happen...and as I've come along through life and living, I've thought,..."this is where I'm supposed to be", and then, all of a sudden, something else opens up...it's just like a "Wow! experience".

The heartening fact is that true Self-consciousness, when sufficiently valued and established, can be trusted to go on at some level without any fuss or concern about keeping it up deliberately....: it's the commitment which remains there all along (Harding, 1986, p. 53).

For these participants, once the growth-oriented, expansive change process was set in motion, it seemed to continue progressing in

a positive direction. While pain and dissonance are well-known motivators for a change-oriented process, once the participants of this study had actually experienced the positive feelings associated with opening to new dimensions of reality, this energy served as a powerful motivator to ongoing consciousness development. Cash (1986) confirmed this theme when he wrote that "adventuresomeness arises because a vista of the quest's possibilities opens up" (p. 171).

Even during periods of relative quiescence, such as Pipe Carrier and Raechel were experiencing at the time of their research interviews, there was an overriding sense that the lull was very temporary. As Pipe Carrier said, "I'm not at a standstill. I feel there's water moving underneath the ice". Raechel was in the process of letting go of things in order to make the room for new "energy to come through". Tony also noted, that while his career direction is still uncertain, he does not feel as if his present process is one of "being stuck or stopped; it's just delayed and slowed down". Once one is on a path moving toward the expansion of consciousness, there seems to be a knowing that one cannot turn back.

d) Purpose

TABLE 9

PURPOSE

Participant	Exemplary Statement from Narrative
Tony	But why? You know, ...but in order to?...in order for me to live better, to <u>be</u> more. I want to honor a co-human being <u>basis</u> ,...to heal the suffering that I see.
Marni	When I am dying, I know that my thoughts will be left in the world, and they will be evolved from where they were. The evolution from my grandmother to my mother to me and to my daughter - that's where it is very real to me. Maybe it will be just that, that chain of learning or evolution.
Raechel	It's an energized feeling. I can't have it and just sit there and be. I have to do with it, because it's much more than I am. I can't contain it.
Carrie	I guess in my daily life, through my clients, is more where I have the opportunity to draw on this...maybe that's my mission.

Paradoxically, it is in searching for one's unique destiny in life that a deep connectedness with community can be discovered. This sensibility of a commitment to the larger human family evolved for many of these participants as they became clearer about a sense of self. Donald recognized that his commitment to "healing the earth" starts from his "core and works out". Amy has made a commitment to

unite her spirituality and her work, as she feels that is her "total meaning".

Joel's process of developing a world view actually arose out of a feeling of purpose connected to human well-being, a call to witness for alternatives to the path of violence. A sense of purpose emerging out of feelings of empathy for all life forms has been an integral part of Pipe Carrier's path.

Serendipity's growing social consciousness developed through working with "people who have been through hell", victims of every kind of human cruelty. Her commitment to a path of compassion has evolved to a knowing that she wants to be involved in "helping others discover their freedom, turning on their light". When Nimrod began exploring readings in humanistic psychology, he recognized that in his spiritual life he had been trying to free himself of the ego, to transcend it, before it had been fully developed. Out of this "revelation" came a transformed sense of purpose, one which included valuing all relationships and all facets of human existence. Nimrod's experience paralleled that of Ram Dass' (Goleman et al., 1985), who stated:

If I can't look wide-eyed at all the suffering, or the socio-political issues, because they aren't spiritual enough, somehow, I'm missing the mark (p. 214).

The idea of wedding one's personal search for an expanded view of reality with a purpose beyond oneself is the central tenet of Chauduri's (1977) philosophy of integral consciousness: only through the union of individuation and concern for the well-being of humanity

can the human reach wholeness (pp. 63-64). This he saw as the "unity of individual freedom and love" (p. 64). Metzner (1986) espoused the view that it is natural to want to share and practice the awareness that comes from freeing one's mind "to some degree" (p. x). Segal (1979) wrote: "The quest is not merely to discover the treasure for oneself, but to share it with others" (p. 114).

As a part of a study to discover more about "aware" people, Curle (1972) defined them as those who are cognizant of the injustice, exploitation and inhumanity in the world, and are committed to a process of change. In his inquiry, Curle explored the difference between "militants", those active in society attempting to change structures, and "mystics", those who are more preoccupied with changing themselves (p. 10). For people who had achieved a level of ongoing awareness, those who Curle described as fulfilling Maslow's (1971) criteria for transcendents, there was a commitment to both seeking one's own spiritual nature and providing service to humanity (pp. 85-86).

The combination of mystic and militant is perhaps a manifestation of the wholeness, the unity, that self-knowledge is traditionally reputed to impart. The contradictions are resolved: the inner and outer, the Yin and Yang, the light and the dark, no longer cancel each other out but complement and fulfill each other (p. 90).

This prototypical "mystic-militant" is the ideal toward which the participants of this study are moving. The sense is that it is a model, and while few humans may arrive at a point of no contradictions, as open growing beings, even fewer remain there.

Nevertheless, the participants in this study described a commitment to the aims that this prototype implies, ongoing development and its greater purpose: healing humanity and/or the planet.

PROCESS

2) Separation from Routine Patterns

Light can stream into the clearing, into its openness...but light never first creates openness (Heidegger, 1966, p. 384).

At special times in culture and at special times in one's life, a "crack" may open between two worlds. In Castaneda's (1972) Journey to Ixtlan, this crack was described by Don Juan as "stopping the world", the first step to really "seeing" (p. ix). Williams (1981) referred to the less familiar of these "worlds" as the unconscious, and noted that anything entering through the crack from this other world is "an invitation to live more deeply" (p. 17).

While all transitions require some reframing to include more of reality in one's consciousness, it is the unexpected experience in life that is most likely to "stop" one's routine world. This crack can be experienced in times of any break with one's environment, culture, family or role, through developmental change, loss or estrangement. This severance, then, can be a turning point, in Goffman's (1974) term, a frame break.

It is at this point of struggling between dreams, between a death

and a painful rebirth, when, in Needleman's (1965) understanding, one "is said to be able to receive the truth, both about nature and (one's) own possible role in the universal order" (p.3). Death and rebirth symbolism is archetypal and, as Larsen (1976) stated, is a "doorway to the transpersonal" (p. 64). (Archetypes were defined by Jung (1961) as inherited psychic patterns or structures held within the unconscious that predispose human beings to particular patterns of experience.) In Moss' (1981) conceptualization, any disruption of a major reality-structuring pattern - boundaries that contain our beliefs about life and who we are - releases energy that provides an opportunity to open to more of consciousness (pp. 47-48).

Barnett's (1953) conviction was that new ideas are conceived because they answer some want, need or lack (p. 99). Ways that one becomes aware of this want, need or lack were identified in an outline of factors described by Barnett as predispositions to the new. Several of these elements, which could also be conceptualized as factors in separating one from familiar patterns and beliefs, are relevant to this study:

- a) estrangement from cultural norms (p. 379);
- b) proximity to other cultures ("conjunction of differences") (p. 56);
- c) questioning (p. 65); and
- d) crises, personal or cultural (pp. 80-82).

Separation experiences of the co-researchers will be discussed in relation to these four themes.

a) Estrangement from Cultural Norms - "The Outsider"

TABLE 10

SENSE OF ESTRANGEMENT

Participant	Exemplary Statement from Narrative
Tony	I didn't fit in. I'd go to school, not feeling that I fitted in; this world was not the same world that I lived in.
Serendipity	It was spending a lifetime - thirty years of not fitting.
Nimrod	I was a real oddball, you know, with my peers... There was a certain sense of alienation.
Amy	I was in a totally outcast kind of thing.
Pipe Carrier	I feel different from other people, ...and that's always been so. Now I select the areas in life in which I ought to be an outsider.

The sense of estrangement experienced by the persons in this study led them to a yearning for something else. Tony set off on an adventure to Africa where he could be with others like himself: "exiles from a way of life they couldn't fit in". From that point on, he continued to search for a sense of community - a home - with others whose vision of the world was congruent with his own. Serendipity actually named her process of reconnecting with a larger sense of self an experience of "coming home". Amy's feelings of alienation in a small prairie community were transformed into a spiritual experience arising out of her solitude. Raechel's experience following the

transcendental episode triggered by taking LSD was one of alienation from ordinary reality:

I got really depressed after because it had opened me up to such an extent, my ordinary reality just didn't make it, ...and I felt the most incredible sense of loss. I just felt like there was something missing.

"The outsider" (Wilson, 1956), one separated from the dominant culture through estrangement, has a unique vantage point for awareness. Highwater (1981) described the outsider as a "cultural metaphor": one with an opportunity for vision that is barred to those enmeshed in the mainstream of culture through their sense of belonging (p. xiv). In this vein, he looked on alienation as a gift. Writing from a similar viewpoint, deBono (1976) stated:

Someone who has not been thoroughly grounded in the existing perceptions can ...look at things in a new way without artificial effort (p. 87).

Experiencing one's alienation is the beginning step to heading on a homeward journey, according to Metzner (1986), who identified "returning to the source" as one of the key metaphors for transformation (pp. 125 - 128). He noted that it is common for one to experience ordinary reality as "strange" after one has an illuminating experience:

Seekers or travelers, having obtained some insight, ...may feel lost because they can no longer relate to the old, illusory shadows within the prison-cave (p. 128).

b) Proximity of Other Cultures - Exposure to Differences

Whenever our thinking is stimulated in a new direction, our minds are pushed to different viewing points. For many of the participants, this push to novel ideas and life philosophies came either as a result of travel to a new country or of being confronted with a minority culture or viewpoint. In Williams' (1981) understanding, this process of being separated from one's familiar "environment, friends and routines is equivalent to being stripped of one's shields against the unconscious" (p. 21).

Raechel has consistently opened her horizons through traveling:

Going to a different culture and beginning to question some really basic things - really basic customs that I had taken for granted - caused an opening in my mind to think, "Well, maybe there are entirely other ways of being"...I realized a lot of time and a lot of things had fallen away.

She became aware that when she travels she does not "have a belief"; she feels "beyond the belief structure". This has freed her to be open to nonordinary experiences.

An early encounter with a minority culture in his own country occurred for Joel when he first met his mother-in-law, a confirmed pacifist since World War I, a stance highly "unpopular" in patriotic America. Exposure to different world views has been an integral part of Joel's development from that point on: e.g., through his move to Canada; his experimentation with the culture of open relationships, and the exploration of esoteric philosophies.

Contrasting his educational experiences in Africa with those in

England became a painful comparison of world views for Tony. This pushed him to move to Canada in a search for a new community of "exiles". He has had a strong empathy for fellow outsiders, and his long exposure to the Native way has both enriched his ecological philosophy and revealed to him the stark realities of human suffering.

For Serendipity and Carrie, exposure to differences, to looking at the world afresh, was spurred by information presented in university courses. Serendipity's introduction to humanistic and transpersonal concepts of child development meant for her a "freedom to be", an affirmation of her own intuitive knowings about children. Carrie had a sudden insight in a course on brain physiology when she made a link between brain waves being transmitted onto a graph and the notion of extrasensory perception. If energies from the brain could be transmitted to paper, could they also extend beyond that?

c) Questioning

TABLE 11

QUESTIONING

Participant	Exemplary Statement from Narrative
Pipe Carrier	It (the questioning of priest uncle) was a milestone in my thinking about a number of issues. Of course, it happened during an age when I was naturally asking questions and chucking all kinds of authority anyway.

(TABLE 11, continued)

Participant	Exemplary Statement from Narrative
Donald	Because of some of the reading I had been doing, I really began to question the whole educational system...I really began to question, "Does society have to be that way?, Can it be changed?, What part do I play?"
Nimrod	I started questioning basic assumptions about what life was about, ...not enjoying school too much, finding it irrelevant in many ways.

While Nimrod's first questioning experience was a fairly natural part of his adolescent development, his second major period of questioning was a painful process that arose out of a growing dissonance between his changing beliefs and the practices of his spiritual community:

I guess as I developed, came into my own, began to get a sense of my own integrity and started to question things, there was a shift. I realized that I was really compromising myself; I was choosing the incongruencies within myself and within the situation. I had to question some very fundamental beliefs.

This kind of cognitive dissonance, or frame break, creates an uncomfortable quandary; therefore, it is an experience that keeps a questioning process alive during one's search to reduce psychological tension. For Serendipity, her life script - the fundamental belief that she had to be "the savior" - conflicted with a new belief about self-responsibility:

When I connected with the belief of individual rights, self-determination, human potential, I couldn't use my coercive, savior methods anymore, so I was in a total dilemma.

Questioning is a dynamic process that generates power to shake loose our routine patterns and open us to new learning. Donald's questions, for example, provoked a process that continues today, his intensive self-study program. Pipe Carrier's search for answers was also fueled by his perpetual questioning process. He was "in a kind of a rush" with his search until he became "fairly comfortable with the fact that questions will always remain, and that more, in fact, seem to come up" as one goes along. Carrie's attitude toward questions is also one of valuing their role in ongoing exploration:

I have no answers...and more questions...I am certainly very curious about them and open to them, and I just hope that I have the time and energy to sort of explore more.

d) Crises: Personal and/or Cultural

TABLE 12

EXPERIENCES OF CRISES

Participant	Exemplary Statement from Narrative
Amy	I know I was near death, but for other reasons! Not for all the concrete facts. I <u>know</u> the doctor knew when he looked at my changed being, this changed <u>thing</u> in me.
Marni	When I first looked at the dream and visualized that image, I perceived it as a fetus that had been aborted, and I was heart-broken, because I felt like <u>I</u> was aborted....

(TABLE 12, continued)

Participant	Exemplary Statement from Narrative
Serendipity	All of a sudden, there was freedom to be, and I had a very radical awareness that I was at the crossroads of life and death. I became aware of how I was dying - and really died - and I had an opportunity to live.
Carrie	I was <u>furious!</u> I mean, here I was, working as a volunteer <u>all</u> my life, and then I go through all this torture of getting a degree, and then I've got to go back to being a volunteer...I was so angry!
Donald	I just felt that my identity had been squashed by it.
Nimrod	I didn't want to leave at all...I was playing out very much a father role in that community. Being pulled out of there was like being put into free-fall.

Separation from old patterns began with the theme of death or loss for these participants. Amy described the near-death crisis as a "birth" in terms of her spiritual development, "a major turning point" in her life. Carrie's intuition to what she described as her "destiny" came about through facing, metaphorically, a death - the death of a dream. After seven years in university, at age 61, she finally received her degree, only to discover that there was no job waiting for her.

Marni's crisis developed out of her growing feelings of discomfort within herself. Coming face-to-face with her self-rejection, through the counselling process, led to the death of her

limited self-image. This was Marni's initiation to archetypal material from the unconscious.

An initial shattering of old forms was precipitated for Donald when he was in a crisis of depression over the "disharmony" that he felt "surrounded him" in the culture. His second major crisis was heralded symbolically by the breaking of his mug, representing for him the severing of the tradition of his marriage.

The loss of role as father-provider was part of Nimrod's crisis experience when he was pushed out of the spiritual community. Another aspect of this crisis for him was the loss of everything of a material nature that he had worked for over a long period of time.

Metaphors of death and rebirth were central to these stories. This theme is fundamental to the "mono-myth", or archetypal myth, that is basic to all myth (Foster & Little, 1980, p. 91). Larsen considered this the most fundamental transformation symbolism (p. 64). For Allen's (1979) subjects, this death/rebirth theme was identified as a pivotal feature of the awakening experience, and represented a disintegrating of the ego (p. 185). In terms of the mythic journey of transformation, either birth or death can be considered the "severance" or separation that initiates the change process (Campbell, 1949; Metzner, 1986, p. 106). According to Jacobi (1965), death and rebirth themes are common in dreams when one begins a move toward wholeness.

Another archetypal pattern, the wounded healer (Sanford, 1977), relates to these participants' stories. This experience of

woundedness, of death and rebirth, is a central facet of shamanic initiation around the world (Sanford; Williams, 1981, p. 65).

Sanford described the experience thus:

If a person has gone through a crisis, died to an old personality, and fought his or her way back to health and a more conscious life, that person may gain a certain quality that enables him to put others in touch with healing too (p. 81).

Amy and Serendipity are both committed to healing work in their professional lives. Marni's calling as a healer was less specifically defined, but her goal to "purify and simplify", to keep her "thoughts from littering" the world, implied a resolution to heal the planet.

Changes occurring in the culture have been very instrumental in several of Joel's separation experiences. One of these crises involved the decision of Joel and his family to leave the United States:

We were responding to a lot of these social problems. But, the Vietnamese War became more and more oppressive to us and to our sons who were approaching draft age. I'd gotten involved with the counselling of conscientious objectors, and Jen worked in the same draft counselling office. I guess we finally had our fill of it.

This alignment with a minority position on the social issues of the day was influenced by a powerful myth emergent in the culture in the 1960s: the hope in peace and justice wed to freedom becoming an ideal to practice. This ideal, encompassed in a commitment to dialogue, has also been a part of the fabric of subsequent crises for Joel, including the crack that opened the way for his open marriage experience:

There was a whole reassessing of our relationship with Jennie going to university. I urged her to do it. I wanted her to do it. At the same time, I was scared.

The new images arising in the culture in the '60s were also very influential in Nimrod's opening consciousness. He related experiencing "a tremendous ferment" from all of the popular movements of the time - music, ecology, anti-war - along with the ideas of humanistic psychology, and was excited about how "that all fitted together". When his growing humanistic orientation began to clash with the beliefs of his spiritual teacher of many years, the seeds were planted for the eventual separation:

It's very difficult, of course, to question the integrity of someone you've implicitly trusted for a number of years, and where there's all kinds of spiritual rationalizations...She was playing a lot of games and using spiritual stuff to do it. Looking back, it's the realization of the end of innocence.

This kind of crisis often originates in spiritual communities, according to Ram Dass, because of "a discrepancy between the psychological world view and the spiritual world view" (Goleman et al. 1985, p. 190). He confirmed Nimrod's view that the psychological dimensions of any situation are as critical as the spiritual, and need to be integrated for a true transformation of consciousness.

3) Transcendence of Ordinary Patterns

Experiences that separate one from the old life, from one's routine patterns, are the door openers that make way for new

perceptions of the world. Goleman et al. (1985) wrote that the transformative process actually "has to do with changing the way one knows, and thereafter one knows differently" (p. 206). Smith (1986) referred to transcendence in a similar way: "a barrier breaks and we see, not something different, but in a different way" (p. vii). Transcendence is frequently described in terms of wholeness or inclusiveness in the transpersonal literature (Hill, 1980; Maslow, 1971; Watts, 1950). The process of transcending ordinary patterns of consciousness, then, is one of including or adding more sensitivities to the world, a process of glimpsing more possibilities of experiencing reality.

According to Skolimowski (1984), change occurs,

in order that new things can be created, so that the process of transcendence can go on, (because) to be, in the evolutionary sense, is to continually transcend (p. 43).

Transcendence, or including more of reality, is therefore an essential ingredient in the change to a new world view.

TABLE 13

EXPERIENCES OF TRANSCENDENCE

Participant	Exemplary Statement from Narrative
Raechel	It was like there was no death. The journey went on forever and I had done it for eons.

(TABLE 13, continued)

Participant	Exemplary Statement from Narrative
(Raechel continued)	<p>I got the feeling of time and space being very different...</p> <p>There's a feeling of space, of spaciousness.</p> <p>The thing that I like the most...is the overwhelming feeling of being energized.</p>
Donald	<p>I think of a huge sphere - a membrane - and actually, going through the membrane and there being this "whush", you know? I was in a fundamentally new place: light, bright and harmony and joy...I was in an expanded state of joy for a week.</p>
Serendipity	<p>There seems to be the pain and darkness and the tunnel and...light's on the other side.</p>
Tony	<p>My eyes were like a valve...opened up to an unprecedented level - like a shutter in a camera ...and there was so much light...that I could not stand it!</p> <p>Suddenly, her eye...her whole face was radiant with <u>light</u>; light was just pouring out of her face.</p>
Nimrod	<p>Then, all of a sudden, this wave of energy came over me, and I felt as though I was being totally overwhelmed by a very blissful kind of...wave of love or whatever.</p>
Amy	<p>I became <u>totally</u> accepting...I saw and heard things <u>differently</u>...I let go of everything...I was <u>totally</u> <u>perceptive</u>...I was more spiritual than physical...It was like a releasing...I felt like I was on the way in...I became a loving person...I became an idea.</p>

(TABLE 13, continued)

Participant	Exemplary Statement from Narrative
Marni	All of a sudden I feel pulled to reach beyond me...I suddenly realized that I'm in a whole new ballgame. I'm standing in a <u>huge</u> stadium, looking around, for the first time realizing that...well, it's a different world...much bigger than I realized.

The theme of rebirth introduced in the discussion on separation is a theme of transcendence, of breaking through to a new experience of consciousness. Serendipity commented that her life has seemed like a series of "childbirths". One of Marni's rebirth dreams was of enlarging her sense of self by discovering children in the excavation of a house. They were, as she described them, "lost parts of myself that toughly lived on". Marni was pleased that this process transcended her conscious control:

It wasn't me orchestrating or directing...And it was good..., good to know that I wasn't in control, that I couldn't suppress myself entirely.

In Raechel's dream, death itself was transcended. She perceived her dream experience as "beyond thought". Amy's description of transcendence during her state of near death also portrayed cognitions that were beyond her ordinary experiences of reality, pointing her to a new way of knowing.

Expansive feelings of energy and joy accompanying the transcending of ordinary patterns of conscious experience were

expressed by several participants. Amy described the experience thus:

I entered into this euphoria...For the next year I went through a state of such strength and elation that I have never known.

This sense of expansiveness was also the theme expressed by Marni when she discussed her shift in world view, and by Donald when he described his feeling state following the move out of his marriage.

The "cleansing of the doors of perception" is a well-known metaphor for the transcendence of ordinary vision. Tony's first extraordinary experience of light was a clear illustration of this process. A second incident for Tony was again one of seeing light emanating from a face. Donald's "beam" experience was also an energizing one, one of "light and movement" that was the key turning point in his life. Nimrod, Raechel and Pipe Carrier also described experiences of transcendence in terms of energy. In Pipe Carrier's view:

The only way we can (communicate with nature) is by getting out of our knowledge mode and going into really feeling the vibrations that are there.

In Raechel's understanding, transcendence involves a process of "changing state":

Energy or momentum (is needed) in order to get me to change state, and that's what I would define as inspiration...or intuition...some kind of force which gets you into something else, something unusual, something new and different.

Some of Nimrod's experiences were understood by him to be ones of changing state: "almost like Kundalini kind of experiences".

Experiences of light and energy, of course, are special ones of

transcending our everyday reality. Descriptions of such experiences are an integral part of religious traditions, and are frequently reported in the literature on the near-death experience. Projection of inner light from the center of the self accompanies an expanded consciousness, according to Babcock's (1983) theory of pleromic psychology (p. 21). "Pleroma means 'an abundance of light'" (p. 6). Seeing this light involves transcending ordinary consciousness.

A final theme of transcendence involves crossing the bounds of convention. This has been a central process for Joel in opening to new sensibilities. He recognized that a core theme for him has been one of going "right to the edge of life", of pushing "boundaries". This particularly became true after he moved to Canada, when the "vehicles became available", and when he "began stepping outside" the framework of the society.

Carrie and Serendipity have also transcended conventional patterns of the culture through their involvement with channeling. The process of actually becoming a channel was preceded for Serendipity by other "spiritual experiences", including "visions - the third eye started opening" (in Eastern philosophy this third eye is considered the eye of inner sight). It was during a hypnosis session that Serendipity first encountered Kwan Yin, an entity who "came as a teacher, and as a partner". While Carrie has not become a channel herself, her intimate involvement with a medium has been described by her as "her destiny". Through this relationship, she has not only been introduced to the "spirit world", but has also been initiated

into a whole new social world which she expressed as being "just totally different to anything that I have ever encountered". In a recent article on channeling, White (1986) cited such communication as one "source of information for transformation" (p. 10). It is his view that:

Channeling can be a means of spiritual growth, and the spiritually-aspiring person should welcome whatever assistance he gets along the way, whether from ordinary or extraordinary means (p. 13).

4) Mindful Willing Participation

It is human will that changes the world (Rifkin, 1985b, p.80).

While experiences of separation and transcendence may sometimes come unbidden, the ongoing process of transforming one's mind requires willingness. According to Assagioli (1973), the will is the most fundamental of the human being's inner powers, both because of its centrality in the personality, and because of its decision-making potential (p. 6). In Williams' (1981) understanding, will "is the drive of the transpersonal within us to become conscious" (p. 81). Haronian (1975) perceived the will more as a verb than a noun, as a process or function of choosing (p. 31). Will is energy, is deciding. Mindful willing participation, then, is a theme which includes notions of aware, watchful, attentive attitudes of mind in a process of consciously involving oneself in taking part in, or cooperating with,

energies of transformation. Cash (1986) asserted that it is "this element of conscious, deliberate participation" that is the distinguishing feature of self-transformation (p. 170). This element is an illustration of intentional change as defined by Tough (1982).

Changing to a new world view is a process of adding sensitivities. Skolimowski (1984) defined sensitivities as "articulators of reality" (p. 25). Every sensitivity added, therefore, creates another opening for extending one's vista of the world. In this view, cleansing the doors of perception is far too limiting as a conceptualization of consciousness change. As Skolimowski stated:

These windows and gates are often not yet there. We have to create them first. We create new windows, we erect new gates of perception, by creating and nurturing new sensitivities....: this involves our entire being (p. 28).

This involvement has been expressed by the participants as opening, letting go, exploring, putting energy in, searching, being with, sharing and allowing. An opening, allowing attitude is recommended by Foster and Little (1980) in their guidelines for turning off the familiar mind chatter prior to a vision quest:

The past must be forgotten, the thought process must be stilled, clocks must stop...The hero/ine must stop the internal dialogue in order to be receptive...(p. 113).

Being receptive involves taking in new ideas. According to White (1986), information is critical to the transformative process, as:

there is no ascent into higher states of consciousness without attendant change in the contents of consciousness (p. 10).

The change process, then, involves both will - opening to new ideas, and surrender - allowing the ideas to be incorporated. This is a process that involves the interaction of yin and yang energies, the moving power of creation. Wolff (1965) wrote that "the seminal meaning of 'surrender' is 'cognitive love'", which means "total involvement, suspension of received notions, pertinence of everything" (p. 177).

Expressions of the co-researchers' involvement in this central process of consciousness change are illustrated in Table 14.

TABLE 14

MINDFUL WILLING PARTICIPATION

Participant	Letting go/Being with	Shared Energy	Exploration
Amy	You have to let it go...I am determined about that...your mind is no longer "dot-dot-dot", doing its processing. Like, I enter the scene. It's getting right into it - not trying to make sense... letting go of that and kind of accepting it.	after that it's kind of up to me to begin to open myself deliberately or consciously to making that kind of change on a more ongoing basis.
Pipe Carrier	I feel that it's important that I don't be in the head too much, but kind of feel the knowledge...any quasi-psychic experiences that I may have witnessed or had, took place at those times... that I let go of the head, and not when I studied a book.		I was always searching... I've always had a great interest for the things that we can't see.
Joel		There was just an immediate clicking between the two of us.	It was also a time of beginning to explore the esoteric...There was a lot of energy expended.
Serendipity			I started exploring things like Ram Dass and Krishnamurti and Thomas

(TABLE 14, continued)

Participant	Letting go/Being with	Shared Energy	Exploration
(Serendipity continued)			Merton and those who talked about possibility.
Marni	I couldn't read the words...My structure was so rigid. Somehow,...there was just enough of an opening to let in some of the ideas, and as they came in, ...I could feel the opening; that letting in those ideas allowed me to let in more. Like, I was physically building new channels...I just lived with those ideas...and they have worked their way into my understanding of the world.		I did start to inject new information through reading and through dreams... I think it's the reading and the writing and the reflecting...I'm exploring things, and not trying to fit them into the original specs that had been established.
Raechel		There would be something generated in the communication...things would happen.	Something in me...knew... there was more. I knew in myself there was something that existed that I wanted to discover, and traveling, at that point, provided the vehicle.
Tony		If you're willing to put energy into something enough, it will work - just have faith that it	I have an immense need to believe and to know...So, I put a lot of energy into the spiritual and the

(TABLE 14, continued)

Participant	Letting go/Being with	Shared Energy	Exploration
(Tony continued)		will work.	intuitive, and I think, because of that, I've gone a lot further than other people who've not had the same incentive.
Nimrod			There's been a continual thread of exploration of different things. In terms of my own process ...there's always a growing edge...
Donald		Then, the significant connection with Dane Rudhyar ...like, it was a physical, metaphysical, integrated connection.	I resolved to actively study that kind of material...I consciously worked a lifestyle out that allowed me freedom to explore and to read on my own...John Lilly really got me established as an explorer.
Carrie			These things are happening, and if I don't open my head to them, I'm missing out on a certain dimension in my world... And that's how I got sort of into thinking and reading.

Marni's articulation of her experience in reading unusual ideas (Table 14) provides a graphic illustration of total immersion in the change process. Letting go and being with new ideas was the core theme of her experience. When Raechel was in Crete, she had naturally experienced a letting go, and after three weeks, she had "taken on the rhythm of the waves". Her attunement to the water, in conjunction with reading a book about water, "caused an opening" in her. This receptive state preceded her profound dream. Pipe Carrier also expressed the power of letting go as a way of opening to more facets of reality.

Letting go of attachments was, and continues to be, a major component in cooperating with the transformative process for these participants. Joel recognized one of his key needs was to be "able to flow and let go". Letting go of a crippling belief about karma became a turning point for Nimrod in embracing a more open consciousness. Raechel shared that letting go of the "North American way and all it represents...feels like the most massive thing I have to do in order to be free". An attachment to this old paradigm was finally severed for Donald when he separated from his wife. Serendipity's major letting go revolved around her life script, a recognition that it was not her role "to save" everyone. Freeing herself from this global responsibility made it possible for her to own her personal power. Carrie's letting go and accepting the volunteer job was a surrender - a, "what else have I got to lose?" This letting go process is one of freeing psychic energy for the next step in the change process, the

"special release" described by Welches (1982).

Opening to the quest for expanded consciousness for these co-researchers arose out of a need or a want - to know more, to be more, to experience more. The only belief necessary for this exploration was a belief in "possibility". It was this belief of the co-researchers that focused the attention, provided energy for participation in the venture, and paved the way for the creation of new openings for perceptions. This consciously chosen exploration of new ideas and experiences was central to the change process for all participants.

Shared energy or communion with others was also expressed as significant in terms of participation in the transformative process. When something is shared, there is a letting go of it, not in the sense of losing it, but in a sense of expanding it. Raechel commented that talking about her experience with her roommate regenerated feelings. Joel also described feelings of this shared energy with his mother-in-law. It was also "strong" empathic bonds between Tony and significant women in his life that precipitated opening him to extraordinary experiences. Donald also described experiencing a profound link during a dialogue, where "it was almost like the 'beam' was connecting us, and then there was this rain of information". For Nimrod, experiences of heightened energy have occurred with a communal sharing process where there's "a real connection with people".

Donald's experience in connecting with certain books was a similar "shared energy" experience. Books have been very relevant to

Joel's process as well:

I seem to intuitively select books at periods of my life when what their messages have to say to me are very critical to my evolving.

When Nimrod spoke of encountering writers in humanistic psychology, it was as if he had a personal connection with them: e.g., "That was Rogers' gift to me".

Donald's most recent experience with a book, Earth Ascending, is a vivid example of mindful participation:

I had to start thinking in new ways, and stretching, but I really got into it. I think my first reading took three or four months. I was taking it in with such intensity, I could only assimilate so much information at a time. It was totally altering in my structure, really. It was really working me over.

Marni expressed similar thoughts when describing her experience in studying A Course in Miracles:

It impresses me so much that the exercises are a technique of entering new - not only new data - but new structure, ...or, like in a computer, it would be the hardware, not the software - you know, new patterns for thinking.

Both of these descriptions, as well as the example from Marni's narrative in Table 14, point to the process of transformation as one involving the change of both structures and contents of consciousness. It is as if the new information, or contents, creates new pathways which allow yet more new information to enter consciousness, which again opens new structures. Participating wholeheartedly in this path of change was described by Donald in one word: "Embrace!"

5) Validation

A concept inherent in an ecological understanding of the world is that the key to all life processes is relationship (Bateson, 1979; Salk, 1983). Validity, then, exists in relationship, in the "in-between". Whether one's relationship is with great ideas, the inner self, a friend, nature or community, a sense of validation or confirmation comes from communion. "Confirmation is central to human existence", wrote Friedman (1983, p. 37). Rogers (1980) termed the act of validating, "unconditional positive regard" (p. 116). Being valued involves being fully present to another and experiencing acceptance of one's "otherness". This feeling of being validated was a critical element in the transformational process of the co-researchers in this study.

One of our basic needs as human beings is a sense of belonging (Maslow, 1968): we are social beings. To be without a sense of affinity is, as Harding (1986) described it, "how a madman must feel - cut off, unable to communicate" (p. 22). Metzner (1986) stated that when others of like-mind are found, it is like finding an "inner family" or "elected affinities" (pp. 128-129). Also basic to the human personality, in Smith's (1982) view, is finding a framework, "a will-to-order and orientation" (p. 15). When a personal experience is not a part of one's familiar frame of reference, a need arises to name the experience, to legitimize it, by discovering a new framework.

Relationships of validation could be equated with the "helpers"

who give "magical aid" that Campbell (1949) described as essential to the hero's successful journey (p. 246). The "aid" for these participants came from three key sources: from relationships with significant others; from relationships with ideas or frames of reference; and from personal experiences which evoked an inner confirmation. Examples of these sources of validation are illustrated in Table 15.

TABLE 15

VALIDATION

Participant	Exemplary Statement from Narrative		
	Personal relationships	Frameworks/Books	Inner knowing/ Personal experience
Tony	<p>We were validating each other. We were co-workers on the planet. Yes, that was validating. I loved it!!!</p> <p>Here were all my funny feelings and funny ways of doing things, and here's someone who not only can say, "far out!", but he's the same or similar...that was wonderful!</p>	<p>You're reading a book and you say, "Oh yes, of course that's true"...it all fits ...you find that your own odd way of looking at things is tremendously substantiated.</p>	<p>This is like, tangible... you know, it's not in a book.</p>
Amy		<p>I feel almost a sense of communion with those writers...So validating! So, you read these people and you go, "Yeah, yeah, I'm not on the wrong track".</p>	<p>I saw it work right in front of my eyes...Healing ...that's what happened, and I saw it. I <u>saw</u> the difference.</p>
Carrie	<p>You know, people come my way, and they come my way for certain reasons, and whether it's to reconfirm or affirm my own belief system, or carry me one step further, I really don't know.</p>	<p>It (conference on psychic energies) gave a little more understanding...to my point of view that, "Yes, these things do and can happen".</p>	<p>It confirms that there are forces and energies around working that I have to learn to trust, even more.</p>

(TABLE 15, continued)

Participant	Exemplary Statement from Narrative		
	Personal relationships	Frameworks/Books	Inner knowing/ Personal experience
Raechel	I really need to communicate and I need to find people that are on that dimension... It's important to me to know that kinship or network... Like, it facilitates my growth incredibly.	For a while I didn't know whether I was crazy or what, because I didn't have a framework to fit that experience in.	There was something in me that <u>knew</u> this...I think these experiences try to help me remember.
Pipe Carrier	It was important because I finally had contact with a whole bunch of people who legitimized my whole set of vague ideas...(and)were tolerant of things other than their own immediate beliefs.	North American (Native) spirituality held more genuine things for me.	
Serendipity	And an intimacy that you'd only dreamt about...the intimacy that you experience with those of like thought... I mean, there's nothing like it...where you don't need words for everything. I had no awareness that there was anyone else that thought like I did, and all of a sudden, there was freedom to be...	(I) needed to belong to a club that believed in miracles.	So, the synchronicity is fantastic, because...I trusted my beliefs about children.

(TABLE 15, continued)

Participant	Exemplary Statement from Narrative		
	Personal relationships	Frameworks/Books	Inner knowing/ Personal experience
Donald		<p>José's book really helped me, because it made the new paradigm that much more vivid.</p> <p>Father Zossima just represented for me one of the old cronies of the direction I was heading in, so it was like I got immediate connectedness...</p>	<p>There was an excitement as I ordered it (book), and I just knew beforehand that this was <u>right up</u> my alley, and that it would take me into a much broader realm.</p>
Joel		<p>We became pretty much convinced that the whole concept of reincarnation had validity...We began to find in this approach a viewpoint of life that made some sense.</p>	<p>It felt right. It seemed to be that that was, you know, the only way to go.</p>
Nimrod	<p>Like, it was a haven for me (spiritual community), feeling a bit like a fish out of water in the culture.</p>	<p>...the Jungian concept of integration was very helpful to me... I began to see how all these things were connected.</p>	<p>Things clicked, you know. Just connections were made ...and I just found that very affirming.</p>
Marni	<p>And what was very important ...was the counsellor gave me permission to read...</p>	<p>Actually, that typology (and the book) really helped me to have a structure for understanding.</p>	<p>That was powerful learning ...the image carried such emotional weight, I couldn't deny it.</p>

For Tony, validation has held central meaning throughout his life. At the times when he has had no affinity groups, he defined his experience in terms of feeling like an "exile". Discovering and being with kindred spirits was, for Tony, a mutually validating experience. He also recognized that it was at times when he was feeling the most validated that he was able to be the "most fruitful and most helpful". One of the most significant validating experiences in Tony's life was the I-thou relationship with the man who was a "father figure" to him.

A similar kind of connection for Serendipity spelled freedom. With this new-found freedom came the natural urge to communicate the "good news" to others: "like any new wisdom, your reaction...is you want to share it!" Sharing with people who could understand her experience was essential for Raechel in order for her to transcend feelings of loneliness. This was important for Pipe Carrier too, as his experience of finding an affinity group came after a long period of feeling alone with his ideas.

Carrie's need for validation has primarily been met through her close relationship with the "medium" and through messages of "truth-value" channeled through this friend. Her wish to share her understanding with others is motivated by excitement: "whenever possible, whenever I had the opportunity, I would talk about these things to anybody that I could, because I was just really interested".

When Nimrod found an affinity group, people with whom he could freely talk about spiritual things, "it was like a haven". Now that there is more openness in the larger culture to discussing these kind

of ideas, he does "feel at home", and doesn't need the shelter of a spiritual community to feel validated.

Experiencing validation in the deepest sense, in the sense of truly feeling at home - caring and being cared for - was described by Serendipity as "intimacy". Tony described this kind of intimacy, or communion, occurring for him in the wilderness, "where the only always available validating experiences can be had".

In the search for a framework to legitimize extraordinary experience, connections were sometimes made with writings that also spoke of this intimacy. The need to make sense provoked Tony to write about his transcendent experiences to a Jesuit priest in the hope that he could "incorporate them, from his point of view, into some picture, some overall direction, which he was not able to do". As Amy learned, in the institutional church, "you don't discuss those kinds of things", so books often became her source of validating frameworks.

After leaving the spiritual retreat, Nimrod's search for a broad framework led him to Jungian thought. The notion of embracing all of reality, including the shadow side of things, provided him with a guide for understanding his painful separation from the community. Serendipity's pursuit of a framework was her reason for joining a spiritual circle. She wasn't involved long before she became aware of the same thing that Nimrod had discovered in his spiritual group, that the "human aspect" was not being acknowledged. She left the circle and looked to her inner self for validation, because she recognized "that we're humans here, and unless we clean our own stuff, we can't

see clearly".

Joel's long search for ever-expanding frameworks took him to the philosophy of reincarnation. Raechel's quest also led her to esoteric and Eastern frameworks, but it was ultimately the communication with a friend that gave her an essential "acceptance" of her experience. The framework of Native spirituality seemed more vital for Pipe Carrier than other forms, because of it being a way of life rooted in North America.

One's own truth holds, what Ram Dass described as, "intuitive validity" (Goleman et al., 1985, p. 205). This inner validation was often expressed by the participants with a sense of deep conviction. Marni described this inner knowing with a sense of awe at the many illustrations of synchronicity in her everyday life: "of grace flowing from one person to another; of healing touch; of being there when someone needs the words that you are able to say...".

6) Integration Versus Pull to Familiar Patterns

I know you understand it. What I am telling you is that you haven't yet realized it; you don't yet live it - (Socrates, in Way of the Peaceful Warrior, Millman, 1980, p. 158).

To integrate means to form into a whole - to unite or synthesize. The process of incorporating one's expanded vision into a way of being is critical if, in Harding's (1986) words, "one's life is not to disintegrate into two quite alien, idea-tight compartments" (p. 7).

Vaughan (1985) recognized how easy it can be to slip back into one's old patterns following experiences of expanded consciousness, for "to see through the veil of illusion is one thing; to live in that awareness is quite different" (p. 69). The process of moving toward integration, toward a living out of one's greater awareness, is often experienced as one of forgetting and remembering. Transformation is an open-ended process of blending one's view of the world with one's way of being so that it can become the fabric of one's life.

As Foster and Little (1980) said, "to complete the heroic journey, the returning hero/ine must survive the impact of the world...there is a path to follow" (p. 128). Surviving the world means overcoming many dangers, as the need to belong is closely connected with a fear of being labelled as different or crazy. In a survey that queried fifteen hundred North Americans, "Have you ever had the feeling of being very close to a powerful spiritual force that seemed to lift you outside of yourself?", forty percent acknowledged such an experience (Greeley & McCready, 1975). Few of them had discussed the experience for fear of being thought "crazy" (Goleman et al., 1985, p. 188). Statements from this study presented in Table 16 illustrate the dynamics of this ongoing struggle with old patterns and definitions of reality.

TABLE 16

PULL TO FAMILIAR PATTERNS

Participant	Exemplary Statement from Narrative
Marni	The pressure is so strong to live out everything in a material way, you know, physical pleasure, convenience, comfort.
Joel	I've been brought up on the empirical approach... You must prove it in a laboratory before it can be believed and is for real. And I realize that that's a totally bankrupt idea, but there it is in my background.
Pipe Carrier	One thing is the fear of barking up the wrong tree; one doesn't like to be made a fool of. I'm torn with a tremendous skepticism. To try and become more spiritual I find the more difficult of the two routes, so that slipping back into the more easy way is always there; the danger is always there.
Serendipity	There's a constant awareness of how your perceptions may change, but we have so many of the behavioral habits...We grow up in a violent world. I hate violence,...but there's a lot of violence in my behavior.
Raechel	I often get stuck in the old way...There's so much out there in the modern world to take things as they appear to be, and it's very hard to hold onto a thought contrary to that. It's like having a foot on each side. It's like seeing one way and wanting it, ...(but) the old way is more familiar; it's more habitual, more ingrained, it's easy, you just kind of flow into that one, and yet it doesn't have it anymore.
Amy	I mean, you can see why I don't talk about this. I mean, this sounds perfectly hallucinatory...I do not feel a psychiatric case! I wouldn't talk about it to anyone. I'm very defensive about this.

Amy's fear of ostracism was most graphically portrayed in her "path" dream. As she stood in the presence of the figure of Christ, her symbol of wholeness, in fear of embarrassment, she "looked around to see if anybody was watching".

I mean, it was within me. It was my dream. No one else was on that same path to even watch me or know what I was experiencing. No one was even present in that part of the dream to witness me, praise me or be in awe in the presence of this spiritual energy, so why did I worry?

Govinda (1986) defined transformation in terms of incorporation, stating, "We are transformed by what we accept" (p. 178). Transformation, then, implies integration - living in harmony with one's world view. Integrity, or adherence to a set of values, becomes an ethical responsibility. This supports Haronian's (1975) view that the "mature conscience is rooted in and may even be identical with a broad and expanded consciousness" (p. 28). This theme of integrity, or integration, was frequently expressed by the co-researchers in ethical terms, denoting a sense of commitment and responsibility to live out their values. Examples of these expressions are noted in Table 17.

TABLE 17

INTEGRATION

Participant	Exemplary Statement from Narrative
Marni	Having unearthed this richness in myself, I cannot neglect it. So, I feel really called upon to produce something.

(TABLE 17, continued)

Participant	Exemplary Statement from Narrative
Serendipity	That's what I'm <u>going</u> to do. I think that's what changes, is you start to take more responsibility...it's commitment versus hoping.
Pipe Carrier	If one path will eventually reduce me as a person, I must follow the other path - even though, practically, it may not make that much sense at the time. It always takes on some shade of doing wrong to my spirit, to my spiritual gain.
Nimrod	It's like I have a sense that I'm much more on my soul's path doing what I'm doing now.
Amy	I don't feel I've been the same person since. I want to get out there and apply it every day with everybody I see because I know that is going to fulfill me...my spirituality and my work will have to go hand-in-hand.
Donald	I feel much more completely into a very clear and grounded sense of who I am and what my values are. It's like this place is a full expression of my values.
Raechel	I really need to communicate and I need to find people...having people around really helps me to live it and be it.
Carrie	So, I sort of incorporate little things as I gather along the way...(and) through my clients is more where I have the opportunity to draw on this.
Tony	It floated back into the ocean waves of my consciousness - you know, the big wave suddenly subsides, but it's still there somehow...If I think of a tangible thing, I think of probably the way I was with Indian people; the way I did not seek power from - or take power from - but shared power <u>with</u> them. To enhance each other's power would be a deep motive.

(TABLE 17, continued)

Participant	Exemplary Statement from Narrative
Joel	I've got to collect them (awarenesses) all together and sort of say, "O.K., there's the resource, the raw material; now, what are you, inside, going to do with it all?"....I need to ...find out what...all this incredible wealth is for...

Recognizing the power of thoughts in the world, Marni expressed her conviction that living out the transformation is a "cleaning up process". Change was also perceived as "a way of being" by Amy, Serendipity and Tony. Both Tony and Raechel also noted the importance of communication in terms of integrating ongoing experience into one's way of being.

A key area of conflict in living out this way of being was often expressed in terms of searching for an appropriate career direction. This struggle was most graphically encapsulated in a question raised by Tony:

My main pain at the moment is, how do I keep faith with my inner, slowly growing knowledge of myself and a spiritual universe, and deal with the world in order to feed my family?

The issue of vocation was also at the heart of Joel's current self exploration.

Discovering one's true vocation is a vital feature of integration. This was characterized by Nimrod in terms of investing his "life energy" in congruence with his "soul's path". Donald

described integrating his vision in terms of grounding and expressing, and conceived his earth healing workshops as one way to manifest his dream. Following her true path was described by Amy as a need to express her understanding congruently in every aspect of her life.

Carrie depicted the process of integration as one of incorporation, and reported her inner experience as being a feeling of, "I know something, you don't know". This process of incorporation, or taking things in, was also recognized by Joel when he discussed his task of integration as one of synthesizing his knowledge and experience on the inner plane.

Integration is an ongoing process, and occurs at increasingly deeper levels as the opening of consciousness continues. Marni's description of her process in reviewing her transcript illustrated this living dynamic:

I think that just the whole process of reading the transcript and thinking about it and responding to it in my own mind from the way I felt then, all helped to make it part of me in a real way...And, I just find it absolutely an astonishing example of synchronicity that I also get pregnant at that time. All of a sudden, all this seems to have settled down and shaken down in my whole consciousness, and I get pregnant,....like, when your mind and soul are at peace, your body does what fits.

THE EMERGENT PARADIGM

7) Sensibility of a Universe of Pattern and Meaning

Starhawk (1982) referred to the emergent consciousness of the

interacting, interdependent nature of the world as "immanence" (p. 9). The participants in this study embody this change in world orientation, one that Drengson (1983) denoted as an ecological sensibility of life and Rifkin (1985b) called empathic and participative (p. 90). As J. A. Wheeler said, "This is a participatory universe"; we are part of its pattern (Skolimowski, 1984, p. 161). Words like "pattern", "flow", "energy", "natural" and "wholeness" align with Rifkin's view that "the mind is not interested in controlling but rather in connecting" (p. 83). According to Watson's (1976) interpretation of Bohm's implicate order, thoughts are a specific means of connecting between minds, as they "can be considered as particular objects unfolded from the deeper ground movement of mind" (p. 41).

Relatedness and participation are integral to Skolimowski's (1984) view of the learning involved in the evolutionary process:

The natural and the supernatural are one. By acquiring new sensitivities, that is, new powers of experiencing and receiving, we make the supernatural natural. We lift ourselves to the level of the transnormal, which then becomes normal (p. 67).

In the consciousness of North Americans, the Indian is symbolic as this "deep sense of relatedness to all life", according to Williams (1981) (p. 10). In his analysis, therefore, "the Native American spirit" is closer to our own spiritual roots than Eastern philosophies (p. 9).

A recognition of the interpenetration of spirit and nature - of sensing life as both - was integral to the paradigm espoused in this

study. At the heart of this view is the sensibility of the world as one of a pattern of relatedness. This consciousness is reflected in the statements from the narratives selected for Table 18.

TABLE 18

PATTERN: SPIRIT - NATURE RELATEDNESS

Participant	Exemplary Statement from Narrative
Tony	<p>I have that feeling that there is a pattern and a flow and I can only be open to it. It's almost like a fabric that you can tear...of life...a flow of events...And it's as though everything exists and is all aware of each other.</p> <p>I got to know those dogs. Those dogs touched me in a very deep way, and there was a new connection. That made me think, "My God, what could happen with people? Indians lived like this all the time".</p>
Marni	<p>I feel now that there's such a wholeness about my sense of God being involved in everything...I see it more as openness to sort of the potential of things and being trusting enough to sort of experience and wait and see what it will bring...and examine it...and be with it; not control...or decide...what the allowable parameters are...</p> <p>I feel like the job is...more mental...just to work at cleaning out your thoughts and feelings, so that you don't contaminate the world.</p>
Pipe Carrier	<p>In the totality there are only a few things that we need to remember, and one is, that everything works very well and everything works very simply and everything is all right.</p>

(TABLE 18, continued)

Participant	Exemplary Statement from Narrative
(Pipe Carrier continued)	I think...spirituality and the global village and ecology and so forth are actually not far apart... we're just part of things...(The body) is just the vehicle, which...gives essence, and keeps the soul here.
Serendipity	We are spirits, and there's a reason why we are here in bodies, because we communicate with those in bodies.
Raechel	I realized it was almost like on a wave-length. It was playing eternally...It had been set in motion and it was...It's just there for whoever wants it, always. Almost like the collective unconscious. We were aware that thoughts were real and they had power and form...we realized the responsibility involved with awareness.
Joel	My soul can be incarnate in lives now, or past or whatever...the whole concept of time just does not exist...The conservation of energy which we see everywhere has to have some relevant, similar approach in the meaning of life. There's an awareness that (nature) has to be flowed with.
Carrie	If we're talking about energies, the spirit itself has got to be an energy that comes into the body at birth...I trust that...the spirit lives...there has to be an energy force that moves on to another plane. In the natural flow of things, I think that maybe my love of nature, my understanding of nature, took me to the...supernatural. Of course, we have to assume that the cosmos and so on is just an extension of nature.

(TABLE 18, continued)

Participant	Exemplary Statement from Narrative
Nimrod	I think, still for me, in terms of the spiritual orientation, there's a strong sense of the contact with the natural world as a kind of basic foundation.
Donald	I'm now in the place of drawing on the cosmic energies as they manifest through these different cyclic events...I mean, the natural energies are there for us to draw on if we align our consciousness with them.
Amy	...the end goal is to become like the divine...whole and part of...

In this study, the reality behind the physically manifest world was often described in terms of energies, including an awareness of the power of unseen forces. Pipe Carrier gave credence to the power of thought and invisible energies when he referred to "the intangible things that make life so complex, that enter into family dynamics, for example". For Raechel and Marni, an outgrowth of honoring the invisible was the recognition that thoughts were real entities that are transmittable. This kind of understanding creates a sense of responsibility that transcends our ordinary concepts of behavioral accountability. Carrie used energy metaphors throughout the relating of her story, as her understanding is that energy is the foundation principle for life. Joel's conceptualizations were also expressed in energy terms.

The concept of sharing energy connections is embodied in Donald's

and Marni's descriptions of wedding nature and spirit in rituals of communion: Marni, in thinking of sex as union, and then experiencing it in that way for a first time; and Donald, feeling a connectedness with others, who, although separated physically by vast distances, were related in time by their common participation in earth healing ceremonies.

Integration of this notion of life as energy was reflected in each person's story with concepts like synchronicity, no coincidence, destiny and purpose. Experiences of synchronicity and a sense of destiny held meaning for these participants in terms of guidance for living. This sense of meaning is exemplified in the statements in Table 19.

TABLE 19

MEANING: SYNCHRONICITY AND DESTINY

Participant	Exemplary Statement from Narrative
Donald	<p>Everything means something,...if you've got your eyes and ears open.</p> <p>Like, in just <u>knowing</u> that if I feel really truly drawn on this path, my needs will be looked after, ...and then, this space opened up at just the right time.</p>
Nimrod	<p>There was a sense in which it was right because things worked...(and) when those types of things start to happen, I have a sense of, "O.K., we're on track", and when they don't...I have a sense of real self doubt...I just have a sense that I'm on the right track now,...once you get that sense, it's incredible how that builds up. It's almost</p>

(TABLE 19, continued)

Participant	Exemplary Statement from Narrative
(Nimrod continued)	as if the new paradigm emerges like a mandala - if we just tune into it.
Carrie	I can only imagine that it's not a coincidence...; people come my way for certain reasons...Somewhere along the line, my vision problem is here for a reason; there is a pattern to the fact that I've taken (all these) risks...There's a certain sense of destiny involved in where I should be at what point in time....There must be a kind of a guardian.
Serendipity	<p>Having been there, I can understand. If I'd been raised by mystics I wouldn't be able to understand. So, I'm grateful for every moment in my life.</p> <p>So, the <u>synchronicity</u> - like, people give you gifts and they give you healing, and the awareness that they get, "gifts" out of it.</p>
Raechel	<p>There was a synchronicity...It was the right "everything", and it all started fitting into place.</p> <p>I think that's what all these experiences are for; just to tap me on the head and say, "Don't buy into it; don't believe it; there's more than you think; just remember that".</p>
Joel	It's been my firm conviction that when I get into particular situations, the appropriate books will become apparent to me, and it's always been the case....(There's)no question in my mind - that there is a guidance out there - and if I can but tune into it, I will be given some appropriate information and direction...I believe...things (are) pretty well planned out...
Tony	It seems as though there is a deep inner source of evidence...It fits in...that there is a guide. All you've got to do is try;...to knock and the door will be answered...if I've lost something,

(TABLE 19, continued)

Participant	Exemplary Statement from Narrative
(Tony continued)	and I put energy into expressing that loss,...there it is, in front of me. What is lost and my need, as it were, both exist simultaneously, and both are aware of each other, and both somehow come together at that point that I articulate it.
Amy	Losing that and stepping away (from the spiritual path) and just pursuing ordinary existence...means I am in a mess in no time. I mean, even in a dream I've been given a reading when I wasn't even <u>reading</u> the Bible...Doors have opened for me that never would have opened before, ...and I don't think it's coming from me anymore.
Pipe Carrier	All the knowledge that is there to hold and to have is already in you...Sometimes, some form of guidance comes from without... Some things are happening that point to a kind of synchronicity. I'm getting communication from people who are on the right path, while others who are rooted in the other way have kind of fallen by the wayside.
Marni	I accept that I'm on a journey...like a calling, like a vocation or a mission. I'm not the author. If it's coming from me at all, it's only the part of me that's in touch with sort of the universal body or spirit or something, and that all I'm doing is listening to a tune that's probably been playing all along.

Ram Dass wrote that continual "tuning" to messages of guidance was a way of coming close to one's own truth (Goleman et al., 1985, p. 202). Gaining knowledge for one's life through this kind of

attunement implies experiencing the universe as a field in which, in Deikman's (1982) understanding, "no absolute barriers exist between entities" (p. 55). This mode of being in the universe was defined by William James (1958) as religious sensibility and by Maslow (1968) as Being-cognition: a union of knower and known.

Guidance, whether in the form of inner knowing or meaningful outer life incidents, is a relatedness between the conscious and the unconscious that serves wholeness. The process of coming to wholeness was defined as individuation by Jung (1961), and was referred to as discovering one's life purpose or destiny by Sanford (1977, pp. 16-17). Within every living being is the urge to wholeness. Since the human being is a part of nature, the individuation process - the path to wholeness - is a pattern laid down by nature, and is contained in the archetype of the self.

"One must experience a calling", according to Williams (1981), to follow one's path (p. 28). The choice to follow this path requires what Maslow (1971) termed willing surrender (p. 303). This means saying, "yes" to one's path; a wedding of free will and destiny. Jaffé (1971) wrote that, while we are not free to choose our destiny, we are free to choose cooperation with this pattern inherent in our nature (p. 91). In Metzner's (1986) understanding, "we fulfill our destiny by exercising our free will" (p. 57).

According to Singer (1973), there is an intentionality to the events in one's life which is a reflection of the purposeful nature of psychic energy (p. 271). This guidance coming from life incidents -

this energy - "provides the thrust for the individuation process" (p. 271). Jung's (1952) concept of synchronicity was descriptive of the connection between two or more incidents that are linked - beyond space, time or causality - through their meaning (para. 955-996). Events of synchronicity are meaningful coincidences, outer happenings corresponding in a "meaningful way with an inner psychological condition" (Harding, 1965, p. 44).

Both Williams (1981) and Harding (1986) have included the element of will to this concept, noting that some involvement, some energy, must be extended by a person for synchronistic phenomena to occur:

Synchronistic events are more likely to occur when one has a living relationship to the Self (Williams, p. 80).

Everything - just the right books, teachers, circumstances - will leap to his assistance, if he's determined to press on (Harding, p. 57).

Synchronicity, then, could be described as an energy connection between persons, or between persons and events, a connection requiring commitment, openness and acceptance - a participation in life energies. With this intentionality, a person can be in harmony, in synchrony - in rhythm with the patterns in the universe, and in tune with one's process of individuation.

An awareness of this need for participation in life energies - of sensing a larger purpose of one's life - was expressed by the co-researchers as a calling, a sense of mission or plan, an awareness of one's path, or a feeling of destiny. An illustration of the connection between synchronicity and one's relationship to a larger

sense of self was Nimrod's account of knowing when he's on the right path. Pipe Carrier also discussed synchronicity in terms of giving direction for his path. Disharmony seems to be a "no" message - a communication that a wrong turn has been taken. This sense of the negative was expressed by Amy in terms of not being able to "avoid" her path anymore. There is a sense of rightness - of appropriateness - when one is living in resonance with one's life plan.

In addition to meaningful events, participants in this research described guidance as something that comes from a deeper sense of self - from intuitive knowing - and/or from beyond the self. Dreams or symbols of wholeness emerging from the unconscious are often communications to a person to embark, or remain, on the path of individuation. For example, Marni described drawing a mandala, a circular symbol of wholeness, that integrated several aspects of self which then became "like a family". Her dreams of the fetus and the small children were also messages from the unconscious summoning her on her journey. Amy's dream of the Christ figure, also a symbol of wholeness, was an obvious beckoning to her to follow her own path. Once these dreams were honored, they became aids for Amy and Marni in choosing to follow the calling of the self.

Trusting in the unknown is implied in the notion of a "willing surrender" to one's destiny. This requires a relinquishing of a sense of security, of certitude. Nimrod chose to let go of security issues as a priority, noting that all the material things were "not worth it in spiritual terms". With this decision, he reported becoming free to

follow his "soul's path". Letting go of concern for security was also a key to Donald's alignment with his life purpose. Raechel's personal journey was expressed as a search for freedom and "possibility", so letting go of attachments was also her way of cooperating with her life meaning. It is a trusting attitude toward the future that characterized Carrie's expressions about destiny, a trust that seemed to flow out of her positive personal myth: "whoever I chose to touch or whoever came into my world would have very positive things happen to them".

Pipe Carrier said that he knew with his "whole being what the right path is" for him to follow. His Taoistic attitude of waiting to embrace this plan derived from a knowing that "things are happening the way they're happening...things are probably unfolding the way they ought to". Joel also communicated this attitude when he stated that, "things are unfolding...in a way that is leading me somewhere". Tony expressed this same kind of trust in the pattern of things throughout his story. It is when we have this trusting life stance, "when we are in Tao", in Williams' (1981) phrase, that we can meet "the guide" along the way (p. 47).

The process of individuation can be conceived as being a central feature of the change to the new paradigm defined in this study. van der Post (1976) wrote that, "We live not only our own lives but, whether we know it or not, also the life of our time" (frontispiece). At this moment in history, for these participants, living the individuation process is set in the framework of the paradigm emerging

at the growing edges of the culture. This paradigm embraces a sensibility of "both/and", one in which personal destiny and relatedness to all of life go hand-in-hand. Individuation of the person enveloped in this expansive world view, then, has profound implications for the larger social order. As Pipe Carrier articulated:

The only way that things are going to be changed in the world, is individuals changing themselves...things happen quietly, indoors and inside of individuals.

CONCLUSION

Summary: Fundamental Phenomenological Description

The transformative process, as described in this study, is evolutionary - a gradual spiral change, moving in a direction toward increasing expansion of consciousness for the purpose of healing persons and/or planet. A separation from one's old world view occurred for the participants of this study either through cultural estrangement, proximity to new cultures, a questioning process, and/or experiencing personal and/or cultural crises. The transcendence of one's ordinary patterns of consciousness was another component reported in the process of opening to new possibilities of experiencing reality. Changing one's mind involved the change of both contents and structures of consciousness, and required a willing surrender, a letting go and opening to new contents, which created new

structures, making room for new contents, and so on.

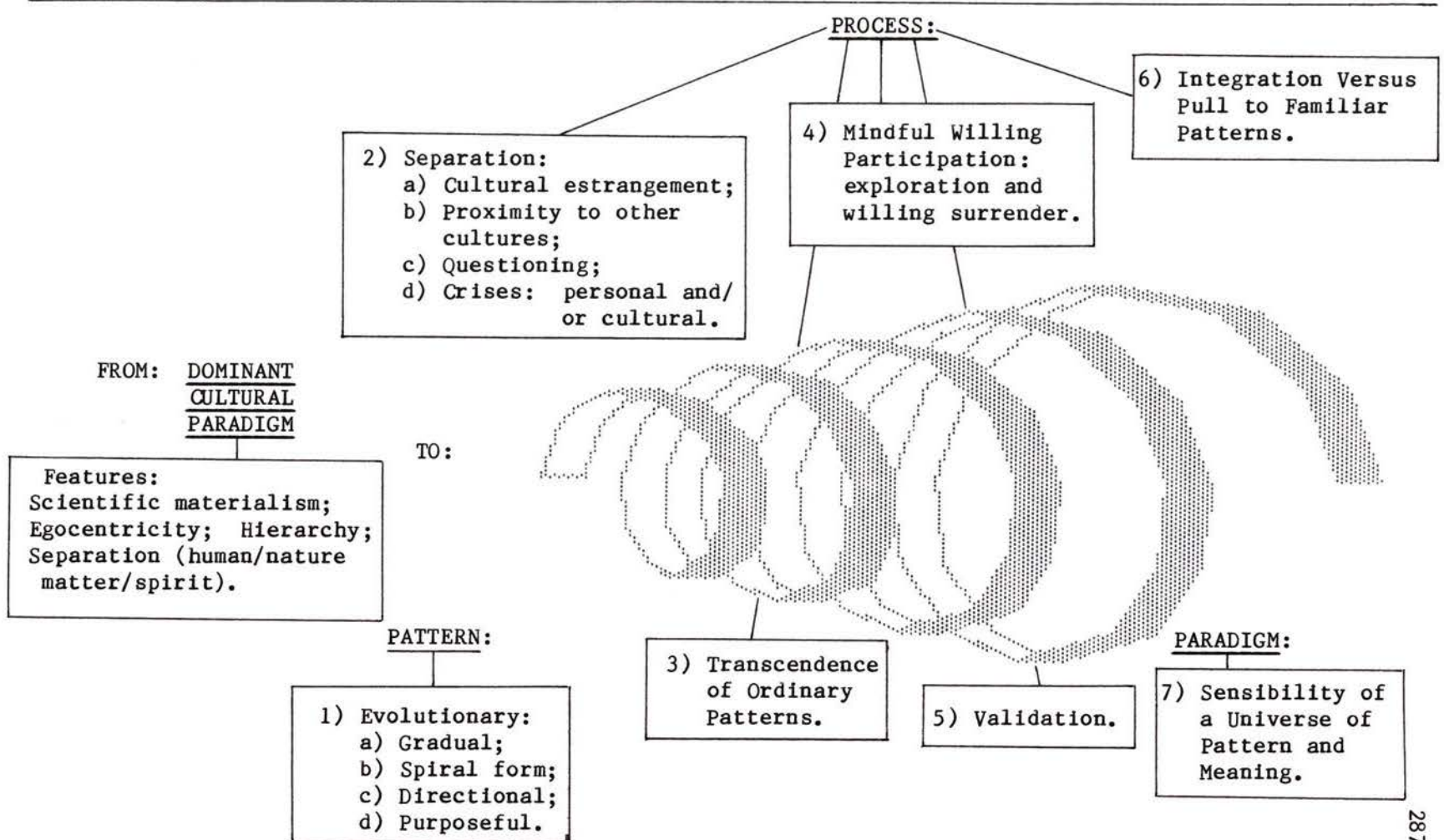
Persons on the quest described in this inquiry emphasized a need for validation - from conceptual frameworks, from writings, from other persons, or from subjective experience. This validation was described as an aid in the process of integration, as the pull to return to familiar patterns was frequently reported as an ever-present danger. This obstacle in integration came in the form of fears of being considered different or crazy or wrong. The sense of an ethical responsibility, and the grounding or expressing of the new view in some way, led to its fuller realization for the persons in this study.

Awareness of a universe of pattern and meaning enveloped these participants with a new sensibility. Attention to synchronistic patterns in events and being aware of a sense of destiny are integral facets of this new sensibility. Change was experienced by the co-researchers as being guided by some force beyond the egoic self. The call to wholeness - the individuation process - was a key feature of the change to a new world view for these persons. It is an individuation process that, at this point in history, is embedded in the emergent cultural paradigm.

A pictorial representation of the experience of changing to a new world view is depicted in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1

THEMES OF CHANGING TO A NEW WORLD VIEW



Highlights of Meaning

A major impetus for social change since the 1960s has been fueled by a proliferation of special interest and movement groups. Much energy has been expended by participants of these groups over the years toward efforts to change things "out there". Some of these bodies of change were instrumental in sparking or increasing awareness for many of the participants in this study, but what is most important to highlight about the overall process of change for these persons is their ongoing involvement in changing their own minds. For the co-researchers in this study, the emphasis in changing to a new world view has increasingly been on searching for personal integrity, and then living one's learning. Service in the world is then wed to a commitment to continuing change in oneself, and is perceived in terms of healing or communing, of returning to wholeness.

Change, for the participants in this study, can best be described in terms of a change in a way of being. This changed way of being is an approach to life, a philosophy or a sensibility appropriate to any situation: it is a trust in the nature of life and a reverence for wholeness. Tony, for example, expressed this respect for life in many ways, including his "deep motive" to empower others, to share "power with" them, when he was working with the Indian people. This commitment to wholeness, in self and others, was best communicated by the persons in this study as decisions involving integration of their changed outlook. These decisions invariably revolved around a sense

of purpose that took the participants beyond the self. A sense of "we" permeated these participants' paths of realization, especially in their specific commitments to healing self, others and/or the earth. This "we-feeling" was also communicated by the co-researchers in their descriptions of intimacy or communion that held special places of meaning in their lives.

Since application of any change is the most important facet - the only real meaning - the process of integration of a change in paradigm is critical if it is to have any impact on the larger society. As many of the participants emphasized, living out a new way of being is a difficult part of the path of change, as the culture continues to be dominated by a sense of individualistic materialism. Whether one is learning more about spiritual or psychological principles, beginning awareness can be subverted if there is no validation for an alternative vision to the dominant cultural paradigm. Persons in this study described validation - by others, by writings, by enlarged frameworks of reality, or through subjective experience - as being the invaluable element supporting their commitment to live in congruence with an expanded vision of self and life.

Because the key focus of this study was the discovery of the underlying structure of the change embodied in the emerging shift in paradigms, specific behavioral changes of the co-researchers were not purposely explored. While instances of specific change were a part of each person's narrative, further questions about the impact on others of one's change in world view could provide fertile ground for future

investigations. Some of the questions raised by this study will therefore be addressed in terms of implications for research.

Implications for Research

A whole host of questions in connection with family relationships provides a basic domain for future research that is implied by this study. What kinds of changes in partner relationships are resulting from the change in paradigm? Is there a change in attitudes about intimate relationships arising out of the new world view? Is there a change in the meaning of intimacy? What specific changes around sex role stereotypes and/or the expectations of man/woman of each other are actually emerging from the shift in paradigms? Are new stereotypes replacing the old? How would the parenting style of one's parents have influenced the process of change to a new view of reality? In what ways might a person's change in world view impact on attitudes and methods of raising one's own children? How might beliefs about children be affected by an overall change in world view? How do parents who have embraced the new paradigm help their children simultaneously to exist in mainstream society and question its primary values? How do partners help each other in an ongoing examination of values in relation to their consistency with a vision of wholeness? What is the experience of facing the clash of paradigms between marital partners?

In addition to questions about family relationships, related

arenas for inquiry could involve the exploration of the nature of change in other key relationships of persons embracing a new world view. For example, how might work relationships, friendships, extended family relationships and/or communications with neighborhood service persons be transformed when one has integrated such a change?

Another group of questions that arises from this study revolves around speculations concerning the nature of changes in the world of work. Does a change in world view tend to precipitate, or involve, a process of career change? Are there particular kinds of work that tend to attract persons who have comprehended a new perception of reality? Have certain fields of employment actually been instrumental in supporting persons' shifts in world view? How has a change in paradigms affected practices in traditional settings of employment: e.g., schools, hospitals, business offices? In institutions preparing people for work, what is the level of awareness in regard to the alternative paradigm? Is there any evidence of interest among students and/or faculty of these settings to explore the potential meaning of a new paradigm for their own lives?

In every sphere of life, similar questions addressing the impact of the new world view could be explored. People, such as the participants of this study, might be consulted about the nature of specific changes they have participated in, at home, in their work environment, or in other structures in society, that were a direct outgrowth of a transformed perspective on reality. Exploring questions about the nature of the ripple effects resulting from a

personal change of mind could lead to a broader understanding of the link between personal and cultural change.

Personal Meaning

In the beginning of this study, I was motivated by a desire to illuminate more of the mystery surrounding the nature of the paradigm shift as it is being experienced at this time in our culture. My interest arose out of a commitment to use my enriched understanding in my roles as educator and counsellor. I believed that I could become more effective in promoting this change with students and clients if I learned more about the lived-experience. What I was not aware of at the time of the study's conception was how thoroughly I had integrated an "active change" orientation. As I became immersed in the study - with reading, with the interview dialogues, with transcribing tapes of the sessions, with constructing the stories - I gradually became aware of a subtle change in my own consciousness, slowly awakening to a realization that my active change stance was one that is embedded in the heart of the dominant paradigm of this culture. This attitude, this way of being, has been transformed for me, over the duration of this study, to a deeper sense of what is more meaningful in all relationships - healing. This is a difficult change to communicate in words, but the different feelings surrounding this shift have had a profound impact on my inner state of being, which I increasingly feel as a state of peace. It was as if reading the transcripts, over and

over, was in itself a healing experience for me, as the sense of trust - of simplicity, of attunement with synchronicity - repeated throughout the narratives, permeated my own being with a renewed sense of trust in the wisdom of the patterns in the universe. The ideas emerging from this trust form the core of the final chapter of this study, and are presented as an outline of ways that educators and counsellors can nurture natural patterns of growth.

CHAPTER V
AN EVOLVING FRAMEWORK:
GUIDING THE TRANSFORMATION

INTRODUCTION

From the evolutionary pattern of change to the individuation process as a central feature, the transformation to an expansive world view embodied in this study can be identified as a process rooted in nature. That it is a journey being undertaken by increasing numbers of people at this time in history in the Western culture, also locates this transformation as a cultural-historical process. The fact that this coincides with the growing needs of Mother Earth for a restoration of balance is a strong indicator that even the cultural-historical aspect of the change is deeply grounded in nature. Co-researchers in this study referred over and over to themes of destiny, guidance from beyond the self and awareness of synchronistic patterns - all indicative of the sensibility that nature is permeated with spirit, with invisible energies, and that the change process is one guided by nature.

Pearce (1985) emphasized the need to go back to the original plan of nature in order to recognize that "spirit is the central nexus of human experience" (p. xx); that reaching a "union of our human and divine natures" is a natural goal of human development (p. xix). At this turning point in history, then, what is needed is a freeing of

the human being for this journey toward wholeness. This developmental process has often been blocked by an enculturation that has obliterated an awareness of the full potential of human nature. An evolution of consciousness for collective humanity could occur through a common acceptance of this notion that the spiritual is natural.

If an ongoing cultural evolution is to be inspired and nurtured through the changing of minds, through a shift in paradigms about the nature of the cosmos and the human being, education and counselling are two fields that have significant parts to play in the fostering of this change. As a process which seems to originate in nature, it is one that needs a cooperative approach. What educators and counsellors can do, basically, is participate - cooperate - in the process of "destiny". They can perform a "midwife" function.

Thinking of one's role in terms of midwifery, in itself, requires a transformation in paradigms, as in the Western world we tend to try to control change. It necessitates thinking in these terms voiced by Pipe Carrier:

For me to be an advocate for active change in other people, or even within myself, is kind of futile; it's applying that Western kind of energy to making things happen, and I don't need to do that.

This attitude is incorporated in Kegan's (1982) approach to change as a natural process, one which needs acknowledgement and support. A midwife can provide the matrix for this support which, in Pearce's (1977) definition, is a source of possibility, a source of energy and a safe place for exploration of possibilities (p. 18).

We're all on the same path together, guiding one another
(Millman, 1980, p. 142)

Educators and counsellors can also be thought of as peers, companions on the "same path", though they may be at different points along the way. This "shared journey orientation" was advocated by Van Hesteren (1986) in his discussion of counsellor education as an arena for fostering a "quest" mentality (pp. 211-218).

Whether one thinks of the educator or counsellor in terms of a companion on the way or as a midwife, certain guidelines, illuminated by the needs of the participants in this study, are common to either picture of the guide. While the emphases in applying these guidelines vary relative to whether one is playing an educating or counselling role, the basic premises are conceived to be relevant to both. In discussing this map for guides, I will focus on possible guiding functions, elucidating differing emphases in practice for educators and counsellors. I will also utilize illustrations from the narratives where appropriate.

GUIDING THE TRANSFORMATION PROCESS

A key principle for guides of transformation is that one can only help a traveler on a path that he/she knows. Because of the need to find someone familiar with "the path", many of the participants turned to writers as guides. Others were inspired by persons with prior knowledge of the transformation process. This kind of guide served

orienting and normalizing functions.

Nimrod called his friend that had performed an orienting function for him a "catalyst":

He was the one that kind of connected me with that whole stream...pointing me in the direction that had significance.

Joel described his wife as one who helped orient him all along the way:

She's probably been the opening wedge, or introduced the opening wedge for a lot of ideas.

For Carrie, courses in parapsychology provided both orienting and normalizing functions. The information presented confirmed for her that, "yes, these things can and do happen".

From reports of the participants that related to fears of being "wrong" or made the "fool" or thought of as "crazy", it is evident that normalizing paranormal experience is a critical function of a guide. These co-researchers were eager to share their experiences of transcendence as soon as I had communicated my keen interest. Amy had never told her story to anyone, and her near-death experience had occurred fifteen years earlier. Donald said, "I've never, ever shared all this with anyone before, so I'm seeing it differently". Sharing, in itself, seemed to normalize experiences for Tony and Raechel, and Carrie expressed excitement in connecting with someone open to the subject. Counsellors, especially, need to be open to listening to experiences that transcend the ordinary. Tony expressed his need for a listener thus:

These experiences are very important to me, very important things to examine.

An additional way that both counsellors and educators might serve these guiding functions of orienting and normalizing could be in the development of bibliographies which include a variety of writings on holistic frameworks of reality and transformational processes.

Another core principle for guiding processes of change involves a special kind of relationship - one that affirms persons in their uniqueness, affirms a participative, co-creative process and encourages exploration. Such a relationship is a partnership of care, of responsiveness. It is one that takes time to develop, as it is a relationship of trust and intimacy, of engagement, commitment and nurturance. This kind of relatedness serves both a validating and a participating function. The I-thou dialogue is, of course, central to these functions. This kind of validation and sharing held pivotal meaning for the co-researchers in this study.

The validation of one's personhood and one's experience were the most frequently mentioned needs of the participants. Affirmations of their differences were especially freeing experiences of validation for Tony, Marni and Serendipity. Experiences of feeling validated were often described in terms of deeply felt meaning:

- An intimacy that you'd only dreamt about - Serendipity
- We were validating each other. I loved it! - Tony
- It was like a haven - Nimrod
- I finally had contact with a whole bunch of people who accepted the ideas that I had - Pipe Carrier

- The counsellor gave me permission to read, to go ahead and nurture myself - Marni

My experience of using the dialogal approach in the interviews for this research was also confirming of the value of a relationship of participation and mutual validation. The process was validating of my research, at the same time that it validated the stories of the participants. Donald commented that he was glad I had structured the research as I had:

Sharing this, I'm getting all kinds of new information about it as well.

After Marni had read the transcript, she exclaimed, "I felt really proud of it".

Feedback from participants on the value of being involved in this study, of being able to tell their stories, has added confirmation to my conviction that just being present and open to another is a validating experience. Being fully present, then, as an educator or counsellor, is at the heart of participating with, and validating, both person and process.

An additional principle intrinsic to guiding others on the path to new perceptions of self and world is one of congruence. We teach who and what we are, regardless of what words we speak. We can only teach what is integrated as our own world view. One's way of being, then, needs to be congruent with the message espoused in order to be a model of the process of transformation. Serendipity noted how often our habitual behaviors are not apace with out intellectual understanding. When one is truly whole and in harmony with the self,

for example, there is no need to push anyone else to change. This kind of respect for each person's own natural evolutionary process is an important change for counsellors and educators to integrate in order to serve a modelling function grounded in congruence.

An older man who had "long and deep experience in counselling" and lived out his ideals on many levels was this kind of congruent model for Tony. Joel's first paragon for change was his mother-in-law, a woman who modelled for him the courage to follow an unpopular path.

Willingness to stay with someone through a questioning, searching, "rebirthing" process describes a core ingredient for the guide who is playing a facilitating function. This "staying with" another in a supportive way is essential in order that a process of change not be aborted. A midwife cannot rescue a woman in labor from the contractions leading to birth, but she can remain by her side, guiding and comforting her throughout the process. Modern guides, especially in the form of counsellors, sometimes rush in to take away a person's pain, unknowingly robbing the person of necessary experience in the process. Cooperating with pain and struggle is a way of staying in harmony with nature's plan. While "culture" might prefer a quick fixing of disharmony so that a person might functionally resume a position in the world, nature, or the call from the unconscious, might be heralding, instead, the beginning of a new venture. Serendipity became painfully aware of her own interference in the process of self-determination, when she learned the differences

between "responsibility for and responding". She also learned the meaning of facilitating as "being with" through her own experience with helpers:

You need key people in your life who rattle your chains, and stay with you during that process.

The facilitating of processes is a key skill in the art of counselling. This facilitating role can be effectively played out in connection with crises that separate persons from routine patterns, with integrating transcendent experiences, with working through unfinished issues (letting go), and with working with symbolic images emerging from the unconscious throughout a change process. The individuation process, which was described as a core feature of the change to a new world view, can be facilitated in the counselling relationship by working with whatever emerges. As Williams stated, "nature, not the teacher, provides the trick to keep us growing" (p. 62). There is no need to "trick" a person into changing. There is only a need to facilitate the healing process that is occurring.

Marni's individuating process was facilitated through working with her dream images that were leading her to including "lost parts" of herself. Amy's dream was also facilitative of her development by clearly picturing her singular path. Raechel's dream on Crete was an initiation into a knowing "that beyond everything apparent (there) was something different". McGlashan (1967) described how the dreaming mind can initiate a process of freeing the whole mind:

The dreaming mind, I suggest, in addition to all its other functions, is an instrument of liberation, capable of

breaking up the conventional patterns of human perception, and releasing new forms of awareness. I invite you to regard the dreaming mind as a sharp file smuggled into the space-time prison cell where man lies captive...(p. 141).

This is consistent with Thomas' (1978) assertion that significant dreams may be inherent in human nature to aid in the integration of meaning in one's life.

Crises can be perceived as either disastrous events in one's life or as opportunities for transformation. Viewing crisis points in terms of possibility is one way that counsellors can be helpful as guides in the journey to increasing consciousness. Carrie's crisis centering around her inability to find paid employment was ultimately perceived by her as "destiny". Donald's separation from his wife opened him to a more complete living out of his life values. When change is seen as part of a plan to help one evolve, there is an acceptance of crisis, that, in itself, is facilitative. As Donald's friend said when he left his marriage: "You know, we shouldn't call it separation, we should call it expansion". Any crisis, any letting go, can lead to expansion. This kind of expansive, free feeling was expressed by Serendipity after finishing her "power" issue: "I understand...the freedom!"

By engaging in processes of explicating and questioning taken-for-granted assumptions about self and culture, counsellors and educators can fulfill a preparing the ground function. Clearing away the obstacles of enculturation was identified in this research as a critical step in paving the way for opening to transformative

experiences. Questioning and exposure to different views of reality were two of the key ways these participants separated from the dominant paradigm. Moving "beyond the belief structure", for example, was crucial for Raechel in opening to new possibilities.

Educators could prepare the ground for seeing beyond our pictures of reality through fostering methods of transcending limits of thought. One such method, creative philosophizing (Drengson, 1983), is a process of elucidating conceptual frameworks and examining their limited nature. This can open one to a recognition that culture is a shared construction of reality. Such explication of one's own culture, along with the exposure to other world views, is what Bowers (1974) defined as "education for cultural literacy". Drengson proposed that this transcultural process is one that can free us to design patterns for living appropriately and harmoniously with the natural world (pp. 104 & 161).

True questioning, which is fundamental to any process of counselling or education that can prepare the ground for opening to new perceptions, can be exemplified in the figure of Socrates. Needleman (1982) described the questioning that is at the core of the Socratic dialogue as "an act of attention" (p. 26): a stopping of one's ordinary world that makes it possible for the mind to transcend "the tyranny of thought" (p. 28).

Educational and counselling processes that can nurture an opening of mind are actually experiences of unlearning. In other words, one must become as "a little child" to experience awe at continuing to see

the world anew. This kind of wonder was expressed by Carrie when she said:

I have no answers...and more questions; I can't say doubts ...because there are just my wonderings. I am certainly very curious about them and open to them...

It was noted in this study that the process of transformation is a gradual, ongoing journey - a living experience of increasingly opening to new sensitivities. An individual counsellor or educator who embraces the caring paradigm can be responsive to this process as it is unfolding in persons, without assuming responsibility for its completion. Counsellors and educators can put energy in and then let go. Each guide along the way can share a bit more of the whole, another piece of the pattern which connects, remembering that each piece is not the only class or the only counselling session in a person's life. Guides can serve an illuminating function by revealing the patterns and connections in their awareness, but as Serendipity remarked: "humility is critical, because you don't know when it's going to integrate".

In spite of being unable to know of any one person's readiness to perceive more holistically, an important function of education is the illumination of the interdependencies of life processes. While faculties in universities have increasingly focused on refining their specializations, the very name university implies the interconnected nature of knowledge. Pipe Carrier's "lack of faith in the scientific ethos" related to its focus on detail "at the expense of the whole picture". Critics of education have pointed out that by leaving out

the pattern that connects, the life of the matter is also eliminated (Bateson, 1979; Kozol, 1975; Turner, 1986).

It was this lack of concern with patterns that frustrated Tony in his role as an educator:

Of course I love that intellectual stuff...and how it fits in with the patterns and so on, but that's hard to communicate and you're not paid to communicate that anyway.

When he did find teaching "fruitful" was when he could talk about "meta-mathematics - the patterns", and when it was in the service of helping the Indian people make a connection with the "white man's world". Making connections in the learning process was also important for Nimrod. It was because of its "relationship to the real world" that he found the study of geography exciting.

Marni expressed her belief in the possibilities of education for changing minds thus:

I think that if the Western world could shift its rigid structure of thinking, you know, we wouldn't have nuclear war to contend with, we wouldn't have third world poverty. We would...change our thinking. We have to change our thinking. I think the answer is education: introducing new data and forming new patterns.

Like the participants in this study, counsellors and teachers have the opportunity always to be involved in both teaching and learning, processes that can continue to aid them in changing their own minds. Part of this ongoing process of change occurs because of exposure to new information and new ideas which feed the expansion of consciousness while creating new openings for perceptions. Ideas and information, then, serve an energizing function, as they nurture the

growth of new structures of consciousness when they are incorporated. Joel's whole journey of change, for example, was fueled by new ideas. Needleman (1982) labelled ideas that have the power to create this kind of transformative effect, "great ideas" (pp. 45-60).

Great ideas, in the form of a framework that is inclusive of the myriad possibilities of life, are not only energizing, but are the guides par excellence for the journey of transformation. Such a framework is orienting, normalizing, validating, illuminating, prepares the ground for change and is, in and of itself, a model of the possible. Our culture is in need of this kind of a framework that can act as a guide in helping us remember that we are whole and are part of a larger whole. We are in need of this new guiding myth.

Much of the exploration undertaken by the participants in this inquiry revolved around searching for a framework to normalize and facilitate integration of their experience, and to guide them on the next stage of their learning. This research, then, is supportive of the conviction shared by many current writers that we need a view of nature and human nature broad enough to encompass the discoveries of modern physics and creative evolution, and that includes transcendent (paranormal, supernatural) experience as a normal facet of life (e.g., Argüelles, 1984; Grosso, 1985; Koestler, 1978; Skolimowski, 1984; Turner, 1986; Vaughan, 1985; Watson, 1986).

Dissemination of such an expanded framework of reality was also recommended by the participants in Allen's (1979) study. As von Eckartsberg (1983) wrote, we need a recognition of "god-consciousness"

in our psychologies to "account for the fullness of the human drama" (p. 205). Maslow's (1980) belief was also that a description of full human nature necessitated the inclusion of the spiritual (p. 126).

As noted in the discussion on the evolutionary nature of the change, once a participant became aware of a reality beyond one's ordinary sensory experience, a positive direction of change became ongoing. This fact lends support for the promoting of an expanded view of the nature of reality as a context for the change process. Berman (1981) wrote of the importance of an expansive context thus:

Preservation of this planet may be the best guideline...the best context for all our encounters with Mind or being (p. 295).

Slater (1977) and Grosso (1985) also emphasized the need of an enlarged view of reality in terms of its survival value. In Slater's view, our understanding of reality is based on what we need, and we are now at a point in time when we need to know more of reality to survive (p. 5). Grosso's conviction was also that psycho-social evolution is critical to survival (p. 103). In fact, Grosso wrote his treatise with the expressed purpose to:

appeal to the helping community to broaden its metaphysical base of operations, to expand its paradigm of what is possible and what is effectively real in human experience (p. 179).

This enlarged paradigm, according to Grosso, will enhance helpers' skills in guiding the transformation (p. 179).

Part of the value of a new myth, of viewing the universe holistically, is that it can lead to a new ethic, an ethic of

relatedness that embodies the awareness that how one lives can affect everyone and everything else. For Raechel and Marni, that ethic even enveloped them with a sense of responsibility for their thoughts. Skolimowski described this ethic in terms of a need to base a new paradigm on the reality of the brotherhood of all beings (p. 78). Erwin Schroedinger's (in Courtois, 1981) expression of this reality locates this relatedness in our oneness: "In truth there is only one mind" (p. 52).

Descriptions of a guiding process, of "a communal, collective pool of knowledge", in Pipe Carrier's words, or "God's plan" in Marni's phrase, denoted a knowing of this unity of mind that has been labelled variously as the noosphere (Teilhard, 1959); the psi bank (Argüelles, 1984); Mind at Large (Huxley, 1954; Grosso, 1985); the collective unconscious (Jung, 1961); and a global ecology of mind (Watson, 1986). As Marni learned, a way of knowing what we need to know, in order to live in harmony with our self and with all of life, is attunement to this more encompassing "mind field". As co-creators on the planet we are also contributors to this mind field, and what we are now being called on to do is enrich this "psi bank" with our creative expressions of the highest potentials of human nature. These "highest" possibilities can then serve as guides for other participants on the way to a realization of their wholeness.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Statement of Research Purpose

STATEMENT OF RESEARCH PURPOSE

I am a doctoral candidate in educational psychology from the Department of Psychological Foundations, Faculty of Education, at the University of Victoria. I am studying the phenomenon of the emergent paradigm shift - a change in consciousness characterized by a transcendence of ego and cultural beliefs, and by an understanding of reality as a dynamic purpose of interdependent, interrelated energies in systems of wholes. I am looking for participants who define themselves as having experienced the aforementioned shift in consciousness.

The purpose of this study is to understand the essential structure and meaning of the experience of changing to a new world view. To this end, participants will be asked the following key research question, "What is the experience of changing to a new world view?" Understanding the nature of this experience may provide guidance to educators and counsellors, who in turn, may guide persons in a process of consciousness development.

Persons who are interested in sharing the stories of their experiences of consciousness change will be invited to engage in dialogal interviews with me. An interview to explore the core research question will be tape recorded to allow for total attunement to the dialogal experience. Prior to this taped interview, participants will be given an opportunity to complete the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, a self-report instrument designed to indicate one's preferences of introversion/extraversion, ways of perceiving in the world, and ways of making decisions. The results of this questionnaire will be discussed thoroughly, including the way that they might enhance clarification of the primary research question.

Following the audio-taped interview, I will type a complete transcript which I will return to the participant for validation and/or additional comments. A reduction of this original transcript will then be typed, and again, returned to the participant for confirmation that the essential experience has been captured. Themes of the experience will then be delineated, which will also be checked with the participant to ensure a shared understanding in meaning.

Confidentiality regarding participation in this project will be maintained by changing identifying information in the transcript and by utilizing pen-names in the sharing of the data. Audio-tapes will be available only to the participants and the researcher, and will be destroyed at the completion of this study.

If you are interested in learning more about this research, with the potential to become a participant, please contact me by telephone.
- Nancy Dudley - Telephone: 403-288-0196.

APPENDIX B
Consent Form

CONSENT FORM

I, _____, consent to being a participant in this study about the experience of changing to a new world view.

I understand that my participation in this research is completely voluntary and that I may decide freely to withdraw at any point in the research process.

I also understand that I will be allowed to listen to the audio-taped interview, read the transcript of the interview, and read the final reduced transcript - all with the purpose of modifying and/or deleting anything that I wish.

I further understand that my participation in this study will be kept confidential. Any names or other identifying information will be changed in the transcript process. A pen-name of my choice will be substituted for my real name. Audio-tapes of the interview will be accessible only to me and the researcher. Audio-tapes will be either returned to me or destroyed upon the completion of this study.

I further understand that I will complete the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator and have the results of this questionnaire explained to me thoroughly.

Finally, I understand that the researcher will be available for debriefing, and responding appropriately to any feelings that may have been provoked by the interviewing process.

Signature

Date

APPENDIX C

Pilot Interview and Data Ordering Process

Step #1 - Transcript of C.'s Experience - Interview of March 3, 1986

Step #3 - Highlighting (encircling) descriptive statements and potential themes

C. - Cynthia, Co-researcher

N. - Nancy, Interviewer

C. I want to get things as clear as possible (N. Um-hum). Clarity of ideas or expression has become very important to me so that I am not misunderstood. (Um-hum!) And I feel that this what's happened to me in the last while.. is hard to describe anyway..is hard to put into words (um-hum!) ...all the time. It's as if for the last while little ideas have been filtering through a screen...uh...and then all of a sudden somebody took the screen and the window off (uh-huh). And then there was such a mad influx of things...like a torrential downpour (um) uh, so it's been really hard to sift through all of that.

N. When you say that one of the things that's really important for you right now is to be understood (um-hum), that then is a part of your new awareness?

C. I think so because, I think I've always been passive about expressing myself, asserting myself, and now I realize that no matter what, I want to be understood clearly, (um-hum) and...I guess I feel a real need to define myself and my thoughts (um-hum)...I'm not prepared to... to just let things lie for the sake of peace (um-hum), or to be malleable, because out of all this has come confirmation of self, as I was telling you the other day.. That's what I think..especially what I feel, is valid..and most of my life I've been told how to feel, that you could feel this, but not that...and this is appropriate and that is not appropriate...to Hell with that! So...I think there's a lot of...there's still a lot of anger at what had gone on in the past... and...but I suppose the major thing is that (more animation in voice in this last phrase - quite, bland voice when stating feelings of anger) I have come to, to validate myself (Um).

N. Oh, how about just trying to share sort of the story of how this has occurred for you, you know, like the question of "What is the experience of changing to a new world view?" Can you share, just in a story, you know, like over the last several weeks some of the things that really had impacted, or how you've experienced this process for yourself?

C. Well I think the process started years ago...uh...in that... well...in the friendships that I've developed (um)...uh, there seemed to be a pattern almost..I don't know about predestiny, but, again we talked about Synchronicity (um-hum)... I felt that all the new people that I was meeting, um...well I guess perhaps you are attracted to your future...I don't know (laughter).

N. That's a neat idea...that's a neat thought (laughter in voice).

C. Um, but all the information that I was gathering, say from C....,

from N. and M...those friendships, contacts, started me thinking in..along different lines. There was always that in my head. 'Cuz a lot of the material that you are looking at was something that I was concerned with when I was at University in my psychology courses, and I would write about...I had written a couple of papers, not on...not as in depth...these were undergraduate courses,...on changing your belief systems...(Really?)...and uh...but over the years, uh, I come, as you know, from a very rigid kind of family, and there's all these rules (um-hum)...and uh, for me to have even expressed any of those ideas would have led to complete ridicule(um-hum),...so gradually some of my ideas were validated, some of my thoughts...and that started the process, but then, I think.....uh.....of course in the last,... well since September when I was aware, I guess it was the last part of October when I was aware that my Mother had two months to live... um...in the first place it felt in going through that time period that I aged about 50 years...or maybe I just grew up (um)...and then, but even that, that time period taught me to fight for what I wanted for my mother (um-hum) and I began to step back..it was as if I stepped back and I was always observing (because I was watching my mother for any sign of whatever she needed (um-hum). I was trying to fill all of her needs. I became 'the watcher'...instead of 'the participator' and... that in itself...I don't think I have observed enough throughout my life, because I was always lacking self-confidence; always thought that my interpretations of things were wrong, um, but I began to see a lot of things in people, and I saw...uh...it was as if someone had pulled the carpet out from underneath me as to...as to my way of thinking...(um)...and I couldn't...That in itself was overwhelming. I finally looked at myself as being worthwhile...Um... taking care of my mother through her illness really restored a lot of confidence that I had lost (Um)...and the fact that I felt that I even had to protect her against other's ill-thought-out or hasty or very rigid decisions made me gain a lot of strength, because if I didn't stand up for my mother, then this rigidity would get in the way of the best solution. (Um-hum!)...and-uh....

N. So it was in fighting for her that you ultimately could trust your own experience...

C. Well, I was trusting my intuitive feelings, and...I realized that that was consistently the best choice for my mother...and my mother and I had always been...had a difficult relationship, but there was still a very...we were close, we just drove each other crazy. And I felt that we could often tune in, well we could tune into what the other person's needs were. It didn't mean we always responded, but we might know, we knew how the other person was feeling. So that was part of it, and then of course...um...when she died...uh...but it's as if...I can't express it (frustration in voice)...it's as if I had a sudden...it's as if I was rising above the earth and I was observing everything that was going on (um-hum)...and...that someone had taken a lid off...off me...and I could...I could really see things clearly, or a suddenly..... (all of this was shared with much feeling in

voice).....uh..... I had - this is going to sound trite, but I had a sudden feeling that I finally knew what life was about (um)... and, although I felt very isolated because I no longer had any sense of family family, I still felt I had more.. I felt I'd finally come into contact with my own humanity and.....I felt that (I saw very clearly into.....well, into relationships) um, and I felt... I just felt (much feeling) I saw things very, very clearly.. and almost there was kind of an extrasensory thing about it that I can't explain, well which may be common to all people who have gone through shock and are in a grief - a grieving...but all of this happened so quickly that I was thinking all the time and all of this was 'pinging' (um-hum) as if my synapses were on constant go although I was dealing with shock and all these ideas kept coming into my head (Um)....that..... I guess for the first time I felt like a human being (Um).....Um, that I think probably for the first time in my life I had a really good sense of self.

N. Was this immediately after your mother died?...this experience that you're talking about where you felt like you almost rose above the earth and were able to see into things, as you describe it...Was that that morning, or...?

C. Uh.....I think that occurred a little later..... I think the first three days were too much of a shock.....but I felt, to some degree, that, that began that process. It was as if I wasn't inside of my body. It was if, uh, it wasn't an out-of-body experience...I don't think, but I felt very detached from myself, um...

N. Your consciousness didn't seem to be a....

C. No, I was in my body (uh-huh), but I felt....I felt as if I had been led into some kind of pool of knowledge (Um!)...I don't know if you felt that way after your mom died (No)....It's so hard to express because it's, uh.....I guess I arrived at a great understanding of my mother, finally! (uh-huh). and of our relationship. clarity of observation, as far as things close to me....(Uh-huh)

N. You mentioned before, that day that you were over here that for the first time, and I'm wondering sort of when it was that you had, for the first time that feeling or a knowing that your mother did love you.

C. Well that was immediate (that was immediate).

N. Right as soon as she died...that she was there with you.

C. Because probably, although I was terribly upset....I was curiously more at peace those three days (grief in voice) but I had a strong feeling that she did love me, and I had also a strong feeling of her presence those three days after she died (Um). And to some degree I've had that feeling since, but not as strong as those three days. And I felt that every time I was becoming upset or starting to cry that-uh, all of a sudden it was as if she touched me (Um)...and then I would feel very peaceful (um)...very happy for...and that happened for those three days.....It's uh.....it's just that I-uh, that I felt that a lot of things.....Everything (emphasis in

voice) about the dynamics of my family situation became clear to me, and all the things that my mother had said to me - and this realization of course caused me a lot of pain, but there was a realization that my mother had loved me...all my life, and-uh, and I think that a lot of that arose from lack of communication, which is why I want to make myself clearly understood. I don't want little things storing up or any little resentments (um-hum).....Uh.....But I felt,...I just felt extremely strengthened, and uh,.....I was also very conscious of, of.....of another.....I had always poo-pooed the spiritual (um)...poo-pooed what was beyond death or was very skeptical that there was any sort of form after death, although I had experienced some contact with my father after he died - twice, as I think I told you,....But it's as if all those blinders were lifted and I realized that I thought...just felt intuitively that there was some kind of spiritual afterlife...out there (um)....And.....it's as if a lot of little - I don't know if any of this is making any sense - (Uh-Huh!) I'm not clear.

N. Well, it's O.K. Like to just keep struggling with it, because it sounds like-uh....It isn't easily translated in our everyday language, so trying to find descriptive words and metaphors and all that I'm sure is part of it...but you are making sense.

C. (It's as if my whole life was divided in half...the half that went before my mother's death and the half after, because my perspectives will never, ever be the same! (Um)...And, although I have fears about the future and insecurities, I feel almost as if I have been healed (Ummm). And (wow!)...there's a sense of wholeness I feel about myself that I have never felt in my entire life, (umm). But there's also a strong sense of-a...the sense of wholeness that allows me to feel a sense of -a....well I feel that I'm very much on my own, but I am prepared to accept that (um-hum)...So, I've gone from feeling very depressed and out of control of my life prior to nursing my mother....um,...malleable, controlled somewhat by the opinions of others - - and always feeling that I was wrong - to a sudden realization that I was worthwhile all those years...but I was so different from the rest of my family)...And I suddenly feel that as if I've found my realm (Ummm). And talking to you about things that you're doing in your life....I can't tell you, I get such a well of happiness... talking about these kinds of things...and I have gone through a lengthy three year depression, and while I'm not wildly, ecstatically happy, leaping from trapeze to trapeze, I'm feeling more of a peace (ummm)... and, it's as if I'm healing myself (Ummm)...or perhaps it's just that I finally believe that it's all right for me to follow my inner instincts, my inner gut reactions..and -uh, I will not allow anyone to tell me that I'm wrong in what I'm feeling.

N. It seems like what you're describing happened - you know, I think what happened during your mother's illness and your taking care of her is very significant from the standpoint of knowing that you had to fight for her, and thereby gaining confidence in your own perceptions - but it sounds like afterwards there was sort of an altered state of

consciousness - or even during her dying you describe sort of being 'the watcher' - standing outside, observing. I don't know whether that would be considered an altered state in the same way, but it sounds like it was different than your usual pattern of operating.

C. Um-hum...Well, I felt...And there were lots of things that I observed that I didn't like that I wish I'd had the strength to say 'no' to as well (um-hum), but there was such turmoil, such havoc at my house for that ten weeks as well as some good quiet moments, but too few of those. But it's as if - WELL, I just don't even feel like myself, I feel that my old self I don't even know who I was!(UM!) It's as if...it's not just a superficial skin,...it's as if I have entered...um...I've left that person behind (Ummm)...so within a period of six weeks now I feel I have completely left myself behind (Wow!) I don't know where that person is. Probably as I come out more and more of a grief state there will be something that will re-emerge, but...um...there's such a piercing clarity in my brain right now, and a sense of what I need to do with my life...um...So in just every aspect I consider I have come full circle within that six week period (Umm), and-uh...it's so astounding to me! (Ummm)...that I would feel this way. I mean I didn't feel this way when my father died (Umm)...although it had a large impact on me. I didn't feel that my consciousness had changed - that there was such a complete turn-around and I didn't...I kept a diary after my father died as well, but it was the pain of our non-relationship I think (um-hum), but the things that I wrote in here [pointing to diary] are-uh metaphysical feelings: I-I don't know how I can describe them, it's uh [stated breathlessly and hurriedly, as if a bit nervous that I might not understand].

N. Um-hum...It sounds like you were open to, or opened to, another dimension of existence through this. I mean, I don't know you would describe that, whether you feel like it was a 'happening' and you can't explain that, but that's what it sounds like.

C. Well it is a door into another dimension (Umm), I feel (Um-hum) and none of the...I don't have any of the old anchors...Um...and the fact, that I feel so happy about this change...This is a profound happiness! (um-hum, um-hum)....that is.....

N. You mentioned a feeling about sort of like boundaries and boxes falling away.

C. Um-hum...Those are the boxes that had been imposed on me (um-hum)...a lot of which I had come to adopt for myself. I guess when you're raised with that, but I guess that there's a realization too that in many ways my mother is like me, but she didn't have the skills to fight off all of the things that were imposed upon her, and I think, I feel that....It's almost as if I absorbed a great part of her soul when she died and I'm feeling that...I feel very strongly that she is within me, and I've never felt that before. A realization that my mother had glimmerings of some of these things that happened to me all of her life and she was interested in...well, she would have been very interested, for instance, in what you are doing (Ummm)...

but,....I feel that I have the strength that she didn't have to battle against all the outside things that, that prevented her from being who she was (um-hum)...And-uh...I guess you could say I have a sense of freedom, as well (ummmm). I don't know how this is all going to translate (Laughter of both of us)...Sometimes I'm better with writing things down. I find it hard to verbalize about my feelings.

N. Um-hum....It sounds like, you know, in recognizing all these things that were imposed and that you didn't need to hang onto any of that any longer, there is a freedom.

C. And I don't care who agrees with me, or disagrees with me...Um...the important thing is that I get the feelings out, and the important thing is that I write things down...and I have a great need to share (Ummm) these experiences...I guess I feel that no one can touch me....with criticism, and I feel that I will protect myself from those who seek to minimize or ridicule anything that I'm feeling, so I'm selective in whom I tell people about this (Umhum)...But it's had....um.....(animated) when you feel completely disassociated from your old self it opens up a whole new realm of possibilities. (It is a rebirth) (Ummm)... a reexperiencing of the world through completely new eyes and everything that you've looked at before you're looking at in a different way (Hmmm). And, I think, perhaps all people who have been through the death of a parent look at the world in different eyes because they are aware of their own mortality...It could be that...

N. It sounds like it was more than that for you, however...

C. Well, this time; knowing, comparing it to my father's death there is no comparison (Ummm). His death affected me deeply, but not in this same way.

N. Hmmm...Well, when you say that you had this experience of almost all your synapses were open and all these ideas were coming in, that-

C. Night and day. I would find it just very hard to sleep. I would just lie there, and-uh...it was hard to...all these thoughts were coming and-uh...it was very hard - drove me crazy - it was hard to sort things out (Um-huh). (It's as if I lost all the control (mmm) in my brain between the synapses. And, to some degree, I've tried to control, to tone that down a bit, or I've had to write it down (Um-hum), so that I could stand it. I had to get some of the ideas down. (Um-hum)...But also there was a sense,...ah... I think the realization that my mother loved me gave me a very strong sense of well-being...and-uh...power! (Um-hum). I hope that the fact that I cared for her gave her that sense as well.

N. Would you say that that's the first experience in your life that you have felt really loved. I mean that you felt that you were lovable?

C. Uh....Yeah.

N. I mean it sounds like it was something that touched your core in a way maybe that no other loving has...ever done.

Long pause.....

C. Well I think I blocked a lot of it (umm) as it seemed safer (um-hum)...and I can't deny the unhappiness of growing up with my

mother...can't just gloss over that...But...there was a realization that I had blocked love of all people (Ummm), of my family, of friends...but there always seemed to be a catch. That if I was loved I had to behave in a certain way, I certainly never felt any unconditional love but I gave my mother unconditional love when she was dying (quietly) and she also gave that back to me (much feeling expressed)...and that was my first experience.. (Deep sigh)

N. And that's the transformation kind of thing, isn't it?

C.I think so! So I think I still have gone through a lot of guilt, ah....but ultimately I come back to the feeling that I was loved (Um-hum).

.....pause for feeling experience in silence.....

N. It's so moving to hear your story. I guess similarly for me with the experience with my mother. There's no comparison between that and with my father and part of that I'm sure was my age. The other was total involvement with mother. You know I was 24 (um-hum) when my dad died, and also there wasn't really...I didn't feel that there was much of a cluttered relationship with my dad - between him and me it was fairly clear. This whole thing of unconditional love, you know, I'm sure that was a big part of the experience with my mother...well, an open channel between us...where there'd never been one before (laughing expression).

C. I think too I realized there was a...I realized the power of love and-uh....I realized how much I hated what was happening to my mother....that really there was very little consideration of her deep feelings--her deepest feelings in all of that, although she had a neuropsychologist and a minister and nurses and doctors and myself tending to her...uh, I mean there is a lot that I would do differently, and I think that's why I've come...I realize what has happened to me and I think that that's what I want to give back is trying to knit the body, mind and spirit in some way to work with the ill (Ummm),.... and, I guess I realize too that all things are possible and of course, that we see only that which we allow ourselves to see, or are enlightened enough to see...and I want to go on with that. I think there's a lot of room for growth in me, but...it is, it is a transformation, it is a rebirth...And it is certainly a transformation for me to confirm the self. But it also has affected all my relationships as well (Ummm), which I see with greater clarity...or I think that I see better into the souls of people (Hmmm).

N. See behind the behavior, huh? Beyond the behavior.

C. Yup. It doesn't necessarily mean I love the behavior! (laughter).

N. Are there some passages in your journal where you feel you did describe some of the things that were happening to you? In a way that you'd like to share? Or feel comfortable about sharing?

C. Well, I was looking through, I thought...I'm trying to make some sense out of what I am saying. I know I'm not being judged here. I know I'm being listened to.....(pause, looking through her journal).....

Hmmmmmm

N. Yes?

C. There's so much...(Animated voice) In the midst of all of this there was a realization too that...I don't know whether in the grieving process...but there was a feeling of-uh, really of extrasensory awareness...um....Again (it's hard to express...a feeling of being above everything) (um-humm)...a feeling of-a...

N. Did you write about this?

C. Well, I...Just little blups in here, I keep talking about healing and psychic power, and that kept coming into it...and...because I...I think that those aspects, that extrasensory is so much denied and boxed in (uh-huh)...and when I was fighting to protect my mother all those sort of extrasensory feelings or whatever, gut or intuitive, or whatever you want to call it, were so powerful that that's, I think, what caused me to fight.

N. Oh, sort of a paranormal knowing that you were right.

C. Um-hum, um-hum, uh-hum! Even the last night, the night before she died, I had-a, I had some sense then. The Sunday before I had the sense...Of course, mind you, I couldn't pin-point it because her state she'd been sort of in and out of a semi-coma state...and-uh...there was just something there...But it made me realize I wanted to explore that particular side of me which had been repressed so long. And I kept thinking of...I don't know why...perhaps that communication came from my mother that she knew and understood everything being in another realm and she was passing that information on to me to validate what I was saying or thinking or feeling (Ummmm)..But it was a sudden realization, Yes, that there is power in love, in healing, that, again, miracles can occur, and there is so much beyond what most humans are allowed or allow themselves to see (uh-hmmmm).

N. What I'm thinking as you're talking; as you're sharing is, you know you're story is moving and one of those stories that can hit the heart of others, and the thing that's really striking is how similar your story is to those people who have had near-death experiences...and you haven't lost consciousness, but it's happened without that kind of experience. It seems to me that some of the things you're saying are just so similar.

C. Well I feel in many ways...it's, oh, you know you talk about men who experience their wives' symptoms of pregnancy (um-hum). It's just almost as if I was so closely attached to my mother in that ten weeks that as her world diminished, my world diminished (um-hum)... and I feel almost that-a...I said I did feel that as she diminished I became stronger...it was as if her soul was leaking into mine. And so I was picking up her...her strength. (Mmmmm). And at times she had a very strong aura of...I just couldn't, I can't express it, it was expressed by other people...of radiance. (Mmm)...and great beauty, the closer she got to death. And she was seeing so many things, and she was becoming more peaceful. And I think that...you mentioned that you had to let go of your mother before she could die and I couldn't...the first time my mother was close to death and in a coma, I couldn't let go of her, and I think probably that...but I think there was also...

I've thought about this, and I thought there was a very loving, radiant circle of people around her and -a...you know, we just hovered over her day and night for three nights and I think that that brought her back. I felt that that power translated to her and that's what brought her back....but, and I didn't want her to die, but then I realized that was very selfish, and I think she realized, like you pointed out, I was ready to let her go, I wanted her to die, I wanted her out of her misery. I wanted to be out of my own misery! (Mmmm). But I can't go back into...I'll never be able to step back into the other side. I feel I have stepped into the other realm...and-a...there just is no way back. (Mmmm).

N. What was it? How did you say that? You know it was as if I died along with my mother?

C. And I came back.

N. But you came back.

C. And she didn't. Or she just...she went on into another area, but I still feel that...it is as if all the paranormal senses have been heightened (hu-hum, Mmmm)...And there is a sense that I have something to offer in the way of healing, and I feel instinctively I have been given some small gift of healing. (Mmmm). And for me to express that is really strange. I won't just tell anyone that, or they'll really thing I've gone round the bend.

N. Mmmm...You mentioned prior to this experience being more atheistic or however you want to put it.

C. Um-huh...Skeptical! Well I have come from professing non-belief to believing in God which in itself...I mean all these major turnabouts have happened...and all the things that have been sort of simmering in my mind have boiled over...I think that my mind has boiled over in the synapses...that's the thing...I think that best describes it (Mmmm). And -a realization too, that people who believe in God often have an aura too....I remember when I was in my twenties...Several people said to me they thought I had a real aura of - a....and I feel I lost that. I feel I descended from my twenties through, you know, a lot of things...a lot of things were painful to me...and then the deep depression in the last three years...And a sudden break from that depression....But people have told me most of my life that I have a healing affect on them. I don't know if you've ever experienced that, but I...(much laughter, both of us)

N. Well I've never expressed it...I think you certainly have a calming presence.

C. Which I always found amazing, because I always felt this incredible inner turmoil (Mmmm)...But people have sought me out because they say I've calmed them down. I remember one man saying to me he saw me as a river of calm...that the only peace he experienced was when he was around me...and I thought, yeah, but what about all my inner turmoil? You don't know what's going on inside. But now I feel that that calm is real. (Hum-hum). I mean I've always thought of you as a calming person. But I don't know what all is going inside of you, either. (laughter, both of us).

N. I feel that I am feeling quite centered much of the time. I feel too that my mother's death was one of the more profound experiences of my life.

C. Did you feel a heightened sense of paranormal?

N. Hmmm. Yeah, sometimes an awareness...

C. Of that realm?

N. Yeah. Well it was at that time that those kinds of things really helped me. It's that I've been aware of that before that. I mean it wasn't that it was something new to be aware of synchronicity or those things but it was heightened at that time. You know, I can remember specific instances where a real calming...You know, like I just hate flying...a fear of flying...and at one point getting on the plane and really doing this whole thing of letting go and sort of a prayer of a trusting, turning it over and then an incredible feeling of peace and calm coming over me as we took off...just a knowing that there was a presence...Things like that that I was very attuned to. (Mmmm). And that LeShan book, The medium, the mystic and the physicist was really helpful, in that period of time. And sort of that whole notion that there is this physical realm, but that there is this whole other realm as well. More knowing that than just (reading about it)...Yeah, than just having the intellectual.

C. Well I think it's the gut affirmation of things that have flitted into my consciousness (Mmmm)...but...I know that I'm not going to let anyone deny me what I want (Mmmm). I don't mean that in a charging sort of way (um-hum), but in a quiet sort of way, I'm going to go after what I want because I feel that I have been given an extra insight into...I mean I'm lucky that I know someone like you that is pursuing, that is interested because I would be lost to know who to turn to,...who to talk to in order to read more and.....you know.....C. used to...well she often talks a lot about you and H. to me and -a you know she always told me about H.'s analysis of dreams. I've always thought that was really interesting and...but then it's as if now...I've thought a lot about both of you since this has happened and a realization that you are ahead of your time...both of you. You are pursuing...I mean, your interest in dreams and altered sort of states...a...Now those are the kinds of things I kept thinking about... dreams and altered sort of states and altered experiences... other realm thinking..and it was an affirmation...that this was all valid. (Mmmm)...that this was all...that you and H. somehow had a glimpse of the other side...you were living on the other side, so to speak...that you had-a...I had that sense about M. and C. and you and H.... and Ho. a little bit...but us being...I think that people who have these thoughts...I include myself...that there is a certain group of the population that are over here (gestures) and are above the rest of the population in that they can look at these things or they've had an experience...(struggling for words)...that has allowed them to see the other side...and they have a very clear world vision, but also a very clear metaphysical vision...and that there is something special about all of you, and no doubt you know a lot of other people like

this through your inner peace group and therapeutic touch...I mean you are in touch with this realm, but I feel that these people who acknowledge the paranormal and the other powers, the powers of healing, etc. and the things that cannot be documented or that just are and that they don't have to be scientifically validated, they just are...you have found that world and I feel that I have just sort of tripped into it completely (um-hum)...

N. But, it's like-a when you describe what you know and what you're experiencing and how you've put this together, and so forth...a...it's like lengths of time of having been exploring this doesn't really matter...it's like in your experience, you have left over here, and, you know, the fact that I've been reading about these things for so many years doesn't really mean anything in terms of being a step ahead of you.

C. Now I'm just trying to understand it intellectually...I'm trying to do the reading to..

N. But I think you have more even of...at least in listening to you, you've had more of -a...sort of the metaphysical experience than I would say I have had. You know, I do feel that a lot of mine maybe... is intellectual...but then, on the other hand maybe I disqualify some of my own insights....Like I feel like I'm very in tune with synchronicity and very aware and, you know, awestruck about life and have been...really all of my life (um-hum)...but I haven't even had the kind of experience that you're describing that you had which sounds very profound. And maybe that's because my path is different, that it's been sort of a gradual thing...sort of through all my life...sort of a steady, plodding...and that yours is sort of-a full bloom flower all at once....And I'm doing exactly what I wrote in my paper I wasn't going to do (laughter)

C. You're not saying Um-hum, Um-hum...(laughter). No, if you didn't talk to me..it's important...I wouldn't want you just to sit there and say Um-hum, Um-hum, because I would...having you talk about it, then I listen to you and then that also...It's an exchange. I don't want this...I couldn't stand it if you just sat there with a semi-Rogerian smile on your face. (Laughter...) Whatever works, works. If what you say generates more electricity in the conversation...I can't function...I can't go on in a monologue...I can't do that (Um-hum)... I've never been able to do that...

N. Well I think it's really important that it's a dialogue.

C. Well it's a lot easier for me...

N. I mean clarification and so forth isn't enough for me...to be engaged, you know...(Um-hum)...certainly part of the time...I mean there's a time to just listen and try to make sense, and so forth, but then there comes a point where I also want to be engaged in...clarification, I suppose is what it is, but my way of further clarification, since I'm an extravert, is babbling on a bit and....

C. But I need that. I'm an introvert and I will just fade into myself...and this is hard to express anyway (Mmmm). It's a sense of knowing, a sense of...(See I've had glimmers into this all of my life,

when I was in high school, of -a....I feel like I've had little glimmers, or I've had little insights, that something has been telling me certain things all along, but I've ignored them because (it was too frightening in a way to consider.)

N. Um-hum...You sort of were drawing like a spiral...(Laughter)...Did that have any significance?

C. I think so...It's as if I was -a.....I feel that I have suddenly come to the top.....I've waded out of the manure...and -a all my life...I mean to acknowledge these kind of thoughts makes you...I've always felt different from the mainstream. I've always felt isolated from everything in my life...uh...I've been lucky in my late twenties and thirties to find friends who aren't threatened by my thoughts (Mmmm)...or who.....I don't think my family ever quite knew what to do with me.....

N. It seems that at this point in your life you can say, "I appreciate being different."

C. Um-hum...And I feel too that all my life I think I've been somewhat threatening 'cuz I've had other ideas or...I've always sought to minimize myself or to contain myself...and now...it's really funny. When I flew to Toronto there was a man on the plane...Oh, he offered to carry my luggage and I had a three hour wait for my flight, so we went to coffee together. Well this man had to listen...He was very nice...and he had to listen to me go on. And he said, well this is all too heavy and deep for me...And I could see that he just didn't know what I was talking about...I mean he just thought he was going to have a coffee with someone while waiting for our flights...(Mmmm)... Little did he know what he was going to get into...And I sensed that in a lot of the friendships I have had that I have kept so much in...inside...but now that I am expressing things I'm finding that people are really responding to that.. And I'm finding out all the kind of paranormal experiences people have had because I am risking...I don't really care...I'm just letting all this come out. (Mmmm)...And I'm finding other people leaping onto what I'm saying...and expressing themselves (um-hum).

N. That's really neat...

C. And (daring to be myself) has led to really more confirmation of my friends (Um-hum)...so...I think...It is kind of scary, because there's no safe ground for me anymore...There's nothing...There's no connection, but also in this experience I have.....there's historical knowledge as well.....I can't...There's a whole reviewing, I've reviewed my whole history, as much as I can remember, and I suppose that's very typical after the death of your parent; you become very nostalgic (um-hum)...but-a...it's just...everyone...oh most people said to me, "your mother is understanding everything now that she's gone"...but (in a sense I feel that I'm understanding everything)...and my trip back East allowed me to explore my mother's history and understand a lot more (Um-hum)...And...it is, it's just as if I have instant.....observation of my father's life and my mother's life...and.....(understanding and knowledge) (It all took place so

fast)..

N. Um-hum...and so now it's making sense of it and integrating it and (um-hum)...and so forth. Does talking about it feel like that really helps? Sharing what's happening for you, that it makes it more real?

C. Um-hum...although..it doesn't make it more real. It is real... it's real to me and I accept that that is valid (Um-hum)...in itself but it's...it's also important for me to hear about other people's experiences that-a...and by what routes that they have arrived at where they are...And I guess for some it's an instant overwhelming change (Uh-hum)...and for others it's a gradual step-by-step process to a consciousness change..But my consciousness change started out in an intellectual manner...I think, and then it...(Um-hum)...it reached, it hit overwhelming proportions when my mother died...(um-hum)...and all of it was emotionally internalized. (um-hum)...

N. Looking at the Myers-Briggs thing, do you think it was more sort of the perception, or the judging thing, you know, like the feeling thing?...

C. They're, they're intertwined...I can't...but there's also a judging aspect to my personality too that I think has been exercised as a....it's -a.....there's a realization that....there's a better understanding of people, I feel I have...and...I mean, I grew up with my mother feeling that she was always judged by everyone, and I grew up definitely judged, but -a...there's a lot of forgiveness in me too...I think I've finally come to forgive myself. (Mmmm)...and I,...(Mmmmm)...and what is important is love...I think the perceiving aspect will take over as opposed to the judging...

N. I was wondering if it was more the perceiving or more the feeling or judging function that shifted first, but it's almost like you're saying...

C. They're intertwined, but I'd have to say that it's the feeling, it's the trusting of my inner judgement, and it's just as if somebody went, "Zot!, OK you have clear vision, and now that you validate your own feelings you will perceive in a much better way". It's a little of the chicken and the egg...(Um-hum)...but I do think the feeling is what had the major effect.

N. Just in listening to you, it sounds like all along, like you say you've had glimmers, but throughout all that, you've been so unable to trust your own way of being in the world that they just remained glimmers, they couldn't be integrated into your...life...

C. And I would shut out these glimmers because it caused me too much unhappiness (Mmmm)...cuz it meant that I had to look at this, and it was too frightening in a way (uh-hum)...and to acknowledge all the things that were going on in my mind and the things about my personality that were different or learned in directions that were not status quo - God knows I've never been status quo - but it always seemed so simple to deny all of that because then I thought I would get along better in the world...I would be more mainstream and I would be accepted (um-hum)...and now I don't feel the need to be accepted, except on my own terms..

N. Join the ranks of the unacceptable. It's great fun! (laughter).
 C. Then again, I feel accepted by you and C. and M. so if I didn't have - and my other friends - and if I didn't have that then -a...well you always seek out your own kind, so-a...but I realize that, you know, my life isn't necessarily going to be easy...seeking out...or looking into these areas that you have already looked into... because I expect...but then I will just discuss it with people who do accept it...(um-hum)...find people of my own kind, but it's finally realizing what my kind is (Laughter)...

N. Oh yes, Anne of Green Gables - kindred spirits.

C. Uh-hum!...And that all things are possible and that I cannot deny any aspect of the other realm, whatever that entails, (Mmmm)... whether or not I've experienced it, because I have really emotionally experienced it, and now I just have to look closer in that area (um-hum)..I feel as if I have been given, in all of this, some kind of gift (Um-hum!),,,or strength. But other people would say, "God, you're sure deluding yourself...God, you're cracking up. Haste ye to the Foothills Hospital!" (Laughter)...

N. No, maybe you have become totally sane. (Laughter).

C. I think so. I feel sane. I feel that...I don't know, if you've read any of...I really admire Shirley McLaine...

N. Oh, I read her Out on a Limb

C. Um-hum! And anyway, I feel that she's a real kindred spirit, just in her freedom,..her free spirit aspect...I think that that feels like me. I like her lifestyle...everything about her life appeals to me greatly...and -a...I feel...I mean she's...I'm not centered within a family, I have no husband, I have no children to center me, so the only...I just have to center myself. I feel that there's a woman who has centered herself. Some of me is resentful of all the criticism and fettering that I've had and that has had a major impact on my self-esteem, and I don't think...I feel that I have been healed to a great extent, but it's still I...it's as if, I think it's going to be hard to completely shake the past. I think it's going to be a struggle. (Mmmm)...But again, I feel I've been given a gift to shake at least 50% of the shackles,..and then the rest is up to me... (Mmmm)...because I have felt really shackled. God forbid anybody tell me that I can't do something....so that's the way I've always been... if someone told me I couldn't do something, then I did it.

N. Mmmm...It's more like, what you have left to do is maybe, you know, letting go little by little of the pain that's left. Now you understand the patterns and the past and all that. It's....

C. Yeah, there's nothing I can do about it, so it would be helpful to try to let go of it...and I do feel that I have been given the chance to let go of it...(Um-hum). It's almost as if I've, to some degree - this will sound corny, but - been cleansed (um-hum)...and all the therapy in the world, all the cognitive therapy for depression in the world, hasn't had the impact of what has just happened to me (Hum-hum)...as far as...

N. I was going to ask you about that. Do you feel that that in any

way prepared the ground for you...like that period of -a...seeing intellectually or putting things in a different perspective? Do you feel that that prepared the ground in any way, or there was more a holding thing? In other words, what impact do you think counselling has?

C. Well that particular brand of counselling is-a...again, box-like...and with Dr. I've -a certainly...his therapy, that kind of therapy... had an impact to some degree, but nothing to the extent of emotionally being aware of this sort of paranormal sense of awareness...Nothing can have as much impact as that...because I'm a feeling person, you can appeal to my intellect, and you can try to make me a pragmatic person...and cognitive therapy is very pragmatic..."No, your thought processes are distorted" - as they were, but now my thought processes are suddenly clear and...I don't know...I don't know how much impact that pragmatic approach to therapy had... Um...I mean I certainly talked about many, many other things to him... He could not confine me into that box...I mean, he tried, but I think he gave up, and he just, he just listened...(Mmmm)...and it was more of a....

N. So it ended up being supportive to have somebody listen...

C. Um-hum! And he asked a lot of the right questions...It was a painful process, but it was only when he hit an emotional chord that there was any improvement...and he...and it certainly wasn't by saying, "Such and such and such is a distorted thought and this is why and what would be a more reasonable...."certainly that taught me that pragmatic thought process, but I'm not...I am more of a feeling person, I am not pragmatic, really...and I'd be a liar if I said I was pragmatic...So, who can say? It may have opened up something, but until...but now, -I have vision through an emotional experience, and that's far more important....

N. Um-hum...Are you continuing to see him? After this, or...?

C. Well I saw him four days after my mother died...I don't think I could tell him what I've experienced...All the things I've just discussed with you...I think he would... that's just not part of his life...(Mmmm)...and...I feel that what he's doing is important, but, for me, what has happened since my mother died is far, far more important...and I think...I think he has a lot to learn in the area of his own therapy...That he could learn from other kinds of therapies... for people like me, anyway...But I have talked to him about, oh you know, healing and -a power of love and all this kind of thing and I think he probably intellectually acknowledges it, but...I mean, he's got his box...and he is a pragmatic, cognitive therapist and that's what he is...and I don't think he could...I'm sure he's considered the power of the mind, cuz he operated the stress clinics as well, and so he realizes the ability of the mind to control, but he's also dealing with the mind...I don't think he's considering all the aspects of... all the things that the mind can be capable...certainly not considering the metaphysical...for me to have come to the realization of...or the opening up, the removal of the shutters through his kind of

therapy would take me from now till doomsday, I think, 'cuz there was no internalization.

Step #2Gestalt Impression

C. began to trust her own judgements through needing to respond to her mother's needs while she was caring for her in the dying process. C. had to fight for her mother. A feeling experience of being unconditionally loved by her mother following the death provided a release or healing that opened C. to a flood of new perceptions. These perceptions confirmed ideas that had been glimmers for C. for years (via reading, ideas from friends, etc.) These glimmers may have prepared the ground. The actual experience of transcendence, described by C., led to a validation of self, which to her was a rebirth. The whole experience was to C. a turning point, wherein she saw all of her previous life as her "old self" and life from now on as her "new self". This "new self" is committed to a path of serving others through pursuing learning about healing. Integration of her experience is occurring through sharing with friends and reading. C.'s service to mother led to a gift of healing love from mother which is leading her to a wish to give healing service to others.

Step #4

Data Reduction: Protocol

C: Cynthia, Co-researcher

N. Nancy, Interviewer

I first met C., an attractive, articulate woman in her mid 30's, several years ago when she was a teacher for one of my children. She has remained an acquaintance through the years. During her mother's recent illness and dying she began to consult with me about nursing care, both because of my background in nursing and because of my own experience of nursing my dying mother. Our common experience rapidly created a bond that transcended any verbal communication. Following her mother's death she became interested in hearing more about my dissertation and asked to read my research proposal. She was immediately responsive and became eager to share her own transformational experience which had been precipitated by her participation in her mother's death and dying. After a preliminary contracting session we met in my living room for our formal taped interview. C. arrived, with personal journal in hand, fairly bursting to describe to me the nature of her new-found understanding of self and reality. The body of this lived-experience follows.

C. I want to get things as clear as possible. Clarity of ideas or expression has become very important to me so that I am not misunderstood. And I feel that this what's happened to me in the

last while is hard to describe...is hard to put into words. It's as if for the last while little ideas have been filtering through a screen and then all of a sudden somebody took the screen and the window off. And then there was such a mad influx of things...like a torrential downpour

- N. When you say that one of the things that's really important for you right now is to be understood, that then is a part of your new awareness?
- C. I think so because I think I've always been passive about expressing myself, asserting myself, and now I realize that no matter what, I want to be understood clearly. I feel a real need to define myself and my thoughts. I'm not prepared to just let things lie for the sake of peace, because out of all this has come confirmation of self... that what I think..especially what I feel, is valid. Most of my life I've been told how to feel...that this is appropriate and that is not appropriate. The major thing is that I have come to just validate myself. (spoken with much animation).
- N. How about just trying to share the story of how this has occurred for you, like, "What is the experience of changing to a new world view?" Can you share, like over the last several weeks some of the things that really impacted...how you've experienced this process for yourself?
- C. I think the process started years ago... in the friendships that I've developed. There seemed to be a pattern almost... synchronicity. I don't know about predestiny...well I guess perhaps you are attracted to your future.
- N. That's a neat idea...that's a neat thought...
- C. All the information that I was gathering from some of the new people, new friendships, started me thinking along different lines. There was always that in my head. A lot of the material that you are looking at was something that I was concerned about when I was at University in my psychology courses and I had

written a couple of papers on changing your belief systems. But over the years (I come, as you know, from a very rigid kind of family) for me to have even expressed any of those ideas would have led to complete ridicule. But gradually some of my ideas were validated...some of my thoughts...and that started the process. But then, since October when I was aware that my Mother had two months to live... it felt in going through that time period that I aged about 50 years, or maybe I just grew up. That time period taught me to fight for what I wanted for my mother and I began to step back. It was as if I stepped back and I was always observing, because I was watching my mother for any sign of whatever she needed. I was trying to fill all of her needs. I became 'the watcher' instead of 'the participator'. I don't think I have observed enough throughout my life because I was always lacking self-confidence; always thought that my interpretations of things were wrong. But I began to see a lot of things in people, and it was as if someone had pulled the carpet out from underneath me as to my way of thinking. That in itself was overwhelming. I finally looked at myself as being worthwhile. Taking care of my mother through her illness really restored a lot of confidence that I had lost. And the fact that I felt that I even had to protect her from others' ill-thought-out or hasty decisions made me gain a lot of strength.

- N. So it was in fighting for her that you ultimately could trust your own experience...
- C. Well, I was trusting my intuitive feelings, and I realized that that was consistently the best choice for my mother. My mother and I had always been close...we could often tune into what the other person's needs were. We knew how the other person was feeling, (thought) we'd always had a difficult relationship. So that was part of it, and then when she died...it's as if I had a sudden..it's as if I was rising above the earth and I was observing everything that was going on ...and...that someone had

taken a lid off me and I could...I could really see things clearly. I had (this is going to sound trite)...but I had a sudden feeling that I finally knew what life was about. And, although I felt very isolated because I no longer had a sense of family, I still felt I had more...I felt I'd finally come into contact with my own humanity. And I felt that I saw very clearly into relationships. I just felt I saw things very, very clearly. There was kind of an extrasensory thing about it that I can't explain. All of this happened so quickly that I was thinking all the time and all of this was 'pinging' as if my synapses were on constant go, although I was dealing with shock and all these ideas kept coming into my head. I guess for the first time I felt like a human being. I think probably for the first time in my life I had a really good sense of self.

- N. Was this immediately after your mother died? This experience where you felt like you rose above the earth and were able to see into things?
- C. I think that occurred a little later. The first three days were too much of a shock. But I felt, to some degree, that that began that process. It was as if I wasn't inside of my body. It wasn't an out-of-body experience, but I felt very detached from myself. I felt as if I had been led into some kind of pool of knowledge. I guess I arrived at a great understanding of my mother...and of our relationship.
- N. I'm wondering when it was that you had, for the first time, that feeling or a knowing that your mother did love you.
- C. Well, that was immediate...that was immediate....Although I was terribly upset, I was curiously more at peace those three days. I had a strong feeling that she did love me, and I had also a strong feeling of her presence those three days after she died. Every time I was becoming upset, all of a sudden it was as if she touched me and then I would feel very peaceful. Everything about the dynamics of my family situation became clear to me, and all

the things that my mother had said to me. There was a realization that my mother had loved me...all my life. I just felt extremely strengthened. I had always poo-pooed the spiritual ...what was beyond death... was very skeptical that there was any sort of form after death. But it's as if all those blinders were lifted and I realized... felt intuitively that there was some kind of spiritual afterlife. I don't know if any of this is making any sense.

- N. It isn't easily translatable...but you are making sense.
- C. It's as if my whole life was divided in half...the half that went before my mother's death and the half after, because my perspectives will never, ever be the same! And, although I have fears about the future and insecurities, I feel almost as if I have been healed. And there's a sense of wholeness I feel about myself that I have never felt in my entire life. So, I've gone from feeling depressed and out of control of my life prior to nursing my mother.... malleable and controlled somewhat by the opinions of others and always feeling that I was wrong, because I just exist in another world...to a sudden realization that I was worthwhile all those years, but I was so different from the rest of my family. And I suddenly feel that I've found my realm. I can't tell you, I get such a well of happiness talking about these kinds to things that you're also interested in! I have gone through a lengthy depression, and while I'm not ecstatically happy, leaping from trapeze to trapeze, I'm feeling more of a peace, and it's as if I'm healing myself. Perhaps it's just that I finally believe that it's all right for me to follow my inner instincts, my inner gut reactions and I will not allow anyone to tell me that I'm wrong in what I'm feeling.
- N. It seems like what you're describing that happened during your mother's illness is very significant from the standpoint of knowing that you had to fight for her, and thereby gaining confidence in your own perceptions ...It sounds like afterward there was sort of an altered state of consciousness - or even

during her dying you describe sort of being 'the watcher'. It sounds like it was different than your usual pattern.

- C. Well, I just don't even feel like myself, it's not just a superficial skin. I've left that person behind...so within a period of six weeks now I feel I have completely left myself behind. There's such a piercing clarity in my brain right now, and a sense of what I need to do with my life. So in just every aspect I consider I have come full circle. It's so astounding to me that I would feel this way! I mean I didn't feel this way when my father died. Although it had a large impact on me, I didn't feel that my consciousness had changed, that there was such a complete turn-around. I kept a diary then as well - mostly about our non-relationship - but the things that I wrote in here [pointing to journal] are metaphysical feelings. I don't know how to describe them.
- N. It sounds like you were open to, or opened to, another dimension of existence through this...
- C. Well, it is a door into another dimension. I don't have any of the old anchors. I feel so happy about this change...This is a profound happiness.
- N. You mentioned before a feeling of boundaries and boxes falling away...
- C. Those are the boxes that had been imposed on me...a lot of which I had come to adopt for myself. There's a realization, too, that in many ways my mother is like me, but she didn't have the skills to fight off all of the things that were imposed upon her. It's almost as if I absorbed a great part of her soul when she died and I'm feeling very strongly that she is within me, and I've never felt that before. My mother had glimmerings of some of these things, she would have been very interested, for instance, in what you are doing, but I feel that I have the strength that she didn't have to battle against all the outside things that prevented her from being who she was. I guess you could say I have a sense of

freedom, as well.

- N. It sounds like, in recognizing all these things that were imposed and that you didn't need to hang onto any of that any longer, there is a freedom.
- C. The important thing is that I get the feelings out ...I have a great need to share these experiences. I feel that I will protect myself from those who seek to minimize or ridicule anything that I'm feeling, so I'm selective in whom I tell about this. But when you feel completely disassociated from your old self it opens up a whole new realm of possibilities. It is a rebirth - a reexperiencing of the world through completely new eyes, and everything that you've looked at before you're looking at in a different way.
- N. When you say that you had this experience of almost all your synapses open and all these ideas were coming in...
- C. Night and day. I would find it just very hard to sleep. All these thoughts were coming and it was very hard...hard to sort things out. It's as if I lost all the control in my brain between the synapses. I've had to write it down so that I could stand it. I had to get some of the ideas down...But also there was a sense...I think the realization that my mother loved me gave me a very strong sense of well-being...power!
- N. Would you say that that's the first experience in your life that you have felt really loved?
- C. Yeah...there was a realization that I had blocked love of all people...of my family, of friends...but there always seemed to be a catch. That if I was loved I had to behave in a certain way, I certainly never felt any unconditional love, but I gave my mother unconditional love when she was dying and she also gave that back to me (much feeling expressed) and that was my first experience (Deep sigh)! Ultimately I come back to the feeling that I was loved.
- N. This whole thing of unconditional love, you know, I'm sure that was a big part of the experience with my mother... an open channel

- between us where there'd never been one before...
- C. I realized the power of love. I realized how much I hated what was happening to my mother....that there was very little consideration of her deepest feelings in all of that, although she had a neuropsychologist and a minister and nurses and doctors and myself tending to her. I realize what has happened to me and I think that that's what I want to give back...trying to knit the body, mind and spirit in some way to work with the ill... and I guess I realize too that all things are possible and that we see only that which we allow ourselves to see, or are enlightened enough to see...and I want to go on with that. I think there's a lot of room for growth in me, but it is, it is a transformation, it is a rebirth...And it is certainly a transformation for me to confirm the self. But it also has affected all my relationships as well, which I see with greater clarity. I think that I see better into the souls of people.
- N. Are there some passages in your journal where you feel you did describe some of the things that were happening to you? In a way that you'd like to share? Or feel comfortable about sharing?
- C. There's so much...(Animated voice)...there was a feeling of...of really extrasensory awareness. Again it's hard to express....a feeling of being above everything. I keep talking about healing and psychic powers, and that kept coming into it. I think that those aspects, that extrasensory is so much denied and boxed in...and when I was fighting to protect my mother all those sort of extrasensory feelings or whatever, gut or intuitive, or whatever you want to call it, were so powerful that that's, I think, what caused me to fight.
- N. Oh, sort of a paranormal knowing that you were right...
- C. Um-hum, um-hum, uh-hum! It made me realize I wanted to explore that particular side of me which had been repressed so long. It was a sudden realization, Yes, that there is power in love, in healing, that, again, miracles can occur, and there is so much

beyond what most humans are allowed or allow themselves to see. It's just almost as if I was so closely attached to my mother in that ten weeks that as her world diminished, my world diminished. I did feel that as she diminished I became stronger...it was as if her soul was leaking into mine. And so I was picking up her strength. And at times she had a very strong aura of...of radiance...of beauty the closer she got to death. And she was seeing so many things, and she was becoming more peaceful....I'll never be able to step back into the other side. I feel I have stepped into the other realm...and there just is no way back.

- N. What was it? How did you say that? You know it was as if I died along with my mother?
- C. And I came back.
- N. But you came back.
- C. And she didn't. Or she just...she went on into another area, but I still feel that all the paranormal senses have been heightened. And there is a sense that I have something to offer in the way of healing. I feel instinctively I have been given some small gift of healing.
- N. You mentioned prior to this experience being more atheistic...
- C. Well, I have come from professing non-belief to believing in God...all the things that have been sort of simmering in my mind have boiled over. I think that my mind has boiled over in the synapses... And a realization, too, that people who believe in God often have an aura too. I remember when I was in my twenties several people said to me they thought I had a real aura of..... and I feel I lost that. I feel I descended from my twenties through a lot of things. But people have told me most of my life that I have a healing affect on them. I remember one man saying to me he saw me as a river of calm. Now I feel that that calm is real. I've always thought of you as a calming person, but I don't know what all is going inside of you.
- N. I feel that I am feeling quite centered much of the time. I feel

too that my mother's death was one of the more profound experiences of my life.

C. Did you feel a heightened sense of paranormal?

N. Hmmm. Yeah, sometimes an awareness...

C. Of that realm?

N. More knowing that than just reading about it, than just having the intellectual.

C. Well I think it's the gut affirmation of things that have flitted into my consciousness. I'm going to go after what I want because I feel that I have been given an extra insight. I'm just lucky that I know someone like you that is interested because I would be lost to know who to turn to,...who to talk to in order to read more. You know, C. used to talk a lot about your and H.'s interest in dreams and altered sort of states. Now those are the kinds of things I kept thinking about - dreams and altered sort of states and altered experiences...other realm thinking...and it was an affirmation...that this was all valid. That you and H. somehow had a glimpse of the other side...you were living on the other side, so to speak. I had that sense about M. and C. I think that people who have these thoughts, I include myself...that there is a certain group of the population that are over here and are above the rest of the population in that they can look at these things or they've had an experience that has allowed them to see the other side. And they have a very clear world vision, but also a very clear metaphysical vision...and that there is something special about all of you. I mean you are in touch with that realm...you have found that world and I feel that I have just sort of tripped into it completely. Now I'm just trying to understand it intellectually...I'm trying to do the reading to... See I've had glimmers into this all of my life...It feels like I've had little glimmers, or I've had little insights...that something has been telling me certain things all along, but I've ignored them because it was too frightening to consider.

- N. You sort of were drawing a spiral...Did that have any significance?
- C. I think so...I feel that I have suddenly come to the top.....I've waded out of the manure. I mean to acknowledge these kind of thoughts makes you...I've always felt different from the mainstream. I've always felt isolated from everything in my life. I've been lucky in my late twenties and thirties to find friends who aren't threatened by my thoughts...All my life I think I've been somewhat threatening because I've had other ideas, I've always sought to minimize myself or to contain myself...and now... I'm finding out all kinds of paranormal experiences people have had because I am risking...I'm finding other people leaping onto what I'm saying...and expressing themselves...And daring to be myself has led to really more confirmation of my friends. It is kind of scary, because there's no safe ground for me anymore. There's nothing...there's no connection, but also in this experience there's historical knowledge there's a whole reviewing...in a sense I feel that I'm understanding everything... it's just as if I have instant observation of my father's life and my mother's life...and understanding and knowledge.
- N. Does talking about it feel like that really helps? Sharing what's happening for you...that it makes it more real?
- C. It doesn't make it more real. It is real... It's real to me and I accept that that is valid in itself... but it's also important for me to hear about other peoples' experiences and by what routes that they have arrived at where they are...And I guess for some it's an instant overwhelming change and for others it's a gradual step-by-step process to a consciousness change. But my consciousness change started out in an intellectual manner, I think, and then it hit overwhelming proportions when my mother died...and all of it was emotionally internalized.
- N. Looking at the Myers-Briggs thing, was it the feeling experience or was it seeing in a new way, the perception or the judging?

- C. They're intertwined. But there's also a judging aspect to my personality too that I think has been exercised...there's a better understanding of people. I grew up with my mother feeling that she was always judged by everyone, and I grew up definitely judged, but there's a lot of forgiveness in me too...I think I've finally come to forgive myself... and what is important is love. I think the perceiving aspect will take over as opposed to the judging.
- N. I was wondering if it was more the perceiving or more the feeling or judging function that shifted first, but it's almost like you're saying...
- C. They're intertwined, but I'd have to say that it's the feeling, it's the trusting of my inner judgement, and it's just as if somebody went, "Zot!, OK you have clear vision, and now that you validate your own feelings you will perceive in a much better way"... but I do think the feeling is what had the major effect.
- N. Just in listening to you, it sounds like all along, like you say, you've had glimmers, but throughout all that, you've been so unable to trust your own way of being in the world that they just remained glimmers, they couldn't be integrated into your...life...
- C. And I would shut out these glimmers because it caused me too much unhappiness because it meant that I had to look at this, and it was too frightening in a way.....it always seemed so simple to deny all of that because then I thought I would get along better in the world...I would be more mainstream and I would be accepted...and now I don't feel the need to be accepted, except on my own terms...I'll find people of my own kind, but it's finally realizing what my kind is and that all things are possible and that I cannot deny any aspect of the other realm, whatever that entails, whether or not I've experienced it, because I have really emotionally experienced it, and now I just have to look closer in that area. I feel as if I have been given, in all of this, some kind of gift. I feel that I have been healed to a great extent.

It's almost as if I've, to some degree, been cleansed...and all the therapy in the world, all the cognitive therapy, hasn't had the impact of what has just happened to me.

- N. Do you feel that that in any way prepared the ground for you?
- C. Well that particular brand of counselling is again, box-like...that kind of therapy... had an impact to some degree, but nothing to the extent of emotionally being aware of this sort of paranormal sense of awareness....Nothing can have as much impact as that...because I'm a feeling person. I have vision through an emotional experience, and that's far more important. For me to have come to the realization...or the opening up, the removal of the shutters through this kind of therapy would take me from now till doomsday, I think, because there was no internalization.

Step #5 - Explicating Essential Themes/Exemplary Descriptive Statements

The following themes were discovered during the ordering of the data. Each theme will be illustrated with verbatim statements from the original information.

- Preparation
- Empathy with other
- Validation of self
- Transformational experience (Unconditional love - Perceptual shift)
- Rebirth / Healing
- Spiritual sensibility
- Integration

Preparation

In early dialogues with Cynthia she shared that, prior to the experience described in the interview, she had both been attracted to the kind of ideas outlined in my dissertation and had espoused these ideas, albeit tentatively, with select friends. During the course of our taped interview she alluded to this earlier interest as one which may have prepared her for 'the future'.

"in the friendships that I've developed...there seemed to be a pattern almost...I don't know about predestiny but, ...well, I guess perhaps you are attracted to your future..."

"all the information that I was gathering...from friendships, from contacts...started me thinking in...along different lines"

"at University in my psychology courses I had written a couple of papers on changing your belief systems"

"gradually some of my ideas were validated"

"those are the kinds of things I kept thinking about - dreams, altered sort of states and altered experiences...other realm thinking...and it was an affirmation (hearing same ideas from friends)...that this was all valid"

"I've had glimmers into this all of my life...little glimmers...little insights...but I've ignored them because it was too frightening in a way to consider"

"I've always felt different from the mainstream...I've had other ideas"

"my consciousness change started out in an intellectual manner"

Empathy with other

As primary caretaker, Cynthia became wholly attuned to her mother's needs during the dying process. It was this empathy, this intuitive understanding, that enabled Cynthia to respond to her mother with appropriate caregiving.

"I was trusting my intuitive feelings and I realized that that was consistently the best choice for my mother"

"My mother and I had always been close...we could often tune into what the other person's needs were. We knew how the other person was feeling, (though) we'd always had a difficult relationship"

"I was always observing, because I was watching my mother for any sign of whatever she needed"

"I gave my mother unconditional love when she was dying"

"It's just almost as if I was so closely attached to my mother in that ten weeks, that as her world diminished, my world diminished"

"I did feel that as she diminished I became stronger...it was as if her soul was leaking into mine"

Validation of self

Cynthia found it necessary, at times, to fight for what she perceived to be the best care for her mother. In trusting her judgement about her mother's needs, Cynthia learned to trust her self. In a discussion during a 'member check' on the original data, Cynthia espoused the conviction that it was the empathy with her mother that broke down the walls, opening her to self-validation. This self-validation was further internalized for Cynthia through the experiences which followed her mother's death.

"the fact that I felt that I even had to protect her from others' ill-thought-out or hasty decisions made me gain a lot of strength"

"I finally looked at myself as being worthwhile. Taking care of my mother through her illness really restored a lot of confidence that I had lost"

"I was trusting my intuitive feelings"

"when I was fighting to protect my mother all those sort of extrasensory feelings or whatever, gut or intuitive, or whatever...were so powerful that that's, I think, what caused me to fight"

"It's just that I finally believe it's all right for me to follow my inner instincts, my inner gut reactions"

"It's the trusting of my inner judgement"

"what I think, especially what I feel is valid"

"I had a really good sense of self...for the first time in my life"

"the major thing is that I have come to...just to, validate myself"

"now I don't feel the need to be accepted, except on my own terms"

Transformational experience

Cynthia's core experience of internalizing a new world view occurred in two major stages. A change in belief about self, first in feeling worthwhile through her service to mother, and then through a felt experience of knowing she had always been loved, was preliminary to being opened to a flood of new perceptions.

Unconditional love

"I certainly never felt any unconditional love, but I gave my mother unconditional love when she was dying and she also gave that back to me...and that was my first experience"

"there was a realization that my mother had loved me...all my life"

"that was immediate" (after mother's death)

"I had a strong feeling that she did love me, and I had also a strong feeling of her presence those three days after she died"

"all of a sudden it was as if she touched me...and then I would feel very peaceful...very happy"

"the realization that my mother loved me gave me a very strong sense of well-being and -uh...power!"

"ultimately, I come back to the feeling that I was loved"

Perceptual shift

Cynthia describes this aspect of her experience as sudden, extrasensory and hard to explain.

"It's as if for the last while little ideas have been filtering through a screen...and then all of a sudden somebody took the screen and the window off...and then there was such a mad influx of things....like a torrential downpour"

"I can't express it...it's as if I had a sudden...it's as if I was rising above the earth and I was observing everything that was going on...and...that someone had taken a lid off me...and I could really see things clearly. I had a sudden feeling that I finally knew what life was about. I felt I'd finally come into contact with my own humanity and...I felt that I saw very clearly into relationships. I just felt (much emotion) I saw things very, very clearly...and almost there was kind of an extrasensory thing about it that I can't explain...but all of this happened so quickly that I was thinking all the time and all of this was 'pinging' as if my synapses were on constant go...and all these ideas kept coming into my head...I guess for the first time I felt like a human being...I think probably for the first time in my life I had a really good sense of self"

"It was as if I wasn't inside of my body. I felt very detached from myself"

"I arrived at a great understanding of my mother, finally!...and of our relationship"

"It's as if I lost all the control in my brain between the synapses"

"there was a feeling really of extrasensory awareness...again, it's hard to express...a feeling of being above everything"

"I think that my mind has boiled over in the synapses...that's the thing...I think that best describes it"

"I feel that I have been given an extra insight"

"I felt as if I had been led into some kind of pool of knowledge"

"in a sense I feel that I'm understanding everything...it's just as if I have instant observation of my father's life and my mother's life...and understanding and knowledge"

Rebirth/Healing

Cynthia described the meaning of this experience for her in terms of rebirth and healing - a transformation.

"It is a rebirth...a reexperiencing of the world through completely new eyes, and everything that you've looked at before you're looking at in a different way"

"It's as if my whole life was divided in half...the half that went before my mother's death and the half after, because my perspectives will never, ever be the same!"

"I feel almost as if I have been healed...and there's a sense of wholeness I feel about myself that I have never felt in my entire life"

"It's as if I'm healing myself"

"WELL, I just don't even feel like myself...it's not just a superficial skin"

"There's such a piercing clarity in my brain right now, and a sense of what I need to do with my life"

"I consider that I have come full circle" - "a complete turn-around"

"I have a sense of freedom as well...a profound happiness"

"maybe I just grew up...I've suddenly come to the top (of spiral)"

"I realized the power of love"

"It is a transformation, it is a rebirth...and it is

certainly a transformation for me to confirm the self...but it also has affected all my relationships, which I see with greater clarity. I see better into the souls of people"

"I feel I have stepped into the other realm...and there just is no way back...I suddenly feel as if I've found my realm"

"all the paranormal senses have been heightened...and there is a sense that I have something to offer in the way of healing, and I feel instinctively I have been given some small gift of healing"

"It's as if somebody went, 'Zot!, OK you have clear vision, and now that you validate your own feelings you will perceive in a much better way'"

"I feel as if I have been given, in all of this, some kind of gift"

"It's almost as if, to some degree, I've been cleansed"

"I have vision through an emotional experience"

Spiritual sensibility

A key mark of significance of Cynthia's experience lay in her new-found acceptance of a spiritual sphere of life.

"I had always pooh-poohed the spiritual...but it's as if all those blinders were lifted and I just felt intuitively that there was some kind of spiritual afterlife"

"the things that I wrote (in journal) are metaphysical feelings...I don't know how I can describe them"

"it is a door into another dimension"

"I have come from professing non-belief to believing in God"

"I realized the power of love...and that all things are possible"

"(paranormal knowing) made me realize I wanted to explore that particular side of me which had been repressed so long"

"it was a sudden realization, Yes, that there is power in love, in healing, that, again, miracles can occur, and there is so much beyond what most humans are allowed or allow themselves to see"

"there's a lot of forgiveness in me too...I think I've finally come to forgive myself...and what is important is love"

"all things are possible and I cannot deny any aspect of the other realm, whatever that entails...whether or not I've experienced it, because I have really emotionally experienced it and now I just have to look closer in that area"

Integration

For Cynthia, integration of this experience is occurring through sharing about this life event with kindred spirits, reading material that expands on her new understanding, and exploring the potential for a new career path that will encompass her new world view.

"I don't have any of the old anchors...It is kind of scary, because there's no safe ground for me anymore..."

"I feel a real need to define myself and my thoughts"

"I have a great need to share these experiences"

"I'm finding out all the kind of paranormal experiences people have had because I am risking...I'm just letting all this come out...And I'm finding other people leaping onto what I'm saying"

"I will...find people of my own kind, but it's finally realizing what my kind is"

"it's important for me to hear about other people's experiences"

"Now I'm just trying to understand it intellectually...I'm trying to do the reading"

"what I want to give back is trying to knit the body, mind and spirit in some way to work with the ill"

"we only see that which we are enlightened enough to see...and I want to go on with that"

"I think there's a lot of room for growth in me"

"daring to be myself has led to really more confirmation of my friends"

Almost two months after the core interview, Cynthia and I met for the purpose of validating the data and my initial ordering process. Most of our dialogue centered around her process of integration. A summary of her comments follows.

"Sharing for this research and seeing my story written has been a further validation of my self. Integrating my new awareness is a difficult struggle and I do need validation of others. From my inner change I now must change in my relationships to others in the outer world. I have been such an accommodator and I am now risking honesty in relationships, stating opposing viewpoints and sharing honest feelings. I'm no longer pleasing. Those friends who are having the hardest time with my change are those who seem to have the most difficulty with trust and intimacy. I do feel that some of my friends will change. I want to explore possibilities like returning to school, but there are so many options - I'm most interested in pursuing studies in philosophy. Lately, I feel as if I've been released from prison and I can do what I want, but there are so many things, that I can't choose. I still have clarity of vision but lack of motivation at the moment. I am no longer motivated by the urge for approval. I stopped

'cheerleading' which made me obsessive-compulsive. Now I have to find new motivators. I have all this freedom and I don't know quite what to do. Boxes are restricting, but you can also hide in boxes and be safe! I continue to feel a strong compassion for my mother, which also means compassion for myself. I still want to explore development of psychic powers and healing. Synchronicity never ceases to utterly amaze me! Now that I am paying attention there is a really heightened sense of 'strange coincidences'. Whenever I think of needing something or wanting to know something, someone appears to respond to that need! I feel that I am open to everything that involves expanding on these new ideas. I know I need to follow what I know in my heart is true - and that is not always easy!"

Step #6 - Phenomenological Description

The structure of Cynthia's experience of changing to a new world view is characterized as a process embodying seven essential themes, beginning with preparation and culminating with a phase of integration. Glimmers of ideas from "other realm" thinking, feeling different from the mainstream and gathering information from friends began an intellectual consciousness change for Cynthia that transpired over a number of years. This change was emotionally internalized for Cynthia through a transformational experience precipitated by her mother's illness and death. Opening to her mother in empathy dissolved the walls which allowed Cynthia's validation of self. A posthumous felt experience of unconditional love from mother, along with an opening of synapses in a perceptual shift, were key features of the core transformative experience. Meaning of this experience is described in terms of rebirth, healing and a new openness for Cynthia to the spiritual dimension. Integration is occurring for Cynthia via sharing the experience, reading and exploring the possibility of a career that can include "trying to knit the body, mind and spirit" in working with the ill.

VITA

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Educational Institutions Attended, with Dates of Entering and Leaving:

Northwestern Hospital School of Nursing, Minneapolis	1955 to 1958
University of Minnesota, Minneapolis	1958 to 1960
The University of Calgary, Calgary	1972 to 1974
University of Victoria, Victoria, B.C.	1983 to 1987

Degrees and Diplomas Awarded, with Dates and Names of Institutions:

Diploma of Nursing	1958	Northwestern Hospital School of Nursing
B.S. (cum laude)	1960	University of Minnesota, Minneapolis
M.S.W.	1974	The University of Calgary

Honors and Awards:

National Honorary Society of Nursing, Sigma Theta Tau, 1958

Publications:

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Title of Dissertation

The Experience of Changing to a New World View: A Phenomenological
Study of the Emergent Paradigm Shift

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(Date)

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