ADULT CAREER CHANGE IN THE
CONTEXT OF THE LIFE-SPAN
DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of
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by

Jimmie Beasley Young, B.S., M.S., M.A.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University

1996

Dissertation Committee:

Dr. Robert Rodgers

Dr. Susan Sears

Dr. Twinet Parmer

Approved by

[Signature]

Adviser

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VITA

February 4, 1957......................... Born - Fort Worth, Texas

1980.................................................. B.S., Texas A&M University
College Station, Texas

1984.................................................. M.S., University of Texas at
Dallas
Richardson, Texas

1990 - 1993......................................... Doctoral Studies,
The Ohio State University
Columbus, Ohio

1993.................................................. M.A., The Ohio State University
Columbus, Ohio

FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: Education

Emphasis: Higher Education and
Student Affairs

Studies in Adult Life Span Development
Dr. Robert Rodgers

Studies in Counseling and Psychotherapy
Dr. Susan Sears
Dr. Twinet Parmer
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Introduction

The past 25 years have witnessed tremendous growth in the number of adults changing careers. The average person enters and voluntarily leaves the work force four to six times during the course of their lifetime (Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1987, Table 606). In particular, the number of 25-64 age career changers has grown steadily since 1970 and is projected to continue to do so through the year 2000 (Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1987, Table 608).

This phenomenon has been studied from many perspectives including but not limited to the literature specifically addressing adult career change as a primary phenomenon. These studies have tended to focus upon isolated variables measured at a single point in the life of the subject (Kanchier & Unruh, 1988; Kanchier, 1988; Armstrong, 1981; Henton, Russell, & Koval, 1983; Perosa & Perosa, 1983; Perosa & Perosa, 1985; Vaitenas & Wiener, 1977; Fredrickson, Macy, & Vickers, 1978). The variables under investigation in these studies often dealt with characteristics of the career changer such as congruity, identity achievement, self-concept, emotional adjustment, risk taking, satisfaction, or decision making style. Thus, this body of research has yielded multiple isolated cross-sectional snapshots of adults who have
completed or are considering career change.

While many of these studies have recognized that career change decisions occur in the context of an adult’s growth and development, and may even have positioned their studies within the confines of a life-span developmental theoretical framework (Kanchier & Unruh, 1988; Perosa & Perosa, 1984), they have failed to position their inquiry “in the experience” of the participant in order to understand the career change phenomenon holistically, subjectively, contextually, and inductively. According to Baltes, Reese, and Lipsitt (1980) such a developmental perspective is particularly applicable when the phenomenon under study involves a process better understood in the context of chains and patterns of antecedent and subsequent events.

Adult psychosocial development is one area of inquiry which has considered adult career change from such a developmental perspective. Adult psychosocial development, one of three areas of inquiry within adult developmental theory, is defined by Rodgers (1984) as “the nature of the developmental issues and life events which occur throughout the life-span, and to a person’s pattern of resolutions of these issues and adaptations to these events” (p. 479). “Psychosocial theories combine feelings, behavior, and thinking into a rich, complex picture of the life-span” (Rodgers, 1980, p. 39). The “organismic” psychosocial theorist views the life-span as a continual interaction between the human psyche and the environment. The environment, including, but not limited to, family of origin, current family, cultural conditioning, socio-economic status, gender, and work context, provides a combination of challenges, supports, and blocks which call upon
and interact with an internal psychological framework, resulting in the unfolding of the personality. The timing and nature of the environmental stimulus, the cognitive level and style of the individual, and the biological "ground plan" or unfolding agenda engage the person in a dance of consistency and change. Periods of stability can be interrupted by unanticipated and perhaps untimely external life events which activate internal biological processes, or internal changes, all leading to transition. This dance of stability and change is often explicated in terms of stages, tasks, crises, and coping or adaptation skills. Theorists operating from an organismic perspective include Erikson (1950) Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson, and McKee (1978), Gould (1978), and Josselson (1987).

The behavioral psychosocial theorist is primarily interested in the relationship between specific life events and the resulting idiographic responses of individuals as mediated by biological, psychological, and contextual factors (Rodgers, 1984). The behaviorist orientation argues that growth and development (or the lack thereof) are primarily influenced by external life-events and the idiosyncratic adaptive interpretations of those events made by the individual. Thus great variations may emerge between different individuals experiencing the same, or similar life events and circumstances. Theorists operating from the behaviorist orientation include Schlossberg (1981), Baruch, Barnett, and Rivers (1983), and Neugarten (1976).

Thus within the literature pertaining to adult psychosocial development, there are differing perspectives between the organismic and behavioristic orientations and a concurrent difference in the way in which career change
might be viewed by each. For example, the organismic literature might view career as a means to actualize or “live out” emerging aspects of the personality. The developmental efficacy of the career change might be assessed by the degree to which the new career is more congruent with the unfolding personality than the old one. The behavioristic literature might view career change as a response to some “life event” or environmental stimulus that provokes an idiosyncratic adaptive response on the part of the individual experiencing it. The developmental efficacy of the career change might be assessed based upon its level of subjective adaptability in terms of the life of the individual experiencing it.

Many of the studies which have manifested organismic-behavioral theoretical differences in viewpoint have been done using men only and it is difficult to determine the degree to which women’s patterns of psychosocial development are represented in the results of these studies. Furthermore, although increasingly women’s lives are being studied (Josselson, 1987; Baruch, Barnett, & Rivers, 1983; Hancock, 1989; Levinson, 1996), less is known about how a career change might manifest itself in the context of women’s growth and development.

Statement of the Problem

The developmental literature has positioned career change in the context of life-span growth and development and designed inquiry to view the phenomenon as one element in a more comprehensive “whole” life. Adult psychosocial theory has viewed career change in such a contextual manner however more needs to be known about career evolution. There have been
few studies that used samples representative of the general population (Farrell & Rosenberg, 1981) and most studies have used relatively small samples (Gould, 1978; Levinson et al, 1978; Vaillant, 1977; Josselson, 1987; Baruch, Barnett, & Rivers, 1983). Furthermore, the respective research samples have been disproportionately composed of men. Hence there appears to be a need to explore more comprehensively the career change as a phenomenon in the broader context of adult development for both men and women.

**Purpose of the Study**

Three years ago, Steve Jackson (fictitious name), a third year Ph.D. student in Counseling Psychology at a major mid-western university, resigned his job as a group manager for an urban CPA firm. Steve was 29 at the time of the resignation and had spent six years in a profession in which he perceived he could not find satisfaction. His initial career choice had led him into a workplace which drew upon a value system which he felt was inconsistent with his own. He perceived his initial selection, which was based primarily upon the encouragement of his parents who are both CPAs, as flawed. His subsequent decision to pursue graduate study in Counseling Psychology was made one year in advance of his matriculation, and represented a daring step in a conservative world.

The “event”, marked by Steve’s resignation from the CPA firm and enrollment in school may be viewed as embedded within his context of developing. It is an event arising as a part of a dynamic process, not a singular, unidimensional phenomena. There is no single cause for such an event, nor is it best viewed as a causal, linear relationship. In order to
understand a life-altering decision such as the one Steve made, we must first gain some comprehension of the intricate developmental process in which it was formulated.

Human development, for the purposes of this study, is viewed as a system of interaction between a vigorous environment and a dynamic self. An environment exists for the individual meaning maker to the extent that it is perceived by him or her. Thus we may exert some degree of selectivity in that which we compose as external and relevant. Obviously a mountain is a mountain and a tree is a tree; however, seldom does an object evoke solely an objective recognition of its existence. Instead the image of a mountain may inspire a fond childhood memory or the recollection of a miserable, cold afternoon alone in the rain. Perhaps attention may be focused upon the level of the tree line or height of the peak, or maybe the image of a mountain produces an inner, affect-laden spiritual response leading to a feeling of “oneness” with a greater existence. Thus the way in which the environment is, depends upon the way in which it’s perceiver, is. This suggests that the only way to understand Steve is to understand “what the mountain means to him” as he constructs the meaning.

For this reason it is my intention to position this study upon the ground of adult psychosocial theory, with a particular personal emphasis on the organismic orientation. The purpose of the study is to gain an understanding of the participant’s perception of the internal and external circumstances leading up to, surrounding, and following a career change. Naturalistic research methodologies will be utilized to develop a particularized psychosocial theory grounded in the life-span context of the participants.
Theoretical formulations will be grounded in the lives of five men and five women. I plan to use the resulting formulations to dialogue across developmental literature relevant to the emergent theory.

The naturalistic research I am proposing is appropriate to generate theory from the complex multi-variable nature of the phenomenon of interest, which begs a holistic, inductive approach. Conventional quantitative methodologies would, by their very nature, be used to test theory that already exists and ask “what generalizes?” Such a question seeks to abstract out the generalizable from the complexity within which it exists. The strength of the qualitative approach is a commitment to understanding the multitude of factors and patterns composing the symphony of complexity inherent in the human condition.

Given the purpose of this study I have chosen to explore the following research questions.

**Substantive Questions**

1. What key themes and patterns did each participant identify when they analyzed their recent career change from the context of their life-span?

2. What key themes and patterns did I recognize when I analyzed their perception of the career change when viewed from the context of their life-span?

3. If common patterns and themes seem to exist across individuals, what will such a grounded theory look like?

4. In what ways could the grounded theory emerging from this study serve to inform existing developmental literature?
5. In what ways are the current adult development theories helpful in illuminating (or distorting) the particularized experiences of the participants?

Significance of the Study

Over the past quarter century there has been a prolific increase in the number of adults choosing to change careers. Furthermore, that trend is projected to continue through the turn of the century and beyond (Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1987). This increasing frequency of the adult career change phenomenon suggests the need for a greater understanding of the factors influencing and interacting with such a change process (Armstrong, 1981; Henton, Russell, & Koval, 1983).

The increasingly frequent phenomenon of adult career change carries with it significant implications for both the counseling and student affairs professions. Often additional higher education is a prerequisite to adult career change. As a result, the past twenty years have witnessed significant growth in the number of older adults returning to college for additional training (Aslanian & Brickell, 1980). Simpkins (1982) refers to this phenomenon as the "graying of the college campus". For the student affairs professional, the movement of the student mix away from traditional-age college student population suggests the potential relevance of a reevaluation of current programming parameters and a further consideration of developmental concerns across the life-span.

For the counseling professional, the increasing occurrence of adult career change is a social phenomenon demanding more effective interventions grounded in a life-span developmental perspective. According
to Perosa and Perosa (1984) researchers studying mid-life career changers “have emphasized career development theory rather than adult development theory” (p. 55). Perosa and Perosa recommend that “there is a need to integrate career development theory with adult development theory and a need to include females in the research” (p. 53). Thomas (1978) suggests that counseling interventions aimed at adult career changers should take a more “life-planning” approach aimed at effectively intervening across life roles in a manner developmentally consistent with the needs of the adult client.

As previously stated, there have been large number of studies investigating adult career change as an isolated phenomenon (Kanchier & Unruh, 1988; Kanchier, 1988; Armstrong, 1981; Henton, Russell, & Koval, 1983; Perosa & Perosa, 1983; Perosa & Perosa, 1985; Vaitenas & Wiener, 1977; Fredrickson, Macy, & Vickers, 1978). These studies have focused upon isolated variables measured at a single point in the life of the career changer. While many of these studies have pointed out how a career change is a process embedded in a life time of growth and development (Kanchier & Unruh, 1988; Perosa & Perosa, 1984), they have not been designed in such a way as to explore this phenomenon holistically.

This study will investigate the career change process as a primary focus and position it in the context of the life-span of both men and women. It is my hope that this study will further inform adult psychosocial developmental literature, particularly as it relates to adult career change.
CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Adult psychosocial theory is concerned with the “what” of development; that is, the specific content areas of life that preoccupy individuals in their process of growth and development at different times in their lives (Rodgers, 1980). Adult career change is one such “content area”, and is the focus of this study.

The psychosocial literature is rich with discussion concerning the nature and role of “career” and “career change” in the broader context of overall life-span development. In the following discussion I will explore the thoughts of several organismic psychosocial theorists pertinent to this study. My discussion will focus on career related aspects of the respective theories, but will not be limited specifically to these issues, as an exploration of the broader developmental context is equally relevant. The theorists selected for discussion are Daniel Levinson, Ruthellen Josselson, and Roger Gould; however, several other adult psychosocial theorists will be referenced when their work clarifies, supports, or expands that of the others. As opposed to discussing each theorist individually, I have chosen to integrate their work and move chronologically through the life-span from young adulthood through mid-life.
My understanding of psychosocial literature will inform theory development in a manner consistent with the notion of "theoretical sensitivity" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), but not drive or control it. Only after my theoretical formulations are complete will I dialogue with a priori theory in order to explore ways in which each may inform the other.

The Theorists

Levinson and others (1978), studied the lives of 40 men drawn from four different occupations: executives, novelists, biology professors, and hourly workers in industry. All of the men were between the ages of 35 and 45, and were interviewed for a total of 20 hours. They were asked to tell the story of their lives. Once the stories were assembled, the researchers derived theoretical formulations from the commonalities and differences among the forty lives. The emerging theory was, over time, further grounded in life-span interviews with 45 women, and biographical accounts of over 100 men and women living at different times and in different parts of the world (Levinson, 1996).

The recent publication of Levinson's (1996) book Season's of a Woman's Life chronicled the results of his and others' interviews with forty-five randomly chosen women including an equal representation of businesswomen, academics, and homemakers between the ages of 35 and 45. Intensive biographical interviewing yielded a picture suggesting that "women go through the same sequence of eras as men and at the same ages." (p. 5) He argued that, "there is, in short, a single human life cycle through which all our lives evolve, with myriad variations related to gender,
class, race, culture, historical epoch, specific circumstances, and genetics." (p. 5) His new book explores, in rigorous fashion, variations particularly related to women.

Levinson positioned the notion of "career" as a component of a broader "underlying pattern or design of a person's life at a given time" (Levinson, 1996, p. 6) which he referred to as the "life structure." Levinson defined a Life Structure as having both internal and external aspects. Internally, a Life Structure includes a person's core values, fantasies, and conscious and unconscious potentials that shape their engagement with the world. Externally it includes a person's overall pattern of roles, memberships, interests, condition and style of living, and long term goals. Levinson also described various dimensions of the Life Structure including occupation/career, relationships, life style, mentor relationships, and the Dream.

Furthermore, Levinson (1996) argued that the life structure includes both objective and subjective aspects. For example, while describing the nature of relationships in the life structure, he said,

In describing a relationship we must consider: (1) what the Person and the Other do with each other; (2) the subjective meanings involved; (3) what the Person gives and receives - materially, emotionally, socially; (4) the social context of the relationship; (5) the place of the relationship in the person's life structure and how it connects to other relationship; (6) its evolution over time within the life structure. (p. 23)

Thus the life structure is more than either the external activities and relationships of our life or the internal subjective interpretations of them: it is both.

Levinson's theory is considered "age-graded" as it positions the role of career in a man's or woman's life as one element of a life structure tied to the
nature of the developmental tasks demanding attention at any given point in time. Thus the role of career in the life of a 50 year old would differ from the role of career in the life of a 25 year old, as each is working on different developmental tasks embedded in a different life structure.

Levinson divides the lifespan into three eras or macrostructures of the life cycle. Each era is further divided into periods which provide for transition between eras and change and development within each era. In order to understand an individual’s career transition in terms of Levinson’s work, it is necessary to understand not only the immediate demands of the period in which they find themselves, but also the choices made in response to the tasks of prior periods and their perceived outcomes.

In reviewing the developmental periods described by Levinson (for both men and women), I would hypothesize that five of them would have particular relevance to any study of adult career-changers: Those include the "Early Adult Transition" (ages 17-22), "Entering the Adult World" or "Entry Life Structure for Early Adulthood" (ages 22-28), "Age Thirty Transition" (ages 28-33), "Settling Down" or "Culminating Life Structure for Early Adulthood" (ages 33-40), and "Mid-life Transition" (ages 40-45). Often the life tasks after age 45 tend to have a more inward orientation and are directed in the service of cultural or spiritual growth (Jung, 1971; Gould, 1978). While this does not preclude the possibility of career change later in life, it does suggest that its efficacy as a defining developmental task diminishes after the age of 45.

The Early Adult Transition represents a developmental path from adolescence to early adulthood. One developmental task of this period is to terminate the adolescent life structure through the modification of existing
relationships as well as the modification of the self in relation to them. The second task is to take an initial step into the adult world and explore its possibilities. For Levinson’s men, a major task of this period was separation from family of origin. Of the 40 men studied, only seven stayed personally and geographically close to their parents during their 20s. The others experienced various degrees of conflict and alienation between themselves and their parents (primarily with their fathers), resulting in either “major conflict” or their “moving away” to avoid conflict. College offered many of Levinson’s men an institutionalized environment to support the tasks of this developmental period.

In order to explore the lives of women, Levinson (1996) utilized a framework for understanding how women and men differed in life course. The key concept in the framework was the notion of "gender splitting" which he defined as, "a rigid division between female and male, feminine and masculine within the self." (p. 414) He argued that our patriarchal society encourages gender splitting within, for example, the occupational realm between the domestic sphere and the public occupational sphere and between men and women’s work. Levinson identified two internal figures which emerge and cause conflict in women as a result of these cultural factors. These Figures, often influenced, or became the basis for, a woman’s conscious sense of self - The person she wanted to be.

The internal figures identified by Levinson were the Traditional Homemaker Figure and the Anti-Traditional Figure. The Traditional Homemaker Figure valued the "Traditional Marriage Enterprise" and sought to marry, have children, maintain a household, and care for all those within and beyond the home. The Anti-Traditional Figure sought to be more independent,
develop occupational skills, defer children, and generally take responsibility for herself. According to Levinson, the women in his study experienced an internal struggle between the relative influence of these two figures over the course of their lives.

For Levinson's women, the Early Adult Transition differed significantly between the career women and homemakers (as did all later periods). The homemakers identified little, if at all, with the Anti-Traditional Figure as they moved initially toward a Traditional Marriage Enterprise. The career women, on the other hand, struggled with the conflict between the two figures.

The career women's Early Adult Transition often began with their move to college and terminated with entry into the career world. Their initial choices were marked by an inner ambivalence between the two Figures.

Josselson (1987) studied 60 college senior women in order to understand their path toward ego identity development. Eleven years later she reinterviewed 34 of these women to follow up on the outcomes of the initial separation process. She classified each of the women in terms of Erikson's notion of ego identity development as operationalized by Marcia (1966). In general, she found that developmental differences among her women rested upon the separation - individuation continuum. For these women the problem was one of separating and becoming capable of self-constructed autonomy, while at the same time, maintaining connection. Josselson's women differed from Levinson's men in that their separation was accomplished within the context of relationships, whereas the men tended to separate without an emphasis on relationship, and their separation tended more often to result in a conflicted and/or strained relationship with their
parents.

During college, many of Josselson’s women freed aspects of themselves from prior parental identifications, permitting a qualitative reorganization of their identities. Some of the women encountered a period in which new aspects of selfhood were tried out and experimented with (moratorium). Ultimately, the women either committed to a form of self-defined identity (achieved), adopted prior parental identifications (foreclosed), remained in exploration (moratorium), or were pathologically diffuse (diffusion).

An important contribution of Josselson was her recognition that parenting style had a direct influence on the outcome of the separation process. Josselson recognized that those women who “foreclosed” on parental identifications tended to have possessive, fearful, and isolated mothers. The mother’s overidentification and confusion of her own ego with that of the child, may have resulted in the child being unable effectively to enact separation.

Similarly, Baruch et al. (1983) in their study of the contributors to a sense of well being for 300 women said that, “The woman who seeks the primary support for her identity in her children may in the end harm not only her own self-image but her children’s ability to grow up as separate individuals” (p. 114). Josselson’s “foreclosures” exhibited an identity style based on tradition and conviction, rooted in the need for security and constancy. They tended to be rigid, inflexible, judgmental, and dualistic. While they were found to be hard working, the role of “work” was of relative unimportance in their lives, serving only as a means to enhance the family unit
and its ability to ensure security and constancy in their lives.

Josselson's "moratoriums" tended to have overprotective mothers who indulged and overvalued them. These women experienced tremendous guilt during separation, as they perceived that they were betraying their mothers. Their attempts at separation were earmarked by a multitude of methods aimed at dealing with, or rebelling against, guilt. Often their experimentation was more extreme, and their denial of those aspects of themselves confused with their parents, more vehement. This group of endlessly introspective women could not achieve career commitment and for the most part fell back into diffusion or foreclosed by age 34. They chose relationships with men in college who were just as controlling as their mothers had been.

The "identity achievements" on the other hand, were able successfully to deal with the guilt implicit in successful separation. Their experimentation involving many dimensions of their lives led to the integration of a self-chosen identity. The capacity to integrate their identity resulted in an ability to repeat the process later during adulthood. These women did not view work as the most important element in their lives, although they were committed to their work. The anchor in their lives was finding a synergistic balance between career, relationships, and personal interests. They were flexible, nonjudgmental, and had the capacity to integrate aspects of both security and adventuresomeness in the context of relationships.

Women classified as "achievements" were women that found a relationship, separate from her parents with which to be in connection while transitioning from college to adulthood. This relationship was one of support, not dominance as the women experimented with issues related to career,
sexuality, politics, and religion. These people tended to be supportive boyfriends, husbands, and later, children. Careers acted as anchors for some women but this occurred only when a relevant mentor was present who was able to share and enhance the experience.

Of particular interest to this study was Josselson’s follow-up interviews with the Identity Achieved women, who were, at the time of their second interview, in their early thirties. These women, who comprised twenty-four percent of the sample, had the highest self-esteem and lowest levels of anxiety. They had, prior to their second interview, experienced new crisis periods during which they reconsidered their goals and, as a result, reconstructed their identities. They remained self-assured, flexible, and open to change.

Interestingly, Identity Achievements were the most likely of the four groups to have changed professions. According to Josselson, "Of the eight Identity Achievements, seven are now in different occupations than they had chosen in college in contrast to none of the eight Foreclosures." (p. 100) Their career changes were deeply considered and made after significant reflection and were not based on impulse. Josselson argued that the Achievements' initial occupational commitments did not lack depth, but reflected a deeper process in which occupational commitments were subordinated in favor of interpersonal and ideological identity commitments. According to Josselson:

For women, commitment to aspects of the self in relation to others as well as to belief systems forms the nucleus of the identity constellation. In a sense, occupational identity grows out of that nucleus. Once a woman has committed herself to whom she wants to be in relation to others, how she wants to contribute to others, her occupational identity becomes a means of expressing aspects of this basic sense of self. With identity related to but not rooted in career goals, Identity Achievement women are
flexible about their jobs and, into their early thirties, are still considering options. (p. 101)

While Identity Achievements were active job changers, the Moratoriums remained occupationally stable. By their early thirties, three had Identity Achieved, one remained in Moratorium, and six had retreated to Forclosure. According to Josselson, their internal capacity to make decisions remained paralyzed by a sense of guilt related to a strong desire not to disappoint their parents and particularly their mother.

Foreclosures who were reinterviewed in their early thirties remained, for the most part, in foreclosure. That is they continued to rigidly adhere to the values and institutional identifications of their parents. They remained dualistic, rigid, and externally-defined and yet had high self-esteem and low anxiety. Their lives were centered around their families and job or career was only a vehicle in service of the needs of the family.

Finally, the Diffusions, seemingly buffeted by numerous external forces, moved from job to job with no coherent plan or cohesive intention. While some were able to achieve some level of stability through the identification with an authority figure, most remained in Diffusion, died, or continued to attempt to establish an identity.

Thus, based upon Josselson’s work, one might expect women career changers to have successfully achieved a sufficient level of parental separation, a coherent identity, and be seeking a new balance in their lives. One would further expect the career change to occur in the context of relationship and as a part of a “balanced” life structure.
Roger Gould (1978) viewed the process of development as a continual shedding of internalized childhood states which impinge upon, and interfere with, the evolving conscious demands of adulthood. Gould, a psychiatrist, based his theory of adult development on clinical experience with both men and women. He identified a series of age-related (but not necessarily age-specific) developmental stages during which certain childhood internalizations or assumptions must be challenged in consciousness and ultimately integrated. Similar to Levinson's "Early Adult Transition" period, Gould identified the stage "Leaving our Parents World" (age 16-22) during which both men and women must challenge the assumption "I'll always belong to my parents and believe in their world". Gould argues that in order to separate, young adults often take substantial action in order to confirm in themselves that which is different from their parents. That is, in order to differentiate themselves from their parents and affirm a unique personal identity, they often appear compelled to deny in themselves attributes which they identify with their parents. The degree to which this occurs appears to be a function of how hard parents "hold on" versus "let go" as their children attempt to separate. Implicit in Gould's work is the notion that the more our true talents and interests are denied in order to achieve separation from our parents, the more likely are substantial adjustments later in life.

The next life period described for Levinson's (1978) men was "Entering the Adult World" (ages 22-28). It is during this time that a young man explores the possibilities for adult living in multiple components of his "life structure". Simultaneously (and antithetically) a man feels pressure to create a stable life structure, making commitments and becoming responsible. The tension
between exploration and commitment is pervasive throughout the period. The commitments which are made form the basis for an initial life structure, the viability of which may be determined by the degree to which important aspects of the self are allowed expression.

For Levinson’s women (1996) the life period equivalent to Entering the Adult World was "Entry Life Structure for Early Adulthood." For all fifteen women in the homemaker sample, marriage/family was the central component of this structure. While most of the women periodically held outside jobs none invested in them significantly. Contrastingly, whether married or not, work was the central component of this structure for the career women. Love, marriage, and/or family were important, but subordinated relative to career. In their early twenties, the career women had outlined a life plan for early adulthood and by their mid-twenties had developed the capacity to start a family without getting trapped in a Traditional Marriage Enterprise. Despite a focused engagement with work, the career woman’s experience continued to be influenced by the conflict between the internal Traditional Homemaker Figure and the internal Anti-Traditional Figure.

Gould identifies a similar stage he calls “I’m Nobody’s Baby Now” (age 22-28). During this stage, the assumption “Doing things my parents way, with will power and perseverance, will bring results, but if I become too frustrated, they will step in and show me the right way”, must be challenged and ultimately shed in consciousness. During this stage the task is to become competent, which is often initially accomplished through the rigid adoption of the host culture’s values and advice (e.g. corporation, church, community, mentor, etc.). Later these values and advice are often rethought, perhaps
challenged, and ultimately integrated into the self. For most men and some women, a sense of competence is most often achieved at work, but could be achieved as a care giver and homemaker.

It is during this stage that we begin living out our “life dream”, which often initially crystallized during our late teens or early twenties. Gould argues that the life dream arises out of our identification with the stock male and female role models offered us in youth. He further argues that our culture perpetuates several myths, which often become incorporated implicitly into our life dreams; for men the myth is that “power brings bliss”; for women the myth is that “marriage brings bliss”. Similarly Baruch and others (1983) argue that the “marriage myth” prompts women to mistakenly think that being married will take care of her need to develop competence. Gould suggests that the degree to which we adopt these rigid, culturally defined roles, myths, and expectations, to the detriment of our unfolding genetic dispositions, will have a direct relationship on the degree of severity of transitional periods awaiting us in the future. Levinson similarly recognizes the significance of the congruence of the life structure with important aspects of the true self. He argues that a lack of congruence may lead to a man feeling his life is a sham or an unwanted compliance with the demands of parents or society, and a betrayal of himself.

For Levinson, the “Dream” is a vision of oneself and one’s life in the future, and it provides vitality and clarity to life pursuits. He argues that it is a task of young adulthood to define more clearly the dream, and find ways to live it out. Those who fail to ground the initial life structure in the pursuit of a vision of themselves in the future may loose connection with life, causing the dream
to die, and with it, a sense of vitality and purpose in their lives. External constraints such as parental influence, financial considerations, family expectations, or economic realities may short-circuit the living of the dream, leading to a "reckoning" later, perhaps near mid-life.

In his study of men, Levinson argued that several adult persons may act as transitional figures during their "Novice Phase", enabling and empowering the actualization of the Dream. One such figure is often a "Mentor," or person several years older with greater seniority and experience in the world the man is trying to enter. The Mentor supports and facilitates the realization of the Dream, acting as a mixture of parent, peer, and sponsor. The Mentor becomes an internalized figure through identification, enhancing developmental expansion into a new identity. As their relationship evolves, the man begins to experience himself as more capable and mature. The two slowly begin to relate more as equals until, at some point, the relationship ends. Often the ending involves substantial conflict and bad feelings, but provides the man a symbolic transcendence of the boy/man division of childhood.

Levinson described another frequent transitional figure of men as the "Special Woman". The Special Woman helps the man shape and live out the Dream. She "shares it, believes in him as its hero, gives it her blessing, joins him on the journey and creates a 'boundary space' within which his aspirations can be imagined and his hopes nourished" (Levinson, 1978, p. 109). At a deeper level, she enables the man to project his own internal feminine figure, or Anima (Jung, 1971) on her, providing him symbiotic wholeness pending further development and acceptance of the feminine in himself. Later in life, as the man is able to become more complete in himself,
he will have less need for the illusory or actual contributions of the Special Woman. Their ability to sustain a lasting relationship often depends on whether in supporting his dream, she lost her own.

For more “traditional” women, it becomes important, perhaps in the thirties and forties, after years of holding an identity fashioned on and appended to his, to begin to assert her own will on an environment from which she has been long removed. The large number of “traditional” family divorces around the Age Thirty Transition and the Mid-life Transition speak both to the difficulty of this passage and to their more frequent occurrence during transitional periods. For the more “liberated” woman, the issue seems to revolve around the couple’s ability to balance the diverse demands of their respective (and different) dreams.

The next adult developmental period identified by Levinson is the “Age 30 Transition” (age 28-32). It is during this period, that life begins to take on a more “serious” quality. Levinson's men often felt a mandate to proceed to make any substantial life changes before “time runs out.” For those men whose initial life structure included important aspects of their personalities, this was often only a mild reevaluation, but for those who had poorly matched their life structures with their dreams, talents, and external possibilities, this was a time of great difficulty. Often every aspect of the man’s life was called into question, ending ultimately in a recommitment to the existing life structure, or a commitment to new choices involving career and/or family. If the choices of this period are poorly made, and the life structure flawed, the price to pay will be much higher in the next transitional period.
For Levinson's women this period was a period of great personal growth and development. The homemakers, as they neared their thirtieth birthday, had achieved their initial goals centered around the Traditional Marriage Enterprise and began to expand their participation in the outside work world. None of the homemakers had children after their thirtieth birthday. Rising out of this decision was a constellation of new possibilities to explore. The career women, by their mid-twenties, had found a way to establish a form of modified Transitional Marriage Enterprise in which their time and energy were split between some work and some homemaking. During their age 30 Transition all the career women went through major changes in their occupational path and many ended, restructured, or began relationships and/or marriages.

Gould identified a parallel stage he calls "Opening up to what's inside" (age 28-34) during which the assumption "there are no significant coexisting contradictory forces within me; life is simple and controllable" must be challenged. During this stage, we challenge and modify the rigid rules of our 20's. As our competence has increased, so has our recognition of the limitation of our abilities and the complexity of reality. We encounter aspects of ourselves which have not found expression and seek to include them in our lives. During this stage Gould argued that it is the work men do that substantially determines their view of the world and self-image. Career is often connected to the "magic dream" and thought to be capable of pulling us up from the smallness of childhood. That is, career is thought to be a panacea for weakness and insecurity, and a means to immortality. Levinson and others (1978) expressed a similar idea when he recognized that career advancement
is often stimulated by a fantasy with magical qualities which suggests that “if I get to the top of my ladder, I will have everything I really wanted and live happily ever after” (p. 154). Gould further argued that for some there emerges a need for more intrinsic pleasure in work occasionally leading to a career transition. For women there is often less concern for career, as marriage is often connected to their “magic dream” of home and family. It is during this stage that Gould suggests a strong pull for women toward child bearing.

The next male developmental period identified by Levinson is “Settling Down” (age 33-40). It is during this period that a man invests himself fully in the major components of his life structure. His goals are to establish a niche in society through the actualization of the Dream. He becomes a valued, competent member of his world as he advances on an internalized timetable. By the end of the Settling Down period, there exists a distinctive phase which Levinson calls “Becoming One’s Own Man” (age 36-40). This is a phase during which a man strives to reach the upper rungs of his ladder; to become a senior member of his world. It is also a phase during which mentor relationships may become particularly vulnerable. The man will not only lose his current mentor, he will grow beyond the readiness or willingness to be the protege of another older person.

Levinson’s focus on career as a critical component of a man’s life structure during their thirties is echoed by Vaillant (1977) in his description of the results of a thirty-five year longitudinal study of a relatively small sample of Harvard educated men. Vaillant (1977) argued that:

From age twenty-five to thirty-five they tended to work hard, to consolidate their careers, and to devote themselves to the nuclear family....In working hard to become specialists at their careers, the Grant Study men tended to sacrifice play. Rather than question whether they had married the right
woman, rather than dream of other careers, they changed their babies' diapers and looked over their shoulders at their competition (p. 216).

Their wives, according to Vaillant,

contcerned with the nuclear family on the one hand, withdraw from their less-conventional unmarried friends and put their children's needs and household security first. At the same time, they strive to give exciting parties, resume postponed careers, and inadvertently push their husbands toward the very promotions that would disrupt their own roots (p. 217).

Many of Vaillant's men served in World War II, and were thus of a prior generation during which the "traditional" nuclear family arrangement was somewhat normative. Hence, their historical events and cohort characteristics shaped their lives significantly. Vaillant's observations remain potentially suggestive for some families today. The dynamics he describes project dissonance to the impending Midlife Transition in a manner similar to storm clouds gathering on the horizon. However, many families today are structured differently and have lived through different historical influences, suggesting different dynamics and processes. Our ability to overgeneralize with respect to family dynamics is no longer justifiable, nor in all probability, was it ever.

Levinson's women experienced the period he called "Culminating Life Structure of Early Adulthood" between the ages of 33 and 40. According to Levinson, around age 36 the woman's task, within this period, shifts from one focusing on establishing a new life structure to one of "Becoming One's Own Woman." During this phase the homemakers were challenged with the task of becoming less a "little girl" and more a "woman." According to Levinson, becoming a woman has to do with a shift in internal orientation from an emphasis on the culturally congruent "little girl" (Traditional Homemaker
Figure) to an emphasis on the more independent, competent and responsible "woman" (Anti-Traditional Figure).

For the career women, this period was initially one of instability and uncertainty as they struggled with an "intended structure" which could not be immediately realized. They wanted out of relationships, into relationships, or to have children, but often did not possess the resources or set of circumstances conducive to their wishes. Many were plateauing occupationally and derailing, some were choosing to focus on family and diminishing their work involvements, while still others were struggling to continue their march up the perceived ladder of success. The career women often found the work place to be uncomfortably heirarchical, political, and patriarchal during this period.

For the duration of the period, most of the career women found satisfaction and self-esteem in both occupation and love/marriage/family. Late in the period many women, exhausted from the energy expended to maintain their Neo-Traditional Marriage Enterprise began to envision and negotiate an Egalitarian Marriage Enterprise in which everything was shared with their partner including housekeeping and child care.

The last developmental period described by Levinson which I will discuss here is The "Mid-life Transition" (age 40-45). During this period Levinson's men question every aspect of their lives, often feeling as if they cannot go on as before. They experience concerns regarding their loss of youth and are forced to deal with an expanding or changing role in society and family. This is a time during which repressed, suppressed, and neglected aspects of the self urgently seek expression, stimulating modification of the life structure. Men often make significant external changes in their lives during
these years including divorce, remarriage, alterations of occupation or life style, or movement towards more creative or autonomous enterprises.

Levinson argues that a major task of the Mid-Life Transition involves confronting and reintegrating four polarities or pairs of tendencies or states normally experienced as conflicting and mutually exclusive. These four polarities are: (1) Young/Old; (2) Destruction/Creation; (3) Masculine/Feminine; and (4) Attachment/Separateness.

Integrating the Young/Old polarity involves mourning the loss of the youthful hero in oneself and learning how to be a hero of a different kind in mid-life. It means recognizing that the battle fought in youth is no longer the battle which must be fought. As Joseph Campbell (1949) so cleverly argued, we spend the first half of our lives climbing the ladder only to find that its leaning against the wrong wall. The Destruction/Creation polarity is grounded in a man's growing awareness of his own mortality and a resulting desire to affirm that which is creative in himself, both for his benefit and that of others, prior to his death. The Masculine/Feminine polarity addresses the need of men at mid-life to begin integrating the feminine in themselves. Levinson argues that young men, in attempting to affirm their masculinity deny and repress the feminine in themselves. The anxiety they often associate with the "feminine" may inhibit the development of important aspects of the self during mid-life. Finally, the Attachment/Separateness polarity deals with the shift toward more internal, subjective, creative work often experienced at mid-life.

Levinson argues that these polarities need to be reintegrated during every developmental transition. The extent to which this is accomplished successfully will have a direct effect upon the viability of the next life structure.
According to Levinson, a man's desire to question and modify his life reflects the healthiest parts of himself, but may be hindered by pathological anxiety and guilt, dependencies, animosities, and vanities of earlier years. These may inhibit his examination of important issues at mid-life and lead to the formation of a life structure which excludes important aspects of himself which are seeking expression. According to Levinson and others (1978), if a man at 40 seeks to rework his life structure, he will be opposed "by other persons and institutions - his wife, children, boss, parents, colleagues, the occupational system in which he works, the implicit web of social conformity - that seek to maintain order and prevent change" (p. 200). However, they further argue, that a man must learn to listen closely to the voices of change emerging in his psyche and decide consciously what part in his life he will give them:

A man hears the voice of an identity prematurely rejected; of a love lost or not pursued; of a valued interest or relationship given up in acquiescence to parental or other authority; of an internal figure who wants to be an athlete or nomad or artist, to marry for love or remain a bachelor, to get rich or enter the clergy or live a sensual carefree life - possibilities set aside earlier to become what he now is (Levinson et al., 1978, p. 200).

Levinson also identified a Mid-Life Transition for his sample of women. During Mid-Life the homemakers began to question the Traditional Marriage Enterprise, ultimately determining that caregiving would no longer be the primary function of their life. According to Levinson, the homemakers wanted to be more care-free and to have the opportunity to make their own decisions and pursue their own interests. Their ability to achieve their emerging goals was constrained by their prior failure to develop their sense of self and by a
culture which was not always welcoming or supportive. The result for most of
the homemakers was a period of significant crisis during this period. None-
the-less these women attempted, often in opposition to the desires of others, to
make new choices and take greater responsibility for their own lives and
decisions.

The career women, who had embraced (and struggled with) aspects of
both the Traditional Figure and Anti-Traditional Figure for all their adult lives
began to question their vision of the "Successful Career Woman." According
to Levinson the Successful Career Woman is a cultural myth which portrays a
woman struggling admirably against a set of cultural and occupational
constraints, only to, around age 40, break through and "have it all" - career,
mariage, and children. According to Levinson, this myth was often a guiding
mythology for the career women which, after diverging significantly from
reality, had to be reworked during Mid-Life. The resulting developmental
passage yielded an alteration of the women's relationship to their occupation.
They constructed a new balance of engagement in, and separateness from,
the world, potentially empowering their capacity to pursue their own goals
even if others opposed them.

Gould identifies a similar stage he refers to as the "Mid-life Decade"
(age 35-45), during which the assumption "there is no evil or death in the
world, the sinister has been destroyed" must be challenged. During this stage,
men and women must develop aspects of their personalities which have been
suppressed or denied and give them expression in their lives.

Gould suggests that for men, the "work mythology" must be dismantled.
It is during this time that men recognize the illusionary nature of the notion that
one can become invincible with money, power, and status. Work can no longer serve the purpose of protecting us from that which we fear most. A new balance, more inclusive of our emerging dispositions must be struck. Achieving such a new balance in life may lead to a career or lifestyle change if a man has options.

Gould identifies five basic motivations for work: (1) as a “cure” or to get “bigger”, which in effect constitutes a defense against perceived personal inadequacies; (2) psychodynamic reasons such as the need to affirm or deny a prior identification with a significant parent or other; (3) to express and exercise an expanding or previously denied range of talents and capacities; (4) to be a part of an organization or field that has its own extrinsic meaning; or (5) out of necessity. Gould argues that at mid-life we reapportion these five motivations for work which give work meaning. In youth, work is often done out of necessity, to get “bigger”, and to be a part of something bigger than oneself. Later in life there is often a greater focus on affirming our talents and abilities in what we do, and dealing with previously repressed or suppressed aspects of ourselves which now are demanding attention. As Gould (1978) states:

when work loses its illusory magical protective powers and when we are more in tune with our instincts and impulses, we become authentic adults, true to our innermost selves. We generate our own interests, motivation and values. Because we have decided which things really have meaning for us, we see clearly just how we want to spend our time. We no longer fear bosses or idealize and imitate mentors. We stop being false protectors to women and require instead a relationship of two independent adults (p. 245).

According to Gould (1978), women at mid-life feel an increased need to act on their own behalf and to challenge the notion that it is “impossible to live
without a protector". Some women may have so fully identified with their mothers at the expense of their true wants and needs, that they mistakenly project that same control over their lives onto their husbands. It is important for women attempting to regain power in their lives to distinguish between husbands who actually are attempting to control and maintain power over them, and their own internal childhood fears denying them permission to restructure their lives. As Gould (1978) stated, "By this time, the woman has completely forgotten that originally she only pretended to be helpless. She gave away power and is perfectly capable of taking it back - except in her mind. She now believes in her own helplessness" (p. 251).

Gould's notion that women at mid-life grow developmentally through an increase in instrumentality, is echoed by Baruch et al's (1983) suggestion that women returning to the work force must recognize that one can be "nice" and have power. Thus for many women it is important to begin to integrate the masculine aspects of their personality and own their own capacity for aggression, anger, and domination. The external manifestation of these internal changes is often a return to the workplace after a period of remaining at home, an accelerated focus on achievement, or if previously employed, a career change. In general, it is important that those emerging aspects of personality be given a voice in the evolving life style of the mid-life woman.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter has been to explore the adult psychosocial theories of Josselson, Gould, and Levinson. While I focused primarily on the career-related aspects of the respective theories, I did not limit the discussion
specifically to these topics, as an explanation of the broader developmental context was equally relevant. It is my intention that my understanding of psychosocial literature will inform theory development in a manner consistent with the notion of "theoretical sensitivity" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), but not drive or control it. After completing theory development with respect to this study, I plan to dialogue with these, and perhaps other, a priori theories in order to explore ways in which each might inform the other.
CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to articulate the assumptions and procedures related to the methodological considerations guiding the process of inquiry in this study. I have elected to design a naturalist inquiry, and as such have chosen a model described by Lincoln and Guba (1985) for its articulation. The selection of a naturalistic approach is related to the nature of the phenomenon I have chosen to study and will be elaborated in the pages to follow.

I will initially describe the focus of the study and will then endeavor to explain how the focus "fits" with respect to the paradigm of inquiry. I will then explore sampling considerations, phases of inquiry, instrumentation, and the planning of data collection and recording modes. This will be followed by a discussion of modes of data collection, data analysis procedures, logistical considerations, trustworthiness procedures, ethical considerations, and a definition of terms.

Focus of the Study

Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that in a naturalistic study, the focus serves two major purposes. First, it describes the boundaries of the inquiry:
that is, the general field or terrain within which the study lies. Second, the focus determines inclusion-exclusion criteria for emerging information. These criteria are critical to the naturalist in that they permit a purposeful filtering of data emerging from the voluminous and often broadly defined information gathered early in the study. Decisions about what to keep and what not to keep in terms of data, are made with respect to an understanding of the focus of the study.

It is, however, important to remember that in naturalistic inquiry the boundaries defined by the focus of the study, and in fact, even the focus itself, remain tenuous and potentially subject to change as the inquiry unfolds. Lincoln and Guba (1985) point out that:

the focus of the inquiry can and probably will change. Conventional inquirers regard such changes as absolutely destructive of their inquiry designs ('you will confound the variances hopelessly'); the naturalist expects such changes and anticipates that the emergent design will be colored by them. Far from being destructive, they are constructive, for these changes signal movement to a more sophisticated and insightful level of inquiry (p. 229).

Thus the focus is an articulation of the researcher's intention to gain an understanding of a particular phenomenon. That initial intention is tempered by the notion that the emergence of relevant data may result in a narrowing, diverting, or altering of the initial focus. According to Glesne and Peshkin (1992), "data analysis done simultaneously with data collection enables you to focus and shape the study as it proceeds" (p. 127). In this way there is an interactive relationship between the focus of the study and the emerging data under analysis.
The focus of this study involves gaining an understanding of the "process" of career change when viewed in the context of an individual's life history. I am interested in the internal and external factors leading to the decision to make a change, the circumstances around which change is made, and the inner reaction and adjustment to the change after it has occurred. I believe these factors will not exist in isolation, and will be sculpted, in part, by the individual's life history and his or her interpretation of that history. I suspect a multitude of intra-individual, inter-individual, and environmental factors may come together in a mutually reciprocal fashion to compose the complexity of an individual undergoing the process of change. It is my desire to acquire greater understanding of that phenomenon.

The Fit of Paradigm to Focus

In selecting a paradigm of inquiry for a specific problem or area of interest, it is important to consider the manner in which the assumptions underlying the paradigm "fit" or interact with the nature of the problem. I have selected naturalistic inquiry for this study as I think it is best suited to explore a phenomenon which I believe should be viewed holistically and systemically. Trying to discover the mutually interactive factors implicit in human meaning construction and understanding are the focus of this study, not the adoption of a current theory and its assumptions concerning relevant constructs. Perhaps the best way to explore the naturalistic paradigm and its degree of fit with the problem at hand is to consider the axioms on which it is formulated and their relationship to the phenomenon we wish to understand. As already indicated, Lincoln and Guba (1985) define an axiom as "the set of undemonstrated (and
undenombratable) 'basic beliefs' accepted by convention or established by
practice as the building blocks of some conceptual or theoretical structure or
system (p. 33)." Lincoln and Guba (1985) provide a clear explication of five
axioms undergirding the naturalistic paradigm and I will offer their presentation
in the pages that follow:

Axiom 1: The nature of reality.

The naturalistic paradigm assumes reality is complex and
accommodates multiple legitimate constructed interpretations of it and these
are best studied holistically. The emergence of multiple realities as a part of a
naturalistic study may carry the researcher in many unexpected directions.
This "unfolding" nature of the inquiry process prohibits the notion of a priori
prediction and control as an ultimate objective. Instead, the naturalist seeks
only to understand the phenomenon to the extent possible given the data
acquired.

Data for this study will be gathered from ten individuals who have
experienced a career change. Each individual's life story constitutes an
individual construction of reality. As a part of this study, I positioned myself as
researcher, in the experience of the participants in an attempt to gain a clear
understanding of their world as they view it. According to Bogdan and Biklen
(1992) the naturalist's goal "is to better understand human behavior and
experience. They seek to grasp the processes by which people construct
meaning and to describe what those meanings are" (p. 49).

Axiom 2: The relationship of researcher to participant.

There is a mutually reciprocal relationship between the researcher and
the participant, such that each influences the other. We should recognize that
the researcher is attempting to reconstruct a prior construction of the participant who, through interaction with the researcher (and with their own reflections now viewed from the perspective of the present), may be continuing to grow and modify their construction. In a way, the researcher is aiming at a moving target while moving themselves. However, it is this dance of mutual meaning making which offers the level of complexity of understanding we seek in naturalistic inquiry. It is important that the researcher recognize that he or she may influence the participant and vice versa, and consider this phenomenon when developing the parameters of the interview process and its subsequent interpretation.

In this study, I interacted with each participant for approximately three to four hours. I believe that my own construction of their meaning was the result of a mutually reciprocal meaning making process. My approach was to initially permit the participants to reflect on their lives as if it were a book. They were told to divide the “book of their lives” into chapters logical to them and discuss what they have discovered. This session was followed by my asking the participant to respond to a series of open-ended semi-structured interview questions. The format initially permitted the participants to structure the presentation of their lives as they perceived it to be. The subsequent semi-structured interview questions permitted me to add focus in order to more richly explore the domains and areas of significance which had emerged earlier, and touch on new ones. Through these activities, I sought to minimize my impact on the participant’s construction of their experience while being inclusive of life domains which seem to be significant in prior lifespan studies (Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson, & McKee, 1978; Gould, 1978; Josselson,
Axiom 3: The goal of inquiry.

The objective of naturalistic inquiry is to gain an understanding of a particular phenomenon as it pertains to a specific context. Through the generation of working hypotheses with respect to a particular problem or area of interest, the depth of our understanding may be enhanced.

My study utilized purposeful sampling techniques in order to locate a sample illustrative of the process under investigation. Transferability of any theoretical outcomes will be subject to the researcher's evaluation of the contextual similarity of my sample to theirs.

Axiom 4: The nature of cause vs. effect.

Naturalistic inquiry rejects the notion of cause and effect. Instead, the idea of causality is replaced by the idea of reciprocal determinism, whereby multiple factors come together mutually interacting and effecting each other. This more systemic view eliminates the need to separate cause from effect, in fact making it difficult to distinguish one from another.

In my study, I sought to explore the factors interacting with, and contributing to, the construction, implementation, and consequences of career transition. Thus the focus was on the processes at work and the interaction between factors relevant to an understanding of a career transition as it existed in the context of the participant's life.

Axiom 5: The role of values in inquiry.

All inquiry, whether that associated with the conventional paradigm, or that emerging from a more naturalistic approach is directly and/or indirectly influenced in some way by the values of the researcher. The formulation of the
problem or area of interest, the selection of a paradigm of inquiry, and the choice of a theory used to guide data collection and interpretation all influence the nature of, and outcomes associated with, the research project.

Each of us operates from a personal paradigm, or world view, related to our cultural heritage, cognitive style, and life experiences. Our world view often operates unconsciously as an underlying set of beliefs and assumptions about the nature of reality. As a researcher, I know that my world view interacted with everything from the selection of the research topic to the research design, to data interpretation. Furthermore, I believe that it is my duty to provide the reader, as best as possible, a statement regarding my values and biases which may influence this work. I will endeavor to do this as follows:

Six years ago I left a six-year career in the banking industry in order to return to school and prepare for a career in a human development field. In that I had chosen the change, I expected little in the way of transitional discomfort. Much to my surprise I found the transition to be quite difficult. It took about one year for me to fully separate from the way I had come to know myself and to integrate a new way of "being" in the world. I was struck by the degree to which my identity was influenced by my prior occupation, place of residence, friends, and family. It was this transition which sparked my interest in the nature of the dynamics operating in a career change situation. I became interested in why some individuals make such changes and others, who consider it, do not. I am certain that my prior experience with the phenomenon I am studying will be a two-sided sword. On one hand, my prior experiences may position me with greater insight into the relevant factors involved in such a situation. On the other hand, they may blindfold me to
factors operating in some which are inconsistent with my own experience, and thus create blind spots or the potential for misinterpretation. Throughout this study, I focused on remaining aware of how my prior experiences might be interacting in my work to distort or otherwise confuse the outcomes.

These five axioms undergird the naturalistic paradigm and represent a foundational set of assumptions from which the research design and data interpretation emerge. Tied inseparably to, and depending fully upon, these five axioms are fourteen characteristics of naturalistic inquiry described by Lincoln and Guba (1985).

**Characteristic 1:** Natural Setting. Naturalistic inquiry assumes that the phenomenon under study should be understood in the context in which it normally exists. It is the context which has provided the ground from which meaning has been constructed in the first place. That is, reality exists as complete gestalts which should be viewed holistically in order to be understood. The setting is as much a part of the gestalt as the phenomenon itself, as each has interacted with the other in the formation of the whole.

The natural setting for this study is the living or working environment of the participant. Whenever possible I met with the participant in his or her work or home environment. It was my hope that by my entering their living space, they would remain more comfortably in tune with their life experiences and more easily relate these experiences to me. While I suggested to participants that we meet in their home or office, I remained flexible and was willing to meet with them at any location convenient to them. The participants ultimately selected a time and location which was comfortable to them.
**Characteristic 2:** Human Instrument. Naturalistic inquiry views the most efficient data gathering instrument to be the researcher him or herself. It is only a human mind which can adjust to, and make sense of, the multitude of realities which may be faced in the course of data gathering and interpretation.

It is possible to deeply understand another human being only through the complexity of human intersubjective interaction. While this interaction opens the door for various misrepresentations and misinterpretations, it also permits the vast complexity of a holistic, multidimensional perspective. In interviewing the participants, I engaged them on a cognitive and affective level. I observed their verbal and nonverbal responses to me and pursued even the unexplainable "sense of things" that often emerges in interpersonal discourse. I sought to clarify ambiguity and pursue emerging themes in the data as they arose. It is this level of complexity which is possible only through the use of the "human as instrument".

**Characteristic 3:** Utilization of Tacit Knowledge. Within the naturalistic paradigm felt or intuited insights are legitimate, as it is in our everyday interactions with others. Often intuition leads us beyond our own personal paradigm of meaning making to those nuances present in another's viewpoint. Without the ability to pursue our "sense of things", we might interpret another's words literally or from our own perspective and miss their more idiosyncratic meaning.

In attempting to understand another's life, I attempted to enter into their experience to the extent possible. I pursued intuitive hunches with additional questions and requests for clarification. In the end, tacit knowledge was every bit as valuable as the propositional knowledge resulting from our interaction.
Characteristic 4: Qualitative Methods. Without diminishing quantitative methods, it should be clear that the more inductive and flexible qualitative methods will be more likely to get at the complexity of multiple social realities. Qualitative methods effectively reveal the richness of the context under investigation and more clearly illuminate the nature of the researcher/participant interaction.

Naturalistic inquiry discourages the development of a priori categories to guide the study. Instead, the participants create the categories as their stories unfold. In this study, the participants not only described the continuities of their lives, but defined the turning points marking times of transition and change. Later, semi-structured interview questions and probing techniques "filled-out" the framework elicited from the participants.

Characteristic 5: Purposive Sampling. The idea of purposive sampling in the naturalistic paradigm is to select a sample which clearly illustrates the phenomenon under study. Theoretically, as the study unfolds and the phenomenon under investigation begins to crystallize, the sampling criteria may be further focused toward those cases illustrating aspects of the phenomenon in which the researcher is uncertain or in need of further clarification. This form of sampling increases the likelihood that the researcher will encounter the multitude of constructed realities relevant to the study.

In this study, I began by selecting those individuals whom I suspected would clearly exhibit the phenomenon in which I was interested. I also initially sampled broadly in terms of that phenomenon (different career paths, ages, geographical location, etc.) so as to attempt to capture the maximum diversity in its presentation. As the study evolved, I consistently applied this approach
to sample identification. I interviewed five men and five women for this study.

**Characteristic 6:** Inductive Data Analysis. In the naturalistic paradigm there exist no a priori theoretical categories. Through the use of inductive data analysis, the researcher seeks those patterns which logically emerge from the data and thus are free to illuminate unfolding multiple realities and mutually shaping influences. Along with these emergent patterns, however, may come ambiguity and a lack of clarity in data interpretation. Patton, (1990) argues that “being open and pragmatic requires a high tolerance for ambiguity and uncertainty as well as trust in the ultimate value of what inductive analysis will yield” (p. 62).

Induction further permits the researcher to contemplate contextual considerations such as the effect of researcher values on data interpretation. And finally, induction lends itself nicely to the notion of “thick description” of the meanings emerging from the study and its contexts, so important to later researchers who may review the findings of this study with regard to the possibility of transferring them to another context.

In this study the critical context is that of the participant’s life with a focus on its relationship to the career change. In Chapter 4 of this transcript, I will endeavor to illustrate the characteristics of the sample comprising this study and to provide richly descriptive examples relevant to the theoretical formulations in order to permit future researchers enough information to evaluate for themselves the possibility of transferring any theoretical conclusions of this study to other individuals and contexts.

**Characteristic 7:** Grounded Theory. In the naturalistic paradigm the substantive theory should emerge from the data and not be prefigured by any
a priori theory. The expectation is that the unfolding complexity will be captured in theory as it emerges and thus be grounded in the data.

In an ideal naturalistic world, the researcher would engage the participant free from any viewpoints colored by a priori theoretical perspectives. In fact, I have attempted to create a design which will minimize the effect of a priori theory on my theoretical formulations. However, I would be remiss not to describe the relevant theoretical perspectives with which I have personally struggled and which led to the design of this study. These theoretical perspectives represent lenses through which I began to wrestle with the data acquired in this study. There may, however, be some advantages implicit in a prior awareness of related theoretical perspectives. Such a perspective may enrich data interpretation in a manner similar to casting a beam of light into an otherwise dark nook or cranny lying near an illuminated structure. That is, a priori theory may suggest areas of exploration or interpretation which might otherwise have remained invisible or unnoticed.

The critical issue here is what Strauss and Corbin (1990) refer to as "theoretical sensitivity" or "the attribute of having insight, the ability to give meaning to data, the capacity to understand, and the capability to separate the pertinent from that which isn't" (p. 42). Strauss and Corbin (1990) argue that theoretical sensitivity is acquired through reading relevant literature, personal experience, professional experience, and later in the researcher's interaction with the data collected. Thus the researcher seeks to take that which is already known and hold it "out there" in such a way as to inform data interpretation but not limit or blind it to any a priori theoretical perspective.
This study was informed by the work of Levinson, Dallow, Klein, Levinson, and McKee (1976), Josselson, (1987), Gould (1978), and others. The research design, which will be described in the pages to follow, initially asked the participants to describe without interruption their understanding of the turning points and stable periods of their lives with a particular emphasis on their more recent career transition. They were then posed a series of open-ended semi-structured questions designed to illuminate the still "dark nooks and crannies" of their lives. My search into the darkness was assisted by these a priori perspectives, but not to the extent that it limited or constricted the emerging theory by its own configurations.

**Characteristic 8: Emergent Design.** In naturalistic inquiry, the research design is permitted to unfold in a manner consistent with the emerging data base. The relevant assumption is that the researcher could not know enough in advance of data collection effectively to create a suitable and complete design. By leaving the design flexible, the researcher can enact modifications as the emerging data suggests new categories of interest. The rigid design of the conventional research paradigm preconceives those areas of interest, thus limiting the focus of the study to what one thinks one will find when one gets there. According to Patton (1990):

> Qualitative inquiry designs cannot be completely specified in advance of fieldwork. While the design will specify an initial focus, plans for observations and interviews, and primary questions to be explored, the naturalistic and inductive nature of the inquiry makes it both impossible and inappropriate to specify operational variables, state testable hypotheses, and finalize either instrumentation or sampling schemes. A qualitative design unfolds as fieldwork unfolds. (p. 61)
While the general form of my research design remained consistent throughout the investigation, I did make several changes in certain aspects of the design over the course of the study. These occurred in response to situations and circumstances I encountered and ultimately served to enrich the theoretical outcomes. For example, early in the study I identified a significant category which demanded the addition of a new open-ended question in order to fully explore its boundaries and nature. As I added the question, I attempted to contact prior participants by mail to ask them the new question. Two of the participants did not respond to my written request. I did not make additional requests of them. While I was retroactively unable to fully complete my data set such that all questions had been asked of all participants, I found that the category which demanded further exploration was one of the richest aspects of the emerging theoretical perspective. My capacity to add an additional question was critical to bringing my outcomes to form.

**Characteristic 9: Negotiated Outcomes.** In the naturalistic paradigm, meanings represent a co-construction between the researcher and the participant. In order to facilitate an accurate representation of meaning, it is thus important to acquire the assistance of some or all of the participants in reviewing the researcher’s interpretations of their words. This makes meaning construction a participatory endeavor among the parties involved.

Initially I planned to create a life history write-up on each participant, with a particular emphasis on those issues surrounding the recent career change. Following initial data collection on the first four participants, I composed a life history and mailed it to each respective participant for editing, feedback, changes, etc. I then adjusted my interpretations accordingly.
Finally, I mailed the revised life history to the participant for their records. In this way, the participant was allowed to act as a co-constructor of their own life history. My goal was to attempt to illuminate the shadows of meaning in their discourse and confirm with them that I clearly saw that which is illuminated.

With three of the remaining participants I took a somewhat different approach. I provided them an overview of the model which was beginning to crystallize from the stories of all the participants and then provided them the model categories with their own words coded into the categories. I then contacted them by phone or in person to discuss their thoughts. I took this approach for several reasons: (1) the life history was providing little in the way of meaningful feedback. The participants seemed to view it as a "nice summary of my life:” (2) the life history did not request direct feedback regarding the emerging theoretical model and its relationship to their life: and (3) the life history was not yielding a productive feedback discussion with the participant, as it was primarily done through the mail.

The new approach proved to provide significant advantages and substantial dynamic feedback both in terms of my interpretation of their life and on the way in which their life is (or is not) informed by the theoretical model. The conversational format provided the flexibility for a diverse range of discussion regarding both their life and the model.

**Characteristic 10: Case Study Reporting Mode.** The naturalistic researcher prefers the case study reporting mode because it permits the flexibility to convey the complexity of multiple constructed realities and the thick description necessary for other researchers to consider the transferability of the findings to their context of inquiry. Patton (1990) further argues that
"case studies...become particularly useful where one needs to understand some special people, particular problem, or unique situation in great depth, and where one can identify cases rich in information" (p. 54). This method additionally provides the researcher a forum for reflexive reporting such that their values, biases, and interactions can be examined in the context of the report. Finally, the case study is an effective medium for exploring the variety of mutually shaping influences present in the course of the study.

In conducting this study, I created a case study of each participant presented through the coding of interview text into an emerging theoretical model. The model, which was continually reworked consistent with the Constant Comparative Method of data analysis, provided a chronological presentation of the participants lives using their own words. The final write-up will not present the individual case studies in totality, but will instead weave together a presentation of the emerging theoretical model as illustrated by the actual text from the interviews. This format permits dialogue across the cases while permitting the substantial "thick description" and self-reflexivity demanded in this type of inquiry.

**Characteristic 11:** Idiographic Interpretation. Naturalistic inquiry favors idiographic interpretation of data or the interpretation of data with respect to the particulars of the case as opposed to a nomothetic interpretation which favors data analysis in terms of the phenomenon that generalizes. Idiographic interpretation is more applicable to the naturalistic paradigm, as it permits complete consideration and explication of the context within which the phenomenon under study occurs. The interaction between the phenomenon and the context in which it occurs can thus be viewed holistically and naturally.
In this study, it was important to consider the entire context of the individual's life in order to understand the factors leading to, influencing, and emerging from a career transition. I believe that it was important to gain an understanding of the participant's life patterns, including his or her periods of growth and change, as well as his or her periods of stability in order to sufficiently illuminate relevant factors in the process of career transition.

**Characteristic 12**: Tentative Application. The ability to transfer the theoretical formulations resulting from a naturalistic research study to that of a different context is contingent on the degree to which the originating context is congruent with the context to which it is being applied. The naturalistic paradigm assumes that constructed meanings are influenced by factors operating within the specific contexts in which they occur as well as the interaction between the research participant and the researcher. It is important to consider these factors when pondering issues of transferability.

In reviewing the outcomes of this study and considering transferring them to other contexts, it is important to compare the demographic makeup of this sample with that of the receiving context. I have included substantial data regarding the nature and makeup of the sample later in this document. I have also provided the reader substantial information with regard to my prior theoretical grounding which may influence the way I interpret data. Additionally, I have commented as necessary in order to provide the reader my perception of any personal biases which I recognize as potentially impacting or interacting with my interpretation of the data. Finally, in Chapter 4 of this document, I have provided the reader sufficient "thick description" to reasonably make transferability decisions.
**Characteristic 13**: Focus-determined Boundaries. By fostering an awareness of an emerging research focus, the researcher can define areas of inclusion and exclusion. The emergent nature of the focus permits the multiple realities encountered in the study to inform the further refinement of the focus. Thus the design cascades or flows out of itself as a result of the ongoing interaction of the researcher, the researched, and the context of inquiry. While this may be viewed as a weakness in the conventional paradigm, it is a strength in the naturalistic paradigm, as it permits theory to unfold naturally and thus results in a theoretical perspective grounded fully in the data.

In this study, the respondents were initially asked to consider writing a book about their lives. They were asked to consider how they would divide the chapters; the content of each chapter; and the transitional periods dividing the chapters. As a result of this open-ended approach, many participant-defined categories emerged, which then added clarity and direction to the focus of the study. The purpose of the open-ended semi-structured questions was to illuminate any "shadows" by specifically addressing predefined dimensions of the individual's life. These questions helped fill-out an understanding of the participant's life and expand upon their prior discussion.

**Characteristic 14**: Special Criteria for Trustworthiness. The criteria for trustworthiness are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. These criteria and their relationship to the research design of this study will be thoroughly discussed in the pages that follow.

**Where and from whom data was collected**

Lincoln and Guba (1985) describe four considerations important to the planning of a sample, including: how the informants will be identified and
contacted; how the sampling criteria will evolve over the course of the study; and at what point will termination of sampling occur? Each of these considerations will be discussed as follows:

1. How the informants were identified and contacted: Consistent with the naturalistic paradigm, purposeful sampling procedures were employed. According to Patton (1990), “the logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth” (p. 169). The idea is to select those participants which will best illuminate the focus of the inquiry and to study these cases at great length and depth. The following discussion addresses the selection of the initial participants of this study.

In order to qualify as an initial participant in this study, an individual must have spent a minimum of two years in a “professional” environment. Professional is loosely defined to include those individuals with a four year degree from a post-secondary curriculum, and subsequent employment in a related capacity by an institution, agency, or organization. The two year requirement ensured that the participants had sufficient experience in an earlier career to clearly understand the presses of the environment upon their lives and identities. Additionally, it excluded job-hoppers who may have been in the exploratory stage of career development, from the study.

Subsequent to being employed in a professional position, the initial participants must have undergone a “career change”. For the purpose of this study, career change is defined as a perceived movement to an occupation requiring substantially different responsibilities and calling upon qualitatively different domains of interest and/or expertise from those previously held.
Potential initial participants were screened by asking them to discuss their change of vocation. Subsequent probes were used until sufficient information was acquired to determine their perception of the nature of their change. The individuals selected were those who exhibited characteristics consistent with these criteria and who perceived their career change to be substantive. For example, the defense industry production manager who purchased a bed and breakfast inn in Vermont, the corporate attorney who opened a restaurant, or the marketing executive who bought a winery were all eligible for participation in the study.

Individuals terminated or "laid-off" from previous employment were not excluded from sample consideration. The final determination was tied to the process triggered by termination. If termination led to a process of self-reflection through which a new, qualitatively different career direction was chosen, then that individual could have been selected for the study. However, should termination have triggered a mad dash for the first available job opening or a return to the same type of job, then the individual would have been omitted.

Finally, the participants were all required to have initiated their career change no more than ten, and no less than two years prior to their participation in this study. This assured that the participants had a relatively recent experience such that the details could be recalled with a reasonable degree of accuracy and a distant enough experience to permit some degree of integration with respect to the changes.

The participants were selected using a snowball (purposive) sampling method. This method is appropriate in that it facilitated my ability to locate
these individuals. Additionally, it allowed each potential participant to be
screened (both through the referring source and ultimately, the screening
process) prior to selection. There were no specific age or race requirements
for participation. Additionally there were no socioeconomic requirements
required for participation in the study.

Once a potential participant was identified they were mailed a letter
describing the nature of the study, qualifications of participants, requirements,
potential benefits, and confidentiality issues (See Appendix B). I followed-up
within a week by phone to inquire as to their interest, answer any questions,
and, if they were interested in participating, screen them for inclusion as a
participant. Once they were accepted as a participant, I scheduled a mutually
convenient time and location for us to meet.

2. The manner in which sampling criteria evolved over the course of the
study. Consistent with the naturalistic paradigm, the selection criteria may be
modified as the study unfolds should the emerging theory demand it. Any
reconfiguration of the sample criteria will be based on the nature of the
emerging theory and will be the result of an attempt to clarify, test, or question
emerging hypotheses. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) initially, no
participant is any better or worse than any other, however, as the inquiry
proceeds, and the problem becomes more focused, participants should be
selected in a manner designed to fill-out and complement emerging theory.
This principle, however, represents an ideal, and assumes a large pool of
potential participants from which to selectively choose.

In this study, I did not modify selection criteria during the course of the
investigation because I did not find any reason to do so. My capacity to flesh-
out the emerging theoretical perspective would not have been enhanced by an alteration of the sample selection criteria.

3. Termination of Sampling. Glaser and Strauss (1967) argue that, when developing grounded theory, theoretical saturation should be reached prior to termination of sampling. Theoretical saturation occurs when further data fail to expand or inform existing theoretical formulations. Thus emerging theory informs not only the nature and properties of the sample, but the size of it as well.

In this study, due to time and logistical constraints, I limited the number of participants to 5 men and 5 women. As the study progressed and the model began to crystallize I found it necessary to make fewer and fewer refinements to the model. However, I made several slight changes even during the time I worked with the last participant’s data. This suggests that I did not reach theoretical saturation, although, based on the diminishing level of refinement necessary to code the final few participant’s data I believe that I was nearing saturation, however this is only speculation. The fact that theoretical saturation was not reached is a limitation of this study.

Phases of Inquiry

Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that the naturalistic researcher begins a study not knowing what is not known. As a result, the study goes through several phases:

Phase 1: Orientation and Overview Phase: During the early phase of inquiry categories will emerge and the focus usually becomes more clearly defined. Initially, however questioning will be broad and open-ended,
permitting a substantial diversity of information to emerge. Categories of interest will be identified and the focus will begin to clarify.

Early in the study, I concentrated on the categories emerging from the initial "grand tour" question. Those categories were expanded, clarified, or reduced based upon additional data. The unfolding categories then informed further interview considerations as a question was added and several were omitted.

Phase 2: Focused exploration. This phase moves questioning towards a more focused effort as every aspect of the emergent categories are explored. Thus later participants may be subjected to more focused questions than those early in the study. The idea is to tailor the questions in such a way as to expand, clarify, or limit the categories under active exploration.

In my study, through the addition of a question relevant to an emerging category I was able to extract and refine a developmental model relevant to the career change phenomenon.

Phase 3: Member Check Phase. This phase has to do with confirming the researcher’s construction of the participant’s experience with the participant. The dialogue which results underscores the participatory nature of the relationship between researcher and participant and the co-constructed nature of the research product.

Following the completion of the first four interviews I composed individual life histories which were mailed to each respective participant for changes, additions, comments, etc. Upon return to me, I modified each participant’s respective life history to reflect their clarifications and drafted a final version which was returned to them. I found this approach to offer little in
terms of providing meaningful feedback and decided to take a different approach.

I decided to select a sampling of three participants (two men and one woman) and send them an overview of the emerging theoretical model as well as the model categories with their own responses coded into appropriate sections. The selections were made based on logistical considerations. I followed up with a personal conversation during which I asked them to respond to the model and its relevance to their life, particularly with respect to the specific coded transcript. I found this approach to provide exceptionally rich dialogue which further informed the development of this model.

Determining Instrumentation

When doing naturalistic inquiry, the instrument of choice is the human being. The human, unlike other instruments of man’s creation, is capable of empathic introspection and reflection when observing or interacting with another human. Thus through an interactive process, the naturalist can formulate categories which are more phenomenologically congruent with those of the participant than might another instrument. Patton (1990) argues that “the capacity for empathy, then, is one of the major assets available for human inquiry into human affairs” (p. 56).

The human is also capable of viewing the participant’s world holistically; that is, as a whole within the context in which it exists. This permits a systemic perspective of the phenomenon, seldom available through the conventional paradigm of inquiry. According to Patton (1990):

this means that, at the time of data collection, each case, event, or setting under study is treated as a unique entity, with its own particular meaning
and its own constellation of relationships emerging from and related to the context within which it exists (p. 50).

While the human is capable of great complexity in terms of understanding the world of another, it is also true that their interpretation must first pass through their own subjectivity which may distort their perception. There are a number of methods which seek to minimize the effect of researcher bias on the results of a study. These will be covered later in the section on “Trustworthiness”.

I was the primary tool in this study. I interviewed the participants and engaged their responses through my own subjectivity. In order to mitigate against my own preconceptions I visited on a periodic basis with several individuals in the human development field who found this study particularly interesting. I also periodically discussed the emerging model with my advisor. My intent was to dialogue about the nature of emerging categories and the basis on which they were constructed. As a result, my subjectivity was frequently challenged and clarified, new ideas emerged, and old one’s, which were found to be inconsistent with the data, were discarded.

As the interviewer, I engaged the participants in two ways:

1. At the “Grand Tour” level: The participants were initially asked to respond to the following question: If you were to write a book of your life, I would like you to consider how you would divide the book into chapters; what the content of each chapter would be; and on what basis you divided the chapters. I am interested in knowing the general theme of each chapter as you see it, and in the events you view as major turning points in your life. The participants were provided knowledge of this question in my initial contact
letter, and thus had substantial time to consider how they would respond.

2. Through a Semi-structured, Open-ended interview question set: The questions (see Appendix A) were initially formulated based on categories of data found relevant in the work of Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson, and Mckee (1978), Gould (1978), and Josselson (1987) and are categorized by one of the following five life domains: (1) occupation; (2) relationships (significant others, children, & family of origin); (3) friend and peer relationships (4) ethnicity and religion; and (5) leisure activities and life style. There are three reasons I included these questions in the study: First of all, they served to illuminate categories which emerged from the initial “grand tour” question. Second, they brought new categories to light which might otherwise have been omitted from consideration; and third, the data permitted me to more effectively dialogue with a priori theory after completing this study.

While I initially followed the question set closely, depending on the nature of the emerging categories, I later added and/or deleted questions in order to focus more narrowly on certain unfolding categories of data.

I would like to note, that I administered the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) to each participant. It is my intent to later use the results to dialogue with the theoretical outcomes of this study. I will not score the instruments until after completion of this study. In effect, my administration of the MBTI constitutes data gathering for a future study which will permit an additional perspective with respect to the outcomes derived here.

Data Collection and Recording

The primary data collection mode in this study is the interview. According to Patton (1990), “the purpose of interviewing... is to allow us to
enter into the other person's perspective. Qualitative interviewing begins with
the assumption that the perspective of others is meaningful, knowable, and
able to be made explicit” (p. 278).

Bogdan and Biklen (1992) argue that qualitative interviews vary in the
degree to which they are structured. On one end of the continuum lie the more
open-ended questions which permit the participant to respond at length to very
broad, "grand tour" types of questions. The advantage of this approach is that
the categories emerge from, and are structured by, the participant. The
disadvantage is that relevant categories may not emerge simply because
attention was not directed toward them or the participant forgot to comment on
them. On the other end of the continuum lies the semistructured interview
protocol through which each participant is posed the same predetermined set
of open-ended questions. The advantage of this approach is that all
theoretically relevant categories may be addressed in the question set and
each participant is posed the same set of questions. The disadvantage is that
we are "looking for metal with a metal detector". That is, the very nature of our
questions may predispose us to receive only the information relevant to the
categories already present in the question set.

The design of this study attempted to draw from the strengths of both the
open-ended and semistructured approach to interviewing. As previously
described, I began with a "grand tour" question, permitting the participants to
structure their own responses and thus influence the nature of the emerging
categories and focus. I then followed-up with a semistructured, open-ended
question set designed to "fill in the gaps" with respect to the categories which
had previously emerged. The semistructured question set additionally offered
the participants the opportunity to discuss any aspect of their transition process which may have initially been unintentionally omitted from their discussion. Finally, the protocol ensured the capacity for a later dialogue between the theoretical outcomes of this study and the theories of those from whose work the question set was originally grounded (Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson, & McKee, 1978; Gould, 1978; and Josselson, 1987).

Data collection was accomplished in two ways: First, I tape recorded all interview sessions with participants. Relevant information was transcribed onto a computer. Bogdan and Biklen (1992) suggest transcribing only those sections of participant response which might reasonably be considered useful. They warn, though, that more thorough transcription should occur early in the study when the focus is still unfolding. Once relevant categories are more clearly defined, the amount of information transcribed can be reduced to that which informs those categories. I transcribed all interviews in total with no exceptions.

Second, I maintained a notebook of field notes to record those nuances of human interaction which were not apparent on a taped record. I also noted situations in which I sensed my own interactions with the participant may be influencing the integrity of the data. The field notes permitted me to be self-reflexive and track my own perceived impact on the results. Finally, I used the field notes to record any ideas or thoughts occurring during the course of research. These ideas often had to do with emerging theoretical categories, hunches I would like to follow up on later, or participant expressions which seemed incongruent with the content of their discussion. Patton (1990) suggests that field notes should include, “the observer’s insights,
interpretations, beginning analyses, and working hypotheses about what is happening in the setting” (p. 242). The field notes later became an integral part of data analyses and interpretation.

**Data Analysis Procedures**

The purpose of this study was to develop grounded theory. According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), grounded theory “is inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents. That is, it is discovered, developed, and provisionally verified through systematic data collection and analysis of data pertaining to that phenomenon (p. 23).”

The data analysis procedures which were employed in this study are defined by what is commonly called the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss (1967) describe their approach as having a strong emphasis on theory as process. Their approach stresses the idea of an continuously expanding and developing process of inquiry in which each stage informs the next. Theory emerges from, and is thus grounded in, the data. This approach lends itself well to the exploration of social interaction and contextual meaning making, however as Lincoln and Guba (1990) point out, Glaser and Strauss “do not address themselves to working within the naturalistic paradigm” (p. 339), and in fact, position the constant comparative method as seeking “to enable prediction and explanation of behavior” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 3). Despite their philosophical divergence from one of the axioms of the naturalistic paradigm, their procedures fit nicely and will be employed in this study. What follows is a description of the four stages of the constant comparative method as
explicated by Glaser and Strauss (1967).

1. Comparing incidents applicable to each category: The researcher begins by intuitively designating categories of meaning in the data, and coding incidents as examples of each category. Glesne and Peshkin (1992) suggest that the initial step in creating an organizational framework is to put "like minded pieces together" (p. 133). At first, as many "like-minded pieces" or categories as possible are identified, and incidents which "fit" are coded into each. When coding each additional incident into a category, the researcher compares it to the incidents previously associated with the category. Slowly, the theoretical properties of the categories begin to emerge. The researcher begins considering the full range of the category, its relationship to other categories, and its dimensions of existence. As these categories crystallize, the researcher often begins to recognize that each category typically falls into one of two types; ones that he or she has abstracted from the data; and ones which have been extracted from the words of the participant. The prior will tend to be explanations of the latter. After coding for a category several times, the researcher will begin to reconsider his or her thinking in terms of the defining characteristics of the category. It is at this point, that the researcher should stop coding and record a memo to him or herself. The purpose of the memo is to provide a catharsis for the emerging conflict, and to tap the content of thought with respect to the properties of the category. Glesne and Peshkin (1992) argue that memo writing additionally frees the researcher's mind to consider novel thoughts and ideas. It is thus a release and a manner of letting go of thoughts with the knowledge that you can return to them later. At this point in the research process, it may be a good idea to discuss any confusion
with someone else, as they may aid in the prevention of any blind spots and support the integrity of the emerging categories. After clarifying, to the extent possible, the researcher's confusion, he or she returns to the data for more coding and constant comparison.

2. Integrating categories and their properties: As coding progresses, the units of comparison shift from a comparison of an incident with a category (or incidents in a category), to a comparison of an incident with properties of a category within which it might fit. Primitive rules thus begin to be used to dialogue with new incidents, often resulting in the creation of subcategories or the clarification of a category. As categories become more clearly defined, so do the relationships between categories. In this way, the categories become more integrated and broader theory begins to emerge. Furthermore, as data collection, data analysis, and sampling continue simultaneously, the researcher begins to focus the study more directly on the emerging categories in order that they be clarified, expanded, or limited.

3. Delimiting the theory: As the constant comparative study evolves, delimiting occurs in terms of the reduction of the theory and the delimitation and saturation of categories. Glesne and Peshkin (1992) argue that "in order to complete any project, you must establish boundaries, but these boundary decisions are also an interpretive judgment based on your awareness of your data and their possibilities." (p. 130). Thus, theory reduction occurs as categories become more clearly defined, and incidents which call into question aspects of the categories become fewer and fewer. Clarification of the categories often results in the discovery of underlying unifying factors, which place the individual categories in a broader theoretical context. As the a
"big picture" begins to emerge, the researcher can further focus his or her efforts in a more efficient manner. The result is a general reduction in the number of categories due to improved articulation and integration, as well as a continually more refined theoretical formulation. Slowly, categories may become theoretically saturated; that is, so well defined that there is no reason to add further examples. The researcher's focus continues to narrow and clarify as the theory stabilizes and additional data adds little to the existing conceptualizations.

4. Writing theory: At this point, the researcher possesses coded data, multiple memos, and a theory. The idea is to present the theory in text in such a way as clearly to articulate its meaning, nuances, and implications while providing the reader with sufficient thick description to empower appropriate transferability decisions. The content of the memos support the boundaries of the categories, which in turn represent the major themes undergirding the overall theoretical formulation. In order to begin converting theory to text, it will be helpful to collate the memos by category for summarizing. The coded data can be referred to throughout text creation to validate or illustrate specific points.

Trustworthiness

Lincoln and Guba (1985) propose four criteria of trustworthiness appropriate to the naturalistic paradigm. Those criteria are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The following is a discussion of each aspect of trustworthiness and their relationship to the design of this study.
1. Credibility: If you replace the conventional notion of the existence of a "real" in the social world with the naturalistic assumption of contextual meaning making and multiple constructed realities, then the notion of proving truth value becomes more complex than simply an issue of internal validity. The focus instead shifts to trying to support the idea that the researcher's construction of the participant's reality matches the participant's actual construction. That is, the researcher's reconstruction must be credible to the participant. In this study I have approached this issue on two fronts.

First of all, I engaged the participant in a prolonged interaction. I spent approximately three to four hours with each participant over the course of the interview process. That contact occurred in one to four visits at a location of the participant's selection. While three to four hours is not an extensive period of time, it did permit me an opportunity to engage the individual in substantial dialogue and request clarification of those issues which seemed vague or ambiguous. In those cases in which the interview occurred over more than one meeting, I had the opportunity to consider the words of the participant between our meetings and follow up with clarifying, probing, or expanding questions at later meetings, or perhaps add additional questions.

Secondly, I conducted member check procedures following the first four interviews. Following the initial data collection and transcription of the first four participant interviews I composed a life history and mailed it to the respective participants for editing, feedback, changes, etc. Upon receipt of their responses I adjusted my interpretations in a manner consistent with the perspective of the participants. Finally, I mailed the revised life history to the participant for their records. In this way, the participant was allowed to act as a
co-constructor of their own life history. My goal was to attempt to illuminate the shadows of meaning in their discourse and confirm with them that I clearly saw that which was illuminated.

With three of the remaining participants I altered my approach by providing each of them an overview of the model which was beginning to crystallize from the stories of all the participants and then provided them the model categories with their own words coded into the categories. I then contacted them by phone or in person to discuss their thoughts. The second strategy was particularly effective in acquiring rich feedback both regarding my understanding of their life history, and of the degree to which the theoretical model was consistent with their experience.

2. Transferability: Naturalists view external validity differently than those adhering to the more conventional paradigm in that they consider their results to have been abstracted from a specific context, and only applicable or "transferable" to another context of a similar nature. While the original researcher cannot assume responsibility for the manner in which their results will be used, they can provide sufficient thick description to enable a later researcher to make that evaluation for themselves.

In Chapter 4 I have attempted to provide the reader sufficient descriptive and quotational information to make transferability judgments for themselves. I elaborated general demographic information with respect to the respondents and provided a large number of textual quotations supporting the theoretical constructs emerging from the study.

3. Dependability: In assessing dependability, the naturalist must consider both the natural instability inherent in any meaning constructing
organism and research design factors which might distort outcomes. The prior is simply a property of that which is studied, and can not be controlled by the researcher; the latter involves design considerations upon which the researcher can exert some level of control. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest an inquiry audit as a means of enhancing the dependability of a naturalistic study. An inquiry auditor examines both the process of inquiry and the product resulting from that process. Thus the methodology, data, findings, interpretations, and conclusions are scrutinized by the inquiry auditor who ultimately should attest to the integrity of the design and the logical coherence of the outcomes.

In that this study is done as a dissertation requirement, I believe that my advisor, Robert Rodgers will serve a purpose similar to that of an inquiry auditor. While he may be closer to the study than would be ideal for an inquiry auditor, he has or will scrutinize every aspect of the study, from its initial planning to its final conclusion and textual presentation.

4. Confirmability: In the naturalistic paradigm, the issue of confirmability has to do with ensuring that the theoretical outcomes are grounded in the data from which they arose. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest the keeping a reflexive journal as a method of establishing confirmability in a naturalistic study. A reflexive journal is a type of diary in which the researcher records information about his or her thoughts, ideas, feelings, and values over the course of the project; as well as information about the unfolding methodological decisions made throughout the study.

In this study I maintained a reflexive journal in which I recorded my personal struggle with data interpretation and understanding. Later in the
study I began keeping my journal on the computer as an adjunct to memorandums. I found this to be an effective method as it eliminated redundancy between the two and consolidated my thoughts about data interpretation into one location. I recorded entries as frequently as necessary, and often daily during the more intense periods of data collection and interpretation.

**Ethical considerations**

The purpose of this section is to illustrate several key ethical considerations and those steps taken in order to ensure the ethical treatment of participants involved in this study. The three primary issues which will be covered are gaining entry, maintaining confidentiality, and participant involvement in the meaning making process.

Prior to their involvement in this study, each participant was mailed a letter (see Appendix A) describing our mutual responsibilities should they decide to participate. The letter addressed where I received their name, the qualifications necessary for participation, the nature and goals of the study, requirements of participation, confidentiality issues, and what the participant will gain from participating in the study.

In terms of confidentiality, I tape recorded my conversations with each participant and later transcribed them onto computer for print into hard copy. I then erased the tapes of our conversations and coded the transcripts with fictitious names to protect their identity. Any segments of the transcripts (whether direct quotations or summaries of their experiences) used in the final report contain only altered names of towns, people, natural markers, buildings,
etc. in order to protect the individuals from identification.

Definition of Terms

Behavioral Psychosocial Theory: Theoretical formulations primarily interested in the relationship between specific life events and the resulting idiographic responses of individuals as mediated by biological, psychological, and contextual factors (Rodgers, 1984).

Career Change: In this study, career change is defined as a perceived movement to an occupation requiring substantially different responsibilities and calling upon qualitatively different domains of interest and/or expertise from those previously held.

Category: According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), categories emerge through several analytical steps, the first of which involves the identification of conceptual phenomena in the data. These concepts are grouped based on thematic similarities into categories. An emerging category has conceptual power because it attracts to it multiple concepts which define a broader meaning construction. Ultimately, as the boundaries of a category become more clearly defined, it is given a name, and is considered analytically in terms of the data for further refinement. Thus a category is a constructed “cluster of meaning” about which theory is generated.

Constant Comparative Method: A defined set of data analysis procedures defined by Glaser and Strauss (1967). When followed, these procedures result in the construction of theory which is “grounded” in the data. The constant comparative method combines concurrent data coding with ongoing data analysis accomplished through an analytic method of constant
comparison of emerging data categories.

Grounded Theory: Grounded theory is theory that is "inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents. That is, it is discovered, developed, and provisionally verified through systematic data collection and analysis of data pertaining to that phenomenon" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 23). But grounded theory is more than a philosophical approach to inquiry. It is additionally a methodology of comparative analysis explicated by Glaser and Strauss (1967).

Idiographic Interpretation: Theoretical formulations derived from a particular context have meaning only in the idiographic sense for that specific time and space context. Idiographic interpretation also implies a holistic interpretation of the data at hand (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Incidents: Incidents are data events which are ultimately coded into categories. Their properties are used to define the boundaries of the emerging categories and to provide examples of unfolding theoretical formulations.

Naturalistic Inquiry: According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) the practice of naturalistic inquiry involves "no manipulation on the part of the inquirer...and, second, the inquirer imposes no a priori units on the outcome. Naturalistic investigation is what the naturalistic investigator does, and these two tenets are the prime directives" (p. 8).

Organismic Psychosocial Theory: Organismic psychosocial theorists such as Gould (1978), Levinson (1996), and Josselson (1987), Jung (1971), and Erikson, (1950) view the life-span as a continual interaction between the human psyche and the environment. Environmental stimulus interacts with the
unfolding personality to create periods of change and stability. These periods are often described as stages separated by points of "reconsideration" referred to as transition periods, turning points, or crises. The constructs in these theories were formulated initially from inquiry into the lives of their subjects.

Professional: In this study the term professional is defined to include those individuals with a four-year degree from a post-secondary curriculum, and subsequent employment in a related capacity by an institution, agency, or organization. For example, an individual employed as a staff accountant after receiving a degree in accounting, or an individual employed as a sales person after receiving a degree in marketing.

Psychosocial Development: According to Rodgers (1984), adult psychosocial development is one of three kinds of adult developmental theory, concerned with "the nature of the developmental issues and life events which occur throughout the life-span, and to a person's pattern of resolutions of these issues and adaptations to these events" (p. 479).

Snowball Sampling: Snowball sampling is a form of "purposive sampling" designed to quickly identify qualified research participants. According to Patton (1990), snowball sampling involves asking qualified participants (or other individuals) for the names of people who might meet the sample requirements and be willing to participate in the study. The idea is to accumulate a number of information-rich cases in an effective and efficient manner.

Theoretical Saturation: Theoretical saturation occurs at a point in which the addition of participants is not expected to expand the existing theoretical formulations with respect to the phenomenon under study. The point at which
saturation occurs is determined subjectively and is often tied to the failure of recent incremental cases to further inform theory.

Theoretical Sensitivity: According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), theoretical sensitivity is an awareness on the part of the researcher regarding “the subtleties of meaning of data” (p. 41). It is the ability of the researcher to approach the data with an insight into that which is pertinent and should thus be retained, and that which is not and should be discarded. Theoretical sensitivity is acquired by the researcher through a review of pertinent literature, professional experience, and personal experience.

Thick Description: According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) what is called “thick description” delineates the detailed information necessary for the reader of a specific research inquiry to understand the findings and to make decisions with regard to the transferability of the findings to other contexts. Thick description attempts to reconstruct the meanings made in the research encounter with a minimum of inference.

Transferability: The ability of the theoretical formulations arising from one naturalistic study to be applied to a similar situation in a different context. It is the responsibility of all naturalistic researchers to provide sufficient “thick description” of their research settings, participants, and made meanings to empower another to consider whether there is sufficient contextual similarity to warrant applying the theoretical formulations of one study to another.

Summary

In this chapter, I have attempted to articulate the assumptions and procedures related to the methodological considerations guiding the process
of inquiry in this study. I initially described the focus of the study and then endeavored to explain how the focus fit with respect to the paradigm of inquiry. I then explored sampling considerations, phases of inquiry, instrumentation, and the planning of data collection and recording modes. This was followed by a discussion of modes of data collection, data analysis procedures, trustworthiness procedures, and ethical considerations.
CHAPTER IV
FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter will present the findings of this study. The findings were generated through the application of the Constant Comparative Method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) to ten interview transcripts and are supported by subsequent member check procedures and various methodologies consistent with the goal of maintaining the trustworthiness of the study findings. These and other methodological considerations were discussed in the prior chapter.

Consistent with the axioms and characteristics of Naturalistic Inquiry, I have endeavored to provide the reader with sufficient ‘thick description’ in order that they have sufficient data available to determine the transferability of the results of this study to other contexts. In order to do this, I have made extensive use of direct quotations from participants to illustrate the theoretical constructs which have emerged from the data.

In developing this text I have chosen to comment on gender differences on a category-by-category basis and only if a clear difference was observed in the data. If no discussion occurs with respect to gender, then the reader should assume that no gender differences were found related to the construct under discussion.
This chapter has been organized into four primary sections which I have titled (1) Emergence; (2) Submergence; (3) Disruption; and (4) Alignment. Each section contains numerous subsections through which it is expanded and developed. Each section begins with a theoretical overview which is followed by a more detailed discussion illustrated with excerpts from participant interviews. This chapter is supported by Appendix D which describes the relevant characteristics of the sample.

**Emergence**

The term "emerge" is defined in Webster's Dictionary as, "to come forth or rise up from" or "to become obvious or evident." The term "Emergence" was selected to describe a particular phenomenon in which aspects of personality "come forth and become evident." These "aspects of personality" are made observable as they infuse energy into, and create an attraction to, involvements, interests and activities (Involvements). They seemed to be basic neutral aspects of their personality. On reflection, the ten participants spoke of an early awareness of these basic ongoing aspects of themselves. All except one said that they had "always known" of these basic "parts" of their personality, which I will call "Organizing Principles" for the purpose of this discussion.

The participants spoke of an attraction to Involvements congruent with their Organizing Principles early in their lives. However, for many, their natural attraction was subordinated during their youth in order to have lower level needs, such as the need to be loved, to be safe, and to receive approval, met by significant others. Many chose to behave in ways which met with external
approval (and thus ensured safety and a sense of being loved), but were incongruent with their Organizing Principles.

The result, for many of the participants, was that they selected Involvements for which they were rewarded, but not naturally attracted. Some believed that they came to identify with Involvements incongruent with their Organizing Principles and diminished or devalued congruent ones. This phenomenon will be referred to as "Submergence." The resulting conflicted state was one of being identified with Involvements incongruent with Organizing Principles. This manifested internal stress ultimately causing many of the participants to reconsider the Involvements with which they had identified and to "Reacquaint" themselves with their Organizing Principles and the Involvements congruent with them. This process of increasing the congruence or "Alignment" between Involvements and Organizing Principles is the central focus of this paper. It is a complex process which involves an inner "Disidentification" with incongruent personality aspects and a "Reidentification" with, and integration of, more congruent ones.

The participants in this study consisted of five men and five women, each of whom had undergone a career change at some time during the last ten years. The characteristics of the participants are described in Appendix D. The questions to which they were asked to respond are included in Appendix A.

Each participant, at various times in his or her respective interview, discussed important Involvements in his or her life. They spoke of those things, people, activities, and organizations to which they had become committed. Their commitment led to an investment of time and energy. Some
of those involvements were spoken of with enthusiasm and described positively. They said that they seemed to generate positive self-esteem, active enthusiasm, a sense of being creative, and a feeling of high energy. Other involvements were spoken of with a lack of enthusiasm or positive regard. The participants often said that these involvements drained them of energy and left them feeling incomplete.

All ten of the participant's in this study perceived that their career change was, at least in part, motivated by the desire to redistribute their mix of involvements in order to increase those which they perceived more positively and decrease those which they held in lesser regard. Very early in this study, I became aware of the importance of this theme as a primary perceived motivator of the career change process and began exploring the data for further refinements and a deeper understanding.

The outcome of this exploration is presented in this section. I have divided this section into four subsections: Involvements, Organizing Principles, Immersion Experiences, and I Have Always Known.

**Involvements**

For the purposes of this study, involvements are external life investments in things, people, activities, and organizations. Involvements require an investment of time and energy and may be perceived as being positive, negative or neutral in nature. For the purposes of this discussion 'people' involvements will not be inclusive of significant involvements with individuals such as a family member, lover, spouse, significant other, or mentor. These relationships and their relevance to the outcomes of this study
will be addressed in other sections of this transcript. Thus Investments in ‘people’ will refer to an affinity or disaffinity for generic sociopolitical interactions with others.

Each of the participants had a number of Involvements that they considered to possess generally positive characteristics. Involvements perceived as being positive were thought to promote positive self-esteem, active enthusiasm, a sense of being creative, and a feeling of high energy by the participants. For example, one participant described a positive Involvement as follows: “I mean, I know that not everyone bakes cookies weekly as part of almost a religious experience of mine, this creating these cookies. I don’t know how else to say it other than the fact that it gave me; I just loved doing this. I just enjoyed it a lot.”

Another participant described an Involvement with an organization and with people;

I was quite secure and quite comfortable working for a large company and I like the politics of working for a large company and I liked the challenges in a large company and I was in a very enviable position in that I had pretty much free run, I was dealing with the chairman of the board, and the CEO and I was also going out in the field and dealing with the people so it was a really perfect job.

Other Involvements were described with a lack of enthusiasm or general positive regard. The participants often said that these negative Involvements drained them of energy and left them feeling incomplete, misunderstood, and uncomfortable with the accepted norms associated with the Involvement. For example, Joyce, a 38 year old ministry student reflected on her experiencing of an early set of incongruent Involvements grounded in her father’s occupational expectations:
Thinking about it I guess probably is when I realized I had a choice when at first I didn't think I had a choice. When I was growing up I had drilled in me that you could be a teacher, you can be a nurse, you could be a secretary, schoolteacher or housewife and those were the choices I thought I had so I didn't want to get married and I was a terrible typist worked in a doctors office during the summer and fainted when someone would come in with a cut. I'm not going to be a good nurse so that left school teacher and I was a good student so it was; I just never thought about doing anything else. I went to school to be a schoolteacher. Not knowing my dad had said you would go to school, get a degree we will send you to school and then if something happens to your husband you could always go to work. It wasn't as though I was looking for a career. So I went to school and did what I was supposed to do based around the parameter of being a school teacher. Did miserably at it. The discipline drove me nuts and I got out of it in 6 months. Then I say that was a major event in my life. How could I tell my parents that I'm not going to be a school teacher and all the people that were counting on me to and I made a decision to quit.

While some participants had, at various points in their lives, responded by continuing to work hard at incongruent involvements despite an awareness of incongruency, others distanced themselves by either reducing the amount of time allocated to the involvement or "checking-out" emotionally and remaining present only in a physical sense. For example, one participant said, "I began to experience that accounting was not for me, I really didn't enjoy my profession very well. I worked in a large accounting firm for a little over a year and I had some negative evaluations which probably were deserved at the time because I was screwing off and I think it was from lack of interest."

Another participant said, "I didn't feel like I fit where I was and so the corporate structure didn't seem very accepting of that or that was my interpretation of that and eventually I quit that job just because I was really searching for a new identity."
Many of the participants spoke of negative aspects of Involvements they regarded as generally positive and of positive aspects of Involvements they regarded as generally negative. They were, however, consistently able to characterize their Involvements as generally negative or positive in nature.

Organizing Principles

While Involvements are external investments, Organizing Principles are stable internal orientations or affinities which were perceived as basic yet substantive aspects of the personality. The participants described a natural flow of energy from themselves into an Involvement they perceived as positive, and "positive" seemed to be about a congruency between their perception of the Involvement itself and their Organizing Principles. The participants described their Organizing Principles either in terms of a type of Involvement (e.g. social work or law), topical interest area (e.g. health, food, religion, or spirituality), or personality trait (e.g. creativity or capacity to recognize patterns of meaning in human interaction).

For most of the participants, there was a sense that adult life brought the capacity to differentiate more effectively their Organizing Principles and related congruent Involvements. For many, this was simply a trial and error process through which they learned what they liked. For others, it became clear that an initial step would be to let go of certain aspects with which they had previously identified and become reacquainted with a part of themselves that had been excluded and devalued. In retrospect, it left the participants with the feeling that "what I thought was me was really not me at all." They attributed this false sense of "me" as being about the values and interests of others, often their
parents. As one participants said, "By not having them [his parents] involved in what was truly me, I ended up absorbing what was more of them."

The clearest way to illustrate Organizing Principles is to do so in a way which exhibits their relationship to Involvements in the context of a life. In this way one can gain an understanding of the unfolding nature of the participant's awareness of their Organizing Principles, as they struggle to differentiate its nature and match it to an appropriate Involvement.

For example, Bob changed from a career in real estate law to owning his own restaurant. He was 34 years old at the time of the change and 37 years old at the time of our interview. Early in our interview process he reflected upon his high school Involvements: "Specifically, as I recall, I think it was microbiology that I wanted to do. I wanted to move more into that area because it fascinated me. Life, animals, ...."

This excerpt illustrates Bob’s awareness of an attraction to an Involvement - microbiology. Later in our interview he reflected on microbiology and its relationship to subsequent positive Involvements. Slowly he began to differentiate the Involvements from the underlying Organizing Principles and understand their nature.

So I was doing outside of the academic and work world what was really exciting to me. I can remember distinctly traveling to another city where I found a restaurant called ‘Healthy Jones’ and that I found so exciting. But I never pursued anything in that area, but it was these things that I found absolutely fascinating. Whereas I wasn’t pursuing anything in the biology area, I guess I considered food and how it relates to the body as perhaps an offshoot of that interest. I call that interest in high school biology, I knew there was something there, that was the big word for it and I went further in life at that point, I began to crack into the subcomponent which was food and how food relates to life and to happiness.
Bob's awareness of the Organizing Principle which he described as “food and how food relates to life and to happiness” unfolded in a process of differentiation. He became something of a "Connoisseur" of the deeper aspects of his own personality. With each Involvement related to this Organizing Principle he was able to further differentiate and identify important aspects of himself and, as a result, more effectively seek Involvements congruent with them. As his life progressed he became more aware of this Organizing Principle and more committed to giving it a voice in his life.

I really love food, I have to be in some aspect of it, I love cooking. At that point, I was beyond cookies. I just enjoyed cook books; at Christmas time people would give you, give me, various cook books. That is when you know when you are beginning to identify with something, when you see what people give you as a gift. I was getting cook books, so it evolved, boy has it evolved, probably an hour's worth of that evolution. It evolved into deciding that we will do a restaurant. Really what I tried to do is look at the software of myself, if you will, what are the elements I'm looking for, what brings me satisfaction. Things of needing to be an expert, needing a fairly limited realm; to be an expert instead of a generalist, I wanted to be a specialist. Needing to do something that had some amount of repetition to it, needing to be around food.

Bob's notion of the "software" of himself offers a parallel construct to that of Organizing Principles. His emerging differentiation of his own "software" parallels his strengthening commitment to opening a restaurant. Bob, in this excerpt, identified a number of Organizing Principles other than "needing to be around food." His career choice offered a unique synergy in which all identified aspects of himself could, to some degree, be actualized through his owning a restaurant.

As a second example, Joyce was 35 when she left a public relations position with a large corporation and entered the seminary to begin a course
of study to become a minister. Our interview occurred when she was 38 and preparing to graduate and embark on a new career. In high school Joyce first recognized an attraction to, and affinity for, extemporaneous speaking; "...when I was in high school I used to be in state competitions for extemporaneous speaking, drawing a topic, it felt wonderfully creative." Her unfolding identification with extemporaneous speaking led to the selection of drama as a college major. Later she switched her major to journalism as it offered a greater synergy and was more inclusive of her Organizing Principles.

I then searched around for what might be another vision and what emerged in my early 20's was an interest in writing and journalism which to me had a "mission" potential. I could choose what I would write about and do it in a way that would persuade and inform other people. I thought that could be influential and that could be good. I wouldn't say I had this real sense of myself. I spent years as a drama major and didn't like it. Then switched to journalism and after the switch it appeared to me that maybe I could deal with this.

Joyce had begun to recognize that the aspect of speaking she enjoyed had to do with her capacity to "persuade and inform other people." She also recognized her desire to be "influential" and to select a field with "mission" potential. These recognitions represent a further differentiation of her initial sense of an attraction to extemporaneous speaking. As Bob had said, she had begun to "crack into a subcomponent."

Joyce perceived that her decision to enter seminary offered her an Involvement which integrated all the important aspects of herself of which she had become aware. She believed that she had identified a more complex, integrated and inclusive synergy.

What would normally be a kind of an out of myself experience of preaching is incredible. Preaching is my best. I definitely like that. We participated in something Saturday. We had a denominational assembly
where we struggled with ordination of homosexuals. One thousand people divided up into groups of 10 as strangers and sat real close together uncomfortably with strangers and shared where they were on this issue and went around in a circle and somehow in the course of that because the church doesn't do a very good job of talking about uncomfortable things, it seemed sort of transformational like wow, there is a presence in the room and feeling that we wouldn't have to agree but we had to listen and we had to understand that person's point of view had been just as prayerfully arrived at as our own point of view and kind of struggled with my intolerance of intolerant people and that is not the typical church thing at all but it gave me great hope for what the church could be. Not to solve things, not to all agree, but to be willing to listen. So all of those are real group kind of things. Preaching seems like it would be just me preaching and everybody listening but I'm getting a lot of cues from the faces of people I know around me.

In this excerpt Joyce illustrates what she meant by "mission potential."

We also see her capacity to communicate, persuade, and inform through "preaching" and the facilitation of a process of sharing and opening up between people. Finally, we see her comfort level with the political aspect of the human condition, a natural human phenomenon grounded in communication and persuasion. In the ministry she is able to effectively provide an outlet for all the aspects she had differentiated in herself as important and attractive.

Both Joyce and Bob discussed their high-school-age perspective of, and early choices for, involvements they regarded as attractive. They then described a refinement process through which they slowly learned to more clearly differentiate their Organizing Principles and identify involvements which offered more integrated synergies in their expression. With increasing awareness came the courage, capacity, and drive to move toward more congruent involvements. All of the participants exhibited a
similar relationship between an ever emerging differentiation of Organizing Principles and an ever expanding search for Involvements congruent with them.

Immersion Experiences

Early in this study I recognized similarities in the way the participants described their inner response to congruent Involvements. They spoke of them as "a religious experience," "totally involving," "energizing," or as something "I have always thrived on" or "got lost in." For example, Bob stated "I mean, I know that not everyone bakes cookies weekly as part of almost a religious experience of mine, this creating these cookies. I don't know how else to say it other than the fact that it gave me, I just loved doing this. I just enjoyed it a lot." His words and the words of other participants suggest that such an Involvement is experienced as deeply focused, absorbing, and exhilarating. Others mentioned losing a sense of time and even a sense of identity while being immersed at this level.

For the purposes of this study, the term Immersion will be used to denote this deep, absorbed and exhilarating engagement with an Involvement which is congruent with an Organizing Principle. After identifying Immersion as a construct emerging from the data, I began directly asking subsequent participants to discuss these sorts of experiences in their lives (see question #VII-a in Appendix A). I directly asked this question to the final six participants. I mailed the question to the other four and asked them to respond in writing. Only two of the four responded. I did not make any further attempt to contact the two who had not responded. I then compared the experiences they
described with their stated congruent Involvements and Organizing Principles. With only a few exceptions the participants described times in their life in which they were Immersed in Involvements perceived as congruent with their Organizing Principles.

The exceptions were primarily related to isolated "Ecstatic Moments" tied to such things as being in love, having sex, connecting deeply to another person or to nature, having children, or appreciating something of great beauty or of artistic significance. These exceptions seemed to relate to brief moments of rapture tied to the experiencing of deep aspects of our shared "humanness," whereas the Immersion experiences appeared more temperament related (and thus idiosyncratic to the individual), were longer in duration, and involved a deep focused engagement which could be repeated again and again. While the boundaries are blurred between these two types of experience, some examples may help clarify the differences and complexities.

Zack was 31 years old when he resigned from his position as a staff accountant with his family accounting firm. He returned to school to complete a Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology. Zack, an early participant, responded in writing to the question regarding Immersion experiences.

Spending time with my Grandfather as a child. He was my father figure and nurtured me. I felt special, loved, and ecstatic when I was with him. Helping others. I have felt engaged and fully connected while giving unto others (not always, but a lot of the time). I have also felt a sense of fulfillment and deep meaning. Admiring nature. I feel connected with God and awed. Its an overwhelming inspiring feeling. Sharing with others at a very deep, personal level. I feel connected, happy and content. I mean that's where the inner voice comes from for me is that when I help people there's a joy that is there that is unlike any joy that I had experienced before. Feeling like a completeness, a wholeness, and I think that is what has encouraged me to do more of that. That's where the inner voice is speaking, saying you're on the right track because of
some of those feelings that come that are associated with doing those things, and then in terms of identity, I just perceive God as sharing with us and so we share also.

Zack's response intermingles Ecstatic Moments, many of which relate to his attachment to a grandfather, an appreciation of nature, and feeling connected to others at a deep level, with Immersion experiences which are congruent with his Organizing Principles including his love for, and commitment to, altruistic acts, deep and meaningful interactions with others, and his idealistic desire to influence others toward creating a better and more "fair" and environmentally conscious world. The Ecstatic Moments relate to the satisfaction of normal human developmental needs while the Immersion experiences are somewhat more idiosyncratic to Zack, illustrating a deep engagement with an Involvement consistent with his view of his own "gifts." The blurring comes when these overlap as in the case of his close interactions with others. On one hand a deep connection with others can be considered a normal, human developmental need. On the other hand Zack engages such interactions at an Immersion level and uses his capacities in this area as an integral part of his perceived life's work. While all people need significant involvements with people to grow and develop in a healthy way, they do not all engage their capacity to interact with others as a major area for skill development and a significant tool in the context of their life and career objectives. This seems to be one key to differentiating Ecstatic Moments from Immersion Experiences. It may be helpful to look at some examples of other Immersion experiences.

Todd left a career in corporate marketing when he was 36 years old and returned to graduate school to study to become a psychotherapist.
interviewed him at age 40 at a time when he was completing his final preparations for the Licensed Professional Counselor exam. In the course of our interview Todd identified a number of positive involvements including playing musical instruments, acting in theater, reading, writing, public relations work, doing therapy, and studying personal growth literature. His Organizing Principles centered around his capacity to (and affinity for) recognize patterns in meaning in relationship, music, and ideas. He responded to the Immersion question as follows:

Sometimes study was like that for me. Reading and learning, get lost in it; you get energized by it. Writing was that way for me. Getting lost in crafting words, abstract. Sometimes I would do that at the piano. I would just sort of make up music as I went for about 30 minutes at a time. Had a great time. Sort of self expression at that point. The only other thing that comes to mind right now is interacting with people. Conversation, flow of ideas, getting lost, really get charged up by that. That’s all that comes to mind. These experiences feel very engaged, it just seems like self perpetuating kind of energy. Curiosity plays into it especially in the learning things, thinking thoughts, that sort of self perpetuating for me. Pretty much the same with conversation, the interaction, the exchange, the input. How that feels in therapy, as a therapist it feels like a very creative process to creatively respond to whatever problem presented and interact at the same time on a level that builds repour, nurturing and educates at the same time. And hopefully, whatever my responses are, perpetuate more interest to the client and some interest in growing, learning more.

In this excerpt Todd illustrates his sense of Immersion. He describes involvements consistent with those which he previously described as positive and which appear congruent with his Organizing Principles. His discussion suggests a strong creative and "self-expressive" dimension to his experience. His use of the term "self perpetuating" also suggests that he perceives that Immersion experiences generate energy and enthusiasm.
Paradoxically his Immersion experiences are not described in a way which would suggest significant 'self-observing (or controlling) ego' involvement. His words "get lost in it" and "getting lost" suggest that Immersion is about becoming so deeply involved in an activity as to "get lost in it" and lose one's self-consciousness. He suggests a quality of 'improvisation' in his words, "sort of make up music," "flow of ideas," and "creatively respond." There is a sense of letting go as opposed to controlling or manipulating.

As another example, Joyce identified a number of positive Involvements including writing, acting, extemporaneous speaking, composing and delivering sermons, public relations work, and political involvements. Her Organizing Principles included an affinity and aptitude for persuading and informing others, written and oral communication of a persuasive nature, politics, an "idealistic" nature, and a "crusader" for her ideals. The following excerpts are from Joyce's discussion of her Immersion experiences:

I feel that in music as well and choral music when you get so caught up in the sound kind of like an out of body experience and preaching is like that. The last sermon that I preached, I had a story that I wanted to share and it was a sermon about children - Jesus and the children. Greg said boy everybody was crying when you told the story and I wanted to tell it not a tear jerking type story. It was just sweet and I don't like real gushy, emotional kind of stuff. What would normally be a kind of an out of myself experience of preaching is incredible. Preaching is my best I definitely like that....Preaching seems like it would be just me preaching and everybody listening but I'm getting a lot of cues from the faces of people I know around me and I do feel this sense of other people who shaped me coming out in my preaching sort like a group of people but they can only see me.

Joyce's discussion of a sense of "an out of body experience" seems to parallel Todd's notion of "getting lost in it." Both suggest a sense of being so involved that one leaves that state of normal, self-observing, self-conscious
To summarize, Immersion experiences involve a deep engagement with an Involvement. As a result of that engagement the participants often experienced a sense of "disappearing" upon reflecting upon the activity after the fact. That is, as a result of a deep focused involvement, the participants did not self-reflect or experience self-consciousness during the engagement as they are totally Immersed in the activity at hand. Only upon later reflection did the significance of the engagement become clear. Participants related such times to creativity, being lost in an activity, gaining energy, losing track of time, a free flow of ideas, improvisation, receptivity, and others. The vast majority of Immersion experiences described by the participants involved their engagement with an Involvement which permitted them to be in congruency with one or more of their Organizing Principles.

On the other hand, Ecstatic Moments were experienced as brief moments of awe, inspiration, pleasure, and/or a sense of connection to something bigger than themselves. These moments seemed to "happen" to them as opposed to result from a focused Involvement. For the participants there also seemed to be a consistent relationship between some Ecstatic moments and the satisfaction of basic cross-human developmental needs including the need to be loved and to love. The sense of love and connection which was experienced by the participants as a part of
these moments was often elicited by a significant human involvement, birth of a child, appreciation of art or nature, and others.

Ecstatic Moments and Immersion experiences overlap in the sense that they are both related to needs. Organizing Principles seemed, for the participants, to manifest as needs. That is, once differentiated (and perhaps even when not), they seemed to cry out for inclusion and engagement. Ecstatic moments were often related to fulfillment of needs for love and safety.

I Have Always Known

In exploring the participant's sense of the origin of their Organizing Principles I found a consistent emerging theme. The participants believed that their Organizing Principles had "always" been present. Many felt they had not always "owned" or identified with them, but that their influence had always been active.

For example, Bob, the businessman turned restaurateur, experienced a point in his prior education when he considered taking the CPA exam:

So I had the opportunity in December to either sit around here and sit for the CPA exam in may like the rest of my classmates or and what I actually chose was the other route which was to say the hell with all this, something isn't right here, and I traveled to California where I sold pop corn in a drive-in movie theater.

Bob's later concluded that his sense that "something isn't right here" was a reaction to an Involvement incongruent with his Organizing Principles. At age 37 Bob reflected on this and other related times in his life.

Just combining all those things, trying to do a self-examination based on the software or as the career counselor, her term is the computer chip, that no matter what you do, its always this circle that you need to go back,
right to the chip, because the chip is telling you where you need to be. So I just try to get at it that way, and the chip knew I did not want to sit for the CPA exam, and the chip knew I didn't want to practice law, but I did enjoy law school, and that chip knew that it had to be food, some aspect of food.

If we accept Bob's notion of "software" as analogous to Organizing Principles, then he seems to suggest that sitting for the CPA exam was an Involvement which was incongruent with his Organizing Principles and thus distasteful enough to elicit avoidance behaviors (traveling to California to sell pop corn). He further states, on reflection, that part of him knew this, even though the awareness was not exactly conscious. He sensed a distaste or discomfort around accounting, but could not articulate the reason he did not like it, or own what he did like. It was only later, following a prolonged period of personal exploration, some of which involved a professional counselor, that he could begin to articulate and separate himself from an identification with incongruent Involvements and identify with more congruent ones. The possible implications of this include the notion that Bob's Organizing Principles existed prior to Bob's conscious awareness of them and prior to his identification with Involvements congruent with them.

With only one exception, the participants believed that their Organizing Principles had "always been there." For many, their lives had exposed them to activities and Involvements which had allowed them, through a learning process, to differentiate more effectively their Organizing Principles and match them to more congruent Involvements.

For example, Todd, a corporate marketing executive turned counselor, in response to an inquiry as to how long he had been aware of his organizing Principles, said:
They have been there always. Are you asking how long ago did I recognize them? Actually from the beginning. Now that I think back I was reading biographies at six and seven. I was reading biographies of writers and what their lives were like and wanting to be a writer and being creative, even my play was all, now that I look back, was sort of creative. Whether it was building forts as a kid or whatever, somehow wood work in shops, musical stuff so there was always an intuitive theme and always felt like I was picking up on information that other people didn't get in situations. Sometimes in an objective way. Sometimes I guess I felt people never stepped back and looked at the big picture of their behavior, of their actions, and I sense that from 8, 9 years of age, so its been there a long time.

Todd's words, "now that I think back" and "now that I look back" suggest a recently emerging conscious awareness, and identification with, his Organizing Principles. It also seems apparent that his Organizing Principles have exerted a press to which he has behaviorally responded for most of his life even though his conscious, more differentiated, awareness of them is more recent.

Joyce, a 38 year old public relations executive turned seminary student said:

I think they've always been there. Our family conversations when I was growing up were sort of debates with my dad which made my mom very uncomfortable because she is one of those moms who likes peace. We weren't like 60 minutes from when those two people would debate and call each other names, that is not the way. Just taking a current event because he was always big into the news, which was probably where the journalism came from, and taking two sides of everything what if this had happened well I don't agree, and we enjoyed that and my two brothers would just sit and listen. My mom would think that we didn't like each other because we were taking opposite sides and so that ability to persuade I think has always been real important to me and a degree of confidence that if I could just state my case I could persuade somebody; if I could just have 3 minutes of your time I could convince you that this is a good idea and a lot of that worked for me in the corporate atmosphere too. A lot of my agenda in those positions when I wasn't accomplishing the executive agenda, I had some freedom to do my stuff but I had to sell somebody on it first, so a lot of the selling with words has always been
real important to me.

Joyce's affinity for debate and the drive to influence others through verbal interaction represented a significant Organizing Principle which manifested in her sermons and group work with her parishioners. Joyce believed that this Organizing Principle had "always been there."

Susan, a 55 year old attorney turned seminary student stated, "I think I have always had that sort of end bent toward social services, social issues, that kind of thing, I think it has been always just at the root in me."

With only one exception, all the participants shared the perspective that their Organizing Principles had "always" been present. They also consistently discussed their emerging conscious awareness, differentiation and identification with these aspects of themselves. Some of the participants felt as though they had been separated from their Organizing Principles during periods of their lives. During these times of "Submergence" these individuals had very few congruent Involvements in their lives. Others had a number of Involvements which were congruent with their Organizing Principles, but later sought a more synergistic integration.

Thus the participants, at any point in their lives, could be placed on a continuum based on the degree to which their Involvements were congruent (or incongruent) with their Organizing Principles. Congruency, for the participants, accompanied an identification with their Organizing Principles which encouraged a conscious attempt to find a more synergistic integration of congruent Involvements. Incongruency, for the participants, led to a sense of dissatisfaction and stress. This led to a period of self-exploration and ultimately a greater differentiation of, and identification with, their Organizing
Principles. Finally, this was followed by a commitment to new Involvements more congruent with their emerging and more differentiated sense of their Organizing Principles. For the purposes of this paper, the term degree of "Disguisedness" will be used to discuss a participant's location on this continuum. The more a participant's Involvements are incongruent with their Organizing Principles, the more Disguised they will be termed.

The following section explores the participant's view of aspects of their socialization which had an impact on their identification with, and expression of, their Organizing Principles through the Involvements of their life.

Submergence

The participants were each asked to describe their childhoods and to discuss their Involvements and sense of themselves as children and young adults. They did this from an adult perspective. In effect, they were asked to describe their "Identity Structure" at various points in their lives. An Identity Structure is a set of inner identifications related to outer Involvements. It represents the answer to the question, "who am I" at any point in the life span. It has to do with a set of beliefs and assumptions about self and the world and is reciprocally influenced by a number of factors including roles, relationships, mentors and others. As previously discussed, an Identity Structure will exhibit varying levels of congruence with Organizing Principles on a continuum ranging from very congruent to very incongruent. This was previously referred to as degrees of "Disguisedness."

Participant Identity Structures were explored in the data. Eight categories were identified and used to sort the data. The categories were (1)
religious or spiritual identifications; (2) school or educational identifications; (3) work identifications; (4) joined group or organizational identifications; (5) friend, lover and mentor identifications; (6) hometown identifications; (7) cultural / ethnic identifications; and (8) family identifications. The participants relationship to, and identification with, the contents of these categories defined their sense of themselves at any point in time.

I sorted the data for each participant into each of these eight categories for three different time periods, two of which are relevant to this discussion. First, I sorted all references to each category for the years 0 - 17. It was during these years that the participants described their socialization in their families, schools, communities, etc. It was here that they were initially "parented," educated, loved, supported, and directed. And it was from the set of beliefs and assumptions emerging from this period that they began making initial decisions about their entry into the adult world. The participants believed that many of their emerging beliefs and assumptions about themselves at age 17 were incongruent with their later sense of themselves, say at age 28 or 30. They did not believe that they had changed, as much as they believed that they had discovered or refined, and identified with, what was already there. Thus the participants emerged at age 17 from socialization in varying degrees of Disguisedness. The perceived relationship between the factors identified in socialization and the participant's resulting degree of Disguisedness was of particular interest.

The second period for which I sorted the data into these eight categories included the years 18 - to the point of dissonance leading to the most recent career change. It was during these years that the beliefs and
assumptions internalized during the first 17 years were translated into adult Involvements. The Involvements in turn, offered feedback to the participants with regard to their congruency to Organizing Principles and a "learning cycle" was established. At some point during these years, the participants of this study described the emergence of increasingly conscious dissonance related to varying levels of incongruence between their Involvements and Organizing Principles.

An examination of the data emerging from participant's reflection upon their socialization suggest that the degree of Disguisedness at age 17 was related to several primary factors. The factors were related to the degree to which the participant perceived that (1) their Organizing Principles were affirmed and valued in their family and community; (2) they were affirmed for Involvements congruent with their Organizing Principles; (3) there were others who possessed similar Organizing Principles who would act as mentors or "objects of identification" for the participant; and (4) there were Involvements congruent with their Organizing Principles available to them. Organizations, people or institutions which devalued or diminished Involvements congruent with Organizing Principles promoted a "disidentification" with the Organizing Principles and ultimately to a sense of dissonance, stress, guilt, defendedness and confusion.

Similarly, the degree to which the participant felt as though they were safe, loved, and valued at home had a relationship to the degree of Disguisedness they experienced at age 17 (as reflected upon later). The term, "Mattering" will be used to synopsize this construct. As children, the participants did whatever they perceived it would take to Matter at home, even
if that meant investing themselves in Involvements incongruent with their Organizing Principles. Mattering was more important than anything and had the quality of a basic need. The need to Matter was frequently a motivating force behind participant's commitment to, and identification with, Involvements incongruent with Organizing Principles.

Participants who were highly Disguised in early adulthood had often been forced to live-up to a set of incongruent expectations and demands or forced to meet the emotional needs of one or more of their parents. Under these circumstances, instead of responding to their own inner motivations and impulses, they focused on the behaviors and beliefs which would provide them psychological safety, validation, love, and affirmation in their family of origin. These participants developed early Identity Structures significantly incongruent with their Organizing Principles. They were the most fearful in the face of change and the most ambivalent over the longest periods of time prior to making a commitment to new Involvements. They also appeared to have a stronger reliance on support figures and other adaptive mechanisms to empower changes in career or other Involvements.

These participants struggled with an intense fear of change and later reflected on a lack of a clear sense of their Organizing Principles during early adulthood. Their consideration of a possible career change was more conflicted, took longer, and was more prone to postponement.

Participants who had more congruent Identity Structures as young adults described childhoods in which they felt affirmed, loved, and valued on their terms. That is, they were validated for "just being themselves." These participants chose initial Involvements which were more congruent than the
other group. They experienced Immersion more often, were less stressed, more courageous in the face of considered change, and required less reliance on support figures and adaptive mechanisms to empower changes in career or other involvements.

However, even for these participants, there were "blind spots." Blind spots were aspects of Organizing Principles which had been Submerged or unexplored. These participants engaged the change process as an opportunity to enhance the synergy of their Identity Structure. That is, to strike a more inclusive and productive balance between involvements and Organizing Principles.

I divided this section into two subsections. The first subsection will flush out and illustrate the relationship between socialization, Disguisedness, involvements, and Identity Structure for two participants, Todd and Susan. The second section will look at gender difference as it pertains to this discussion.

The Relationship between socialization, Disguisedness, Involvements, and Identity Structure

Todd (0 - 17)

Todd was interviewed at age 40, four years after he had left a career in corporate marketing and returned to graduate school on his way to becoming a psychotherapist. His Organizing Principles centered around his capacity to (and affinity for) recognize patterns in meaning in relationship, music, and ideas. He considered himself creative, intellectual, spiritual (but not religious), intuitive, artistic, friendly, social, and flexible.
He was raised in a small farming town in Oklahoma. His mother worked in the home and his father owned a local grocery store. He was the oldest of two children. He described his parents as concrete, practical, money-oriented, sports-oriented, and business-like. Thus many of their values were incongruent with Todd's Organizing Principles. His early childhood recollections, however, suggest he experienced a sense of Mattering and congruency:

early childhood was very playful, creative, sort of a naive time of life. Pretty much, I'm the oldest child so basically the only child for about 4 1/2 years. And the first grandchild on either side of the family so I pretty much got plenty of attention in the early years. Things seem pretty wonderful I guess for a long time.

As he got older and his family began to emphasize their value system in his socialization, he began to experience dissonance and dissatisfaction:

The only thing that I maybe saw different through that time period is after about I never got into sports my interests stayed mainly intellectual and creative so, doing things after certain say the teenage years I began to, I felt more and more alienated from my family which was a concrete group of people. So all that creative and intellectual stuff was pretty much frowned on, it wasn't concrete, it wasn't practical and did not translate directly into money especially in a small town setting where I grew up. So that's probably the most painful thing, feeling different, that parts of me were not approved of. But both parents really, I guess, my father pushed me to be more business-like and my mother pushed me to be more sports-oriented and I didn't really want either one of those so that was a lot of painful stuff at home.

Todd had begun to experience a set of parental expectations and values which were incongruent with his Organizing Principles. He experienced dissonance around the ambivalence between the need to Matter and the need for congruency. He gained a sense that there was a "role" to play and a way to act in order to Matter in his family.
Lots of other conflicts for years and years. It was all about walking through some prescribed role they had for me. Filling in some kind of structure. Interest in art and literature and intellectual pursuits were discouraged unless it was for scholastic achievements and then they were, you know, you were supposed to do that and perform. I'm not sure why music was allowed or encouraged, they certainly paid for all those instruments and lessons but there again I think some of that was PR for my dad's business and that was pretty much the way things were termed as far as my activities, different organizations, different civic activities I was in and theater work. But it was very much discouraged as any kind of career. In fact they sat me down and told me that I better not be thinking of that as a career choice.

Todd perceived that his parents had expectations that he would remain in his home town and take over the family grocery store. His distaste for this involvement and the pressure being placed on him created strong inner dissonance:

Yeagh, my parents had a lot of plans for me. My father's always been into two lines of work. His business is a grocery store, supermarket sort of thing, and farming and ranching, and particularly farming and ranching. He grew up with that so that's quite a noble profession or it was like connection to God and the earth or something. It was way out of proportion. So he had plans for me to be in both of those, definitely. From age 8, I worked in the grocery store every summer until I was out of college. I hated every minute of it and hated him for forcing me to do it.

While certain congruent involvements were permitted, Todd was aware that they were, at best, conditionally accepted by his parents. The message to him was more than an admonishment to an involvement; it was an admonishment to the part of him which felt congruent with the involvement. The lines were being drawn between the part of him which needed to be loved and accepted by his parents and the part of him which was sensing an attraction to a congruent (but not approved) involvement.
During the same years Todd was interacting with other involvements which were positioned at varying degrees of congruence or incongruence. For example, school offered substantial affirmation of his Organizing Principles. As a result of that affirmation, Todd invested large amounts of time in and around school activities. According to him, much more than he might have otherwise.

Then of course I started school and I thought that was the greatest thing. Learning and all that stuff was fascinating. I always enjoyed that kind of organized activities, school activities. During junior high and high school I was sort of, I was into everything in a way. I studied about 4 or 5 different musical instruments and had to be an officer in about 5 or 6 clubs or whatever and I did musical theater for the community theater, I had a radio show in high school. It's an overkill basically but all that stuff brought me a lot of validation I didn't feel at home. Lots of great mentor relationships from teachers. The other thing was the writing stuff was always encouraged by several teachers through school, English composition and got a great deal of encouragement along with encouragement for public speaking and doing plays and drama.

While school offered Todd affirmation, his church was a source of dissonance. Todd's natural affinity for the spiritual coupled with his analytical, abstract and intuitive nature resulted in feelings of stress when faced with, what he perceived to be, a rigid and dogmatic theology. The inconsistencies between what he heard in church and what he saw modeled by his parents created a further sense of alienation from religion.

We always went to church, Baptist Church which was encouraged by my parents and grandparents. Then growing up as Southern Baptist I couldn't connect with how judgmental that it was even though it became very important as a child. By 9 or 10 years old I remember sitting at church and saying I don't need to be talked down to, sorry, it's so simplistic. Its like cartoon versions I didn't believe in, devils and a very paternal kind of God sitting on a throne passing judgments on me. I just didn't buy into that so I drifted around. I didn't know it wasn't a real high
priority for a lot of years. Oddly enough I don't think my parents had one even though we certainly attended church two to three times a week during a lot of my childhood. I think that was one of the other inconsistencies I could pick up on early. I didn't really see them living out any of their belief systems except fearful do right or do good or you will be punished, but I didn't see it really translate into their daily lives so I thought that was pretty useless to spend two to three times a week sitting through these sermons. But it was good PR for the store. Actually I think they felt very connected to the community through it. But it wasn't spiritual for them.

Growing up in a small town also limited Todd's exposure to people with which he could identify. The culture of the town appeared to Todd to value the same things as his parents. He experienced, at an early age, a sense of being different from his peers: "Fredrick, Oklahoma. About 8,000 people. Now that I look back, there were probably very few kids who went to college and very few who had the breadth of interest that I had. I had few close friends so that that made me even feel more different than I was at the time."

While most of Todd's extended family shared the values and perspectives of his parents, an uncle mirrored involvements congruent with his Organizing Principles. This resulted in some degree of identification with his uncle and a sense of affirmation.

Growing up I had one uncle who lived in Oklahoma City and he taught English, Spanish and Drama. Those were more in line with my interests so there was some adult out there that had some, I could relate to basically. I wasn't around him, but maybe two or three times a year and he was fascinating and always took students on those trips to like Mexico and London and out seeing the rest of the world and doing things that sounded interesting to me. He encouraged my interests in different things too. I didn't want to be a teacher but there was enough of a connection that I felt like this.

As Todd approached adulthood and a choice to go to college he also sensed a growing tension with respect to his parents: "As I became a person
on my own, the rift from my family grew larger because I seemed so different from them." While Todd's Organizing Principles had been affirmed in school involvements and by an uncle, they had been diminished by his family and others. Part of his growing dissonance was born from the emerging sense that in order to pursue involvements congruent with his Organizing Principles he would have to significantly distance himself from his family.

Todd (18 - Point of Dissonance)

Todd arrived at college with many of his Organizing Principles submerged beneath a blanket of internalized disapproval. While part of him had a clear sense of, and attraction to, congruent involvements, his "internalized parent" had convinced him to identify with a more practical, business-oriented world view which was to influence his initial adult decisions and commitments.

I'd been pretty much brain washed that most of my interests weren't going to translate to a living. I was sort of in a limbo. I was making good grades pretty much making all the right contacts but really didn't have any idea what I was going to go. It took me a long time to put a major down on paper. I put business for a while but I knew that wasn't gonna ever work for me. So I finally wound up with advertising and that was in the Journalism Department. For me this was a compromise between being creative and being in the business world. So that was going to translate. The biggest [influence on those early decisions] probably was my father even though I don't want to admit that cause I was trying to move against it. But I'm sure that since I viewed pretty much our family role was to be a PR machine for his business, or at least that was sort of the life he related to us then, so I thought It had to influence my decision to go into advertising and PR because I was trying to match up the creative side of me with some kind of business aspect.

Todd's selection of Public Relations as a major was adaptive in the sense that it satisfied his "incongruent ought to's" and the more congruent
Organizing Principles. The internalized expectation to be in business and be practical were brought together with his love of writing and being creative. While he later perceived it to be too much of a compromise, he had made some decisions which would commit him to a path with a set of consequences and outcomes. Once Todd got involved in the Public Relations program, his natural writing skills drew recognition and affirmation. This reinforced his current path and diminished the chance of any reconsideration at this point in his life.

After I decided to become a public relations, no advertising journalism was the actual degree, several professors were real encouraging about my writing skills and just had a very enthusiastic response from them and they would use examples of my work in class. The last campaign we wrote I was doing copyrighting about like our Airways to Britain and my professor broke into tears during the presentation because he liked the writing so, because it reminded him of his last trip there. So that all gave me a lot of confidence and encouragement to continue in PR writing. So those people had a great deal of influence. That got me into that career.

Other aspects of Todd's college life supported his "compromise" and he found himself positioned within a developmental trajectory despite some level of perceived incongruence. While his general Involvements appeared marginally congruent, to Todd, they seemed incongruent with his values and ethics. His Identity Structure was solidifying and anchoring him on a committed path.

About the second year I decided to join a fraternity and had some people push me to do that and I really doubted I was going to like it but I took to it like crazy. We were in a big house with about 125 guys, have a whole social structure, parties and all kinds everything. We studied a little but all kinds of stuff to do. When I first went to school I wanted to explore drama classes and I had been offered a drama scholarship in a small college and it was too small and too close to home so I turned it down. Still I always wanted to do it and I was fascinated with it. By the time I got with everything that I had been fed by my parents, that it was a silly
thing to do plus getting into this fraternity which was very traditional and
everybody was either doctor, lawyer or corporate crap nothing was going
to fit together for me so I sort just slowly let go of all that stuff. All ideas of
being a drama major. I don't think I even told many people I wanted to
do that at the time.

On later reflection, Todd began to recognize the process through which
he "let go" of his prior dreams and the involvements to which he felt the most
attracted. It represented a choice between that which was affirmed and
supported and that which was attractive.

That was important in some way, fitting into what I could conceive at that
point in time to fit into society, I don't know if I'm making sense. Based on
what my vision of the traditional American dream was; to achieve that, I
put a lot of things that I really liked and were really more me aside that I
had been led to believe were not appropriate or didn't fit. So I would
systematically disown a lot of that stuff that was me.

Upon graduation from college Todd took a position in Public Relations
and was married. His wife, Kim was in a similar professional field, which
served to further reinforce his current Identity Structure.

About a year later Kim moved down here and we got married and she
took a job in an ad agency so were both sort of in PR and advertising
stuff. My first corporate job, I wound up in Fort Worth with Southwestern
Petroleum Company. Doing lots of PR writing designing and in-house
publications and brochures. Actually it was sort of fun. The company was
not that great a company but what they let me do was wonderful in many
ways.

Over the next seven years Todd began to experience increasing levels
of dissonance and an emerging awareness of incongruencies in his life. He
changed jobs several times in the same field. He began to feel distant from his
wife and grew mildly depressed. Slowly he began to question all aspects of
his Identity Structure, as each served to reinforce the others. He became
unhappy in his job and marriage.
Susan (0 - 17)

Susan was interviewed at age 55, three years after she left a career as an attorney and returned to school to prepare for a career in the ministry. She is the youngest of two children and lived in Austin, Texas until her junior year in high school, when her family moved to Highland Park in Dallas. Her father graduated from a Texas University and worked for a text book publishing company. Her mother worked in the home, as was traditional for a woman during those years.

Susan described herself as service-oriented, particularly as it relates to children, intellectual, orally persuasive, an abstract thinker, and religious.

As a child Susan experienced a severe illness and the loss of an eye in an accident. According to Susan, these events significantly influenced her view of herself and the interactions in her family.

I had a series of major illnesses. My first was in the first grade and they thought I was going to die and that was a kidney infection. I was really gone. That first grade Christmas the doctor came to my house three times to give me shots and so its funny to talk about because I know its had a big impact on my life and I know it had a big impact on my mothers life for me to be that sick. I think the doctor must have told her, and I didn’t know it until much later, that the threat was really would I live through adolescence because there was something about going through puberty that could make it reactivate. I did have one other spell in the third grade but then by the time I got to that adolescence stage, that seemed to have been cleared up but when I was in the six grade I put out an eye in an eye accident. Both of those two illnesses were really major influences. But after my first illness my mother became very over protective and I think that made a wall between her and my dad because she was so involved with me. Then when I put out my eye it was so horribly traumatic that it really took me years to come to terms with that. Years and years and years. That sounds so terrible but grade school was really good except for being too over protected. In sixth grade when that happened that was really hard.
During her junior high years her parents marriage deteriorated. Her mother became "over-involved" in her life and came to rely upon Susan to meet her emotional needs. At the same time her father "became an alcoholic" and began a period of slow deterioration. Her mother's over-involvement with Susan served to create distance between she and her father. Thus Susan identified more with her mother, but always felt an sense of "striving" for her father's acceptance and love. The energy Susan was forced to invest in trying to Matter in her family minimized opportunities for safe self-exploration. Her "illnesses" created dynamics which reinforced this pattern.

But the down side to all of that is that my father was becoming seriously an alcoholic. That had started around the time I put out my eye. They were linked in a pretty unfortunate way although I don't think in a causal way. I think my dad [favored] my sister because not only was she the smart one but I think more like he really wanted her to be a teacher and in education and that kind of thing. I don't know if they thought I wasn't smart enough or if it was the business of my having been sick and of course by the time I came along my family was in much worse disarray and there is another piece of trying to think of, but they thought I was boy crazy and they didn't ever envision or prepare me to envision the marriage thing so it wasn't like it was that easy. But no I don't know if they thought I wasn't going to grow up or if they, just like an alcoholic family, didn't have the thought to plan ahead.

Susan concluded that her father did not believe that she was intelligent. This caused her to continually question herself and to perpetually seek affirmations of competence from others. Susan believed that the energy she invested in meeting the needs and expectations of her mother, coupled with her family's inability to encourage a productive vision of herself in the future, limited her initial capacity for self-understanding and goal setting. Investing significant energy in an attempt to Matter in her family left her insecure and
fearful with regard to self-determinism.

Susan (18 - Point of Dissonance)

Susan entered college in 1958, embedded in a prevailing culture which offered women few choices with regard to occupational involvements. While she had an early sense of attraction toward social work, women of education, according to Susan were expected to marry well and have a family.

At Newcome one of the things they teach you, well they don't teach you, it is sort of the girl foolishness, was that you go to learn to be a good wife at a cocktail party. I don't think I had a lot of vision about that and my family so clearly did not equip us for work. We were girls and we just were not prepared to work so we had to really do that on our own. At some point I may have aspired to be a stewardess but I couldn't have done that after I put out my eye.

Unequipped in terms of a personal vision of herself, and unclear of, and uncommitted to, her own Organizing Principles, Susan decided on a culturally acceptable choice following graduation from college: she married an attorney and, in the process, enacted some degree of parental separation. One year after her marriage she had a daughter.

I got married 6 months out of college; had a daughter a year later. I was in a marriage that I should not have been in and it was more, I wouldn't say that I married to escape my family, but it was to find stability. Really to find stability.

Under the stress of a marriage which she said was less than fulfilling, Susan revisited a prior consideration of a career in social work. As she said, "I think I have always had that sort of end bent toward social services, social issues, that kind of thing." Susan began to make plans to return to school to pursue a graduate degree in social work. At approximately the same time she separated from her husband. Her initial plan to separate and pursue a new
course in her life was premature. On reflection, she did not believe that she had the confidence to reconstruct successfully her life alone. While Susan had a significant Organizing Principle firmly in consciousness and had identified a perceived congruent Involvement, she did not yet possess the capacity to act on them.

When I had separated from my husband, I began to see it was too hard for me to do that and I had even enrolled in the School of Social Work at the University of Texas, so during that period when my daughter was very young I think I decided that I needed the security of that man and it was too hard with my family so that was the point. I often wondered what my life would have been like if I had not gone back because we stayed together another 10 years or something. It was not a good marriage but it gave good foundations for my daughter. In a sense it did for me. It took me back to my husband or that need for security. That would have been the point that I needed some stability and I needed that predictability. So that would have been the, I don't know if I could have gutted it out at all, maybe I could have, but I couldn't see it, so I'll never know but I went back. So that did prevent me, I dropped out of the School of Social Work and I hadn't been there very long and I wanted to go. I had been trying to get there for years and it was too scary.

Susan had emerged from socialization at age 17 significantly Disguised. None of the data suggest that she was affirmed in her family for Involvements congruent with her Organizing Principles. In fact, she describes her primary affirmations as related to her ability to meet her mother's emotional needs; an expectation which distanced her from her father and from herself. In order to Matter and feel safe she had to do what was expected at the expense of her undifferentiated nature. Additionally, she never described any congruent role models with which she could identify and who could champion or encourage congruent Involvements. Finally, she grew up in a time period and culture in which there were a substantially limited number of "acceptable" Involvements available to women.
In her twenties, Susan embraced her cultural value system as it related to women. She married and had a daughter immediately after graduating from college. She said that her motivation was to find "stability," a byproduct of Mattering which had not been available in her family. She also recognized the cultural expectations placed on her while in college with regard to "what educated women do with their lives." She described her initial Identity Structure as unhappy and once attempted to change things. Unfortunately without the inner strength born of self-esteem and self-understanding, she retreated to a life style she perceived as safe and yet incongruent.

The attraction to social work continued for Susan and when her daughter entered the first grade, she entered graduate school. Her plan was to earn a MSW, get a job, gain the capacity to support herself and extricate herself from her marriage. This arrangement permitted integration of more congruent Involvements within a context perceived as safe. After graduation in 1974 she began a career in social work and shortly after that, began an affair with another man. According to Susan, the affair created a safe context outside the marriage and empowered her to finally get a divorce in 1974.

When she [her daughter] was in the first grade I went back to graduate school at Tulane and got my MSW and that was a pretty conscientious - I'm going to learn to support myself and get out of this marriage, so that was a pretty conscious plan.....I really liked being a social worker, got a good job, a lot of affirmation and graduated in 1971 and was separated from my husband by 1974. I can't say that it was a total stroke of independence because I had reconnected with someone I had known from Dallas and although he was married he was going to help me out of that marriage, we had gotten involved. It was a kind of a way out. I wish I could say that I did it all on my own, but I didn't.
Susan enjoyed being single, and began to further consider what she wanted do with her life. But prior to focusing on more congruent involvements, she had to prove to herself that, contrary to what her father had said, she was "smart." She proved this to herself by enrolling in law school.

Then at the end of the 70's could see my way into law school. Mostly because I wanted more education. I didn't want to pursue that social work degree and where I was I could go to law school at night and I did. When I think about it, it was sort of crazy because I was working full time and going to school at night and still had my daughter. By that time she was in high school and she graduated from high school the year I graduated from law school. We were really a team and I give full credit to her dad too because he was always around....Sometimes I think maybe I shouldn't even have left it [social work], that's where my fulfillment was or foundation. But I can't say going to law school was a mistake because what law school did that social work school could never quite do is law school says you're smart; Social work school doesn't say that. It gave me the power and the intelligence because my sister was the smart one and I was not. So law school gave me that stroke. I was a far better social worker than I was a lawyer although I did some very interesting things in law.

By completing law school, Susan proved to herself that she was "smart," which, to a certain degree, freed her from the need for external affirmation. She finally "mattered" in her own right. Susan practiced law for five years. Her area of expertise was at least "content congruent." That is, by focusing on social service related legal issues, she stayed close to her Organizing Principles. But while the content was congruent, the "process" of law felt incongruent.

I was moving away from the contest the opposition the struggle the beating your brains out; that stuff. Really the bullshit, pardon me, but if you want to go to work where everyday is an argument great. If that is the way you want to talk to people and interact with them and beat up on them so be it. I really don't.
Her sense of incongruency around her career in law initiated a new period of struggle and searching. This time she could listen more closely to herself, as the cries of unmet developmental needs, false assumptions, and limiting cultural expectations had lost prominence.

**Gender Difference in Submergence**

Exploration of the notion of Submergence in the participant data uncovered some differences related to gender. I observed two differences warranting an expanded discussion. First, every woman interviewed discussed her reaction to, and struggle with, perceived limitations on the possible involvements available to her. They felt the press of cultural expectations with regard to what a woman "should" do with her life. Often that press influenced their initial Identity Structure and influenced occupational, educational and relationship decisions. When complying with the "shoulds" left the participant with a choice of involvements and an Identity Structure incongruent (or at least less congruent than others) with their Organizing Principles they often felt as if they had to "settle." Many of the participants grew more disillusioned, angry, sad and frustrated as the time they invested in the incongruent Identity Structure increased. The older the woman, the more limitations she perceived that she faced early in life, and the more changes she had to make to establish congruence.

For example, While Joyce's desire to be a minister had emerged early in her life, so did her realization that it was not an involvement which was available to her.
I think I had a more focused vision late in my teens and into my early 20s and maybe that was in part thinking about ministry growing up in the Southern Baptist church and not thinking I wanted to be a missionary and not thinking there were too many other options for women and I just let it go for a while, just putting it on the back burner. As long as I was Baptist, it didn’t seem to me like I could ever be a part of the clergy of a church. I had a real clear sense of a particular direction I should go at about 17 or 18 years old. So I put that on the shelf for an indefinite period of time.

The second observed difference had to do with the participant’s value of interpersonal affiliation versus their value of autonomy. The women participants were much more likely to discuss their Involvement decisions contextually in terms of the potential effect upon their parents and/or family. Their decisions were directly influenced by these factors which at times resulted in incongruent (with respect to other Organizing Principles) Involvement decisions (as later reflected upon by the women). The men seldom mentioned the perceived effect of their Involvement decisions on family members and when they did, it was typically expressed as a less than critical issue. There was little evidence that the men considered the concerns of their family members a pivotal consideration in their choice of Involvements, particularly with regard to occupational decisions.

For example, Alice left her job as a manager of a catering and gourmet foods retail shop to join her husband in their purchase of a bed and breakfast inn in Vermont. I interviewed her at age 54 and she had left her retail position seven years prior. Lois had five children and had based a long line of career decisions on the needs of her family. As she said, "I would say my life has pretty much been centered around my family. I mean everything seems to revolve around it always, the need to work was because we needed money to
raise children, yeah, I would say around my family."

On another occasion she considered the implications of her husband quitting his job:

From 82 to 85 I managed a gourmet shop, 200 kinds of cheese. I did totally manage it, it was fun and we did catering, parties, and then the woman sold the shop and I went to work for another company, similar type of business. And did that at that company for a year and then Paul talked about leaving his job and quitting and I was very glad that he was going to do that. I felt very strongly about him getting out of it. I was afraid he'd have a heart attack. It was very stressful, he traveled, he hated it. He was involved with union negotiation on the management side every three years and he'd be gone for months at a time and he hated it. So I encouraged him to do that well. Then I decided I'd be better to get some real nuts and bolts restaurant experience because I didn't know what we'd end up doing. So I quit the job. I went and got a job in a restaurant as a cook.

While Alice was successful in finding, and identifying with, some involvements congruent with her Organizing Principles the central criteria around which her Involvement decisions were made was her perception of the needs of her family. Alice supported her Identity Structure through an ideology grounded in a sense of "duty."

It is just something you do, you have to do it. It is a will. I don't know. I guess it is from my parents. You just do what you have to do, I don't know. My mother always helped her parents and my mother was sick for a while when I was a teenager and I had to help, I had to do the cooking. I just learned you do what you have to do. I never questioned it. You have to be, I don't know, I can't explain it, you have to be strong that is all I know. I have to be strong I have to pick up the pieces and you do what you have to do. I have probably said that 10 times that is just the way I am.

The trade-off resulting from Alice's ideology of duty was a diminishment of, and loss of identification with, her sense of her own needs and desires. On one occasion she agreed to put a family swimming pool in the yard where her
garden had been. Gardening had always been a congruent Involvement in her life. She was shocked by the mild depression which followed the construction:

Well, it was a small thing, but we put a swimming pool in where my garden was. Well, we planned for it but then when it happened it kind of upset me, I was kind of surprised, I learned a lot from that, it got me prepared for a lot of other things that happened later. That was interesting, it was kind of a surprise. I learned that things, that you can't let it get to you, that you have to get tough and get tough on your self and that has helped me through a lot of other things. You just get tough and you just deal with it. You think through it as much as you can and you plan things better than you think. Yeah, that's what surprised me about it, that it bothered me. We planned for months, you don't put a swimming pool in in a day, you have to plan for it, get the whole thing engineered, hired the company and make all the decisions warranting this thing you are going to do, putting in this swimming pool. We weren't even using most of the garden anymore because the kids weren't home anymore, we let most of it grow into a weed patch. But it surprised me the day they came with the bulldozer, how much it bothered me, I was really amazed. It really surprised me. So other times, things happened after that then I did a lot more thinking about when we made these definite changes and I think for it be prepared for it so I could really think through it.

While Alice is somewhat of an extreme example in that she seemed to lose identification with important aspects of herself through an ideology of care and duty, all of the women participants vocalized a concern for striving toward congruence in the context of a caring connection to others. The men did not verbally express the same.

**Disruption**

For all the participants, there emerged a feeling of dissonance and incongruence at some point prior to their decision to change careers which was perceived as a "Disruption" to the stability and constancy of their lives.
The dissonance was experienced as frustration, anger, ambivalence, sadness (perhaps even slight depression), confusion and/or a sense of being disconnected from a sure, stable and continuing sense of themselves. For example, Todd felt unhappy, confused and unsuccessful. He began to question his assumptions about the meaning of success which helped him gain an awareness of his incongruency. His rigid assumptions about success were part of an Identity Structure which was keeping him stuck in incongruent involvements. His feelings of pain were threatening the existing structure and planting the seeds of change.

Didn't feel successful at all. In some ways that almost looks blind or spoiled or something. I may have had things a lot of other people wanted to achieve. But it just didn't fit. But I had some really skewed things around money from my family who was very money oriented, so it was never enough. Even at my moderate level of a good salary it didn't look like anything today. I couldn't really assess that as a success even though it was. As much as I hate to admit it I was still carrying a bunch parental stuff about what success looks like. A lot of conflicting messages there too. It didn't fit me and my real desires or interests. It was a really unhappy time.

Similarly, Susan began to experience dissonance and, as a result, questioned her values as they related to her work and her life.

I was moving away from the contest, the opposition, the struggle, the beating your brains out, that stuff. Really the bullshit, pardon me, but if you want to go to work where everyday is an argument, great. If that is the way you want to talk to people and interact with them and beat up on them so be it. I really don't.

The feelings and awarenesses which emerged foreshadowed change and "Disillusioned" them with respect to their habitual way of knowing themselves. Some of their involvements were perceived as dying, ending, changing or just somehow "being different" in a way which left them with less
to "hang onto." Their changing relationship with one Involvement often led to a recognition of the need to terminate, reposition, or reconfigure others. The mutually reinforcing relationship between all aspects of their now "Dis-integrating" Identity Structure entered awareness and for many, it seemed that their worlds were coming apart at the seams. Many realized that they would never be the same, but few had a clear sense who they would become.

Point of No Return

Many of the participants lived with feelings of dissonance for an extended period of time. Some said they denied them for awhile, others said they "moaned and complained," and others poured themselves into incongruent or destructive Involvements. At some point, however, each of the participants reached a "Point of No Return." A point at which they knew that things would never be the same again. For some, the Point of No Return was initiated by others. In several of these cases the dissonance had, over a long period of time, contributed to behaviors and circumstances leading to the significant event.

For example, Zack began to experience dissonance around his choice of accounting as a career at approximately the same time that his first love relationship ended. He had moved to Phoenix from the Midwest to take a staff accountant position and did not have a significant support system in place to help him through this difficult time.

During that time period there were several major things which happened too which stick out strongly. Probably my first serious relationship that affected me in a pretty profound way that, never having experienced a serious relationship before, it certainly set some new goals, gave me some things that I think I would want in life, realizing that there probably is a lot more to life than making money and being successful at a career.
The second thing that I learned was, I began to experience that accounting was not for me, I really didn't enjoy my profession very well. I was fired from Arthur Anderson. I worked there for a little over a year and I had some negative evaluations which probably were deserved at the time because I was screwing off and I think it was from lack of interest. Not everybody agreed that I should have been fired. It had a traumatic effect on me and set back my confidence; actually and it opened up a whole new vista. What should I do? Also during that time I broke up in the relationship. Those were two major blows to my confidence. But there were times when I would get flooded and just couldn't and so, maybe inadvertently I did, because I wanted to be alone and didn't feel like fucking with anybody. Its like I don't want to deal with people, I just wanted to be here and be. I can remember like being high, I had smoked a joint by myself and I can remember being in this emotional agony and it was after the relationship breakup and all and going what is there, there's like no ground beneath me, I'm falling, what can I rely on, what can I trust? There's nothing.

Zack had lost a relationship and was fired from a job, both of which were significant components of his Identity Structure as well as integral parts of his dreams and plans for the future. Being fired and loosing his girl friend were two, almost simultaneous events, which led Zack into Dis-Identification. By Zack's admission, his own lack of interest in accounting had resulted in behaviors which led to his dismissal.

While Zack had contributed to being fired, other participants described their "Point of No Return" as an event outside their immediate control. Even in these cases, however, it was clear that the ground was ripe for new developmental growth. The significant event often resulted in a "reframe" of a limiting set of perceived life circumstances and/or removed certain perceived obstacles from their pursuit of more congruent involvements.

For example, the birth of Bob's first child was an experience of extreme emotion which led to a perceived redistribution of priorities.
It was when our first child was born, it was that event that led me to say, "I want to do what I feel passionate about." So the children actually had a great impact, because, I think some people get the same impact from the death of someone, I got it from new birth. It is an emotional thing that snaps, and perhaps with me it was the emotional event of the birth of a child. It was because this sense of this is important, one of the most important events in my life and there is a piece and it was my work piece of my life that I thought, 'that's not so important and I need to make it as important as what I just saw happening right then.'

It was the death of her father that finally empowered Joyce to quit her job and attend seminary school, a goal which she had embraced for years. Her experience provided a reframe in terms of considering her own mortality, but also was an event which cleared some perceived limiting life circumstances (having to care for her father).

...losing my father-in-law and my father real close together, and it was actually the death of my father and being there with them in Waxahachie, but that was nice to be close and I took him for radiation treatments and could be there for my mom. What I had on the back burner for a long time in terms of seminary, after my dad passed away. I was so thankful because I had seriously attempted to get into seminary about 5 years earlier and there was some family finance things that made that not good timing. But it would have been so hard to be in seminary and to be there to help my mom and dad. But after I lost my dad I thought that it was so typical of people to think, that you will have time to do something one day, but maybe I needed to go ahead and do it now. So that was what I needed to take a chance that I wanted to take for a long time. He passed away on January 1st and that following September I had quit my full time job and was attending school full time. It came pretty quickly. I had brochures and other things and had been trying to do it for a long time. But this was the nudge that really told me it was time to do this.

While half of the participants experienced their Point of No Return through events enacted upon them, the other half initiated their changes themselves. These participants found the courage to sculpt their change events; to terminate their Identity Structures; to step from the edge of a
precipice without the knowledge of where they would land. In each of these cases, the participants struggled with significant dissonance prior to making a decision.

Todd, for example, struggled with intensifying feelings that he was gay and the implications this could have on his marriage, career and lifestyle. Acceptance of the idea would create a press for significant change. The emerging awareness, driven by feelings of dissonance and incongruence, began to break down his safe and familiar Identity Structure.

It's hell. For me it was. It wasn't anything I clearly saw for a long time [being gay] and then low level feelings which had no context at all to be put into at that point and time. For me there was no way to fit that into any construct about of how to live your life or it just was not you know. So I guess originally I just thought it just was an occasional feeling that came up that was nothing to be acted on or wasn't really going to play into my life in any way. Then it came about as my marriage became less fulfilling. But even though with the tremendous struggle, I just felt it looked like and felt like throwing the entire world that I can relate to and stepping onto another planet. That's part of my re-evaluation at this point is that something I really wanted to do. Was I really looking for just another way to step onto another planet. And let's make a huge swing. Not that the feelings weren't real when I had them, but I always thought the feelings toward women were real too. Coming out as a gay man was a very long, long mental and soul searching kind of thing I had to come to terms with. Did I really believe it was okay? Did I really believe it was worth? Were those feelings strong enough to interrupt my life, interrupt my wife's life at that point and time? And I wasn't ready to let go of my family at that point and I knew that was a big possibility. All my close friends from college, I figured I would have to let go of. So I just came down to would I honor this part of myself? Did I find it valuable enough and honorable enough to act on it and follow it through? It was a long process and then doing it was even harder. Certainly had the rewards but you know, that part of myself had to be expressed and it threw a lot of things into turmoil.

Todd decided to initiate a set of Point of No Return events in his life. He left his wife, moved in with a gay lover, came out as a gay person, and
ultimately quit his job.

...and about that time that's when I tried to get a divorce and come out as a gay person. That shook many areas in my life and all of a sudden again I didn't feel like I fit where I was and so the corporate structure didn't seem very accepting of that or that was my interpretation of that and eventually quit that job just because I was really searching for a new identity.

Whether the participants initiated their Point of No Return event/s themselves or had them enacted upon them; whether the event resulted in a reframe or cleared away perceived barriers; or whether they contributed to the circumstances leading to an external change event or had no direct responsibility for it, all the participants shared the following: (1) feelings of dissonance and incongruence preceding the Point of No Return Event; (2) a disidentification with a familiar Identity Structure resulting in feelings of anxiety, confusion, and fear; (3) an emerging, but as of yet infantile, sense of positive potential for congruent changes.

The ambivalence between the loss of the familiar and "safe" Identity Structure and the potential for positive growth and change was an important emerging theme in the data. It was here that there appeared to be a "disintegration" laid parallel with the hope for productive "reintegration." It was here that the participants struggled with perceived risks, employing a number of adaptive mechanisms to buy them time while they pondered who they would become.

The career was an integral and common aspect of the changes encountered by the participants, but in none of the cases was the career the sole aspect of the Identity Structure modified.
Key existential assumptions regarding life, meaning, value, community, love, death, spirituality, and success were addressed in their raw form. They were dismantled, reconsidered and often, reconceived. The following section is about the participants struggle with the ambivalences inherent in this process. It is about the reengineering of an identity.

Alignment

As the participants passed their "Point of No Return" they engaged a change process which, in each case, led them into a new career. While the process of "Dis-Identification" with an old Identity Structure, and the dissonance that goes along with it, gained momentum there emerged, at different times for different participants, an awareness of valuable aspects of themselves which had been left out in the old Identity Structure. They began to differentiate those aspects and recognize an attraction to Involvements congruent with them. Slowly the participants began a process of "Re-Identification," which supported the integration of a more congruent Identity Structure. Making the necessary changes in Involvements was often met with internal and external resistance however, as participants described struggling with the part of themselves which was afraid to step out of a "comfort zone" and risk doing things differently.

The participant's struggle with the ambivalence between their sense of an attraction to more congruent Involvements and their feelings of fear around making change was a central theme in their movement toward Alignment. This section will first dissect the factors identified by the participants which "called them back" to their old
Identity Structure and those which "called or empowered them to move forward" to a new one. It will then explore the participants perspective, well after the fact, of how they are now "different" from what they were before engaging the change process.

**Factors Which Called Them Back**

The participants described this side of the ambivalence as driven by fear, a sense of loss, desperation, and feelings that "it might not work out." Tending to these feelings created a press in favor of the safe and familiar old Identity Structure. Both internal and external factors were relevant to the participants as they discussed this construct. The external factors included the perceived resistance of others to their proposed or intended changes, financial considerations, and the lack of viable role models to support and mirror their considered changes. The internal factors included a perceived need to prove competence in an endeavor which was a part of the old Identity Structure, self-doubt and inner criticism.

**External Factors**

**Resistance from Family and Friends**

Most of the participants perceived varying degrees of resistance from friends and family to the changes they were enacting or considering. The resistance was expressed in many forms, including direct outward disapproval or more subtle forms of disapproval such as sarcasm, critical glances, or "silent treatments." Some participants even experienced behaviors from others which discouraged or blocked their exit from existing involvements. For example, Zack found himself feeling obligated to remain in a family accounting
firm out of a sense of duty while various members of the family attempted to
discourage his return to graduate school.

There was a time when I was working for my parents and I couldn’t leave
the accounting profession because they were needy at that point. There
were very few people working for them. They had a very small firm.
They had people quit on them so I had to take on more responsibility and
my step father wasn’t moving his ass that much to sell the practice. He
was out of it and he wasn’t so concerned about it, but I was dying in it. I
mean I wanted out of it in the worst possible way. So that was a setback,
not being able to do what I wanted to do. That went on for probably a
year and a half. That slowed my return to graduate school for at least a
year and I finally entered when I was 28. I finally reached a point where I
told them I was leaving and that they had had long enough. I was
pissed. I was pissed with my step father. And I found some resistance to
that from some family and friends that, primarily family, felt that perhaps I
was making the wrong choice, that they thought I was doing well, making
a good income, and that I would be considered a success in the eyes of
many people, but for me personally, it wasn’t satisfying and so I had to
learn to once again separate even more from people to a certain extent
and listen to my own inner voice, to my heart and do what I thought I
needed to do...

Judy struggled for years with the idea of leaving her public relations
position with a large company to purchase a restaurant and winery. Each time
she got close to making a decision to go ahead, her husband would resist.
Finally, she was determined to leave.

I guess there was I time for me when I said to my husband, now it’s your
turn. For six years you have done pretty much what you’ve wanted to do
and I’ve had the family load on me, and I kind of philosophically said to
myself it’s his turn. It’s time for me to follow my dreams and do some of
the things I want to do and to not feel captured by that corporate structure
struggle and strain....So I took the letter [of resignation] home and
showed it to Jarel and I said you have got this weekend to change my
mind and we can discuss it this weekend. Otherwise, I will turn this letter
in first thing Monday morning. He said I really don’t want you to do this, I
really don’t think we are ready to do this.
Don and his wife left excellent corporate positions to purchase a bed and breakfast inn in Vermont. His family and friends were critical of their decision to uproot and leave their existing lives. Don perceived, however, that their resistance was grounded in a sense of fear that things might not work out for them. He also believed that they were projecting their own fears of change into Don's situation.

Well, I knew, like any parent, they have your best interests at heart, they think you have something good, nice and secure, "why do you want to throw that away, this is what you have been going for." I don't think she was not supportive, it was just she was scared, why are we chucking everything away? She is supportive of it now....Well the thought process was funny because we had so many people down on us as to why are you doing this, you have a nice secure life, I had a good future at A&T, Sally had a good job, we had a nice house and a secure future and the thought process, if we had listened to other people we wouldn't have done it. I think a lot of people were jealous that we were gonna follow our dream. I think they thought they would like to but they can't.

While Don perceived that his mother's resistance was related to her concern for his well being, Joyce wondered if her husband's resistance wasn't about the effect that her enrolling in seminary would have on him. She believed that he was concerned with a threat to his identity imposed by her impending changes. She believed that he needed to also "try on" the potential changes in his role resulting from her entry to school and the ministry.

I'm sure it felt like he had been kicked off the edge [when told that she was entering the seminary]. Then he went over, it was real interesting that after a week he couldn't believe this was really happening. He went over to see some friends and he hadn't told anybody what I was thinking about doing and I hadn't said anything at work because I needed to work right up until school started. This is five months before I did that so I had to have a double life for a while. But he went over to see some friends and they had a beer and said you'll never believe what Joyce wants to do. He told them and they thought it was wonderful. He came home and he was okay...Once I was actually in seminary I got a lot of support and having Darron's support was really important to me and I don't know why
that conversation was so helpful for him. I think it was helpful for him to say it to somebody else, this is what Joyce wants to do. And hear how it would be for him to be the spouse of the minister and what does that mean for him. This is a career change that has significant repercussions for him.

Financial Considerations

For most of the participants, financial considerations either delayed or were strongly considered in the decision making process relative to their career change. For most, however, it was not central to the decision to change. Most of the participants who decided that it was time to change did not let money, or the lack of it, stand in their way. For example, Joyce perceived that the lack of money could always serve as an excuse not to leave her position and return to school. Clarifying this perspective empowered her to diminish the relative importance of money in her final decision to leave.

One of the challenges at the time was trying to return to school full time while I was bringing in 60% of our family income. And had much better benefits than Darron....when I finally thought I'm going to be a minister, Darron and I talked. Not like, I was well, maybe in six years we need to look at finances and it was kind of impossible. It's like financially when is the right time to start a family? You would never have children. It would never be a good time. So when we pulled out the check book, I mean now I think about it and we laugh about it. Why was the check book so important but it really is about kids, saving for college, making a house payment, it is real practical and not just Darron trying to control everything. But it was kind of a checkbook dialogue for years and years and years and after my dad died and I was back at work and kind of life had returned to normal it occurred to me that as long as Darron and I had been together Darron knew me very well and he probably also knew that if I really wanted to do something I would just do it. If it was really something I had to do I would do it. So rather than having another check book conversation I sent all my papers off to school to see if I would be accepted.
Todd was so determined to return to school that he enrolled without knowing how he would pay for it.

Probably part left over from early childhood stuff was I was determined not to make money the determining factor here. It had been so so long for my family that I was going to do it differently no matter what. I certainly considered it but I went ahead and enrolled in school not knowing how I would come up with the tuition. Sort of a leap of faith and it was always there.

George and his wife moved from a farming community in the Midwest to a large city in Texas so he could attend seminary. While his local church helped them transition to school, they were far from secure financially. In spite of these factors, George did not seem to consider financial considerations as limiting constraints in terms of his decision to return to school.

I wasn't too worried about finances. Our local church took care of us well. I got a job shortly after we arrived and my wife worked part time in different places. We never really worried. Oh, there were a few times the check book balance got a little low and we were worried but things fell into place for us as far as finances so we didn't worry about that too much.

While several of the participants initially delayed returning to school or changing jobs for financial reasons, their subsequent decision to change did not occur because of some significant improvement in their financial condition. They were able to make changes because they somehow altered their perspective with respect to the relative value of money and financial security. They had decided to "figure out a way to make it work."

**Absence of Role Models**

Another external factor which impeded the capacity to risk change and increased feelings of fear and anxiety was the absence of role
models with which the participant could identify in terms of their contemplated changes. This was particularly relevant for women considering entering a traditionally male line of work. For example Joyce said,

The classes had sort of begun to prepare me for that because I'd only be through one year of the seminary, but to stand up and preach I had probably seen two women preach in my life before I preached my first sermon. They had been in small congregations so that seemed like probably about the scariest of the whole transition because I new school would be fine if I gave myself enough time to make the transition. I knew I could do school work. But what was it that I was going to say and how would it be to preach and I had almost no role models for that. That seems real scary. That seemed like I was really stepping off the edge.

To summarize, several external factors were perceived by participants as obstacles to their capacity to change careers. Direct or subtle resistance from significant people in their lives was commonly experienced. Additionally, most of the participants struggled with issues around finances and the capacity to "afford" to change. Finally, several of the participants, particularly women, cited the lack of available role modes as a hindrance to their capacity to change.

Internal Factors

The Need to Prove Something

While these external factors were significant, the participants also identified several internal factors which impeded moving beyond their existing Identity Structure. For example, several participants believed that before making a change in their lives they had to first "prove" something. The thing which needed to be proven was usually tied to an incongruent Involvement
around which there had been some expectation that they should be successful. For example, Joyce remained in public relations long after she began experiencing dissonance. Before leaving she had to prove to herself that she was not a "quitter."

Part of the trick was, those years I was trying to get to seminary. I had to be honest with myself that I was not escaping, so I hung in with the PR stuff longer in part because I didn't want to be a quitter. I didn't want to be a quitter in PR but I think I had to prove that to myself. That would keep me some place longer than I felt like I needed to be? I think it had more to do with proving it more to myself than to other people.

Many of the participants felt ashamed that they had been unable to "live up to" these expectations and wanted to "set things right" before they could let go of their old Identity Structure. In a sense they had to "recycle" back through an old (or new, but incongruent) Involvement in order to satisfy themselves that they were smart, capable, or successful. Only then could they let go of their old Identity Structure without experiencing feelings of inadequacy or failure. For example Zack had been fired from his position with a large accounting firm in Phoenix. He returned home to Ohio and joined his families accounting firm despite an awareness that he did not enjoy accounting. He did not feel that he could leave accounting until he could prove to himself that he could be successful.

During that time a couple of things that were important to me was to prove that I could do accounting and be good at it after having been terminated. It was important for me to show myself that I could do it. It made me very motivated to do well, so I did do well at my profession, but that wasn't fulfilling enough. After I proved to myself that I could do it, it just wasn't fulfilling...

Underneath Zack's drive to prove that he could be successful in accounting was an internalized expectation that he "should be good at, and
enjoy, accounting." This expectation had its roots in his childhood. His mother and step-father were both accountants and Zack sensed their pride with respect to his participation in the profession. This created an inner barrier to his exit from this aspect of his identity.

My mom and stepfather are both CPAs, so when I told them I was going to be an accountant, they thought that was probably a good choice. My mom likes being an accountant, but they both thought it was great and I think I already indicated that they were very disappointed (when he decided to leave accounting)... Obviously my mom had an impact on me in becoming a CPA. I probably would not have been a CPA and accountant if it hadn’t been for her. I wouldn’t even have known what an accountant was or what they did.

Bob experienced great difficulty separating from the family business. He returned and left three times in all. It was only after he had proven to himself that he could be successful that he was able to finally leave the business for good.

Leaving the family business and needing to do it one more time until I was satisfied that I had done a good job. I didn’t want to leave before having done a good job. It’s funny, now that I think about that theme would apply throughout these various things... I spent five years working in the family business. Long enough to close the chapter. I became a director of the company, worked on the biggest real estate project that the company had, I was the project manager on that, and saw that through to completion. Finished the business that had to be done. And played out the least bit of hesitation that it is time to move on. I wanted to exit. Not knowing at that point at all what I was going to do.

Similar to Zack, Bob’s internalized expectation that he should ultimately join, enjoy, and be successful in, the family business created an inner barrier to change. This barrier diverted him a number of times from leaving the business in favor of a more congruent involvement.

I came from a family where my father owned, with his brother, a construction company and the family dynamics revolved around the family company where all of the children at some point in their...lives,
worked in the family business...I think I was driven more in that business area as a result of the family history background that there was a business, and perhaps it was more expected of me to be in this business type setting as opposed to a nonbusiness setting which I describe the science area as being. Early on there was some tugging away from what I was into.

Bob's perceived expectation that he should enter a career in business (particularly the family business) created a press which, he believed, resulted in his selecting a series of incongruent involvements. The dissonance he experienced as a result of these choices was mitigated by a corresponding series of validations for his efforts in business.

Probably the significant items in high school, one of which was, I found, the activity of Junior Achievement to be satisfying and challenging. I worked in that arena, was elected president of a company... eventually, was selected to receive the business award when I graduated from high school. I think what I found of interest is not necessarily what I became involved in. The example I would like to use is the business area, which I excelled in, even though this was not my first choice for where I wanted to head...In any event, I continued to succeed in that business world even though that wasn't what I wanted to do. Early on there was some tugging away from what I was into. Even though I was excelling at what I did in fact get into.

Bob's commitment to business, despite experiencing significant dissonance, was related to an internalized childhood expectation that he would ultimately join the family business. He perceived that as long as he planned to work in the family business, he would Matter in his family.

For many of the participants childhood wounds and unmet needs emerging from a context of family criticism, expectation, and judgment exerted a significant influence on their future selection of involvements. For example, Susan had entered a relatively congruent field of work (social work), only to return to law school in order to prove to herself that she was "smart." In her
family she had always been considered the "social" one, but not "smart" by her father. The wounds created a tension driving her to prove her intelligence to herself and thereby satisfy an unmet childhood need for validation.

Sometimes I think maybe I shouldn't even have left it (social work), that's where my fulfillment was or foundation. But I can't say going to law school was a mistake because what law school did the social work school could never quite do is law school says you're smart; Social work school doesn't say that. It gave me the power and the intelligence because my sister was the smart one and I was not. So law school gave me that stroke. I was a far better social worker than I was a lawyer although I did some very interesting things in law.

The participant's need to "prove something to themselves" suggested a conflicted inner posture. On one hand they perceived that they did not enjoy certain aspects of their lives or jobs, but when they considered something different they encountered a stream of inner criticism and fear. The emerging negative self-talk was rooted in childhood expectations which they perceived themselves to be violating. This often led to a set of related behaviors apparently aimed at releasing them from the grip of their inner critic, and ultimately from an incongruent Identity Structure. "Proving" was actually about first "living up" to childhood expectations and, as a result, experiencing a sense of affirmation and value sufficient to empower the capacity to "let go" of the expectation. Once they were successful in their endeavor they felt successful as a person. They had "ridden in", "conquered", and now they were free to ride out. Their capacity to let go of their self-imposed incarceration in a false self allowed them to consider new, more congruent changes.

**The Inner Critic**

In this study the "inner critic" was a powerful force. It stripped away confidence, security and the sense that things would be "okay." It diminished
the capacity to take risks and sent participants rushing to "settle,"
"compromise," and "rationalize." It kept them out of touch with their feelings,
wants and desires and led many to invest heavily in incongruent involvements.
It was, only in retrospect, however, that they recognized this. For example,
Susan left her husband determined to return to school for a degree in social
work. In retrospect she felt she was "too scared" to make it. She rationalized
that she returned to her husband to provide stability for her daughter. She
remained in an unsatisfactory marriage for ten more years. Only after later
completing her social work degree, getting a job in the social work field, and
beginning an affair with another man was she able to muster the courage to
leave her marriage.

When I had separated from my husband, I began to see it was too hard
for me to do that and I had even enrolled in the school social work at the
University of Texas so during that period when my daughter was very
young I think I decided that I needed the security of that man and it was
too hard with my family so that was the point. I often wondered what my
life would have been like if I had not gone back because we stayed
together another 10 years or something. It was not a good marriage but
it gave good foundations for my daughter. In a sense it did for me.
Success took me back to my husband or that need for security more than
success if you can separate them. That would have been the point that I
needed some stability and I needed that predictability. So that would
have been the, I don’t know if I could have gutted it out at all, maybe I
could have but I couldn’t see so I’ll never know but I went back. So that
did prevent me, I dropped out of school. I hadn’t been there very long
and I wanted to go. I had been trying to get there for years and it was too
scary. By that time I knew a lot about child development and I didn’t feel
right for my daughter. So I went back so that was a big one. Cause I’ve
never known what it would have been like. When my husband came to
get me I just looked at him and I thought I don’t want to go and my sister
said don’t go. If you feel like that, don’t go. I walked out the door and I
felt I had to, yes. I called him and said do you want to try again? He did,
he always did. I had been away over a year. I called him from Austin
and I knew I was too scared.
For Todd, the prospect of leaving his wife, career, and coming out as a gay man was significantly at odds with his inner critic which was rooted in the Baptist, practical, duty-based, conservative, money-oriented ethos of his father. He perceived that his only escape was what I will call a "Polar Swing." That is, he completely terminated major aspects of his Identity Structure and discontinued all contact with the external version of his inner critic (his parents). He left his wife, quit his job, and moved in with a "bohemian" male lover. He experienced fear, confusion, shame and loneliness, but also a sense of positive potential and new excitement around previously unexplored aspects of himself. In his lover he found a free-spirited rebel who exhibited a perspective which empowered Todd to own the rebel in himself. It was only in this way that he believed he could get enough distance from his old identifications that he could explore what he really wanted and who he really was.

My first lover was an artist and we moved in together and he had some projects to do and I quit my job and sort of lived a bohemian lifestyle with him and did stained glass windows with him for about a year.... it seemed very far from where I was living at the time which was a corporate structured life. He had many of the same family pressures to do the same stuff I had. So I related and we had a background similar but he was just staunch that he wasn't going to do it and pursue his interests come hell or high water and I thought that was pretty neat and attractive and certainly a part of me that I hadn't got to express in any kind of positive way. It became a little too far from what I was used to to sustain a relationship. I thought sometimes that that's why things went so extremely different. That I had to break that far away to sort of reconstruct who I really wanted to be. Which in essence is not that far away but at the time I needed that much difference to set up a sense of self I guess.

To summarize, each participant experienced various levels of internal and external resistance to planned or in-process
changes to their Identity Structure. The resistance was one pole of an ambivalence born out of a change process which caused the participants to separate from a familiar way of living and viewing the world and themselves. To let go of their old Identity Structure the participants often had to deal with a number of external factors including the objections of those who were close to them, financial concerns related to changing jobs or returning to school, and/or the lack of relevant role models to support their considered changes. Many also struggled with a set of limiting internal assumptions which manifested as an "inner critic" when violated. These assumptions manifested as an implicit investment in the status quo and forced the participants to deal with guilt and fear in order to move on. The resulting fears often kept the participants "stuck" in an Identity Structure they no longer perceived as acceptable. It was only after a Point of No Return and the support of a number of adaptive mechanisms that the participants moved from their safe and familiar sense of themselves.

Adaptive Factors and Perspectives Which Empowered Participants' Progress

In varying degrees the participants all experienced anxiety with respect to the career and other life changes they were making. There was a sense of "taking a risk," and feelings of insecurity. Each participant utilized various methods and perspectives to deal constructively with their anxiety. I classified their adaptive responses into one of three categories: (1) new perspectives on risk; (2) exploration and planning; (3) supportive and catalytic people;
and (4) providence. The following discussion explores these empowering methods and perspectives.

New Perspectives on Risk

A tool participants employed in dealing constructively with the anxiety associated with change was the formulation of a new perspective which helped them in understanding and considering the risks implicit in their circumstances. The participants formulated and embraced these perspectives. The new perspectives were used to moderate an imposing sense of fear of risk. Often they were rationalizations which empowered the capacity to change: sometimes they were strong emotions; sometimes they reworked priorities; sometimes they realigned their lives with the process of "God's Will" or with a process of a wisdom greater than themselves.

Beneath these new perspectives were feelings of fear related to leaving what was "known" and moving toward what was "unknown." While fear resisted change, feelings of anger empowered it. Some participants endured significant frustration and anxiety until anger became the dominant emotion. It was at these times that action was taken, new perspectives actively embraced, and changes made.

For example, Zack felt "trapped" in the family accounting firm. It was only after he became angry that he was able to take action.

There was a time when I was working for my parents and I couldn't leave the accounting profession because they were needy at that point. There were very few people working for them. They had a very small firm. They had people quit on them so I had to take on more responsibility and my step father wasn't moving his ass that much to sell the practice. He was out of it and he wasn't so concerned about it, but I was dying in it. I mean I wanted out of it in the worst possible way. So that was a
setback, not being able to do what I wanted to do. That went on for probably a year and a half. That slowed my return to graduate school for at least a year and I finally entered when I was 28. I finally reached a point where I told them I was leaving and that they had had long enough. I was pissed. I was pissed with my step father.

The new perspectives most frequently described by the participants were rationalizations such as, "I can always go back," "it's a greater risk to stay," and "there is something bigger at stake." Each of these were mentioned multiple times, and several were mentioned by almost all the participants. These perspectives were discussed most frequently when I ask them about their how they handled feelings of fear or being "at risk."

"I can always go back" was a perspective in which the participants either convinced themselves that if things did not work out in terms of their emerging Identity Structure, that they could always return to the old one, or that they could at least recover occupationally and get a new job using their "old" skills. This perspective was expressed by many of the participants.

For example, Zack found some level of comfort in his perception that if graduate school, or his intended career in psychology was unsuccessful, that he could always return to accounting.

In some ways I feel fortunate because I always felt that I have a career, an accounting career, that if worse came to worse, I know I can always go back into the profession and so that was in some ways a nice little security blanket I could fall back on...Now at the career change point, I didn't have this type of experience because I think I had that security blanket, you know, I mean I know that's there. I could always go back to what I was doing before. In some way that was my grounding it was not like a total, like I was giving something up and it was an irrevocable change. I don't think it ever is, but sometimes people perceive that it is and that prevents them from doing it. It's not irrevocable though, I mean I can always go back into business.
Molly utilized this perspective to both empower herself, and to counter her husband's objections and diminish his fear's around the perceived risk of her career change.

So I took the [resignation] letter home and showed it to Bill and I said you have got this weekend to change my mind and we can discuss it this weekend. Otherwise, I will turn this letter in first thing Monday morning. He said I really don't want you to do this, I really don't think we are ready to do this. And I told him well, look, the worst that can happen is that we can't make it on our own and I'll go back to work... I'm pretty marketable in the city and I've never burned any bridges and I've got a lot of friends in 'ag' and a lot of friends in the city and I said what's the worst that can happen. We have saved probably 6 to 8 months of enough income that we can support ourselves and if I need to go back to work I'll go back to work. That to me was never an issue and maybe that's my own self-confidence or an ego or whatever you want to call it. I never doubted my ability to get a job.

"It's a greater risk to stay" was a perspective emerging out of a situation in which the participant was significantly unhappy in their current career. They often felt that "it can't get any worse" than it is now. Their understanding of this message was that the risk of change was less than the certainty of continued unhappiness or anxiety related to their current situation. There was a sense that they were justifiably "leaping from a burning building."

Todd had been in corporate public relations for fourteen years. He was unhappy and unfulfilled. It was this unhappiness which finally empowered him to make some changes in his life.

Sometimes I think for a long time I avoided taking those risks for a change, then finally let the, until I just finally hated it so much I had to take a risk. Disliked life so much or the way things were going sort of forced me to take the risk. Push through any kind of fear. And sometimes that took longer than; I wish it had been a shorter period.
George grew up on a farm in southern Minnesota. As long as he could remember, he was expected to take over the family farm. With the declining farm economy he was forced to take an agricultural sales job. While he had considered going to seminary, it was not until economic circumstances in Minnesota became intolerable, that he found the courage to go to school.

I would have said, I don't have what it takes to be a minister, but in 1992 again the stresses of the job, I wasn't enjoying my work, the farm economy wasn't turning around and money was hard to come by. Farmers were not willing to spend a lot of money on things which is what I was trying to do: get profits for my company. So things just, and my wife had trouble getting a job. There was a huge glut of teachers in Minnesota schools which were consolidating, laying off teachers and everything and she was having a hard time so in 1993 we thought we would give this a shot.

"There is something bigger at stake" was another empowering perspective. This had to do with the participant's altering the context in which the change decision was made such that the change and its implicit risks were less important than something else. In this sense it was a reworking of priorities and resulted in a reconfigured sense of "what is important in life." For some this had to do with religion or spirituality and a sense of doing "God's will." For these participants, there was a sense that Alignment was congruent with "God's will." That is, they felt a greater sense of connection to God through a deeper connection with their own Organizing Principles. For others it was about the intersection of a value (other than religion) and an Organizing Principle. That it, there was a perceived relationship between actualizing their Organizing Principles and living congruently with their values.

Additionally, for many there was a shift from an outcome orientation to a process orientation. That is, from an "I want to be a" perspective to an "if I
listen within and follow my sense of what is right for me, everything will be fine" orientation.

For example, Todd went through a difficult transition during which he considered and carefully defined his values. His sense of risk during his career change was mitigated by the knowledge that his choices were motivated by, and consistent with, his values.

Those aren't concrete answers but I come to a point I guess that I know pretty much my own personal values and how I feel about things. I know what things should be guiding my life from this point on and I'm pretty happy about this. I've done some therapy work or personal assessment to get to that point. I've had to reexamine so many things and see them in a new light.

Tony depended on his "faith" to manage his sense of risk. His capacity to "let go" of a need for control was grounded in his commitment to a "higher" value.

It was a shift but yet my faith has helped me a lot. I'm secure that nothing is going to happen that I won't be prepared to cope with. That's a big part of a person's stresses that you face every day in making big life decisions. If I decide to do this, that's okay, I'll be fine. My faith will keep me on the right track. That's been a big blessing...That was a time [going to seminary] we turned everything over to God or fate and just resigned to the fact that we were going to move and make changes and let the spirit lead us where it may. I think probably in the last couple of years it's really changed. When I was in secular positions and jobs I was always trying to live up to standards now I'm trying to live up to supreme standards and that is probably a more important thing now.

Zack mitigated feelings of risk by making decisions based on a deep sense of who he is and what is right for him. He called this sense an "inner voice." He also believed that his inner voice was consistent with the "will of God." In that his inner voice offered advice seemingly congruent with his Organizing Principles, he ultimately equated living congruently with living
divinely or spiritually.

I am much more adept at stepping back now and putting things in perspective and asking are they really important and I find that that’s enabled me to go on with things and not be as stressed, to take more risks, take more chances and just to be more comfortable with life... That’s always been an impetus. It’s still a major push for me today, this kind of inner voice. I call it more being in tune with the will of God. So to me they are similar terms. That’s how I think of it, wanting to be following the path that’s probably the best path for me if I’m open to that and willing to give up and be free and not to cling onto things. What became apparent to me is the need to let go, let go a lot of fears of how will I make it financially, how will I be able to support a wife, how will I be able to have a wife and family, was part of that letting go and trying and disregarding those things and go with the more feeling or sense of the heart things and did it feel right.

**Exploration and Planning**

All of the participants engaged in some form of exploration prior to making their career change. While their exploration was, at one level, related to knowledge acquisition related to a potential new job or career pursuit, it was, at another level, about trying to see themselves in a new way. Some were able to see themselves differently by "doing" something related to the new potential pursuit and seeing "how it felt." They acquired information, did internships, returned to school, and attended seminars. Equally, or more important, was their capacity to find people who would affirm, champion, or at least, exhibit characteristics congruent with their contemplated changes. These people played a catalytic role and empowered the participant to visualize and understand themselves in a new way. Finally, either after significant exploration or, as a part of it, the participants began planning their changes and taking initial action steps on the plan. They moved, quit jobs, left spouses, lovers and friends, returned to school, and purchased businesses.
There were details to attend, calls to make, things to buy or rent, applications to be completed, and attorneys to be hired. The planning of these activities diverted energy from an introspective focus on themselves to the matters at hand. In this way, fear was sublimated into energy necessary for "doing."

The participants explored involvements which they believed to be more congruent with their Organizing Principles. Exploration took many forms, yet consistently provided the participants an opportunity to learn about, and "try on" their considered changes. As their certainty grew, their efforts crossed over into planning activities through which they considered what their changes would "really look like." For example, Alice and her husband, Paul began by considering what it might be like to own a bed and breakfast inn. Their exploration began by looking at various small businesses, with an emphasis on inns. They read articles and talked to people. Finally they decided to begin looking at specific properties, ultimately deciding to purchase a bed and breakfast inn in Vermont.

We went to go visit some friends who owned a ski house. Paul was at that point scouring the newspapers for businesses we could look at and we went then, he found one, an inn that was for sale, that had, it was more than an inn, it was a motel, it was a big piece of real estate and he wanted to go look at it. So we did and that kind of got us both really interested and then we sat down and talked about it at that point and decided that would be what we would pursue. So that was about the time we were really sitting down and talking about it. Thinking through well, we could both do this. We had enough nuts and bolts to do what we need to do to run an inn.

Similarly, Don and his wife, Sally explored the possibility of purchasing a bed and breakfast inn. They began by staying overnight in an inn. Later they attended a seminar on the topic and began to take it quite seriously. For them, exploration led quickly to planning.
Sally and I stayed at a bed and breakfast one time when we went away for 3 or 4 days, we liked it. So we decided to take a seminar to see what it was all about, and we took the seminar and really started thinking about it seriously, is this something we would like to do? Could we do it? How would it effect Todd, our son? And so, two years before we did it, we sat down and said this is what we want to do, and we laid out a plan of how we were gonna get there, and we went and did it.

Todd’s approach was more introspective. He worked with a career counselor who helped him explore his interests and personality. Once he had identified counseling as a potential field of interest, he looked into academic programs, the potential for future income, and job opportunities. Todd’s discussion illustrates the inner aspects of an external exploration. He recognized that he was involved in the transformation of his sense of his own identity.

I was introduced to the idea of becoming a counselor while I was going to counseling. So I was really in a place where I was searching for something, but that would fit a bunch of pieces of my personality with a profession. So I sorta actively searched out how to do this. The thought process began with realizing, began with the Myers Briggs really and with the counselor. Further recognizing personality traits, interests I never keyed in on, so it became an emerging kind of identity and a new view of self was the process and the more I examined that the more it seemed to fit with being a counselor, being an ENFJ. So that sorta like, the picture of myself began to fit with this idea, it began to overlap stronger and stronger. That was the thought process. It began to make more and more sense and it really was something I was very interested in, even though I never really studied it before. But I continued to check out what the classes would be like, what working would be like, what the income ladder would be. It sounded much more interesting so that’s why I went to work.

Zack, who was increasingly growing dissatisfied with accounting, did some exploration through a church and a suicide hotline. He began to try on "human service" as an occupation and life style.
I began exploring it more, thinking, knowing that accounting would not be it for me and that I would have to search. That's when the spiritual side of me became more focused. I ran into a couple of priest friends that had a major bearing on that and I actually did some volunteer work with them and with the church and helping with retreats and being involved with that and beginning to question what is success and what is the purpose of life.... I did some volunteer work at the Suicide Hotline and through that experience I realized that I could be good at doing something other than accounting. And it was much more fulfilling for me. And I began exploring possibilities, taking classes here and there, seeing if it was a good fit, which then basically led to the decision of leaving accounting.

To summarize, Exploration was one method participants employed in order to deal effectively with anxiety related to making career and life changes. The anxiety arose over fears related to the termination of an existing, yet often substantively incongruent, Identity Structure. Exploration also offered participants an opportunity to engage in a differentiation and integration of aspects of excluded Organizing Principles and engage the Involvements which could synergistically integrate or reintegrate them into their lives. Exploration led to increased self-esteem, empowerment, and action. Exploration took the form of doing new things to see "how they felt."

Supportive and Catalytic People

The participants described various roles that people played in their change process. I identified four primary roles which were repeatedly referenced by the participants: Allies, Mentors, Models, and Witnesses.
Allies were people who would support, validate, and affirm aspects of the emerging identity Structure. The Allies role was to help them explore, to listen, to mirror approval and confidence, and to begin to share their emerging vision. For some, the Allies were spouses, but for others they were friends, professional counselors, or other family members. For example Bob's wife, Laurie served as an Ally:

Laurie and I, my wife, for at least a year before I exited, would talk and talk and talk, dream and kind of put our plan together; we did lists. She played a very supportive role in my career changes. She was involved in the planning process, the dreaming process, she was the feed back as I would do visioning, if you will, nightly talk about the dream, she was the receptor of those hours and hours and hours of my dreaming and needing someone to hear the dream. She was not the dreamer, I really feel like I was the dreamer, which is probably why she isn’t more involved in the business today, because this isn’t, and wasn’t, her dream, but she was supportive of my dream.

For Susan, her daughter served as an Ally:

The most interesting person has been my daughter because she loves it. For some reason she just loves it. I think it has to do with for one thing she liked this man I was dating, she thinks I have been very happy but its the way she talks to her friends about me that her mother is still lively, her mother is still creative, growing. So she really likes that and she and her husband, they helped me move out of my house and she came back up here and really helped me make the move and so she’s been a cheerleader.

The Ally offered the participant unconditional support. Often, the Ally had little knowledge of the venture or change the participant was considering, but was willing to listen and was somewhat "pliable" in their capacity to see the participant in a different way as the participant began to see themselves differently.
While Allies offered unconditional support, Mentors played more of a "championing" role. That is, they were closer to the action, and often in a position of influence in terms of the aspirations of the participant. They often played the role of sponsor, advisor and role model. In my sample, I found only three examples of Mentor relationships.

The psychological relationship between the participants and their mentors was more complex (and potentially conflicted) than that of the Allies. While their relationship with Allies was simple, loving and unconditional, their relationship with mentors contrasted interfacing agendas underscored by a sense of striving to "get ahead." It was these conflicted aspects which seemed to result in relationships which were nurturing and close in some ways, yet cautious and distant in others. These were relationships of context and convenience, and tended to come and go as contrasted with Ally relationships which tended to be more enduring.

Alice learned about the real estate residential sales business from a man who owned an agency in her town. He championed, taught, and supported her growth as a professional. Over a number of years she gained knowledge and confidence, ultimately leaving him to open her own agency. Their relationship did not survive the transition.

The only person that I can think of that might, that I had a lot of respect for was the fellow that I started to sell real estate for. He was very very good at what he did and I learned a great deal from him. I really tried to do what he did. I found that he really knew what he was doing and I thought he was a good person to pattern what I wanted to do, my learning from him. I guess that would be the only other person, other than my parents, I learned a lot from them, but as another person, separate from family, I would say he would of had a big impact on what I did. He was very honest, he had a great deal of integrity, he spoke what he thought, he didn't beat around the bush. When you got chewed out, you got chewed out. If he thought you were doing something he didn't like or he could
suggest your handling a situation in a different way he would come right out and say, "look, I think you could do it this way." Very helpful, but he had been at it a long time so he really knew the best way to do things. I guess I wouldn’t of left him if I hadn’t of learned so much. I guess probably that was the biggest thing he did for me. I learned so much and I got a lot of self-confidence from what I learned from him that I could break off and go into my own business. I felt I was capable of doing it on my own. I would say that he was a very big impetus because of what I did learn from him...

While there were very few Mentor relationships observed in my sample, Identifications were present for every participant. Identifications can be subdivided into two categories: (1) contact with individuals who observed congruent and yet often unowned (or undeveloped) talents or personality traits in a participant and then communicated their perceptions to the participant; and (2) contact with individuals who owned and exhibited talents and/or personality traits which were congruent and yet often unowned (or undeveloped) in the participant. Regardless of the category of Identifications, the participants, through their interaction with these people, were able to increase their capacity to identify and embrace congruent aspects of themselves.

Henceforth, I will refer to Identifications consistent with the first category as "Witnesses" and to the second category as "Models." Witnesses were people, respected by the participant, who had observed and commented favorably on a congruent talent or personality trait of the participant. Often these comments related to Organizing Principles which had not been incorporated into the participant's Identity Structure or only marginally incorporated. That is, the participant had not previously identified themselves as possessing those talents or traits in a positive sense. Paradoxically, and in
retrospect, each of the participants later commented, on these very same Organizing Principles, saying that they "had always known" of their existence. This is an intriguing aspect of this study, as it suggests a possible difference, at any given point in time, between a person's "true nature" and the personality aspects they have come to embrace and incorporate into their Identity Structure.

The participant's reactions to encounters with Witnesses were very positive and were typically recalled with great joy and energy. Often they were considered milestone events or "aha" experiences, leading to new choices and increased courage to make changes in Involvements. Witnesses occupied diverse roles in the lives of the participants. They were teachers, counselors, friends, lovers, acquaintances, or family members. Their "moment of impact" was often brief, but the meaning extracted from the interaction by the participant was powerful and timeless.

For example, Todd considered writing and public speaking to be important Organizing Principles. He recalled a number of incidents with Witnesses which occurred over three decades prior to our interview. These encounters supported his capacity to integrate his Organizing Principles into his Identity Structure. Referring to several of his public school teachers, he said, "the other thing was the writing stuff was always encouraged by several teachers through English composition and I got a great deal of encouragement along with encouragement for public speaking and doing plays and drama very early."

Later, while in college, Todd recalls some additional interactions with Witnesses related to the same Organizing Principles:
After I decided to become a public relations, no advertising journalism was the actual degree. Several professors were real encouraging about my writing skills and just had a very enthusiastic response from them and they would use examples of my work in class. The last campaign we wrote I was doing copyrighting about like our airways to Britain and my professor broke into tears during the presentation because he liked the writing so because it reminded him of his last trip there. So that all gave me a lot of confidence and encouragement to continue in PR writing. So those people had a great deal of influence.

These interactions supported Todd's selection of public relations writing as an initial career. They encouraged Todd to begin to appreciate, value and investigate these aspects of himself. This was particularly important because his family did not value these aspects of him, and even discouraged him from pursuing them as a career.

Zack identified human service as a significant Organizing Principle. After a number of years in the accounting profession he began a process of exploration of human service related fields. While volunteering in a suicide prevention program he received some important feedback from several witnesses:

I found that the job (accounting) was okay, but that I had a real desire to reach out to others, which is when the suicide prevention work began. I think that's when I began looking at it. Also hearing other individuals say to me that I had good things to offer when they would come to me to talk about their problems, and the idea that I could do this as a living...

The positive and supportive feedback he received from the individuals with which he worked supported a shift in how he saw himself. He began to value, appreciate, and explore the part of himself that enjoyed human service. He began to acquire additional skills and consider career options in human service related fields.
Molly identified a capacity for written communication and a creative nature as two of her most significant Organizing Principles. Growing up on a farm, in a conservative Mennonite community, she found little support for these aspects of herself. However, in school these aspects were recognized and encouraged. It was this encouragement that supported her capacity to value, appreciate and develop these aspects of herself.

I don’t know if they identified it or if I identified it, but teachers all along, even since the fifth grade developed my writing and my creative skills. They really encouraged that, which I am very thankful for. I had a fifth grade teacher that encouraged it and again in Junior High I had a speech/writing teacher, English teacher who encouraged it, a high school teacher who was way, way beyond her years and totally out of place in our country high school as far as her thinking goes and really encouraged that. So from the part of me that’s a writer and is always a writer, I can honestly say that for me it has been little vignettes. For me it has been someone who I’ve respected that has said things that they did not realize at the time had a major impact...

Despite a growing sense of empowerment around her writing and creative abilities Molly’s high school years were difficult. She said that she felt "left out" and a little bit like an "ugly duckling." She clung closely to a boy friend out of "insecurity and low self-esteem." A turning point for her was when she was encouraged to audition for the "County Beef Queen."

I probably should tell you this it’s kind of a funny little side, my dad encouraged me to try out for the county beef queen. They had these commodity queens and stuff and I really didn’t want to do it very bad, but he really wanted me to. It was something very important. I won and I suddenly had and I must have been about fifteen or sixteen and I suddenly had my first taste of having a little bit of visibility and having a little attention that I didn’t get in my school. I wasn’t the beauty queen in my school and I wasn’t the cheerleader in my school but here again a group of adults saw me in a different way then my thirteen and fifteen year old friends did which kind of began to tell me something there and sort of brought me into my own. I took that a couple of steps further and I was state beef queen which sent me on a couple of national trips and
also sent me to the state fair for two weeks and I met some people there that just opened some doors and opened my eyes to the fact that there were people who used their writing skills to write about agriculture. I just didn't know that that profession existed. I never really talked about that, but that is really where that started and even though I make fun that I am the Ohio Queen of Beef that really was one of the key things that, the most influential thing that lead me into my career.

The adults who "Witnessed" Molly in a new way empowered her to see herself in a new way. This experience ultimately increased her sense of self-esteem which empowered her to move in the direction of her Organizing Principles and let go of Identity Structures related more to safety than growth. It was through these experiences that she found an application for her writing skills in the familiar context of agriculture.

The people Molly met in the field of agricultural journalism played a role consistent with the second category of Identifications. These people are called "Models" because they exhibit characteristics congruent with the participant's Organizing Principles and offer the participant a sense of how they might own and integrate them into their life.

Thus Models are individuals who own and exhibit talents and/or personality traits that are congruent and yet often unowned (or undeveloped) in the participant. These individuals were important because they provided participants an opportunity to observe others "living into" Involvements congruent with their underexpressed Organizing Principles. The participants were immediately attracted to these people, and often remembered them for many years after only a single contact. Their memories provided a "touchstone" to a potential vision of themselves in the future.
For example, Zack, who grew up in a family of accountants, experienced an early affinity for, and attraction to, an aunt who was in a human service profession. As a model, she offered Zack a sense of the possibility of integrating a human service orientation with a congruent career and lifestyle. She additionally was a writer and Zack considered her creative. Creativity and written communication were also important Organizing Principles for Zack.

Probably an aunt of mine who is an elementary school teacher. For working with children seems like a service oriented profession and she's also written a book, a children's book. She seems creative. I respect my mom too just for what she has been able to do and accomplish although I don't like the field myself. She's done quite well for herself, against a lot of adversity too. She's accomplished the most. In terms of the actual profession, I think my aunt because what she's doing, its more in line with my service kind of oriented self.

Years later Zack left the accounting profession and returned to graduate school to train to become a psychotherapist. Counseling Psychology integrated his affinity for human service, writing, and creativity. During these years he became more spiritual and began to deeply explore these issues through the Catholic Church. Additionally, he began to consider how he could be most productive in terms of human service. It was at this time that he met Father Hillsman, a Catholic Priest, psychologist, and writer. Father Hillsman offered him a Model of an integration of Zack's Organizing Principles. It became a significant relationship.

A priest, Father Hillsman, had a pretty big impact I think on me. His thing, was, you know, he had certain things about careers. Is it something you would like? Do you have an opportunity to make a positive impact upon the world? Really that kind of giving aspect of it. Already that was already there, it just was kinda brought out a little bit more. He's a psychologist too. I don't even know if I was already on that track or not prior to meeting him. I don't think he had that much of a role in terms of me trying psychology. It was more some of the experiences I had and internal processing. But he was influential in the sense that
he’s given me, in terms of his desire of possibly thinking bigger, rather than just psychologist, maybe you can try to do more good and that’s where I’ve kinda gotten in line with the program development influence, politics, that kind of thing. It’s probably evolved out of that. Although I think he’s still got some hope, I’ll probably be a priest or something. I must have been about 27 when I met him.

While Zack, at the time of his interview, had no intention of becoming a Priest, Father Hillsman’s Identity Structure and perspectives “rang true” for him. They offered him a sense of validation for those aspects of himself. They empowered him to honor those aspects of himself and to strive to incorporate them in his life: To find his own unique integration.

Joyce’s decision to attend seminary was, according to her, significantly influenced by her grandmother and uncle. Each modeled the capacity to integrate their faith into their lives and actions. At this point in her life, she had been unable to find a satisfactory integration of these. The interaction with these Models supported her natural affinity for the spiritual, particularly as it related to its concrete application in everyday life.

I think my aunt and uncle, particularly my uncle who just retired after he had been on the faculty at North Texas. He was Vice-President of Academic Affairs and head of the Physics Department for a long time and he just retired. He used to think that he wanted to be a minister and throughout the time that he taught, which was a major thing in physics, he would take his Bible with him to work and put it on his desk and would never push anybody about anything but if any student ever asked him why the Bible was on his desk. He was a very thoughtful, quiet, patient man, very different from my dad so that was kind of a nice balance. He and my aunt seemed to have sort of a team approach to his career. He has been real supportive about this change and has been sort of in the absence of my dad and my father-in-law... I think my uncle and my father-in-law were real influential people to me. They modeled more of the way you would incorporate your faith in your job. Which I didn’t manage to do very well. I seemed to feel like I was working for Satan a life time in the corporate world. Which is part of why it wasn’t a good experience for me.
While Models often posed as examples of successful integrations of Organizing Principles emerging in the participant, they occasionally took on a slightly different role. This role had to do with helping the participant let go of "safety structures" and find the courage necessary to change aspects of their lives. In these cases the Model often exuded courage, anger, or dissatisfaction with the status quo. By helping participants own their own anger, they were often helpful in empowering the participants to make changes in their life.

For example, Todd described his first male lover as a "bohemian rebel." His affair with this individual provided him validation for the bohemian rebel aspects of himself. These were critical attributes to find at a time when he was finally attempting to gain separation from a critical (internal and external) father. In a similar way, his second lover was "boyish" and "playful" man who permitted Todd to identify with the boyish and playful aspects of himself. In this sense, Models were used as "separation devices." That is, they Modeled attributes necessary to reject an old Identity Structure. They also served to connect the participant with unowned, and often empowering, aspects of himself.

Then with my two male lovers, I've, in retrospect, come to think of loving them in a way that validates parts of myself that I disowned. For example, my first male lover was an artist, Bohemian and I don't mean far out but it seemed very far from where I was living at the time which was corporate structured life. He had many of the same family pressures to do the same stuff I had. So I related and we had a background similar but he was just staunch that he wasn't going to do it and pursue his interests come hell or high water and I thought that was pretty neat and attractive and certainly a part of me that I hadn't got to express in any kind of positive way. It became a little too far from what I was used to to sustain a relationship. The second lover was another swing back the other way through the traditional preppie professional. He was about 8
years younger and very boyish and innocent and I think that was a part of me that I don't think I ever got to connect with because everything was to be so serious and so business oriented this was a playful sort of childlike portion of him was what I wanted to connect with. It ended because of his immaturity. Or at least I think I understand why I was there at the time.

To summarize, the participants tended and were receptive to interactions with people who could empower their emerging Identity Structure or, at least, their struggle for one. I classified the various roles of these important people as Allies, Mentors, Witnesses, and Models. These were different roles or patterns of interaction in support of the development of aspects of their Organizing Principles. Thus one person could fill more than one role over a period of time. Allies offered unconditional support, but were often removed from the circumstances facing the participant. Mentors championed, advised, and encouraged the participants, and were often in positions of power. Witnesses observed and communicated affirmation for congruent aspects of the participant, empowering them to recognize, value and develop these parts of themselves. Models exhibited, through their Involvements, Organizing Principles which were both congruent with, and more developed than, the participant. The participants were drawn to, and empowered by, them.

Providence

Providence is a term describing a perception by many of the participants that their development occurred as an "opening of doors" or
"unfolding of opportunities." It is related to the outcome of taking risks; of "doing" in the face of apprehension. Providence was the sense that with every congruent action, there was an expansion of opportunities, choices or possibilities available which would not have been available had the action not occurred. Many participants observed that with each step toward Alignment they experienced greater confidence and a broader range of options.

Participants moving toward Alignment typically perceived Providence to be related to "fate," "the will of God," "an inner voice," "the culmination of prior lives," or some other divine aspect congruent with their Organizing Principles. Also present was a sense of being on the right path: A sense of a calling. There was a certainty that opportunities were coming available "for a reason." This was an immensely empowering, integrating and satisfying perspective for the participants.

Additionally this was a critical construct in the change process. As participants committed to Involvements congruent with their Organizing Principles and took action, they often had additional opportunities and possibilities come available. The more they did, the more they learned about themselves. Learning empowered an increased capacity to differentiate their Organizing Principles and the Involvements congruent with them. They became Connoisseurs of their Organizing Principles. Once they had taken risks and explored new, more congruent Involvements, additional actions or commitments seemed less frightening. Change became less about one decision and more about a process of living and growing.

For example, Zack began a Masters Degree program in education. Unsure as to his capacity to complete a Ph.D. in counseling psychology, he
finally mustered the courage to apply to the program. Once accepted, his next action was to begin his course work. At that point he felt he might complete a Masters Degree, but remained unsure as to whether he could complete the Ph.D. As a result of his experiences during his first two years, he has continued toward his now final goal of a Ph.D. Providence manifested in this way for many of the participants. One small "leap of faith" in the direction of Alignment led to success, increased confidence, and the availability of additional congruent opportunities and insights.

Initially I started in the College of Education because I decided I couldn't get a PhD, I figured I probably couldn't do it. Later I thought if I'm going to go back, I'll give it (a PhD program) a shot and I'll apply and see if they let me in and they did, and I thought, well you know I'll go and if all I can do is a Masters, then well, I'll have a Masters and that opened up the door and I think I started out not knowing what I could do, if I would be able to do it and I think just in the process the confidence has built, seeing other people do it and realizing they didn't have a thing on me. It just kinda evolved to the point, to where its very close to in my grasp.

This set of experiences ultimately empowered Zack to move from a goal orientation (one step at a time) to a process orientation (a sense of trust in his "inner voice").

I am much more adept at stepping back now and putting things in perspective and asking are they really important and I find that that's enabled me to go on with things and not be as stressed, to take more risks, take more chances and just to be more comfortable with life...That's always been an impetus. Its still a major push for me today, this kind of inner voice. I call it more being in tune with the will of God. So to me they are similar terms. That's how I think of it, wanting to be following the path that's probably the best path for me if I'm open to that and willing to give up and be free and not to cling onto things. What became apparent to me is the need to let go, let go a lot of fears of how will I make it financially, how will I be able to support a wife, how will I be able to have a wife and family, was part of that letting go and trying and disregarding those things and go with the more feeling or sense of the heart things and did it feel right.
Molly discussed her sense of Providence and its relationship to the recent career and life decisions she had made. For her, Providence was about looking for "signs" and taking congruent opportunities when "doors were opened" to her. Similar to Zack, she exhibited a process orientation empowered by a sensitivity to the appropriate "signs" and the courage to walk through the "doors" when they were opened.

I made the decision to be much more philosophical that I would have to leave and that I could leave and I think all these things worked together to create your decision path. I'm not a believer that one morning you wake up and just know that this is what you're going to do. These things build, you get signs, you have doors open as you walk along or doors are closed as you walk along that force you to go in different directions. I very much see life and career paths as a big set of decision trees as you can go down this route because the door is open and you try to go right and you can't go that way, and you try to go left and you can't go that way or you know whatever. And I tend to follow those open doors very much and try not to buck my way through the doors that are closed.

Don brought his love of historic preservation, construction, woodworking, people, and cooking to the bed and breakfast inn that he and his wife purchased in Vermont. The inn offered a synergistic outlet for his Organizing Principles and permitted a greater degree of Alignment than he had ever previously known. During the seven years they owned the inn, Don worked toward acquiring a building inspector's license and served a term as local tax assessor. He did this while renovating and restoring the inn. He views his next step as selling the inn and beginning a career as a local home inspector and expanding his opportunities for woodworking. The knowledge and local connections he acquired during the restoration and while serving as tax assessor supported and led to a consideration of this new career.
I didn't think I could do it, I know I couldn't do it. I mean, you know, people don't start out to be inn keepers in their life. It just kind of evolved to that point where I developed enough skills where I could do the inn keeping and get it to where, I would probably say that would be my last career, when I do my home building inspection and woodworking and sally does her crafts...So once we sell the inn we already have that mapped out, how we want to do it. We want to buy the place, have a barn, Holly can do her antiques and crafts and I can do woodworking part time if I want. Now that I have learned to do house appraisals, being the tax assessor in town here and knowing building construction, could go into doing home building inspection as a business...I had a lady who played with a Ouiji board tell me I'd come back seven times. What is funny about that is that in a previous life I was an inn keeper, I was a woodworker, I was a sculptor, and I was an artist. And that is one of my paintings up there, I have one upstairs. I've got paintings and stuff. So you never know. The things I really like to do , I've supposedly done in a past life. So maybe this, this is my last life time, the culmination of everything I've done before.

For Don, "building inspection" integrates his love of various aspects of construction, his knowledge of tax assessment and value, and his affinity for historic preservation into an Involvement which he views as in the service of people. While externally this appears to be a discrete career change, for Don, it is simply a more efficient and synergistic integration of his Organizing Principles. For Don, the risk of purchasing and operating a bed and breakfast inn led to greater Alignment, which led to a process through which he found increasingly complex integrations of his Organizing Principles. Finally he experienced a sense of his life being a "culmination" of all aspects of himself.

The notion of Providence, when experienced by the participants, often included a shift from an outcome or goal orientation to a process orientation. There was also a sense by the participants of unfolding layers of opportunities, with each layer leading them to greater sense of Alignment and more integrated and synergistic Identity Structure in terms of Organizing Principles.
The greater degrees of integration suggests a learning process through which the Participants were able to gain an increasingly more differentiated understanding of their Organizing Principles and the Involvements through which they could be actualized.

After the Dust Settled

In reviewing the substantive results of this study, two additional categories warrant discussion. The first has to do with the participants perception of the first year following their career change. The second has to do with their later reflections regarding their career change.

Perception of the First Year Following the Career Change

When discussing the year following their most recent career change, the participants all spent significant time describing their day to day struggle with the situations and circumstances associated with living their new lives. Gone was the prior reflective posture and surprisingly absent were discussions of inner struggles with the ambivalences of change. Instead, there was mention of the endless tasks to be performed, chores to be completed, and decisions to be made. The participants, who had spent extended time periods in exploration and introspection were now caught in the whirlpool of life's daily demands with little time left over to consider their inner processes. If there were left over fears and concerns (and there were some), they had little time for examination, as the participants "experiencing" was claimed by the tasks at hand.
For example, Don, who purchased a bed and breakfast inn in Vermont was overwhelmed with the renovation of the inn, and the building of a new business:

When we bought the inn we knew there was a lot of renovation work to do. What you originally think would be a five dollar, two hour job, turns into five hundred dollars and three weeks later. We knew we were going to encounter those. Probably turning the place around, that was the biggest headache. The place was run down, the clientele had decreased and other inn's weren't recommending it, so we knew we had a job of turning, anytime you have a place with a bad reputation, turning it around is a formidable task. Well the biggest preoccupation was building up our clientele and getting the place looking half way decent so people would stop. We had some people booked in here who stopped, looked at the place, and drove away. So that's one of the things we knew we had to do was to change the appearance of the place so it looked decent for people to come in. One of the other things was, we had to have a new septic system put in which about for the first two months we only had one tank so we had to have it pumped out, and do our laundry elsewhere until the system was installed. And of course, getting acclimated to putting in the real long hours and getting used to the reservations, the confirmation, you know, when to get things started. How to come up with a system to get the inn clean and etc. Those are the things that we thought about for the first six months.

Tony, who began attending seminary experienced a similar confrontation with the daily demands of his new life.

Ah, what was it going to be like? I hadn't been to school since I graduated from college in 1981, so I had been out of college for ten years, so my biggest concern was how to adjust to seminary life again, or doing homework and going to lectures and taking notes and studying properly for a test and learning how to write a paper again. Those were upper most in my mind.

While the participants had little time to be "in touch with their feelings," several discussed experiencing some anxiety and stress during slow moments. For each of these participants, their fear seemed grounded in the concern that they "might not make it" or somehow might not be good enough
or know enough to be successful in their new venture. For example, Zack who returned to graduate school was concerned about his capacity to make good grades. He compensated for his concern with "perfectionistic" tendencies.

During the first six months after the change, I think a lot of it initially was; can I do it or not. That was the scary part. I felt I had something to prove so I was perfectionistic at first. I remember being at times overwhelmed, like I had too much to do, there was a lot of stress. So it was difficult, but I don't think there was any question at that point that I made the right decision. I saw I was making progress. I was working toward my goal. I remember having some fears about the thesis; would it be overwhelming? I was frightened by that.

Similarly, Joyce who was enrolled in seminary, experienced some stress and anxiety around her capacity to do well in her classes.

Well just wondering if I could think enough to manage the classes. Because I worked at Zale full time until a week before classes started so I was immediately in school again and the process for registration was that the new students get at the back of the line so you get the classes nobody else wants because they know the teachers are really hard. So I had two theology classes which was not - I would not recommend. That's very philosophical and I'm a very practical person that was just a different sphere of my brain that I hadn't used in a long time. I guess I got about 2/3 of the way through that semester before I was really sure I could do this and my job had been to be concise; to take ten sentences that an executive wanted to say and make them one which is just the opposite of the way I needed to do in graduate school. So I wasn't sure how verbose I could actually be. Of course I've managed that just fine, but that was a transition too. I never thought that I had made a mistake. I just thought it was tougher than I expected. I never thought I should be back at Zale Corporation. I never thought that was a mistake but it was tough. A real preoccupation with am I too old to do this again and to start getting grades when they have got to be A's, so I was impatient with myself to get up to speed.

The performance anxiety experienced by several of the participants subsided around six months after their career change. For example, Joyce quickly began to gain confidence, "The school part got a lot more comfortable.
The second six months was actually nice and easy because I wasn't working in a church yet." Don also felt a lot more confident during the second six months.

Well, I think the second six months you feel a little more confident. We knew what we were doing, we were starting to get the reservations in, starting to get rid of some of the reputation the place had had, starting to make a new clientele that we have, which has been with us since we started. We have people here come back every year...After six months you know what has to be done...And the second six months you feel a little more confident.

The participant's feelings of anxiety and stress were related to the need to learn a relatively new set of skills quickly. None of the participants reported ever seriously considering that they had made a bad decision or expressed any serious regrets. Their preoccupation with the tasks, chores and activities at hand seemed to deflect any material self-reflection pending the crystallization of a substantially modified Identity Structure.

I asked each participant to reflect on the career change they had made, which in some cases was several years prior to our interview, and to discuss their thoughts. None of the participants expressed regrets over having made the career change. Most had a sense that their lives had unfolded in some form of logical order; that the progression of events composing their lives had an elegant sensibility underlying it. Most expressed a sense of having gained from all of life's experiences - good and bad, and that their journey had somehow brought them progressively closer to Alignment. Approximately half of the participants expressed that they wish they had known enough about themselves to have made more congruent changes earlier in their lives.
Finally, the participants expressed changes in their values. **These shifts were away from an outcome orientation, striving for wealth, recognition or fame, or compliance with the wishes of others. They were toward a process orientation, harmony with an internal value system (which was often inclusive of a spiritual component), and a desire to serve others.**

For example, Todd was pleased with his career change. On one hand he expressed the wish that he had come to a greater understanding of his Organizing Principles at an earlier age, but on the other hand, recognized how the aggregate of his life experiences have added rich diversity and brought him to the somewhat satisfying place he finds himself now.

I don’t know if I would do all that much different. I would liked to have come to this place sooner in life. I think the best thing that would have helped was when I was in undergrad the first time I would have checked out more career options; explored more. Had a broader base of knowledge about career. That might have helped me to this place sooner; I’m not sure...I wish I had done it earlier. It’s all positive, the changes. I sort of believe that all the things I been through brought me to that point and certainly help me. The variety of experiences help me counsel people; help me do the profession I chose.

While Susan expressed her hope that her decision to go to seminary will result in a "good" outcome, she is pleased with her experiences at school. She also expressed a sense that her life is "coherent" or part of a larger plan, and that there is a divine aspect to how her life has unfolded.

Well I pray that it was a good one and I guess only the future will say that. But that is not completely true. When I came here the admissions man talked about the riches of going to theology school, so that will always be a part of me. I hope there’s a good outcome. I love it that I took this sabbatical. I love it that I checked out. I don’t mean in a drop out kind of way but in a constructive way. I love it. To be really theological about it, I just was guided here. When I was writing for my paper it’s like I was, at my age, is kind of a long story but there is a ton of
coherence which amazes me. Again I got here by the seat of my pants but there is an undergirding of theme that was supposed to happen; meant to happen; had to happen, however you say that. Grace if you want to call it grace.

George compared his value system prior to returning to school, with it after he had been there several years.

My life is lined up pretty much. When I worked in sales I wanted to be the top salesperson and get the little fringes and like that; a little more strung along by fame and fortune, but now I don't have a lot of demands; a lot of yearnings other than immediate kinds of things...I think probably in the last couple of years its really changed. When I was in secular positions and jobs I was always trying to live up to standards. Now I'm trying to live up to supreme standards and that's probably a more important thing now.

Joyce reflected on the importance of the richness of "life's lessons" on her potential effectiveness as a minister.

I don't think I would do it sooner. As hard as it was to get here there were, I think, some lessons to be learned for me as a human being: a texture to my preaching and teaching in the church. Now that definitely has a lot to do with those experiences of loss and struggling; being a working mom and never feeling like you do anything the best you can do it because your time is so limited.

While Peter is pleased with his career change, he would like to have been more Aligned earlier in his life.

I would do differently my earlier years in education and college majors and that sort of thing. But as far as the, I would not have done anything differently as far as changing my career to end up in the area that I like. I would have chosen a different college major. I would have chosen a different college. I would have chosen different extra curricular activities. Maybe its just that now that I see what I like to do, you can project backwards and say well, gee, what I could have done. When I worked part-time in college for a construction / real estate company, I would have worked in a restaurant, so I could have seen much earlier what environment was right for me and what energy level was right and that sort of thing...I've taken a different view toward life in general or success or having to measure one's self against - to give you an analogy, a good
example here in the restaurant business is that I don't measure success by the dollars made. In my mind I started out here saying I would like to make a profit, but I don't have to become a millionaire. As long as I can feed my family and have the life style I care to have I don't really care beyond that from a self-esteem standpoint because I know I will have been successful just by doing something that has brought me happiness and put food on the family's table. Its a whole different mind-set; I think which comes from age and being knocked around a little in life. You just get a different sense for what's important and how you measure your own success.

Summary

This chapter defined and illustrated a developmental model emerging from the data collected. The model is an attempt to provide a description of the lifespan developmental issues around, and related to, adult career change as they pertained to the five men and five women who participated in this study. I attempted to provide sufficient thick description to ensure future readers the capacity to make transferability decisions and to support an understanding of the emerging constructs.
CHAPTER V
CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction
In this chapter I will discuss the outcomes of the study, particularly as they relate to human development literature. I will also discuss the various implications of the emerging model and explore potential directions for further research.

Summary of Purpose of Study
The purpose of the study was to gain an understanding of five men's and five women's perception of the internal and external circumstances leading up to, surrounding, and following a career change. The study was designed in response to the tremendous growth in the number of adults changing careers over the last quarter century and the limited research viewing this phenomenon holistically within a lifespan context. Naturalistic research methodology was used in such a way as to develop a particularized psychosocial theory grounded in the lifespan context of the participants. The naturalistic research paradigm was congruent with a holistic and inductive approach, and was effective in generating an emerging theory from the complex multi-variable nature of the phenomenon and data under examination.
Discussion and Implications - Introduction

In this section, I will discuss implications of the model emerging from the data. Due to the broad scope of the emerging developmental model, I will focus my discussion on the relationship between the theories of five known developmental theorists and the theoretical patterns emerging from the study. Limiting the discussion serves to highlight the primary outcomes and their relationship to a priori theory and reasonably limit the discussion. I will base the discussion around the theories of Daniel Levinson, Ruthellen Josselson, Roger Gould, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, and Abraham Maslow. The work of Levinson, Josselson, and Gould were discussed thoroughly in the Chapter II. While Csikszentmihalyi and Maslow were not previously discussed, the outcomes of this study suggest that it may be relevant to include their work at this time.

In order to lay a groundwork for the reader, I will begin my discussion with a brief definitions section summarizing the theoretical terminology emerging from the study.

Definitions

1. Alignment is the moving toward greater levels of congruence between Involvements and Organizing Principles. It is about "aligning" oneself externally with one's true nature. It flourishes on the boundary between the inner world of subjective experience and the external world of involvements, activities, and relationships. It is empowered by the process of Connoisseurship (authentic inner exploration of one's true nature in the context of external activity) and Providence (the logical unfolding of new
opportunities and insights as a result of engaging in new behaviors).

2. **Allies** were people who supported, validated, and affirmed aspects of the emerging Identity Structure in the participants. Their role was to help them explore, to listen, to mirror approval and confidence, and to begin to share the participant's emerging vision of themselves. For some, Allies were spouses, but for others they were friends, professional counselors, or other family members.

3. **Connoisseurship** is a term used to describe a learning process occurring in the participants through which they came to differentiate and integrate their Organizing Principles. The process began with an attraction to, and engagement with, an external Involvement. Through their experience they gained a deeper understanding of, and appreciation for, an aspect of their personality (Organizing Principle). Over time they came to extract an increasingly refined understanding of their Organizing Principles and the Involvements which could potentially actualize them. At a deeper level, this process is a touchstone to an inner dialogue between the ego and the deeper aspects of the self.

4. **Degree of Disguisedness** represents an individual's location on a continuum bounded at one end point by total Alignment (all Involvements are congruent with Organizing Principles) and at the other endpoint by total Submergence (all Involvements are incongruent with Organizing Principles). The degree of Disguisedness in early adulthood seemed to be related to a number of factors related to the participant's experience in their family of origin and childhood environment.
5. **Ecstatic Moments** were moments in which participants felt deeply exhilarated, connected, happy, inspired, fulfilled, transcendent, joyful and full of life. These moments were motivating and memorable. They were stimulated by "human" encounters with natural beauty, love, sex, artistic appreciation, and/or the birth of a child. They were short in duration; often just moments, but often lasting in impact.

6. **Identity Structure** is a set of inner identifications related to outer involvements. It represents the answer to the question, "who am I" at any point in the life span. It has to do with a set of beliefs and assumptions about self and the world and is reciprocally influenced by a number of factors including roles, relationships, career, mentors and others. An Identity Structure will exhibit varying Degrees of Disguisedness at any point in time.

7. **Immersion** was experienced by the participants as a deep focused involvement with an activity. The experience was characterized by deep concentration, loss of a sense of time, feelings of exhilaration and joy, and a sense of being "self-less." That is, participants perceived that their conscious awareness of themselves or self-consciousness had temporarily been lost while they "became their activity." Immersion was often sustainable over a period of time and, for the participants of this study, tied to congruent involvements. That is, participants were much more likely to report Immersion experiences with regard to congruent involvements than for incongruent ones.

8. **Involvements** were external life investments in things, people, activities, and organizations. They required an investment of time and energy and could be characterized by the participants as generally positive, negative or neutral in nature.
9. **Mattering** related to psychological safety in one's family of origin. It refers to the natural human need for love, validation, and approval in one's family. The participants, as children, were highly motivated to behave in ways which would permit them to feel like they Mattered in their families even if their actions insulated them from congruent involvements and authentic identities.

10. **Mentors** were people who played a championing role to the participants. They were typically "close to the occupational action" and in a position of influence in terms of the aspirations of the participant. They often played the role of sponsor, advisor, and/or role model. Participants relationship with mentors contrasted interfacing agendas underscored by a sense of striving to "get ahead." These relationships were nurturing and close in some ways, yet cautious and distant in others. They were relationships of context and convenience and tended to come and go. For the participants, the Mentor relationship resulted in a press toward incongruency. That is, the participants in this study had Mentors who supported incongruent involvements.

11. **Models** were people who owned and exhibited talents and/or personality traits which were congruent and yet often unowned or undeveloped in the participant. The participants were validated, encouraged, and inspired by these people, even if their encounter was brief. They offered the participants a touchstone to their unintegrated Organizing Principles. They symbolically said, "here's a way your Organizing Principles can be integrated into a life. Don't be discouraged. Look, I did it."

12. **Organizing Principles** were internal orientations or affinities which were perceived, upon reflection, as substantive, basic, neutral and permanent
aspects of the personality. The participants believed that their Organizing Principles had "always been there" and had exerted a press for expression and inclusion in their lives, but were not always well integrated into their Identity Structures.

13. **Point of No Return** represented an inner response related to an external event which served as a touchstone to the termination of an old Identity Structure. Many of the participants could identify a single event after which they knew (and consciously accepted) that things would never be the same for them again. These events were typically perceived as emotional and led to new behavioral responses. The behaviors led to an expanding set of options (Providence) and a learning process (Connoisseurship) leading to a greater degree of Alignment. Examples of Point of No Return events included events over which the participant perceived that they had little or no control such as the birth of a child, losing a love relationship, or being fired from a job and events which they initiated such as leaving a love relationship, quitting a job, or returning to school. Sometimes Ecstatic Moments and Point of No Return Events were the same.

14. **Providence** is related to the outcome of taking risks; of doing. It was the sense that with every action, there was an expansion of opportunities, choices or possibilities available which would not have been available had the action not occurred. The participants perceived this as an "opening of doors" or "unfolding of opportunities." Participants moving toward Alignment typically perceived Providence to be related to "fate," "the will of God," "an inner voice," the "culmination of prior lives," or some other divine aspect. This was an immensely empowering, integrating and satisfying perspective for the
participants.

15. **Submergence** was the process through which authentic aspects of the personality (Organizing Principles) were devalued and/or suppressed. In this study the participants could speak of Submergence as arising out of a conflict between the press of their Organizing Principles for inclusion and the more powerful need to Matter in their family.

16. **Witnesses** were people, respected by the participant, who had observed and commented in an encouraging fashion on a congruent talent or personality trait which was currently unintegrated or undeveloped in the participant. These individuals were often teachers, instructors, acquaintances, or friends. Encounters with Witnesses were often recalled with great joy and energy. Often they were considered milestone events or "aha" experiences, leading to new choices and increased courage to make changes in Involvements.

**Theoretical Patterns Emerging From the Study**

The participants of this study described aspects of their personality which they believed to be "constant." That is, they perceived that these aspects of their personality "had always been there." I called these aspects Organizing Principles. Organizing Principles were perceived as internal stable orientations or affinities which were core and substantive aspects of the personality as far back as the participants had memory. The participants described these parts of themselves either in terms of a type of Involvement (eg. social work or law), topical interest area (eg. health, food, religion, or spirituality), or personality trait (eg. creativity or capacity to recognize patterns
of meaning in human interaction). In each case the participant’s perceived an attraction to Involvements congruent with these Organizing Principles. I would hypothesize that beneath these descriptions are structural aspects of the personality, perhaps similar to Jung’s (1971) notion of Personality Types.

Involvements congruent with Organizing Principles were perceived as inherently satisfying. Involvements incongruent with Organizing Principles were perceived as dissatisfying and stressful, particularly over extended periods of time. Immersion experiences were often "touchstones" to congruent Involvements. That is, participants were far more likely to engage congruent Involvements at the Immersion level than incongruent ones. An engagement with congruent Involvements was rewarded with with a sense of satisfaction and pleasure while engagement with incongruent Involvements resulted in dissatisfaction and stress. In this way Organizing Principles exerted a continual press for integration and inclusion into the lives of the participants.

Participants, upon reflection, described themselves as young adults at varying levels of Disguisedness. The degree of Disguisedness seemed to be related to a number of factors including the degree to which the participants, as children and young adults perceived that (1) their Organizing Principles were affirmed and valued in their family of origin and community; (2) they were affirmed for Involvements congruent with their Organizing Principles; (3) there were others who possessed similar Organizing Principles who would act as mentors or "objects of identification" for the participant; (4) there were Involvements congruent with their Organizing Principles available to them; and (5) they Mattered in their families.
Participants who were highly Disguised as young adults described childhoods in which their Organizing Principles (and congruent Involvements) were not affirmed or valued in their family of origin. Often they were forced to live-up to a set of incongruent expectations and demands or forced to meet the emotional needs of one or more of their parents. Under these circumstances, instead of responding to their own inner motivations and impulses, they focused on the behaviors and beliefs which would provide them psychological safety, validation, love, and affirmation in their family of origin. These participants developed early Identity Structures significantly incongruent with their Organizing Principles. They were the most fearful in the face of change and the most ambivalent over the longest periods of time prior to making a commitment to new Involvements. They also appeared to have a stronger reliance on adaptive mechanisms to empower changes in career or other Involvements.

These participants struggled with an intense fear of change and later reflected on a lack of a clear sense of their Organizing Principles during early adulthood. Their consideration of a possible career change was more conflicted, took longer, and was more prone to postponement.

Participants who had more congruent Identity Structures as young adults described childhoods in which they felt affirmed, loved, and valued on their terms. That is, they were validated for "just being themselves." These participants chose initial Involvements which were more congruent than the other group. They experienced Immersion more often, were less stressed, more courageous in the face of considered change, and required less reliance on adaptive mechanisms to empower changes in career or other
Involvements.

However, even for these participants, there were "blind spots." Blind spots were aspects of Organizing Principles which had been Submerged or unexplored. These participants engaged the change process as an opportunity to enhance the synergy of their Identity Structure. That is, to strike a more inclusive and productive balance between Involvements and Organizing Principles.

Within several years of their ultimate decision to change careers all of the participants experienced emerging feelings of dissonance and incongruence. There was a disruption in the stability and constancy of their lives which was experienced as frustration, anger, ambivalence, sadness, dissatisfaction and confusion. They recognized that they were unhappy and began to struggle with the possibility of making some changes in their lives.

While the participants struggled with feelings of ambivalence, at some point, each experienced an event which they designated as a "Point of No Return." This was a point at which they consciously recognized that "things would have to change." For some, the Point of No Return was initiated by others as in the case of getting fired or losing a valued relationship. This was most often the case for the more Disguised participants. However, even in these cases, these participants often reflected on their participation in, and contribution to, the circumstances leading up to the Point of No Return event.

For other participants the Point of No Return was initiated by them as in the case of quitting a job, returning to school, or leaving a relationship. This was most often the case for the least Disguised participants. They found the courage to sculpt their change events; to terminate their Identity Structures.
These decisions were not made easily, however and were often the result of an extended period of consideration and struggle.

During the period of ambivalence marking serious consideration of a career change participants struggled with, on one hand, a fear of the loss of a stable Identity Structure and on the other, an excitement or promise of positive potential. In conjunction with the ambivalence there were internal and external factors resisting change and various internal and external mechanisms empowering it.

External factors resisting change included perceived financial constraints and pressure from friends and family who either overtly dissapproved of, or warned against, the proposed changes. The absence of role models with which to identify and learn was also cited, particularly among women entering historically male professions.

Internal factors resisting change included the perceived need to prove competence at an incongruent activity prior to leaving it and a struggle with inner criticism and self-attack. The need to prove competence seemed to be related to finding a release from old and internalized expectations arising from childhood interactions in the family of origin. The inner criticism, similarly, was related to internalized negative judgments (beliefs) grounded in the prior (often childhood) criticisms of important others.

While these factors discouraged change, there were other internal and external adaptive mechanisms which empowered it. These factors included new perspectives on risk, exploration and planning, supportive and catalytic people, and providence. Each of these factors are thoroughly explored in Chapter IV.
Ultimately, each of the participants entered a new career and assumed the tasks and responsibilities inherent in the new endeavor. When asked about the year following their career change the participants focused on their engagement with a set of new tasks and requirements of new knowledge. Gone was the prior reflective posture and surprisingly absent were discussions of inner struggles with the ambivalence of change. Instead, there was mention of the endless tasks to be performed, chores to be completed, and decisions to be made.

None of the participants, upon later reflection, had significant regrets with regard to their decision to change careers. Each expressed satisfaction in their capacity to have come so far and learned so much. They found their new endeavors more congruent and more personally satisfying. Interestingly, many of them were already planning additional changes in their work, but these tended to be of a "fine tuning" variety and related to integrating their Organizing Principles more synergistically. There perspective of career, at this point, was more as a means to actualizing their Organizing Principles, than of "becoming something" or assuming a role external to themselves. They were seemingly more creative in the way they approached their life's work and more interested in flexibility, satisfaction, meaning, and synergy.

Finally, the participants expressed significant changes in their values and/or perspectives on life following these career changes. These shifts were away from an outcome orientation, striving for wealth, recognition or fame, or compliance with the wishes of others. They were toward a process orientation, harmony with an internal value system (which was often inclusive of a spiritual component), and a desire to serve others.
Daniel Levinson

Central to Levinson and others (1978) theory of adult male development was the notion of "Life Structure." Levinson defined a Life Structure as having both internal and external aspects. Internally, a Life Structure includes a person's core values, fantasies, and conscious and unconscious potentials that shape their engagement with the world. Externally it includes a person's overall pattern of roles, memberships, interests, condition and style of living, and long term goals. Levinson also described various dimensions of the Life Structure including occupation/career, relationships, life style, mentor relationships, and the Dream.

According to Levinson, Life Structure emerges from decisions and commitments made toward the end of transitional periods. It is actualized during a stable period which ordinarily lasts from six to ten years. According to Levinson (1978), "The primary task of every stable period is to build a life structure: a man must make certain key choices, form a structure around them, and pursue his goals and values within this structure" (p. 49).

Levinson's notion of Life Structure thus appears more comprehensive than my use of the term Identity Structure which I have described as a constellation of inner identifications including roles, involvements, goals, and values. Identity structure, as I have described it, is more about the answer to the question, "Who am I?"

One dimension of Levinson's Life Structure emerging in early adulthood (for men) was the Dream. Levinson (1978) described the dream as having the quality of a vision or imagined possible life that generated
significant enthusiasm in his sample of men. Levinson suggested that,

Whatever the nature of his Dream, a young man has the developmental
task of giving it greater definition and finding ways to live it out. It makes
a great difference in his growth whether his initial life structure is
consonant with and infused by the Dream, or opposed to it. If the Dream
remains unconnected to his life it may simply die, and with it his sense of
aliveness and purpose...Those who betray the Dream in their twenties
will have to deal later with the consequences. Those who build a life
structure around the Dream in early adulthood have a better chance for
personal fulfillment, though years of struggle may be required to maintain
the commitment and work toward its realization. (pp. 91-92)

In this excerpt, Levinson's notion of the Dream appears similar to the
notion of Organizing Principles described in this study. That is, Levinson
seems to suggest that the Dream has some deep connection with the
authentic self and thus acts as a touchstone to healthy development. Men who
integrate, work toward, and actualize their dream develop in a healthy way
and those who do not have a developmental price to pay.

All of the participants in my study (men and women) had a Dream in
everal adulthood. In most cases they described their dream in terms of
culturally acceptable and gender specific roles (particularly for the women).
As opposed to developing through the creation of a Life Structure congruent
with their Dream, they developed by Disidentifying with a Dream grounded in
cultural and family expectations and continually modifying the Dream (and
their identification with it) toward greater congruency with their Organizing
Principles.

Thus, for the participants of this study, the dream could be congruent or
incongruent with their Organizing Principles. If incongruent, the
developmental task was to challenge the illusions and fallacies implicit in the
dream and reconstruct a new, more congruent one. This contrasts with
Levinson's suggestion that healthy development in his male sample related to their capacity to integrate their dream whether congruent or not.

In support of Levinson, he frequently references the importance of integrating aspects of the self into the Life Structure. He argues that a flawed Life Structure excludes important aspects of the self, however he does not appear to make room for the possibility of an incongruent Dream. This apparent inconsistency is evidenced in the following excerpt which discusses the man is his mid-thirties (Becoming One's Own Man) who finds himself in a flawed and intolerable Life Structure:

The difficulty lies partly in the actuality of his life. This man's life structure is indeed flawed. It does not permit him to live out crucially important aspects of the self, and it requires him to be someone he can no longer accept. But the flaws existed, and have been tolerated, for some time. They become intolerable now because the tasks of Becoming One's Own Man are so urgent; it is essential to pursue the Dream, to be a person of independence and integrity, to be more fully a man, to be less enslaved by the little boy in himself who desperately needs to be cared for and who is victimized by his inner ties to powerful, exploitive adults. (p. 157)

It appears that implicit in Levinson's argument is the assumption that the Dream is congruent with Organizing Principles. This was inconsistent with my results.

While Levinson devotes little attention to the childhood forces driving and/or interacting with the selection of, and commitment to, an incongruent Life Structure, he does, as previously discussed, recognize (from Jung) and speak to, an underlying and temperament-related ordering force he calls the "Self." According to Levinson (1978), "Other men form a life structure that is reasonably viable in the world but poorly connected to the self." Although they do their bit for themselves and others, their lives are lacking in inner
excitement and meaning" (p. 61). Here Levinson suggests that the Self is a reference point for development and that an incongruent Life Structure leads men to lives lacking excitement and meaning.

It seems to me that this idea is somewhat consistent with my notion of Organizing Principles as temperamentally related reference points for development which, when ignored or excluded, led to the stress-related reactions I found in my participants at points of incongruency or Disguisedness. Furthermore, while it may not be specifically stated, the presence of a permanent self suggests a permanence to this aspect of the personality consistent with my participants perception of "I have always known."

Levinson's notion of stable periods of development followed by transitional periods was evident in my data. According to Levinson (1978), "It consists of a series of alternating stable (structure building) periods and transitional (structure changing) periods. These periods shape the course of adult psychosocial development" (p. 49). He went on to say, "As a transition comes to an end, it is time to make crucial choices, to give these choices meaning and commitment, and to start building a life structure around them. The choices mark the beginning of the next period" (p. 52). Levinson thus argues that his men went through periods of stability, followed by periods of dissonance, exploration, and reassessment ultimately followed by commitments and another period of stability.

This progression was observed in my data. My participants career change was typically one external outcome following a period of dissonance and exploration. Once the commitment was made to engage a new venture,
the participant became immersed in bringing those inner identifications and outer ventures to life. Psychic energy was shifted from introspection to "doing."

Levinson (1978) argues that "...no life structure can permit the living out of all aspects of the self. To create a life structure I must make choices and set priorities. Every choice I make involves the rejection of many other possibilities" (p. 60). Thus Levinson suggests that the unfolding of development is driven by the inability of any Life Structure to successfully integrate all Organizing Principles simultaneously. My data were consistent with this argument. However, I found that the career changes (and other related developmental outcomes) which I examined were consistently more synergistic integrations of multiple Organizing Principles than the prior ones. Thus, as my participants grew in their awareness of, and identification with, their Organizing Principles and explored potential congruent involvements, they consistently integrated more and excluded less of themselves.

Levinson suggested that a Life Structure may have varying degrees of congruency with the Self and that the choices and commitments that are made during times of transition are influenced by a man's perception of, and approach toward, an inner ambivalence. According to Levinson (1978), "Likewise, he may choose to remain in his present job rather than make a more drastic change entailing greater risks and discontinuity. If this is an active reaffirmation, he will make significant improvements in the character of the work even if the job title remains the same. The decision to stay put is not always based on a reaffirmed commitment. It may stem more from resignation, inertial, passive acquiescence or controlled despair - a self-restriction in the context of severe external constraints" (p. 52).
Here Levinson describes the inner ambivalence between the energy of the Self which creates a press toward congruency and a sense of risk which opposes it. He also recognizes the potential for external constraints to come to bear on the outcome of the struggle. My data supports these ideas and proposes a developmental model through which the ambivalence can be understood. The model also identifies the specific strategies my participants utilized in opposing the fear side of the ambivalence as well as the inner and outer constraints supporting it.

Levinson described the Mentor as a transitional figure supporting a man's ability to progress through a transitional period. He described the Mentor as involving a relationship with a slightly older man, often situated in work, in which the man is sponsored, championed and/or counseled in such a way as to empower his ultimate realization of his dream. I referred to a similar figure in my study as a Mentor. Mentors in my data were rare. Additionally they were not necessarily "good" in the sense of being supportive of a participant's movement toward a congruent Identity Structure. That is, they were as often figures who supported a participant's illusions with regard to commitments to incongruent Involvements. Levinson made a similar point when he said, "A relationship may be remarkably beneficial to the younger person and yet be seriously flawed" (1978, p. 100).

Mentor's, however, were not the only important catalytic roles which emerged from this study. Witnesses, Allies, and Models were other catalytic roles played by others. Allies offered unconditional support, but were often removed from the circumstances facing the participant. Witnesses observed and communicated affirmation for congruent aspects of the participant,
empowering them to recognize, value and develop these parts of themselves. Models exhibited, through their Involvements, Organizing Principles which were both congruent with, and more developed than, those of the participant. The participants were drawn to, and empowered by, them.

To summarize, the work of Daniel Levinson, for the most part, integrates nicely with the outcomes of this study. Levinson, however, does not explore, in any depth, developmental contributors to an incongruent Life Structure.

Ruthellen Josselson

Josselson's research methodology and theoretical perspective was both naturalistic and traditional. On one hand she believed that a study of women's development was most effectively approached holistically and inductively. As she said, "Despite all that has been written about women, few have studied women phenomenologically or have been interested in their self-definition, allowing them to tell their stories. In this respect, this work is fundamentally heuristic, an effort to portray the whole woman who is lost in statistical analysis" (1987, p. xiv). On the other hand, she utilized Marcia's (1966) model of ego identity status as a frame of reference for interpreting and examining her data. Thus there are elements of both naturalistic and traditional perspectives in Josselson's work.

In her research, Josselson classified the women in her study into one of four cells initially delineated by Marcia (1966) who was informed by Erikson. The four cells illustrate a relationship between two dimensions of identity formation: (a) a crisis of identity (b) a commitment to aspects of identity following a period of exploration. Combining the two dimensions led to four
possible paths: (1) Foreclosures: a path through which a woman commits to a value system congruent with those of her family of origin with little or no exploration; (2) Moratorium: a path through which a woman experiences an identity crisis, but is unable to move beyond an exploratory period to commitment; (3) Achieved: a path through which a woman commits to a firm sense of identity following a period of exploration; and (4) Diffusion: a path through which a woman neither experiences an identity crisis nor commits to a firm sense of identity.

Josselson argued that for the women in her study developing their own individuated identity was accomplished within the context of relationships, whereas for Levinson's and Marcia's men it was accomplished more through separation from parents. According to Josselson, the capacity of her women to enact an individualized identity was related to parenting style and born out of a period of exploration embedded in a context of interpersonal support.

For example, "Achievements" individuated in the context of a relationship with a supportive other, usually the man in their lives. "Moratoriums" formed relationships with control-oriented partners like their parents and struggled with guilt and anxiety in order to individuate, while "Foreclosures" did little exploration and ultimately patterned their adult lives after a template of their childhood family values and roles. Foreclosures married men they could control in their drive to recreate their families of origin.

Based on Josselson's model, I would tentatively classify one of my women as Foreclosed and four as Identity Achieved. Consistent with Josselson's claims, the Identity Achieved women tended to be flexible, non judgmental and their Organizing Principles were well integrated into their
Identity Structure and Involvements. The Identity Achieved women's career change decisions were all made with the support and involvement of a significant other. However, three of the four women had to assert strongly their wishes in order to garnish the necessary support from their loved one.

There was one of the Identity Achieved women who spent many years in Moratorium. Her early struggles with guilt and anxiety stemmed from her enmeshed relationship with her mother who was perceived as overprotective and dependent on her for emotional support. Around mid-life she was able to identify her Organizing Principles and commit to Involvements congruent with them. As her self-esteem increased she terminated a destructive marriage and began a more supportive and constructive relationship. These circumstances were congruent with Josselson's discussion.

The woman in my study whom I suspect was Foreclosed grounded her feelings of worth in her ability to respond to the needs of her family. She held a deep-felt sense of "duty" and responsibility emerging from what she had been taught was "the right thing for a woman to do." She was out of touch with her feelings and desires and identified with the "New England culture" through which she embraced an ideology of duty described as "you don't complain; you just do what you have to do." She had remained, to some degree, Submerged and Disguised all of her life. Attempts at Alignment had only been limited and superficial. While she recognized many of her Organizing Principles, she subordinated them to the needs of others and, as a result, they were poorly integrated into her Involvements and Identity Structure. Her personality characteristics and life circumstances were congruent with Josselson's Foreclosed women.
With one exception, the Identity Achieved women participants in my study all enacted parental separation, in part, with the support of a significant, non-dominating love relationship. These relationships permitted the open expression of feelings and needs by both parties, dealt well with conflict, and were generally perceived as positive. The exception was the women who spent a number of years in "Moratorium." She enacted separation through marriage, however, her choice of husbands was, by her own admission, related to her mother's expectations for her and not her sense of what she wanted. She remained in the marriage for a decade out of the need for "stability and constancy." Later in her life, when she began to make commitments based on her sense of her Organizing Principles, she established a pattern of more supportive, non-dominating relationships.

In general, Josselson's model was an effective lens through which to view the lives of the women in my study. The four women who engaged the process of Alignment, and were successful in creating synergistic integrations of their Organizing Principles all, in Josselson's terms, were Identity Achieved. Foreclosure seems to be a form of pervasive Submergence, and Moratorium a form of pervasive Disruption. Josselson's Moratoriums and Foreclosures existed in Disguised form, which stemmed from their inability to identify with, and commit to, the actualization of their Organizing Principles. Early family dynamics superimposed on limiting cultural expectations and opportunities for women, in both studies, appear to be at the root of the Disguisedness (or failure to become Identity Achieved).
Roger Gould

Roger Gould (1978) viewed the process of development as a continual shedding of internalized childhood states which impinge upon, and interfere with, the evolving conscious demands of adulthood. According to Gould:

(1978)

By striving for a fuller, more independent adult consciousness, we trigger the angry demons of childhood consciousness. Growing and reformulating our self-definition becomes a dangerous act. It is the act of transformation. Adult consciousness progresses between the ages of 16 and 50 by our mastering childhood fear, by learning to leash and modulate the childhood anger released by change. As we strive to live up to our full adult potential, we confront layer after layer of buried childhood pain. Adult consciousness, then, evolves through a series of confrontations with our own primitive past. Finally, as adults we can begin to master demonic reality and rework the irrationalities of childhood. As children, we couldn't confront the demonic, so we kept it at bay through protective devices. Protective devices overcome our feelings of total vulnerability to the demonic and seem to guarantee our complete safety. (p. 25)

Gould's notion of "internal childhood states" seems somewhat similar to Jung's (1971) notion of a "complex." They both deal with an internalization charged with an affective tone. That is, there is an internalized belief, conclusion, assumption, or expectation about self and/or the world and associated emotions linked in the unconscious. This complex or internal childhood state originated as a child's reaction to a set of circumstances which were typically faced early in life. Later, when they faced new situations which raised the same issues, either consciously or unconsciously, of the earlier, often childhood situation, the complex or childhood consciousness emerged and they responded and felt like they did as children. Gould argues that these states are often grounded in fear and may block us from responding from a
more realistic and flexible adult perspective, and thus may block our capacity to reach our potential.

Gould's use of words such as "potential" suggest a growth-oriented and temperament-related nature at the core of the personality. Thus, the shedding of internalized childhood states is a way of dismantling a limiting belief or assumption and thus freeing up the capacity to "transform" one's identity and empower one's growth and development. He later states, "when work loses its illusory magical protective powers and when we are more in tune to our instincts and impulses, we become authentic adults, true to our innermost selves" (p. 245). Here he seems to imply the notion of Organizing Principles.

In terms of the emerging model, Gould's theory primarily addresses itself to issues related to the ambivalence of change. His theory also describes the dynamics which potentially underlie Submergence.

For example, my participants struggled with the ambivalence between their sense of an attraction to more congruent Involvements and their feelings of fear around making the change. These feelings of fear were often related to what I called "the need to prove something" and/or the "inner critic." These constructs seem to be related to what Gould refers to as internalized childhood states. They relate to old, affect laden, assumptions, identifications, and beliefs, often originating in childhood, which had to be reworked and or released before the participant could move on. Many of my participants remained "stuck" in incongruent Identity Structures and Involvements out of fears related to challenging these old, but powerful internalized belief systems.

These states of Submergence, for my participants, arose out of childhood circumstances in which they did not feel safe identifying with their
Organizing Principles or engaging Involvements congruent with them. Instead they were forced to focus on the values, aspirations, needs, and goals of others in order to have their needs for love and safety met and to Matter in their families. This kept them out of touch with a general sense of themselves, their Organizing Principles, and often, their feelings. It seems to me, based on the data, that the more significant developmental obstacles faced by the men and women in this study may be related to the internalized childhood states of which Gould speaks.

Gould also argues that in order to separate from families of origin and to become a distinct person, young adults often take substantial action in order to differentiate themselves from their parents. They often appear compelled to deny in themselves attributes which they identify with their parents. The degree to which this occurs appears to be a function of how hard parents "hold on" versus "let go" as their children attempt to separate.

This idea appears congruent with my interpretation of the data from this study. My participants emerged from socialization at varying degrees of Disguisedness. In general the more Disguised they were, the more their parents had judged, criticized, depended on (in terms of emotional needs), limited, or had strong expectations for them as children. Additionally, the more Disguised they were, the greater the difficulty they had with separation and the more difficult was their life path "back to themselves." For some participants this resulted in what I called the "polar swing" in which the participant disowned many aspects of his or her perceived internalized parent and embarked, temporarily, on a "migration toward the opposite." Ultimately, when they began to perceive safe separation, they were again able to embrace
aspects of their Organizing Principles shared with their parents.

Gould also identified five basic motivations for work. For example, according to Gould some people use work as a "cure" or to get "bigger," which in effect constitutes a defense against perceived personal inadequacies. Thus work becomes a place where they can cure past wounds and feel strong, powerful, and complete. They may also use work for psychodynamic reasons such as for the need to affirm or deny a prior identification with a significant parent or other. They may use work to express and utilize an expanding or previously denied or excluded range of talents and capacities. They may use work to be a part of an organization or field that has its own extrinsic meaning. Finally, they may use work purely out of necessity in order to make enough money to survive. He further argues that early in life work may be more about "getting bigger," particularly for men and that later in life, for both men and women, work may become more about expressing previously denied or excluded talents and capacities. These notions are consistent with the results of this study. Initial career choices were made through a lens formulated during socialization. Thus embedded in those initial decisions were the perceived expectations of others and the powerful force of unmet developmental needs. Additionally those initial decisions were often made with little life and/or career exploration or awareness.

While it seems possible to find a multitude of clear points of integration between the two theories, Gould's work seems to focus on the developmental issues underlying, and the capacities to move beyond, the "fear" side of the change ambivalence. He also describes the dynamics which potentially underlie Submergence. His ideas inform the theoretical constructs and
patterns which emerged from my data.

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi

Csikszentmihalyi (1990) studied extensively the “Psychology of Optimal Experience.” That is, he has looked at when people describe themselves as “the most happy.” From interviews with thousands of subjects across the country and the world he has formulated a model grounded in their experience. His work illuminates the experience of my participants and informs the model which emerged from my data.

According to Csikszentmihalyi (1990) the state of ultimate happiness, which he called “Flow,” is, “the state in which people are so involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter; the experience itself is so enjoyable that people will do it even at great cost, for the sheer sake of doing it” (p. 4). Csikszentmihalyi’s notion of Flow is a congruent construct to Immersion.

Csikszentmihalyi (1990) described a “phenomenology of enjoyment” which had eight major components. These components emerged from the experience of thousands of subjects and, in his words, included the following:

First, the experience usually occurs when we confront tasks we have a chance of completing. Second, we must be able to concentrate on what we are doing. Third and fourth, the concentration is usually possible because the task under taken has clear goals and provides immediate feedback. Fifth, one acts with a deep but effortless involvement that removes from awareness the worries and frustrations of everyday life. Sixth, enjoyable experiences allow people to exercise a sense of control over their actions. Seventh, concern for the self disappears, yet paradoxically the sense of self emerges stronger after the flow experience is over. Finally, the sense of the duration of time is altered; hours pass by in minutes, and minutes can stretch out to seem like hours. The combination of these elements causes a sense of deep enjoyment that is so rewarding people feel that expending a great deal of energy is worthwhile simply to be able to feel it (p. 49).
The properties of Immersion which my participants identified appear closely related to the properties of a Flow experience identified by Csikszentmihalyi. In fact, it appears we are talking about the same thing. While the constructs appear similar, the developmental context in which the two models position themselves differ somewhat.

For example, for my participants, Immersion experiences were related to congruent Involvements. That is, when my participants were engaged in an activity at the Immersion level, it was highly probable that the activity was congruent with their Organizing Principles. Thus, for my participants, greater degrees of Alignment, and conversely lesser degrees of Disguisedness, were related to a more frequent incidence of Immersion. Similarly, participants in this study perceived that their lives had become more Aligned, they also perceived an increase in the incidence of Immersion. Finally, the participants in this study perceived that their Organizing Principles "had always been there" and were thus somewhat related to temperament in the sense of being "timeless." Developmentally, this suggests that growth is, in part, related to our capacity to differentiate, reflect upon, and then integrate (through congruent Involvements) our Organizing Principles into our life. One possible implication is that development is related to the capacity of the ego to embrace and "set a place at the table" for genetics: to compare one's experiencing to one's reaction to, or interest in, an activity and to then invest energy in those activities which "feel" congruent.

Csikszentmihalyi seemed to view Flow more as a skill. That is, he related optimal experience to the capacity to bring order to, and to a certain degree, control consciousness. He suggested that this "ordering" capacity can
be learned and may run contrary to genetic instruction. As he said, "In other words, consciousness has developed the ability to override its genetic instructions and to set its own independent course of action" (p. 24). A rival hypothesis was generated by this study.

While he recognized personality traits as pervasive ordering elements of consciousness, he seemed to see them more as factors to be recognized and adjusted in the quest for a more controlled consciousness. As he said,

The names we use to describe personality traits - such as extrovert, high achiever, or paranoid - refer to the specific patterns people have used to structure their attention....Attention can be invested in innumerable ways, ways that can make life either rich or miserable....We create ourselves by how we invest this energy. Memories, thoughts, and feelings are all shaped by how we use it. And it is an energy under our control, to do with as we please; hence, attention is our most important tool in the task of improving the quality of experience. (p. 33)

Thus while Csikszentmihalyi recognized the Flow experience as integral to happiness, he failed to relate it to temperament or Organizing Principles. Instead, he seems to see people as able to control themselves and become whatever they want to be. This perspective differs from the one emerging from my data in which the participants perceived a positive correlation between Immersion and Organizing Principles. For the participants in this study not everything could be made congruent by acts of willful control or skill development.

There are other points of interaction between the two models. For example, Csikszentmihalyi explored the notion of Connoisseurship which he viewed as a learning process resulting in goal modification. As Csikszentmihalyi (1990) said:
In Sam's case an accidental event imposed itself on his consciousness: the challenging beauty of life in the ocean. He had not planned to have this experience; it was not the result of his self or his goals having directed attention to it. But once he became aware of what went on undersea, Sam liked it - the experience resonated with previous things he had enjoyed doing, with feelings he had about nature and beauty, with priorities about what was important that he had established over the years. He felt the experience was something good, something worth seeking out again. Thus he built this accidental event into a structure of goals - to learn more about the ocean, to take courses, to go on to college and graduate school, to find a job as a marine biologist - which became a central element of his self. From then on, his goals directed Sam's attention to focus more and more closely on the ocean and on its life, thereby closing the circle of causality. At first attention helped to shape his self, when he noticed the beauties of the underwater world he had been exposed to by accident; later, as he intentionally sought knowledge in marine biology, his self began to shape his attention. There is nothing very unusual about Sam's case, of course; most people develop their attentional structures in similar ways. (p. 35)

Csikszentmihalyi's discussion of Sam's "attentional structure" fails to explain the deeper organizing force which influences "what Sam likes." If we were to view Sam's circumstances from the perspective of the model emerging from my data, the discussion could be broadened to consider this deeper issue: We might consider that Sam had, prior to this excerpt, begun to differentiate a number of Organizing Principles in his life, including a deep attraction to, and interest in, nature and natural beauty. His exposure to a new involvement, "Marine Biology" offered a congruent outlet which he perceived to offer a more synergistically congruent integration of his Organizing Principles. While involved in activities related to Marine Biology his interest and energy were fortified by the experience of Immersion. Through his exploration of marine biology and the experiencing of related Involvements he began to integrate these Involvements into his Identity Structure. Furthermore,
as a result, he probably was able to further differentiate the parts of himself which found them satisfying. His identification with, and incorporation of, marine biology into his Identity Structure was another step on a life-long journey of differentiation and integration of his Organizing Principles into a congruent life.

The differences in the two models are subtle. It seems to me that Csikszentmihalyi is implying the existence of Organizing Principles when he says that marine biology “resonated with previous things he had enjoyed doing, with feelings he had about nature and beauty, with priorities about what was important that he had established over the years.” (p. 35) Yet there is also an “ego construction and control” that also seems to be suggested regardless of congruence. Thus there may be a logical inconsistency between these two propositions. Regardless, Csikszentmihalyi does not frame Sam’s experiencing contextually as a part of a developmental process.

Another interesting comparison of the two models has to do with the family dynamics which developmentally empower Flow or Immersion experiences later in adulthood. According to Csikszentmihalyi (1990):

The family context promoting optimal experience could be described as having five characteristics. The first one is clarity: the teenagers feel that they know what their parents expect from them - goals and feedback in the family interaction are unambiguous. The second is centering, on the children’s perception that their parents are interested in what they are doing in the present, in their concrete feelings and experiences, rather than being preoccupied with whether they will be getting into a good college or obtaining a well-paying job. Next is the issue of choice: children feel that they have a variety of possibilities from which to choose, including that of breaking parental rules - as long as they are prepared to face the consequences. The fourth differentiating characteristic is commitment, or the trust that allows the child to feel comfortable enough to set aside the shield of his defenses, and become un-selfconsciously involved in whatever he is interested in. And finally there is challenge, or
the parents' dedication to provide increasingly complex opportunities for action to their children. (p. 88)

In comparison, the characteristics which were positively related to Alignment (and thus the probable frequency of Immersion experiences) were: (1) the degree to which their Organizing Principles were affirmed and valued in their family and community; (2) the degree to which they were affirmed for Involvements congruent with their Organizing Principles; (3) the degree to which there were others available who possessed similar Organizing Principles who could act as mentors or "objects of identification"; (4) the degree to which there were available congruent Involvements; and (5) the degree to which they felt safe, loved, and valued at home.

The differences in our "good enough" family dynamics appears grounded in our different assumptions with respect to the role of the ego. In my model the role of the ego is to facilitate between biology and the Identity Structure. Biology encourages satisfaction of basic developmental needs including the need to be safe, loved, and valued as well as the higher "expression-needs" represented by the Organizing Principles. Identity Structures crystallize out of the ego's capacity to act on a "best guess" as to the way to "be" in order to get first, the basic developmental needs met, and only then, the expression-needs met. Expression-needs are generally met to the extent that the environment affirms, values, supports, models, and provides Involvements for, Organizing Principles. Thus Lifespan development is related to the capacity of the ego to enter into "Connoisseurship" with respect to the Organizing Principles. Identity Structures optimally evolve with increasing synergistic complexity and congruency.
Csikszentmihalyi, on the other hand, views the role of the ego as to acquire the skills and discipline necessary to order consciousness around a set of “rules,” regardless of whether or not they are consistent with the child’s Organizing Principles. To that end, the role of the parents includes a modeling and encouragement of those rules, again, regardless of whether or not they are consistent with the child’s Organizing Principles. While both models argue the importance of the satisfaction of basic developmental needs they seem to then diverge, each in a manner consistent with their respective view of the role of the ego.

Csikszentmihalyi looked closely at the relationship between optimal experience and work or career. His initial observations related to the “skills” necessary to maximize Flow and the “rules” which can be learned and followed to optimize experience.

To improve the quality of life through work, two complementary strategies are necessary. On the one hand jobs should be redesigned so that they resemble as closely as possible flow activities - as do hunting, cottage weaving, and surgery. But it will also be necessary to help people develop autotelic personalities like those of Serafina, Joe, and Ting, by training them to recognize opportunities for action, to hone their skills, and set reachable goals. (p. 157)

This argument implies a strong emphasis on technique and skill, and little or no suggestion of the importance of matching the “type” of work to the “type” of individual.

Csikszentmihalyi (1990) goes on to discuss the “Paradox of Work.” Thus we have the paradoxical situation: On the job people feel skillful and challenged, and therefore feel more happy, strong, creative, and satisfied. In their free time people feel that there is generally not much to do and their skills are not being used, and therefore they tend to feel more sad, weak, dull, and dissatisfied. Yet they would like to work less and spend more time in leisure. (p. 159)
He resolves the paradox by arguing that work could be perceived as more satisfying if it were congruent with the worker’s goals:

When we feel that we are investing attention in a task against our will, it is as if our psychic energy is being wasted. Instead of helping us reach our own goals, it is called upon to make someone else’s come true. The time channeled into such a task is perceived as time subtracted from the total available for our life. Many people consider their jobs as something they have to do, a burden imposed from the outside, an effort that takes life away from the ledger of their existence. So even though the momentary on-the-job experience may be positive, they tend to discount it, because it does not contribute to their own long-range goals. (p. 160)

Csikszentimihalyi views "goals" as products of the conscious will or ego, not as negotiations between the innate personality and striving ego. Thus careful conscious consideration is the ultimate authority according to Csikszentimihalyi.

In this study, I encountered many participants who discussed periods in their lives during which they were committed to an incongruent Identity Structure. That is, the ego had identified with, or committed to, goals and Involvements which were incongruent with their Organizing Principles. The result was a constellation of stress reactions. It seems to me that Csikszentimihalyi's argument fails to consider that the actualized goals of the ego may or may not bring a sense of satisfaction depending on their level of congruency with the deeper Organizing Principles.

To summarize, some aspects of Csikszentimihalyi's ideas appear congruent with the data emerging from this study. Differences lie in our articulation of the relationship between the Flow experience, the conscious ego, and the notion of Organizing Principles.
Abraham Maslow

In his book, *Toward a Psychology of Being* (1968), Abraham Maslow dedicates a chapter to the discussion of the relationship between intrinsic personality (and its structure of needs), defense, and growth. In his discussion, Maslow argued for the existence of a healthy, innate personality and suggested a process through which it could be actualized. He also discussed factors which could cripple its development and expression. His ideas provide an interesting overlay to the model which emerged from this study.

Maslow argued that in an environment in which a child is permitted to respond to his or her own sense of pleasure (with certain prudent limitations) that he or she will gravitate naturally toward congruent involvements.

According to Maslow (1968):

The answer I find satisfactory is a simple one, namely, that growth takes place when the next step forward is subjectively more delightful, more joyous, more intrinsically satisfying than the previous gratification with which we have become familiar and even bored; that the only way we can ever know what is right for us is that it feels better subjectively than any alternative. The new experience validates itself rather than by any out-side criterion. It is self-justifying, self-validating....In this way, we learn what we are good at, what we we really like or dislike, what our tastes and judgments and capacities are. In a word, this is the way in which we discover the Self and answer the ultimate questions Who am I? What am I? (p. 45)

Maslow seems to describe a link between Organizing Principles and Immersion (or Flow) experiences. If Csikszentmihalyi's Flow experience, as he argues, is the pivotal component of optimal experience and if Maslow's innate Self gains expression by following intrinsic satisfaction (optimal experience), it should follow that there would be a positive correlation between
the actualization of the healthy Self and the experiencing of Flow or Immersion. That is, by selecting Involvements based on one's sense of subjective satisfaction or pleasure, given the relationship between subjective satisfaction and the Flow experience, it should follow that one would experience a high level of Flow experience.

In addition to the above, Maslow suggested that growth of the innate Self is related to the capacity to honor, and form a communicating connection with, a deep inner source of wisdom. According to Maslow, the wisdom is tapped through our subjective/affective reaction to a multitude of life Involvements. Our capacity to honor the inner source is related to the degree to which we respond to these subjective/affective reactions in ways which increase our pleasant (or congruent) Involvements and decrease our unpleasant (or incongruent) ones.

The idea of "tuning in" to an inner source and responding in terms of congruent subjective reactions is mirrored in my emerging model. The participants who moved toward Alignment described themselves as listening to an "inner voice," or "personal computer chip." They learned to "listen within" and honor the messages they received.

Maslow further argued that it is only when a child becomes bored with a current attractive Involvement that he or she turns to another, perhaps more complex, attractive Involvement. Given this progression of growth through the pursuit of pleasure, Maslow considered the factors which might impede, or interfere with, growth and development:

What is the alternative to growth forward? Why is it so hard and painful for some to grow forward? Here we must become more fully aware of the fixative and regressive power of ungratified deficiency-needs, of the attractions of safety and security, of the functions of defense and
protection against pain, fear, loss, and threat, of the need for courage in order to grow ahead. Each human being has both sets of forces within him. One set clings to safety and defensiveness out of fear, tending to regress backward, hanging on to the past, afraid to grow away from the primitive communication with the mother's uterus and breast, afraid to take chances, afraid to jeopardize what he already has, afraid of independence, freedom and separateness. The other set of forces impels him forward toward wholeness of Self and uniqueness of Self, toward full functioning of all his capacities, toward confidence in the face of the external world at the same time that he can accept his deepest, real, unconscious Self....We grow forward when the delights of growth and anxieties of safety are greater than the anxieties of growth and the delights of safety. (p. 46-47)

Maslow recognized the natural "ambivalence of growth" which creates an inner tension seeking resolution. The tension is characterized, on the one hand, as a sense of risk accompanied by feelings of fear related to leaving the safe and known. On the other hand, as a sense of positive potential and enjoyment related to new possibilities but requiring courage. He further argued that the capacity to resolve the tension in the direction of growth is related to our experiencing of the various aspects of the ambivalence as they relate to, and were influenced by, our past and present experiences.

The tension between growth and safety described by Maslow was a central theme in my research. The participants, in most cases, could clearly articulate this struggle for growth, and in fact, devised a number of strategies for managing their feelings of fear and sense of risk.

Maslow further argued that stunted growth and development is often related to unsatisfied safety needs. According to Maslow, unmet safety needs result in the child focusing on maintaining stability at the cost of growth. He believes that growth requires certain idiosyncratic levels of psychological and physical safety. The cost to a child of focusing on stability (as opposed to
growth and self exploration) is the failure to develop an authentic sense of self. Maslow’s ideas mirror the patterns observed in my data, particularly with respect to those who emerged from socialization “Disguised.” According to Maslow:

Assured safety permits higher needs and impulses to emerge and to grow towards mastery. To endanger safety, means regression backward to the more basic foundation. What this means is that in the choice between giving up safety or giving up growth, safety will ordinarily win out. Safety needs are prepotent over growth needs. This means an expansion of our basic formula. In general, only a child who feels safe dares to grow forward healthily. His safety needs must be gratified. He can’t be pushed ahead, because the ungratified safety needs will remain forever underground, always calling for satisfaction. The more safety needs are gratified, the less valence they have for the child, the less they will beckon, and lower his courage....Ultimately the person, even the child, must choose for himself. Nobody can choose for him too often, for this itself enfeebles him, cutting his self-trust, and confusing his ability to perceive his own internal delight in the experience, his own impulses, judgments, and feelings, and to differentiate them from the interiorized standards of others. (p. 49-50)

Consistent with Maslow’s view, my participants, as children, behaved in ways which they perceived would maintain safety and stability while allowing them to “Matter” in their families. Their drive for love and validation was often satisfied at the expense of Alignment. As they learned to behave in ways which led to validation they internalized the expectations of others and slowly lost a solid sense of themselves. Instead, they learned to define themselves through their capacity to live up to the expectations of others. In the process, they lost themselves. Often the result was an assortment of stress reactions, a perception of being unhappy, and feelings of low self esteem. It was, however, these feelings which provided a motivation for change.
Maslow viewed this process as the "death" of the authentic self, which is replaced by a "pseudo-self." He suggested that the process of Submergence leaves the person endlessly conflicted and unhappy. He articulated the process in this way:

This is the perfect paradox. Everything looks normal; no crime was intended; there is no corpse, no guilt. All we can see is the sun rising and setting as usual. But what has happened? He has been rejected, not only by them, but by himself. (He is actually without a self.) What has he lost? Just the one true and vital part of himself: his own yes-feeling, which is his very capacity for growth, his root system. But alas, he is not dead. 'Life' goes on, and so must he. From the moment he gives himself up, and to the extent that he does so, all unknowingly he sets about to create and maintain a pseudo-self. But this is an expedience - a 'self' without wishes. This one shall be loved (or feared) where he is despised, strong where he is weak; it shall go through the motions (oh, but they are caricatures!) not for fun or joy but for survival; not simply because it wants to move but because it has to obey. This necessity is not life - not his life - it is a defense mechanism against death. It is also the machine of death. From now on he will be torn apart by compulsive (unconscious) needs or ground by (unconscious) conflicts into paralysis, every motion and every instant canceling out his being, his integrity; and all the while he is disguised as a normal person and expected to behave like one! (p. 52)

In addition to the congruences described so far there are other important similarities. For example, Maslow's notion of Peak Experiences informs my notion of Ecstatic Moments and Immersion experiences. According to Maslow, Peak Experiences are happy, involved, and rapturous moments. He describes one aspect of the Peak Experience or "B-Cognition" as follows:

When there is a B-Cognition, the percept is exclusively and fully attended to. This may be called "total attention"... What I am trying to describe here is very much akin to fascination or complete absorption. In such attention the figure becomes all figure and the ground, in effect, disappears, or at least is not importantly perceived. It is as if the figure were isolated for the time being from all else, as if the world were forgotten, as if the percept had become for the moment the whole of Being. (p. 74)
Maslow's state of complete absorption appears congruent with my state of Immersion. Maslow, however expands the construct to include my notion of Ecstatic Moments as well. That is, Peak Experiences are defined by Maslow in such a way as to make them inclusive of both what I am calling Immersion and Ecstatic Moments.

Furthermore, Maslow described a relationship between the Peak Experience and the "real self" as follows:

I have another operation to report, on peak-experiences, in which "identity" has various real, sensible and useful meanings. But no claim is made that these are the true meanings of identity; only that we have here another angle. Since my feeling is that people in peak-experiences are most their identities, closest to their real selves, most idiosyncratic, it would seem that this is an especially important source of clean and uncontaminated data... (p. 103)

It seems to me that Maslow's argument is similar to my argument for the relationship between Immersion experiences and Organizing Principles.

Maslow later expands his argument and describes a relationship between Peak Experiences and Self-Actualization. According to Maslow, anyone experiencing a Peak Experience is simultaneously exhibiting characteristics and states of consciousness congruent with his self-actualizers. He argues that the self-actualizers differ from everyone else in terms of the frequency of their Peak Experiences. In his words:

Such states or episodes [Peak Experiences] can, in theory, come at any time in life to any person. What seems to distinguish those individuals I have called self-actualizing people, is that in them these episodes seem to come far more frequently, and intensely and perfectly than in average people. This makes self-actualization a matter of degree and of frequency rather than an all-or-none affair, and thereby makes it more amenable to available research procedures. (p. 97)
It seems to me that if, according to Maslow, self-actualizers experience more frequent Peak Experiences and, if during Peak Experiences they are closest to their "real selves," then it stands to reason that self-actualizers are closer to their "real selves" more frequently than non-self-actualizers. This idea seems to me to be congruent with my assertion that the individuals in my study who exhibited high degrees of Alignment (a synergistic relationship between their Organizing Principles and Involvements) experienced Immersion more frequently than others.

Maslow weaves together the relationship between Peak Experiences, self-actualization, satisfaction, and "true" identity development. Furthermore he describes the developmental journey and the potential pitfalls which can derail healthy growth. The model that emerged from this study is similar to Maslow's theory.

Further Potential Implications

For the participants of this study, career change was a phenomenon embedded in a broader process of growth and development. The participants utilized the career change as an opportunity to create a more synergistic relationship between their Organizing Principles and Involvements. This more congruent relationship permitted new and previously excluded aspects of their personality to be integrated into their lives. They wanted to be happier and more fulfilled and most were successful.

While a career change occurred for each of the participants, many of them also changed love relationships, friends, hobbies, and where they lived. While these external life changes were significant, they paled in comparison to
the internal changes. Over the period of time extending from before, during, and until after their career change the participants came to disrupt and reform their sense of their own identity. They questioned and struggled with old beliefs and assumptions. They lived with ambiguity, fear, and a sense of risk as they worked toward greater internal and external congruency. They were motivated by a variety of stress factors related to their old inadequate Identity Structure and encouraged by the possibility of "becoming."

A number of the participants embarked upon their life changes with the support and additional training offered by a University. With the significant growth in the number of older adults returning to college for additional training, I believe this model offers a small step in the development of a particularized psychosocial theory attempting to understand the career change phenomenon and its relationship to a broader developmental journey. Such a model could be quite helpful in the design of programs which have as their objective the support and encouragement of the returning adult learner.

For the counselor, such a model would be rich in its capacity to inform intervention decisions relating to adults engaged in a career redecisioning process. The counselor who views his or her client from a broad, developmental perspective will be substantively empowered to help their clients grow and develop.

**Directions for Further Research**

The model which emerged from my data is tentative and tied directly to the life perspectives and experiences of only ten individuals. Additional people need to be studied and modifications in the model may result.
In particular, I believe a deeper understanding of the relationship between Organizing Principles, Involvements, Immersion experiences, and the process of Alignment could be beneficial to both Student Affairs professionals, Licensed Professional Counselors, and other mental health or career development professionals. Additionally, I think it would be beneficial to further understand the factors related to Submergence and the psychological mechanisms which empower the process of Alignment.
Bibliography


APPENDIX A

SEMI-STRUCTURED QUESTION SET
Initial Question: If you were to write a book of your life, I would like you to consider how you would divide the book into chapters: what the content of each chapter would be; and on what basis you divided the chapters. I am interested in knowing the general theme of each chapter as you see it, and in the events you view as major turning points in your life.

I. Life dream
a. Do you recall having a vision of yourself in the future in your early 20s? How did you visualize your work, love, and life style to be? How has your vision been fulfilled, unfulfilled, or changed?
b. How do you envision your future at this point in your life?

II. Occupation
a. Describe your career development since age 18, including any reassessments you made along the way?
b. Most parents have hopes and perhaps plans for their children, things they would like them to go into or do. Did your parents have any hopes or plans for you? (Josselson)
c. When did you begin thinking about making a career change and how did this happen?
d. How would you describe your thought process as you struggled to make a decision about the change?
e. During the first six months following the change, what preoccupied your feelings and/or thoughts, if anything?
f. Was it different during the second six months?
g. How do you feel or think about the change now?
h. Why do you work? Has this always been the case?
i. If you had to do it over again, what would you do differently, if anything?
j. What role did your friends, parents, siblings, spouse, and children play in your decision to change careers? How about during the process of change?
k. What role did solitude play in the career change process?

III. Relationships (significant others, children, & family of origin)
a. Has your relationship with your parents changed over the years? How? When? Your 20s, 30s, 40s, 50s, 60s?
b. As you perceive it, how has your parents view of you changed over the years? 20s, 30s, 40s, 50s, 60s? (Josselson)
c. How has your relationship with siblings evolved over time?
d. Who in your family do you most respect from an occupational perspective? Why?
e. Describe your relationship with significant lovers in your life and how they have changed over time. 20s, 30s, 40s, 50s, 60s? Have there been any transitions, either yours or your partner’s that have affected your marriage (or relationship)?
f. Describe each of your children and how your relationship with them has evolved over time.

IV. Friend, peer, and mentor relationships
a. Looking back over your life, were there any people who had a great impact upon your career development? Describe them, and how your relationship with them changed over time. Did any of these people influence your career change in any way? If so, describe.
b. Are there any younger people whom you feel you may have had a significant impact upon their career development. Describe them, and how your relationship with them changed over time.
c. Have your relationships with your friends changed over the years? How? 20s, 30s, 40s, 50s, 60s?

V. Ethnicity and religion
a. If you have one, how has your belief in or relationship with a Supreme Being changed during your life?
b. How did your parents religious beliefs compare to your own at different points in your life? (Josselson)
c. Discuss your ethnic heritage and the impact it has had on your life.

VI. Leisure activities and lifestyle
a. Are there interests or activities that you used to do or thought about that you wish you were doing now? Plan to resume in the future? Were any of these ever considered as career possibilities?
b. Did you ever go through a time when you reassessed your life? If so, when was it? Why do you think it occurred? (Examples: reevaluate your marriage, career, values, the direction your life was taking, etc.)
c. What have been your major personal accomplishments in your 20s, 30s, 40s, 50s, 60s?
d. What have been your major setbacks in your 20s, 30s, 40s, 50s, 60s? How have you dealt with those?
e. At what point in your life did you stop being who you were supposed to be and start being who you are? (Gould)
f. Do you recall a time when you became acutely aware of your mortality? How did it affect your outlook? (Young/old polarity)
VII. Added
a. I would like you to think of moments when you were deeply focused and involved in something that was meaningful. First describe what you were doing or involved with during the times you experienced this. These may be moments in your present or your past, even childhood. Briefly tell how you feel in such moments. What impact, if any, did these moments have on your life?
APPENDIX B

FORMAL LETTER REQUESTING PARTICIPANT PARTICIPATION IN THE STUDY
July, 1993

Dear: 

I received your name from .

I am currently a PhD Candidate in Higher Education and Student Affairs at The Ohio State University. My areas of interest include adult life-span development and the life transition process. I am currently beginning a dissertation study focusing on the lives of several men and women who have made career changes within the last ten years. I am interested in trying to understand the inner dynamics and experiences involved in the initial decision to make a career change, the change itself, and the period following the change. I believe that in order to do this it is necessary to see the career change in the context of the individual's entire life, not just as an isolated event. I am excited about the potential value of the information derived from this study in terms of empowering and informing others interested in making changes in their lives.

I would like you to consider participating in this study! I will endeavor, over the course of this letter, to inform you of what participating in this study would mean, and the type of mutual responsibilities we would incur as a result. I will use a question and answer format to attempt to logically address all the pertinent issues.

**What qualifications must I have in order to participate?**
You must have completed a minimum of a four-year college degree. Prior to your career change you must also have been working professionally in a field related to your area of college study for at least two years. Finally, you must have made this job or career change no longer than ten and no less than two years ago. The change may have been the result of your voluntarily leaving your prior work arrangement, or may have been the result of being laid-off or terminated.

**What will my participation require of me?**
First, you will be asked to respond to the following question: If you were to write a book of your life, I would like you to consider how you would divide the book into chapters; what the content of each chapter would be; and on what basis you divided the chapters. I am interested in knowing the general theme of each chapter as you see it, and in the events you view as major turning points in your life. Second, you will be asked to respond to a series of open-ended questions each addressing one of the following life domains; (1) occupation; (2) love, marriage, and family; (3) ethnicity and religion; (4) leisure
activities; and (5) friendships and peer relationships. Finally, you will be asked to complete a personality profile instrument called the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator.

I estimate the time necessary to complete these tasks to be approximately four hours. I will travel to the location of your choice to meet with you at a time (or times) that is convenient to you. I am available on weekdays or weekends for our visits.

How will you take information and how will confidentiality be addressed?
I will tape record our conversations and later transcribe them into hard copy. The tapes will then be erased and the transcriptions coded to prevent your identification. When converted to text in the dissertation document, names of towns, people, natural markers, buildings, etc. will be altered to protect your privacy. The results from the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator will additionally be coded to prevent name recognition.

What will I gain from participating?
Often people find it personally enlightening to reassess the path of their lives. I offer you this opportunity.

I hope participating in this study sounds attractive to you. I will phone you next week to further discuss the possibility of your being involved.

Thank you for your consideration

Sincerely,

Robert Rodgers, PhD
Associate Professor of Psychology and Higher Education and Student

Jay Young
PhD Candidate; The Ohio State University
APPENDIX C

SAMPLE OF SORTED DATA, BY CATEGORY, FOR ONE PARTICIPANT
Dissertation Model - Todd

Emergence

1. Organizing Principles
   a. Evidence of Organizing Principles (Moving toward) w/ Involvements
      * during junior high and high school was sort of I was into everything in a way. I studied about 4 or 5 different musical instruments and had to be an officer in about 5 or 6 clubs or whatever and I did musical theater for the community theater, I had a radio show in high school.
      * What it evolved into was the writing aspect of it was really what I got...was best at and what I was most turned on about... that field... actually being creative.
      * I did Graduate school and on to my internship for the LPC as a therapist. I never in my life before had a job or career that I spent time studying that I wanted to work on outside the office. So it feels like a very good match this time. I feel like I'd do this stuff even if it wasn't it would be in my life someway if it wasn't a career.
      * the fact that I was color blind factored in sometimes because it would rule out certain things like architecture that were interesting or photography although you could probably do those things I'm not completely color blind but I am enough that it would be a bother. Much earlier on I just knew it would be some type of professional whether intellectual or mental kind of capacity instead of a more physical or mechanical or merchant kind of thing.
      * I knew at times when I was going into advertising I knew I didn't want to be in it, to be an account executive. The creative side was more interesting, so not being an actual artist...it just naturally came down to writing for me.
      * Verbal skills is the first thing I think of. Verbal interactions with people. Somewhat in public relations but since I did mostly writing that was linguistic but it wasn't verbal interaction I like that. Much more problem solving skills, probably more so the intuitive, looking at patterns, those kinds of things you did in writing, but I certainly didn't have to use them like I did in therapy. The interesting people and personal interaction, personal growth, those kinds of interests I use today. Some of the skills overlap you know I think from journalism to counseling such as everything from linguistic stuff like paraphrasing or summarizing and reframing are the things you do. You deal with meanings around personal growth. PR is putting everything in a positive light. That's much of the purpose in therapy too.

   b. Immersion Experiences
      * Sometimes study was like that for me. Reading and learning...get lost in it...you get energized by it. Writing was that way for me. Getting lost in crafting words, abstract. Sometimes I would do that at the piano. I would just sort of make up music as I went for about 30 minutes at a time. Had a great time. Sort of self expression at that point. The only other thing that comes to mind right now is interacting with people. Conversation, flow of ideas, getting lost really get charged up by that. That's all that comes to mind. These experiences feel very engaged... it just seems like self perpetuating kind of energy. Curiosity plays into it especially in the learning things thinking thoughts that sort of self perpetuating for me. Pretty much the same with conversation...the interaction, the exchange, the input. How that feels in therapy as a therapist...it feels like a very creative process to creatively respond to whatever problem presented and interact at the same time on a level that builds repour, nurturing and educates at the same time. And hopefully whatever my responses are perpetuate more interest to the client and some interest in growing, learning more. I experience some of that just with friends in conversation.
c. Evidence of Incongruence (Moving away from)
* I wanted more independence. I wanted less structure in corporate system. I wanted much more meaning. I didn’t want to devote my creative abilities to promoting products or the same product year after year. I wanted much more dynamic process more involved in people’s lives. Something that was meaningful on a personal level. Something that wasn’t measured by bottom line dollars.

d. I have always known
* about age 5 or 6 someone asked me what I wanted to be and I said a writer and that sort of blew them away. So in some form, of course at time I wish that I probably write a book, something more creative than commercial writing.
* They have been there always. Are you asking how long ago did I recognize them? Actually from the beginning. Now that I think back I was reading biographies at six and seven. I was reading biographies of writers and what their lives were like and wanting to be a writer and letting creative... even my play was all, now that I look back, was sort of creative. Whether it was building forts as a kid or whatever, somehow wood work in shops, musical stuff so there was always an intuitive theme and always felt like I was picking up on information that other people didn’t get in situations. Sometimes in an objective way. Sometimes I guess I felt people never stepped back and looked at the big picture of their behavior, of their actions, and I sense that from 8, 9 years of age, so its been there a long time.

Submergence

2. Identity Structures (Through Age 17)
   a. Perception of the Broad Cultural Context
      1. Ethnicity or other cultural identity
      2. Religion / Spirituality
* always went to church, Baptist Church which was encouraged by my parents and grandparents
* Then growing up in Southern Baptist I couldn’t connect with how judgmental that it was even though it became very important a lot having that and also appreciate have some kind of church background as a child. By 9 or 10 year old I remember sitting at church and saying I don’t need to be talked down to, sorry, its so simplistic its like cartoon versions I didn’t believe in... devils and a very paternal kind of God sitting on a throne passing judgements on me... I just didn’t buy into that so I drifted around I didn’t know it wasn’t a real high priority for a lot of years.
* Oddly enough I don’t think my parents had one even though we certainly attended church two to three times a week during a lot of my childhood. I think that was one of the other inconsistencies I could pick up on early. I didn’t really see them living out any of their belief systems except fearful do right or do good or you will be punished, but I didn’t see it really translate into their daily lives so I thought that was pretty useless to spend two to three times a week sitting through these sermons. But it was good PR for the store. Actually I think they felt very connected to the community through it. But it wasn’t spiritual for them.
   3. City / Town
* since we were all in a small town we knew we would be moving on someplace next year, sort of a common goal so that getting into a larger arena and experiencing more of life.
* Fredrick, Oklahoma. About 8,000 people. Now that I look back, there were probably very few kids who went to college and very few who had breadth of interest that I and a few close
friends had so that that makes me even feel more different than I was at the time.

b. Perception of the Context of the Family / Major Relationships

1. Perceptions of the nuclear family

a. congruent or neutral aspects

* early childhood would be very playful, creative, sort of a naive time of life. Pretty much, I'm the oldest child so basically the only child for about 4 1/2 years. And the first grandchild on either side of the family so I pretty much got plenty of attention in the early years. Things seem pretty wonderful I guess for a long time.

* Growing up I had one uncle who lived in Oklahoma City and he taught English, Spanish and Drama. Those were more in line with my interest so there was some adult out there that had some, I could relate to basically. I wasn't around him, but maybe two or three times a year he was fascinating and always took students on those trips to like Mexico and London and out seeing the rest of the world and doing things that sounded interesting to me. He encouraged my interests in different things so. I didn't want to be a teacher but there was enough of a connection that I felt like this.

b. incongruent aspects* The only thing that I may have seen different through that time period is after about I never got into sports my interests stayed mainly intellectual and creative so... Doing things after certain say the teenage years I began to feel more and more alienated from my family which was a concrete group of people. So all that creative and intellectual stuff was pretty much frowned on...it wasn't concrete it wasn't practical and did not translate directly into money especially in a small town setting where I grew up. So that's probably the most painful thing... feeling different that parts of me were not approved of. But both parents really, I guess, my father pushed me to be more business like and my mother pushed me to be more sports-oriented and I didn't really want either one of those so that was a lot of painful stuff at home

* As I became a person on my own the rift from my family grew larger because I seemed so different from them

* I always thought of it as a distant, harsh, judgmental, especially from my father. My mother needed lots of emotional attention all the time from me because she didn't get it from my father. That was sort of how the things set up. Lots of other conflicts for years and years. It was all about walking through some prescribed role they had for me. Filling in some kind of structure.

* Everything but gratitude was discouraged. Gratitude towards my parents was the only thing they really wanted to hear except sympathy for my mother. Empathy. There was pretty much no need for any emotions especially for my father I don't any emotions were really necessary. Maybe a little gratitude, that was the big one and most of that came from mom. She is the only one that did anger or resentment from the family and dad seldom did any kind except maybe in a jovial kind of story telling and interaction with friends, but no other emotion no anger, no joy either because joy meant you weren't worrying enough about what you need to be working on and achieving or producing. So too much happiness was very suspect. Play was wrong.

* Interest in art and literature and intellectual pursuits were discouraged unless it was for scholastic achievements and then they were you know, you were supposed to do that and perform. I'm not sure why music was allowed or encouraged they certainly paid for all those instruments and lessons but there again I think some of that was PR for my dad business and that was pretty much the way things were termed as far as my activities, different organizations, different civic activities I was in and theater work. But it was very much discouraged as any kind of career. In fact they sat me down and told me that I better not be thinking of that as a career choice.


c. responses to incongruent aspects
* but school activities and outside stuff continue to grow and I was really in most everything so I went to outside validation I guess is you might say.
* during junior high and high school was sort of I was into everything in a way. I studied about 4 or 5 different musical instruments and had to be an officer in about 5 or 6 clubs or whatever and I did musical theater for the community theater, I had a radio show in high school. Its an overkill basically but all that stuff brought me a lot of validation I didn’t feel at home.

d. congruent outlets abandoned

2. Friends / lovers

c. Perceptions within the Context of School
* then of course I started school and I thought that was the greatest thing. Learning and all that stuff was fascinating. I always enjoyed that kind of organized activities, school activities
* during junior high and high school was sort of I was into everything in a way. I studied about 4 or 5 different musical instruments and had to be an officer in about 5 or 6 clubs or whatever and I did musical theater for the community theater, I had a radio show in high school. Its an overkill basically but all that stuff brought me a lot of validation I didn’t feel at home.
* Lots of great mentor relationships from teachers...The other thing was the writing stuff was always encouraged by several teachers through school English composition and got a great deal of encouragement along with encouragement for public speaking and doing plays and drama.

2. Friends / lovers

3. Perceptions within the Context of Joined Organizations
* during junior high and high school was sort of I was into everything in a way. I studied about 4 or 5 different musical instruments and had to be an officer in about 5 or 6 clubs or whatever and I did musical theater for the community theater, I had a radio show in high school. Its an overkill basically but all that stuff brought me a lot of validation I didn’t feel at home.

d. Perceptions within the Context of Joined Organizations
* Yea my parents had a lot of plans for me. My father’s always been into two lines of work. His business is a grocery store, supermarket sort of thing, and farming and ranching and particularly farming and ranching. He grew up with that so that’s quite a noble profession or it was like connection to God and the earth or something. It was way out of proportion. So he had plans for me to be in both of those, definitely. From age 8, I worked in the grocery store every summer until I was out of college. I hated every minute of it and hated him for it for forcing me to do it.

e. Perceptions within the Context of Work (Vocation and Avocation)
* I probably thought I’d be in some corporate situation in either directing a PR department or second in command or something in a public relations department, married, a few close friends, maybe in a country club, and an urban home.

f. Perception of “Life Dream”
* I probably thought I’d be in some corporate situation in either directing a PR department or second in command or something in a public relations department, married, a few close friends, maybe in a country club, and an urban home.

3. Identity Structures (Through Age 28 - Early Adult Transition and Entering the Adult World - Levinson)

a. Perception of the Broad Cultural Context
   1. Ethnicity or other cultural identity
   2. Religion / Spirituality
   3. City / Town
* After college I guess was always looking for a bigger and bigger pond. I decided I had to move to Dallas because it was a much larger city... biggest metropolitan area. So I moved
down here and I got a job.

b. Perception of the Context of the Family / Major Relationships

1. Perceptions of the nuclear family
   a. congruent or neutral aspects
   b. incongruent aspects

* For years, even after I had gotten a degree and gone on to Dallas and had good jobs in PR I'd get calls...I'm gonna buy another store, you want to come run it for me and stuff like that. They always had ways to pull me back in the family business.
* Growing up all through High school I would argue about when I was going to work or if I was going to work. We had some pretty tough. They were more like emotional standoffs they were not like verbal fights or physical fights but a lot of conflict. One summer in college I wanted to stay and work wait tables with some fraternity brothers my parents went ballistic its like betraying the family not coming home and doing your duties.

c. responses to incongruent aspects

* I'd been pretty much brain washed that most of my interests weren't going to translate to a living. I was sort of in a limbo. I was making good grades pretty much making all the right contacts but really didn't have any idea where I was going to go. It took me a long time to put a major down on paper. I put business for a while but I knew that wasn't gonna ever work for me. So I finally wound up with advertising and that was in the Journalism department. For me this was a compromise between being creative and being in the business world. So that was going to translate.
* The biggest probably was my father even though I don't want to admit that cause I was trying to move against it. But I'm sure that since I viewed pretty much our family role was to be a PR machine for his business, or at least that sort of the life he related to us then, so I thought I had to influence my decision to go into advertising and PR because I was trying to match up the creative side of me with some kind of business aspect.
* They always had ways to pull me back in the family business. No one was always my answer, although sometimes I would consider it for about 2 days just for the monetary stuff.
* Well, that summer I eventually wound up going home and the next summer I stayed there and did what I wanted to. Took me a while to get the courage but I usually get around to doing what's best.

d. congruent outlets abandoned

* When I first went to school I wanted to explore drama classes and I had been offered a drama scholarship in a small college and it was too small and too close to home so I turned it down. Still I always wanted to do it and I was fascinated with it. By the time I got with everything that I had been fed by my parents, that it was a silly thing to do plus getting into a fraternity very traditional and everybody was either doctor, lawyer or corporate crap nothing was going to fit together for me so I sort just slowly let go of all that stuff. All ideas of being a drama major. I don't think I ever told many people I wanted to do that at the time.
* That was important in some way fitting into what I could conceive at that point and time to fit into society...I don't know if I'm making sense. Based on what my vision of the traditional American dream was to achieve that I put a lot of things that I really liked and were really more me aside that I had been led to believe were not appropriate or didn't fit. So I would systematically disinherited a lot of that stuff that was me.

2. Marriage / children

* About a year later Kim moved down here and we got married and she took a job in an ad agency so were both sort of in PR and advertising stuff.
* Well I started dating Kim when I was around 21 or 22 when we were both in college and involved in the same social groups and fraternity. So we seem very much at the same point and was very equal relationship. We sort of seemed like partners at the same level and then
we both. I graduated a year earlier so I started my career a little sooner but pretty much in similar fields same degree. So it seemed like an equal partnership and things were going right along. After we moved to Dallas and couple of years down here we started drifting apart. I saw her as much more ambitious career wise than me and I got more and more a misfit in the corporate world and I don't see that as the rason for the breakup but it added to the alienation.

3. Friends / lovers

* I usually had a few close friends that I confided in say in my twenties, but that was about my own level of awareness, it was as deep as I could go. I always had a really large group of social connections lots and lots of people but I was only close to four and that continued to most of my thirties until the last couple of years.

c. Perceptions within the Context of School

* I went to OU in Norman, Oklahoma and the best thing was to be in a new environment, a larger time I guess, but it took me about a year after I had all that stuff in high school I was tired of activities I just laid back and got into the system. I did my academic stuff and met a few friends and had a great time.
* After I decided to become a public relations... no advertising journalism was the actual degree. Several professors were real encouraging about my writing skills and just had a very enthusiastic response from them and they would use examples of my work in class. The last campaign we wrote I was doing copywriting about like our Airways to Britain and my professor broke into tears during the presentation because he liked the writing so because it reminded him of his last trip there. So that all gave me a lot of confidence and encouragement to continue in PR writing. So those people had a great deal of influence. That got me into that career.

d. Perceptions within the Context of Joined Organizations

* About the second year I decided to join a fraternity and had some people push me to do that and I really doubted I was going to like it but I took to it like crazy. We were in a big house about 125 guys have a whole social structure parties and all kinds everything from... we studied a little but all kinds of stuff to do.
* getting into a fraternity very traditional and everybody was either doctor, lawyer or corporate crap nothing was going to fit together for me so I sort just slowly let go of all that stuff. All ideas of being a drama major. I don't think I even told many people I wanted to do that at the time.

e. Perceptions within the Context of Work (Vocation and Avocation)

* My first corporate job wound up in Fort Worth with Southwestern Petroleum Company. Doing lots of PR writing designing and in-house publications and brochures... actually it was sort of fun the company was not that great a company but what they let me do was wonderful in many ways.
* I quickly sort of got bored with PR corporates... especially that place but was, I don't know, it wasn't that easy to find jobs and I looked around and looked around ...it's a highly competitive field but I'm not a high competitive person and that was sort of a mismatch. Eventually, I wound up with Lennox Industries in Dallas. The heating and air-conditioning manufacturer. It was a great move actually for my career. I had to do all that kind of stuff, writing and designing brochures and in-house publications. Some of our publications have 15,000 circulation world wide and stuff so it's pretty good. After about 3 years I started getting bored with that and about that time that's when I tried to get a divorce and come out as a gay person.
* I went back to corporate PR and took a job with MBank doing thier in-house publications. Within a year they started doing layoffs and getting rid of all the PR departments so I was out again.

f. Perception of "Life Dream"
* I probably thought I'd be in some corporate situation in either directing a PR department or second in command or something in a public relations department, married, a few close friends, maybe in a country club, and an urban home.

**Disruption**

**4. Conscious Awareness of Incongruency**

* Didn't feel successful at all. In someways that that almost looks blind or spoiled or something. I may have had things a lot of other people wanted to achieve. But it just didn't fit. But I had some really skewed things around money from my family who was very money oriented, so it was never enough. Even at my moderate level of a good salary it didn't look like anything today. I couldn't really assess that as a success even though it was. As much as I hate to admit it I was still carrying a bunch parental stuff about what success looks like. A lot of conflicting messages there too. It didn't fit me and my real desires or interests. It was a really unhappy time.

* It's hell. For me it was. It wasn't anything I clearly saw for a long time (being gay) and then low level feelings which had no context at all to be put into at that point and time for me there was no way to fit that into any construct about of how to live your life or it just was not you know. So I guess originally I just thought it just was an occasional feeling that came up that was nothing to be acted on or wasn't really going to play into my life in any way. Then it came about as my marriage became less fulfilling. But even though with the tremendous struggle I just felt it looked like and felt like throwing the entire world that I can relate to and stepping onto another planet. That's part of my re-evaluation at this point is that something I really wanted to do. Was I really looking for just another way to step onto another planet. And lets make a huge swing. Not that the feelings weren't real when I had them but I always thought the feelings toward women were real too. Coming out as a gay man was a very long, long mental and soul searching kind of things I had to come to terms with.

Did I really believe it was ok. Did I really believe it was worth... were those feelings strong enough to interrupt my life, interrupt my wife's life at that point and time. And I wasn't ready to let go of my family at that point and I knew that was a big possibility. All my close friends from college I figured I would have to let go of. So I just came down to would I honor this part of myself? Did I find it valuable enough and honorable enough to act on it and follow it through? It was a long process and then doing it was even harder. Certainly had the rewards but you know, that part of myself had to be expressed and but threw a lot of things into turmoil.

**5. Turning Points**

* After about 3 years I started getting bored with that and about that time that's when I tried to get a divorce and come out as a gay person. That shook many areas in my life and all of a sudden again I didn't feel like I fit where I was and so the corporate structure didn't seem very accepting of that or that was my interpretation of that and eventually quit that job just because I was really searching for a new identity.

* My experience in coming out as a gay man was... first would be awareness. Really coming face to face with those kind of feelings. Trying to figure how big a part they play and how. That was the first one. Second would be investigation. Trying those relationships with men. No wait a second. After awareness coming to terms with that was probably the hardest part. Going through the mental process. So Awareness, Coming to Terms, Sort of accepting what it was and then investigation. Taking a risk. Fourth would be owning and integrating it into all parts of my life at that time.
* Yes. I think as I began to let go of it, it certainly was painful at the time but I thought I was being drawn to new something that would be exciting and different but there was such a part of me that said for instance when I tried to be bohemian with my lover that it was so boring to me to be that disorganized and that out of cultural mainstream. I felt I was lost in another planet. There wasn’t enough structure. I guess that went along for me in letting go of it. I was letting go of a lot of structures at that time and even though they didn’t fit, I knew how to play that game and there was some comfort in that. The lack of structures was very disorienting. I didn’t know who to be.

Alignment

6. Struggle with Ambivalence
   a. The pull of what’s familiar and “safe”
      1. A need to prove something
         * I’m trying to figure out what I tried to prove. Self-worth I guess. Like I was describing activities I did so many of them in high school, I’m sure that was an attempt to prove my worth. I did things especially to prove it to my parents, but it never worked too well or it didn’t feel like it worked, but I think I was always going through that. I’m sure I was the one who chose those careers paths to prove I could do them in the business world even though it wasn’t my first choice. I wanted to prove to myself I could do it then became pretty unhappy about it. Even my final ones probably to prove to myself something. Prove my interests are worthwhile.

      2. External or internal resistance
         * I think as I began to let go of it, it certainly was painful at the time but I thought I was being drawn to new something that would be exciting and different but there was such a part of me that said for instance when I tried to be bohemian with my lover that it was so boring to me to be that disorganized and that out of cultural mainstream. I felt I was lost in another planet. There wasn’t enough structure. I guess that went along for me in letting go of it. I was letting go of a lot of structures at that time and even though they didn’t fit, I knew how to play that game and there was some comfort in that. The lack of structures was very disorienting. I didn’t know who to be.

         * Coming out as a gay man was a very long, long mental and soul searching kind of things I had to come to terms with. Did I really believe it was ok. Did I really believe it was worth... were those feelings strong enough to interrupt my life, interrupt my wife’s life at that point and time. And I wasn’t ready to let go of my family at that point and I knew that was a big possibility. All my close friends from college I figured I would have to let go of. So I just came down to would I honor this part of myself? Did I find it valuable enough and honorable enough to act on it and follow it through? It was a long process and then doing it was even harder. Certainly had the rewards but you know, that part of myself had to be expressed and but threw a lot of things into turmoil.

         * By that time I sort of knew all their key phrases and what their (parents) answers would be so I’d get the resistance sort of second hand I heard these things about the decisions I had to go through before hear these arguments against them. So at the time they were very silent to me about when I tried to bring up my enthusiasms about a new career and school but I would get it second hand from my sister or they worried about or its the same old routine I heard for years. They thought that to strike off and go to grad school and pursue a career at times without knowing at times where all the money would come from was totally irresponsible.

      3. Struggle with financial considerations
Probably part left over from early childhood stuff was I was determined not to make money the determining factor here. It had been so long for my family that I was going to do it differently no matter what. I certainly considered it but I went ahead and enrolled in school not knowing how I would come up with the tuition. Sort of a leap of faith and it was always there.

4. Lack of Adequate Role Models
  b. Factors influential in a movement toward the Organizing Principles
     1. Developing Allies, Mentors, Identifications, Witnesses and finding support (Communicating). Also see prior sections on "congruent aspects."

*I started another relationship and it started having some problems so I went to counseling and part of that was career exploration kind of stuff and after taking the Myers-Briggs and doing some counseling, se suggested that I consider being a therapist. Something I never even considered but it kind of made so much sense out of so many things that have interested me. Within 4 or 5 months I was in grad school and loved every minute of it.

* She came up with the counselor idea, number 1, which sort of struck me as funny at the time. We had only been 2 or 3 months into counseling. She continued pretty much from the approach, not just Myers Briggs, but examined what things turned me on in the past, reactions with people, levels of intelligence in certain areas. So she was there to identify things that I couldn’t see or never had seen before. She kept feeding those back. Not pushing the profession on me but it just fit very well with who I was.

* My one sibling, my sister, was very supportive. All my friends thought it was the perfect match for my personality. MY lover at the time thought it would be great. So they were all pretty supportive. They weren’t active in helping me choose the profession or anything, but once I came up with it they were very much behind me.

* The way I’ve handled any kind of anxious or feelings, I guess while I was going through therapy I would talk about them and talk to people going through similar type of situations, classmates or people who had made career changes before. Used journaling a lot to help think through any kind of fear or find the direction I wanted to go.

2. Exploration and exposure

* My first lover was an artist and we moved in together and he had some projects to do and I quit my job and sort of lived a bohemian lifestyle with him and did stained glass windows with him for about a year which I did. We had a big contract to do and money although he wasn’t organized. It then became a nightmare. Then I went back and didn’t really have a real answer of what I wanted to do career wise and I knew I had to find something more satisfying that fit all the new changes I didn’t have an answer so I went back to corporate PR and took a job with MBank doing their in-house publications. Within a year they started doing layoffs and getting rid of all the PR departments so I was out again. I wasn’t supposed to be there I guess. I floundered for a few months trying to figure out what I really wanted to do if I really wanted to go back or why go back to public relations when I really didn’t want to and that relationship ended and I then switched to managing a showroom at the trade center to get by until I figured out my next career.

* I was introduced to the idea of becoming a counselor while I was going to counseling. So I was really in a place where I was searching for something, but that would fit a bunch of pieces of my personality with a profession. So I sorta actively searched out how to do this. The thought process began with realizing, began with the Myers Briggs really and with the counselor. Further recognizing personality traits, interests I never keyed on in, so it became an immerging kind of identity and a new view of self was the process and the more I examined that the more it seem to fit with being a counselor, being an ENFJ. So that sorta like... the
picture of myself began to fit with this idea, it began to overlap stronger and stronger. That was the thought process. It began to make more and more sense and it really was something I was very interested in. Even though I never really studied it before. But I continued to check out what the classes would be like, what working would be like, what the income ladder would be. It sounded much more interesting so that’s why I went to work.

* Then with my two male lovers I’ve, in retrospect, come to think of them in a way that validates parts of myself that I disowned. For example, my first male lover was an artist Bohemian and I don’t mean far out but it seemed very far from where I was living at the time which was corporate structure life. He had many of the same family pressures to do the same stuff I had. So I related and we had a background similar but he was just staunch that he wasn’t going to do it and pursue his interests come hell or high water and I thought that was pretty neat and attractive and certainly a part of me that I hadn’t got to express in any kind of positive way. It became a little too far from what I was used to to sustain a relationship. The second lover was another swing back the other way through the traditional preppy professional. He was about 8 years younger and very boyish and innocent and I think that was a part of me that I don’t think I ever got to connect with because everything was to be so serious and so business oriented this was a playful sort of childlike portion of him was what I wanted to connect with. It ended because of his immaturity. Or at least I think I understand why I was there at the time.

3. Mitigating Risk
   a. I can always go back
   b. A value perspective

* Those aren’t concrete answers but I come to a point I guess that I know pretty much my own personal values and how I feel about things. I know what things should be guiding my life from this point on and I’m pretty happy about this. I’ve done some therapy work or personal aspirations to get to that point. I’ve had to reexamine so many things and see them in a new light.

c. Staying here is a greater risk

* Sometimes I think for a long time I avoided taking those risks for a change then finally let the... Until I just finally hated it so much I had to take a risk. Disliked life so much or the way things were going sort of forced me to take the risk. Push through any kind of fear. And sometimes that took longer than... I wish it had been a shorter period.

d. A sense of passion, interest, and enthusiasm around change

* think as I began to let go of it, it certainly was painful at the time but I thought I was being drawn to new something that would be exciting and different

e. Significant exploration

* I was introduced to the idea of becoming a counselor while I was going to counseling. So I was really in a place where I was searching for something, but that would fit a bunch of pieces of my personality with a profession. So I sorta actively searched out how to do this. The thought process began with realizing, began with the Myers Briggs really and with the counselor. Further recognizing personality traits, interests I never keyed in on, so it became an immerging kind of identity and a new view of self was the process and the more I examined that the more it seem to fit with being a counselor, being an ENFJ. So that sorta like... the picture of myself began to fit with this idea, it began to overlap stronger and stronger. That was the thought process. It began to make more and more sense and it really was something I was very interested in. Even though I never really studied it before. But I continued to check out what the classes would be like, what working would be like, what the income ladder would be. It sounded much more interesting so that’s why I went to work.

f. Polar Swing
My first lover (male) was an artist and we moved in together and he had some projects to do and I quit my job and sort of lived a bohemian lifestyle with him and did stained glass windows with him for about a year which I did. We had a big contract to do and money although he wasn't organized. It then became a nightmare.

* my first male lover was an artist Bohemian and I don't mean far out but it seemed very far from where I was living at the time which was corporate structure life. He had many of the same family pressures to do the same stuff I had. So I related and we had a background similar but he was just staunch that he wasn't going to do it and pursue his interests come hell or high water and I thought that was pretty neat and attractive and certainly a part of me that I hadn't got to express in any kind of positive way. It became a little too far from what I was used to to sustain a relationship.

* I thought sometimes that that's why things went so extremely different. That I had to break that far away to sort of reconstruct who I really wanted to be. Which in essence is not that far away but at the time I needed that much difference to set up a sense of self I guess.

7. Making the Career Change
   a. The Change

* so I went to counseling and part of that was career exploration kind of stuff and after taking the Myers-Briggs and doing some counseling, she suggested that I consider being a therapist. Something I never even considered but it kind of made so much sense out of so many things that have interested me. Within 4 or 5 months I was in grad school and loved every minute of it.

b. Perception of the First Six Months following the change

* First six months of school was really rough because I was in a new relationship, going through therapy, all this stuff about confronting my family about all this, and starting a new school and a new career so that occupied my mind along with my own therapy work at the time really. I never second guessed it once I started classes. First couple of classes were theory classes and I enjoyed it. Took them in the summer so it was a lot of work. I tended to involve myself like checking out all the theories against what I was going through in modern therapy so that was almost an overkill at the time. I didn't need to look at my therapy from every theory. Just work the process I was doing.

c. Perception of the Second Six Months following the change

* Much more together. Less anxious and simplified. I sort of put so many parts of my life in perspective, family, relationships, career. I had a new positive way to look at what assets I could bring to the business world or to career world.

8. Identity Structures (After Age 28 and the change of careers)
   a. Perception of the Broad Cultural Context

      1. Ethnicity or other cultural identity
      2. Religion / Spirituality

* About 5 or 6 years ago did a lot reading a lot of psychological reading a lot of theological some of it was medophysical. It was real important for me to put together a thought system that worked for me and it was amazing to find literature that made more sense to me. That was much more holistic much more love and acceptance oriented. I think its very important.

b. Perception of the Context of the Family / Major Relationships

      1. Perceptions of the nuclear family

* Pretty much everyone was supportive of the idea (going back to school) except my parents and they really didn't want to hear anything about it.

* There was not a lot of interest. I didn't push (my parents) because that was the time I was
getting fed up with the relationship anyway which was very disappointing because I was getting hyped about it (going back to school).

* I confronted them about it and how preoccupied they were with their own careers and life. It was part of the pulling away from them and not seeing them...I don’t see my parents. We occasionally exchange small notes not letters. In the last four years I’ve seen them once at my sister’s wedding a year ago.

* Much earlier on I just knew it would be some type of professional whether intellectual or mental kind of capacity instead of a more physical or mechanical or merchant kind of thing. All those just described everything my father does. I totally define myself as different than that.

2. Marriage / children

3. Friends / lovers

* Now more energy shifts into the few friends that are close and less energy goes to keeping up so many other external relationships...I sort of look at it as my ability to validate myself grew I needed less of a huge sort of social structure to validate me. and be connected with.

c. Perceptions within the Context of School

d. Perceptions within the Context of Joined Organizations

e. Perceptions within the Context of Work (Vocation and Avocation)

* Particularly career wise I can see it as continuing to grow as a therapist and my practice. It all seems very optimistic at this point. Anything much more a sense of I’m going to do it my way with my life, kind of thing, instead of living out a lot of things that were fed to me previously. It seems very calm compared to the past. I know what I want to do basically how I want to go about living life. Those aren’t concrete answers but I come to a point I guess that I know pretty much my own personal values and how I feel about things. I know what things should be guiding my life from this point on and I’m pretty happy about this. I’ve done some therapy work or personal aspirations to get to that point. I’ve had to reexamine so many things and see them in a new light. I just feel very comfortable in my ability to do that and what I’ve come up with. So it seems comfortable or less chaotic than the past.

f. Perception of “Life Dream”

* in the past, I guess, the way I viewed life up until say mid 20’s, it was always to set goals, a place you think you had to arrive at, things that measure your worth and now its more of a self acceptance.

* Particularly career wise I can see it as continuing to grow as a therapist and my practice. It all seems very optimistic at this point. Anything much more a sense of I’m going to do it my way with my life, kind of thing, instead of living out a lot of things that were fed to me previously. It seems very calm compared to the past. I know what I want to do basically how I want to go about living life. Those aren’t concrete answers but I come to a point I guess that I know pretty much my own personal values and how I feel about things. I know what things should be guiding my life from this point on and I’m pretty happy about this. I’ve done some therapy work or personal aspirations to get to that point. I’ve had to reexamine so many things and see them in a new light. I just feel very comfortable in my ability to do that and what I’ve come up with. So it seems comfortable or less chaotic than the past.

* Yea, in the past, I guess, the way I viewed life up until say mid 20’s, it was always to set goals, a place you think you had to arrive at, things that measure your worth and now its more of a self acceptance.

g. Other perspective shifts

1. Reflections on life

* I don’t know if I would do all that much different. I would liked to have come to this place sooner in life. I think the best thing that would have helped was when I was in undergrad the
first time I would have checked out more career options explored more. Had a broader base of knowledge about career. That might have helped me to this place sooner I'm not sure.
* I which I had done it earlier. It's all positive, the changes. I sort of believe that all the things I been through brought me to that point and certainly help me the variety of experiences help me counsel people. Help me do the profession I chose.

2. Dynamic Synergism

3. Prosperity

* Originally it meant a lot of material things. Or at least that's the way it was prescribed to me that prosperity was lots of investments, money in the bank, nice clothes, nice car, nice house, monetary security. Those are the things you had to worry about in order to make you happy. I never really connected that too well except I certainly enjoyed those things when ever I experienced having some material things. As it has evolved, prosperity to me is more about enjoying life, doing things you like, being around people you like, being around people you connect with, doing activities. It's sort of a state of being and not something that's outside yourself.

4. Solitude

* I needed tons of time alone to study for one. Time alone to do the decision process too. I say that was one of the big changes I began to make going through a long period of not having any time alone always involved a lot or with someone. That's something I examined even in therapy. Even though I'm ...... I still need my time alone to go through certain mental processes. To enjoy certain things like reading and journaling. Journaling always played a big, big role for me in coming to decisions and working things out. Early in life it seems like I spent a lot of time in solitude as a child playing fantasy and I don't know that it was a big choice but I did it. After about probably puberty 13 it's like I totally interested in being with people or a group searched around from then on until this last career change. Now that I'm actually doing counseling its like I demand a lot more solitude just to recuperate from a days work. I don't want to have to deal with after counselling. So solitude really important I guess.

I live alone now so its pretty easy to do it. I can go home sort of veg out or watch mindless television. Struggle is been to do mindless things and not keep myself reading psychological stuff or intense novels or movies. That's been the hardest part, to do solitude in a restful or storing kind of way. Right now solitude is not that big a problem.
APPENDIX D

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF SAMPLE
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Sample Information</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Name</strong></td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
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<td><strong>Age @ Change</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Place in Family</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prior Career</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>New Career</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnicity</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Significant Personal Identification</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Home Before Change</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Home After Change</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Sample Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Name</strong></th>
<th>Susan</th>
<th>Alice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Place in Family</strong></td>
<td>oldest of 2 kids</td>
<td>oldest of 3 kids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Current Family</strong></td>
<td>divorced, 1 kid</td>
<td>married, 4 kids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age @ Interview</strong></td>
<td>55</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age @ Change</strong></td>
<td>52</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prior Career</strong></td>
<td>Social Worker and then attorney</td>
<td>Mgr. of a catering and gourmet foods retail shop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>New Career</strong></td>
<td>Seminary to become a minister</td>
<td>bed and breakfast inn owner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnicity</strong></td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Significant Personal Identification</strong></td>
<td>2 major illnesses (kidney &amp; loss of an eye), alcoholic father</td>
<td>Rural N.E. childhood, no religious affiliation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Home Before Change</strong></td>
<td>Urban, Texas</td>
<td>rural NE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Home After Change</strong></td>
<td>Urban, Texas</td>
<td>rural Vermont</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Sample Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Name</strong></th>
<th>Judy</th>
<th>Joyce</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Place in Family</strong></td>
<td>youngest of 3 kids</td>
<td>first of 3 kids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Current Family</strong></td>
<td>remarried, no kids</td>
<td>married, 2 kids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age @ Interview</strong></td>
<td>42</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age @ Change</strong></td>
<td>37</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prior Career</strong></td>
<td>Public Relations Mgr. for large agriculture co-operative</td>
<td>Journalist and then corp. public relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>New Career</strong></td>
<td>winery and restaurant owner and operator</td>
<td>Seminary to become a minister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnicity</strong></td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Significant Personal Identification</strong></td>
<td>mennonite, rural farm upbringing, born late after accidental death of brother</td>
<td>Southern Baptist, rural Texas upbringing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Home Before Change</strong></td>
<td>Urban, Midwest</td>
<td>rural Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Home After Change</strong></td>
<td>Urban, Midwest</td>
<td>urban Texas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>