

**AN INTERPRETATIVE PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF POSITIVE
TRANSFORMATION: FOSTERING NEW POSSIBILITIES THROUGH HIGH-
QUALITY CONNECTIONS, MULTI-DIMENSIONAL DIVERSITY, AND
INDIVIDUAL TRANSFORMATION**

by

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**Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy**

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Dedication

To Ira, Jr. and Jahna

May the words on these pages bring
a better life to you and generations to come.

&

To the Loving Memory of Retta Holdorf

Without your words of wisdom, love and support
this document and degree would not be possible.

Thank you, Thank you, Thank you!

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An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis of Positive Transformation: Fostering New
Possibilities through High-Quality Connections, Multi-Dimensional Diversity, and
Individual Transformation

Abstract

by

H. TIMOTHY EWING

Case Western Reserve University and the Department of Organizational Behavior have housed the Master of Science in Organization Development (MOD) & now the Master of Science in Positive Organization Development and Change (MPOD) programs for over 40 years. During the program's history, many alumni have shared anecdotal accounts of cognitive, affective and behavioral changes that positively transformed their lives toward becoming more self-aware, more self-confident and effective change agents. Given such accounts, this study explores the question: How do MOD and MPOD graduates experience positive transformation and sustain it over time? Positive transformation, within this study, refers to the long-lasting, strength-based changes in behavior, affect and cognition used to help oneself and others to flourish. Through the use of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) and Appreciative Inquiry (AI), 32

graduates spanning MOD classes 1 – 15 and MPOD classes 1 – 4 were interviewed to answer the research question.

The MOD/MPOD program shaped the interviewees' lives and changed their futures. The program's design in conjunction with the cohort's composition supported the interviewees' positive transformative experiences. The study concluded: (1) positive relationships with high-quality connections (HQCs) serve to facilitate strength-based behavioral, emotional and cognitive changes that lead to positive transformation; (2) validation and confirmation support individual transformation contrary to the disconfirmation and discrepancy theories of change; (3) positive relationships with HQCs increased interviewees' capacity to withstand conflict and experience it as a learning opportunity; (4) multi-dimensional diversity heightened and deepened self-awareness by engaging with diverse others, having exposure to diverse learning modalities, and experiencing oneself in diverse contexts; and, (5) creating generativity via positive relationships and doing work that brings value to others added meaning to the interviewees' lives.

KEY WORDS: POSITIVE TRANSFORMATION, HIGH-QUALITY CONNECTIONS, MULTI-DIMENSIONAL DIVERSITY, POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS, POSITIVE EMOTIONS, ADULT EDUCATION, ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, GENERATIVITY, VALIDATION AND CONFIRMATION

1 Introduction and Nature of the Study

For over 40 years, students have arrived at Case Western Reserve University's Weatherhead School of Management from various countries and communities to pursue a Master's of Science in Organizational Development (OD) degree. They represented diverse professions, ages, and vast life experiences. The students enrolled in the programs for reasons ranging from wanting to learn and develop OD skills to catalyzing change in their families, organizations, neighborhoods and/or starting OD initiatives wherever they are. Some students wanted to change their lives to live with purpose and intent. Others arrived not knowing what they wanted or what to expect but they felt that this educational opportunity was what they needed. Regardless of their motivation, one theme was constant. No one fully grasped how their lives as students in their Master's of Science in Organizational Development (MOD) or, the program in its current iteration, the Master's of Science in Positive Organizational Development and Change (MPOD) would positively transform them forever.

I became familiar with the MOD/MPOD program as a Ph.D. student who was a teaching assistant in MOD 15 and MPOD classes 1-5. In this role, I served many functions: supporting the students' personal and academic growth, facilitating family group meetings, observing students' behaviors and providing feedback, as well as delivering content modules. My interactions with students created opportunities to discuss their experiences in the program and its impact on them. From the students' anecdotal

accounts and my observations, I noticed patterns and heard themes of personal and professional development. They spoke of taking additional time to listen to family members and colleagues. They offered OD interventions in professional meetings that were well received and utilized. These experiences reflected a change from their pasts and many were excited by their individual positive transformation. Listening to their experiences also prompted me to reflect upon my journey.

I, too, experienced positive transformation and drew parallels to the MOD and MPOD students' experiences. I entered the Ph.D. program in Organizational Behavior in a diverse cohort of 8. We were 5 women and 3 men. Our youngest cohort member was 26 years old with the oldest member at 51. We hailed from Ohio, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Michigan in the United States along with Kazakhstan and Turkey. The glue that held us together was the desire to learn, grow and challenge one another to be better people, scholars, and members of the global human system. We committed to transporting the theories and knowledge we acquired in the classroom and applying them in our personal and professional lives. Our academic program prepared us to become critical thinkers and rigorous academicians yet our scope of learning transcended theoretical models, research methods and publishing. We had opportunities to identify our strengths and learn how to support others in identifying theirs. I honed my group facilitation, coaching, teaching/presentation and research skills. We also inherited meaningful values. For example, we were taught to conduct research and publish articles of consequence; consequence meaning researching phenomena that empowered, gave hope and/or made meaning of the human experience. Another inherited value was to

explore innovative ways to continuously enhance our knowledge through workshops, seminars and subjects that held our curiosity. As a result, I enrolled in courses at Victories of the Heart, the Omega Institute for Holistic Studies, and the Gestalt Institute of Cleveland. Each program supported deepening my learning about myself in relation to others. These opportunities afforded me the time, space and ability to deepen my self-awareness, express my emotions and to have richer, authentic, meaningful relationships with others. Each of these experiences along with my Buddhist practice influenced my roles as student, instructor, family member, facilitator, consultant, personal coach, community member and researcher. These were contributors to my positive transformation.

I realized that in many ways, my personal experience mirrored the experiences of the MOD/MPOD students. Simultaneously, I was in the course of sorting through dissertation topics when this one stirred my interest and gained momentum. Knowing my personal journey and witnessing the journeys of MOD and MPOD students that I encountered, these accounts generated numerous questions. I wondered if other MOD and MPOD graduates experienced positive transformation and whether similar patterns and themes held true for them. Also, what additional information might I discover about positive transformation if graduates were interviewed about their experiences in and after MOD/MPOD? What can be learned about the positive transformative process that enhances our knowledge about change?

One might ask, “Why use the term Positive Transformation instead of change?” The term positive is used to convey a particular type of change. Cameron’s (2003) research in Positive Organizational Scholarship posits that there are at least 3 connotations for the word positive.

1. A focus on positively deviant performance, or successful performance that dramatically exceeds the norm in a positive direction;
2. An affirmative bias, or an orientation toward, for example, strengths rather than weaknesses, optimism rather than critical communication; and
3. A focus on virtuousness and eudaemonism, or on the best of the human condition and that which human beings consider to be inherently good.

“The concept of positive possesses the attributes of the heliotropic effect. This is the tendency in all living systems toward that which gives life and away from that which depletes life – toward positive energy and away from negative energy” (Cameron, 2008).

In this study, I use positive to signify the students’ affirmative bias and orientation toward their strengths that give life in contrast to their weaknesses. In the MOD/MPOD programs, students learned to gravitate toward the self-identified aspects of themselves and their experiences that were life-giving and allowed them to use their skills, abilities, and talents to give life to others.

I, choicefully, used the word transformation in contrast to change due to types and levels of shifts that occur in the transformative process. The context for transformation made in this study, and elaborated upon in the literature review section, has relevance to the multi-layered, multi-faceted transitions the graduates (interviewees) experienced entering, progressing through and emerging from the MOD/MPOD programs. They graduated with

new self-awareness, utilizing new skills, practicing new behaviors and having the confidence and discernment to identify environments where they could thrive. Positive Transformation describes the life-giving, strength-based changes in behaviors, attitudes, affect and cognition students used to support themselves and others as a result of participating in the MOD and MPOD programs. The transformation manifested in their personal and professional lives at the conclusion of the program and into their futures.

1.1 Study Overview

This is the study overview: Chapter 1: The Introduction and Nature of the Study details how this research topic came into existence and defines the parameters of the study; Chapter 2: Literature Review defines transformation, change, and adult learning and their effects on individual change; Chapter 3: The Setting and Research Method provides a historical perspective of the MOD/MPOD programs and explains my use of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as a qualitative research method to address the research question; Chapter 4: Data and Thematic Descriptions is a detailed presentation of the data analysis along with thematic descriptions that emerged from the data; Chapter 5: Meaning and Conceptual Insights/Propositions moves the study into a meaning-making process and conceptualization of the discoveries that emerge from the data as they pertain to positive transformation; Chapter 6: Implications and Conclusion report key findings from the study, implications for future research and research limitations.

This study is designed to capture and understand the positive transformative experiences of MOD/MPOD graduates. I utilize IPA and conduct Appreciative Inquiry (AI)

interviews at the individual level of analysis to develop group level themes based on their responses. My research question is: how do MOD/MPOD graduates experience positive transformation and sustain it over time?

1.2 Researcher's Frames of Reference

A significant aspect of any study is to understand who the researcher is and identify the frames of reference that influence his or her work. In this vein, I want to offer brief personal, professional, and academic perspectives that shape my frames of reference.

Personally, I am an African American, middle-class, educated male who is Buddhist, with very strong multi-generational family ties. Living in the United States, and specifically Cleveland, as an African American I am sensitized to in-group and out-group dynamics. I often ask questions regarding whose voices are being heard and included and whose are not. Inclusion and valuing multiple perspectives are important to me. Being middle-class, educated, and male, I am aware of the privileges and access that these identities afford me. The opportunity to conduct this research and add my voice to the scholarly conversation is a privilege that I acknowledge. It also forces me to listen closely and represent the interviewees' voices with the utmost respect; honoring the privilege that has been entrusted in me. Buddhism and my multi-generational ties reinforce my group membership. My Buddhist practice reminds me of my connection to humanity. In essence, what happens to others impacts me and vice versa. This results in mindfulness about how I interact with others and leave them in my wake. Regarding family ties, my earliest recollections involve membership in my family. Whether interacting with my 103

year old great-uncle or my 5 year old niece, I have a sense of connection, family history and responsibility for shaping the next generation.

Since 1997, I have been an independent consultant with an emphasis on organizational development, diversity, inclusion and meritocracy. Via coaching, training and skills development, I assist organizations in creating safe, inclusive work environments where employees can bring their full selves to the workplace. Revealing hidden aspects of the workforce helps the individual, their teams and the organization to be more effective in reaching their goals. Work across sectors and industries both domestically and abroad have allowed me to see patterns that prevent organizations to access the full human potential of their workforce. Maximizing human potential has become my calling and discovering life-giving approaches to do so has been my mission. Learning and teaching at the Gestalt Institute of Cleveland lends another lens to support me in my personal life and professional work.

My academic frames of reference are influenced, informed, and shaped by my socialization into Case Western Reserve University's, Department of Organizational Behavior. The department is the academic home of pioneers to numerous topics that are researched and discussed in organizational behavior and organization development: Richard Boyatzis' Emotional Intelligence and Intentional Change Theory, David Kolb's Experiential Learning, along with David Cooperrider and Ron Fry's Appreciative Inquiry. These topics are embedded within our culture and are known and respected throughout industry and the academy alike. My studies, coursework, teaching

assistantships, consulting opportunities, as well as attending the World Congress on Positive Psychology have made me a student of Appreciative Inquiry and positivity.

My personal, professional, and academic frames of reference appear throughout this study. Because each researcher has a viewpoint, mine appears in the literature chosen for review as well as in the coding and meaning making assigned to the data. It is likely that another researcher from a different discipline would observe different phenomena.

Simultaneously, I have rigorously attempted to stay very close to the data in conveying the experiences of the interviewees and to be diligent in making meaning of their experiences based on the data.

2 Literature Review

In the spirit of transparency, it is important to acknowledge that the literature for this study was selected after the data collection and analysis were complete. This inductive approach allowed me to interact with the raw data as freshly as possible, without influence of earlier models of interpretation and openness to allow unexpected themes to emerge. The Literature Review in Chapter 2 is presented before the Thematic Analysis and Descriptions in Chapter 4 to offer readers a broader, academic, scholarly context in which to frame the study.

2.1 Literature

To engage this research question, I have reviewed three bodies of literature: change, transformation, and adult learning. I discuss change and transformation literatures to understand the similarities and differences between the two concepts. Within the review of the change literature, I also present Lewin's Three-Stage Model of Change as a framework for understanding and explaining how people change. The final body of literature explains adult learning theory, defines learning and presents several theories describing how adults learn.

2.1.1 Change

Many researchers have written about change and change processes as they relate to individuals and organizations (Bennis, 1973; Curtis, 1991; Quinn, 1996). My intention is to first frame what is meant by change, identify conditions in which change occurs and the roles that emotions play in the change process. I will then present two models of change to further understand this phenomenon.

2.1.1.1 What is change?

“When people say that someone has changed, they are essentially claiming that the person is different from the way he or she was” (Silka, 1989). Silka’s description of change is both neutral and non-evaluative. The change is neutral in that it does not indicate the type of change the person experiences nor who the person was before or after the change took place. It is non-evaluative in that there are no details regarding the quality or nature of the change. What can be concluded is that depending on the researcher’s epistemological stance change can be layered with characteristics and meaning that reflect the researcher’s perspective. What follows are descriptions of change that offer more in-depth definitions.

Warren Bennis (1973), in *Interpersonal Dynamics*, offered that change is generally associated with interpersonal relationships. The changes are often related to behaviors, attitudes, values and beliefs.

When referring to what is changed or influenced, we will use primarily two terms – behaviors and attitudes. Behavior refers to overt acts which

may or may not reflect covert mental processes or feelings. Attitudes blanket the whole range of covert responses from beliefs and values on one extreme, to feelings, impulses, and motives at the other extreme (Bennis, 1973).

Bennis' operating assumption regarding change was that it occurs during the interplay or exchange between individuals where beliefs, attitudes, and values shift. He defined behaviors as the actions that manifest as a result of conscious or unconscious thought processes (Bennis, 1973). Attitudes were the overarching responses from beliefs, values, feelings and impulses of the individual.

Interpersonal relationships were the crucible where change took place. "It is this process, the seeking out, processing, and utilization of information for the purpose of achieving new perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors, which we have called 'changing'" (Bennis, 1973).

Alexander and French (1946) said that change was a result of having new experiences that were different from past behaviors that the individual used to update their thinking, feelings, and behavior. "Their view of themselves may change, as may their perceptions of others" (Alexander & French, 1946). Kuhn elaborates upon Alexander's definition.

Advances sometimes are made within an existing paradigm, at other times the paradigm shifts. So, psychological change occurs in these ways as well. Sometimes behaviors, thoughts, and feelings are altered within an existing framework, at other times our whole organizational system changes (Kuhn, 1962).

These perspectives derived from the field of psychology. Alexander operated from the premise that new experiences were the catalyst for change that helped to shift ones self-perceptions and their perceptions of others. Kuhn (1962) labeled these changes as

paradigmatic shifts; shifts in the current paradigm or the move to a completely new paradigm. Both psychoanalysts contended that change was behavioral, cognitive and affective.

Robert Quinn, an organizational behaviorist, defined change and identified two types with regard to impact and longevity: incremental and deep change. Incremental change is described as limited and reversible. This is to say, that if the change did not materialize then the individual could revert to his/her old ways or patterns (1996).

Incremental change usually does not disrupt our past patterns – it is an extension of the past. Most important, during incremental change, we feel we are in control (Quinn, 1996).

He goes on to describe the differences between incremental and deep change.

Deep change differs from incremental change in that it requires new ways of thinking and behaving. It is change that is major in scope, discontinuous with the past and generally irreversible. The deep change effort distorts existing patterns of action and involves taking risks. Deep change means surrendering control (Quinn, 1996).

Incremental and deep change have fundamental differences: their relationship to past thinking and behaving, reversibility and scope of the change, along with ones willingness to relinquish control during the change process. Quinn said that achieving deep change is a difficult process and in today's world of constant change that deep change is not necessary every day but we may need to do it more frequently (1996).

Based on the above definitions, it can be concluded that change happens in the context of interpersonal relationships whereby cognitive, behavioral, and affective shifts result in altering paradigms; either existing paradigms or newly embraced paradigms. The change

may be incremental in reference to the amount of change that takes place. With incremental change, there is no disruption or discontinuation of past behaviors. The change is temporary and if the proposed change does not take hold the individual has the power to revert to old behaviors. Conversely, deep change is more difficult to obtain and requires new ways of thinking and behaving. The depth, scope, and magnitude of the change make reverting back to old behaviors difficult. The change could result in updating cognition, affect and actions; shifting one's self-perception or perception of others.

2.1.1.2 Conditions for Change to Occur

Above, there are descriptions and explanations as to what change is along with multiple facets of change. Below are details describing the conditions where change occurs, followed by change frameworks and a model of change.

Becker (1964) concluded that change occurs as a result of situational adjustments. These are changes that individuals make to take on the characteristics required of them in their current situation.

The process of situational adjustment allows us to account for the changes people undergo as they move through various situations in their adult life. But, we also know that people exhibit some consistency as they move from situation to situation. Their behavior is not infinitely mutable, they are not infinitely flexible (Becker, 1964).

The changes could be superficial, short-term, or immediate. The quality that makes the changes long-lasting and transferable across situations is the level of commitment bestowed on the change by the individual. Kelman (1961) suggests that "the level of commitment is highest when the adopted behavior is chosen, explicit, and publicly

known.” Becker sees that the situations provide the conditions and dictate the type of change to occur. The change is identified as the adjustment and the long term adoption of the behavior is the commitment. Becker’s model centers on behavioral change.

George and Jones (2001) offer a perspective on intra-psychic change. They believe that change occurs when there are inconsistencies or discrepancies with existing mental, physical and emotional schemas. The inconsistency with the pre-existing schema prompts the desire to reduce the discrepancy. The prompts trigger an emotional reaction that sets the process of individual change into motion. The emotional reactions ultimately led to a change in individual perceptions, interpretations and behaviors.

I take from these models that various experiences prompt change to occur. When faced with situations that require new and/or different behaviors, thoughts or feelings, a signal is triggered that indicates a need for change from one’s pre-existing schemas. The discrepancies evoke an emotional response that lead to the change and the changed behavior is sustained based on the usefulness of the behavior in multiple situations. This translates into the individual’s commitment to the behavior. The emotions generated to manage the discrepancy play different roles during the change process; roles that extend from providing information, motivating behavior, accessing cognitions, to emotion being the target of change itself (Greenberg & Rhodes, 1991).

2.1.1.3 The Roles Emotions Play During Change.

Below, I describe three roles that emotions play in the change process: reaction to discrepancies, as a connection to needs and goals, and a phenomenon to be dealt with.

Emotions as a reaction to discrepancies are encountered when the discrepancy is personally relevant to one's personal well being, goals or objectives (Frijda, 1988; George & Jones, 2001).

In this way, emotions are functional in that they provide signals that there is a situation that is personally relevant and in need of attention. The signaling function is complemented by the motivational implications of emotions; emotions motivate cognitive activity and behavior to deal with emotion-triggered situations (Frijda, 1994).

The emotional reaction becomes a key signal that there is a situation that requires the individual's immediate attention (George & Jones, 2001). "The emotion puts them in a state of preparedness to deal with the discrepancy and mobilize cognitive processing and behavior" (George & Jones, 2001). When engaged, the individual can begin to identify their emerging emotions that can consequently lead to a connection to their needs and goals.

Greenberg & Safran (1987) argue that emotions, in the face of change, are primary biological responses that inform us of our needs, basic concerns, and facilitate problem-solving. They also believe that if the individual is unaware of their emotions and is unable to identify or name them that a therapeutic relationship will help to increase their awareness. I would offer that therapeutic relationships are one of many ways for

increasing one's awareness. Once awareness has been heightened, the individual is ready to problem-solve. The third role that emotions play is in addressing change as a phenomenon with which to be dealt.

With change as a phenomenon to be dealt with, there are two points to consider emotions are discrete and each emotion functions differently in the change process (Greenberg & Rhodes, 1991). The idea that emotions are discrete reminds us that we are not always aware of our emotions or how they may impact us at any given moment; our motivations, behaviors, etc. Second, if each emotion functions differently in the change process, it is important to deal with each emotion as a unique phenomenon with its own characteristics (Greenberg & Safran, 1987). Each emotion possesses its own motivational properties and phenomenology. Managing emotions and the phenomenon surrounding them work as steps taken to facilitate change.

Conscious and unconscious emotions impact our change process. Whether the emotions are in response to our internal discrepancies or not, the emotions become indicators of our needs and goals that connect us to these desires. Heightening these emotions and awarenesses sets us on a journey of addressing the emotions and taking steps to facilitate change.

2.1.1.4 Change Frameworks

There are multiple theoretical frames to help better understand change and its processes. The next section presents change frameworks along with a change model to help better

understand this phenomenon. Bunker and DeLisle (1991) offer six theoretical change frameworks.

1. Socratic-Rational Framework
2. Behaviorist Framework
3. Power-Coercive Framework
4. Systemic Framework
5. Normative-Reeducation Framework
6. Social Psychological Framework

Below, I briefly describe each framework.

The Socratic-Rational framework (Chin & Benne, 1978) assumes that people are logical, rational beings. Supporters of this framework argue that people will change their behavior with new information that they receive. “People would be expected to adhere to these rules if they believe it is in their self-interest to do so” (Bunker & DeLisle, 1991). Within this framework, education is seen as the conduit to change because it is assumed that correct information will enlighten people and lead to enlightened behavior.

The Behaviorist Framework is non-cognitive. According to London (1975), “through the use of shaping and modeling one can aim for precision in establishing the behaviors that will work for the desired effects.” Behaviorists strive to provide examples to modify and/or change observable behavior. Therefore, attention is focused on the external manifestation of the change process which is not an indication of cognitive or affective shifts. This framework is action based.

The Power-Coercive Framework utilizes power and coercion to implement change (Chin & Benne, 1978; Hornstein, Bunker, Burke, Gindes, & Lewicki, 1971). Change occurs

when people are forced to change. “Compliance on the part of those with less power to the plans, directions, and leadership of those with greater power is less likely to lead to private acceptance on the part of the individuals involved, though it may happen” (Bunker & DeLisle, 1991). There are clearly identified roles within this framework. Those with greater power impose the change and it is expected that those with lesser power will comply with the directive.

The Systemic Framework is aimed at individuals changing within a system. The operating assumption is that individuals change their behavior in response to forces largely outside of their consciousness (Bunker & DeLisle, 1991; Minuchin, 1974; Napier & Whitaker, 1988). In order for the individual to change, the system must change. Choices become possible when the individual is made aware and is knowledgeable about the system and how it functions.

The Normative-Reeducation Framework emphasizes the power of disconfirming information at the beginning of the change process (Chin & Benne, 1978). Disconfirmation becomes the catalyst for seeking new knowledge and information. This framework acknowledges the strong impact of socio-cultural norms, our commitment to these norms and patterns of behavior, and how they can help, hinder, and influence our change processes (Bunker & DeLisle, 1991). Information serves as a catalyst for change. The individual’s active participation in their reeducation reflects the effectiveness of their change process. An emphasis of this framework is the individual’s involvement in developing and implementing their change process (Bunker & DeLisle, 1991).

Last, the Social Psychological Framework originated from Kurt Lewin's (1958) Three-Stage Model of Change: unfreezing, change, and refreezing. This framework, anchored in consistency theories from the field of social psychology (cognitive dissonance theory, Festinger 1957; balance theory, Heider 1958; congruity theory, Osgood & Tannenbaum 1955) assumes that people are motivated to change their thoughts and attitudes when they find themselves in a state of imbalance and therefore strive to restore balance and an internal sense of harmony (Bunker & DeLisle, 1991). There are several assumptions associated with this framework. First, it draws attention to the fact that an individual must unlearn pre-existing paradigms in order to change. Second, there is the belief that tension generated when there is a gap in the individual's knowledge galvanizes the change process (Leavitt, 1978). Finally, Lewin believed that there is a need for psychological safety in the environment to reduce threat, remove barriers, and create an environment for the change to take place; because of the emotional nature of change (Leavitt, 1978; Schein & Bennis, 1964).

Of the six frameworks used to describe change, the Social Psychological Framework best aligns with the operational and theoretical underpinnings of the MOD/MPOD programs. Lewin's model is outlined below.

2.1.1.5 Model of Change

Kurt Lewin's Three-Stage Model of Change explains how people change. The model is discussed with Bennis' mechanisms that provide detail explaining how each stage functions. A fundamental tenet of Lewin's model is summarized by Frederick (Fritz)

Perls' Paradoxical Theory of Change (Beisser, 1970). Perls, founder of Gestalt therapy, posited that the more one stays the same and accepts who she or he is, the more the individual is then able to change, because the change is grounded in acceptance of self that has been resisted or not embraced (Beisser, 1970; Crocker & Phillipson, 2005; Seltzer, 1984; Yontef & Fuhr, 2005).

Change does not take place through a coercive attempt by the individual or by another person to change him [or her], but it does take place if one takes the time and effort to be what he [or she] is – to be fully invested in his current positions... He [Perls] believes change does not take place by 'trying,' coercion, or persuasion, or by insight, interpretation, or any other such means. Rather, change can occur when the patient abandons, at least for the moment, what he would like to become and attempts to be what he [or she] is (Beisser, 1970).

Perls believed that time dedicated to increasing an individual's self-awareness around feelings, thoughts, behaviors and processes was a precursor to change taking place. This principle is central to Stage 1 of Lewin's model.

2.1.1.5.1 Lewin's Three-Stage Model of Change

Lewin's model provided the foundation for the Social Psychological Framework. His work influenced the field of psychology as well as organizational development. I mention this because several individual and organizational change models were developed as an extension and/or modification of his work. The three stages of the model are unfreeze, change and refreeze. They are overlapping processes that encompass changes in beliefs, attitudes, values and behaviors that are central to the change process (Bennis, 1973). The model positions individual, group and/or organizational change within the context of social psychological processes that require a rejection of prior learning that is replaced by relearning or new insights (Wirth, 2004). I am working at the individual unit of analysis.

The table below explains each stage and the mechanisms involved in the change process. The mechanisms are a product of Schein's (Schein & Bennis, 1964) elaboration on Lewin's model.

Table 1: Lewin's Three-Stage Model of Change

| |
|---|
| Stage 1: Unfreezing - creating motivation to change |
| Mechanisms: a.) Lack of confirmation or disconfirmation |
| b.) Induction of guilt-anxiety |
| c.) Creation of psychological safety by reduction of threat or removal of barriers |
| Stage 2: Change – developing new responses based on new information |
| Mechanisms: a.) Cognitive redefinition through |
| 1. Identification: information from a single source |
| 2. Scanning: information from multiple sources |
| Stage 3: Refreezing – stabilizing and integrating the changes |
| Mechanisms: a.) Integrating new responses into personality |
| b.) Integrating new responses into significant ongoing relationships through reconfirmation |

(Bennis, 1973)

2.1.1.5.1.1 Unfreezing

The first stage, unfreezing, is created by a motivation to change; “making something solid into a fluid state” (Lewin, 1958). Stimuli in the environment indicate to the individual the need to shift from fixed, pre-existing thoughts, feeling and/or behaviors to different ways of being. The gap creates an imbalance that triggers the need for change. The individual then searches for cues or sources of information to signify the types of changes needed (Bennis, 1973). The individual is made aware of his/her pre-existing paradigm before attempting to shift. Schein associates three mechanisms to the unfreezing stage.

1. Disconfirmation or lack of confirmation refers to incongruence (intra-psychic, interpersonal, or environmental) that invalidates the individual's self-image. These conditions lead to feelings of dissatisfaction; a feeling of being out of alignment with the

surroundings. People are unlikely to change unless they sense a need for it. 'Embracing change typically means that people are dissatisfied with the way things are' (Burke, 1994). The imbalance created from the incongruence prompts the need for change.

2. The induction of guilt-anxiety emerges from the gap between pre-existing paradigms that are not working and what is desired. There is a feeling of inadequacy (Bennis, 1973). Schein (1999) says that there is 'survival anxiety' as in 'I will not survive in some sense unless I change.' He describes guilt as 'I will not achieve my own ideals and aspirations unless I change' (Schein, 1999).
3. The creation of psychological safety is achieved by seeking support in the form of reassurance, helping to bear the change and being assured that the outcome is more palatable than the pre-existing paradigms (Bennis, 1973). The individual must believe that moving will not bring them humiliation or a loss of self-esteem (Burke, 1994; Schein, 1987).

2.1.1.5.1.2 Change

The second stage, change, takes action that would alter an individual's social system from its original level of behavior or operation to a new level (Lewin, 1958). Schein (1987) called this stage "cognitive restructuring;" helping people to see things differently and to react differently in the future. The assimilation of new information results in cognitive restructuring (Bennis, 1973). "Once there is sufficient dissatisfaction with the current conditions and a real desire to make some change exists, it is necessary to identify exactly what needs to be changed, if not already articulated in the first stage" (Wirth, 2004). The individual gathers information from multiple sources to process and integrate in order to achieve the desired change. Schein discovered two mechanisms that contribute to the change.

1. Gathering information from a single source, he referred to as identification. The single source is an individual with whom the person changing has an emotional connection. The individual likely imitates the actions, attitudes, or beliefs of someone recognized as being different from what was previously deemed acceptable (Wirth, 2004). Particular attention is paid to the individual regardless of the content. There is identification with a new role or way of being. The individual strives to see another point of view and imagines it for him/herself.

2. Scanning the environment for new and relevant information is how the individual gathers cues from multiple sources in the social environment. There is no emotional response to the information or the sources; attention is paid to the content regardless of the messenger (Bennis, 1973). The individual engages in “trail-and-error learning” whereby the individual tries new behaviors and sees how others respond.

2.1.1.5.1.3 Refreezing

Refreezing involves establishing a process that will make the new level of behavior “relatively secure against change” (Lewin, 1958). This stage requires integrating the change - taking the new, changed way of behaving and making it fit comfortably into one’s total self-concept. “It involves practice – trying out new roles and behaviors, getting feedback, and making adjustments until the new way of feeling, acting, and thinking is reasonably comfortable” (Schein, 1987). The refreeze mechanisms focus on personal and social integration.

1. Integrating new responses into personality centers on how well the individual will be able to integrate new behaviors and attitudes into one total self-concept (Burke, 1994). The actions become habitual and consistent with other behaviors, values and beliefs of the individual (Wirth, 2004).
2. Integrating new response into significant ongoing relationships through reconfirmation refers to whether or not the new behaviors will fit and be confirmed by significant others. This testing would involve openly and actively engaging with others about the new ways of doing things (Burke, 1994).

Unfreezing and changing are necessary for change to occur. Refreezing makes the change sustainable (Bunker & DeLisle, 1991).

The change model first identifies the importance of understanding the individual’s concept of self before embarking on change. I use concept of self to signify one’s self-perceptions, actions, behaviors, and feelings. Inner discrepancies created by what the individual wanted or what the environment required of them created inner dissonance that prompted the change. Gathering information about oneself from others as well as learning new ways of being was the next stage in the change process. Lewin suggested

gathering this information from others and groups surrounding the individual; an organic process. Finally, once the change took place, finding people and places to embody the changed self was an integral component of sustaining the change.

2.1.2 Transformation

Wilfred Bion (1965) identified transformations as the changes individual's encounter regarding an emotional experience toward a progressive series of mental realizations.

Transformation occurs in moving the unconscious part of an emotional experience into consciousness. "Transforming here would be changing the form but not the fundamental nature or invariant aspect of the emotional experience" (Bion, 1965). In this way, the individual is able to receive new, private and personal knowledge about his/her emotional life.

Bion developed a process for understanding transformations. He first determined that the mind develops in order to think about the emotional experience. He then developed a pathway to explain how these thoughts evolved from sense impressions of emotional experience to further mental processing. "From there he defined the steps of 'mentally digestive transformation'" (Grotstein, 2005). This term referred to how the emotional experience was processed, comprehended and integrated into a new experience. Bion believed that there were 4 types of transformation:

1. *Rigid-motion transformations* which involved little alterations and corresponded directly to past events that may now be relived
2. *Projective transformations* as it relates to Melanie Klein's "projective identification" in which a person engages in the ego defense

mechanism projection in such a way that their behavior towards the object of projection invokes in that person precisely the projected thoughts, feelings or behaviors (Bronstein, 2002).

3. “*Transformation in hallucinosis*” only occurred in psychosis
4. “*Transformation in O*” was the beginning and end of the transformational cycle. It moves from the ineffable, to awareness raising, linking it to knowledge transitioning into the states of Absolute Truth and/or Ultimate Reality

(Grotstein, 2005).

Gaining a better understanding of transformations and how they occur, Bion, a psychoanalyst, developed mathematical equations representing relationships between the emotional experience, the client and the analyst involved in the transformative process.

A recognizable pattern in Bion’s 4 types of transformations was that the first three types were deficit based. *Rigid-Motion Transformation* was based on dwelling on a past experience or with little movement from the experience. *Projective Transformation* dealt with projections that are placed on others which reflect the thoughts, feeling and behaviors of the individual in projecting the ideas. And, *Transformation in Hallucinosis* occurred when psychosis was present. It is in “*Transformation in O*” that Bion described a process that involved the unarticulated emotional experience, awareness and consciousness raising, and the role that knowledge plays in meaning making and progression to the newly transformed state.

Norbert Freedman (1985), a psychoanalyst, added another dimension to the description of transformation. He says that it signifies not just change, but that something is “transformed.” The changes are said to assimilate into new structures. In the psychoanalytic

field, transformation is the reorganization of psychic structures along development lines” (Freedman, 1985).

Transformation is the essential process of structure building. In this new structure, the previously un verbalized experiences are given verbal representations and the unintegrated sensations and perceptions now appear in imagistic form within the ambiance of the therapeutic hour. With the attainment of symbolic equation, the transformation process is complete. The change observed fulfills the definition of a restructuralization in psychoanalytic terms. Not only do we observe a psychic organization at a higher level of structure, but we also find that the affects and drives are progressively carried by more complex vehicles of representation (Freedman, 1985).

In Freedman’s conceptualization, un verbalized experiences when articulated, accompanied by sensations and perceptions become images. This described the transformative process. Yet, emotion and drive were motivators propelling the psychic reorganization. Freedman identifies emotion and drive as necessary factors in the sense-making process. The change in the affective environment is the most important reorganization because the psychic and emotional energy are restructured.

“Psychoanalytic transformations, by virtue of the intimacy of the contact, tend to move toward higher levels of reorganization” (Freedman, 1985). In addition, Freedman purports that transformation of the mental structure involves dialectic conflict. He sees the conflict in progression from thesis to antithesis to synthesis.

In more traditional language, in any mental organization there is a predominant wish—the thesis; within the context of an object relationship, there inevitably arises a latent unconscious, unacceptable wish—the antithesis; and, the ensuing conflict, arising at the point when a wish is not gratified, contributes to the finding of a new object and a new symbol—the synthesis (Freedman, 1985).

The conflict exists from having a predominant, unconscious want that becomes conscious and unfulfilled which leads to the search to fulfill the desired want. McCaskill (2008)

states that personal transformation occurs when an individual has a fundamental dissatisfaction with life. Basic personal assumptions and their sources must be addressed before one can begin the transformation journey through learning, reflection, transitions and other processes that result in a lasting change of mind, emotions, perceptions, identity and self-change (McCaskill, 2008).

Freedman and McCaskill's statements align. They posit that internal dissonance prompts the transformative process. The vacuum created from the internal dissonance reorganizes structures and consciousness (McCaskill, 2008). Transformation is seen as a paradigmatic shift involving a number of sequential stages of consciousness, moving to a leap of transcendence resulting in personal commitment grounded in action (Taylor, 1989).

Based on this research, transformation is a cyclic, multivariate process. The process includes making the unconscious conscious through awareness building. The characteristics that contrast transformation from change are in the emotional experiences and motivators that propel the learning, reflection, and restructuring needed for long lasting change.

Personal transformation was found to be messy, mysterious, and multi-dimensional. It is not possible to be in control of this process and people can only cooperate with it at best. Personal transformation is an art, not a science; it requires practice and patience, not perseverance and perspiration. It looks more like dance than a decathlon (Ferendo, 2005).

Ferendo goes on to say that at the heart of personal transformation is paradox. He believed that transformation occurred more as a result of attitude than action, awareness rather than activity.

Surrender and curiosity do more to cultivate transformation than willpower and intelligence. Ultimately, it is life that does the transformation and it is life that creates the experiences that allow us to have a change in consciousness (Ferendo, 2005).

The foundation of transformation is change; changes in beliefs, attitudes and values. Yet what these researchers suggest is that transformation deals with unprocessed emotion that the individual strives to process, comprehend, and integrate. Much of the need for transformation stems from inner dissonance or an emotional conflict. Finally, Freedman offered that intimacy created in the psychotherapeutic relationship facilitated reorganization resulting in a transformation. I ask, did the intimacy created within the MOD/MPOD community - interpersonally or at a group level – lead or contribute to the interviewee’s positive transformation?

The review of Adult Learning literature revealed yet another layer of the complexity surrounding positive transformation.

2.1.3 Learning

Understanding how adults learn is fundamental to this study in that the research participants were adults and they reported their positive transformation occurring while enrolled in their MOD/MPOD programs. In this section, I articulate the basic tenets of adult learning.

2.1.3.1 Adult Learning Theory

Malcolm Knowles (1970, 1975, 1977, 1980) was said to be the pioneer of adult education. Many of the characteristics that we ascribe to adult learners derive from his work. His primary premise was that life experience differentiates adult learners from children and teenagers. Life experience provided reference points for exploration, new application and new learning for adults. Below are Knowles' (1970, 1975, 1977, 1980) characteristics of the adult learner:

1. Adults are autonomous and self-directed. They need to be free to direct themselves.
2. Adults have accumulated a foundation of life experiences and knowledge that may include work-related activities, family responsibilities and previous education. They need to connect learning to this knowledge/experience base.
3. Adults are goal-oriented. Adults usually know what goals they want to attain in their educational experience.
4. Adults are relevancy-oriented. They must see a reason for learning something. It has to be applicable.
5. Adults are practical. They may focus on an aspect of learning that is most useful to them in their lives.
6. Adults need to be shown respect. They want to be acknowledged for the wealth of experiences they bring into the classroom.

These characteristics describe who the adult learner is; simultaneously I find it relevant to describe what learning is.

Learning has been defined in numerous ways, including the following:

Learning involves change. It is concerned with the acquisition of habits, knowledge, and attitudes. It enables the individual to make both personal and social adjustments. Since the concept of change is inherent in the concept of learning, any change in behavior implies that learning is taking place and has taken place. Learning that occurs during the process of change can be referred to as the learning process (Crow & Crow, 1963).

Learning is a change in the individual, due to the interaction of that individual and his environment, which fills a need and makes him more capable of dealing adequately with his environment (Burton, 1963).

Learning is a change in human disposition or capabilities, which can be retained and which is not simply ascribable to the process of growth (Gagne, 1965).

David Kolb (1984) defined learning as the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience(s). He offers four critical aspects of the learning process.

1. Emphasis on the process of adaptation and learning in contrast to content and outcomes
2. Knowledge is a transformation process that is being continuously created and recreated versus an independent entity to be acquired
3. Learning transforms experience in the objective and subjective forms.
4. We must understand the nature of knowledge to understand learning, and vice versa.

Jarvis (1987) stated that all learning begins with an experience and real learning begins when a response is called for in relation to an experience. If the individual is unchanged by an experience, Jarvis questions whether real learning takes place. He proposes that new experiences must be experimented with, evaluated, reflected upon and reasoned through for the most effective change to occur. He goes on to say that post experience behaviors gauge if change has taken place, to what degree and its breadth. Finally,

Mezirow (2000) defines learning as the “process of using a prior interpretation to construe a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of one’s experience as a guide to future action.”

Based on these researcher’s findings, the definition of learning falls into one of two categories: learning as change and learning as a response to an experience. Learning as change refers to the acquisition of habits, knowledge and attitudes gained as a result of

interacting with ones surroundings (Burton, 1963; Crow & Crow, 1963; Gagne, 1965).

Learning as a response to experience was interpreted by Kolb (1984) as knowledge being created as a product of transforming an experience. Jarvis defined learning as the response to an experience.

Change, Transformation and Adult Learning are theoretical perspectives that position the study in a larger body of research literature. Chapter 3 provides a brief history of the MOD/MPOD programs and explains the Research Methodology used to approach the research question.

3 Setting and Research Methodology

Chapter 3 provides a program description and history of the MOD/MPOD programs. I also describe Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) - the qualitative research method used to answer the research question: How do MOD/MPOD graduates experience positive transformation and sustain it over time?

3.1 Program History and Description

What is Organizational Development?

Organization development is an effort (1) planned, (2) organization-wide, and (3) managed from the top, to (4) increase organization effectiveness and health through (5) planned interventions in the organization's 'processes,' using behavioral-science knowledge (Beckard, 1969).

Organizational Development is 'a long-term effort to improve and organizations problem-solving and renewal processes, particularly through a more effective and collaborative management of organization culture – with emphasis on the culture of internal work teams – with assistance of a change agent, or catalyst, and the use of theory and technology of behavioral science including action research' (French & Bell, 1978).

These definitions have permeated the Organizational Behavior and Organization Development fields for over three decades. In fact, it was the desire to create change agency – that is to develop individuals with the knowledge, skills and capabilities to perform a systemic diagnosis of organizations, create a strategic plan for improvement and mobilize resources to carry out the change effort – which led to the development of the Master of Science in Organization Development (MOD) program at Case Western Reserve University.

Prior to MOD's inception, OD interventions were facilitated within the Department of Organizational Behavior. Faculty members led mostly Cleveland-based, OD projects with Ph.D. student support. Change came when a local business leader met with OB faculty members and proposed a master's level program that would teach working professionals how to facilitate OD interventions. This interested faculty members and work to create the program began (Essex, Boyatzis, Carten, & Holdorf, 2001; Neilsen, 1984).

The question at hand was: What would a master's degree in OD entail? Faculty members were surveyed to answer this question and a three page list became the basis for the curriculum. In 1975, it was decided to have an 18 month program. The teaching faculty gathered after each session to decide the next content areas that would enhance or address students' learning needs. The design also included two T-Group meetings, an Isms Lab, and a Career and Life Planning session. T-Groups, or Training Groups, were leaderless groups intended as an exercise in awareness building. The MOD program began with a fall T-Group and another taking place in December. Isms Labs (focusing on racism, classism, sexism, etc.) took into account how privilege and disadvantage impacted the students' MOD experiences and influenced their organizational interventions. The Career and Life Planning sessions focused on life after MOD. They explored potential options that were available and how to plan for a future in the OD field. One and half years later

the format changed from meeting on alternate Saturdays and Thursdays to evening courses on Mondays and Wednesdays (Ewing, 2011).

The 1980s marked a significant period in the program's evolution. The MOD program gained its stride. Having run several classes the faculty learned that the program curriculum clustered into three distinct areas (Ewing, 2011).

Part 1 focused on the student's increasing self-awareness and gaining interpersonal skills. It also disrupted the students' notions of school. There were several experiential activities and exercises to prompt students learning. One activity requested students to draw a lifeline describing their life's journeys that led them to the MOD program. Another activity asked students to develop a personal board of directors and another required a written autobiography. Work within small groups was used to develop better interpersonal skills (i.e. effective communication and feedback skills), learn about group dynamics, and group development.

Part 2 of the program focused on OD theories and approaches. Faculty members taught courses in their areas of expertise preparing students for consultancies within organizations. Here students began to understand and integrate OD theories and principles.

The final third of the program was dedicated to applying and incorporating what they learned to actual organizations. Local clients were selected from the Cleveland

community as project sites. The students selected new groups to do an on-site, interview feedback process: to have an entry meeting, develop a verified interview protocol based on the clients' needs, interview the organization's employees, analyze the interview data and report the information back to the client. During this process, conflict would generally arise. Issues of privilege, power and social identity would surface and need to be addressed. These dynamics led to the creation of the Isms Labs. To continue their learning process, insights learned in the team project were applied to individual field projects. In essence, the first half of the program was an explosion of newness. The second half was dedicated to integration.

The year 2004 marked another turning point in the program's history (Ewing, 2011). Until this point, the program reached and recruited applicants within a 90 mile, and sometimes 120 mile, radius of Cleveland. The program was reconfigured to reach a larger applicant pool. The three most significant changes were the name, structure, and philosophy of the program. The name officially became the Master of Science in Positive Organization Development and Change (MPOD).

The MPOD program is a relatively new response to continuing change in the world that emphasize an increasingly strategic focus on relational and human factors, and striking a balance between economic well being, social responsibility, and environmental sustainability. The curriculum attempts to remain on the cutting edge of change leadership, organizational transformation, and societal benefit. As such, it draws heavily from positive organizational scholarship, positive psychology, appreciative inquiry, emotionally intelligent leadership, and sustainable enterprises. The program uses experiential learning and action research methods that are wrapped in an intensive, applied, and highly interactive cohort design (Cohen, 2009).

Structurally, the program remained 18 months in length and moved to (6) 1-week residencies. This format allowed for international applicants to participate in the program as well as recruit from a larger US population outside of Ohio. The philosophical change harnessed the positive, appreciative, stance emerging from faculty expertise and research, i.e., Positive Organizational Scholarship, Positive Psychology, and Appreciative Inquiry. The program also embraced Emotional Intelligence and Sustainability as these needs increase for organizations to be successful.

3.2 Research Method

3.2.1 Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)

IPA (Smith, 1996; Smith & Eatough, 2006; Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009; Smith, Jarmon, & Osborne, 1999; Smith & Osborne, 2003) is a qualitative research method with a focus on how people make sense of their major life experiences. The aim of IPA is to explore in detail how participants are making sense of their personal and social world. “It originated and is best known in psychology but is increasingly being picked up by those working in cognate disciplines in the human, social, and health sciences” (Smith, et al., 2009). It attempts to explore personal experience and is concerned with an individual’s personal perception or account of an event, as opposed to an attempt to produce an objective statement of the object or event itself (Smith & Osborne, 2003). IPA has three theoretical underpinnings that support research: phenomenology, hermeneutics, and idiography (Smith, et al., 2009).

The phenomenological philosophy strives to understand the complexity of lived experiences which is an “unfurling of perspectives and meanings” (Smith, et al., 2009). It provides a rich source of ideas about how to examine and comprehend lived experiences. From this perspective, I sought to understand the positive transformative experiences of MOD and MPOD graduates. I wanted to know how they explained their processes and made sense of it in their own words, from their own experience. In addition, I wanted to understand how they sustained their transformation over time. IPA is a method for hearing the interviewees’ experiences and allowing them to elaborate upon these experiences. IPA encourages interviewees to discuss any relevant information that supports details conveying their experience (Smith et al., 2009).

The second theoretical underpinning comes from hermeneutics, the theory of interpretation. IPA is concerned with examining how a phenomenon appears and the researcher is implicated in facilitating and making sense of the phenomenon along with the interviewee (Smith, et al., 2009). In this regard, IPA utilizes a double hermeneutic process in that the researcher makes sense of the participants, who make sense of their own experience (Smith & Osborne, 2003). “The participant’s meaning-making is first-order, while the researcher’s sense-making is second-order” (Smith, et al., 2009). Within the data analysis, it was my task as researcher to convey the interpretations that interviewees made regarding their transformative experiences. The second tier of analysis was my analysis, categorization, and development of themes from their experiences; my interpretation of the interviewees meaning-making.

The third theoretical underpinning is idiography: concerned with the particular. IPA is idiographic at two levels: (1) the first level addresses IPA's commitment to the particular in the sense of attention to detail that manifests in a thorough, systematic, and deep data analysis; (2) the second level addresses the commitment to understanding how particular events, processes and relationships are understood from the perspective of the particular people in the particular context (Smith, et al., 2009). I managed the idiographic nature of IPA in the data analysis and reporting the interviewees' experiences.

There are 7 steps of data analysis involved in IPA. An outline of the steps accompanied by a description follows.

3.2.1.1 Data Analysis

I generated 3 data sources from the interviewees: my handwritten notes, the digitized recordings and the interviewee transcripts. My handwritten notes and the recordings were transcribed in their entirety and compared with the recordings for accuracy. I ventured from the IPA style of analysis by using the qualitative software program, NVivo. "The use of a computer is not intended to supplant time-honoured ways of learning from the data, but to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of such learning" (Bazeley, 2007). I made the decision to use NVivo to manage, code, and cluster the large volume of interview data. I followed IPA procedures using the NVivo software program. There are 7 steps in IPA data analysis (Smith, 1996; Smith & Eatough, 2006; Smith, et al., 2009; Smith, et al., 1999; Smith & Osborne, 2003). Steps 4 and 5 were performed out of

sequence to accommodate the large sample size, as will be discussed later in this section.

The 7 Steps to IPA data analysis are:

1. Reading and re-reading the interviews
2. Initial noting
3. Developing emergent themes
4. Searching for connections across emergent themes
5. Moving to the next case
6. Looking for patterns across cases
7. Writing the analysis

I read and re-read one transcript while listening to the digital recordings. I kept notes/memos regarding any thoughts, ideas, or insights that emerged while reading the transcripts.

There are no rules about what is commented upon and there is no requirement, for example, to divide the text into meaning units and assign a comment to each unit. Your aim is to produce a comprehensive and detailed set of notes and comments on the data (Smith, et al., 2009).

During my second read of the transcript, I proceeded sentence-by-sentence, line-by-line coding the concepts that emerged from the data. I repeated this process with each interview transcript. Some codes were similar and others differed from the previous interview(s). Writing notations helped me attempt to bracket one interview from the next. Of course, I was influenced by what I previously read. Nonetheless, attempts to bracket allowed new themes to emerge. Steps 4 (searching for connections across emergent themes) and 5 (moving to the next case) were performed out of sequence. This allowance was made to accommodate the large sample.

In this case, the emphasis may shift more to assessing what were the key emergent themes for the whole group. Here it may be the case that one identifies emergent themes at case level but holds off the search for patterns and connections until one is examining all the cases together (Smith, et al., 2009).

In conducting the analysis, I moved from case to case before searching for connections across emergent themes. I read each of the interviews, naming and categorizing phenomena through close examination of the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). I developed 937 codes in total; note that some sentences received multiple codes representing different concepts.

Faced with organizing the data for easier management and conceptual clarity, I gathered the data, codes and memos into three distinct groupings according to when the concepts discussed took place. Interviewees spoke of their experiences in three different timeframes as prospective students, enrolled students, and post-graduates. The prospective student phase (P1) was identified as the period of time when the interviewees first learned about the MOD/MPOD program and decided to apply. The enrollment phase (P2) was marked by the interviewees' start of classes until graduation. The last phase, the post-graduate phase (P3), represented the interviewees' lives from graduation until present.

Once grouped into phases, I reread the codes and their quotes to verify that indeed the codes represented the concepts and were placed in the appropriate phases. It was here that the emergent themes began to materialize. "The themes were the recurring patterns of meaning (ideas, thoughts, and/or feelings) throughout the text" (Smith & Osborne, 2004). By verifying the codes and re-reading my memos, I was able to identify themes. I grouped the codes into clusters by themes that I called categories. The categories

described and provided details about the interviewees' positive transformative experience.

As a researcher one is drawing on one's interpretative resources to make sense of what the person is saying, but at the same time one is constantly checking one's own sense-making against what the person actually said. As an adjunct to the process of clustering, it may help to compile directories of the participant's phrases that support related themes (Smith & Osborne, 2003)

I was able to use NVivo to quickly reference the participants' phrases that supported the specific themes. As more themes emerged, I searched for connections across emergent themes. They were subdivisions of the category with common yet differentiating characteristics. Some, but not all, subcategories had properties. I defined properties as subdivisions of the subcategory that nuanced or further explained the subcategory. Each component of this matrix was supported with quotes taken from the interview transcripts.

“For these larger studies, measuring recurrence across cases is important” (Smith, et al., 2009). In IPA, there are no rules dictating how recurrence should be recorded. Therefore, in this study, I counted recurrences based on the number of times an interviewee spoke of a particular theme. The recurrences appear in table form in the beginning of each phase presented in Chapter 4: Data and Thematic Description.

Writing the research analysis for a large sample size involves summarizing, condensing, and illustrating what the researcher identifies as the main themes (Smith, et al., 2009).

This stage engaged the double hermeneutic process while moving from the idiographic to the group level of analysis. Smith et al. (2009) say that the writing focuses on the interviewees thoughts and experiences at a group level stating what “most of the

interviewees reported” or “many of the interviewees reported.” The group level statements are supported by individual quotes that represent the themes within the categories. The narrative is written in a way that links themes to categories and links categories to the overall phenomenon. “There should be a sense of the narrative developing across both the whole of the paper and indeed the different sections of the paper” (Smith, et al. 2009).

The next question one might ask is, “Who did I interview?”

3.2.1.2 Demographic Data

My target was to recruit and interview 32 people representing 19 MOD and MPOD classes. I sent invitations to participate (Appendix A) to 77 graduates. I focused on alumni who worked and/or lived in the Cleveland, Ohio area. I made this choice with the goal of having face-to-face interviews with each research participant. My challenge was to develop a system whereby I would have full representation from MOD classes 1-15 and MPOD classes 1 - 4. I approached the task by clustering MOD classes 1-5, 6-10, 11-15, and MPOD classes 1 – 4 into 4 groups. (MPOD 5 was omitted from the study. They were recent graduates. This variable excluded them from having post-graduation experiences needed to address questions regarding their sustained transformation.) I successfully recruited 8 interviewees from each cluster. With 5 classes represented in each cluster, 3 classes had double representation. Eight interviewees from 4 clusters provided the 32 interviewees needed for the study. The sample represented: 22 females and 10 males; 4 educators, 12 self-employed (3 non-OD entrepreneurs & 9 OD

consultants), 3 retirees, 8 workers in private industry, 4 workers in social services, and 1 government worker. This sampling was designed to provide representation from the 15 MOD and 4 MPOD classes encompassing the history of the program.

3.2.1.3 Protocol

“Probably the best way to collect data for an IPA study and the way most IPA studies have been conducted is through the semi-structured interview” (Smith & Osborne, 2003). The semi-structured interview acknowledges and encourages the attempt to establish rapport with the interviewee, ordering of questions is less important, the interviewer is freer to probe interesting areas that arise, and the interviewer can follow areas of interest or concern during the interview (Smith & Eatough, 2006). I developed a 6 question Appreciative Inquiry (AI) protocol (Appendix C) based on Cooperrider, Whitney and Stavros’ (2003) 4-D Model to collect the interview data. The 4-D’s are:

1. Discovery – identified the best of “what is”; in this phase interviewees shared stories of their successes and accomplishments – their core life-giving factors;
2. Dream – amplified the interviewee’s positive history and potential by sharing stories of when they saw their personal and professional transformation in action;
3. Design – focused on long-lasting change by identifying the interviewee’s positive core; they provided exemplars of their positive transformation; and,
4. Destiny – revealed the interviewee’s preferred future by focusing on new images of the future where their positive transformation was engaged and helping others.

3.2.1.4 Data Collection Procedure

Once the interviewee agreed to participate in the study, we arranged a place to meet. The interviewee determined the location because people feel most comfortable in places of

their choosing (Smith & Osborne, 2003). The interviews were conducted in their offices (14), in coffee shops (12), in libraries (3), and some interviewees requested that we meet in their homes (3). I met the interviewees, introduced myself and provided background information regarding my interest in the topic and the origins of the study. They signed consent forms (Appendix B) and we proceeded with the interview. The consent forms also contained a question requesting permission to digitally record the interviews. All of the interviewees agreed. Their consent to record was important because their transcribed interviews provided the data needed for coding. “Our view is that it is not possible to do the form of interviewing required of IPA without tape recording” (Smith & Osborne, 2003). The interviews ranged in length from 55 minutes to 1 hour 20 minutes. I took handwritten notes in addition to the recording to capture what was said. The interviews were conducted over a 3.5 month period.

4 Data and Thematic Descriptions

The interview data were divided into three distinct stages of the student's experience distinguished by the demarcation of time. The prospective student phase (P1) was identified as the period of time when the interviewees first learned about the MOD/MPOD program and decided to apply. The enrollment phase (P2) was marked by the interviewees' start of classes until graduation. The last phase, the post-graduate phase (P3), represented the interviewees' lives from graduation until present. This chapter presents the interview data along with the thematic descriptions.

4.1 Prospective Student Stage (P1)

The interview data for P1 derived primarily from three interview questions:

- When did you first learn about the MOD/MPOD program?
- What was happening in your life that attracted you to MOD/MPOD?
- When you entered, what do you remember hoping to gain most as a participant in the program?

The responses to these questions are organized into six categories: previous exposure to organizational development, others seeing my potential, wanting something new, recruitment, personal development, and unknown outcomes.

Table 2: Prospective Student Phase (P1) Categories & Response Rates

| Category | # of respondents | % response rate from the total sample |
|----------------------------|------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Previous exposure to OD | 3 | 9% |
| Others seeing my potential | 4 | 12% |
| Wanting something new | 26 | 81% |
| Recruitment | 16 | 50% |
| Personal development | 19 | 59% |
| Unknown outcomes | 5 | 16% |

4.1.1 Previous exposure to OD

Some interviewees previously participated in some workplace OD experiences prior to entering the MOD/MPOD programs.

I was working in a training development organization and we had a very robust program at the time of change, using management development and developing participative management back then and we were doing quality circle work and I really liked facilitating groups. I really liked development work and it gave me a fundamental understanding of what I was doing. It gave me a lot of tools, it gave me a lot of concepts and understanding; it gave me language (Interviewee #6).

In addition, previous coursework in either their undergraduate studies or other graduate programs exposed the students to OD.

I had been in a program similar to that in undergrad for a semester that was experimental studies with some people out of the University of Colorado and I just felt like, wow, this is what I always wanted to do and didn't know it (Interviewee #4).

Previous exposure to OD introduced the interviewees and increased their interest in the OD field and therefore, the MOD/MPOD program.

4.1.2 Others seeing my potential

Receiving feedback from others regarding the interviewees' ability to work with others, to facilitate change, and/or their belief that the interviewee would excel in the OD arena functioned as an attractor to the program.

Oh you really have the gift for facilitating and it was like what are you going to do, if you really have the gift. And I was getting other feedback in other ways, but it was kind of a way of reinforcing my desire to do organizational developmental stuff (Interviewee #9).

The plan has always been that I would go to graduate school and then succeed [my manager] and she would move into a corporate role only I ended up succeeding her right at the beginning of the program and I was really kind of freaked out because I was made the head of human resources for this division, Training and Development. I was sooo young and I look back and oh my goodness, the guy who was the division president was a Harvard MBA and he felt that he saw enough in me that he thought I was definitely worth the risk is the right word and that I would make a change and actually he was a very good mentor to me as well (Interviewee #31).

The director with the agency I was with was just an incredible guy. He really supported me. He wrote a wonderful letter of recommendation for me for the program just a wonderful letter saying I was his best employee ever and that I was very supportive, very nurturing. He felt that I might be able to help the agency that was struggling at the time and he spoke to the executive directors. He also thought it was an opportunity for me to grow the agency (Interviewee #30).

In many ways, others seeing the students' potential was the catalyst needed to acknowledge their affinity for OD and to enroll in the program.

4.1.3 Wanting something new

In this category, interviewees described how they wanted their lives to go in new directions. They spoke of having experiences that prompted them to explore their life

options. Their exploration led them to investigate the MOD/MPOD program. Wanting something new separated into two subcategories: personal and professional.

Personally, interviewees wanted to engage in meaningful work and wanted to find ways of integrating their knowledge and skills.

I think that I really did not know what I wanted to do with my career. Because I had been in the retail sales environment and finally figuring out, through my bachelor's program, that that really wasn't the environment that I wanted to be in. At that point, I was really struggling with skill set types of things but morally, I just knew that that wasn't the environment for me (Interviewee #13).

This interviewee, via her work experience, understood that her current work was not satisfying her nor utilizing her skill set which, upon hearing about the MOD/MPOD program, helped her bridge her skills and abilities within a possible career. Others saw the program as an opportunity to bring their skills together. "When it started coming to me what it is [the MOD/MPOD program], I saw it as an opportunity to bring together a lot of what I realized I already knew but didn't have a framework for it" (Interviewee #17). Working with others and making a difference was another personal driver for the interviewees. In these instances, interviewee's spoke of wanting to work toward a larger cause that positively impacted others' lives. "I knew I wanted to do work with people, and help them to make a difference and I didn't know at all how" (Interviewee #17).

Finally, some interviewees found the program as an outcome of their pursuit for happiness.

After 5 years, I thought 'I feel like I'm done.' I had to do more. As I became the director, I had to do more of the work that I liked a lot. Figuring out budgets, I had to stay in the office. I had to deal with a lot of

employee issues. It just became that I was in the office all of the time and I did not like that. It became a very small world all of a sudden. But, then I started to think about what else would I like to do? So, I think it was just that whole process of looking at what's making me happy, feeling like I can work, stimulating a lot of change and I'm not good with being bored stuck in an office all day. So I think those were just all the factors (Interviewee #23).

Personally, the interviewees wanted to use their skills and abilities in ways that brought them happiness. Having meaningful work that unified their skills, talents and abilities spoke to the personal aspect of wanting something new. Qualities that explain the professional dimension of wanting something new were: career change, career needs, credentialing, wanting to do OD work, and wanting recognition.

One segment of the interviewees wanted to gain skills toward becoming internal change agents. "I would have a degree that would help me become a consultant, a sales training professional or training professional and with that I would be a career change agent" (Interviewee #4). The other segment wanted to become external consultants.

It was [the] MOD program that served as the catalyst for me to leave the corporate environment and really restructure myself, go from being a corporate doer to exploring my abilities as a scholar and a change management practitioner. That came out of MOD (Interviewee #12).

Some interviewees wanted a master's degree for credentialing. This is to say, the interviewees felt that they were in stages of their professional lives whereby having a master's degree in OD would advance their careers. "I wanted to have the title behind my name, the credentials that would make me more marketable because I felt that what I did intuitively was aligned with what I was getting out of the course but I wanted to also be able to say that I also studied it and gained a lot more than I ever expected" (Interviewee #16). By having a master's degree, they hoped to advance their careers.

In P1, many interviewees had limited knowledge of OD yet desired to learn more and to do more OD work as an outcome of wanting something new. They hoped to gain a better understanding of how to effect change; specifically, to effect change within organizations.

I didn't have [an] organizational development background or good theory or anything about it. I didn't have anything specific to say, 'This is what I want to do.' It just was very, very intriguing (Interviewee #10).

Career needs and wanting recognition are the remaining areas within the professional dimension of wanting something new. The interviewees felt that pursuing this degree would help them meet their career needs given their emerging job responsibilities (Interviewee #27, Interviewee #16, Interviewee #4). Others wanted recognition for offering a different set of skills that was not present within their organization. "Being narcissistic, I just wanted recognition at [his place of employment] that I was a good person that had something different to offer. So, it was really pretty narcissistic" (Interviewee #2).

4.1.4 Recruitment

How the interviewees learned about the OD program and what appealed to them about the curriculum were captured in this category. They learned about the program in one of three ways: attending an open house, from the media, or via referrals. The interviewees were unsure as to how they obtained the open house information but it served as a vehicle for learning more about the OD program (Interviewee #4). The media sources were the radio and magazine articles (Interviewee #25, Interviewee #4, Interviewee #6). Referrals

to the program were a common recruitment stream that played a significant role in the interviewees learning about and entering the program.

Faculty members, inadvertently, recruited when they presented information in the interviewee's workplaces (Interviewee #24). Executive Education courses were an additional form of faculty recruitment. Interviewees learned about OD theory and reinforced their learning experientially.

Our organization began participating in the executive education program and I think it was in 2003 and what we did was develop a partnership and I believe it was forty seats we ended up purchasing. One of the first sessions I personally attended was the AI [Appreciate Inquiry]. It was a very powerful session for me in terms of listening to his description of what AI was and how it can be used, how it can influence how people see things (Interviewee #28).

Exposure to OD via faculty research in executive education courses was a method of recruitment that enticed interviewees. Another approach was via faculty members meeting with prospective students and discussing the OD program.

I don't know if someone told me about it cause we didn't have email back then. When I first started the Engineering program, and I'm not sure if someone told me about it... I'm really not sure. When talking with [faculty members] and I told them my interest and [one] mentioned the MOD program (Interviewee #9).

Faculty member to prospective student contact was effective in linking the student's wants with what the program offered. Another example of faculty involvement was from outside of the university. A faculty member at another institution referred an interviewee to the OD program. "I had a business undergrad. It was my Aunt who was chair of an organizational behavior department who said I might want to look at an organizational behavior program and that Case had an excellent one and I should try it and she gave me

some names to follow-up with” (Interviewee #15). Faculty members played an important recruitment function in peaking the interviewees’ interest.

Interviewees also spoke with alumni about the program. Their discussions positively influenced their decisions to enroll.

A friend of mine went through MOD 6 and kept calling saying I think this is a program you should consider. He knew I was looking for a career change and knew I was looking for a Master’s Program and I was really seriously considering going into adult education with a focus on training and development (Interviewee #17).

Again, I actually was downsized from that organization and I went through the actual facility that helped you when you were downsized and the person that was helping me asked if I had heard about the OD program at Case. She said she had just completed the program and that it was great and that everything I was describing was OD (Interviewee #13).

The alumni shared personal experiences and first-hand accounts detailing the benefits of participating in the MOD/MPOD program. Their concrete examples appealed to the interviewees.

4.1.5 Personal Development

This category captures what the interviewees hoped to gain by participating in the program. Their responses were clustered into 3 subcategories: self-development, knowledge acquisition, and practical intervention skills.

Interviewees described entering the program because they felt that it was time to invest in their personal growth and development.

So, I think for myself, personally, the decision to undertake the program, which I considered it to be something I just did for me. I’ve done a lot of

family, my kids are all grown-up. I spent years of money and time on everybody; this is something I just want to do for myself. That was probably the beginning of the transformation, starting to look at doing things for myself and then my own individual growth within that in time (Interviewee #25).

Self-development and personal growth led interviewees to the program. Yet, the quality of life afforded them upon completion of the program was also a motivator.

I think of this as much a personal need as a professional need to grow that attracted me to this position. There seems to be a very strong parallel of my personal with my professional growth that if I remember what I'm telling you. I don't know how to capture that in a few words but that was my need and motivation and what drove my motivation to success is recognizing at age 40 that I needed to do some things for myself to ensure higher quality of life, and I'm not talking about material things (Interviewee #26).

Self-development, personal growth, and achieving a higher quality of life accounted for the types of development the interviewees hoped to obtain as a program participant.

Another facet of personal development was acquiring knowledge to become an OD practitioner. Understanding systems and how they worked described the type of knowledge acquisition the interviewees desired. They felt that understanding the how organizations functioned as a system was an integral component of initiating change. For example, how to manage conflict (Interviewee #8), understanding how organizations plan and make decisions (Interviewee #24), and understanding how parts of a system interconnect and align (Interviewee #21).

One interviewee felt frustrated because she could see her department in turmoil and didn't know how to address the situation but felt there was something that could be done.

I don't know that there was necessarily a whole lot going on in my life but probably just my frustration of being where I was. You know, being able to see a bigger picture of what our department could be in a larger system and not being able to do anything about it. But, it was also attractive because with my social work background, understanding systems and understanding your clients in larger systems of their world, systems of therapy and so forth, and so it wasn't a stretch to understand the possibilities (Interviewee #10).

The interviewee understood systems thinking from her social work background. Yet, she was frustrated from not knowing how to effect change within her organization.

Understanding how to effect change was particularly relevant to interviewees because many did not have OD backgrounds. "It was a hope to have a better understanding of how to effect change; how to effect change within an organization. I didn't have organizational development background or good theory or know anything about it" (Interviewee #10). Therefore, understanding how to navigate through an organization and choosing which interventions would be most effective was a desired outcome of the program. As well, due to previous exposure to AI and EI (Emotional Intelligence), there was a desire to understand more fully how AI and EI could be used as approaches to change.

Again, the techniques of AI and the EI, those certainly, getting a deeper understanding and appreciation both for myself and how I can help others in terms of coaching and so forth in development. I think all those parts of it going in helped me to decide, did I want to do this, but [also] to see how I could apply it (Interviewee #28).

The desire to understand how to effect change was with the intention to build knowledge toward becoming effective change agents.

Gaining practical skills was the final characteristic of personal development the interviewees hoped to achieve. As one interviewee expressed, “I had some clear expectations about wanting to learn more about leadership and motivating people and changing organizations” (Interviewee #30). Some saw their organizations moving them toward change management and the interviewees entered the program wanting to learn how to effectively implement change.

Other interviewees desired practical skills in business management. These were individuals who sought the program to add managerial skills to their repertoire. “Having figured out I wanted to be a manager/leader, I wanted to do it in a particular way - humanistic, probably in profit, I definitely needed some softer stuff, not straight MBA stuff” (Interviewee #29). Another interviewee, the founder of a non-profit organization, wanted to use her degree to run the organization (Interviewee #1).

4.1.6 Unknown Outcome

Students were attracted to the MOD/MPOD while also having little to no awareness of why they were interested in the program or what to expect from it.

I got into a program that didn't let me know what I was getting into, but it was good. Once I got into the program I realized I had no understanding of what I was getting into or what the program was about. Cause I did not come from a corporate environment or have an OD background into the program (Interviewee #17).

OD was a completely new area of knowledge.

So, I did not really know anything about OB prior to joining the program. I was a social worker. A lot of people in the program had experience with OB and knew what it was. Some were pioneers in the Cleveland in the area at TRW etc. - implementing early organization development and

again they were all maybe 15 – 20 years older than I. I was sort of... I was a fish out of water in the program I was in my early to middle 20's. The interesting thing was that because of my background I had a whole set of skills they were teaching (Interviewee #19).

Both quotes highlight that the interviewees enrolled in the program not knowing what to expect or what OD was as a discipline.

The interviewees were attracted to and entered the program for a multitude of reasons.

Previous exposure to OD in their workplace and/or in academic settings provided interviewees a glimpse into the OD field and they were inspired to want more.

Colleagues' feedback acknowledging the interviewees' successful facilitation and/or change management skills encouraged interviewees to pursue OD. Exposure to various recruitment streams, wanting something new in their lives along with personal and professional development were each contributing factors in the interviewee's pursuit of the program. In addition, there were some interviewees who were unaware of OD until they began their coursework. Interviewees enrolled in the program having diverse hopes, desires, motivation, and levels of awareness of OD. Yet, they each enrolled in their MOD/MPOD programs and embarked on a collective journey.

4.2 Enrollment Phase (P2)

The second division of data coincides with the enrollment phase of the program (P2) bracketed from the start of coursework until graduation. Seven categories emerged from the coded interview data reflecting how the students came to achieve positive transformation during P2. The categories, listed from highest to lowest response rate from the total sample, were: new knowledge, personal growth, diversity, gaining practioner skills, membership in a learning community, faculty involvement, and support for self and others. Each category had a unique set of characteristics that I will define and elaborate upon in this section.

Table 3: Enrollment Phase (P2) Categories & Response Rates

| Category | # of responses | % response rate from the total sample |
|------------------------------------|----------------|---------------------------------------|
| New Knowledge | 27 | 84% |
| Personal Growth | 25 | 78% |
| Diversity | 15 | 47% |
| Gaining Practioner Skills | 14 | 44% |
| Membership in a Learning Community | 13 | 41% |
| Faculty Involvement | 11 | 34% |
| Support for Self and Others | 10 | 31% |

4.2.1 New Knowledge

This category encompasses new concepts, ideas and/or ways of thinking that were introduced to interviewees throughout their MOD/MPOD program. As one person

expressed, “I think the OD program and the study within the program, the whole learning process, elevates the experience to a higher level so you can think beyond just the day-to-day function. But, you can also translate it into the bigger picture for the organization and the industry” (Interviewee #25). The interviewee expressed how acquiring new OD knowledge facilitated her ability to think systemically. New knowledge also reinforced the concept of “self as an instrument of change” – meaning how the MOD/MPOD program participants would influence the systems where they worked and what talents, skills and abilities they would employ to support a OD intervention. “I think it [MOD] really helped me learn how to think systemically, critically, comparatively and in that mess it helped me start to work with myself, understanding me in the ways which allowed me to begin to look at me in relationship to others, which was very challenging and difficult but powerful” (Interviewee #23).

Interviewees were introduced to EI, AI, and strength-based thinking in their MOD/MPOD programs. These approaches reframed the interviewees’ orientations and opened their minds to new possibilities. They saw themselves through different lenses then explored how to support others from their new perspectives.

So, the first part was the individual, learning about self, then we got to Richard and he taught us about coaching, about being empathetic, about being passionate, intentional change theory. So, now not only do we know more about ourselves but we were able to help other people along with this as well (Interviewee #14).

When introduced to AI, the interviewees began to see positive possibilities for themselves and for the world around them.

I would say that it [MOD] opened my awareness to myself, to the Appreciative Inquiry community, locally, nationally and internationally in

a way that I could not have imagined. That awareness showed me what was possible and when I had the vision of what was possible, I also had the great benefit of the support and feedback that I had gotten through MOD that kept telling me, 'you can do this, go for it.' I didn't have that before I started (Interviewee #7).

In seeing expansive possibilities for themselves, the world, and how to support others, there also came a greater understanding of people and processes.

I don't think that there was any book I read that didn't give me new insight, didn't help me become more educated in understanding people and perspectives. Every single thing that we did was about learning about people processes, perspectives, and the importance of experiences. Our slogan in my class was trust the process. People do not do a change unless they go through a process (Interviewee #3).

Their introduction to individual and system-wide change challenged interviewees to think about themselves, their interpersonal relationships as well as their roles in multinational organizations. Interviewees were faced with decisions about change and where they would be most effective (Interviewee #18).

4.2.2 Personal Growth

The characteristics of personal growth were clustered into 3 areas: self-awareness, self-confidence and personal change. Personal growth was the personal insight, development and change interviewees experienced in the MOD/MPOD program.

The interviewees felt that by raising their individual consciousness around how they felt, what they thought, and how they behaved that these characteristics would be fundamental to their increased self-awareness.

One of the things that I did learn, not the thing I learned most, was about the way that I processed information. I found that I'd say things internally and I need to process through them before I come to an answer and I

found that people found that off-putting when I'd get some feedback from my 360 (Interviewee #10).

The MOD/MPOD program helped students gain a better understanding of themselves by seeing who they were, identifying their strengths and areas development.

It's [MOD] been mind opening and painful. It makes you look at yourself, which is both painful and mind-helping but then it would have to be something after, like being totally aware of those ugly things; all those things we don't like or those things that we want to change (Interviewee #14).

Another student discovered an area of developmental and found its self-defeating nature.

"I probably recognized in myself I had a tendency towards dictatorial behavior, and that that wasn't going to serve me (Interviewee #29). Interviewees also reported learning in dyadic relationships, in groups (family groups and T-Groups) and by writing their autobiographies.

Family groups were a collection of eight or so students randomly selected by faculty members to provide an alternative learning environment smaller than the classroom experience. For example, for students who may have been reluctant to speak in the large group or needed added time to process information and discuss concepts presented in class, the family group was intended to provide opportunities for more intimate learning. Consequently, the family group also provided a venue for intra- and interpersonal learning. "Early experiences with the family group and things like that, I very quickly became aware that there was a lot to learn about me" (Interviewee #29).

Because the family group was together for the duration of the program, it provided opportunities for group members to watch each other's behaviors and provide feedback

(Interviewee #32). The family group provided a safe haven for experimentation (Interviewee #16). This is to say that the family group allowed students to test and try new behaviors, to see how their behaviors were received and note how they impacted others (Interviewee #8). It was in these moments that the feedback often led to personal insights and/or epiphanies (Interviewee #32). The family group was also a support system when individuals were faced with struggles or hardships.

For example, having the family group, if you were struggling and had some challenges you know that they were there to support you and back you, and really give you support in terms of how can they help you to stay in the program (Interviewee #13).

Family group members helped students through difficult times. The intimacy, support, feedback, and insights gained from being a family group member aided in the interviewees' positive transformation. T- Groups were an additional vehicle for personal growth.

T-Groups, or training groups, were leaderless groups designed to inform students about how they functioned without an appointed leader. The first T-Group typically took place during the earlier stages of the MOD program and was a multiday activity. Some found the T-Groups to be a transformative experience and a lot was gained (Interviewee #27). It was a great awakening (Interviewee #19).

And the last thing I think that is critical, and if that's a wish list I'm going to say it - because I could care less about budget or time or whatever - that the T-group be brought back because I know you don't have that now but I think that was a fundamental part of the experience. You're there and you're not going anywhere and you have people there to support you and guide you through these moments where you have really huge opportunities to push out and do this (Interviewee #23).

T-Groups were intense experiences of personal growth. When coupled with self-reflection and support, the interviewees found T-groups beneficial to their transformation. Writing an autobiography was another prong to the interviewees' personal growth process.

One of the first assignments given to interviewees was to write an autobiography detailing events in their lives that led them to the master's in OD program. When finished, they shared their autobiography with two classmates for feedback. The author selected one reader and the second was randomly selected. The assignment and sharing their stories with classmates enhanced their personal learning.

I think the biggest transformation for me was writing the autobiography. It was the hardest paper I ever had to write in my life. It's so hard to write about yourself. After writing the autobiography, having the insight from the other two people that read it and the feedback that they gave, and one person gave me feedback and like I said before being so family oriented and how I support friends and family, one of the things that came out of the feedback that someone told me was that because you are who you are and because of your morals and values and how you value family, she asked me the questions, 'if you are struggling and having challenges, does anyone ever ask you how are you doing?' I had never looked at it from that perspective and do you know, still, after writing the autobiography and receiving the feedback from the person who read it, she was exactly right (Interviewee #13).

Writing about their lives, having others read it and the reader posing questions and noticing patterns added another layer of insight and depth to the interviewees' self-awareness. "It's funny because when we did our biography in the program we had to have a couple other people read it and one of the comments that was made to me was that I was a scrapper, you know, that I would scrap to get things done" (Interviewee #5).

Having another student make observations about her process, she became more aware of her resourcefulness for accomplishing tasks.

These multi-faceted approaches heightened the interviewees' self-awareness.

It's one of those things that is so interesting that you have a week spent away at that time in a group encounter then you have your family group and each class to some degree, the discussion, the exercises all led to helping to understand to some degree why you are saying what you are saying, seeing what you are seeing, and to this day I guess I am better able to frame out why I see things the way I do (Interviewee #4).

The autobiography, the family group, self-assessments, discussions and T-group experiences each helped the interviewees learn about their strengths, weaknesses and offered insight for a narrative explaining why they behave in the ways that they do.

Self-confidence was achieved when the interviewees become aware of who they were, identified their strengths then utilized them along with other skills to implement and execute OD interventions.

One aspect of self-confidence derived from being positively reinforced for who they were when they entered the program (Interviewee #14).

I knew what I could bring, I could bring myself. Coming in I knew who I was, I think, and just really connecting with that group of people [MOD students and faculty] on that level. I also knew that at the end when I started wrapping things up, I knew what I was getting out of it, I knew where I was going with it (Interviewee #10).

Or, as another interviewee phrased it, the program reinforced who he was and he learned how to apply his strengths in business.

MPOD was like a reinforcer for me of what it is to be a human being because I remember when going through it a lot of it talked about personal development and being great with people. And, I already knew I was that way going into the program so a lot of the stuff on understanding and listening that was just reinforced through MPOD because I could see how those things are important. It allowed me to see how those things are important in business (Interviewee #14).

Learning about themselves and having a willingness to incorporate their new insights, interviewees gained confidence in advocating for themselves in the group (Interviewee #14). Other students began feeling confident enough to stretch beyond their comfort zones and trying on new behaviors (Interviewee #8).

Identifying their strengths and developing self-confidence resulted in students' taking more risks. One student worked full-time while going through the OD program. The interviewee discussed how self-confidence gained in the MOD program also impacted her approach to work. "I had a lot more confidence and I stretched more and I did things that I hadn't done or even thought about before" (Interviewee #30).

The words are basically powerful to me and our teams, message, the purpose was, it was to be able to try new things. It shows up every day in ways where it has helped me interpersonally and even through my job, as well, with relationships (Interviewee #14).

External consulting projects in the MOD/MPOD programs built interviewees' skills and self-confidence to practice their skills outside of the classroom.

First of all, it gave me, over time, time to really build up my confidence we had an all day retreat that we had to plan, we had individual field experience. All of those were about building up my skill set and knowledge base in real life situations that made my confidence go through the roof (Interviewee #23).

I think because we worked in a group so much in the MPOD program I spent more time developing ideas and presenting them even within the group environment so I feel fairly comfortable doing that. I think that

probably contributed to my feeling a little bit more satisfied with what I was doing (Interviewee #25).

Reinforcing who they were, practicing and developing OD skills, and the ability to take more risks all contributed to burgeoning self-confidence that supported their personal growth.

The remaining attribute of personal growth was personal change. Personal change spoke to how the interviewees' behaviors changed in congruence with OD values and beliefs.

The program promoted a mindset that invited students to think about how they would be in the world (Interviewee #22). They were encouraged to be mindful in their interactions and to think about the impact that they have on others.

One of the things I learned from MPOD is be the change you want to be and I don't think you can effect change in someone else until you truly step away and that you always put that mirror in front of your face first (Interviewee #14).

Interviewees were encouraged to incorporate what they learned in the classroom into how they lived their lives. "I think it was the appreciation; the program organized, materialized something I think which was budding in me to shift from a complete left brain thinker to getting in touch with right brain thoughts, relationships, and my spiritual side" (Interviewee #2). The interviewees call to action was to live with more heart – relational being more aware of themselves and others.

4.2.3 Diversity

Diversity emerged from the data in three distinct ways: individual aspects of diversity, global/contextual diversity and diverse learning experiences. These were experiences that

provided opportunities where the interviewee gained greater self-awareness via interactions with others different from themselves, in different contexts, and having diverse learning experiences. In this category, interviewees shared experiences where diversity enhanced their self-awareness that contributed to their positive transformation.

Individual aspects of diversity were described as dimensions of diversity that classmates represented and presented during P2. References to age, gender and professional work experiences and occupation had the highest number of occurrences in the data. Some differences created cohesion while others were sources of conflict; each type resulted in learning.

It was certainly a diverse group of students in my MOD class. We had people from 25 years old to people in their 60's. There was a doctor, a lawyer, there were a lot of bankers for some reason, a lot of HR people, people who worked in manufacturing. There was just such a wealth of people to learn from (Interviewee #3).

In this instance, age, occupation and professional experience enhanced the student's learning by offering different viewpoints from diverse sources. Gender representation also influenced their learning. "So, at that time a lot of opportunities were opening up for women. You would be interested in knowing this that in my program in MOD, there were 36 people in the program and only 6 females. It was very, very different. Most of the men in it were already accomplished in OD" (Interviewee #19). When this interviewee enrolled in the program, OD was an emerging field and most of the initial work was facilitated by men. In a class dominated by men working in the OD field, the interviewee's knowledge about OD and its applications was increased.

An interviewee shared an account of how she and another classmate continued to have conflicts caused by what she believed were their differences.

We varied in different ages and different cultures, ethnicities, and experience in terms of career. And there was one gentleman that was middle aged, a white male, he and I definitely had challenges. I think it was definitely because of the gender and generational differences that we both shared. He had stereotyped me as young, building my career, and didn't look to me to give insight from our coursework and practicum experience based on the work that we were working on. He made a comment to me one day and talked about how shocked he was that I was able to present to a client, because based on his observation of me he didn't think that I would be able to pull it off. I think the situation there was he didn't even think about how I may view things and how I learned things. I think he automatically went into 'she should behave and act the way that I think she should behave.' And so, we definitely had major challenges throughout our full program because we almost worked together the entire time (Interviewee #13).

Later, the interviewee explains that at the end of their program they were able to discuss how their differences were impacting their perceptions of each other.

They used their conflict around differences to support their individual learning.

The diversity of the MOD/MPOD student body contributed in creating a nurturing, supportive learning environment for the interviewees. The inclusive atmosphere welcomed people and created a safe, comfortable space to learn.

I think my fellow students were interesting, supportive, although very diverse and the faculty was also. There was no intimidation, no power play. Those were all good things to have in an environment that is nurturing and therefore trust develops within that. And with that atmosphere, for me, it fostered more rapid, coming out of my shell, using the learning and applying it to life (Interviewee #26).

They were "diverse people with diverse notions" that fostered the feeling of belonging (Interviewee #8).

Although interviewees enrolled in the program for different reasons and from different backgrounds, their differences allowed individual growth and development to take place (Interviewee #3, Interviewee #24, Interviewee #26).

So I learned to appreciate a lot of different perspectives and understand that people from different walks of life who grew up much differently than I did also had something important to say; also had experiences to share that would help me grow (Interviewee #3).

It was as though by confronting others differences the interviewees were better able to understand themselves while also understanding the other person if there was a willingness to listen.

Interviewees also found that global diversity experienced during their international trips broadened their perspectives. Students articulated how they were able to gain a greater understanding of the international use of their skills during their trips to Belgium and the UK (Interviewee #22, Interviewee #32). One interviewee explained that it was in Europe that the theory became practical (Interviewee #32). “During the trip, it become obvious that the similar concepts, challenges and organizational dynamics existed in European organizations as did in the United States and some of the approaches to addressing them were similar” (Interviewee #7). The international trip broadened the interviewees’ scope of possibilities regarding how and where their OD skills could be used by allowing them to experience a company outside of the U.S. (Interviewee #16). “This was life-changing” (Interviewee #7).

Finally, within the category of Diversity, the vast array of diverse learning experiences supported their positive transformation. The international trip was one example of their

diverse learning experience. Their external consulting projects were another. These were projects where interviewees practiced their OD skills in organizations. “The small group projects that we were on were really important for testing our skills in applying the book learning about people in systems” (Interviewee #26). “The external projects allowed the students to practice their skills and develop as consultants with supervision” (Interviewee #15). The added benefit for some interviewees was practicing their skills in industries, organizations and roles that were unfamiliar.

Diversity was evident in the demographic composition of the MOD/MPOD students, as experienced during their international trip, and the variety of learning contexts and experiences provided within the program. The interviewees expressed how diversity increased their self-awareness and helped them to understand how their OD skills could be used in multiple settings across industries, domestically and abroad. Each diverse situation provided additional opportunities for the interviewees to see, understand and value how different experiences provided new insights about themselves. Diversity as it relates to self-awareness supported the interviewees’ positive transformation.

4.2.4 Applicable Practitioner Skills

Gaining practical skills, as stated in P1, was a desired and achieved outcome for the interviewees. The interviewees valued learning skills along with practicing and applying them within the program. There was a direct application for the skills learned in the program to be used afterward.

Having the ability to test the skills during the program was valuable because I had done this for eons, on the job training, and the fact that I

now had the skills and theory that I could apply to real life and then the classic toolbox where I could go back and say, this is my client and this is something that I could apply. My approach is not to say, 'ok guys here's some theory we're going to apply to this' but I apply it without letting them know (Interviewee #5).

The curriculum and design of the program allotted time for students to learn methods and approaches, to hone their skills and work with project teams inside of organizations. In turn, the experience built their self-confidence.

First of all it gave me, over time there, to really build up my confidence. So, in 2 very short years, I became someone that had no idea what OD is to knowing what I could become and was an OD practitioner through our practicum, our group practicum, a workshop, we had an all day retreat that we had to plan, we had individual field experience - all of those were about building up my skill set and knowledge base in a real life situations that made my confidence go through the roof (Interviewee #23).

The students gained hard skills and learned to discern which skills to use and when (Interviewee #11). Using consultative skills like questioning and listening were emphasized and reinforced throughout their coursework and was foundational to their learning (Interviewee #7). Critical questions they were taught to consider were: what is an objective? How do you engage with the client and build client relationship skills? How do you develop a protocol? And, how do you develop a program (Interviewee #23)?

Given the opportunity to practice OD skills with clients in organizational settings helped build the interviewees' self-confidence.

Well, I wouldn't have been able to use any other tools or the questions in trying to help him figure out his goals, and figure out his purpose without MPOD. I wouldn't have known how to have that conversation or how to start that conversation. So, that's just the method to the tools part of MPOD (Interviewee #14).

I was working in a training development organization and we had a very robust program at the time of change using management development and

developing participative management back then and we were doing quality circle work and I really liked facilitating groups. I really liked development work and it [MOD] gave me a fundamental understanding of what I was doing. It gave me a lot of tools, it gave me a lot of concepts and understanding; it gave me language (Interviewee #6).

In both examples, the interviewees reflect how the MOD/MPOD program supplied them with the resources necessary to function as OD practitioners. They learned to listen, ask questions and apply concepts to support clients in reaching their goals. MOD/MPOD provided a language for understanding and articulating their thoughts. Learning the concepts and practicing the skills in the program reinforced their learning whereby the interviewees could draw on the skills when required.

The interviewees also identified three skill areas in which they developed competencies: group facilitation, conflict management and utilizing creative approaches. Considering that most of the OD work conducted by the students would be performed in groups, facilitation skills were necessary. “All of those process skills. I think that is the biggest amount of heft that I have in my own tool kit. It taught me the nuts and bolts but then once you’re confident in that, then you can be confident to not know” (Interviewee #23). This interviewee felt that learning and gaining group facilitation skills gave her the freedom and confidence to be comfortable with unexpected outcomes.

According to the interviewees, conflict management was not taught during their coursework. Their knowledge derived from working with and being in group interactions. For some, there was a significant amount of conflict and they learned to work through it,

gained a better understanding of people and how to manage conflict (Interviewee #13, Interviewee #10). “The program itself gave us an important space for entering into conflict and dealing with it” (Interviewee #23).

Lastly, the interviewees were encouraged to explore creative options to problem-solving and innovation. “It taught you how to think, be creative and solve problems (Interviewee #30). Another interviewee learned how to use creativity within large systems to build, design, structure and plan programs (Interviewee #11).

Knowing how to develop and implement programs, facilitate groups, manage conflict and be creative were practitioner skills gained in the MOD/MPOD program. Having opportunities to learn and practice the skills increased the interviewees’ ability to use them. Acquiring new skills to use in OD interventions was pivotal in the interviewees’ positive transformation.

4.2.5 Membership in a Learning Community

Having a learning community that embodied characteristics that supported the interviewees’ growth and development was integral to their positive transformation. The willingness to build strong interpersonal relationships and being in groups benefitted the interviewees (Interviewee #10, Interviewee #11, Interviewee #8, and Interviewee #32). “I think that I developed a core of individuals from MOD and from CIGO that became very important to me and to this day we’re in touch at least weekly in things that are both personal and professional in nature” (Interviewee #7).

The Learning Community valued sharing and being open. This characteristic of the learning community inadvertently conveyed the message that it was ok to be vulnerable (Interviewee #18). Sharing, openness, and vulnerability supported student's progression and development.

I think that the people that I was engaged with the most in the MOD program were people that were also open to their own personal transformation. I think all but one of them came into the program to develop functional skills to be a change agent. Only one of them was really searching how she could develop herself, but between that particular person and the other people I engaged with the most, it was all of us really being open to developing those skills and going well beyond that. The quality of staying curious: people who were willing to stay curious and test the limits and boundaries and be very loving and caring of other people. That was huge. You don't go through these mind philosophical shifts without becoming ungrounded and kind of scared. So, there's a huge love and support (Interviewee #12).

This quote expresses how openness, sharing and vulnerability created safety for interviewees to stretch beyond what was familiar by means of testing and exploring their limits and boundaries. To reach this level of transparency, trust and open communication were necessary along with non-judgmental communication (Interviewee #21, Interviewee #18). "I think the faculty and the closeness of the group, as diverse as we were, we felt or developed a trust that wasn't judgmental and that each of us could take what we needed to fit our very diverse lives, life styles and professional life, I think that's rare" (Interviewee #26). These factors allowed students to share personal thoughts and feelings with one another that they would not share in other contexts, with other groups (Interviewee #11).

The classroom and activities became the learning laboratory for students. In the learning

community, interviewees felt that they belonged, could be transparent, build trust, and could share information about themselves. Each of these properties contributed to the underlying desire to learn together. Some described learning together as the collaborative power of the cohort where you received constant support to learn how to work in and learn from the group (Interviewee #10, Interviewee #11). Another interviewee found “the experience of being with the same group of students and having us all go through the journey together and using that as a kind of an analysis for group development and evolution” was a significant learning opportunity.

4.2.6 Faculty Involvement

Faculty members played a significant role in the interviewees’ positive transformation. Data regarding faculty involvement coalesced in three areas: support and availability, learning from experts in their field, fostering the search for knowledge.

Faculty support and availability represented the degree to which interviewees felt that they could approach, speak with, and receive feedback from faculty members when needed.

They were not pretentious, they were not very formal. We were not calling them ‘Professor So-n-So.’ We were talking to them on a first name basis. They were just willing to share with us and are still willing to share with us on an ongoing basis about different things, whatever we feel like bringing to meet with them to talk about (Interviewee #25).

The faculty members’ availability to discuss personal and professional topics along with their informal disposition aided in the interviewees’ development. In turn, the faculty members supported and pushed students (Interviewee #7).

We were still new enough where the faculty was invested in what we did and how we thought, I believe. And, I think that translated for me into the kind of support that I mentioned (Interviewee #26).

This kind of support and availability conveyed a feeling of significance. The interviewees felt important.

Hearing lectures and engaging with faculty members who were thought leaders in their fields also supported the interviewees' positive transformation. An interviewee responded that "learning about AI and EI from the subject experts spoke and excited me" (Interviewee #16). Expertise was not limited to these fields. Several faculty members contributed to the interviewees' overall well-being.

Eric would say that all data is good, Ron Fry gave a sense of feedback related to the self, Cooperrider asked what could be a better tomorrow, and Bilimoria gave a sense of getting it done in a good way; through leadership (Interviewee #20).

Each faculty member contributed with a level of expertise that guided and supported the interviewees' development.

Faculty fostering a search for knowledge encouraged interviewees to continue asking questions and looking for answers.

They [faculty members] did create an atmosphere of inquiry, of discovery and openness to many possible interpretations, so you never felt like there was one right answer to the question that was asked, the one answer that would give you brownie points. It was the search that really was our energy and we were accountable for ourselves the faculty was not accountable for us (Interviewee #29).

The students become accountable for directing their own learning process. The faculty member's role was to help interviewees develop inquiry skills. Once answers were

discovered the students were also encouraged to use their individual lives and experiences to make meaning of their discoveries.

I think the program was designed to - well there were certain classes you had to go to and certain subject matter you had to delve into. There was so much emphasis on make this thing work for you in your context. Here is the basic concept, what meaning do you take from it? What meaning do you bring to it? That it could be very individualized. So, that's what I mean by not highly structured, that there weren't answers to the questions already. It wasn't, here's the content, master it and we'll give you the test, it's here's the content, find your own mastery. And I think most people including myself responded to that invitation (Interviewee #29).

By fostering the search for knowledge, students became self-directed, autonomous learners.

4.2.7 Support for self and others

Support in this context meant the ways in which the interviewees encouraged others and the ways the interviewees received encouragement. They identified three facets of support: receiving support, supporting others, and mutual support. Receiving support during P2 was executed via multiple sources of feedback. Peer review of their work was one example of this. One of their early assignments in the program was to write an autobiography. When completed, two classmates read the document and provided feedback to the writer. Some interviewees found the "peer review" non-threatening and useful (Interviewee #22, Interviewee #32). "I had some incredible feedback coaches that were part of my closest friends from MOD. People who read my autobiography and gave me feedback, people from my family group that gave me feedback, not to mention the faculty as well" (Interviewee #7). The feedback given during the enrollment phases had a long term effect.

Throughout my course I was getting feedback from the day I started to the day I left from peers and friends and people that knew me well through the program and even outside of the program. Even though you're asking about what was happening during the high point, that feedback stayed with me very, very strongly. I came into the MOD program with a lesser degree of self-assurance and self-confidence and I portrayed more self-assurance and self-confidence than I really had internally and so people in MOD and other people were shocked to hear me even say that. But, after 2 years of the program they sort of got it and saw where my struggles were, especially my family group and people that I had a lot of interaction with about the autobiography and their feedback was everything that I needed and more to blow this out of the water: to work in OD, to go out on my own, whatever that meant. And that feedback was very much what I needed to make the high point decision to go out on my own and to get the skills (Interviewee #7).

This interviewee took the supportive feedback provided from peers and incorporated it into his professional decision-making to change career paths.

Being pushed and encouraged by others was another type of support received in the program (Interviewee #11, Interviewee #18). Experiencing the program together and getting to know each other as co-learners meant that the students became familiar with one another. Their mutual comfort and familiarity made it possible to receive their peers' encouragement to perform beyond the status quo.

Some of the people I remember pushing me the most in the OD program were those who didn't think I had searched far enough or had gone far enough so there was this drive to find the best answers. I think that's where some of my passion comes from; a passion for making things better that many of my colleagues use (Interviewee #29).

Pushing fellow classmates to pursue the next level of awareness or delve for more depth or insight was a common experience shared by the interviewees. There was a general feeling that there was someone present to support individual change; someone to see them through it (Interviewee #11). In particular, there were faculty members and

classmates helping them learn.

So, if you've got faculty and other learners around you helping you make sense of what's going on, with the intentionality that we just don't find that out there [outside of the OD program]. So, in a sense when we're in school, paying attention at a different level, there is much more potential for deeper learning, it's a huge difference (Interviewee #29).

Receiving support from faculty members and students facilitated a process for deeper, greater learning.

The converse of receiving support was supporting others. Supporting others entailed "watching and being involved with others as they expressed themselves" as well as exploring what was behind their motivation and thought processes (Interviewee #27).

"Just as others were able to see aspects of you, being supportive of others meant seeing others strengths" (Interviewee #18). In principle, supporting others meant having genuine concern for them, working with them and helping them (Interviewee #24).

Each of the categories described in this section comprised components that contributed to the interviewees' positive transformation. The MOD/MPOD program provided information and knowledge in a diverse, supportive learning community where the interviewees could develop and practice skills where they experienced personal and professional growth. As a result, their self-awareness, self-confidence, and their ability to change increased. These result led to their positive transformation.

4.3 Post Graduate Phase (P3)

The final stage of the describing the interviewees' positive transformation is P3, the Post-Graduate Phase. This period of time starts at the completion of the MOD/MPOD program until present. The question guiding this section is: How did interviewees maintain and sustain their positive transformation over time? The data were grouped into 7 categories. I clustered the categories into 3 groupings: (1) the first grouping (making strength based decisions, operating with greater awareness, utilizing OD knowledge and skills along with continuous learning) dealt with what the interviewees did to maintain and sustain their positive transformation; (2) the second grouping (receiving recognition and being a resource for others) addresses what others did to support the interviewees; and (3) the third grouping (working in supportive, thriving environments) described the types of environments where interviewees would thrive.

Table 4: Post-Graduate Phase (P3) Categories & Response Rates

| Category | # of respondents | % response rate from the total sample |
|--|------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Making strength-based decisions | 20 | 63% |
| Operating with greater awareness | 25 | 78% |
| Utilizing OD knowledge and skills | 30 | 94% |
| Continuous learning | 16 | 50% |
| Receiving recognition | 25 | 78% |
| Being a valuable resource for others | 29 | 91% |
| Working in supportive, thriving environments | 25 | 78% |

What Interviewees Did to Maintain and Sustain their Positive Transformation

4.3.1 Making Strength-Based Decisions:

After graduation, interviewees had greater self-confidence which afforded them the ability to make decisions based on where and how their strengths would thrive and prosper. Interviewees made strength-based decisions anchored in their self-awareness and self-confidence.

The ability to make strength-based decisions applied to both their career choices and their personal lives. Regarding their career moves, interviewees chose positions that were often different from their previous roles. This was of particular interest because 40% of the interviewees found new jobs after graduation. “It took me about 6 months after I finished the program to get out, out of [her company’s employment], out of government and out of social work. I went to [a] hospital where I went there in training and development” (Interviewee #19). In situations where interviewees stayed in the same organizations with the same titles, they looked for new responsibilities in their old roles (Interviewee #10, Interviewee #27, Interviewee #32).

Interviewees also made strength-based decisions to work for themselves; to become entrepreneurs. Knowing themselves and identifying their strengths supported their choice to pursue self-employment for autonomy and control of their professional lives (Interviewee #10, Interviewee #18). Entrepreneurship was also encouraged when interviewees were approached to lead consulting projects.

In August of 2000, the year after I graduated, and I had been working for this non-profit organization. People were calling me saying, maybe we could do this or that. So, I went on vacation and made the decision that I needed to go out on my own and test it—my abilities to be a consultant and see if I could do it (Interviewee #5).

Embedded in making strength-based decisions, interviewees were better able to identify what they wanted and didn't want in their lives.

I intended to do some contract consulting here and very quickly they asked if I would consider a full time role, and I said no, I'm not interested in doing that. I can go back to [his previous employer] and get all my benefits, seniority, and everything else if I wanted to do that. There was a series of 4 times when they asked if I would consider part-time roles and I said no each of those times until I agreed to a half-time role that would be in membership development, which is what I love to do, and that would allow me the flexibility to still work with other clients of my choosing (Interviewee #7).

They [the employer] would send me out to float the trial balloons in terms of mergers to merge the senior services. And then nothing happened and began falling apart. My department was at risk. It was a cash cow, so I started doing court cultured therapy. In the nursing home, as a volunteer, I had a wonderful garden in the back which was my therapy. I would put lights up, garden at night and then I saw it, 'The Plant Manager' and thought 'Boy!' I thought that was a good name for a garden design business. I had a Masters' Degree, I didn't want to manage people any more, I wanted to manage plants and so I opened a business. That was 15 years ago (Interviewee #26).

Making strength-based decisions to pursue jobs that were better suited for the interviewees provided freedom and confidence. This is to say, the interviewees spoke of gaining freedom to work in a variety of fields in numerous positions. Their MOD/MPOD experiences gave the interviewees skills, abilities, and confidence to make strength-based personal and professional decisions.

Freedom. Well, freedom and enlightenment. Two things, yes I would put it that way. From the enlightenment came the Freedom. I recognized what was good for me and what wasn't and as a result I was able to set a course that gave me the freedom that was really important to me to be able to flourish (Interviewee #1).

Making strength-based decisions evoked feelings of freedom.

Completing the program, having increased self-confidence, and making decisions based on their strengths influenced the interviewees' career choices, risk taking, flexibility, and the willingness to relinquish control.

Another interviewee exercised her freedom immediately following graduation.

I turned 40 the summer we finished and instead of paying back that loan from [my lender] I went to China. How about that?! That was a life changing experience also and on the way back home, I met [a classmate] in San Francisco. I came in from the Pacific side. He was living in San Jose. That was a wonderful experience (Interviewee #26).

The interviewee believed that she would be financially secure based on her new skills and self-confidence. In this example, flexibility was a byproduct of making strength-based decisions and creating more freedom. With regard to flexibility, interviewees acknowledged having a greater range of behavioral choices that became available to them. They understood that there were multiple ways of approaching a situation and allowed for the variance.

This was another huge thing. I believe Appreciative Inquiry to be part of our conversation. We [the facilitation team] would be really open to how you express yourself - the way you need to express yourself either individually or as a group. So, there are people who are very oratorical and there are people who needed to express it on paper - I need to do it in a song. I need to do it in dance - which is really different if you dealing with people whose expression is more tribal. So, we will do a song, we will do a dance and we will allow you to interpret it and then we will tell you what our intention was (Interviewee #12).

In this example, the interviewee demonstrated staying open to multiple modes of expression and providing opportunities for those modes to co-exist with others modes.

This was an example of how freedom, self-confidence, and the ability to make strength-

based decisions materialized in a behavioral change. The interviewees released control and allowed the group to lead its learning. Another example demonstrates the types of strength-based decisions interviewees made.

The way to wrap that up is the freedom and the possibilities. An example of that would be that I've had amazing opportunities for travel since MOD that, working full time in a corporation; I just couldn't have taken advantage of. So, for example, putting together the seminar for MOD & CIGO in Belgium, was an example of experiences I didn't have to think twice about doing and I had the time and flexibility to do that as long as I figured it out and I'd done other things. I've traveled to France as a consultant with a company. I have had other chances to go to Europe since MOD and I've met friends from CIGO in Belgium, California, and Florida. And, just things that I've been able to take advantage of sometime that are 3 or 4 or 5 nights away that I've been able to take advantage of doing is just a great example of that sort of freedom and opening myself to the possibilities. The weird thing is, each time I do that I'm learning more, I'm growing more, my self-confidence, my self-assurance is reinforced (Interviewee #7).

This quote exemplifies how making strength-based decisions fostered and provided freedom to work in different locations and take on projects that reinforced the interviewee's self-confidence and self-awareness.

4.3.2 Operating with Greater Awareness

The MOD/MPOD graduates left their programs with greater awareness of themselves as individuals and as agents of change. Operating with greater awareness was an action interviewees took to sustain their positive transformation over time. Having self-confidence & self-awareness, being value driven and having feelings of gratitude were ways that the interviewees practiced operating with greater awareness.

Upon completion of their degree programs then working as organizational development professionals, the interviewees' believed that they could be effective change agents.

I am changing into an even more effective change agent than I was before and I don't think I was shabby before. So, I feel more skilled, more successful, my clients as individuals are better off because they learn more when they are with me than they ever did before (Interviewee #29).

Knowing their skills and abilities interviewees had greater self-confidence. Their self-confidence served as a precursor to their being able to accept when and where they may need support.

All of those process skills. I think that is the biggest amount of heft that I have in my own tool kit. It taught me the nuts and bolts but then once you're confident in that, then you can be confident to not know. So I think all of that helped me go in to all of a sudden these places where I'm an American, I'm a woman, there weren't hardly any other women there, and know that I do know what I'm talking about. I do know what to do, and even when I don't know, I'm confident in knowing that I'll be able to work through it not alone, but with others (Interviewee #23).

In this instance, the interviewee's self-awareness and confidence permitted her the ability to know that she didn't need to have all of the answers and that others could help problem-solve.

In essence, operating with greater self-awareness served the interviewees and their clients. The interviewees were more aware of their skills and abilities and how their personal attributes could work to support their clients or client systems in their change efforts.

Self-awareness in P3 had a different focus than in P2. In P2, the interviewees learned about themselves via feedback from others, activities and tasks. Self-awareness in P3

focused on how the interviewees' behaviors impacted others. Self-awareness became a self-monitoring process.

Well, I started 10 years ago and looking at how I am in a situation and what it is that my actions and reactions, since I came here, what impact that has on a situation and being very aware of that, and that's also being aware of the situation with the group and aware of the dynamics and all of those things (Interviewee #10).

The interviewee is cognizant of her interpersonal and systemic impact. Upon reflection, interviewees accessed their role in the system which led to making thoughtful choices around how they would impact and influence others.

At that time, it led to the change of how I function within the organization that I was in, how I reflected on their approach to work, how I reflected on my own approach to work and how I was motivated to try and help my organization with the change process (Interviewee #12).

An interviewee offered that the focus shifted from performance to his impact on others (Interviewee #6). Greater self-awareness via self-reflection cascaded into multiple areas, i.e., knowing yourself and your projections so you can really examine what you think you see in others (Interviewee #6), being aware of how different leadership styles impact others (Interviewee #20), and self-reflecting to have "the ability to remove self and filters to engage others where they are" (Interviewee #32).

Operating with greater awareness included the interviewees identifying values that drove their behaviors. For example, one interviewee adopted the value to be engaged in continuous learning from others and applied it with colleagues.

I was the head of [a division]. There was a little bit of physics and I tried to share that and sometimes when you do I didn't really do quite as well as I should and so I guess a lot of my intelligence and authority was lost because I didn't look at the situation and what had to be done. I was rigid, isolated, and alone versus being innovative, eclectic, and in a group. Even

now, I'm listening to people more and more. I can see by their eyes that I'm learning more and more how to be involved. It's the whole concept of continual learning, not just [work], but learning about interacting in a rich setting (Interviewee #2).

The interviewee applied relational behavior with colleagues; an OD value. Others provided encouraging feedback when the interviewee's behaviors were consistent with his espoused values.

Wow, this will probably be much more difficult to answer if I hadn't just had a conversation with actually one of my students who came to me with some concerns and said, 'The reason I'm coming to you (because I'm not her advisor or anything) is because you can walk the walk and this is not just your job but what you believe in and this is what you really do' (Interviewee #12).

The interviewee's value alignment with behaviors evoked safety for the student in this example. Other interviewees strived to be more relational (Interviewee #12), listened (Interviewee #8), and stayed open to possibilities (Interviewee #32) as values they held in their awareness while working with others.

Feeling gratitude was another awareness interviewees held in their consciousness.

Gratitude derived from the joy and satisfaction felt from being able to positively impact others' lives.

We watched people go through this change process where they would be very anxious and then all of a sudden you'd orient them they would get their flow down and you get the boots on? And get them used to it. It was immediate gratification, it wasn't that long of a cycle, and then the celebration at the end, we had a grand opening, and there was a lot to celebrate so there was lots of hard work and lots of feelings of accomplishment (Interviewee #15).

There were many sources of gratification. One interviewee enjoyed that she positively impacted an organization on multiple levels (Interviewee #17). Others

felt gratification from using their skills to work with people from different countries (Interviewee #7, Interviewee #3).

We would spend the evenings together just enjoying each other's company so of course there was a lot of camaraderie and enjoyment. We had to work during the day but we managed to plow through that and have such a terrific time. I've never seen people from Norway, Sweden, France, Germany, England, American Chinese - this whole group of really diverse interesting people - who were really good at what they did and it was just a pleasure to work with them (Interviewee #3).

Interviewees felt gratitude for being able to positively impact organizations enterprise-wide and across international boundaries.

4.3.3 Utilizing OD Knowledge, Skills, and Principles

Utilizing OD Knowledge, Skills and Principles was the integration of OD theories, practices and principles, learned in the MOD/MPOD program and that interviewees used in the interviewees' post graduate lives. Utilizing and reinforcing their OD skills helped to sustain their positive transformation. Properties within this category are: promoting ownership for learning and growth, putting concepts into action, working alongside others, skilled facilitation, and other-focused communication.

4.3.3.1 Promoting Ownership for Learning and Growth

Promoting Ownership for Learning and Growth describes the stance taken by the interviewees when working with individuals, groups or organizations. Their operating assumption was that the content needed to do work with groups was generated by the individuals in the situation and the interviewee's role was to lead their process. "To ask questions instead of always having the answers, I think I had the opinion that you had to

get an education so you would be the subject matter expert and it was about you having the answers to the questions” (Interviewee #1). The interviewees came to understand that it “was not about being the sage on the stage, but the guide on the side” (Interviewee #22). Their intent was not to think for others but to prompt others to think and problem-solve for themselves. “Asking them questions and to help them think more about what their goals and their purpose is. I haven’t felt like that in a long time. And it just felt great doing that again” (Interviewee #14). This stance positioned the interviewees to ask questions but to also ask follow-up questions to encourage deeper learning.

I really felt like I was just really guiding them and I wasn’t just really giving him the answers. I was always asking him to give more and I wasn’t just saying “give more, give more”, it was just really being there, helping him think about what’s important to him and for him to even expand on why it’s important to him and can he see this (Interviewee #14).

The interviewee facilitated an empowering, learning processes and provided a pathway for unexpected opportunities to emerge.

It was priceless helping people understand that they are the experts and we are there to facilitate the conversation but then really having to facilitate partnerships where both partners are realizing that they were of equal value in the learning process and knowledge sharing and then creating together - where it had always been, even when the intention was to be egalitarian or equal partnership, it was always out of balance for them and had to have that shift in order to make it valid (Interviewee #12).

For example, in the above quote, the interviewee facilitated a redistribution of power and shared learning. Interviewees felt that their insights and perspectives led others to view their situation differently (Interviewee #25). Overall, this stance provided the clients the opportunity to take responsibility for their learning and the direction of their process. The interviewees helped clients embrace their learning and development.

Another thing is openness and flexibility, that I really, really try to put the client in the driver’s seat and let them both feel in charge and be in charge

so if what's happening isn't working in their point of view or isn't the direction they want to go, then they only need to say so and they're involved in the design so that it is going to work for them and they can tweak the direction along the way. They can flow, proceed, and they can stop (Interviewee #29).

Promoting ownership of learning and growth allowed the interviewees to use their OD skills to empower others to become self-directed in their development. In addition, the interviewees felt satisfied about leading the process and could see the benefit to their clients.

4.3.3.2 Putting concepts into action.

A number of concepts, theories and frameworks were presented in the MOD/MPOD program. During their coursework, interviewees had opportunities to apply their knowledge working with teams and their organizations. In this phase, interviewees made OD interventions utilizing their OD knowledge & skills in multiple settings.

AI was one of many conceptual frames interviewees used during their OD interventions (Interviewee #9, Interviewee #3, Interviewee #5, Interviewee #12, Interviewee #16, Interviewee #22). The next quote is taken from an interviewee who, while consulting to a multi-national organization, was able to impact the group because of her use of AI.

The Asia group had people from India and Malaysia and the Philippines and so some of the issues around height and structure and skin color were compatible so there would be a connect like 'oh my gosh you're more like us.' And there would be a relief because people were looking because we're wired to try and relate with people that we perceive have similarities to us. But, then, there must have been something in my integration of appreciative inquiry that allowed other people to see that we were true to it (Interviewee #12).

The interviewee spoke of integrating AI into how she interacted with the group. She felt

that her interactions positively impacted the group's process increasing the group's safety with her. Another interviewee used AI to improve the communication in her international project group after budget restrictions eliminated their ability to have face-to-face meetings.

There was that language barrier. It was harder to stay connected. It was a lot easier when we were all in one room and could see each other face to face, etc. So, while I was in a MOD class, I had done appreciative inquiry on business communication, so I thought, 'Gosh, I've done this before.' So, I proposed it to my boss and he was cool about it and I interviewed all sixteen people over the phone and I transcribed it all and I went through the whole process of putting it into the 7S model and came out with a provocative proposition and then we had a preliminary meeting where we went over all that. So, we go over it all and people came out with great suggestions (Interviewee #3).

AI was used to generate ideas from the group to improve lines of communication and to overcome their distance barriers. In fact, the team developed technology that was later used throughout the organization.

One of the interviewee's described her process as holding theory in her awareness when entering client systems and using it in conjunction with her senses.

More of an attempt to appeal to the learning styles and that kind of thing and trying to look at the situation from a theoretical perspective first and then what do I see going on in terms of what I can apply that I never thought about before because now I know that theoretical piece. And I engage the client without them knowing their engaged in a theory. It gives them better results (Interviewee #5).

Theory was the basis for this intervention that supported the client and produced positive results. The interviewees used their knowledge about organizational assessments (Interviewee #5) along with planning and development (Interviewee #25) to support their clients.

4.3.3.3 Working alongside others.

This described the manner by which the interviewees interacted with others. Throughout their MOD/MPOD experience, the interviewees read a great deal about human nature, human relationships and change (Interviewee #27, Interviewee #26). The readings became foundational for how they engaged with others in the workplace and in their everyday lives (Interviewee #26). Three characteristics emerged that described this property: being open to multiple perspectives, staying curious by asking questions, and meeting people where they are.

Being open to multiple perspectives was embedded in their understanding that there exists multiple ways of feeling, thinking or acting and to remain open to the range of possibilities (Interviewee #22).

It was more intimate exposure to people that lets you see how different the world is. I go along thinking everybody sees things like I do and they don't. It's not just an intellectual thing. It's much more than that. It's definitely changed me in that way. It boosted my maturation process (Interviewee #6).

The interviewee was open to hearing another person's perspective, being transformed by it and being prompted to make personal life change.

Staying curious and asking questions kept the interviewees engaged and capable of working with others. "I think what it did is broadening my sense of the world to question things felt or believed that I hadn't been able to qualify or verbalize" (Interviewee # 26). Similar to being open to multiple perspectives, this property incorporated behavior that allowed the interviewees to suspend judgment, stay curious and ask questions to gain

greater understanding. In an organizational setting, an interviewee described his process as entering the organization, asking questions to access what was going on, remaining curiosity through observation, taking notes of what was happening, and collaborating with the client to implement change, if necessary (Interviewee #21). This property also afforded the interviewees the ability to identify dynamics that may not have been evident upon first glance but surfaced as a result of staying curious.

Meeting people where they were in their experience helped interviewees be more effective (Interviewee #32). An interviewee described his experience as appreciating the individual's perspective and experiences versus imposing a predetermined template (Interviewee #24). Meeting people where they were was captured in the phrase, "Treat people the way that they wanted to be treated" (Interviewee #44). The saying resonated in one interviewee's mind and became a guidepost for his behavior.

One thing I always found astounding was treat people as they want to be treated. That put a useful, directional echo in my head, process, actionable, plans for things that I think I got from the program or at least used more frequently after the program (Interviewee #4).

Another interviewee discussed how she put the concept into action at work.

And just really bringing my skills to that [reorganization] and being able to go into those offices and be able to know how to talk to them, be able to know how to listen to them, and to respect what they wanted to get out of it, and at the same time be able to say this is the way it is, and we don't always have a say (Interviewee #17).

In this example, the interviewee met people where they were regarding their needs and concerns while also implementing organizational change. Meeting people where they were, for this interviewee, meant demonstrating respect.

Working alongside others created an atmosphere of equals; an egalitarian relationship. Being open to multiple perspectives, staying curious by asking questions and meeting people where they were conveyed that the interviewees' experiences held equal merit and value as others.

Many prospective students entered the program to become Change Agents. Among graduates, change management became the scope of work for many. In order to be effective in these areas, interviewees felt that holding a systems view, understanding groups & their dynamics, and program design & implementation comprised the knowledge and skills needed to facilitate change management.

4.3.3.4 Holding a systems view

Holding a systems view refers to the interviewee's ability to understand how organizations work and to access the level of system (individual, group, organizational or societal levels) where their intervention was focused. One interviewee spoke of coaching a client & helping him understand that as an individual, a leader, he had system-wide impact across the company; a realization the client had not fully understood until the interviewee made a visual model demonstrating the leader's level of impact (Interviewee #4). As interveners, the interviewees also needed to consider the impact that they had on their organizations.

I think in a way I scaled back my career aspirations. I became less ambitious and more, I don't know how to describe it. I think it's the maturity thing. Instead of having performance anxiety and paying attention [to me], and this is probably very related to MOD, [I became] a lot more focused outside on the system and what is my impact on them instead of am I doing the right things to get ahead or

succeed. My focus shifted from my performance to the impact of my actions, I think (Interviewee #6).

Understanding systems and how they work increased the interviewees' awareness surrounding their impact on organizations and teams.

So, these boards start to keep me honest, sergeant-at-arms or advisor, the only one who knows the procedure. That's not fair but I think it's more than that. I guess it's who I am where I can see the short term and long term effect of something as we are going down the wrong road. Let's pull back and look at what that means. It really was in every aspect of my life, life changing, life emerging; literally and figuratively (Interviewee #26).

The interviewee describes prudent decision-making in understanding, managing and paying close attention to the short and long term effects of the group's decisions. In addition, the interviewee skillfully asked the group to consider the impact of their decisions and to take a different path based on the potential outcome.

Understanding systems and its moving parts, i.e. how departments function, prepared interviewees to launch programs and new projects.

I was in charge of system integration for 9 regional hospitals. But, it was worth it for me to leave that job, which was a dream job, trust me that was a dream OD job. It was worth it to come back here to open up this building and work with all the clinical teams to be able to know their work practices and know their patient flow and just kind of come to fruition their dream that they had talked about for 6 or 7 years. I think it's the history of having worked with them to be the person to help to get them acclimated to this new map of buildings and that it was a change project on steroids and I never had to work so fast and furious but everything you did affected the next (Interviewee #15).

In this example, understanding the interplay of entities within the system, afforded the interviewee an opportunity to oversee the successful launch of a multimillion dollar building. Familiarity with how the departments worked, identifying their needs while understanding their hopes, desires and dreams worked to the interviewee's and the

organization's advantage.

4.3.3.5 Understanding groups and their dynamics.

Understanding groups and their dynamics helped to support change efforts. A number of examples shared by the interviewees described group level interventions at various stages of change. Interviewees were involved with groups and supported the implementation of change processes at various stages.

I guess my abilities to work and my understanding of groups and group dynamics and even change, understanding at least change because this was a program and project that not only was it trying to change people's lives but a project that changed every moment. It never stayed the same. So, I developed some really good relationships where I could say, 'Oh, that's what you're doing now? Let me help' (Interviewee #17).

The interviewee understood groups, their dynamics and change processes. Therefore, she was able to support program implementation and provide sound recommendations to finalize the implementation process. Interviewees often found themselves in positions to help establish processes based on their understanding of groups. "There were lots of levels of change and sensing people and influencing those people to think in new ways and to come up with a long range plan for developing this new facility and having it be" (Interviewee #26). The interviewee goes on to describe how she recognized that without full commitment of the group that the project would have failed so she helped to facilitate "buy-in" or commitment from stakeholders (Interviewee #26). Developing a group's process became a critical role for many interviewees.

The group made a lot of progress, made some difficult decisions and it led to further development and strategy and we had developed a process. They more or less followed the process and it worked (Interviewee #6).

Understanding groups and how they worked facilitated smoother decision-making, project implementation and group processes that the interviewees spearheaded as part of their client's change process.

4.3.3.6 Program design and implementation.

A critical component of managing change was the ability to design and implement programs to support change efforts. Interviewees developed program design and implementation skills while in their MOD/MPOD programs (Interviewee #10, Interviewee #27). The interviewees grasped that these skills were important and crucial to a sometimes challenging organizational change process (Interviewee #8, Interviewee #27). One interviewee shared that she was hired to design a training program on topics ranging from tenure issues to welfare reform. Some program participants acknowledged not wanting to be there while simultaneously acknowledging that it was an inevitable change that had to take place. "It was important and tough" (Interviewee #8). Conversely, some program design and implementation projects were mutually beneficial to the interviewee and the program participants.

The other high point was I designed and implemented a long term leadership development program here for high potential and even those that wanted to be high potential people. I really like designing, developing, and delivering or more or less facilitating leadership development or personal development but this was really fun because there was a lot of creativity, [it was] mine to create, and I worked with these individuals here at the center very closely for a year, kind of professor-like in that you read things they write, you hear everything they say, you start to understand them as a person. I had people that I worked with in that program express their appreciation for what they went through, what they learned, and how I coached them. That's more of a long-term high point (Interviewee #6).

The latter example differed from the first in that the interviewee designed and

implemented a change program to develop more leaders within the organization.

The program in the first example was intended to educate participants on mandatory, regulatory changes facing the organization. Although different, the program design and implementation created by the interviewees helped to manage the change process.

4.3.3.7 Skilled Facilitation.

A fundamental skill interviewees identified for successfully working with groups, as an OD practitioner, was skilled facilitation: being creative, getting others excited about the task at hand, choosing the appropriate tool(s) for the situation and facilitating group process. Skilled facilitation required the use of OD knowledge and skills that helped the clients to achieve their goals. In addition, practicing the skills reinforced them while sustaining the interviewees' positive transformation.

Using creativity in facilitation meant being an original, innovative thinker particularly when addressing disengaged staff or a resistant workforce (Interviewee #8, Interviewee #11). Sometimes the interviewees developed unconventional means to increase participation.

I even instituted some staff meetings where we did some play therapy. We did something light-hearted and one of them was to go up in the attic and see what was there in a 100 year old organization in terms of archives and records and then we made a party with some of things we had found up there. This all taking people away from their work place (Interviewee #26).

This approach shifted the staff member's focus to an activity outside of their daily tasks and responsibilities. The employees returned to their normal tasks with more enthusiasm.

Creative facilitation allowed the interviewee to consider try various methods to reach their desired outcome.

Getting others excited and generating commitment for a project required skill and was often an indicator of the project's success. For one interviewee, getting others involved meant motivating employees to participate in an enterprise-wide education program so as to meet the organization's objectives and help the interviewee reach her client's (Interviewee #27).

Getting other people excited about this initiative and getting the support of others. It couldn't have happened without other people's help. Getting people excited and energized about what I was trying to create. When I was working in a company there were other times when I created a program and carried out a program and there were times when I would hire outside instructors to deliver the parts of the program, but still I felt like I was working independently. But this time I felt like I was working with people who were equally as excited as I was. You know doing the program, everyone isn't always as excited as you are. Sometimes, at the end, you get some who will say, 'Wow, this was really worthwhile!' This was one of those programs where everyone was excited and felt that way; where everyone was excited about the experience, not just the people participating but the people delivering it as well (Interviewee #1).

The interviewee recognized the interdependence between the program's success and getting others excited and energized. She goes on to describe how she galvanized others excitement.

"I spent a lot of time talking to the teachers not just about how the program went, but what were their expectations coming into the program and what they thought would come out of it, and many of them were kind of leery about the whole thing, they thought it would be too emotional, above these kid's heads, that they would walk away feeling more separated between black and white as opposed to feeling a continuity between them and all these things I was loving because it proved them wrong. Then, they were talking about not only how they were moved, but how the kids were moved. I really felt a heartfelt difference. That was another sense of accomplishment (Interviewee #1).

Getting others excited required the interviewee to be persuasive, to engage in continuous dialogue, build trust and to return to the client for feedback.

Undergirding getting others excited was getting them involved, listening and conveying that their perspectives were valued and taken into consideration.

Being able to identify which tools to use to help others realize their full potential was another indicator of skilled facilitation (Interviewee #10). From an organizational perspective, knowing which tool to use meant entering into an organization, looking at the organization's culture, industry and operation then putting together a vision of what would be most appropriate given the situation (Interviewee #18, Interviewee #21).

It was one of those great skill tests, you know, how do you go into a situation and resolve it? How you understand it? What people need? And, being able to figure out what it takes to help people move forward (Interviewee #9).

Having the tools and knowing which one to use was attributed to their graduate studies.

The interviewee relied on experience and intuition to select an approach to use.

I always said that the MOD program was, like look at that, it's like a potpourri of school. I was a consultant at a consulting firm when I got in and they kind of put it in bottles and packaged it a little better, but it's like you pull the tool out of the tool kit when you need it (Interviewee #15).

To know actions and outcomes that were desirable had to come about with a lot of work sometimes. All those things, in a general way, I know there were things that I called on and at the time I probably had things that were better outlined in my head but in a general way, I know it was instinct that I called on but with 9 years of practicing in the field, the vocabulary and it's just that I know I'm better for the program. I know I'm more effective (Interviewee #4).

Education, intuition and experience combined to enhance the interviewee's ability to select an appropriate tool. The interviewee's discernment supported the organization in meeting their desired goals.

Finally, in a previous subcategory (Managing Change), interviewees referenced understanding groups and their dynamics as the interviewee's ability to know how groups operate and function. In this subcategory, facilitating group process - referred to how interviewees worked with groups to improve how they functioned. The next quote describes an interviewee's role in facilitating group process.

Well, I think it was just making a clear path and supporting people in it and holding them on it and encouraging them in the process and some articulation on what way people are trying to go. I think helping people express what I think they are trying to express in a way that they feel is clear and acceptable is as a collaborative agreement (Interviewee #6).

The interviewee saw the facilitation role as making the group's process flow more smoothly and easier. The interviewee laid out the group's direction and supported their adherence to that path. The interviewee, as facilitator, also helped the participants articulate their thoughts and ideas. Other interviewees' facilitation roles varied. One interviewee saw the role as helping the group create an environment for an equal exchange of ideas "really debating points, expressing concerns, hopes, ideas and a very collegial feeling in the room, not personal agendas at all, not people holding out or holding back" (Interviewee #6). The interviewee created a collegial feel for the group supporting them to hear a variety of perspectives that informed their strategic planning process. Another interviewee's role as facilitator was to find a place of compromise among the group's divergent viewpoints.

I think that's where it comes together: being able to decipher behaviors in groups and to understand diverging viewpoints and how to speak to people. I tend to be pretty direct. Most often that's appreciated, but not harsh, but getting people to see a compromise (Interviewee #26).

Each of the interviewees approached group facilitation differently yet they held the same objective which was to facilitate processes assisting groups to more easily reach their objectives.

Being creative, getting others excited about the project, discerning when to use what approach and facilitating group process were each components of skilled facilitation. The category demonstrates interviewees' use of OD knowledge, skills and principles.

4.3.3.8 Other-Focused Communication Style

Practicing other-focused communication was how the interviewees incorporated their OD knowledge and skills while engaging with others. Listening, stating and managing expectations were characteristics of this property.

Interviewees listened differently before and after the MOD/MPOD program. They listened with more patience to understand the other person and their intent (Interviewee #28). In addition, there was greater attention paid to non-verbal communication. It was described as "hearing three-dimensionally" - using verbal and non-verbal cues to understand what was being communicated (Interviewee #2). Listening was intended to be more inclusive and to understand others experiences (Interviewee #11, Interviewee #32). For some, this was a significant change from their previous listening behavior.

I think they [friends and colleagues] would say being able to listen, having the ability to understand what their challenges or the obstacles may be and instead of jumping to solutions being able to talk through how to pound out the solution instead of just saying “maybe you should do this” or “maybe you should do that” because every situation is different where in the past I would have been listening but listening to go to solution as opposed to hearing what the whole situation is and then trying to think about different scenarios about how to approach it or demonstrate the solutions. I think that’s one thing that my colleagues and my friends would say (Interviewee #13).

Listening to hear what the other person was saying versus listening to problem-solving was a change. This type of listening had the benefit of building trust between the interviewee and the individual(s) who were speaking. One interviewee said that “if you’re listening and not placing value on what the other person is saying or making judgments about it or speaking in terms of judgment, then you will have the type of trust that cycles back and support you when you want something done” (Interviewee #28). Simply put “people like to work with you when they feel heard” (Interviewee #15).

Now I see myself being more conscious of really listening word for word to what people have to say especially in a change environment, especially in a role of being a facilitator where I’m listening and still being able to add my viewpoints without it being so subjective to everything that I want to have done or that my opinion is the only opinion or that even if you’re going to give your opinion, that I’m going to go with the solution of what I thought about (Interviewee #13).

Listening, valuing what is being said and paying attention to verbal and non-verbal cues aided the interviewees in understanding other’s perspective. The benefit was building trust where people were more willing to cooperate.

Stating and managing expectations helped the interviewees communicate clearly with their clients. It was important to express mutual expectations to make sure that the

interviewee produced the client's desired outcome. Conversely, the interviewee could evaluate the feasibility of the client's needs (Interviewee #18) by asking, "Is what the client wants reasonable and possible?" "I do what I say that I will do and do it. And, if I cannot deliver, I will tell them that too" (Interviewee #21). "I think there's an integrity to when I say or do something, they can count on it getting done even if the answer is not what they wanted to hear" (Interviewee #2).

Listening and managing expectations promoted a communication style that was other-focused. The interviewees listened to the experiences, wants and needs of others then responded in ways that honored what they were saying. Both properties built trust and helped the interviewees be effective.

4.3.4 Continuous Learning

Continued learning and education were means for sustaining their positive transformation over time. Interviewees prolonged their learning via their commitments to personal growth and development, by networking with other MOD/MPOD graduates, and by attending workshops, conferences, and lectures.

One path toward a commitment to personal growth and learning was via mentoring; having someone willing to provide leadership and guidance to support the interviewee's development.

You have to be willing to learn. There were a lot of things that by the time I graduated I thought I would be an expert at, and be able to run anything I was able to do, and you just need experience and be willing to be mentored and willing to learn from that mentor (Interviewee #15).

Interviewees felt that their career advancements and the types of projects they worked on were linked to mentors who helped them navigate their careers and organizations (Interviewee #15).

Listening to others experiences and learning from them was another form of continuous learning. An interviewee recalled making a conscious effort in the workplace to listen to people and learn from them. He said, “I can see by their eyes that I’m learning more and more how to be involved” (Interviewee #2). He learned because he was more receptive to hearing and valuing what his colleagues had to say. Another interviewee personally grew by listening to someone’s life experience.

He was just telling his story and a very intimate part of it and I was just struck by how much Wahoo, and I was a big [Cleveland] Indian’s fan who loved Chief Wahoo, and I realized at that moment that I could never wear Chief Wahoo again. It makes me cry. I didn’t realize that it hurt so many people. It really helped me see things much differently. It’s just people sharing their story that enabled that. And hearing about one person got me to care about lots of people. [He] never said not to wear Chief Wahoo. It wasn’t important to him personally. It was a big gain developmentally (Interviewee #6).

The interviewee’s life was positively impacted when she began to understand the negative impact that her choices had on a segment of the population. Hearing another person’s experience and being impacted by it changed the interviewee’s thoughts and behaviors.

Active, life-long learning supported continuous personal growth and development.

I think being a conscious life-long learner means that you are more open to things being a little different than you thought they were and being open to that possibility, being open to very radically different world views that

don't make total sense, even though they are totally different from yours. Being open to working with others (Interviewee #29).

The interviewee's perspective was to remain open to difference, possibilities and a willingness to make new meaning of the world generated from others perspectives. In addition, there was the want and desire to seek new perspectives.

I am such an active learner. I am constantly scouring the world for continued leading edge thinking and methods and ways to help individuals and collective organizations get better, be better, engage in employees, just this whole enabling sort of thing (Interviewee #31).

Active, life-long learning coupled with the desire to seek new ways of thinking illustrated a commitment to personal growth and development.

Alumni networking, reunions and gatherings extended and expanded the interviewees' learning opportunities. Speaking with alumni to share and learn new information was a valuable resource.

I think everybody in the program, most of the people in the program, are very open and giving. People are very willing to share information, contacts, anything that they feel they can do to help another person. So I think within that group we've just really developed some type of a kinship or bond that makes us want to reach out and help each other. And I think ultimately that's going to be part of that transformation. We're really not out here alone (Interviewee #25).

The interviewee informally met with a group of alumni on a monthly basis to socialize. At these events, knowledge and information were exchanged. At MOD/MPOD reunions, networking and the exchange of idea was more formal.

So, in preparation for that reunion, it was a working reunion, meaning it was a seminar. It wasn't social but certainly social was a great benefit of it but the idea was to conference and keep learning and growing with each other. And, so, in preparation, we had to say since it's been a year and a half since MOD, what are we focused on; what's changed; what are we bringing to the table as we reach and be (Interviewee #7)?

The person-to-person exchange of ideas added to the group's collective knowledge.

Again, everyone's interactions increases the overall knowledge base of the group because everyone has grown on an individual basis and then you bring the group together and you start sharing then the group is able to expand in a way that on an individual basis you would not have been able to do, in my opinion (Interviewee #25).

There was a healthy exchange of knowledge and mutual growth by networking with alumni, attending reunions and informal gatherings. Each of these activities resulted in continued learning.

Beyond the MOD/MPOD networking and learning activities, workshops and conferences other formal learning opportunities were additional avenues for continued learning experiences. Programs at the Gestalt Institute of Cleveland provided interviewees opportunities to deepen their self-awareness while learning other approaches to organizational change (Interviewee #6, Interviewee #19). Others audited MBA courses at Case Western Reserve University's business school.

It was in the MBA program where I was with very young, sharp people, my gosh, in their second year and if you worked with them you know how sharp they are by their second year. In their first year, they are kind of stumbling and in their second year it's like 'Oh My God.' I had a chance to work with a team of them it was kind of cool. They were MBA students. I came in with the Organizational Development or MOD. We called it MSOD at the time. It was a very positive experience working with them. Seeing their enthusiasm and taking it to heart and none of them are going into the particular field that we are talking about. I could see them taking a lot of the process and thought with them in their futures. And, of course, they are international and no telling how that can go forward (Interviewee #19).

Taking graduate level courses and working with other inspired learners motivated the interviewees to continue learning. Interviewees also took courses in specific content

areas, i.e., accelerated learning (Interviewee #29) and reevaluation counseling (Interviewee #17), to name two. These were taught in workshop settings where the interviewees were participants.

It's back to the accelerated learning thing. I have since gone back to graduate school, although I'm not getting another degree, by adding this thing to my knowledge base. I am adding a whole other field of practice to what I know about OD. It's accelerated learning plus OD and it makes my OD work more effective (Interviewee #29).

Consequently, the intention of pursuing additional education was to enhance the interviewees' knowledge base and her OD skills. A by-product of additional education was sustained positive transformation. Continuous learning afforded interviewees educational experiences that enhanced their OD skills and increased their personal and professional influence.

What Others Did to Support the Interviewee's Positive Transformation

4.3.5 Receiving Recognition:

Receiving positive feedback and accolades from others reinforced the interviewees' confidence in utilizing their OD skills and knowledge. Acknowledgements were given in three ways: (1) being selected for special projects, (2) new roles and responsibilities, receiving positive feedback and (3) leadership support.

Upon graduation from their MOD/MPOD programs, the interviewees worked in various capacities and roles throughout organizations. Although their functions were different, interviewees were able to incorporate their OD knowledge, skills and competencies into their work. Organizational success and proficiency in their roles prompted others to select

them for new projects, roles and responsibilities. Some of the responsibilities fell within their range of experiences while other tasks stretched the interviewees' boundaries. The tasks were new to the interviewees and their current success led others to believe that the interviewees could accomplish the responsibilities associated with the new tasks (Interviewee #8, Interviewee #11, Interviewee #24).

Specifically, first of all being asked, recognizing that I have the skill or the talent or confidence. I didn't necessarily question why there were asking me to do this. I was just appreciative of the fact that they came to me and asked for assistance (Interviewee #28).

The interviewee was asked by another department within his organization to serve as an internal consultant to help increase the department's productivity.

I was really engaged in the topic of [my employer] and discovering the sense of the organization, where it was, where it was going, the frustration from the leaders - being part of that and being recognized and subsequent to that presentation, being asked to be a consultant to the board of governors so what I raised could be addressed on an on-going basis (Interviewee #2).

In the first example, the interviewee was asked to support another department. In the last example, the interviewee presented information to the organization's leadership team that resulted in a consulting role with enterprise-wide influence on how the organization functioned. Both examples highlight interviewees being asked to share their expertise with others and each being recognized for their skills.

Independent consultants received indirect recognition via their increased work volume.

The fact that I got business right away and basically since then I've never had to market in the sense of advertising. I mean I do stuff like I network at social functions and events where people see you and say, 'oh yeah, she can do this.' So, those kinds of things and people continue to hire me (Interviewee #5).

Some interviewees did not market themselves or advertise yet were actively working due to positive referrals. Being selected for new projects, being appointed to roles with new responsibilities and getting positive referrals were direct and indirect types of receiving recognition from others.

Positive feedback that acknowledged the interviewees skills and abilities and/or demonstrated others' belief in their abilities exemplified receiving recognition from others.

They recognized my talents and supported me and encouraged me - a wonderful agency - they were so supportive and so encouraging and believed in me, they know that I could do it. They saw it in me before the program, but after the program I saw it in myself (Interviewee #30).

Interviewees relayed accounts of others believing in them before they believed in themselves. By receiving positive affirmations and feedback, interviewees were able to align their external image with their internal perception. Several interviewees shared experiences of others seeing their potential before they saw it within themselves.

It's funny I just, in 2008, they published a synopsis of feedback from other managers and I got what we call a Morey Stone award here at [my company] for sales and the things that people said were my direction was clear, my willingness to help was always there, my personality was positive and steady and I know my wife wouldn't necessarily agree. So, having said all that, I would say most of the time, in the business world, at least, what I just said is true. Willingness to help, clear direction, details, process use, which were lacking in the past and frankly that's not unanimous either (Interviewee #4)!

Receiving specific feedback and affirmation emphasized what the interviewee was doing well. The interviewee acknowledged that he did not always incorporate aforementioned practices and realized the impact the actions had on others when

he did. The recognition underscored behaviors and encouraged the interviewees to continue practicing the behavior due to the positive reinforcement (Interviewee #4, Interviewee #7).

Receiving positive recognition from leaders encouraged the interviewees and provided the interviewees with added resources to accomplish their jobs.

So, he was asking me to work with him on the management group and [the CEO] was asking me to be a consultant with the board of governors. So getting affirmation from the top two officers of the management team of [the organization] made me feel pretty good. And another that was helpful, the COO who at the time was having a tremendous problem and said, 'I like what you said, I need your help. Can you work with me on a regular basis to straighten up some of these issues?' There were some matters with the board of governors, there were some matters with management. Without that support and top leadership understanding and supporting these kinds of efforts, then it doesn't happen (Interviewee #2).

The senior leaders of the organization acknowledged the interviewee by soliciting his help. The acknowledgement also supported the interviewee in his change efforts. The allocation of human resources, funds and creative support were offered as a result of leader recognition.

There is the customer that I see as an influence maker or the customer who was in charge was generous and was highly skilled in solutions as well as my divisional VP and the national sales VP - their kind of support, as far as budget, as far as ideas, as far as their enabling a number of departments within [the company] to do things specifically for this customer that we didn't do for other customers. (Interviewee #4).

Leaders believed in the interviewee and recognized him by providing financial and human resources to support the project. The invitation to participate in new projects or in new roles, receiving positive feedback for others, and having resources allocated by leaders were indicators of doing good work. The recognition served as a catalyst for the

interviewees to sustain their positive transformation.

4.3.6 Being a valuable resource to others:

Being a valuable resource to others was believed to be a fundamental tenet of OD. This is to say that the interviewees saw their primary objective, as OD practitioners, to support and empower individuals, groups and organizations.

The interviewees were resources in supporting change processes by goal setting, developing strategy and helping others to clearly communicate their goals and objectives. These were opportunities to make contributions and help others (Interviewee #27).

We watched people go through this change process where they would be very anxious and then all of a sudden you'd orient them [then] they would get their flow down and you get their boots on and get them used to it. It was immediate gratification. It wasn't that long of a cycle and then the celebration at the end. We had a grand opening, and there was a lot to celebrate so there was lots of hard work and lots of feelings of accomplishment (Interviewee #15).

Observing the change process, helping ease anxiety and orienting people to the change positioned the interviewee as a valuable resource in the change process.

An integral part of being a valuable resource was empowering others to be self-reliant and to see their full potential. The interviewees worked with clients to make them more aware of their own self-empowerment (Interviewee #18). It was a matter of building their confidence and having them own their process (Interviewee #18).

One of the things I really liked that OD valued and I valued in the work is that I don't go into organizations and tell them what to do, I value that they have the human resources in the organization to figure that out, that

they just want me to come in and help them bring the abilities together to figure that out (Interviewee #17).

Entering the organization with the operating assumption that the strengths and resources that will help the organization lie within the organization set a tone of empowerment.

I am not the one that prescribes the need, I work with you to help you find the answer and so that was, once I became clear with what was needed to happen and the managers spoke to the changes that needed to occur, then I could work with them in how to get there. I'm not managing change. It becomes an evolution in working with them (Interviewee #16).

The onus of the group's work was the group's not the interviewee. The interviewee's role was to support the group in their process thus empowering the group.

Interviewees experienced being resources because of their expertise, for example, being able to make a difference in the organization (Interviewee #27), as someone "who could help their lives" (Interviewee #18) or because of their candor that moved the organization into a new level of awareness (Interviewee #5). Their competence and confidence were rewarded.

She actually said in my performance review that I actually was a resource to her in that position. She knew social work, she knew outreach, she knew the perinatal area but I really helped her understand the dynamics of the behaviors because she didn't understand how some of them could be that way (Interviewee #17).

In this example, the interviewee's knowledge and assessment of group dynamics made her a valuable resource to her manager.

They are forging their lives to helping others. And I was so honored that, number one, they thought it was something I could do of value and they were so eager to learn. So eager! That was the most exciting thing. Not only did they think that we could bring something of use to them but they were right there with us, asking questions, pushing us (Interviewee #23).

Inherent in being valued as a resource was the belief that interviewees had skills, talents,

knowledge and abilities that would have a positive impact on the individual, group, or organization.

Supporting and empowering others and being valued as resources were how others contributed to the interviewees continuing to build and sustain their positive transformation.

The Environments Where Interviewees Thrived

4.3.7 Supportive, Thriving Environments:

Environmental factors influenced the interviewees' ability to practice and sustain their positive transformation. Environment, in this context, refers to the types of people with whom the interviewees were engaged, the places where they practiced their skills and their ability to foster supportive relationships. The types of people were as important as where the interviewees utilized their skills. The individual qualities possessed by others in the supportive, thriving environments were having a willingness to collaborate along with a willingness to partner in mutual learning.

Collaboration appeared in the data in two forms: (1) how individuals engaged and collaborated with interviewees, and (2) how interviewees created collaborative relationships to support their clients' goals and objectives.

One was the senior leaders that I very much needed to help accelerate. They were open, active, learners and they allowed me to influence and teach them about possibilities and then they engaged in them and then we worked together collectively on it. And, they became tremendous catalysts for the change, setting aspirational goals and really leading the organization (Interviewee #31).

The senior leadership team allowed the interviewee to offer a different perspective on their situation. The interviewee's ideas were embraced and utilized. Collectively, they were able to forge new pathways. The next example highlights the collaborative strength of interviewee as a co-facilitator.

One was my partner [Judy] because it was very collaborative in real time and she is very focused and total confidence in each other and a great

colleague-ship, lack of competition. It was about the collaboration. It wasn't about having more time in front or whatever. So, it was a great partnership. I'm more of a partnership than a one-man show person. And other people being engaged with us and not just going through the motions. [The group] was really debating points, expressing concerns, hopes, ideas and a very collegial feeling in the room, not personal agendas at all, not people holding out or holding back. We had worked with them for a very long time. We had worked with them in various ways by supporting their directorate and implementing change efforts and I think we probably worked with them as a group before. I think it was that all the stars aligned (Interviewee #6).

Here the interviewee worked with a co-facilitator to lead a strategic planning process with a group that was engaged and committed to the process. The co-facilitators' collaboration strengthened the group's process.

Mutual learning, another property of this category, was described by interviewees as learning from others and their work while others learned from them (Interviewee #18).

It all has to do with that appreciative stance so bringing up and trying to develop partnerships, knowing that they will be listened to and knowing that when I'm listening to them, the influence I'll try to have on them is to facilitate their conversation with me so we'll both be in a learning and exploration mode and not a judgment mode (Interviewee #12).

Mutual exploration resulted in mutual benefit with interviewees and their clients leaving with new awarenesses (Interviewee #23).

Collaboration manifested in two forms: others willingness to collaborate with interviewees and the interviewees collaborating to better serve their clients. Mutual learning fostered between the interviewee and their clients were open and cyclical with both parties gaining new awarenesses. Collaboration and engaging in mutual learning were characteristics describing the people in the supportive, striving environments.

Another aspect of the category is organized around where the interviewees could apply their OD skills. Interviewees found that working throughout the United States & abroad, in profit or not-for-profit organizations, afforded them the opportunity to effectively apply their skills and abilities in diverse settings.

Interviewees employed within organizations found that they could utilize their skills within their corporation as a value-added contribution to help the organization achieve its goals and objectives.

It's been an amazingly great win/win proposition because the benefit I'm gaining at [the company] in Leadership Development, I could use with other clients. And vice versa, I'm with different companies and different clients literally throughout Ohio, throughout the country and internationally, and I'm bringing all that into [this company] (Interviewee #7).

The organization benefitted from the interviewee's accumulated knowledge from the exchange of ideas gathered across client systems. The organization, one of Cleveland's largest employers, worked with the interviewee to create a flexible work schedule suitable for the interviewee and that benefitted the organization. This was a corporate example. The next example is from the not-for-profit sector.

So, in the various modules that I created, I created an outdoor experience for the children, where they would actually go through the woods role playing and role play through the experience of escaping. They would meet some of the people along the way of the Underground Railroad. They would experience some of the highs and lows of actually being on the run (Interviewee #1).

This example highlights how the interviewee utilized creativity, organizational development and educational skills to provide an outdoor theatrical experience for

children. Funds were raised, ideas developed and stakeholders meetings were facilitated to make the project possible. Other interviewees utilized their OD skills within church communities (Interviewee #22), during political campaigns (Interviewee #16), and traveling to organizations on the East and West coasts (Interviewee #8). The types of organizations, industries, locations and sectors spanned the gamut. The variety of locales allowed interviewees to practice their OD skills in diverse settings both strengthening their skill set and sustaining their positive transformation.

Healthy relationships built on trust accompanied by a client's readiness for change helped interviewees thrive in diverse settings. Interviewees felt more connected to the project and people within the organization when the client and interviewee built rapport, (Interviewee #21, Interviewee #18, Interviewee #11, Interviewee #32).

I always say that the thing that makes me feel extra connected or where it's really going into a relationship is when they see me as well as a person, not just as a resource (Interviewee #23).

Building client relationships lent itself to greater collaboration.

So, on occasion she was just firing things out as possibly remedies that she wanted [my company] to do and I remember thinking that what she really needs are tools and what she really needs are actionable results and feedback so I basically asked her the questions to get her to say she agreed we needed tools, she agreed, we needed actionable types of challenges and as a result, the outcome was one that was workable for me and her and I think we had a, well I know we had a good relationship, a good business that was successful... Well, when somebody's willing to go to lunch with you in a business relationship or go to dinner with you or wants to come to see your headquarters or wants to basically get together for business meetings, calls up her peers in the other six divisions to demonstrate to them or to give them good sources and references with her superiors or peers that was all good (Interviewee #4).

The relationship grew as a result of the interviewee listening to the client then responding

to their needs. The interviewees and their clients worked well together when there was a positive rapport and trust was established. The client shared internal resources and the interviewees could be creative and develop new opportunities because of their collaboration. Simultaneously, the client was open to change.

An organization's readiness and willingness to change influenced the interviewee's effectiveness.

We have about 300 employees, as opposed to 36,000 employees, which is an incredible number to try to do anything with I think the size of the organization and makeup of our senior staff. Most of the people here are fairly new, starting within the last couple of years, 2 - 3 years at the most, so [my organization] as a whole is going through a transformation in terms of ways of doing business and ways of looking at the world (Interviewee #25).

The size of the organization, having a new leadership team and the awareness of external influences that impact the business postured the organization to seek new ways of operating. These conditions increased the organization's capacity for change and the receptivity of the interviewee's perspective. A client's willingness to change can be a determinant of when and if the change will occur.

I think it would have to be a kind of system that recognizes that something needs to shift, and usually that something is wrong, but it's also a client, a person who is very willing to look at the positive parts of that so they're not so problem oriented that they can't get shaken out of it, the mindset. Cause you know that there are just downer people with downer systems that are just, we have to problem solve all the time cause it's this and it's that and it's never ending, it will never get better, so we'll throw some money at it and try to change it, but it won't. So, it's gotta be the kind of person in the situation that can see some hope and is willing to look at things positively (Interviewee #29).

Interviewees found that working with clients who could see the positive aspects of change and were aware (or made aware) of a need to shift created environments where

interviewees could thrive.

Working with supportive people willing to collaborate, working in diverse settings, developing trusting relationships and working with clients ready for change were qualities of a supportive, thriving environment where the interviewees' sustained their positive transformation.

Each phase of the interviewees' MOD/MPOD experiences provided detailed insights as to how the program and its community members fostered positive transformation. The experience equipped the interviewees with skills, knowledge, self-confidence, self-awareness and social support that they could incorporate into their personal and professional lives after the program. Consequently, they also discovered ways to reinforce, deepen and sustain their positive transformation over time.

In Chapter 5, Meaning and Conceptual Insights, I provide a diagram that portrays how the categories and themes from each phase of the interviewees' transformative process interconnect. In addition, I formulate conceptual propositions that further broaden our understanding of positive transformation.

5 Meaning and Conceptual Insights

The data and thematic descriptions presented in Chapter 4 comprise a group level narrative of the positive transformative experiences of the MOD/MPOD graduates. Having this information one might ask, what does this mean and what new knowledge derives from the study regarding positive transformation? This chapter attends to these questions. I begin the chapter with a Figure 1 The Positive Transformation Summary. It represents the interviewees' positive transformative process. I follow with a description of the overall process and propositions that provide meaning and conceptual insights regarding positive transformation.

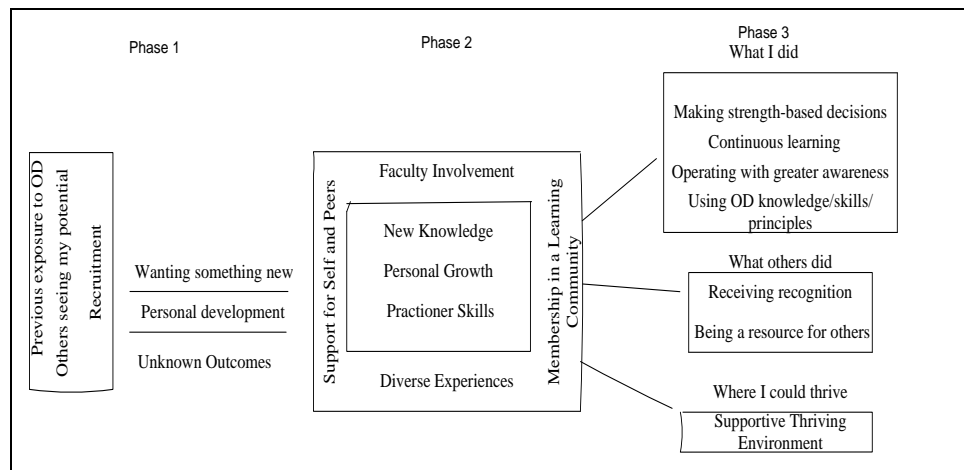


Figure 1: The Positive Transformation Summary

In P1, the interviewees pursued and were introduced to the MOD/MPOD program via three vehicles: previous exposure to OD, others seeing and acknowledging their potential to perform OD functions and recruitment efforts. Their identifiable wants, goals and/or

desires upon entering the program were to create new personal and professional opportunities. Personally, they wanted opportunities to engage in meaningful work, to positively impact others lives and to integrate their knowledge and skills into what they did in and outside of work. Professionally, some wanted graduate degrees to advance or change their career trajectory. Another faction wanted to perform OD functions within their current workplaces. Finally, there were interviewees who entered the program unaware of what they wanted or what to expect.

During P2, the interviewees acquired new knowledge, experienced personal growth and gained practioner skills. Their acquired knowledge centered on new concepts, ideas and perspectives central to the OD field, i.e. Appreciative Inquiry, Emotional Intelligence, OD Theory, Assessment and Development. Practitioner skills were learned and honed in P2: group facilitation, conflict management skills, project management, creative problem-solving, etc. Acquiring new knowledge and skills with opportunities to practice them helped develop the interviewees' comfort, competencies and proficiencies in OD. Personal growth in the form of self-awareness, self-confidence and personal change was the third component of development during P2.

New knowledge acquisition, skills development and personal growth occurred within the learning community. It provided mutual support, had faculty engagement/involvement and offered diverse experiences to enhance the interviewees' development. It their interpersonal relationships in the context of the supportive learning community is where

interviewees' experienced individual transformation that allowed them to change, flourish and offered their first glimpse of positive transformation.

Finally, in the post-graduate stage (P3), the interviewees' identified factors that contributed to sustaining their positive transformation over time. Their responses clustered into three groups: what the interviewees did (their personal contributions to sustaining positive transformation), what others did and the interviewees' ability to identify environments where they could thrive.

Four factors identify what interviewees did to sustain their positive transformation. They made personal and professional strength-based decisions about their lives empowered them and helping to sustain their positive transformation. They committed to continued learning after graduation by networking with other MOD/MPOD grads, attended classes, workshops, conferences and lectures which afforded them opportunities to enhance their OD repertoire. Reuniting with former classmates, meeting other graduates and learning from them rejuvenated and created positive relationship. Having a better sense of their skills and abilities (self-confidence), being conscience of how they impacted individuals, groups and/or organizations (other focused), being grateful to do work that positively impacted others (gratitude) and being purposeful about their values and operating from this stance were ways that the interviewees demonstrated operating with greater awareness and gratitude. This leads to the final contribution interviewees made in sustaining their positive transformation. The continued use of their OD knowledge, skills

and principles reinforced their competence in these areas and allowed them to become more adept at using them.

Others also contributed in sustaining the interviewees' positive transformation.

Interviewees received positive feedback when offered new job roles, responsibilities and projects. When the interviewees were catalysts for change, by encouraging individuals, groups & organizations to value themselves as resources, those impacted saw the interviewees as adding value to their OD change process. As a result, the interviewees felt acknowledged, encouraged and validated by the feedback.

Wow, this will probably be much more difficult to answer if I hadn't just had a conversation with actually one of my students who came to me with some concerns and said, 'The reason I'm coming to you (because I'm not her advisor or anything) is because you can walk the walk and this is not just your job but what you believe in and this is what you really do'' (Interviewee #12).

The third characteristic that helped interviewees sustain their positive transformation was developing the ability to identify and discern conditions where they could thrive.

Working with supportive individuals willing to collaborate, utilizing their skills and abilities in diverse settings, developing trusting relationships and working with clients ready for change created conditions conducive for sustained and growing positive transformation.

5.1 Proposition #1

High-Quality Connections (HQCs) provide the relational conditions for Individual Transformation to take place.

Individual transformation during Phase 2 of the interviewees' positive transformative experience occurred due to the curriculum, diverse experiences and the relationships between classmates and faculty members. Proposition #1 examines the types of connections that made their individual transformation possible.

Berscheid & Lopes (1997) stated that a connection is the dynamic, living tissue that exists between two people when there is some contact between them involving mutual awareness and social interaction. "The existence of some interaction means that individuals have affected one another in some way, giving connections a temporal as well as an emotional dimension" (Dutton & Heaphy, 2003). Dutton and Heaphy's (2003) research distinguished the quality of connections by assessing its life-giving or life-depleting properties. Life-giving, HQCs allowed the transfer of "vital nutrients, it is flexible, strong and resilient" whereas low-quality connections have communication, interaction, and perhaps an interdependency but the "connective tissue is damaged" (Dutton Heaphy, 2003). I introduce the concept of HQCs because I posit that HQCs were instrumental in creating relational conditions for individual transformation to occur.

Dutton and Heaphy (2003) identified three indicators for assessing the power of HQCs between individuals: emotional carrying capacity, tensility and degree of connectivity. Emotional carrying capacity is evidenced when there is safety to display an array of emotions, increased emotion and/or communicate positive or negative emotions (Dutton & Heaphy, 2003). This definition acknowledges that there is room within emotional carrying capacity to experience an array of emotions crossing the gamut; not purely positive emotions but negative emotions also. Tensility relates to the capacity of the connection to bend, withstand strain and to function in a variety of circumstances. It is the feature of the connection that indicates its resilience or the capacity to bounce back after setbacks (Dutton & Heaphy, 2003). Degree of connectivity is measured by the relationship's generativity and openness to new ideas and influences. In addition, its ability to deflect behaviors that will shut down generative processes (Losada, 1999).

These characteristics closely parallel the types of interactions/connections the interviewees described during and after their positive transformative experiences. Indeed, safety was exemplified when interviewees shared autobiographical information with their classmates while staying open to their comments, questions and feedback. They demonstrated vulnerability in soliciting and giving feedback to community members and, later, clients. Interviewees experienced interpersonal conflicts in their Family Groups, Project Groups and T-Group experiences. In some cases, relationships were fractured. In other situations, interviewees were able to build meaningful relationships with individual with whom they had conflict. The recovery from their conflicts was indicative of the

tensility of their connections. Generativity and openness to new ideas and influences were also present.

Throughout my course I was getting feedback from the day I started to the day I left from peers and friends and people that knew me well through the program and even outside of the program. Even though you're asking about what was happening during the high point, that feedback stayed with me very, very strongly. I came into the MOD program with a lesser degree of self-assurance and self-confidence and I portrayed more self-assurance and self-confidence than I really had internally and so people in MOD and other people were shocked to hear me even say that. But, after 2 years of the program they sort of got it and saw where my struggles were, especially my family group and people that I had a lot of interaction with about the autobiography and their feedback was everything that I needed and more to blow this out of the water: to work in OD, to go out on my own, whatever that meant. And that feedback was very much what I needed to make the high point decision to go out on my own and to get the skills (Interviewee #7).

This interviewee speaks to how generative feedback from multiple individuals influenced his decision-making process to become an independent OD consultant.

Some of the people I remember pushing me the most in the OD program were those who didn't think I had searched far enough or had gone far enough so there was this drive to find the best answers. I think that's where some of my passion comes from; a passion for making things better than many of my colleagues use (Interviewee #29).

I believe this account exemplifies the degree of connectivity the interviewee had with classmates and instructors that allowed her to be influenced by their input. These quotes describe their HQCs.

Dutton and Heaphy (2003) use four theoretical lenses to explain the power of HQC's: exchange, identity, growth and knowledge.

The exchange lens argues that HQCs matter by endowing individuals with resources that are useful and valuable. The identity perspective highlights the role that HQCs play in co-creating the meaning that employees [interviewees] can and do make of themselves and of the organization. A growth perspective showcases how relationships with others literally develop employees [interviewees] in the direction of their potentiality and health as human beings. Finally, a learning perspective focuses on relationships as micro-contexts for knowing (Dutton & Heaphy, 2003).

The four theoretical lenses become pertinent to this study when comparing the lenses to where the interviewees were in their lives when searching for the MOD/MPOD program, what they wanted from their academic experiences and what they gained from MOD/MPOD. In order to correlate the concepts and interviewees' experiences, I discuss the four theoretical lenses supported by interview data.

The basis of the exchange lens is endowing individuals with resources that are useful and valuable to others. Quotes taken from P1 indicated that interviewees wanted to gain skills to be a resource to their organizations.

Our organization was in kind of a transitional period as well. We were kind of going through a couple different changes in leadership and I thought that I needed to build my own level of skill and knowledge base to be able to deal with some of things to help the organization out (Interviewee #28).

Being narcissistic, I just wanted recognition at [work] that I was a good person that had something different to offer. So, it was really pretty narcissistic. The heart and sole of the [workplace] was getting bigger and financially growing (Interviewee #2).

These interviewees pursued their academic endeavors to gain personal skills and abilities to support and be recognized as assets to their organizations. "The building of HQCs improves the flow and rate of valued resource exchange, which further cements and

deepens the dyadic connection” (Dutton & Heaphy, 2003). Coursework and practical skills development provided the interviewees with the ability to impact their organization while HQCs provided opportunities to embody how they would present themselves as valued resources to individuals, groups or organizations.

It gave me a completely new set of tools, insights, ways of thinking, even ways of behaving with people professionally and socially, understanding what makes us tick and also seeing issues but also finding ways of finding solutions to those issues (Interviewee #26).

The long term benefit of the exchange lens was that repeated interactions would create new, valued resources, i.e. trust, power or influence, that shaped future patterns for exchange (Dutton & Heaphy, 2003).

HQCs served another purpose when viewed through an identity lens. From this perspective, HQCs contributed to the co-construction of identities valued by organizational members themselves (Dutton & Heaphy, 2003). The organization and its members referenced here means the MOD/MPOD students and faculty members. HQCs afforded the opportunity and the psychological safety (Kahn, 1990) to explore alternative identities and to craft identities that an interviewee felt was worthwhile, that fit who employees [interviewees] are or who they wish to become (Dutton & Heaphy, 2003).

Exploring and pursuing the identity of an OD practitioner were the interviewees’ intentions upon entering the program.

It was a hope to have a better understanding of how to effect change; how to effect change within an organization. I didn’t have organizational development background or good theory or anything about it. I didn’t have anything specific to say, ‘This is what I want to do.’ It just was very, very intriguing (Interviewee #10).

I don't even remember, when I got in, I said, when it started coming to me what it is, I saw it as an opportunity to bring together a lot of what I realized I already knew but didn't have a framework for it (Interviewee #17).

The HQCs developed within the program permitted interviewees to explore various dimensions of their identities, particularly as OD practitioner, along with where and how they would practice. In some instances, HQCs helped interviewees create valued identities by deriving positive meaning about what they were currently doing (Dutton & Heaphy, 2003).

MPOD was like a reinforcer for me of what it is to be a human being because I remember when going through it, a lot of it talked about personal development and being great with people. And I already knew I was that way going into the program so a lot of the stuff on understanding and listening - that was just reinforced through MPOD because I could see how those things are important. It allowed me to see how those things are important in business (Interviewee #14)

Deriving positive meaning from their current identities, creating opportunities for identity exploration and having support to explore possibilities were expressed desires upon entering the program and were achieved via the HQCs developed while in the program.

The growth lens was activated by providing growth-fostering connections, secure bases of attachment for care-giving and developmental relationships (Dutton & Heaphy, 2003).

Interviewees entered the program wanting personal and professional growth opportunities.

There seems to be a very strong parallel of my personal with my professional growth that if I remember what I'm telling you. I don't know how to capture that in a few words but that was my need and motivation and what drove my motivation to success is recognizing at age 40 that I

needed to do some things for myself to ensure higher quality of life, and I'm not talking about material things (Interviewee #26).

So, I think for myself, personally, the decision to undertake the program, which I considered it to be something I just did for me. I've done a lot of family, my kids are all grown, [I] spent years of money and time on everybody, this is something I just want to do for myself. That was probably the beginning of the transformation, starting to look at doing things for myself and then my own individual growth within that in time (Interviewee #25).

Human growth occurs and action is enabled through mutually empathetic and mutually empowering connections, "where both people engage with authentic thoughts, feelings and responses" (Miller & Stiver, 1997). In addition, when one or more care-giving behaviors are part of a connection, they can become the basis for personal growth and development (Dutton & Heaphy, 2003). Interviewees described their personal growth and development occurring in the context of mutually supportive, loving relationships.

I think that the people that I was engaged with the most in the MOD program were people that were also open to their own personal transformation. I think all but one of them came into the program to develop functional skills to be a change agent. Only one of them was really searching how she could develop herself, but between that particular person and the other people I engaged with the most, it was all of us really being open to developing those skills and going well beyond that. The quality of staying curious: people who were willing to stay curious and test the limits and boundaries and be very loving and caring of other people. That was huge. You don't go through these mind philosophical shifts without becoming ungrounded and kind of scared. So, there's a huge love and support (Interviewee #12).

Interviewee # 30 said of her experience:

I think what I gained most was confidence. I found a program that really excited me and I felt like I fit. I felt like I belonged there, like I fit there and I got a lot of confidence.

The interviewees expressed feeling loved, supported and belonging as they grew and developed within the program. I would offer that these feeling states were a direct result of the HQCs established within the program.

The fourth lens focuses on learning. This lens suggests that there exists within HQCs opportunities to acquire, develop and experiment with new knowledge and/or ways of being. Dutton and Heaphy (2003) present two theoretical explanations as to how HQCs affect learning.

First, connections can function as vessels in which knowledge is passed from one person to another; in an HQC, knowledge is absorbed faster, more completely, and with the quality of the connection intact or enhanced (Lampert, 2001; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 2000). Second, knowledge is constituted in interaction between people, with HQCs being more generative, heedful, and flexible (Losada, 1999; Miller & Stiver, 1997; Weick & Roberts, 1993).

Interviewees entered the program eager to learn. “I was going for the learning and I was really about learning from my classmates, learning from my professors and just soaking it in” (Interviewee #3). “I had some clear expectations about wanting to learn more about leadership and motivating people and changing organizations” (Interviewee #30).

Learning concepts, theories and skills were certainly aspects of their learning process.

Learning from others with whom they had HQCs unleashed alternative insights and additional ways of learning.

I think the faculty and the closeness of the group, as diverse as we were, we felt or developed a trust that wasn't judgmental and that each of us could take what we needed to fit our very diverse lives, life styles and professional life, I think that's rare (Interviewee #26).

So, if you've got faculty and other learners around you helping you make sense of what's going on, with the intentionality that we just don't find out there [in general society]. So, in a sense, when we're in school, paying

attention at a different level, there is much more potential for deeper learning, it's a huge difference... It's lessons that served us well and will for the rest of our lives (Interviewee #29).

I think it was affirming to see others think the same about themselves as well as me. When you take as an example [my classmate], because we both know her, she would say things that she would mirror what I was thinking and others were thinking in our family group or the class and you would just find that validated or made you feel there was worth to that (Interviewee #4).

Taking what they needed to learn, paying attention at deeper levels and receiving validation due to a shared understanding, evolved from HQCs with faculty members, classmates and the intimacy of the group that supported their learning.

The interviewee's quotes make explicit their wants and desires upon entering the MOD/MPOD programs. The four theoretical lenses underscored how HQCs with faculty members and classmates helped to achieve their goals. The curriculum provided models, tools and theories pertinent to OD. Yet, HQCs born from engaging in activities together, collaborative learning and caring for one another provided conditions to actualize interviewees' wants and for Individual Transformation to take place.

5.2 Proposition #2

Individual Transformation represents the internal and external shifts in identity needed to align one's self-concept.

HQCs provided the context for transformation to take place. I contend that internal and external shifts in identity, or individual transformation, were needed to align one's self-concept. Individual transformation hinged on three factors: identity work, identity growth and positive identity.

Identity work encompassed the cognitive, affective and/or behavioral tactics undertaken to “create, present, and sustain” personal identities that were congruent with and supportive of their self-concept (Kreiner & Sheep, 2009; Snow & Anderson, 1987). Self-concept, in this instance, was the alignment and embodiment of ideas, values, beliefs, skills and practices associated with OD.

What I hoped to learn and gain were actually what I ended up with was a new operating system for myself, if you will, a new contact that I could use as a fundamental knowledge and learning that I have that I could apply (Interviewee #31).

The field’s emphasis of self as change agent, and you better have your own shit together before you mess in other peoples stuff, that made sense to me, it jived with my experience in health care social service that you can give people all the advice you want to give and they’re gonna do what they chose to do, the advice only makes sense if it’s coming from them (Interviewee #29).

This interviewee explained what she gained most from the MOD program.

A better understanding of people and the ability to step back from process and analyze what’s really going on, which leads me to be a better colleague and better able to assess situations and be able to create winning situations within the workplace (Interviewee #3).

Adopting new operating systems, shifting control that allowed others to make their own decisions, and “stepping back” to gain a better understand of others were pathways toward aligning one’s self-concept with being an OD practitioner. Interviewees created internal and external congruence.

The interplay between identity growth and self-awareness reduced gaps between the interviewees' expected/ideal and perceived/real identities (Kreiner, Hollensbe, & Sheep, 2006).

I think it was the appreciation; the program organized, materialized something I think which was budding in me to shift from a complete left brain thinker to getting in touch with right brain thoughts, relationships, and my spiritual side (Interviewee #2).

People were telling me I wasn't as mean to them! People said 'you've changed,' in terms of always having this aggression in terms of I don't care, I'm out of here. And now I'm stepping back and really seeing that all situations, just because I may not like it, doesn't mean I'm not in the right place but about how I work through it and thinking about the pros and cons and having the ability to recognize that and knowing where I need to make adjustments (Interviewee #13).

Kreiner and Sheep (2009) defined identity growth as the progressive increases in the competence, resilience, authenticity, transcendence and holistic integration of one's self-concept, coupled with decreases in perceptual discrepancies between real and ideal selves. According to Kreiner and Sheep (2009), a reduction in the gap/tension translated to growth and achieving a desired identity that is more positive. The first interviewee described a shift toward becoming more relational and spiritual. The second interviewee described looking at situations holistically versus being dismissive. These shifts were progressive increases that diminished discrepancies between how the interviewees behaved and how they wanted to engage with others.

When positivity is added to identity growth, positive identity is created.

They describe an idealized state of self-concept toward which individuals may strive, consistent with the assumptions of positive psychology and positive organizational behavior – i.e., that benefits derive from a concept

of self focused on developing personal strengths in harmony with one's environment rather than only 'fixing' pathologies or weaknesses of the self (Kreiner & Sheep, 2009; Luthans, 2002; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

Kreiner and Sheep (2009) define positive identity as an identity that is competent, resilient, authentic, transcendent and holistically integrated; differing from identity growth that demonstrated increases in these areas. Competence is the ability to function "efficaciously and harmoniously" in one's world (Kreiner & Sheep, 2009).

I knew what I could bring, I could bring myself. Coming in, I knew who I was, I think and just really connecting with that group of people on that level. I also knew that at the end when I started wrapping things up, I knew what I was getting out of it, I knew where I was going with it (Interviewee #10).

Resilience is the ability to adapt, cope and grow in beneficial ways through adverse circumstances (Kreiner & Sheep, 2009).

How do you engage in conflict and not brush past it in your group or think that this is just one project, 'I will get past it.' If we don't continue to do what I think we did extremely well in my experience [managing conflict], then we're no different than an MBA program or anything else (Interviewee #23).

Sutcliffe and Vogus (2003) believed that resilience is developed through experiences of confronting adverse circumstances including identity threats. Authenticity is the subjective experience of alignment between one's internal experiences and external expression (Kreiner & Sheep, 2009).

The pathways to authenticity include 'deepening self-awareness' (via individuating from others and their expectations, and crafting a coherent narrative of oneself), 'peeling off [socially prescribed] masks' to reveal one's true self, and receiving 'authentication' or social affirmation of oneself. Authenticity, in turn promotes the experience of "eudaimonia" – "an optimal state of well being" – and a self-construal of oneself as an authentic person (Ashforth, 2009).

Authenticity manifested in the ways that interviewees made themselves vulnerable in the face of their classmates and group members. Interviewees' revealed aspects of themselves by shedding layers of their identities and removing social masks, i.e. sharing their autobiographies, working through personal conflict, as well as sharing their hopes, dreams and fears with one another. Transcendence refers to a connection to something greater than oneself (Kreiner & Sheep, 2009). Mirvis (1997) sited that transcendence is facilitated when individuals view their work as "a web of relationships... in a larger context that makes it meaningful." Transcendence is increasingly self-defined in terms of greater than oneself (Ashforth & Pratt, 2003).

I knew I wanted to do work with people, and help them to make a difference and I didn't know at all how this program was going to do that for me. And, I liked it. I liked what I was learning. I wasn't going to drop out because it wasn't what I thought it was going to be (Interviewee #17).

Helping others tap into their strengths (Interviewee #18), supporting others to be the best that they can be (Interviewee #21) and making a difference (Interviewee #17) - were vision-driven statements that linked interviewees to causes greater than themselves. Finally, holistic integration is bringing all of oneself, his or her entirety, to work, relationships and interactions. Holistic integration "can be further subdivided into two dimensions, being realized as individuals seek growth toward a self-concept progressively marked by (a) identity integration (coherence) and (b) wholeness (completeness)" (Kreiner & Sheep, 2009).

I've gone from being bossy and overly directive to really living and being inclusive and collaborative. I think in everything you have to have a balance and a big challenge for me especially through the journey was, some of my professions but not as much especially since more people know about appreciative inquiry, but in the relationships that I have with my son, on my son's behalf a lot of times, I still have to have the first encounter of having the spirit of being much more directive and much

more like, 'if you don't do what I say, there'll be a consequence' but to have a posture of let me help you understand (Interviewee #12).

The interviewee's example demonstrates how she integrated Appreciative Inquiry into her relationship with her son and when advocating on her son's behalf.

So, to use the things that I am learning about myself here [at work] does carry over into my personal life in terms of leadership and things I learn about myself that then is carried over to my personal life. It is a constant learning period. For example, last night, I was working with a bright, sharp, 25 year old. A client family sent him in - 25 or 26 year old. Working with them and understanding how they think and building their confidence and that sort of thing, is a way of learning that carries over into my understanding of young people that I can apply to young people in my life (Interviewee #19).

Holistic integration allows for learning in one situation and integrating the learning in another context.

It's all hard for me to separate personal from professional because I would usually be able to do that before MOD but post-MOD, that's hard for me to do. So that's even a theme right there. Also, it's an indication of, I think, I'm doing the right thing for me now professionally - that I see them as one and I see them together and I don't have to have a stark separation between one and the other (Interviewee #7).

Holistic integration also represents the fusion of one's personal and professional life.

Identity work, identity growth and positive identity development encompass shifts in identity that comprise individual transformation. Individual transformation was made possible due to the conditions provided by HQCs.

5.3 Proposition #3

Self-Awareness is expanded and deepened through experiences with diverse others, diverse learning modalities and experiencing oneself in diverse contexts.

Self-awareness was an intended outcome of the program's curriculum design and interviewees stated wants. By all accounts, this objective was achieved. Fifteen of the thirty-two participants discussed greater self-awareness as an outcome of their academic program. In response to the question, what did you gain most from the MPOD program?

An interviewee responded:

I think a sense of self. You always kind of have this notion of being with yourself all the time and because you're with yourself, you know yourself. I think the program helped me to understand who I was from the context of where I've been, where I was when I started the program and then where I would like to be after the fact (Interviewee #13).

Natsoulas (1991) describes self-awareness as:

I newly learn or remind myself, on a firsthand basis (not from hearsay), about the kind of person I am in one or another specific respect... I newly learn or remind myself of this, from having witnessed relevant actions I performed or experiences I had, and by now bringing this evidence to bear on how I conceive of myself, in terms of a trait or ability I therefore consider myself to possess, on perhaps other grounds as well.

Being conscious of oneself is self-awareness. Natsoulas (1998) found that whenever instances of consciousness raising took place that one or more of the following conditions were present:

1. One witnesses potential evidence about oneself.
2. One has inner awareness of this witnessing.
3. One has occurrent awareness in thought of one or more features of one's character or personality
4. One brings self-witnessed evidence to bear in judging of this feature or these features

This study bears witness to three aspects of diversity that added to the interviewees' self-awareness: engaging with individuals who were different from themselves, the use of multiple learning modalities and seeing the utility of their OD skills in non-US contexts.

The interviewees discovered different aspects of who they were as individuals when engaging with others (classmates, instructors, or clients) who were different from themselves. Their self-awarenesses were evidenced in noticing and interacting with individual differences in personality types, life experiences and world views. These were identity defining experiences because the interactions surfaced identities and values that were important to them (James, 1890; Roccas & Brewer, 2002; Rosenberg, 1997). For example, Interviewee #3 had classmates ranging from age 25 – 60 and represented diverse professions. Interviewee #19 discussed being one of six females in a class of 36 students. Both examples were identity defining moments whereby the interviewees learned from their classmates via experiences that were different from their own. The experiences helped to clarify who the interviewee was, what he/she valued and the ability to view life from other perspectives.

So I learned to appreciate a lot of different perspectives and understand that people from different walks of life who grew up much differently than I did also had something important to say; also had experiences to share that would help me grow (Interviewee #3).

Identity abrasions also increased the interviewees' understanding of themselves. Identity abrasions were encounters that resulted in diminished feelings regarding how much others valued or respected the individual (Ely, Meyerson, & Davidson, 2006).

Interviewee #13 discussed how she and another classmate differed along multiple

dimensions of diversity that resulted in identity abrasions surrounding work identities and tenure within the workforce. In each situation, the interviewees became more aware of themselves and their differences with others which resulted in new information and learning.

The use of various learning modalities also served to increase self-awareness. As students, the interviewees completed self-inventories, wrote autobiographies, worked individually, in pairs and in groups (family groups, project groups and T-Groups) as well as having practicum experiences in organizations that were different from their own.

And the last thing I think that is critical, and if that's a wish list I'm going to say it - because I could care less about budget or time or whatever - that the T-group be brought back because I know you don't have that now but I think that was a fundamental part of the experience. You're there and you're not going anywhere and you have people there to support you and guide you through these moments where you have really huge opportunities to push out and do this (Interviewee #23).

Early experiences with the family group and things like that, I very quickly became aware that there was a lot to learn about me (Interviewee #26).

The wide array of experiences provided additional opportunities for learning and introspection. The interviewees gathered new information about themselves derived from diverse learning modalities, then made judgments regarding the usefulness of the new awarenesses based on who and how they wanted to be as individuals and OD professionals.

Their international study and travel abroad experiences also enhanced their self-knowing in similar ways as interacting with people who were different than themselves in the US. Abroad, interviewees shared learning experiences with British and Belgian students who held different values and beliefs. In addition, US students functioned in a context with different cultural norms and traditions that added layers of complexity to their exchange of ideas. By interacting with international students, the interviewees gained greater clarity and understanding about themselves and what they valued.

The interviewees also discovered and managed to see the use of their skills and abilities outside of the United States. “During the trip, it became obvious that the similar concepts, challenges and organizational dynamics existed in European organizations as did in the United States and some of the approaches to addressing them were similar” (Interviewee #7). Their international trips expanded their possibilities as OD professionals and how their skills could be used outside of the United States.

The interviewees were enriched by engaging with others different from themselves, with exposure to diverse learning modalities and experiencing themselves in diverse contexts. The experiences increased their self-awarenesses, sharpened and defined their identities – clarifying who they were as individuals - and contributed to their individual transformation.

5.4 Proposition #4

Positive Relationships and High-Quality Connections (HQCs) generate Positive Emotions.

I initially introduced positivity by offering three connotations for positive presented in the Positive Organizational Scholarship literature.

1. A focus on positively deviant performance, or successful performance that dramatically exceeds the norm in a positive direction;
2. n affirmative bias, or an orientation toward, for example, strengths rather than weaknesses, optimism rather than critical communication; and
3. focus on virtuousness and eudaemonism, or on the best of the human condition and that which human beings consider to be inherently good.

(Cameron, 2008)

I framed positive to signify the students' affirmative bias and orientation toward their strengths in contrast to weaknesses because in the MOD/MPOD programs students learn to gravitate toward the aspects of themselves and their experiences that were life-giving and allowed them to use their talents, skills and abilities to give life to others. Data gathered from this study allows me to narrow my scope of positivity as it relates to positive relationships and positive emotions. Here I discuss these relationships and emotions.

Trusting supportive relationships are necessary for change to occur (Boyatzis, 2004). It is the generation of positive emotions in community with others that initiates deep change

(Sekerka & Fredrickson, 2010). Relationships may be the most important source of protection from relapses or returning to previous behaviors during the change process (Wheeler, 1999). Relationships matter in a transformative process as do positive emotions. Proposition #1 offered that HQCs provided relational conditions for individual transformation to occur. I also believe that positive relationships were necessary to have life-giving HQCs. The combination of positive relationships with HQCs generated positive emotions (distinct pleasurable sensations) that initiated change (Cohn & Fredrickson, 2010).

Positive relationships are those relationships that are a generative source of enrichment, vitality, and learning (Dutton & Ragins, 2007).

[A classmate] was kind of like my coach. She and I would talk once a week and she would just be encouraging about me trying new things or different things (Interviewee #14).

One of the things he told me was to be comfortable with being uncomfortable and I really meditated and thought about that a lot and that was kind my MO [mode of operation] throughout the MOD program (Interviewee #14).

So, self discovery became a goal, I think I was just fascinated by the field, and what is this animal and wow, there is all this stuff to learn about organizations including process and mood behavior and just stuff. It was one new experience after another. The practice itself became the goal. It was the process of discovery which was both discovery of content and ideas and discovery of self and in relation to others. And, some of the most pivotal experiences in the program were because of my classmates (Interviewee #29).

So, I guess that one of the things, the team learning, the collaborative learning which put sort of a structure, I think, seeing how many people approach teams in different ways without meaning to, and everybody made a contribution (Interviewee #29).

Interviewees experienced the benefits of positive relationships via encouragement to try new things, receiving uplifting advice from classmates and, as highlighted in the quotes above, how positive relationships between group members led to learning. Interviewees utilized their positive relationships to acquire concrete knowledge and to learn about themselves. Positive relationships also provided safety for interviewees to receive feedback from peers and faculty members in a myriad of personal and professional arenas. It is also important to acknowledge that positive relationships also have tension, conflict, differentiation and disagreements. These attributes did not hinder the positive relationships that generated positive emotions.

Proposition #1 discussed HQCs and presented four theoretical frames. Here I discuss the subjective experience of HQCs and their relationship to positive emotions. Dutton & Heaphy (2003) describe the subjective experience of HQCs as an important barometer of the quality of connection between people. They use three indicators: (1) feelings of vitality and aliveness; (2) positive regard; and (3) mutuality.

People in HQCs are more likely to feel positive arousal and a heightened sense of positive energy (Quinn & Dutton, 2005) as indicators of vitality and aliveness.

After 2 years of the program, they sort of got it and saw where my struggles were, especially my family group and people that I had a lot of interaction with about the autobiography and their feedback was everything that I needed and more to 'blow this out of the water' - to work in OD, to go out on my own, whatever that meant. And that feedback was very much what I needed to make the high point decision to go out on my own and to get the skills (Interviewee #7).

The interviewee received feedback from classmates with whom he had HQCs. Their conversations motivated him to take a risk and change careers. He refers to his transformation as “blow[ing] it out of the water” and as a highpoint experience. I experience this as an expression of excitement and aliveness. A heightened sense of positive regard manifests in feeling known or being loved (Rogers, 1951). Revisiting the quote from Interviewee #7, he expresses a sense of being known by those who read his autobiography and by his family group members. He refers to them as “people who know me well.”

“Mutuality captures the sense that both people in a connection are engaged and actively participating” (Dutton & Heaphy, 2003). Mutuality is “a way of relating, a shared activity in which each (or all) of the people involved are participating as fully as possible” (Miller & Stiver, 1997). Interviewee #7 explains that feedback, communication and efforts to understand him were conveyed a result of mutual engagement and concern. With regard to mutuality, it was not solely what the interviewees received, it was also what they give in the relationships that accounted for positive effect (Brown & Brown, 2006; Brown, Nesse, Vinokur, & Smith, 2003; Grant, Dutton, & Russo, 2008). Interviewees supported others (Interviewee #24), got involved with classmates as they expressed themselves and articulated what was behind what they said (Interviewee #27) and they debriefed with classmates (Interviewee #32). “While positive regard captures a ‘momentary feeling’ of love at rest, mutuality captures the feeling of potential movement in the connection (Miller & Stiver, 1997) born from mutual vulnerability and mutual responsiveness” (Dutton & Heaphy, 2003).

The combination of positive relationships and the subjective experience of HQCs created positive emotions for the interviewees. As stated, it was the generation of positive emotions with classmates and faculty members that initiated deep change/transformation. The presence of positive emotions resulted in actions that propelled their transformative experience. Proposition #5 builds on this idea.

5.5 Proposition #5

The “Broaden-and-Build Theory of Positive Emotions” makes available new personal and professional possibilities throughout the positive transformative experience.

Positive emotions include pleasant or desirable situational responses, ranging from interest and contentment to love and joy, but are distinct pleasurable sensations and undifferentiated positive affect. These emotions are markers of people’s overall well-being and happiness, but they also enhance future growth and success (Cohn & Fredrickson, 2010).

When reading this definition of positive emotion, I am aware of the numerous ways in which positive emotions were generated and present throughout the interviewees’ positive transformative process.

It’s almost like there’s a positive force connected with OD and the people that work in it. And that’s the thing that I find wonderful. I just find it wonderful and I find it almost spiritual (Interviewee #4).

The importance in identifying positive emotions is not solely in recognizing that they exist but to discuss the impact that they had on individuals’ positive transformative process. Barbara Fredrickson (1998) states that positive emotions “broaden” people’s momentary thought-action repertoires and lead to actions that “build” enduring personal resources. She calls this the Broaden-and-Build Theory of Positive Emotions. The

“broaden hypothesis” targets the ways people change while experiencing positive emotion and the “build hypothesis” targets the lasting changes that follow repeated positive emotions overtime (Fredrickson 1998).

The “Broadening Hypothesis” impacts visual attention, cognition and behavior, as well as social cognition. Positive emotions, with a broadened focus, produce a preference for a widened, global perspective (Cohn & Fredrickson, 2010). Additional research also attributes positive emotion to broadening individuals’ visual search patterns that lead to increased attention to peripheral stimuli (Wadlinger & Isaacowitz, 2006). Therefore, the effect of positive emotions on visual attention is the ability to perceive a wider spectrum of visual information.

Positive Emotions also affect the focus and the process of cognition. They produce patterns of thought that are notably unusual (Isen, Johnson, Mertz, & Robinson, 1985), flexible and inclusive (Isen & Daubman, 1984), creative (Isen, Daubman, & Nowicki, 1987) and receptive to new information (Estrada, Isen, & Young, 1997). Flexibility and openness are important attributes of positive emotion’s cognitive effects (Bless et al., 1996; Dreisbach & Goschke, 2004). People in positive emotional states are more likely to incorporate challenging evidence (Trope & Pomerantz, 1998) and carefully consider difficult problems (Abele, 1992; Aspinwall, 1998) in their thought processes.

So one of the things I was really good at was having one of the outreach sites; some of our workers thought they were going to go to another office, and they were angry. And this was a group of staff that did not hold back, and having to manage that whole group and restructure it to another outreach site, some got moved some didn’t go where they thought they

were going to go and just managing that whole move it comes right back to understanding people's behavior in groups. And just really bringing my skills to that and being able to go into those offices and be able to know how to talk to them be able to know how to listen to them and to respect what they wanted to get out of it and at the same time be able to say this is the way it is, and we don't always have a say; getting them to understand that the program was a continuous thing. So it was just the way that I was able to relate to them. As I think I'm going back to it I hadn't had that training in groups, and I mean we had some brutal folks (Interviewee #17).

Positive emotions make available more ways of thinking and taking in new information.

In addition, non-positive information can be considered when in a positive emotional state.

Behaviorally, individuals induced with positive emotions have "more and more" varied potential actions available to them thus expanding their thought-action repertoire (Fredrickson & Branigan, 2005). People entrenched in old behavioral patterns are more likely to practice new adaptive styles with positive emotions (Fredrickson & Losada, 2005).

I guess letting groups or clients work through a process. Sometimes you go into a situation thinking, ok, this is the plan, and then because of their personalities or something that happens you begin to change it. So, being flexible to do that but keeping your sense of humor and letting people know that you're human too - that it does affect you. For example, one of the things I remember is that someone changed the whole dynamic of something and so I kind of turned around a couple of times and so I said, 'Ok, let's forget that. We have to walk away and come back' - that kind of stuff so you can get people's mind off of it and move on to something else (Interviewee #5).

This example conveys that positive emotions make more thoughts and behaviors available to an individual while increasing one's willingness to consider new patterns while abandoning old ones; this is transformation.

“Broadened social attention takes the form of enhanced attention to others and reduced distinction between self and other or between groups” (Cohn & Fredrickson, 2010).

Now I see myself being more conscious of really listening word for word to what people have to say especially in a change environment, especially in a role of being a facilitator where I’m listening and still being able to add my viewpoints without it being so subjective to everything that I want to have done or that my opinion is the only opinion or that even if you’re going to give your opinion, that I’m going to go with the solution of what I thought about (Interviewee #13).

The interviewee consciously paid attention to others and incorporated their viewpoints into her thought processes.

Positive emotions can increase trust (Dunn & Schweitzer, 2005) and account for creating a wide array of social bonds and interdependence opportunities (Cohn & Fredrickson, 2010; Gable, Reis, Impert, & Asher, 2004). “Positive emotions also broaden social group concepts and break down an essentialized sense of ‘us versus them’” (Dovidio, Gaertner, Isen, Rust, & Guerra, 1995). This principle was particularly at play across dimensions of age, work experience, faculty-student roles, gender and race.

We could actually do change in a way that was easy for people or easy for them to understand and don’t put anybody down and tell them they were doing things wrong. It was getting the best out of people. I could barely sit in my chair. I was so excited because this is what my experience had been when we were talking about team work and let’s get the best out of people. Let’s listen to their ideas. Let’s see what they can do when they are given positive reinforcement instead of telling them they are just a peon. So that experience, the experience that I had working with other people who were very unlike me. When I was with MOD, I would not sit with the same people all of the time. I would literally move from table to table and sit with different people to get different points of view and different ways of looking at things. I was just eating it up. I can’t tell you

how much I just enjoyed the program. I enjoyed what they had to tell me (Interviewee #3).

Interviewees were able to acknowledge these differences and incorporate them into their learning. Their relationships and learning superseded destructive barriers due to difference. The broadening effect can make substantive differences in what people learn, who they befriend and how they understand their lives (Cohn & Fredrickson, 2010).

The “Build Hypothesis” operates on the premise that repeated exposure to positive emotions broadens an individual’s mindset that can be led to building enduring resources over time (Cohn & Fredrickson, 2010). When dealing with life’s difficult challenges, i.e. death or job loss, individuals who experience some level of positive emotions alongside their negative ones showed greater psychological well being a year or more later (Cohn & Fredrickson, 2010). “This occurs partly because positive emotions were associated with the ability to take a longer view and develop plans and goals for the future” (Moskowitz, Folkman, & Acree, 2003; Stein, Folkman, & Richards, 1997).

Psychological resilience is also associated with the ability to distinguish many finely differentiated positive emotions (M. M. Tugade, Fredrickson, & Barrett, 2004); perhaps this is because a broad emotional lexicon makes it possible to find positive moments without denying the seriousness of a negative situation (Cohn & Fredrickson, 2010).

Tugade and Fredrickson’s (2004) research findings state that people who are generally resilient against negative events recover more quickly by self-generating positive emotions during the recovery process.

I finished MOD, my sons were off to college and my consulting practice was just starting to take off when my husband died. I didn’t know what I

would do. But, I had to do something. He had been my biggest supporter and I know that he would want me to do it. I had to support my boys and I believed that I could. Since then my business has taken off and I have never looked back (Interviewee #18).

Evidence also shows that positive emotions contribute to upward spirals of increasing resources, life successes, and overall fulfillment (Cohn & Fredrickson, 2010). The ability to self-generate positive emotions or experience them in the face of challenging circumstances builds self-reliance, an enduring resource, and the ability to work through challenges.

In essence, assets accrued during positive emotional states are durable and outlast those acquired during the transient state that led to their discovery (Fredrickson, 2000). People who experience positive emotions are more flexible, creative, empathetic and respectful (Fredrickson, 2000).

The incidental effects for positive emotional experiences serve to increase personal resources. Individuals can draw from these stores in subsequent moments and while in different emotional states (Sekerka & Fredrickson, 2010).

I believe that the Broaden-and-Building Theory of Positive Emotions expanded the personal and professional choices the interviewees made during their transformative experience and after. Positive Emotions during the Positive Transformation journey built self-reliance and tapped into unlimited possibilities during positive and challenging times.

5.6 Proposition #6

Positive Transformation becomes long-lasting, deep and sustainable by replicating one's transformative experiences.

Undoubtedly, the interviewees changed personally and professionally during their MOD/MPOD experiences.

I think they [friends and colleagues] would say being able to listen, having the ability to understand what their challenges or the obstacles may be and instead of jumping to solutions being able to talk through how to pound out the solution instead of just saying 'maybe you should do this' or 'maybe you should do that' because every situation is different where in the past I would have been listening but listening to go to solution as opposed to hearing what the whole situation is and then trying to think about different scenarios about how to approach it or demonstrate the solutions. I think that's one thing that my colleagues and my friends would say [regarding how she changed] (Interviewee #13).

The other high point was I designed and implemented a long term leadership development program here [at work] for high potential and even those that wanted to be high potential people. I really like designing, developing, and delivering or more or less facilitating leadership development or personal development but this was really fun because there was a lot of creativity, [it was] mine to create, and I worked with these individuals here at the center very closely for a year, kind of professor-like in that you read things they write, you hear everything they say, you start to understand them as a person. I had people that I worked with in that program express their appreciation for what they went through, what they learned, and how I coached them. That's more of a long-term high point (Interviewee #6).

It was not about being the sage on the stage, but the guide on the side (Interviewee #22).

The change literature, discussed in Chapter 2, stated that change happens "in the interplay or exchange between individuals where beliefs, attitudes and values shift" (Bennis,

1973). These interactions are said to update thinking, feelings and behaviors (Alexander & French, 1946). Quinn (1996) delineated change into two categories. Incremental change had no disruption or discontinuation of past behaviors while deep change required new ways of thinking and distorted existing patterns. Transformation, alternatively, was defined as making the unconscious conscious (Ferendo, 2005); processing, comprehending and integrating emotional experiences (Grotstein, 2005); along with change that assimilates into new structures (Freedman, 1985).

The interviewees learned and changed in a variety of ways. It could be argued that any one of the models presented in their programs could explain how these shifts took place. Did interviewees learn by transforming their experiences using Kolb's four-stage, continuous spiral process of Experiential Learning (concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, & active experimentation) (1984) to create new knowledge? Does Kurt Lewin's Three-Stage Model of Change (Lewin, 1958) (Schein & Bennis, 1964) or Boyatzis' Intentional Change Model (Boyatzis, 2004, 2006) explain how they changed? I believe any or all of these theories provide valid explanations as how the interviewees changed. My interest, raised in this proposition, lies in understanding how their positive transformation became long-lasting, deep and sustainable. I propose that, once interviewees had their positive transformative experiences within the MOD/MPOD program, they replicated their transformative experiences outside of the program. This is to say that upon completing their academic programs interviewees: (1) continued to increase their self-awareness; (2) maintained and

developed new positive relationships and HQCs; (3) self-generated or had interactions that generated positive emotions.

The interviewees continued to have opportunities that raised their self-awareness.

Well, I started 10 years ago and looking at how I am in a situation and what it is that my actions and reactions, since I came here, what impact that has on a situation and being very aware of that, and that's also being aware of the situation with the group and aware of the dynamics and all of those things (Interviewee #10).

At that time it led to the change of how I function within the organization that I was in, how I reflected on their approach to work, how I reflected on my own approach to work and how I was motivated to try and help my organization with the change process (Interviewee #12).

They wanted to have a leadership retreat to build their strategy, their strategic plan going forward. All of a sudden it felt like a lot! I thought, 'Wow, what did I get in to?' But, I was doing this with another professor at the site. They asked us because we were from their [department] if we would like to help and we both said definitely yes. How phenomenal. This is the group of people, men and women, that had given their life to serving people who are worse off, either forgotten, neglected, or at least difficult to embrace because I think having [and] doing that type of service work day in and day out is psychologically draining for those who are doing the work as well (Interviewee #23).

The first two statements reflect how interviewees were conscious of themselves, of their impact on others and how their organizations functioned. In the third quote, the interviewee was aware of the diversity of the group with whom she would be working: their personal sacrifices and the populations that they serve. This type of self-awareness, being conscious of oneself and others, was punctuated within their MOD/MPOD programs and was replicated in P3. Just as diversity influenced and impacted self-awareness in P2, the interviewees' quotes reflect an awareness and acknowledgement of client's differences.

Positive relationships and HQCs provided the container for individual transformation to occur. In P3, interviewees continued to develop positive relationships with MOD/MPOD alumni, colleagues and classmates.

Well, I've really enjoyed the reunion but when you enter the world, it's an ongoing world. It's not a two year world, and that.. now I'm in this momentum with [an alumnus]. He's such a great leader, he is really good, that guy. In real life, he sends emails and it's really such a gift he came along when he did, cause of his leadership. To stay connected because when I came back for that weekend in Aug. you would have thought I graduated last year and it was 30 years ago. It was 30 years ago and I remember it like it was yesterday. So that sense of valuing it and obviously some people were closer but I didn't have any special bonding with anyone person, it was more with the whole (Interviewee #9).

We would spend the evenings together just enjoying each other's company so, of course, there was a lot of camaraderie and enjoyment. We had to work during the day but we managed to plow through that and have such a terrific time. I've never seen people from Norway, Sweden, France, Germany, England, American Chinese - this whole group of really diverse interesting people where were really good at what they did and it was just a pleasure to work with them (Interviewee #3).

Part of my motivation at the start was that I wanted the degree. Certainly I'm glad I got this degree but I gained so much more than the 'degree,' like enlightened self-awareness, like lifetime friendships, like international connections that I'm in touch with at least weekly, like greater self-assurance, greater confidence to take a risk in my career and in life, and the things you already wrote down and the knowledge (Interviewee #7).

So, in preparation for that reunion, it was a working reunion, meaning it was a seminar. It wasn't social but certainly social was a great benefit of it but the idea was to conference and keep learning and growing with each other (Interviewee #7).

For the interviewees, positive relationships evoked feelings of belonging, joyful collegueship, lifetime friendships and opportunities for learning. Positive relationships are those relationships that are a generative source of enrichment, vitality and learning (Dutton & Ragins, 2007). These examples portray the life-giving energy of HQCs during

P3.

Finally, interviewees continued to experience self-generated positive emotions or those generated in relationships. Keeping in mind that positive emotions include pleasant or desirable situational responses, ranging from interest and contentment to love and joy (Cohn & Fredrickson, 2010). Below are examples of self-generated positive emotions.

I feel real fortunate because some people never actualize and again I would say I was fortunate, for me personally, I couldn't do work that wasn't engaging and exciting and that didn't kind of really, emotionally energize me. I couldn't function; it's just not me (Interviewee #31).

I feel excited about the good of organization and the good in people. It's like the good of peoples is kind of contagious (Interviewee #9).

Freedom - well, freedom and enlightenment - two things, yes, I would put it that way. From the enlightenment came the freedom. I recognized what was good for me and what wasn't and as a result I was able to set a course that gave me the freedom that was really important to me to be able to flourish (Interviewee #1).

Feeling fortunate, excited and free were examples of self-generated positive motions experienced post-MOD/MPOD. The following quotes represent positive emotions generated from contact with others.

The responses from the people that we work with, the responses from the agents that we train, very positive comments about... the thing about what we do is... the mantra is: 'They who serve the most make the most money or something. We keep it out here. We're a serve monitor? We serve our associates, our agents, and our clients. And, it's very gratifying (Interviewee #19).

It was so meaningful to me. It's distinctly different in that in corporate clients the learning does happen, I hope, and can happen but these people are there because it's part of their life. They have taken a vow of poverty. They are forging their lives to helping others. And I was so honored that, number one, they thought it was something I could do of value and they were so eager to learn. So eager! That was the most exciting thing. Not

only did they think that we could bring something of use to them but they were right there with us....asking questions, pushing us. It was the most amazing experience (Interviewee #23).

We watched people go through this change process where they would be very anxious and then all of a sudden you'd orient them they would get their flow down and you get the boots on. And get them used to it. It was immediate gratification, it wasn't that long of a cycle, and then the celebration at the end, we had a grand opening, and there was a lot to celebrate so there was lots of hard work and lots of feelings of accomplishment (Interviewee #15).

Receiving supportive feedback from others was a dominant source of positive emotions.

Feedback highlighting their best selves emphasized the interviewees' positive attributes that were not always conscious or obvious to him or her; in doing so, the focus on strengths led toward striving for greater excellence and positively deviant performance (Cameron, 2008). Excellence and positively deviant performance helped to sustain and grow their positive transformation. Characteristics associated with best-self feedback appeared to align with the interviewees' self-concept. As for the relationship built between the interviewee and the feedback giver, the recipients often had strengthened relationships with feedback givers and a desire for reciprocity grew. In addition, there came an enhanced desire to live up to the positive best-self description (Roberts, Dutton, Sprietzer, Heaphy, & Quinn, 2004). Best-self feedback fostered positive interactions and reciprocal feedback, it enhanced feelings of closeness among individuals, and it provided the positive energy needed to embark on personal improvement efforts (Cameron, 2008). Others best-self feedback forged positive relationships and generated positive emotions.

Generating gratitude also had positive effect. "Gratitude reinforces positive action because giving thanks or acknowledgement rewards help-givers, making them feel

appreciated and more likely to help others in the future” (McCullough, Kilpatrick, Emmons, & Larson, 2001).

Once Positive Transformation was initiated and achieved a recursive process began. “Just as positive thinking and positive actions can trigger pleasant feeling states, so too can pleasant feeling states trigger positive thinking and positive actions” (Fredrickson & Joiner, 2002). This cyclic process allowed interviewees to experience positive transformation and flourish – “to live within an optimal range human functioning, one that connotes goodness, generativity, growth and resilience” (Fredrickson & Losada, 2005). In addition, interviewees discovered ways (Figure 1, Phase 3, p.130) to continue the generative, recursive process (what I did, what others did and finding environments in which to thrive) in order to make available new personal and professional possibilities.

6 Implications and Conclusion

The previous chapters portray the positive transformative experiences of 32 MOD and MPOD graduates from 1975 through 2009. One might think that the 2004 philosophical shift in the program would have produced different outcomes before and after 2004.

There was no difference. Adding “positive” to the program and degree title was an overt acknowledgement of what the program was consistently doing from its inception: creating relational spaces where students could learn about themselves with others and about others, learning strength-based approaches to OD and facilitating opportunities for others to flourish in their personal and professional lives.

Positive relationships with HQCs provided the relational space for individual transformation to take place. The exchange, identity, growth/development and learning theoretical lenses offered a framework for understanding what the interviewees wanted upon entering the program and how HQCs helped them achieve their objectives.

Individual transformation that occurred within their positive relationships with HQCs involved aligning the interviewees’ actions, thoughts and behaviors with their best self-concept. OD values and principles were integral to their individual transformation.

Positive emotions generated from their positive relationships made available new personal and professional possibilities that were life-giving and allowed the interviewees to flourish. Sustaining positive transformation was possible by creating and developing

more positive relationships with HQCs beyond the boundaries of the MOD/MPOD program. This transformative process included increasing self-awareness, generating positive emotions, expanding, growing and repeating the cycle. *Figure 2: The Positive Transformative Summary* represents the interviewees' transformative journey.

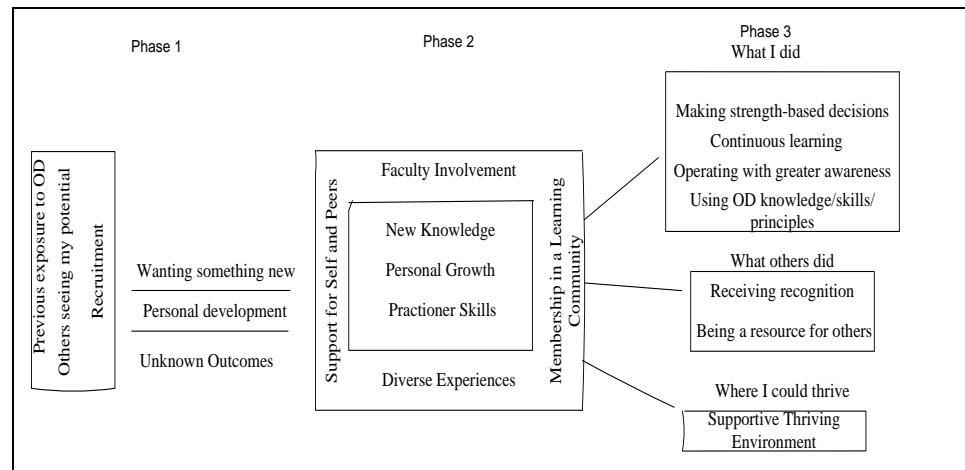


Figure 1: The Positive Transformation Summary

The six propositions below emerged from this study and describe their transformative process and the dynamics that link each of the phases.

1. **High-Quality Connections (HQCs) provide the relational conditions for Individual Transformation to take place.**
2. **Individual Transformation represents the internal and external shifts in identity needed to align one's self-concept.**
3. **Self-Awareness expands and deepens Individual Transformation through experiences with diverse others, diverse learning modalities and experiencing oneself in diverse contexts.**
4. **Positive Relationships and High-Quality Connections (HQCs) generate Positive Emotions.**
5. **The "Broaden-and-Build Theory of Positive Emotions" makes available new personal and professional possibilities throughout the positive transformative experience.**
6. **Positive Transformation becomes long-lasting, deep and sustainable by replicating one's transformative experiences.**

A major premise of this study is that the interviewees experienced positive transformation. Using the categories from P3, the manifestations of their transformation can be categorized into internal and external indicators as shown in *Table 5*.

Table 5: Internal and External Indicators of Positive Transformation

| Internal Indicators | External Indicators |
|--|--|
| Making strength-based decisions | New jobs, career paths |
| Greater self-confidence | Working in diverse work environments |
| Increased self-awareness | Taking boundary stretching assignments |
| Holistic integration of OD values and principles – being open to different perspectives, being a resource to others, believing in the good of others, believing that relationships are important | Holistic integration of OD values and principles – treating people the way that they want to be treated, “being the guide on the side, not the sage on the stage,” building positive relationships with HQCs |

The interviewees created bonds with classmates and faculty members that allowed them to grow, flourish and blossom. They emerged from the program different people than when they entered and after completion of the program they reinforced their positive transformation by replicating their transformative experiences outside of the program. The key findings, implications for future research, limitations and conclusion that follow summarize what was learned from this study and how it applies to future discoveries pertaining to positive transformation.

Key Findings

6.1.1 MOD/MPOD shaped lives and changed futures.

This study reveals that the interviewees' MOD/MPOD experiences shaped their lives and changed their futures. The program's design and structure in conjunction with the groups' composition served to positively affect the interviewees' transformative experiences. Increased self-awareness and greater self-confidence, upon graduation, freed the interviewees to take personal and professional risks that more closely aligned with their core strengths, values and beliefs.

The power of the group and its connection was also revealed. In the fields of Organization Development and Organizational Behavior, it is often said that most of the world's work is performed through groups. Groups and their connections in MOD/MPOD were the cradles of transformation. With their classmates and faculty members, interviewees could mutually explore new learnings, identify their strengths, and/or share autobiographical/personal information. The OD program provided a language and a venue for discussing these topics. In addition, the added psychological safety, disclosure and transparency fostered in their interactions generated positive emotions that supported their positive transformation.

Four themes, discussed below, encapsulate how the MOD/MPOD program shaped the interviewees' lives and changed their futures:

1. validation and confirmation led to transformation;
2. the capacity to experience conflict was seen as a learning opportunity;

3. multi-dimensional diversity enhanced self-awareness; and
4. creating generativity added meaning to life.

6.1.1.1 Validation and Confirmation led to Transformation.

The research literature presented in Chapter 2 identified multiple precursors for change and transformation to occur. The first frame posited that change occurred when an individual experienced a fundamental dissatisfaction with life (McCaskill, 2008). The dissatisfaction created a dialectic conflict from having a predominant, unconscious want that became conscious and unfilled (Freedman, 1985). The vacuum created from the unfilled want initiated a search to fill the void (McCaskill, 2008). This motivated the change. The second frame posited that change occurred when there were inconsistencies or discrepancies with existing mental, physical and emotional schemas (George & Jones, 2001). The inconsistency with the pre-existing schemas evoked the desire to reduce the discrepancy. The prompts then triggered an emotional reaction that set the process of individual change into motion leading to shifts in individual perceptions, interpretations and behaviors. Dissatisfaction, inconsistencies or internal discrepancies were used to explain the conditions upon which change occurred. These descriptions of change contrast with the validation and confirmation experiences that precipitated the interviewees' positive transformation.

The interviewees' understanding of who they were and being validated supported their transformation.

It's one of those things that is so interesting that you have a week spent away at that time in a group encounter, then you have your family group and each class to some degree, the discussion, the exercises all led to helping to understand to some degree why you are saying what you are saying, seeing what you are seeing, and to this day I guess I am better able

to frame out why I see things the way I do and question more how others see and react (Interviewee #4).

This interviewee experienced increased self-awareness, through diverse learning modalities, regarding how he made sense of himself. His transformation manifested in taking time to consider how others made sense of themselves. The next quotes demonstrate the power of reinforcing one's skills and unearthing latent abilities during the transformative process.

MPOD was like a reinforcer for me of what it is to be a human being because I remember when going through it a lot of it talked about personal development and being great with people. And I already knew I was that way going into the program so a lot of the stuff on understanding and listening that was just reinforced through MPOD because I could see how those things are important (Interviewee #14).

I think it was the appreciation; the program organized, materialized something I think which was budding in me to shift from a complete left brain thinker to getting in touch with right brain thoughts, relationships, and my spiritual side (Interviewee #2).

Validation reinforced the importance of skills already possessed by the interviewee.

Acknowledging and accepting one's self (Beisser, 1970) also created opportunities for the interviewees to recognize and explore other emotional, cognitive and affective dimensions of themselves.

The validation and confirmation that led to transformation offers a unique and new lens for explaining the conditions upon which transformation takes place. This perspective is strength-based and allows for skills building and development to occur in needed areas defined by the learner.

6.1.1.2 Experiencing Conflict as a Learning Opportunity.

Managing conflict is an important skill for an OD practitioner. Some interviewees entered the MOD/MPOD program wanting conflict management skills (Interviewee #8). According to the interviewees, conflict management was not taught during their coursework. Their knowledge derived from resolving conflicts independently. For some, there was a significant amount of conflict and they learned to work through it, gained a better understanding of others and how to manage conflict (Interviewee #13, Interviewee #10). In some cases, relationships were fractured. In other situations, conflict was the entry into meaningful relationships.

We varied in different ages and different cultures, ethnicities, and experience in terms of career. And there was one gentleman that was middle aged, a white male, he and I definitely had challenges. I think it was definitely because of the gender and generational differences that we both shared. He had stereotyped me as young, building my career, and didn't look to me to give insight from our coursework and practicum experience based on the work that we were working on. He made a comment to me one day and talked about how shocked he was that I was able to present to a client, because based on his observation of me he didn't think that I would be able to pull it off. I think the situation there was he didn't even think about how I may view things and how I learned things. I think he automatically went into 'she should behave and act the way that I think she should behave.' And so, we definitely had major challenges throughout our full program because we almost worked together the entire time (Interviewee #13).

The recovery from this conflict was indicative of the resilience and flexibility of their HQCs. "The program itself gave us an important space for entering into conflict and dealing with it" (Interviewee #23).

How do you engage in conflict and not brush past it in your group or think that this is just one project, 'I will get past it.' If we don't continue to do what I think we did extremely well in my experience [learning conflict management skills], then we're no different than an MBA program or anything else (Interviewee #23).

At first glance, interviewees reported few critical incidents of conflict in the study. The key words here are critical incidents. This is to say that there were few reports of debilitating, destructive conflict that severed relationships. I attribute their low critical incident reporting to the HQCs between students.

Emotional carrying capacity, tensility and degree of connectivity, the attributes used to assess the power of HQCs (Dutton & Heaphy, 2003), expanded the interviewees' capacity to withstand conflict and experience it as an opportunity. For example, Interviewee #13 expressed the frustration and challenges associated with feeling underestimated and under-valued by her classmate. Their emotional carrying capacity permitted the interviewee to express her frustration with the individual as well as the joy of sharing and learning from each other's perspective. The HQC supported the individuals staying in relational contact while working through the conflict. Their degree of connectivity or openness to one another was demonstrated in their willingness to hear the other's perspective, to understand and be understood. HQCs contributed to reframing conflict as constructive, life-giving and relationship-building. Therefore, conflict was a learning opportunity.

6.1.1.3 Multi-Dimensional Diversity Enhanced Self-Awareness.

The study revealed three dimensions of diversity that contributed to increased self-awareness: individual aspects of diversity, diverse learning modalities and global/contextual diversity. Each dimension provided new awarenesses that contributed to the interviewees' positive transformation.

Individual aspects of diversity presented themselves as unique learning opportunities for the interviewees. As a microcosm of US society, differences regarding race, class, age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, physical & mental ability also appeared in the MOD/MPOD cohorts. Interviewees learned about themselves and others when engaging across dimensions of diversity. They also came to identify other differences that made a difference in people's everyday lives including previous work experiences, family life, personality types and differences in desired outcomes from the program. Interviewee #3 recalled classmates ranging in age from 25 to 60 with work experiences in the medical, banking and manufacturing sectors. "There was just a wealth of people to learn from" (Interviewee # 3). Differences surrounding their social identifiers were sometimes sources of identity abrasions (Ely, et al., 2006) between students. As mentioned above, interviewees worked through conflicts relying on their HQCs and conflict resolution skills.

Positive emotions, like belonging, also played a role in removing potential barriers that sometimes arise in the face of diversity. There were "diverse people with diverse notions" that fostered the feeling of belonging (Interviewee #8). Dovidio et al. (1995) found that positive emotions diminished the sense of "us versus them" and broadened social group concepts.

So I learned to appreciate a lot of different perspectives and understand that people from different walks of life who grew up much differently than I did also had something important to say; also had experiences to share that would help me grow (Interviewee #3).

Engaging with others different from themselves, resolving conflicts and generating positive emotions that diminished barriers helped to build relationships across differences. In the relationships, interviewees learned about themselves at the boundary of learning about others. The outcome was increased self-awareness.

Exposure to diverse learning modalities provided a plethora of new learning experiences. Completing self-inventories, writing an autobiography and group work (project groups, family groups, and T-Groups) were diverse and useful tools to increase self-awareness. “The small group projects that we were on were really important for testing our skills in applying the book learning about people in systems” (Interviewee #26). “The external projects allowed the students to practice their skills and develop as consultants with supervision” (Interviewee #15). Being in a community of learners where the interviewees could discuss personal and professional insights gained from their diverse learning experiences increased their learning. This echoes Jarvis’ (1987) belief that new experiences must be experimented with, evaluated, reflected upon and reasoned through for the most effective change to occur. Diverse learning modalities spawned new learning, change and increased self-awareness.

Global/contextual diversity acquired through their international study and travel abroad experiences enhanced their self-knowing in similar ways as interacting across differences in the US. The differences in culture helped interviewees gain greater clarity and understanding of themselves when interacting with international students. Their second discovery was in identifying how their skills could be used in organizations outside of the

US. “During the trip, it became obvious that the similar concepts, challenges and organizational dynamics existed in European organizations as did in the United States and some of the approaches to addressing them were similar” (Interviewee #7). They discovered that international organizations faced similar challenges as companies in the US. Their international trips presented opportunities for interviewees to experience and learn about themselves in a context different from their home cultures. In addition, learning about challenges facing organizations abroad expanded how the interviewees viewed where and how their OD practitioner skills could be used.

Traditional definitions of diversity fall short of reaching the breadth of what was possible in relation to positive transformation. This is not to deny the necessity for seeing, understanding and valuing traditional categories of diversity and the power that society grants to some groups over others. This study suggests that multi-dimensional diversity permits relationship building across differences, the ability to sit in the tension of learning about differences and gaining more clarity about one’s cultural beliefs and values. Experientially, the study validates the benefit of diverse learning modalities, when accompanied by opportunities for reflection to enhance self-awareness.

6.1.1.4 Creating Generativity added Life Meaning

The MOD/MPOD program shaped lives and changed futures. With classmates and faculty members, the interviewees created positive relationships with HQCs that supported their cognitive, emotional and behavioral changes. This journey was their pathway to positive transformation. The interviewees sustained their positive transformation and continued growth by creating positive emotions in new relationships

with clients (Interviewees #11, 17, 18, and 32), colleagues (Interviewees #1, 17, and 30) and alumni (Interviewees #4, 8, 18, and 22).

Positive emotions include pleasant or desirable situational responses, ranging from interest and contentment to love and joy, but are distinct pleasurable sensations and undifferentiated positive affect. These emotions are markers of people's overall well-being and happiness, but they also enhance future growth and success (Cohn & Fredrickson, 2010).

Feeling gratitude from being able to support individuals and organizations in their change processes (Interviewees #3, 9, 15, and 17) as well as being sought out and valued as a resource to others (Interviewees #5, 27, 28 and 30) evoked positive emotions. The interviewees' experienced the power of positive relationships with HQCs and positive emotions in their MOD/MPOD programs. They strived and succeeded at duplicating these relational experiences afterward. It appeared that generativity derived from these interactions motivated interviewees to develop meaningful relationships and meaningful work. Erik Erikson's Stages of Psychosocial Development and Kenneth Gergen's writings on the value of relationships offer insights into this phenomenon.

Middle Adulthood is Stage 7 of Erikson's developmental model (Erikson, 1974). He states that adults ages 40-65 struggle with being generative versus stagnant. In this stage, generativity refers to the adult's ability to care for others particularly the next generation. He suggests that each adult must have some way to satisfy and support the next generation. In this stage, individuals attempt to "make a difference" with their lives and try to "give back" to their communities and the planet. Social psychologist Kenneth Gergen (2009) posits that generativity inspires new ideas and insights along with enriching potential that is opened through the flow of interchange. "The generative processes stimulate the expansion and flow of meaning" (Gergen, 2009).

Generativity, in this study, was an amalgamation of both concepts. In the Prospective Student Stage (P1), the interviewees expressed wanting to engage in meaningful work. They spoke of working toward a larger cause that positively impacted others' lives. "I knew I wanted to do work with people, and help them to make a difference and I didn't know at all how" (Interviewee #17). Personal growth, individual transformation and gaining OD intervention skills afforded interviewees the ability to engage in meaningful work. Making strength-based decision helped interviewees identify where they could be most effective and with whom. The positive relationships with HQCs, some maintained from MOD/MPOD and others newly developed, inspired new ideas, new ways of being and enumerable possibilities. Each aspect of generativity was in service of making a difference for future generations and providing meaning to the interviewees' lives.

6.1.2 OD Education: It's not what we do but how we do it and with whom.

This study champions the value of relationships. It suggests that students have yearnings for HQCs. If this is also a desire in organizational life, then OD Education has a responsibility to provide students with opportunities to have positive relationships with HQCs and equip students to duplicate these dynamics within their OD practice.

Positive relationships, HQCs and positive emotions create the relational conditions for transformation to take place. This would suggest that the content of the curriculum is not as important or is only important when it serves to build meaningful relationships.

Therefore, the content of the curriculum may change, and it will, but the curriculum must

facilitate opportunities for students to have life-giving connections, relationships that are generative sources of vitality, enrichment and learning, and have positive affect.

As OD Educators, our call is to understand the value of HQCs and learn when and how to craft discussions, activities and assignments to facilitate their use. Considerations such as psychological safety, vulnerability and time to create the best possible learning environment for connections, learning and growth would be taken into account. In addition, it serves the instructors and students to abandon value judgments surrounding conflict, i.e. that conflict is “bad” and confluence is “good.” Interviewees said that conflict was an important learning tool. The interviewees’ anecdotes speak to the additive value that conflict, differentiation and disagreements played in their learning. The learned skill becomes addressing conflict and learning from it versus silencing the voices of conflict.

We receive daily reminders that the world around us is changing. A role that OD educators can play in preparing students and organizations for change is to learn from the diversity available to them, i.e. interacting with people who are different from themselves, using diverse learning modalities and exposing students to different cultural contexts. The first tier of learning increases the students’ level of self-awareness. The second tier of learning raises the students’ consciousness about others’ life experiences. And, the third tier of learning prompts students to ask how they may impact others via their interactions - developing openness, empathy and understanding.

Using diverse learning modalities in OD education is beneficial to the learner. This study highlighted that the students increased their self-awareness using multiple tools. Having these experiences and opportunities to debrief them deepened their conceptual learning, their self-learning and learning about others.

Having students experience themselves in new domestic and international environments has the potential to stimulate new learning. As well, having students venture into non-profit organizations when their primary work is in a corporate setting or visiting a company in Latin American when their primary work experience is in the US, offers opportunities for students to learn from others, to understanding different organizational dynamics and to see the utility of their skills in diverse settings.

6.2 Implications for Future Research

6.2.1 The Role of Hope

There is significance in exploring the role that hope plays in Positive Transformation. In hindsight, I can see the numerous places where hope may have been a motivating factor in the interviewees' desires to transformation. For example, in the desire to do something different, as stated in P1, was their hope for a better family and work life? Were they hopeful when working as change agents within organizations? It seemed that interviewees were excited and hopeful about their future possibilities. If hope influences and impacts positive transformation, what does this mean? I believe these are questions worth exploring.

6.2.2 Expanding the Learning, Testing the Theory.

The population for this study included 32 graduates of Case Western Reserve University's, Master of Science in Organization Development program. There are two approaches that could be undertaken to expand the study: (1) taking another sampling of MOD/MPOD graduates from outside of Cleveland and/or from abroad to test and expand the theory; (2) testing the theory with other groups and organizations.

Additional insights or information could emerge from MOD and MPOD graduates residing outside of Cleveland and the US. I believe that living in a city, state, region or country fosters a cultural mindset about how individuals think, act and feel about themselves and the world around them. In addition, external and internal factors could also affect the graduates' observations of their experience. International graduates would offer a non-US perspective regarding Positive Transformation and their transformative experiences. I would be curious to test the international applicability of positive transformation regarding how it is operationalized and defined from a different cultural context.

This leads me to my next point regarding applicability. Does this process/theory hold true for individuals in groups and organizations outside of OD education? This question speaks to the generalizability of this study to other groups, in other industries and within large systems.

6.2.3 HQCs Self-Inventories

The four theoretical lenses associated with HQCs were central to Positive Transformation. I envision future research efforts focused on developing survey instruments and/or inventories that assess an individual's need for HQCs in order to fulfill their exchange, identity, growth/development and learning needs. Such tools would be used at the start, middle and end of their OD programs to assess needs, need fulfillment and if the needs are being met. As a tool, life coaches could work with students to facilitate connections and/or support the student in pursuing means to meet their objectives.

6.3 Limitations

6.3.1 Sampling Limitations

My primary sampling criterion was to select interviewees representing MOD and MPOD classes from 1975 – 2009. I chose Cleveland-based graduates out of a desire to have face-to-face interviews (a large number of MOD students were from within a 90 mile radius of Case Western Reserve University). As previously mentioned, selecting this sample of graduates had limitations. The primary challenge was the lack of diverse perspectives and voices that informed how positive transformation was described, lived and evidenced. I feel strongly that having cross-class representation permitted access to the phenomena of positive transformation mitigating administrative or curriculum changes. There were advantages to having face-to-face interviews, i.e. noticing non-verbal cues and inquiring about them or responding to the energy created between me and the interviewee.

Geography could have been overcome by using technologies like Skype or NetMeetings. In addition, I could have extended my travel radius to include neighboring states within a 3 or 4 hour driving distance. Therefore, the study could have included graduates living or working in Michigan, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Indiana, and perhaps Kentucky. In the true spirit of Appreciative Inquiry, I could have had other investigators conduct interviews as well.

6.3.2 Culture Biases

There is no denying that I am who I am and who I am influences what I think, how I feel and how I behave. In Chapter 1.1 Researcher's Frames of Reference, I attempt to make explicit my conscious frames of reference and viewpoints that I held entering this study. Other values and beliefs emerged as I self-reflecting on my process of interpreting and analyzing the data. I have an operating assumption that groups and relationships are good. This value stems from my personal experience of ALWAYS being aware of my group membership. I have 39 paternal and 10 maternal first cousins. My parents have a combined total of 19 siblings and this doesn't include my extended family. Via my webs of relationships I learned who I was, established my primary values, norms and understanding of the world. Positive relationships with HQCs were a part of the air that I breathed along with respect – respect for what others said, listening with an open heart and understanding that everyone has something to teach us. Therefore, when entering the Ph.D. program with a cohort of multi-generational, multi-cultural learners, I felt at home. My feeling of comfort and the gravitational pull toward the MOD and MPOD programs

now makes sense to me – the learning, the connections, seeing the best in others and helping where I could – fit into a familiar framework.

Working closely with Ron Fry and David Cooperrider throughout my tenure in the Ph.D. program has added an appreciative/positive psychological lens that inherently values people. This philosophical orientation is woven into the Department of Organizational Behavior's culture and I am part of its fabric.

In essence, I see this work through my life experiences. They shape how I engage and make meaning of the world. This is why, functioning from my value system, I found it increasingly important to hear and honor the interviewees' voices with reverence and to authentically represent their experiences.

6.4 Conclusion

6.4.1 Creating a Process to Trust

Training and education has long been content heavy with little attention paid to the relational field or relationships that support adult learning. We have often used the terms “trust the process” or the “process matters” -- yet have we been intentional about providing adults with a process that they can trust? We can teach about the value of relationships but a first-hand account of positive relationships with HQCs speaks volumes. Crafting activities and exercises that foster relationship building will provide a sensate, experiential reference point for our students to recall and carry forward, as exemplified by many in this study. For some adult learners, this may be their first time

exploring questions about their interior and developing relationships from that part of who they are. Feeling psychological safety, conflict, tension, a sense of being alive and inspiration within a positive relationship – are states that build the resources for “trusting the process.”

6.4.2 Expanding the use of Diversity.

Diversity, in the United States, has come to mean race, class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, physical ability and age. These social identifiers have been the subject of research, training and culture change because they have been the source of power differences that have provided privilege for some and disadvantage to others in our society. These dimensions of diversity were present and discussed. Yet, the conversation did not stop there. This study offers a more expansive, multi-dimensional perspective of diversity because of the HQCs within relationships. Interviewees’ explored the differences that made a difference to them and for them. They also gained empathy and understanding of each other’s lives, which was not always easy. Diverse learning modalities reached students based on their learning styles and created additional opportunities for interpersonal connections. It also altered students’ perceptions of what education is and could be. Finally, contextual geographic diversity moved students out of their comfort zones and offered another source of learning.

6.5 Closing Comments

We change from minute to minute and second to second. How we change and what we change can be highly influenced by with whom we change. Human relationships matter.

Positive relationships with HQCs create the porcelain crucible in which increased self-awareness, generativity, possibility and living up to our fullest potential can be born, nurtured and launched.

MOD and MPOD graduates demonstrated how Positive Transformation was more than an individual endeavor. It involved strength-based cognitive, affective and behavioral changes (individual transformation) used to help oneself and others to thrive and flourish. Individual transformation happened in relationship with others. It became long lasting, sustainable positive transformation when infused with positive emotions and created opportunities to do meaningful work.

As researchers, academician, trainers and business leaders, we have a responsibility and call to action to offer adult learners multi-dimensionally diverse, relational, opportunities for growth and development. If our hope is to change the organizations of tomorrow, we can look to Positive Transformation today.

7 Appendices

7.1 Appendix A: Invitation to Participate

Dear X,

I am writing to invite your participation in a research study to complete my dissertation. My study is designed to capture your positive change experiences as a MOD graduate.

Why this topic? I became involved with MPOD as a teaching assistant 5 years ago. As I facilitated family groups and listened to students' experiences, they shared accounts of personal and professional positive transformation. Their stories highlighted building stronger relationships with family members, colleagues and co-workers. When asked what made their transformation possible? Unanimously, they spoke about the program being integral to their success ranging from the interpersonal relationships they developed to their thought provoking classes.

I noticed multiple themes and wonder were these patterns also consist with MOD graduates. My curiosity led to my research question:

What factors contribute to and support positive transformation as MOD & MPOD graduates?

Generally, you will be asked 4 exploratory questions about your positive change experience in a one hour, Appreciative Inquiry Interview:

1. What positive transformation have you experienced since graduating from the MOD/MPOD program?
2. What qualities or factors contributed to your positive change?
3. How have you seen your positive transformation demonstrated in your life?
4. What role did others play in your positive transformation? What qualities did they possess and demonstrate?

I would like to arrange a face-to-face interview with you to capture your experience. My goal is to hear a broad spectrum of experiences spanning the 35 year life of the MOD and MPOD programs.

Please contact me expressing your interest. As well, I will connect you to access your interest and willingness to be interviewed. I look forward to speaking with you.

Thank you,

7.2 Appendix B: Informed Consent Document

You are being asked to participate in a research study about positive change. You were chosen by the researcher as a participant in this study because you are a graduate of the Master of Science in Organizational Development (MOD) or Master of Science in Positive Organization Development (MPOD) programs at Case Western Reserve University. Please read this form and ask any questions that you may have before agreeing to be in the research study.

Researchers at Case Western Reserve University are conducting this study.

Background Information

My name is Tim Ewing. I am a Ph.D. candidate in the Organizational Behavior Program at Case Western Reserve University. I first became interested in this study as a Teaching Assistant in the MPOD for the past 5 years. As I facilitated groups, observed students and listened to their experiences, patterns and themes regarding change emerged. I noticed patterns among MPOD students and became curious about the common positive change experiences shared among the 30 plus years of organizational development graduates.

The purpose of this study is to interview MOD/MPOD graduates to better understand your positive transformation: what factors contributed to your positive change experience? What were indicators for your positive transformation? What role did others play in your development?

The study is designed to better understand positive change processes as a byproduct of relationships you created in the MOD/MPOD program. Your participation in this study will provide valuable information for understanding this phenomenon.

Procedures

If you agree to be a participant in this research, we would like you to engage in a 1-hour face-to-face interview. We will discuss your MOD/MPOD experience and your reflections on what has been the impact of this experience on your life.

1. Interviews will take place at an agreed upon location where privacy and confidentiality are maintained.
2. Interviews will be audio taped and/or notes taken.
3. Interviews will be transcribed and made into electronic files.
4. Direct quotes may be placed in the study, with names excluded, unless you request otherwise.

Risks and Benefits to Being in the Study

This research has no foreseeable risks and no direct benefits for individual participants. Secondary benefits may include participants your gaining a better perspective on how

positive change occurs and understanding factors that contributed to the your positive transformation.

Confidentiality

The records of this research will be kept private. They will be kept in a locked file and any report we publish will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a participant; your name will not be used in any form in the final report. Access to research records will normally be limited to the researchers. However, the University’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) and other regulatory agencies may review the research records to ensure that the rights of human subjects are being adequately protected.

Only the investigators (the faculty member and student researcher) & transcriptionist, will have access to interview transcripts and audio recordings.

Voluntary Nature of the Study

Your participation is voluntary. If you choose not to participate, it will not affect your current or future relations with Case Western Reserve University. There is no penalty or loss of benefits for not participating or for discontinuing your participation.

Contacts and Questions

The researchers conducting this study are Ron Fry and Tim Ewing. If you have any questions, you may contact Tim Ewing at 216.288.8779 or Tim.Ewing@case.edu and Ron Fry at 216.368.2060 or Ronald.Fry@case.edu.

If you would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s) about: (1) concerns regarding this study, (2) research participant rights, (3) research-related injuries, or (4) other human subject issues, please contact Case Western Reserve University’s Institutional Review Board at (216) 368-6925 or write: Case Western Reserve University; Institutional Review Board; 10900 Euclid Ave.; Cleveland, OH 44106-7230.

You will be given a copy of this form for your records.

Statement of Consent

I have read the above information. I have received answers to the questions I have asked. I consent to participate in this research. I am at least 18 years of age.

Print Name of Participant: _____

Signature of Participant: _____

Date: _____

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent: _____

Date: _____

I agree to be audio taped Yes No

I give permission to use direct quotes from my interview. Yes No

7.3 Appendix C: Appreciative Inquiry Protocol

Positive Transformation:

A Theory of Positive Change

General Information

Name:

MOD/MPOD Class #:

Date:

1. Let's start with a general question. As you think back on your life since you graduated, what did you gain most from MOD/MPOD?

So, let's focus more on your MOD/MPOD experience.

- a. When did you first learn about the MOD/MPOD program?
- b. What was happening in your life that attracted you to MOD/MPOD?
- c. When you entered, what do you remember hoping to gain most as a participant in the program?

2. High Point/Peak Experience

We have all been involved in large or small processes where we have been Change Agents catalyzing positive change. These are changes that bring ideas and dreams of a better world into being. For the moment, I would like you to reflect on your life since you graduated. Think of a "high point change experience" that is memorable and stands out for you. This would be a time when you felt engaged, alive, challenged, and effective; a time when you felt like you were responding to your calling and making a difference in the lives of others.

Please share a high point/peak experience that came about because of your role as a Positive Change Agent.

- a. What made this such a high point/peak experience for you?
- b. What was it about what you did that helped to make this a high point/peak experience?
- c. Tell me more about others in your high point/peak experience? What was it about others' comments, behaviors or ways of being that supported you in your high point/peak experience?

- d. What other factors in the situation, environment or system helped make this change effort so successful?
- e. How did the MOD/MPOD experience shape you to be the way that you were in this story?

3. Personal and Professional Transformation

A fundamental tenet of the MOD/MPOD program is that personal and professional development occur simultaneously. This next question focuses on examples of your personal and professional transformation. I would like you to think about a time since completing the MOD/MPOD program when you observed your personal and professional development in action.

Please share a story about your personal transformation.

- a. Tell me what happened.
- b. How did you see your transformation in front of you?
- c. What were indicators of your development? How did you know that you had developed? What skills did you demonstrate
- d. Think about your life before and after MOD/MPOD, what signs indicate that you were doing things differently in this story than before you graduated?

4. Positive Core

Long lasting positive change is a result of knowing how to “preserve the core” of your best positive transformation. You have undoubtedly had the opportunity to demonstrate elements of your positive change “core” in many facets of your life.

- a. What would your closest clients, colleagues, or friends say are your three most noticeable strengths, values, qualities or ways of working that help you – and help you to help others – to flourish today?

5. Preferred Future

Looking ahead, it is 2015 and the MOD/MPOD program is celebrating its 40th anniversary. At the ceremony, the Program Director announces that there are over 1000 program graduates all over the globe engaged in positive change initiatives. In addition, the Director applauds MOD/MPOD alumni for their core strengths that have led to profound positive individual, family, community and organizational change. You are selected as a panelist to give a short testimony about how MOD/MPOD enabled you to bring out the best in others.

- a. What is the title of our talk?
- b. Share the key story or example you use to convey the impact of MOD/MPOD on your life.

- c. What qualities and attributes of others in the MOD/MPOD program can you identify as having contributed to your success?
- d. What do you recommend for the program and future students of MOD/MPOD in order to maintain their core strengths?

6. Additional Information

- a. What more would you like me to know about your positive change experience and the people who influenced your transformation?
- b. How was this experience for you?
- c. Are there others that you would recommend that I contact?

7.4 Appendix E: Propositions

- 1. High Quality Connections (HQCs) provide the relational conditions for Individual Transformation to take place.**
- 2. Individual Transformation represents the internal and external shifts in identity needed to align one's self-concept.**
- 3. Self-Awareness expands and deepens Individual Transformation through experiences with diverse others, diverse learning modalities and experiencing oneself in diverse contexts.**
- 4. Positive Relationships and High Quality Connections (HQCs) generate Positive Emotions.**
- 5. The "Broaden-and-Build Theory of Positive Emotions" makes available new personal and professional possibilities throughout the positive transformative experience.**
- 6. Positive Transformation becomes long-lasting, deep and sustainable by replicating one's transformative experiences.**

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