

CHAPTER 7

DISCUSSION

"Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing and rightdoing, there's a field. I'll meet you there" - Jelaluddin Rumi

7.1 Introduction

At this point in the thesis, it is time to pause and reflect, to revisit the previous chapters to make sense of what actually happened in the coaching relationship and how the relationship facilitated the development of conscious leadership. I revisit the rainbow helix, the multidisciplinary bands of theory and practice, to reflect on the construct of executive coaching in the light of the data.

In this final chapter I interrogate the data, seeking explanations for the insights gained. Differences and similarities are noted among the clients' experiences of coaching, including their EQ results and their perceived outcomes of the coaching. Next, I explore the work of the coach in more detail through the experience of the case study clients, Brian and Penny, highlighting the sometimes remarkable flow of dialogue that led to the clients' enhanced self-awareness and consciousness, and their development of the skills and emotional intelligence that make up the doing and being of conscious leadership. In the last section I take a holistic perspective, looking at the synthesis of overarching themes of executive coaching for conscious leadership.

In each section, I compare and contrast the studies in the light of the research questions posed at the beginning of the thesis: What does the coach do and how does the coaching relationship unfold through the discourse? How does the coaching relationship develop conscious leadership? I want to discover from reviewing the data how, and why, deep transformational change may have occurred with some of the clients, and whether I concur with Lipman-Blumen's comment that "leadership [development] remains an immanent, mysterious

process” (Lipman-Blumen 1996: 325). While it is noteworthy that the managers achieved the business goals and EQ-i score goals they set at the beginning of the executive coaching program, my interest in this thesis is in how the relationship brought about those changes. Can examination of the conversations between executive coach and manager shed light on this “mysterious process”? How do the data work as a prism, filtering, transforming the rainbow helix into one synthesised band of light? With these questions and reflections in mind, the final chapter brings the process full circle.

7.2 Reflections on the Company Case Studies and the EQ results

The quantitative results

The aggregated quantitative results show that statistically there was a highly significant change in the EQ of the participants overall. When looking at the EQ-i results, I noted in Chapter 4 that there was a highly significant increase in the mean scores across all the composite scales. The results indicate that in general, as a result of coaching, the managers had become more skilled in both interpersonal and intrapersonal awareness, their general mood had improved, their stress management capacity had increased and they were more adaptable. These qualities are precisely those that repeatedly appear in the leadership development literature as being essential to effective leadership for cultivating productivity (Feldman 2003; Kilburg 1996, 2004).

The BarOn EQ-i tests and re-tests are obviously not the only way in which a client’s leadership skills and emotional suitability/intelligence for the job can or should be assessed. The tests were used as one measure that not only guided me as coaching psychologist as to where the client needed additional support and development, but also allowed the client to understand where they needed to improve. It turned out that the tests themselves became an intervention that took on significance for the clients. Given that most leaders have a certain competitiveness and interest in self-improvement, their interest in the numerical scores gave them motivation to improve. While some of the improvement in scores can be attributed to test familiarity, this does not detract from the overwhelming evidence both quantitative and qualitative that change had occurred.

My sharing the analysis of the results with the clients gave them a language with which to discuss self-awareness, assertiveness, empathy, problem solving and so on. In fact, these conversations about the EQ-i are examples of active dialogues of exploration, where the coach is not just providing a mirror, in Hillman's words (Hillman 1996), but deeply engaging the client in developing a meaningful relationship. Moreover, without my knowledge of the EQ-i test results, it would have been harder to see why some of the participants who presented as socially adequate but had low EQ scores were struggling at work e.g. not delivering results. Conversely, it was clear to see why the participants with strong scores, were operating more effectively at work. For example, Ursula, who had the strongest score, applied ideas from the coaching sessions immediately and learned quickly what worked to assist her in building better relationships with her team. She made a strong statement to that effect: "I apply what I learn immediately. Coaching means I stop being so busy 'doing' and I start analysing, evaluating, synthesising, and reflecting. The focus is on my 'being'".

The measured change occurred in all areas of the EQ Inventory scales. The attributes of every scale and sub-scale are closely related to the development of conscious leadership as described in this research. Each sub-scale therefore reflects some aspect of the multidisciplinary origins of my executive coaching model, which I have come to appreciate as a result of this research.

From a human relations perspective, the work of Carl Rogers (1961, 1980) on the need for genuineness, empathy and unconditional positive regard in the relationship between client and therapist, or for the clients here, between manager and team member stand out as essential conditions for high scores on the intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligence components of the EQ. As Yiannis Gabriel noted, "feelings, emotions and fantasies shape the world of work rather than being mere by-products of the work process" (Gabriel 1998:308). From an educational perspective, much of the learning was transformational and required employees to reconceptualise their core beliefs and behaviours (Brooks 2004; Freire 1972; Mezirow 1981).

When I review my work in theology, spirituality and ethics, my emphasis in many of the executive coaching conversations was on social justice as to respect and trust, which is key to social justice and to loving relationships. I was very focussed on developing self-awareness in the clients, in the whole concept of mindfulness and integration of the self, in consciousness (Conger 1994; Dent et al. 2005; Fry 2003; Hillman 1996; Wilber 1997; Young 2002). This level of awareness is the foundation of all Buddhist practice, the practice of mindfulness and the understanding of the interconnectedness of all phenomena. Buddhist practice emphasises the loss of dualism. When we let go of defended behaviours, we re-unite the self with the self, and become present, grounded and powerful. In Christian theological and mystical language, this is at-onement. The idea of consciousness resonates well with the intrapersonal components of the EQ-i scores. It is perhaps not surprising, then, that the impact of my executive coaching protocol on the clients could actually be measured quantitatively. The difference between the pre- and post-test overall scores in intrapersonal intelligence was highly significant, the mean scores of the clients moving from 96.1 to 106.1, indicating the greatest overall improvement of all the scores.

I see the EQ-i components of stress management, adaptability and general mood to be particularly important concerns for psychological leadership development, and even more so, the interpersonal components that are reflected in my belief that interpersonal communication and "feedback" are the keys to good leadership. When reviewing my studies in psychology and psychotherapy, I have noted in Chapter 2 that the links between psychology and consciousness studies are close and overlapping. For example, Martin Seligman's (2002) renewed concept of positive psychology, based in part on the humanist psychological theoretical framework, is a clear influence on my insistence that the clients move towards a positive "New Me". Long before I was introduced to Seligman's work, I used positive psychology through my training in human relations. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s I was interested in realising human potential, and later, I developed my coaching model, before reading Seligman. And it was in the 1980s during my psychology training, that I

developed my use of hypnotic suggestion, owing much to Milton Erickson's inspirational writings (B. Erickson 1994).

The increases in scores such as adaptability, assertiveness, stress management, and the general mood of optimism and happiness were keys to the achievement of conscious leadership and to the managers' ability to be productive and effective. Gail was a good case in point, where she learned through coaching to be assertive, and once this happened, she was able to resolve a number of other issues. All the qualities of the healthy self are interrelated, but the one that I found was the most important to pick up on with my clients was assertiveness. When one is being appropriately assertive, one is in the Adult mode. This was immensely important in the coaching, and is another example of my use of counselling, another band of the rainbow helix. To change an existing behaviour involves becoming aware of the behaviour and the context that evokes that behaviour, then hitting the pause button on that old habitual reactive behaviour. Learning requires awareness, rehearsal of a new skill, and sufficient awareness to insert the new skill at the appropriate times. At an elementary level, by definition, learning new skills involves raising awareness. When a healthy response is being learned in order to replace an unhelpful reactive ego defence, then the level of awareness is far deeper. The risk (i.e. exposure to feeling vulnerable) of change is greater, but the outcome is transformational as it reintegrates the self. That awareness of the elementary and more sophisticated behaviours is brought about because of the relationship. Managers frequently say that releasing old ego defences and behaving in a new constructive way is so empowering that they experience substantial improvements of confidence, happiness, staff relationships, all of which bear on productivity of the individual, the team and the organisation.

It is beyond the purview of this thesis to attempt to measure in quantitative terms the increase in productivity of the two organisations I worked with. However, the overall qualitative comments suggest that the participants did become more productive and effective. For example, the CEO of Company R reported that as a result of the coaching she had instigated further changes to improve systems in the company, and she also attributed the improved,

considered, staff reviews as a direct result of the coaching, which in turn had helped to build more productive staff relationships.

Although my primary concern was with coaching the individual managers, I was also focussed on facilitating positive outcomes for the organisation, and constantly aware of the need for the coaching program to be useful to overall organisational improvement. A number of observations are relevant here. While the organisational context is the subject of much literature on organisational behaviour, it is only in the last decade or so that the relationship between the individual, the coach and the organisation has been explored in any depth (Tobias 1996). Later work by Cacioppe (2000), Orenstein (2002), Jay (2003), and others reinforces my belief that key leadership strategies, and the concept of self-awareness, consciousness, and spirituality in the workplace, are best taught *inside* the context of the work environment and with a long-term continuous development. In Chapter 2 I noted that in terms of increasing productivity of the organisation, Olivero et al. (1997) showed that executive coaching as a follow-up to a training program resulted in an increase of productivity of 88% (cited in Day 2001: 592).

Researchers and consultants concerned with fostering healthy workplaces have shown how crucial the role of leadership behaviour is in ensuring the well-being of employees and their organisation (Dierendonck et al. 2004; Fuqua & Newman 2002; Jain & Sinha 2005; Lyubomirsky et al. 2005). There is also general agreement that a good leader whose qualities reflect a healthy, integrated self, with a talent for empathy and a strong personal presence will be in a position to transform organisational learning and change (Brooks 2004; Hammer 2000; Henderson 2002; Hogan & Kaiser 2005). I noted in Chapter 2 that the psychological health of the executive affects the health of the entire organisation, citing the work of Quick and Macik-Frey that organisational health can be enhanced where leaders understand the power of positive psychology, transformational leadership and emotional intelligence (Quick & Macik-Frey 2004). These very leadership qualities are indicated in the various scales and sub-scales of the Bar-On EQ-i test, and it has been shown that the EQ scores significantly increased in the participants as a direct result of the coaching,

according both to the quantitative results as well as the self-reports of the managers.

Overall benefits of coaching for building conscious leadership

The feedback to me from the participants in both companies was that coaching benefited them not only in developing many specific skills of management but also developing more of the attributes of conscious leadership, which I have shown in the preceding section are connected across all the intertwined bands of the rainbow helix .

a. Better relating

In Chapter 4, I gave examples of how the participants made positive changes in their communication skills, their psychologically healthy behaviour, especially their ability to give and receive constructive feedback. They reported that they gained confidence, assertiveness, claimed their authority, dealt positively with conflict and managed difficult cases, and learned to "hit the pause button" and respond instead of react. The managers' improved interpersonal and intrapersonal attributes meant that they were relating better to their teams, and giving far better staff reviews, which in turn led to perceived positive change. As Giglio et al. (1998) noted in their discussion of executive coaching, interpersonal know-how is leverage for organisational transformation. Also, Lipman-Blumen's (1996) thesis that leadership is "connective" is an important reminder that effective leadership styles now must take into account the fundamental shift in the workplace environment away from old hierarchical models. Her hypothesis is that today's leaders use connections across their complex and diverse aspects of life, and that the nine connective leadership styles she identified should be applied according to the particular circumstance, not according to an inflexible order of organisational structure. The organisational structure is a network of peers rather than a hierarchy of rank. It is the inner presence, genuineness and empathy of the leader in their relationship with others that is crucial to that interpersonal know-how discussed by Giglio et al. This was very noticeable with many of the coaching clients. For example, at the conclusion of Penny's coaching sessions, I discussed with her how the coaching relationship

had lifted her self-awareness, which in turn improved her interpersonal relating, which improved everything in her home and work life.

In their dealings with their peers and with the teams they led, the managers I coached consistently reported how much improved their relationships at work were as a result of coaching. Even when they were talking about their own sense of well-being, their confidence, their ways of doing staff reviews, they mostly talked about the improvements in terms of those relationships at work.

Integration of the self, the team and the organisation

As I commented in Chapter 2, an integrated strategy for training leaders to develop positive proactive relationships within organisations has been discussed by many writers on coaching and leadership development (Biberman & Whitty 1997; Cacioppe 2000; Day 2001; Dent et al. 2005; Mitroff & Denton 1999). Ron Cacioppe refers to an integrated model of individual, team and organisational development, proposing an understanding of Ken Wilber's four quadrants of consciousness to integrate the practical and spiritual elements of work beyond the separation of individual, team and context to a higher state of awareness:

At higher levels of awareness, individuals transcend the mental and social-cultural ego based concerns and experience moments when they become unified with life on a larger scale. This state is not a conceptual state but an actual experience; the seer and the seen are one. This state is often described as transcending time, a sense of quiet, alert stillness in action and a state in which there is not self-talk but natural, effortless action (Cacioppe 2000:111).

Cacioppe went on to emphasise that the integration of the "realities" of the work experience can only be understood in their context (ibid. 115) Significantly, at the same time that the managers reported improvements in their self-awareness at work and their happiness, they also mentioned how much better their relationships with members of their family were. In my study, the growing synthesis and integration was evident not only of self within self, but self with team and organisation, and self at work with self at home.

According to Mussig, "Leadership is a reciprocal relationship between those who lead and those who decide to follow. Any discussion of leadership must attend to the dynamics of this relationship" (Mussig 2003:73). Sinclair (2001)

also made the point that there was a need to understand leadership as a relationship that is collectively constructed,

In a very fundamental way, we can't understand leaders unless we understand the groups from which they spring. The insight that there are no leaders without followers is a very old one. However, people continue to try to explain the secrets of leadership's success without seeking to also define what leadership a group needs at a particular time and why (Sinclair 2001:5)

In the coaching sessions, many of the managers mentioned that they had gained the insight that relationships are collectively constructed. In Company R, Gail said that coaching helped her to improve relationships with her team as a whole. Kevin talked about becoming more empathic with other people's needs. Rachael told about brainstorming solutions with all her staff and becoming more positive. They all used words of relating such as being more open, growing trust, better management. In Company U, the language was similar; for example, Bruce talked about his growing awareness of social dynamics. Derek talked about feeling energised, and Frank discussed giving his team more trust.

This is the language used widely by psychologists to describe a psychologically healthy adult, the Adult self of Transactional Analysis, and of utmost importance, the qualities of emotional intelligence. I have already shown that the benefits of coaching were quantitatively measured through the increase in scores in the EQ-i test. With the managers' perceived improvement in emotional intelligence qualities, they realised the significance of integrity, awareness, presence, consciousness as leadership qualities. The difference between a manager and a true leader is the *presence* of the person (Cacioppe 2000; Fry 2003; Senge et al. 2004; Wilber 1997). Cacioppe talks about 'leadership wisdom' and spirituality, the leader who lets go of self-interest and ego, and is able to respond to the needs of the team and the organisation, to be aware of spirit at work. Wilber (1997) uses the terms awareness and consciousness and integrity to articulate the personal experience of spirituality at work. Senge, like Lipman-Blumen, is among the many management consultants who assert that the leader's "style" is not so much about the external skills demonstrated but more about internal genuineness, and empathic relationships with others. Andrew, the general manager of Company U had the

rhetoric but had not yet developed the personal reality, and was perceived as two dimensional and ineffective.

With Penny and Brian, this increased awareness was explicitly discussed with me over the coaching sessions. For example, it took several sessions for Brian to reach an awareness that his learned fear and anger at his boss Bill was in the way, and it took a few more sessions to reach a point of willingness to suspend his ego defences and to allow himself to be open and compassionate and exercise leadership with Bill. Similarly, Penny's passive attendance at executive meetings for months on end paralleled her teenage experience at the family meal table where she felt inadequate when surrounded by people she perceived as more intelligent and competent than her. The bringing to awareness of the parallel, intentionally developing an alternative positive picture and at the same time embracing her remarkable achievements of developing a company from start-up to multimillion dollar success, plus standing in for the CEO and the CIO to negotiate a store sale – these things coming together allowed her to drop her ego defences and exercise leadership in an intelligent outgoing way with her CEO and peers. The patch of fear that each of them had is an example of the dissociated aspect of the self. Any time an experience paralleling an earlier trauma occurred, a weak link in their sense of self was exposed, and a patch of ego defence covered that weak link like a lick of paint over a crack in a wall. Once Brian and Penny became conscious, hit the pause button on their reactive ego defences, and instead acted in a constructive way, they were acting with psychological integrity. This in effect healed the old trauma and gave positive reward for the new integrated, spiritually present way. With renewed confidence, their energy/spirit rose. The interesting parallel at an organisational level is that using fear as a driving controlling mechanism of the leader over their followers was a dominant organisational paradigm in the traditional bureaucratic model. As Louis Fry (2003) points out, the new learning organisation is driven instead by spiritual leadership, a love-led networked alliance of committed people with a sense of membership.

b. Integration and integrity

The person whose behaviour communicates advanced accurate empathy, whether to the individual person or to a collective of people, will have a high level of authority attributed to them (Reave, 2005; Fry, 2003, 2005). The leader is then seen as having integrity, which is reflected in ethical behaviour (Bass 1998; Reave, 2005:667). As ethical behaviour is a sign of presence, so, as Cacioppe says, it is part of creating spirit at work (Cacioppe 2000).

There is a pattern of language in discussing these qualities that reflects back to my initial "good leader" exercise, and to my study of human relations. It reflects Carl Rogers' work *On Becoming a Person* (1961), where he noted that the study of human relations in psychotherapy was also true to all relationships, not just to the therapeutic relationship. I also cited the existentialist Rollo May (1983: 20) who said "What is the nature of human beings that two persons can communicate, can grasp each other as beings, have genuine concern with the welfare and fulfilment of the other, and experience some genuine trust?" Language, the action of language, is the vehicle for cultivating consciousness (O'Hara 2003).

In my research with the 21 participants, it became clear that the way the coaching relationship developed was a parallel process to the growing positive relationships of the participants with their teams. They learned the skills in the coaching sessions and they practised them. Their success with their new language, their new awareness, their consciousness, reinforced the increasing rapport they were developing with their teams.

This demonstrated success in the coaching process is in essence a "solution" to the problem that Yiannis Gabriel (1998) was talking about in his study on the emotional life of organisations. He said that the dangers of not building empathic relationships led to bureaucratic impersonality, and in that bureaucratic "empty space", the best that can happen is blaming, victimisation and scapegoating. Learning, said Gabriel is not merely gradual enlightenment "but a frequently painful process of 'unlearning' past defensive and dysfunctional postures..." (Gabriel 1998:309). I noted in Chapter 2 that in my view, the capacity for in-depth relating, i.e., undefended and loving relating, is

what distinguishes a leadership coach from a task oriented behaviour change coach. While this comment applies to my own relating with my participants, it is that parallel process of their relating with their teams.

c. Feedback and empathy in the coaching relationship

Pivotal to the success of the coaching was the coaching relationship, as reported by the participants. What works in coaching clearly depends on the nature of the client-coach relationship that is built up from the very first encounter (Duncan & Miller 2000; Goldsmith et al. 2000; Grayson & Larson 2000; Kilburg 2000). A significant issue in this overall relationship is portrayed in the coaching dialogues about giving and receiving feedback, and the ability of the coach to have the psychological insight to facilitate sustained behaviour change (Brotman et al. 1998). Empathic feedback is a master key to self-insight. It is crucial to feeling deeply heard and thus to experiencing a state of trust with another. It is about trusting that "I can trust you with who I am".

One of the happiest and most striking findings in this study was the impact that my simple instruction to the managers about giving "six positive feedbacks a day" had on their relationships at home and at work. As a result of this simple intervention, a first step in learning to do full staff reviews, morale went up across the business. By giving better feedback and handling staff reviews well, the managers also got feedback from staff and were able to do a reality check, usually positive. The coaching outcome was that they embraced the process and absorbed the positive results. This in turn gave a genuine boost to confidence and greater awareness. In contrast, those managers who "forgot" to follow my suggestion to give positive feedback were the same managers who scored low on the EQ-i scores, as I pointed out in Chapter 4.

When the participants reported on the benefits of the coaching relationship, they spoke warmly about the trust, empathy and openness they experienced with me, and they spoke about the caring relationship. A common element was the connection between the genuine relationship and the ability to receive "tough" feedback. As an example, Eric (Company U), who had at first resisted the coaching program, came to acknowledge that he particularly valued my deeper

feedback because it was concrete and situational. He reported that by Session 9, he had begun to be more proactive in his job and to relate to the other managers in the Adult, rather than as an anti-authoritarian adolescent, as a result of my feedback. Bruce commented on the "frank" talk and the positive mode of feedback. Harry described my feedback as tough, saying "with you, it's not hurtful".

While feedback as a concept has taken on multiple meanings in organisational psychology, it is also part of the long tradition of educational psychology, including the work of educators such as Paulo Freire (1972), whose transformative learning paradigm was essentially dialogic, humanistic and emancipatory. Freire's conscientisation process is close to Carl Rogers' dialogic process, in that Rogers' counsellor and Freire's teacher are both portrayed as respectful, empathic listeners facilitating a conversation in which all parties gain insight.

d. Coaching as a language event

My analysis of the actual dialogue of coaching has revealed the level of empathy, commitment and challenge that I encouraged, as was seen in the detailed case studies in Chapters 5 and 6. In several of the dialogues of the other participants it is clear that I was fostering critical reflection, as recommended by many writers (Brooks 2004; Conger & Xin 2000; Day 2001) and of course part of the transformative learning approach developed by Mezirow (1981). Significantly, the very art and practice of coaching is a language event. I noted in Chapter 2, that, as with transformational learning, dialogue and the process of reaching an understanding is the basis also for developing the client-coach relationship. Language, the action of language, is the vehicle for cultivating consciousness (O'Hara 2003). Yet even though I was aware that critical reflection needed to be encouraged and anticipated, the degree to which I altered my language to suit the needs of different clients has been an interesting discovery, one that became more apparent on reviewing the tapes and transcripts of the sessions.

For example, the different discourse (and different stories and metaphors) between Candy and me in Company U compared with Rachael and me in Company R, reflected the very different characteristics of these two women. Candy had an initially low score in EQ (87) and also made the greatest improvement (to 113). Rachael was highly intelligent but also had one of the lowest EQ scores (68) and made little change in her scales (from 68 to 70). Both reported enormous benefits from the coaching, but for different reasons. Candy reflected that her confidence was lower than she had realised, that she needed to slow down her speech and speak in a more authoritative way and find a way to resolve emotions so she could be less emotional and reactive in her dealings with people. We used many sessions to rehearse Candy's communication skills (including the A-B-C of communication), and she was proactive in enrolling in several short courses (e.g. Toastmasters) to improve her delivery, as well as committing to a health and fitness program. As the coaching progressed for Candy, she was able to be more authoritative and far more robust and at ease with her conscious leadership behaviour. By the end of her sessions she reported "Prior to coaching, I had tended to get straight to the point when managing 100 men, but I'm now leading in more and building more of a relationship and getting better buy in." She said: "It's very helpful for me to have a clear sequence in my mind to make feedback effective. I had never before invited feedback from my subordinates."

In contrast, I used very different language with Rachael from Company R, who started off in her coaching being completely task focussed and completely frustrated by the state of the Company's outmoded systems. I believed she was dissociated from her body (e.g. did not attend to her severe back pain for weeks) and could not progress her dis-integrated self. She could not articulate that she felt profoundly alone and unsupported. These observations stemmed from my deep knowledge of psychology and counselling, another example of the multiple influences at work in executive coaching, in this case the influences of therapists cited earlier in this chapter and in Chapter 2, including Erickson, Miller et al., Rogers, Berne, and many others.

I spent a lot of time developing stories, using metaphors, drawing diagrams to illustrate points and encourage a more robust and positive outlook, while at the same time listening empathically with Rachael about her overload at work and her personal grief at the recent loss of her mother. In spite of her low EQ results, she reported enormous benefits through coaching. By the end of the six months she said: “It was wonderful to discuss alternatives regarding what would be most beneficial, to find a path to get what I want, and then to negotiate using scripts and being assertive” When asked the benefits of coaching she said: “I could speak uninterrupted and be heard. I felt you were interested. Therefore I felt belonging, worthiness and confidence.”

My focus on the positives, on what would be most beneficial, rather than moving into the pathology of her anxiety, related closely to Seligman’s positive psychology, where he encourages psychologists to focus on systematically building competency rather than correcting weakness (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi 2000).

e. Mindfulness to insight, insight to love

The self-reporting of the benefits of the coaching relationship included several references to “getting clear”, or “being more aware”, or “feeling energised”, or “healthy and useful relationship”, and “aware of others’ needs”. Self-awareness, other-awareness and energy are related to mindfulness, to consciousness, and spirituality in leadership. (Derek said of the coaching relationship, “it’s like a spiritual relationship”). Ellen Langer, for example, wrote extensively on mindfulness, which she defined as “a state of conscious awareness...” (Langer & Moldoveanu 2000b, cited in Demick 2000:142). Without being mindful, it is impossible to give and receive accurate feedback. A state of awareness allows clarity, and insight, the ability to acknowledge emotion, reactivity or thoughtlessness, and brings about a state of responsiveness that is a necessary condition for giving positive and constructive feedback. Brown and Ryan (2003) were able to confirm the positive relation between states of awareness and consciousness on the one hand and states of well-being. Their study agrees with my own findings, that as the participants became more aware, and were able to be robust and receive tough feedback as well as give genuine feedback,

they also became more confident, more energised and reported an improved state of well-being.

The coaching relationship effectively provided a parallel, albeit professional, intimate conversation. The experience of intimate conversation is what makes people feel empowered. As Olivia said: “Coaching is definitely valuable in being able to talk about my concerns and talk about how to deal with things.” She went on to say: “Coaching has crystallised what I am upset about and why I am upset, and as a result I’ve got a clearer idea of what to do and I do it... I feel I’ve got some power in the situation and that lifts my energy.” This was a powerful message, the move from clarity, to empowerment, to renewed energy, or presence, which in turn is symptomatic of spirituality in the workplace (Fry 2003). Presence is the relaxed open power that shines out when a person is integrated at the core of the self.

f. Well-being and the organisational context

Crucial to the coaching process is having an understanding of the organisational context of the executives (Stace & Dunphy 1994); the managers are responsible for so many aspects of the well-being of their staff and for leadership in the organisation itself (Tobias 1996; Orenstein 2002). If I as coach am not aware of the issues and concerns they experience in the organisation, I cannot accurately empathise and build a good working relationship with them.

My decision to engage with two different companies for my research was in response to this accepted knowledge, so that I could compare and contrast what was happening not only with each individual, but within each of the organisations. My contract with each company was to facilitate the improvement of the organisation through coaching their executives. Another executive coach, Goldberg (2005), observed that as an executive coach interested in building corporate change rather than in one-to-one coaching, he overcame his own initial resistance to executive coaching. As was seen in Chapter 4, the feedback from the clients was clearly indicative that coaching had improved the relationships among the teams, and with improved relationships, the workplace lifted its game, and work progressed better. For

example, we saw how Bruce from Company U talked about how coaching had helped him with his interpersonal skills and as a result, he and his team handled a major engineering problem (that had a risk factor of hundreds of thousands of dollars) exceptionally well and his confidence lifted. He was very happy that the new way he managed the team worked so well.

The life of these two organisations was clearly focussed on the concerns of the individual managers as they strived to manage their teams better, and as they dealt every day with emotionally loaded issues that impacted on the running of the organisation. As discussed in Chapter 4, decision-making and communication processes determine the flow of power in an organisation. I cited Bob Filipczak (1998:32) in Chapter 2 where he said: “the interpersonal skill most often listed in the executives’ debit column is that of simple listening”. And the work of Ann Brooks (2004) pinpoints the challenges that executives face in developing new ways of communicating to their employees when change in the organisation is occurring. In Chapter 5, the case study of Brian details how he could take on board the skills and techniques from coaching and deal more effectively with decision-making and in general arriving at a position of authentic authority.

g. Re-uniting the personal and professional

What was exciting for the clients, and yet what is not evident in most of the coaching literature, was the connection I made as coach between managing a work team in the organisation and, with their spouse, managing the family on the domestic front. One exception was Orenstein (2002) who linked the outcome of changed behaviour (through coaching) to change in the whole person, shaped by their past, their personal lives and their work environments. I urged all clients to practise giving positive feedback and Adult-to-Adult communication with their children as well as with their colleagues. For example, at Company U, Bruce talked about how he had made more explicit to his children how much he loved them, and how that helped him to communicate with more care and interest and encouragement with his team. As well, I was able to engage in a sense of professional intimacy that the participants had rarely experienced before. The participants were able to talk about love in the

organisational context, to understand how to show empathy. I also suggested that they talk to their partners about the coaching, and realised that by getting the clients to talk to their partners, they became more committed to their personal growth. They become more integrated and able to see the organisation through a heightened state of consciousness, without separating their sense of self-at-work from self-at-home. In a sense, their partners became co-coaches.

h. Everyday analogies and other conversations

Another of the findings that really stood out was the power of using everyday analogies, and of using metaphor. For example, my simple device of introducing the A-B-C of communication (Agenda-Body-Conclusion), using the everyday example of writing an essay, usually elicited a lot of humour. Nevertheless, they began to see the deeper reasons for this device after I explained it was about engaging the other person, using empathic listening and taking a personal interest in them to make a connection with them, and then setting the agenda for the ensuing chat. I told them that every conversation, every phone chat, every meeting and every email needed the A-B-C, and almost without exception, this simple example evoked up a big "Aha!" in the group sessions. It can be helpful if the coach takes something that is really familiar, that is memorable and allows group members to relate to an old framework of meaning. They can remember the drills. When the managers in this research project realised that, beyond foreshadowing the agenda of the body of the conversation, the introduction is building a relationship with the other, then it became phenomenally important - they saw that the difference between a good manager and a good leader was the "A" of the A-B-C.

With this everyday example, the managers identified with what it was like to take orders from someone who does not do the relationship building and who is authoritarian. They came back reporting how they did a lot more "A" and what remarkable changes occurred in their workplace when they took an active personal interest in others. The outcomes of their practising this behaviour provided positive reinforcement. Within days, they reported having more fun, an improvement of morale and discovering new information affecting all business

decisions, just as a result of having taken the time. Moreover, they loved to do it at home as well. Lyn from Company R reported that she felt much happier as a result of using the A-B-C and learning how to give feedback, and her husband told her that since coaching she didn't dwell on negative things like she used to. Also in Company R, Nathan had noticed he had a very different style of conversation with other managers. For example, he spoke to Mike and discovered he was a good businessman and very supportive of Nathan. He said: "Before, I didn't know how to function in relationships. I am now talking more."

From Company U, Frank's improvement in all aspects of communication every session was marked. He came in every session having practised the skills we had rehearsed, trying things out and integrating the positive feedback of the experience. After one public presentation he was approached by a headhunter. He was dazzled. He took seriously the challenge of giving emotional feedback to his adult children, something he had never done, and initiated a day together on Father's Day. Frank reported: "It was a really good day. I stood up and gave a speech in the middle of dinner and I told each one I loved them." He had begun speaking out more than usual in all business meetings and contributing more. He was meeting his staff members more regularly and delegating more. He had also steered a difficult staff member into counselling. The outcome of being more assertive with Bill was: "I feel supported. I can now come to him with ideas and he goes through the pros and cons and makes his expectations clear. There's no doubt that my ability to communicate with others has gone up."

In general, it emerged that by using domestic examples, and asking the managers to practise at home with their partner and kids as well as their work colleagues, there was a lot of reporting about how much better their family situation was at home. In fact, some reported that using a variety of the new strategies changed the whole dynamic at home. These are examples of lifelong learning (Mezirow 1981; O'Hara 2003).

- i. Towards conscious leadership: love, spirit and ethics at work

My own insight from the examples above confirms my understanding from my earlier work in human relations that when power is based on fear, people are locked into authoritarian dynamics. When based on trust and respect, power works to maintain mutual responsible adult relating, and inspires and motivates enormous creativity and all kinds of productivity. I learned anew that these dynamics apply as much to the workplace as anywhere else. It brought to mind Carl Rogers' reflections on his work as a therapist that "what is true in a relationship between therapist and client may well be true for a marriage, a family, a school, an administration, a relationship between cultures or countries" (Rogers 1980:viii).

The companies were in different stages of development and approached the professional development of their staff differently. Whereas with Company U, staff had been exposed to systematic staff development, and there was a considerable amount of trust and certainty in the employee/employer relationships, the situation for the staff at Company R was, as their CEO said, that they were demoralised, there was a lack of trust, an extraordinary amount of pressure at a time of change, and a serious lack of support i.e. systems and staff. I reflected in my case notes that, as often happens with senior executives, Sue the CEO wanted to use the coaching as a sounding board, an opportunity to vent and brainstorm. This was the position with all the managers, but the organisational context provided an avenue for both situational and personal change.

From my analysis of the dialogues with the clients in the two organisations, it becomes clear that my coaching style and the use of my Conscious Leadership model was adjusted to deal with the organisational situation as well as for the individuals in relation to the issues they confronted in their respective workplaces. Indeed, on reflection of the two groups of people, at Company U and Company R, I connected with the managers in Company R less in relation to the formal skills and techniques of leadership coaching (e.g. conducting staff reviews; giving and receiving feedback; conducting meetings; empathy and problem solving) and more in relation to a combination of interpersonal skill sets, and the various components of the EQ scales.

The concept of ethical behaviour and an understanding of ethical principles are central to trust in organisational relationships both within and between organisations. In both groups in the companies in my research, the group session on the Robin Hood story sparked vigorous debate. This was not only on ethics and morality generally, but on the realisation that if there was so little synchronicity among team members in the ranking of values in this example, then it was probably the case for every business decision, and they made dozens of business decisions a week. My approach resonates well with the work of Mark Storey (2003), whose observations on corporate fraud and corruption in top organisations were that the wrongdoing would not have been as likely had the executives been coached; they would not have lost their moral perspective. Ethical integrity is also at the heart of Buddhist practice of living compassionately and ethically, that is, the Noble Eightfold Path. The spiritual journey progresses from a rules-based and external punishment notion of what is right and wrong to an internal, integrated moral imperative. Ethical integrity is internal and is an outcome of psychological integration, which is an outcome of the reassociation of the parts of the self that have been dissociated by trauma. It is without doubt crucial that Goleman's concept of Emotional Intelligence in the workplace has been influential in the development of spirituality/consciousness as a fundamental concern for organisational management and conscious leadership (Conger, 1994; Fairholm, 1998; Fry, 2003; Giacalone & Jurkiewicz 2003; Jay, 2003; Dent et al. 2005). Such a perspective is part of a holistic spiritual leadership approach, where gaining awareness comes from deep reflection and subsequent insight.

7.3 Reflections on the individual case studies:

Brian's and Penny's stories

What has been learned from the detailed stories of Brian and Penny as they progressed through the executive coaching sessions? How did the coaching relationship develop and how did each client respond? What worked? What were the differences between Brian's and Penny's experiences of coaching? In my analysis of my role, what did I do that was consistent between the two, or different?

As I progressed through the transcriptions of the many hours of sessions with all the participants, but in particular those of Penny and Brian, as well as my case notes, I began a systematic analysis of sections of dialogue, looking for evidence of discourse strategies. I came up with 11 categories: meta-statement, metaphor, encouragement, challenge, reflecting back, humour, self-disclosure, P-A-C statement, ego defence, narrative, values clarification (see Table 7.1). As I went through the data again and again, I moved P-A-C, and ego defence statement, to the column for "preliminary classification and coding by developing skill sets". I then charted a selection of dialogue excerpts according to evidence and interpretations of the healthy self, A-B-C of communication, empathy, point of power in the present, New Me patterns, and feedback. I then looked for evidence of change through empathy, genuineness, presence/insight, clearing roadblocks. The last kind of analysis was by listening for voice quality, tone and pitch, and cues of nonverbal responses, but I realised that to do this adequately I would have had to video the sessions. I suggest that further research needs to be done to carry out a more detailed discourse or conversation analysis with video recordings.

The importance of language in coaching is paramount, and essential to building relationships as in any communication. One clear example comes from Kahn (1997) who pointed out the affective impact of dialogue in his analysis of Rogers' therapeutic work; he quoted two of Rogers' students to describe empathic therapists: "they have a manner and tone that indicate they take the relationship seriously; are aware of what the client is feeling now; and have a capacity to communicate this understanding in a language attuned to those current feelings" (Kahn 1997:44). Another area of analysis has been to recognise the use of story and metaphor, and of hypnotic suggestion, as key discursive strategies (Richard 2003; Barker 1988). In this thesis I have not included a study of narrative research in the social sciences, nor of narrative therapy in psychoanalysis, but lessons can be learned from these fields, perhaps in a separate linguistically oriented study.

Some form of dialogic or discourse analysis of the conversations between coach and client was nevertheless essential to the methodological framework of this thesis, as I explained in Chapter 3. By interrogating the data from the transcripts, I was able to gain further insight at the micro level into the specific interactions through words, phrases, tone, silence, questions and so on. At the macro level, I was able to see patterns emerging where clients gained awareness, insight, consciousness, where they responded to metaphor, where they reported on their wins at work and in their family relationships.

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TABLE 7.1
Example of Data analysis for Case Study #1: Brian

C = client; EC= executive coach

Tape #	Name (C or EC)	Transcript	Executive Coach Strategy/ client response ¹	Preliminary classification and coding for EC and C By developing skill sets ²	Interpretation of EC or C contribution: ³	Voice, nonverbal cues, quality of sound in voice (feeling/love/music etc) cues from listening to tapes
BR1	EC	The reason I'm exploring this with you is I thinking I wonder...I want to get an appraisal apart from your analysis of it because I might agree with you but I just wanted to know if there was another way of looking at it, and secondly it may be that I can help you work out a way to open up that.[concern about team members apparently refusing to change]	Re-framing the question	Point of power	Feedback plus invitation to explore an issue that obviously troubles the client, even though he speaks to the problem as their problem, not his. Opens a chance to explore what is behind the client's feelings	Warm, open statement inviting confidence rather than closing off the topic
	EC	If there were just a couple of things you could change that would make life a whole lot better for you here, satisfying, pleasing....	Open questions	empathy	Accepting of the mostly happy situation, acknowledging there seem to be a couple of problems, but opening up invitation to elaborate.	Encouraging, upbeat voice, almost teasing,
	C	<i>Yeah I'm pretty happy, I feel my position in life is pretty good...I'd</i>	<i>More open response than</i>		Providing feedback to an open question allows client to be	

¹ Metastatement, metaphor, encouragement, challenge, reflecting back, humour, self-disclosure parent/child/adult, ego-defences, narrative history, values clarification,

² healthy self, ABC of communication, empathy, point of power, new patterns, feedback, power

³ evidence of change through empathy, genuineness, presence, insight, clearing roadblocks etc

Tape #	Name (C or EC)	Transcript	Executive Coach Strategy/ client response ¹	Preliminary classification and coding for EC and C By developing skill sets ²	Interpretation of EC or C contribution: ³	Voice, nonverbal cues, quality of sound in voice (feeling/love/music etc) cues from listening to tapes
		<i>like to shoot for a higher level of maturity across the whole [company]...probably attract some great stronger leadership around to place...</i>	<i>earlier in the session, admitting frustration to some degree</i>		clearer on points	
	EC	Lots of people don't realize they're not grown up, that they're actually kids...they don't function as competent responsible adults...we'd have to work out what we'd do [to promote] adult behaviour.	Affirmation of client's concern	Child/adult reference	Conversation speeding up as session draws to a close and there seems to be an important point of contact in developing the coach-client relationship for the next meeting	Sincere, focussed, strong voice
BW2	EC	What I wanted to pick up with you first Bob on the first session	Meta-statement		Introductory statement to display genuine interest, re-focussing the client to recall and re-connect	Warmth in voice; upbeat, inviting trust
	EC	how was that for you, what was good, what works, what ideas were you thinking about, were there any questions you wanted to ask	Encouragement		Introductory invitation for client to construct own understanding of the previous session, inviting ownership, and indicating the coach's genuine interest	
	C	<i>Oh I guess the schedule is pretty early. A lot of things I mentioned to you I have mentioned to a lot of other forums at the moment but it's probably more a case of a bit of a dump. I guess the thing I hadn't done before that I did with yourself was</i>	<i>Defensiveness)</i>		Client reluctance to acknowledge that the first session was any different from any other forum. Then, after the coach invites further comment (mmm), he goes on to say, thus entering into the first 'insight' that a relationship was beginning to	Voice business-like and detached, avoiding direct engagement

Tape #	Name (C or EC)	Transcript	Executive Coach Strategy/ client response ¹	Preliminary classification and coding for EC and C By developing skill sets ²	Interpretation of EC or C contribution: ³	Voice, nonverbal cues, quality of sound in voice (feeling/love/music etc) cues from listening to tapes
		<i>minor personal things from my past workplaces</i>			form.	
	EC	And what did you take away from that conversation then?	Open question: encouragement	presence	Gentle indication of empathic interaction,	Soft, warm, maintain eye contact
	C	<i>I hadn't actually set out for probably ten years in some of those cases and talked about that but it dragged up a few memories of the past, I guess, and put ... a bit more perspective I guess.</i>	<i>Gaining perspective through reflecting back</i>		Words such as 'dragged up', an 'perspective' used to denote reformulation of problems in the light of past experience that may not have positive connotations, or that may lead to new insights into present situation.	
	EC	...we were able to understand..when it didn't work out	Summarising what was said by the client, with empathy	Feedback with advanced empathic response	Client feels understood and can continue freely. This elevates the coach's authority	Tentative, an element of openness in the tone to enable client to refine and name more accurately their experience
	C	<i>That's it, you're right...what it means is that each of us are probably covering things that we wouldn't normally cover and therefore we're doing a bit too much day-to-day so of stuff</i>	<i>Accepting that the feedback was accurate, he can then take it further</i>	– advanced communication skills	<i>Ability to elaborate and stick to the main points and then move into a more personal story with reflections</i>	
	EC	OK. So do you really want...?....personally, what would it be like for...?"	Open question	Point of power	Challenges client to think from a personal view, moving away from the specific organisational context	

When I stepped back from the detail, and reflected on the data as a whole, I discovered a number of patterns that resonate with the literature, and in many instances, go beyond what has been documented elsewhere. On the whole, I agree with the findings of Miller et al. (1997), whose work in one-to-one psychotherapeutic relationships parallels the one-to-one coaching relationship, that 40% of change in clients was due to the client and 30% to the client-therapist relationship, irrespective of models of therapy/coaching used. Miller et al. looked particularly at the nature and role of language in the relationship, and found that the relationship is likely to "work" best "when the therapist and client speak a language that is similar in word usage, complexity, depth, meaning and other measures of linguistic style" (1997:71). This observation also applies to my work with the two case study individuals, Brian and Penny. While I used the same basic model with both of them, I made several changes to fit in with their particular organisational and personal situations, and to mirror their language, their approaches to solving problems, and their interests. With this in mind, this next section of my thesis analyses the extent to which the coaching conversations with the client (focussing on the attributes of the client's healthy self) built up that constructive relationship and resulted in positive growth in conscious leadership. I have already shown in Chapter 4 how the coaching relationship "worked" for the group. Here I analyse what worked for two key people.

The early sessions: building rapport

The first coaching session functions as both an assessment session as well as building rapport between the coach and the client. In this first session, the coach asks a series of specific questions which provide the parameters of the role of the client in their organisation. As the client tells their story of their work and the work of the company, the coach checks, clarifies and empathises as the main points of the story are revealed, thus building the relationship. The coach is asking the client: "Help me to understand your role", and through the empathic and clarifying dialogue, the coach is conveying a message: "I'm genuinely and actively interested in you and your story. You matter so much I want to make sure I've got it right." It is this first coaching session in which it is essential to

establish a positive, in-depth relationship with the client so that they feel known and valued, and have a high level of respect and confidence in me (and see Barrett 2004; Goldberg 2005; Grayson & Larson 2000; Jay 2003).

I approached my introductory sessions with Brian and Penny differently, and I learned that by having a different approach, the outcomes were very distinct. Because I had known Penny before the coaching, I had assumed a higher level of rapport, and anticipated on her part a higher level of assurance and confidence in the process than in fact occurred. In addition, since I already had some idea of her successful working experience before she took on the role at Company R, it took a while to discover the degree to which she felt overwhelmed by her current position with Company R. On the other hand, with Brian, I followed my usual pattern of building the client-coach relationship from scratch by engaging in a strategy that was a thorough reflection on his role, and a systematic work values clarification, which became the basis for goal setting (Bell 2000; Kilburg 1996; Lipman-Blumen 1996; Sinclair 1998). I asked Brian to reflect on three work situations, including his current role, identifying the most satisfying aspects and least satisfying. Through this exercise I was able to see clearly the content of Brian's stories about his work, his strengths, his areas for development, and therefore the bases of his goals. I heard what mattered to Brian. With Brian I read the wind and the water carefully so when I pushed off our dinghy was set on a steady course. With Penny I made assumptions and the dinghy kept nudging back to the starting point until at last I read the wind and water properly – then we pushed off successfully.

In Brian's case, the identified goals were congruent with his expected goals, whereas in Penny's case, the very process of identifying goals was less clear. On a close reading of the transcripts, I discovered that these differences had a profound effect on the shape and progress of the next few sessions as I had to spend much more time joining with Penny, and finding the language that genuinely resonated with her. It was not until I really heard her overload and heard her issues properly, that the joining "worked". I knew that I had not properly engaged her in the first few weeks. My focus on "joining" with the client is akin to the realisation in psychotherapy that genuine "joining", or the

”therapeutic alliance” between therapist and client is far more influential in bringing about positive behaviour change than behaviour therapists traditionally predicted, believing that it was the model rather than the relationship that had more influence (Lejuez et al. 2006:456; Miller et al. 1997)

With both Brian and Penny, I was successful in conveying my genuine interest in their situation in their companies, and was able to discuss the power relations in their companies in depth, a necessary condition for effective executive coaching according to Tobias (1996) and others. Lester Tobias has emphasised the fact that individual client’s concerns and ideas do not occur in a vacuum, that the coach’s understanding of the broad context of the organisation is essential to locating and relating the coaching to real situations and immediate events, in addition to understanding the personal history of the client (Tobias 1996:89).

Tobias’ approach resonates well with the approach I take in the first session of my coaching protocol, as evidenced by the feedback I invited two weeks later from the two executives, Penny said:

Penny: I came in feeling quite flat and I left feeling very motivated and inspired. And I felt that way for about two days afterwards...It was a lovely session, and I felt much more focussed actually. I felt I had focus, direction and understanding of the difficulties that I’m going through. So I thank you for that.

Penny felt energised in our early sessions but was unable to make any substantial changes until she felt really heard by me.

Brian had a somewhat shy response when he reflected on the first session:

Brian: ... A lot of things I mentioned to you I have mentioned to a lot of other forums at the moment but it’s probably more a case of a bit of a dump.

Cecily: Mm.

Brian: I guess the thing I hadn’t done before that I did with yourself was talk about personal things from my past workplaces ...

Cecily: And how did you find it?

Brian: You are very good, actually. I’ve been thinking about more that part of it than the other things I talked to you about with regards specifically to this company.

He then added:

Brian: I actually sat with you and talked to you about what was good about other workplaces, what mattered to me personally and all those sorts of things. It... put a few things into a bit more perspective I guess... I hadn’t put it [Company U] into

perspective relative to other places I've worked... I find in verbalising it makes you stop and think a bit more about it.

Both responded reflectively about their personal and emotional response to the first session. Penny spent a good part of Session 2 discussing her "wins", as I had determined to concentrate on the positive aspects of her work rather than dwell on the negatives too much (and see Axelrod 2005; Quick & Macik-Frey 2004; Seligman 1994). In my case notes I reflected that I wanted to validate Penny in any and every way I could and also to discriminate between her fear (a possible habit of focussing on the negative) and what may have been the reality that the business was in dire straits.

On looking through these notes, it is revealing that these reflections are based on my understandings as a psychologist, as a Buddhist meditator and as a business consultant. Three authors who have recently looked at the competencies of executive coaches all stress that in depth coaching requires the knowledge and counselling skills of psychologists (Brotman et al. 1998; Wasylyshyn 2001; Winum 2003). Brotman et al. (1998:40) have called for a more complete understanding of what is required in executive coaching, claiming that "psychologists are uniquely qualified to define what is required to be an executive coach when sustained behavior change is the desired outcome". Karol Wasylyshyn, who is president of a management consulting firm in the USA, Leadership Development, is also a clinical psychologist, and has written extensively on the role of psychology in business contexts, claiming that psychologists who understand business are "distinctively equipped as executive coaches" (Wasylyshyn 2001:106), a sentiment that is endorsed by Paul Winum, who has called for further research into this area (Winum 2003:45).

My own approach also resonates with Margot Cairnes' work on the "heart and soul" of corporations, where she argues that, contrary to the popular perception that corporations are heartless, bureaucratic and impersonal entities, it is imperative for leaders to tune into the psychological aspects of the corporation, to the need for self-awareness, and to tackle the massive changes in the present-day world of work with the ability and confidence to think, and feel,

differently. Kilburg (1996) also addresses his work on executive coaching from a psychological perspective, and emphasises the importance of deep reflection. Kilburg's description of triple-loop learning, or reflection on reflection on learning (Kilburg 1996:76) in some ways mirrors my own meditative practice, and my invitation to clients to be critically reflective. While the work of Miller et al (1997) is about counselling psychology, their emphasis on "what works" in the therapist-client relationship has been especially useful to my own work. One of the findings of this research is therefore the extent to which I used my training in several fields, and the significance of being able to draw on psychological insight when I look at the dialogue with Brian and Penny. My rainbow helix metaphor works at the micro-level of conversation as well as in the larger picture. When Penny let me know she thought her staff were so beleaguered and fragile that any changes introduced tended to be taken personally and overwhelmed them, in effect she was also talking about her own feelings. I focussed on key words she was using, so that I could in turn give her feedback in language she connected with.

Similarly, with Brian I focussed on key words he used (for example of having to do more work than he should to cover for his people, of problems of performance). I then moved into questions such as "so do you really want to?" and "personally, what would it be like if...?." These in turn moved the Brian to say "hang on...it's funny, I have to actually stop and think about it...I tend to gauge some of my own personal success to things that have happened...like, I've got these business type objectives and my own personal objectives. I don't want to be too noble. "

When asking the client to tell their story, I look for patterns – patterns in experience, in their approach to people and situations, language, their key words, how they communicate and how they exercise power and leadership in an organisation. One purpose of my attending to key words is that each of us has a unique language that marks us, and this was one of the insights that Milton Erickson used to such advantage in his therapeutic work (Barker 1988:26). If as the coach, I clue into the unique language of the client, and am able to utilise some of those words as I respond and provide feedback, I will

have the greatest empathic connection and thus engage them. This is what happened with both Brian and Penny. They may be conscious or unconscious about why they feel good. I also look for cues as to how they tackle problem solving, so that in turn I can utilise their own problem-solving strategy in relation to their own concerns, so that it will be the most comfortable fit for them. For example with Penny, my reflection about how she had collaborated with her former business partner and found solutions to business problems gave me clarity about how best to coach her. These insights, especially my making the link that she needed to replicate the elements associated with her previous business success, were a turning point in our relationship.

Having figured out how Penny solved problems, I used her problem-solving approach, drawing on her emotional intelligence in this area. For the remainder of that session, we stayed in the brainstorming mode, exactly as I understood she had worked with her former business partner. This was another form of empathy. Whether or not the manager recognises that I am drawing from their stories the principles of their own strategy to then apply with them, it still resonates so deeply that they spontaneously collaborate. In effect the empathic process functions as a hypnotic suggestion, which builds the relationship further (Betty Erickson 1994; O'Hara 2003; Zohar & Marshall 2000).

After the first session Brian felt profoundly known. By telling his story to me he had told me a lot about his core values, and the core elements of his goals. I had picked up on his feelings, and had shown him advanced empathy. In fact, he commented in the second session that he had not talked about such "personal things" about his past work and his feelings before. For Penny, that experience came after the third session, when I acknowledged some of her frustration with the state of play in her company, and her difficulty with the CEO being, as Penny said, a bit "changeable".

Penny: I feel really frustrated, disappointed, like I've under-achieved. I am depressed, angry...

A key quality of leadership is the ability to make decisions. Adulthood is legally defined as taking responsibility for the decisions we have made (James &

Jongeward 1971; Kouzes & Posner 1995). Penny was a mature, competent adult, but in many respects, she had rarely made autonomous decisions, even though she had the capacity and was obviously feeling frustrated about her situation. Penny did not understand all the underlying issues. I decided that the best way to help her would be to teach her how to clarify her values and so be in a better position to make decisions (Rogers 1980). This would be important for her personally and it was central to the executive coaching contract. As Dent and colleagues also found, spirituality values and attitudes “not only have a positive effect on one’s personal life, but also on an individual’s job performance” (Dent et al. 2005: 639).

Gaining trust and credibility

As a psychologist, I am bound to confidentiality with the client, and this assurance to the client is a key factor in their gaining trust in me and in their recognising my credentials and authority. I assure them that whatever is said does not go to other people in their company, and this confidence is the only way that the coaching can be real. Without this trust, conversations cannot be open and real (Scott & Harker 2001; Jain & Sinha 2005; Lipman-Blumen 1996; May 1983; Sinclair 2001).

One of my skills that was most appreciated by clients, and which lifted my authority with them was systemic thinking. Through my training in psychology I studied and practised systemic family therapy for two years. I learned to think systemically, which is very different from thinking at an individual level about a large group of individuals. This helped my clients understand power in their organizations. I am indebted to Erickson for his work in family therapy and to his highly creative approach to individuals and families which he talked about in terms of specific systemic factors, as discussed by Lankton (1988). Stephen Lankton was a close associate of Milton Erickson and is currently the Executive Director of the Phoenix Institute of Ericksonian Therapy. He asserts that Erickson did not himself offer a family systems formulation, but he did utilise an implicit general systems theory, and deeply influenced the theory and practice of family therapy by reflecting the dynamics that underlie all family experience (1988:418).

My systemic approach to management in organisations was possible because of family therapy training, so that I could see the flows of power and communication within the organisation. Many of the clients had not thought systemically before, as was evidenced by the dialogues with Candy, Marcus, Ian and Andrew. They then realised that their decisions were more effective when they were mindful of the Key Performance Indicators of the executive managers and stood in their shoes (i.e. empathy again) and helped them perform. This awareness opened up more collaboration and adult-adult relating with their managers and peers. My credibility increased through my knowledge of both individual psychology and of the power dynamics of the organisation. As Mike the CFO in Company R said: “You gave me some very tough feedback. That was OK... because I am robust. I took feedback on board at first because of your credentials and then we debated stuff and then I really valued you.”

I gained trust and credibility with Penny through her realisation that the coaching had brought about a profound change through the new learnings and the rehearsals of scenarios of meetings and conversations that she needed to have with other managers and the CEO. Much of our skills development and reflection had proved valuable to her, so this had elevated my authority in her eyes and her trust in me. The attitudinal change that she experienced in the session where we constructed the “New Me” showed Penny as highly focussed, and motivated by the immediate challenges she faced. She had just had a success, so she was positive and robust and receptive. She was able to confide her feelings to me:

Penny:...And it’s been like working for two companies [Company R and Bluehills].

Cecily: It really has.

Penny: It’s like being involved in two organisations at once.

Cecily: Definitely. So it’s amazing you were able to integrate it, and actually not be falling between two horses.

Penny: Yeah. Absolutely, yeah. And I think that my skills are integrated and have got so much better this year because I’ve practised. It’s just about having the opportunity to do it and overcoming my fear that I’ll fail, fall on my face, get sacked - all those irrational things, none of which of course happened, and I feel like I’ve made it.

In Penny’s Case Study I discussed how she could express her fears to me because she felt safe in her coaching relationship with me. She acknowledged

her vulnerability and fear and overcame it. It was through our relationship that she felt connected and valued and powerful. Leadership is both the inter-being of the relationship and the outcome of relationship, and I was modelling this. As Senge et al. (2004) point out, the concept of conscious leadership is not the leader's external "style" or strategies adopted, but the inner presence, the genuineness, empathy and positive regard of the leader in their relationships with others.

In Brian's case, deep intuition played a major role in my interpretations of his language: intuition derived from extensive experience of counselling over thousands of hours; intuition due to spiritual awareness and presence. Here again is the rainbow helix. Intuition is insight, as taught through Buddhist practice. An example here illustrates how intuition "worked". I was acutely aware of Brian's language and of the fact that he made numerous references to trust. While he said that, in general, people feel confidence in the company and there was a good level of trust, there was nevertheless a reluctance to take on responsibility. I was left with the question that either he was no longer sure that there was a strong level of trust in the company, or that perhaps some aspect of his own trust was opening to doubt. For some reason at that point Brian was voicing a lack of progress. So then I said:

Cecily: One thing I was thinking about over the last two weeks, I had a sense of everybody – there's a lot on and there's a lot that's going to be on and there's a peculiar sense of being in a bit of a hiatus. Is that just normal or is it really where everybody is? Is there a sense of decisions and actions not really happening, is that right?

The "hiatus" is an intuitive idea, a piece of advanced empathy that I offer, a possible insight at organisational level. Brian validated my intuition. He said "You get that sense in this place, a hiatus." He then offered a number of possible explanations. The facility is ten years old... what was a new and exciting team is now ordinary.... The players are now in their late 30s or early 40s... and possibly they are bored. He went on to say:

Brian: We changed the business in such a way that our previous roles are different to what it was before, straight business decisions. I've seen a number of reasons. So I think there is an element of that around the place that people are stagnating a bit.

I was operating at a number of levels – I was using my educational hat, my counselling hat, my business hat, and my spiritual hat, the rainbow helix.

At this point Brian said they were hoping that a massive new business project (worth over \$80 billion, where Company U would have had to put up nearly \$200m to even get the ball rolling) would rekindle the enthusiasm but it fell over a few days before our meeting. In other words, my intuition about the hiatus was right, and I had picked up the mood of the place accurately. Even though the loss of this project was a big blow, I was increasingly sure the feeling of low energy about the place was really due to lack of energetic leadership.

Because I was coaching 12 of the managers in the organisation, I was able to continue a dialogue with Brian that related to the wider organisational context. He identified a range of concerns about the careers of his staff in relation to the issues of the company project. He was aware that the organisation's restructures meant tremendous cultural change, moving from a utility that was essentially non-competitive and government driven to one that was responsive to market forces. He said: "I mean this world has a very different way of working you know. Multiple targets, multiple goals, you know (but) it's not new every day. It can be very similar from day to day."

This worked at two levels like a parallel process. It was giving him a hypnotic message about how he could himself give a hypnotic message (Godin & Oughourlian 1994). It was also an empathic summary that he had personally taken on board my feedback to him - that he, Brian, had a lot of potential. My empathic response to Brian brought to mind James Hillman's work on a theory of calling (1996), which he summarised as his "acorn" theory, whereby each person has within them a unique core, a "nutshell" that is our sense of fate, individuality, genius, potential. Hillman believed we need to re-imagine ourselves, to gain insight into our calling, and to discover the acorn through the "how" of a visible performance. In several ways I was doing this with Brian. There were three main ways. Within the first two sessions, I asked Brian to reflect on the three most satisfying and three least satisfying aspects of his current role and two previous roles. This was to understand his current role and

to hear spontaneously goals for change, but also to identify his innate pattern of dealing with the world, what Hillman would call his "acorn". A second way was to listen to his stories, for example he had a tendency to "grab the ball and run ahead" and forget to have alliances with other team players to achieve real successful outcomes. A third way was to get him to imagine how he saw himself personally and professionally in five or ten years' time. Taken together, and with numerous other conversations over six months, I fed back to Brian the acorn I was seeing. This message seemed to have registered for him. I became confident that of the 12 executives I was seeing, he was one with high-level management potential and could go all the way to be a CEO.

Brian's self-reporting of how he gained trust in me and respected my credibility was based on his appreciation of the feedback and support I had given him. He said:

Brian: There's no question that my self-confidence and self-esteem improved with just the process of the [coaching]. I think that's one of your strengths -- you make people walk out feeling good about themselves.

Brian was not the only client to say things like this. My enthusiasm, keen commitment to them and sense of fun always tend to lift their spirits. Also, because of the level of my professional authority Brian confirmed that he had confidence in both the challenging professional feedback as well as all the positive feedback I gave him. Towards the end of the coaching program the following exchange took place:

Cecily: The main thing to know with the feedback is that you have such a strong desire to be a better person.

Brian: Yeah and I want to know that so I can, so I can be better. And the more I'm challenged with honest, sort of, credible feedback on where I can improve. I mean I really want it.

Cecily: It's also – earlier you were referring to my credibility and so on. Part of I what I want to know is, you can take this feedback if you have a level of respect and confidence and trust in me – in what I'm saying.

Brian: Yeah. No question about it. There's some people whose feedback you don't treat with the same level of seriousness as from others.

Brian's responses gave me confidence that Brian was for the most part practising mindfulness and optimism, and research studies have shown that people who were mindful tended to also have greater life satisfaction, self-esteem, optimism and self-actualisation (Brown & Ryan 2003:832).

Exemplifying leadership

The coaching process was itself a process of modelling good leadership and good management. For example, by the end of Session 2, I wanted to make sure that we had achievable, concrete goals. We needed a clear understanding that we would collaborate on a project and take seriously the commitment to doing the work expected, just as they would in fulfilling a work contract. For example, they needed to report on how they were building relationships with people – particular strategies and events, such as having coffee, arranging a meeting, doing a staff review, being proactive in a meeting. They were asked to find someone who they could ask to be an advocate for them in the company. They were asked to do reality checks, and discuss feedback that I'd given them with their partner. In nearly all the cases, this was a successful strategy.

Brian was particularly keen to benefit from the program and he did everything he could to follow up. The sheer practice of a skill, and knowing that they were going to report on its success or otherwise, means that clients take the idea seriously. One of the findings, as expected from all educational psychology, is that to learn skills so they are automatic and spontaneous requires sheer repetition of skills and practice and having someone to report to is immensely important. Another finding was that, by insisting on good preparation for the coaching, I was modelling the need for good preparation for every conversation, every staff review, every meeting. Brian reported that he believed a reason for the improvement of the feedback to him from his team was that he was preparing properly. He told me in Session 4 that because of our coaching conversations, he was able to have a properly prepared conversation that was also a genuine and personal conversation with each of his team leaders.

At the first group session, when I introduced the "good leader" exercise, I set the tone of the leadership coaching program by asking the managers to think of real people whom they actually experienced as good leaders. The group reflected on their own actual experience and that of people they knew. When the managers heard others identifying with other responses in the room they saw the discussion as personal, and therefore became more open. They found the

exercise interesting and compelling, making them think critically about themselves and what kind of leader they were. The thoughtful dialogic process the groups engaged in is reminiscent of the Freirian approach to critical thinking discussed earlier. The managers were therefore prepared to compare the extent to which they had the qualities identified. The exercise also established my authority and formed an initial basis for building a constructive relationship with them. Paul Winum, a managing director of a management psychology firm, has researched what is distinctive about what psychologists have to offer in leadership development, and emphasises the psychologist's expertise in the core elements that underlie leadership behaviour and development. Together with other expertise, including behaviour change methodologies and assessment skills, they are in a unique position to work with executives. (Winum 2003). I would go much further than Winum, though, in discussing relationship building in terms of trust, empathy, insight and consciousness.

One of the findings from reflecting on what leadership and leadership development meant to the participants was in realising that seniority and responsibility levels may not mean the same degree of status from one company to another. In comparing Brian and Penny, for example, Penny had more seniority in her company than Brian had in his, yet Brian's projects were financially bigger than Penny's, and so was his salary. Brian had assurance of a permanent full-time job and a stable, intelligent mutually supportive management team, solidly backed by the CEO and the other executive management team. Although he wanted to prove himself and needed to be doing a good job, he had a lot of support and a good safety net. Penny, on the other hand, probably had more experience, she was a mature businesswoman with a background of having built up a highly successful small to medium business with her partner, and by the time she left, their company had become international. At Company R, however, she did not have job security and she had no solid power base in either the branch she was running or the larger retail company, apart from what she could build with me while we were there. Nevertheless, she had genuine support from her CEO and the other executive management team. Unlike Brian, who had known his team over some length of time, Penny's executive team were all relatively new to each other, all learning

to work together. The contexts of the two companies were quite different. If Brian had been in the retail company, he too would have been struggling. Top people are not automatically good leaders. Since high cognitive intelligence and skill does not always translate into leadership, they still need and seek leadership development (Brooks 2004; Conger & Xin 2000; Day 2001; Hunt & Conger 1999; Sanders et al. 2003; Thach 2002). Skilled people often reach a point where attending management and leadership courses with classroom-style groups no longer provides new learning. Such people flourish in an individually tailored leadership development program in which a one-to-one confidential genuine relationship with an external executive coach allows for candid reflection and challenging feedback. Here, leadership skills and presence are developed through dealing with real people and real-time situations over several months (Dent et al. 2005; Hubble, Duncan & Miller 1999; Smither et al. 2003). Senior staff value genuine quality feedback about their relationship building. They are keen to learn this way. And many reported that coaching had provided substantial personal support through difficult times and transformed both their professional and personal lives, somewhat reminiscent of the concept of the therapeutic alliance (Lejuez et al. 2006).

The coaching provided high quality learning for high potential staff who have management and leadership responsibility or potential for such roles. There is a tendency for high-level people to feel that they are not really getting any new take out, especially if their previous experience of "training" is classroom based. They lose interest in classroom style teaching and feel that they have learned as much as they are going to learn. They tend not to know what they don't know. With the feedback I received at the end of the coaching sessions (see Chapter 4) the results exceeded all my expectations. They really wanted authentic relationship, and they commented on my own capacity for leadership.

One of the outcomes of the research was a deepening of my understanding of leadership. Previously, I thought I had a broad vision of leadership, and was aware that the qualities of a good leader matched the qualities of emotional intelligence. On reflection, I had fallen into the reductionist view of leadership as pretty much a collection of qualities. By the end of the coaching project, it was

very clear to me that situational, environmental factors impacted immensely, including in areas of opportunity, job security, business systems, resources, and the wider issue of leadership in relation to the role of corporations in society. However, by the end of the research, I returned to these qualities, realising that there is deeper significance. These qualities, or traits, on their own are merely descriptive, they are like bricks without mortar. The skills of *doing* are essential to the *becoming*. Dexter Dunphy, who has spent much of his consulting life working with corporations to bring about change, has been influential in shifting the paradigm from that of corporate productivity (at whatever cost to the personal and ecological environment) to that of sustainability and the co-creation of inner consciousness and outer reality (Dunphy 2001; 2003). In my view, the personal qualities he describes as necessary to shift to co-creation and sustainability can be likened to those of the healthy self. Mature adults co-create, and are responsible for their healthy environment.

The healthy self

Feeling able to be receptive to the feedback was crucial to the ability to be a healthy Adult and an effective leader (Peters 1996; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi 2000; Thach 2002). What helped these managers to take that risk? I made a contract with them from the outset that we would be committed to openness, and I modelled to them my receptivity, my genuineness, and my willingness to be absolutely "on their team". Nathan reported the outcomes of the coaching with the following: "It's really good... I trust whatever you say. You bring me into focus and on track. .. Personally I have gained a lot. The trust – if I don't trust you I wouldn't be able to open up fully and you couldn't see my situation." In the feedback from these clients, the frequency with which they said "this is a really good relationship," or "I've never experienced anything like it" or "I've never even said that to my wife", showed that the clients were markedly open and experienced a level of relationship that had the intensity and intimacy of a personal partnership but had clearly defined boundaries and parameters.

I was struck with how difficult it was for even very good managers like Penny to give feedback and exercise leadership with their superiors. In one sense, by

definition, giving challenging feedback implies that the recipient's behaviour is in some way inadequate. The conundrum is that without the ability to receive challenging feedback, we are less open to the need for change (Hammer 2000). A healthy adult is able to receive positive feedback and revel in it, and receive challenging feedback without ever being belittled. Kay Hammer asserts that many people are unwilling to give tough feedback because they are afraid they will be seen to be judging their employees. She says:

...if you care deeply for the people you lead and want them to feel happy and productive you must help them accurately face their strengths and weaknesses and give them an opportunity to outgrow their limitations. Otherwise, you have indeed judged them. ...[and] you must also feel comfortable being criticized and recognize that you don't have to be perfect, even if you have assumed the authority and responsibility of serving as a leader (Hammer 2000:207).

In my experience, managers are particularly unwilling to give challenging feedback to their own managers, as with Penny and Sue, and again Brian's reluctance with Bill, and in Company U also, the reluctance felt by Bruce with Don. As a result the senior manager tends to become isolated, which I saw in Sue's case, where because of the dysfunctional situation in the company that she inherited, she found that some managers undermined her. She wanted managers to feel valued, and she wanted to be perceived as receptive, but it was not until the staff reviews with the managers (including Penny) that she received the more genuine feedback that she needed. Then the company, as well as Sue, was able to move forward.

Brainstorming and rehearsing: dealing with difficult situations

Over and above the practical outcomes of the 12-session program, with the models that were taught and rehearsed during the group sessions and the individual sessions, some other outcomes emerged as significant. The Parent-Adult-Child model, the A-B-C of communication, the feedback exercises, the "hit the pause button" concept – all these emerged as far more influential in embedding new behaviours than I had anticipated. When re-reading the transcripts and the case notes, it became clear that these models had provided a language with which the managers could recall and relate events where they

had either used the models or forgotten and were able to say explicitly how they would have acted differently. By identifying with their own experience and transforming their images of themselves through these exercises I was operating in a Freirian mode (Freire 1972) and it gave powerful messages. Paulo Freire, the Brazilian educator known for his work in literacy and conscientisation, believed that if people could see their "reality" by developing a language with which to voice their issues and concerns, they would be able to change their circumstances. Freire claimed that until people who were struggling in their lives were able to engage in critical reflection and subsequent action, they would not be able to move forward from their position of oppression or subordination to implement new ways of thinking and acting that would transform their lives and empower them. While I am not suggesting that my clients were in positions of subordination, they were, in another sense, imprisoned by their old ego defences and learned habits – which could only be replaced with new behaviours through a process of gaining self-awareness, consciousness.

In the coaching sessions, there is immense creativity when the managers are able to brainstorm with me, when they are not afraid their suggestions will be seen as silly or inappropriate. Having a non-judgmental relationship and someone to bounce off and spar with, they could tap into their own creativity and work out far better solutions. By rehearsing scripts, the managers were able to find valuable ways of directly applying the coaching lessons to their own real situations. The rehearsals were language events, and my creative scripts portrayed to them my advanced empathy. They could see I was on their team; I gave them "can do" messages. They could rely on my unconditional positive regard in the process (see Kahn 1997).

What emerged that was unexpectedly valuable was my strategy of sharing stories and metaphors as part of the brainstorming and rehearsing, or as a way of seeking solutions to a difficult issue through non-threatening examples. From these stories they would pick up ideas and take them further, extrapolating and developing how they would apply them. The excitement of being able to think creatively with someone who understood the organisation and the power

dynamics came through strongly. Then we could rehearse ways that they could put these ideas in a way that would work. This was particularly effective in Penny's case, when I had to think creatively, and take Penny along with me, to brainstorm and rehearse ways in which to do leadership development in a crisis situation where everyone in the company was fearful.

In this crisis, Penny was really looking for concrete directive advice. I rehearsed with her possible scripts to use with managers in Company R, and brainstormed with her a couple of scenarios.

Cecily: ...I think it's good you're staying in the acting sales manager's role for six months; I think that's a good move, because you can be seen to be treating everybody fairly. It's like mum and all the kids, making sure that nobody gets an extra cake or something. But then I would also use it as an opportunity to build a relationship with each person independently, whatever the needs are, and be clearly saying to them, like in Maggie's instance, "look Maggie it seems to me that somehow you were slightly marginalised in the last scenario and one of the benefits of bringing in Barbara and Jessie and me is that we actually are a new system now, and I really would like you to make an effort to come into this new situation ... a different balance of power." Actually make it explicit to her. "There is a new balance of power because the blokey thing has gone and we've got two new people, so please make an effort to come back in and let us balance the issues with you and Stephen."

It was in this conversation that I reminded Penny of the group session with the managers to discuss the Healthy Self and Feedback so I could move from the particular to a more general principle of the healthy organisation. I gained the realisation that by creating the space for telling stories, brainstorming new scenarios and so on, that creativity is itself a facilitator of leadership.

In Brian's case, the crucial transformation on which we spent a great deal of time was rehearsing ways in which he could deal with his manager, Bill, with whom he was having a great deal of difficulty in giving and receiving feedback. Having worked through the issue of Brian's fear of authority, and his relationship with his father, our conversations developed an intensity and a level of trust that was enormously powerful. There were so many levels happening in our dialogue – levels of information content, management learning, relationship skills development, plus a very deep valuing and validating of him as a person.

He was very receptive. Brian was also comfortable that intellectually I had the depth and breadth to talk "on his level".

In talking through the negative experience with his manager and his father he had been identifying the old negative thoughts and emotions of the old unconscious script that had kept him hostage for more than 30 years. To some extent, I was applying both Perls' Gestalt therapy and Berne's transactional analysis approach using the Parent-Adult-Child model that remains a powerful tool in encouraging behaviour change (Perls 1969; Berne 1961, 1964). Gestalt therapy developed by Perls (1969) was intended to be a method of re-integrating the self, to reclaim its fragmented parts, to be freed from relying on the authority of outer support and develop an inner self-sufficiency (Perls 1969: 29). Whenever confronted with situations reminiscent of his family of origin's power dynamics, these old scripts had put him on autopilot so that he collapsed his power and became a resentful, angry, vulnerable "Child". At work, the highly competent, educated manager had the ability to rein in strong emotions and suspend reactivity, but he was simmering underneath. In Session 7 he had taken the risk with me of opening up to that vulnerability and acknowledging it. That of course was an essential step in being liberated from it, but it was not surprising that he said that Session 7 was the most challenging session yet.

What I was drawing on here was my training and experience in education. To learn a new behaviour, for example, to drive a car, we need cognitively to understand the idea of what is involved, and we need to learn the road rules. Second, we need hours and hours of supervised physical practice. Third, emotionally, we need a positive "can do" attitude (Seligman 2000). Seligman uses self-determination theory to explain the "can do", by saying that when the three related human needs, the need for competence, the need for belongingness, and the need for autonomy are satisfied, people are intrinsically motivated, able to fulfil their potentialities, and able to seek out progressively greater challenges (Seligman 2000:10). Brian had the cognitive knowledge, he had a lot of management practice but he had had a "can't do" attitude on this aspect of management and leadership. To facilitate the therapeutic change, that is, clear an old negative mindset, there needed to be a high level of trust

between client and coach, and confidence in my professional competence. Through our conversations, Brian, like Penny, was able to make that change, and from re-reading the transcripts, I have found that it was my counselling psychology training that was at the forefront here, and my use of simple hypnotic processes (Rosen 1994).

All of our conversations over six months were Adult to Adult, to ensure that Brian felt powerful and trusting. Having worked with hundreds of Vietnam Veterans and other sufferers of Post Traumatic Stress, I had developed strategies based on EMDR principles (Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprogramming), a behavioural approach developed by Dr Francine Shapiro which required the client to be fully engaged, physically, cognitively and emotionally. In my therapeutic practice the method was part of a larger regime of interventions that resulted in a marked reduction of frequency and intensity of anxiety symptoms and other ego-defensive behaviour. The unconditional positive regard that I afforded the managers assisted them, as Kahn (1997:122-123) has pointed out, to feel a sense of being listened to by someone truly willing to work at understanding them, a sense of having been deeply understood, accepted, and an opportunity to build new self structures.

Metaphor

Equally revealing, or even more so, was the impact of metaphor on building conscious leadership. In addition to the understanding of metaphor as synthesising our understanding and creativity with a deep level of meaning, it emerged that all the stories of other anonymous clients functioned as metaphors as they appealed to the imagination and resonated in a holistic way with the emotions and the cognitive intelligence, in a way very similar to metaphor. I was always aware of the power of hypnotic suggestion. Metaphor works at a hypnotic level (B. Erickson 1994; Godin & Oughourlian 1994). Just as all parenting and educational programs use some kind of hypnotic suggestion with trust and love, verbal suggestions will resonate and register at a deeper level of meaning (Richard 2003; Stein 2003). Richard's work stems from his interest in using creative problem solving to encourage deeper thinking and,

interestingly, he suggests metaphor as a way of bringing up significant personal experiences through analogous stories in order to elicit creative choices to find solutions. Stein's interesting approach is to deepen meaning through the use of art, music, poetry and literary examples to explore and experience the personal, inner world through imagination.

With Penny especially, metaphor was a face-saving way of giving feedback. Metaphor is empathy. Metaphor allowed me to talk with Penny about material in a non-threatening way. With Brian, I was able to use the metaphor of the football game, and his running with the ball, to illustrate aspects of his leadership development needs.

When I spoke with Penny about her relationship with Sue, I used humour with metaphor to talk about her need to give some challenging feedback to Sue. Although Penny had become more confident in her perception of her issue, she was still reluctant to give feedback to Sue. That was when I used a metaphor to say: "Maybe nobody's telling the King that, you know, he's not got his socks on!" Penny laughed, and I continued, "Do you think that the King needs to know he's got no socks on?" We both enjoyed calling Sue a king. I pressed on with Penny so that she could see how I would exemplify leadership in this case.

Cecily: If you had a behaviour that one of your staff had a problem with, would you rather they told you?

Penny: Definitely.

I went on to explain that checking her concerns with someone she trusted, and who was sympathetic to the CEO, was not gossip. Rather, it was being professional, doing a reality check and exercising leadership.

Metaphor allows the conversation to open the door of imagination and to explore a topic and discover a new way of dealing with it. Consultants and researchers need to cultivate the imagination to connect creatively with the executive to bring about greater breadth and depth in the professional and personal relationship (Stein 2003). Executive coaches need to be more creative

communicators, using stories and metaphors as key dialogic strategies to engage, empathise and challenge.

Ethical dilemmas, decision making, integrity and values

When I discussed the ethical dilemma of the Robin Hood story in one of the group sessions, I knew it was relevant but it was not the primary topic I had intended for that week. I had introduced the story with Company U because there had been a clash of values obstructing important business planning. The main connection I wanted to make was that decision making is essentially about ethics and values, and when I introduced it to the managers at Company R it was again seized upon. Nevertheless, this light-hearted story of Robin Hood had a dramatic impact beyond my expectations. For example, Bruce articulated that he loved the Robin Hood exercise in the group. He had never before been aware how much he was judging others by his own morals. It had made him wonder what are morals and he was astonished at the lack of questioning of some of the others regarding ethical issues. This reminded me of one of the important influences of my own life, Joseph Fletcher's work in *Situational Ethics* (1966). Fletcher posed a number of situational dilemmas in his writing, through which it was evident that to be ethical required one to do the most loving thing, and that this ethical behaviour may be at odds with absolute moral law. It is one of the building blocks of spiritual behaviour. Again, it was important to explain that the notion of spiritual intelligence had been developed to describe and explore the inner motivations, values, and ethics that determine an individual's ability to make ethical decisions, determine the most caring and moral way to respond to work situations and dilemmas (Zohar & Marshall 2000). According to Louis Fry, people today are deeply involved in their workplace as a site for integrating their spirituality and their work (Fry 2003:703). This turned out to be very true in the two companies, particularly Company U, no doubt due to the CEO's explicit encouragement and leadership approach.

The group session on ethics, and subsequent follow up in the individual sessions, meant that group members were learning from their experience, way

beyond what I had anticipated in this particular context. It made the group see that there were dozens of valid moral positions and that a good leader needed to find a way through the differences. One of the lessons learned from this situation was that it was important for me to adapt my program immediately to respond to a management dilemma they were stuck on and this elevated my authority. It modelled that they too needed to be flexible and adaptive and pragmatic. It also made them aware that I had a theology degree with an ethics major and had been a university chaplain prior to retraining as a psychologist twenty years ago. Many of them raised spiritual issues after this. This may not have happened if I had been identified as a religious person. Both Fry (2003) and Wilber (!997) differentiate religion from spirituality, Similarly for Hillman (1996), Rogers (1969), and other writers across the spectrum of the disciplines from psychotherapy to theology, and from education to human relations, the indicators of consciousness are spirituality, empathy, integrity, presence, unconditional positive regard. These are the indicators of a deep awareness of self and other, of mindfulness in the coaching relationship.

To further the clients' thinking about ethical issues, to confirm that good leaders have to have integrity and be able to make a business call that unifies the team, there were two things that came up. One was an exploration of integrity, which is both psychological and ethical. Another was to acknowledge the differences and learn how to accommodate them. With that in mind, I encouraged the two groups to go and see the movie *Lantana* (see Chapter 4 and also Penny and Brian's stories). What emerged from this intervention, and it was a serendipitous intervention, was that many people reported feeling much more settled both at home and at work.

When I reflect on this, a number of possible variables contributed to that response. One was that they were encouraged to take their partner on a date to a movie; they were encouraged to have a quality conversation with their partners about the movie. Secondly, the content of the movie was personally confronting. The age of the characters was the about the same as most of my clients. Some of the key characters also had school-age children and all the characters were ordinary good people who made mistakes. Therefore another

variable was that the quality of the conversations with their partners was deeply personal, and with their A-B-C skills they both listened and were heard. There seems to have been, as a result of the enriched intimacy, a benefit I could not have anticipated. Feeling good at home spins off into feeling good at work too. It was a consistent, subtle outcome. Further research needs to be done about the connections at home and work. If the primary relationship connection and intimacy is working at home and they feel heard and understood, then all dimensions of their lives work better.

Working with psychological patterns: "Old Me, New Me"

One of the most important findings in this research was the success of the psychological interventions I deliberately utilised in order to bring about behavioural change. In my view, such interventions are imperative, but only if the coach is psychologically trained. For some of the managers, including both Brian and Penny, the "Old Me New Me" intervention was probably the most liberating, as it was intended to assist them to clear their roadblocks and move on. I am in accord with Quick and Macik-Frey, who have emphasised that the psychological health of the executive affects the health of the organisation (Quick & Macik-Frey 2004). I was dealing with people who are on the whole psychologically healthy, but in many instances there is a roadblock, a learned ego defence that is inhibiting their ability to claim their authority and be an assertive powerful leader. Not all the managers experienced this intervention because it was not always indicated.

For even those who had some counselling experience and a reasonable level of insight, the opportunity to explore the roadblock and discover the origins in an earlier distressing life experience was completely engaging. Without exception, the managers resonated with the insight and are motivated to move the block. They all read information about self improvement; they are motivated but the application of change is difficult. In many instances they think they just lack discipline, but it is difficult to move one's own roadblocks.

I have no doubt that my professional competence and confidence enabled me to identify succinctly the unhelpful pattern and efficiently progress to clearing

that and embedding a more helpful pattern over a couple of sessions. I was satisfied from the feedback from the managers that this process was both liberating for them and also enhanced our coaching relationship and their confidence in me. They knew I am a psychologist who had specialised in anxiety conditions, but we also had enough "wins" already by the time we reached this activity for them to trust me and give me authority to work with them.

I do not believe that this process could operate in a group context in a workplace. It may work in some groups such as personal development seminars, but here we are talking about leadership and it is a personal roadblock, or ego defence, that is obstructing their capacity to be integrated and present, and therefore authentically powerful. In the competitive environment of business management, they would not risk being psychologically vulnerable in a management group. The shift for Brian, even though he did not end up following through confronting Bill, was that he did the work by changing the relationship with his father. This is a good example of where dealing with a domestic situation did the work for the workplace. If we do the work in one place it will have spin off in other places. The letting go of this ego defence was a substantial step in Brian's reintegration of the dissociated defended parts of himself. It is this integration that is vital to his being an integrated and therefore ethical and fully present leader. Integrity is both psychological and moral (Bass 1998; Reave 2005:667).

The learning here is that the coach needs to embrace the whole person by providing the whole range of psychological expertise, emotional intelligences and business knowledge, including personal support, business development, the educational and training understandings, practical skills, rehearsing changes to bring about positive goals: in other words, the 'whole deal'. An executive coach needs the psychological component to attend to the client's unconscious roadblocks; this therefore reintegrates the disintegrated self; a self in which the person may not even know they had to bring about change (Perls 1969). Many coaches think they are doing this work, but they do not know what they don't know, just as the executives may be unaware.

I think neither Brian nor Penny would have known that they needed this. Most executive staff could not say that their team needed this sort of work. While Brian recognised that staff bring their family issues to work, he would have seen that as their private business. With coaching, he articulated that it was the whole person we were dealing with and being able to practise some of the skills with the family had enormous benefit. He could also see that such matters need to be dealt with individually and with an experienced, skilled, qualified practitioner. There is a risk of harming people if it is not done well. Sometimes, although executive staff are high in status, they may be perceived as lacking leadership capacity if they ignore some of the personal issues that team members bring to work. While this perception may well be a lack of skills capacity to empathise with and give appropriate feedback to their employee (the key word here is "appropriate"), it is also because they may lack emotional intelligence ; in addition, the leaders may well have their own ego defences that need attention.

7.3 Recommendations for future research

Writing a thesis is only the beginning. As I progressed through the analysis of the data, I was increasingly aware and excited at the thought of new approaches, new avenues for developing many of the areas explored. In particular, there are four areas that I recommend need to be explored from a different angle or in more depth: executive coaching; organisational development; workplace and family connections; and the tools for measuring and evaluating conscious leadership.

In terms of executive coaching, it would be useful to explore in more depth the process of coaching for conscious leadership from a whole language perspective, given that executive coaching is in essence a language event. I demonstrated through my dialogic analysis that the relationship between coach and client was a complex narrative process. Layer upon layer of meaning is developed through metaphor, through the language of advanced empathy, and through non-verbal and emotional feedback. An in-depth microanalysis of the language event could explore, through the use of video recordings, the non-verbal cues in the coaching relationship, in addition to the more detailed

discourse analysis. Through such micro-research processes, findings from the detailed data would complement the findings from the present thesis.

Such further research can also contribute to reaching a better understanding of the training and development needs of coaches in relation to their potential to enhance the communicative event. This applies to both experienced and novice coaches (i.e. those from other fields of expertise who are setting out to be executive coaches). Micro-analytic research provides another means to demonstrate how the coach who is present and with advanced emotional intelligence uses language.

A second area for further research relates to the need for evaluation of the outcomes of coaching in relation to indicators of improved organisational performance. My research was not specifically directed at “proving” the positive outcomes for the organisation’s development, but there were strong indications that significant changes were taking place, such as in improved staff reviews, better inter-office communications, increased trust among executives, enhanced planning and management capacities, and so on. Further research could look more closely at the role of CEOs in developing a culture of conscious leadership in the organisation. In addition, the qualitative evaluation tools after the coaching program had concluded could more directly seek feedback and even measure indicators of organisational improvements, including financial and management goals as well as leadership goals.

Thirdly, there is scope for further research into my findings regarding the interrelationships of workplace and home behaviours in integrating the whole person. My research demonstrated that when coaching improved confidence, interpersonal skills, and the attributes of the healthy self, these improvements impacted as much on relationships outside work as they did within the workplace environment. Researchers are today generating more interest in the connections between well-being in organisations and well-being in the home/community and a sustainable environment. While I documented many examples of the increased awareness by clients of the close connection between the ways they developed their relationships at home and at work, there

is scope for a more focused study of those connections, possibly through ethnographic, or phenomenological inquires.

Finally, the concept of emotional intelligence in the workplace is generating enormous interest in a world that has witnessed massive changes in the employment market through globalisation, and that is operating under the uncertainty of skills shortages and of the threats to environmental sustainability. People's lives are increasingly centred around their work. The levels of stress, ill health, burnout, and dysfunctional interpersonal interactions found in some workplaces are taking their toll on society. My research showed that improved emotional intelligence scores reflected improved ability to cope with stress, deal with conflict, increase general mood and generally operate in a calmer and more effective manner. The next step in the research would be to analyse these types of improvement at an organisational level. One way to set about that research would be to investigate and develop appropriate tools to review organisational processes – in other words, to look at the organisation's emotional intelligence. Further research into the role of executive coaching for such an environment would be interesting and useful.

7.4 Towards conscious leadership through executive coaching

“Deep change is different from incremental change in that it requires new ways of thinking and behaving...Making deep change requires walking naked into the land of uncertainty” (Quinn 1996:3, cited in O'Hara 2003:68).

The construct of conscious leadership is holistic, drawing upon the interlinking disciplines that have made up the rainbow helix of my research. The many levels of analysis of the data that are discussed in this chapter have revealed incremental discoveries, new insight, and greater awareness of the multiple meanings within the coaching dialogues. Each level of analysis also creates new metaphors of meaning and emerges as part of the interlinking bands of the rainbow. As I have drawn from multiple areas of theory and praxis, and utilised a range of analytic tools, to reflect on and discuss my Executive Coaching for Conscious Leadership Model, so the findings can be interpreted through the

lens of a number of expert discourses at a number of levels. In this concluding section, I present some final reflections on my overall findings.

From the preceding sections, and also from earlier chapters, it is evident that a number of qualities characterise the coaching relationship between the executive leader and the coach, and they are all holistic in nature. They all provide insight into insight, in other words, insight into awareness, integration, and consciousness. I have concluded that, in practice, there cannot be a clear distinction between what David Day (Day 2001) has highlighted as the difference between *leader* development (intrapersonal competence; i.e. human capital) and *leadership* development (interpersonal competence in the development of networked relationships; i.e. social capital). Similarly, the debates in the literature between what is emotional intelligence and what is social intelligence, or even cultural intelligence in relation to the workplace, appear to be somewhat spurious, avoiding the holistic nature of *being* and leadership. Leadership includes an integration of both the intrapersonal and the interpersonal. Conscious leadership is thus a state of being. Each person has a unique core - a genius - which James Hillman called the "acorn" in *The Soul's Code* (Hillman 1996). The soul (as articulated by Hillman) is an undefended state of being, a state of Love, that in Louis Fry's thesis is altruistic love. In this state, all ego-defensive fear is gone and profound healing and knowing occurs. This is transformational. Executive coaching for conscious leadership is, in these terms, an active dialogue of exploration into finding that unique core, the integrated, connected, "present" self.

Self-knowing and other-knowing

The combination of personal and social awarenesses and skills brings about self-knowing (insight into self) and other-knowing (insight into others), akin to the Buddhist practice of *vipassana* meditation, which is translated from the ancient Pali as *insight*. In the coaching relationship, management goals provided a vehicle for building the relationship. Business skills, organisational knowledge and corporate understanding are important for managers, and needed to be fully developed as a first step. The practical business goals were achieved as the managers confirmed through their self-reporting of the benefits

of coaching and gave us a vehicle and a context (i.e. our relationship) for the development of conscious leadership. By focussing on developing conscious leadership through the coaching relationship, I could utilise these leadership qualities as parts of a larger picture. In this way I went beyond the limitations of the trait view of leadership development, because the movement of all the parts in a reassociated, integrated person became a whole which was greater than the sum of the parts. I could coach the skill sets that were congruent with the components of emotional intelligence scales, for example, working with the manager on their practical communication skills for staff reviews while developing empathic feedback, or on problem-solving while developing insight. Everyone needed new practical interpersonal behaviours so that they could respond instead of react with the old defences. The synergy of the new skills and behaviours and the insight was transformational.

Awareness (self-knowing and other-knowing) is a precondition for insight, and consciousness. "I become aware" equates with "I become conscious". Consciousness is an outcome of deeper and deeper insight. Insight is a knowing that involves the person's emotional, sensory and cognitive/understanding being. In the management literature, insight is often used to mean an intellectual understanding, a new idea to address a particular situation, but that is only a part of what it is. Insight is "seeing the inner", "seeing the essence" and it means "seeing beyond the presenting, literal, physical levels to subtler layers of meaning and knowing."

To build relationship, one needs to be empathic. To be empathic, one needs to stand in the shoes of another person and imagine how they may feel, and share that idea and check out the accuracy of it (feedback). But to even stand in another person's shoes and imagine they may be feeling worried, excited etc in this situation, requires that I have experienced it and have awareness from my own experience. The growth of empathy and insight go hand in hand. Insight is particularly enhanced by feedback, which is not only verbal but sensory and emotional. Once a person has grasped the value of reflection, and has learned to reflect, to examine their experience and learn from it, they have developed a feedback loop which will enhance their insight and awareness, and they are

engaging in transformational learning. Without empathy, there cannot be full presence. Empathy and insight bring awareness, which is part of consciousness. Empathy and insight unite one person with the other; insight forms the bridge of inter-being between people, the trust and the acknowledgement of shared knowing that deepens our knowing of one another and of ourselves. Empathy and insight are both process and state, doing and being; they are fundamental parts of the integrated powerfully present person.

A coach with presence, intelligence and experience will have empathy and insight. Empathy is the key to respect and trust between coach and client. The greater the accuracy of the advanced empathy the easier it is to shift attitudes because it is a sharply focussed statement of the old feelings. With support, the client sees the problem in new ways and understands the need for action. For most executive leaders, it is rare to have an opportunity, apart from those provided by counselling or psychological personal development programs, to receive quality feedback. To share examples of conversations, both individual and group conversations in an organisation, and reflect on what may have been happening there, and on one's contribution there, and how one could do it better next time, is an extremely rich learning opportunity for self-knowing and other-knowing.

For most of us, we don't know what we don't know, so we don't always realise that we can benefit from coaching and create the opportunity for transformational learning. To paraphrase Merton Gill, the coaching relationship becomes the microcosm of the clients' lives; during the coaching hour, other relationships are merely abstract and only the coaching relationship is real.

Respect and trust

The participants were able to be receptive to feedback, because they respected the coach and they experienced respect from the coach from the first session. Initially, they all said, they respected my credibility because of my qualifications and experience, but in a short time, they personally experienced the trustworthiness of the coach, which in turn enabled them to take the risk of being vulnerable with their own stories. All the way through they used language

like "I felt supported", "I felt valued, cared for". The language reflected that sense of being well known, of my recognising their potential, their "acorn" (Hillman 1996). Time after time the managers said they felt personally supported and trusted – "you were on my team". And "it's very rare in life you have a forum without a judgment or criticism – in the bunker with someone who understands people." It was an opportunity for candour, to be genuine, no holds barred.

I created a safe, trusted space so they could be who they really were. Brian was quickly cognisant of the fact that his own relationship with his team would be enhanced if the team felt safe with him and could brainstorm solutions to pressing problems. As I quoted in Chapter 5:

Cecily: Your role is to engage in a conversation so that they settle down enough to think clearly about it themselves. That's the big help.

Brian: And I think that it's about a safe environment. I think that a lot.

One of Brian's goals was that he wanted to feel safe, confident and strong with Bill to talk about different issues. By working through his own fears and old habits in the safe space of the coaching context, Brian was able to gain insight and understanding about who he really was and which behaviours were the outcome of learned fear. In the wrap-up evaluating the coaching sessions, Brian said to me: "I think that it [the coaching relationship] clicked straight away. I think that also, talk about safe! I mean, you certainly made the environment very safe from the start."

What enabled people to trust? One is the respect for my professional credibility and the importance to them of the confidentiality of the sessions. However, the trust that nearly every one of them referred to was an outcome my commitment to them, my respect for them, my authority, the accuracy of my advanced empathy, my care for them, and my astute insights and reflections about them and their particular situations.

Responsibility – the ability to respond rather than react

Attending is "present" and responding is the key to "responsibility". This was a new idea for many, and initially only a few were able to articulate it. But they all

recognised that the leaders that they had known and admired were professional – calm and unfazed; they had a capacity to deal with difficult situations with equanimity. They remain present, and aware, and able to respond in the most intelligent, compassionate way. Whereas with others in the workplace most of the managers had encountered reactivity and ego defences, with me they experienced non-judgmental attending and responding.

As discussed earlier, in many respects Penny had rarely made autonomous decisions. After coaching she was more integrated and in a better position to make ethical decisions, and to be responsive to the needs of the team, so that they in turn respected and trusted her authority. I have emphasised throughout the thesis that the concept of ethical behaviour and an understanding of ethical principles are central to trust in organisational relationships both within and between organisations.

Care and concern

The coaching relationship was developed alongside their experience of my genuine care and concern for my clients, which they found very nurturing. This care and concern is personal, but it is also professional. It is bounded by that confidential hour each fortnight. This is not a motherhood experience (I was not in the Parent role), nor is it formal, like a consultation with a lawyer. It is a mutual professional contract where we are both working on these outcomes. What is clear is that each person felt that they truly mattered to me, and indeed they did. Even though I was not there to share my trials and tribulations, they did experience me as undefended. My concerns were suspended and I was there for them.

Since I have a systemic view of the person, I took an active interest in the dynamics in their families as well as in their workplaces, and probably ten or even twenty per cent of the time there was a family focus. Everybody found this immensely engaging and helpful. At some point, everyone raised an issue regarding their children or some other member of their family. So every week they were experiencing some benefit that was also caring, respectful, that was building insight and helping them practically.

Love and conscious leadership

All of the above four areas, the developing knowing/knowledge of self and others (insight and empathy), respect and trust, responsibility, and care and concern, happen simultaneously and contribute to each other. Knowing is not linear, but multi-dimensional, a total holistic experience of the *inter-being*. When all of these things are happening, we are together able to be undefended. These are the four terms with which Erich Fromm defined love. We are together able to acknowledge our fears and our defence mechanisms, let go our defence mechanisms, experience our fear and vulnerability, and move beyond them to be fully aware and equanimous and present. The quality of presence recognised in good leaders is this ability to be aware, fully present, without brittle ego defences. This is both *being* and *doing* love which brings together the bands of the rainbow helix into a synergistic experience during the conversations of the coaching relationship.

Through the stories of the clients we have seen that the principal inhibitors to claiming authority and exercising leadership are fear and unhelpful ego defence mechanisms. The executive coaching relationship facilitates both the learning of new, more functional personal and interpersonal behaviours, and therefore the ability to let go fear to risk trust and experience love. Bullies and victims are dominated by fear. Mature adults however have high quality interpersonal skills which function to appropriately protect their boundaries and assert their authority. This power is fear-less. Fear-less authority is non-threatening, as so many of the clients commented. There is either fear or trust in both psychological and spiritual language. Instrumentally there is a spectrum of fear and trust. When we take this understanding to a larger level, then the spectrum is either anxiety or love.

What I am referring to is not about some limited “love-ology”, like romantic love or particular interpersonal love. I am talking about a state of being in the world. When I do not need my old ego defences, I am present, aware. I am fear-less, that is, in a state of love. The person in this space has a powerful presence.

Love is not just about being caring and supportive. Love is also challenging. Love confronts us with our fears and our shortcomings. It is tough. It is about being authentic. We cannot collapse into our defensive reactions and our old victimology or our old power games. We are challenged to be aware all the time and that is very difficult. Our thousands of habitual defence mechanisms are just as entrenched as any addiction to cigarettes or other drugs. We do not even know we are addicted to these behaviours. Being present and exercising leadership with colleagues at work and with our family members and friends in this conscious way is hard. It is hard to be accepting and welcoming and warm and interested and caring and encouraging when we have not been so in the past. But when we bring to awareness our dysfunctional defence mechanisms and acknowledge and embrace the underlying fear, we re-associate the dissociated parts of the self. In other words, we relinquish dualism and re-integrate the self.

Re-integration brings true integrity. Integrity is without fear. Integrity can take a stand without fear. The person who is integrated acts with integrity. They are present. They live not in fear but in love. The state of love is immensely powerful. Each time a manager experienced a time of letting go of fear and re-association and renewed personal integration/integrity, they experienced a surge of energy. The integrated self is totally present and immensely powerful. We say of a child that they are high-spirited, meaning high energy. Holy Spirit is understood as pure energy. People who are integrated have authenticity which gives them energy and authority. Their authority derives from authenticity – at root it is the same word. They are not egotistical and narcissistic and fearful. Rather they are in Love, in Spirit, inspiring. This is conscious leadership.