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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

RITUAL AS PSYCHOTHERAPEUTIC INTERVENTION
FOR UNRESOLVED GRIEF:
A PHENOMENOLOGICAL MAPPING

BY

NANCY CHRISTINE REEVES

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

IN

COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY

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SPRING 1989



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Nancy C. Reeves

234 Glenaville Dr
Victoria BC V9B1K3

Date: April 20 1989

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled Ritual As Psychotherapeutic Intervention for Unresolved Grief: A Phenomenological Mapping submitted by Nancy C. Reeves in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Counselling Psychology

William J. Lopez
Supervisor

[Signature]

[Signature]

Thomas Craig

[Signature]

Gene Romanuk

Date: Apr 10, 89

DEDICATION

To Bob for supporting me to start
To Tina for pushing me to finish

Abstract

Grieving is a process by which individuals integrate perceived loss or transition. For a variety of reasons some individuals do not reach this sense of resolution. Psychotherapists have discovered that, in some way, ritual helps resolve anxiety, pain, and a feeling of being unfinished with the loss.

To explore this experience of clinical practice and provide a research basis, a phenomenological study was undertaken to explore the question, "How do each of the participants in this study experience ritual when they use it as a psychotherapeutic framework in their lives?" Interviews were conducted with five adults, four women and a man, who had experienced unresolved grief after a loss or transition.

Themes and metathemes were uncovered and described within the framework of existential philosophy. Elements that were common to all individuals were combined into a short phenomenological description of ritual as a therapeutic force. Conclusions in relation to the literature on ritual and implications for further research and psychotherapy were made.

Acknowledgment

I am extremely fortunate in having the assistance and support of so many people, too many to name here. I greatly appreciated the authenticity, clarity, and caring of my thesis supervisor Dr. W. J. Hague. He was a wonderful role model of a supervisor.

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Even though Dr. F. J. Boersma and Dr. J. J. Bergen were not able to remain on the committee I want to express my appreciation for the time and effort they gave me.

I could not have completed this thesis (and remained relatively sane) without the support of family and friends. My husband Bob and daughter Tina were behind me 100 %. The faith my mother Patricia Reeves, grandmother Dollie Lougheed, aunt Joan Lougheed and father-in-law Eric Brinton had in my abilities helped immeasurably in times of self doubt.

My true career as a psychotherapist began with supervision by Dr. Graham Mills and his continued challenge to me to grow was a large

part of my decision to return for a doctorate in Counselling. I treasure his support. Dr. Rose Marie Hague and Dr. Max Uhlemann gave me so much time and encouragement they should have been committee members.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

"Social life proceeds somewhere between the imaginary extremes of absolute order, and absolute chaotic conflict and anarchic improvisation" (Moore & Myerhoff, 1977). For centuries, societies have produced religious and secular rituals to provide stability, control, and order in social life (Campbell, 1972; Moore & Myerhoff, 1977; Turner, 1969; van Gennep, 1960).

In studying rituals of many cultures, van Gennep (1960) states that there is much similarity in the content of rites and in the situations that occasion them. Campbell (1972) stresses the importance of the ritual's purpose. "The function of ritual, as I see it, is to give form to human life, not in the way of a mere surface arrangement, but in depth" (Campbell, 1972, p. 43).

The beauty and power of ritual has also been used in counselling and psychotherapy. Therapists have used ritual but have rarely owned it as a psychotherapeutic framework. Instead it has usually been given the status of "off the record" therapist-initiated activity; stated as a task given to the client yet with no explanation of its purpose (Yalom, 1980). Even when ritual has been given a legitimacy in therapy (Renner, 1979) a detailed account of how, when, and why to use ritual is seldom found. A notable recent exception is an article by Rando (1985) outlining clinical observations.

The Question

The question this thesis seeks to answer is, "How do each of the participants in this study experience ritual when they use it as a psychotherapeutic framework in their lives?" The first step in studying a phenomenon is to determine a description that can then be utilized by all future researchers (Giorgi, 1983). The phenomenological research method, concerned with the thorough understanding of phenomena (Colaizzi, 1978; Giorgi, 1983; Husserl, 1977; Misiak & Sexton, 1973; Polkinghorne, 1980b; Valle & King, 1978) will be utilized in this study. Five individuals who have used ritual to assist their move from unresolved to resolved grief will be examined. Through interviews the meanings of ritual for each participant will be uncovered and themes will be pulled out to clarify the sought question.

This chapter will define and illustrate some of the terms frequently used in this thesis. These terms include: ritual, loss, grief, grief resolution, unresolved grief, psychotherapy, and framework. Chapter Two will provide a general examination of the grieving process including its purpose and characteristics. The place of ritual in the literature will be reviewed using the divisions: grief resolution, prevention of unresolved grief, and unresolved grief. Chapter Three will describe the phenomenological method, while Chapter Four will outline the phenomenological approach utilized in this study. Chapter Five will examine results. Chapter Six will discuss conclusions. Chapter Seven will present reflections and

implications.

Example of Ritual

Since the term "ritual" may conjure up different meanings for various people, a detailed definition must be examined. Before a specific definition is presented, an example of the psychotherapeutic use of ritual with unresolved grief associated with death will be given. This example (Burtt, 1955), one of the parables about Siddhartha, the Buddha, is set in India and is one of the earliest found in the literature.

The client, Kisa Gotami, had grown up in poverty and on that account, when she married above her socioeconomic status, was a focus of contempt to her in-laws. However, when Kisa gave birth to a son, she was suddenly treated with respect. Life seemed very much better for Kisa until her son reached preschool age. Unexpectedly, he died.

The death of her child was a terrible blow to Kisa. Her grief was intensified to an intolerable level by the fear that she would revert to her old status and again be treated in a disrespectful and contemptuous manner. A common maladaptive method used to "deal" with a loss perceived of as unmanageable is to deny the loss itself. Kisa suppressed the reality of her son's death so strongly that she went from house to house, with her dead son in her arms, asking for medicine to cure him. She was laughed at and viewed as crazy by those she encountered.

A wise man saw Kisa and realized she needed help. He referred her to the most effective "therapist" he knew. He told Kisa that if

anyone would know about medicine for her son it would be this man. When Kisa approached the therapist, whom some call the "Possessor of the Ten Forces" and others the "Compassionate Buddha," she asked him for medicine to cure her child's illness. The Buddha began his interview with her by first supporting her strengths, telling her she had done well to reach out for assistance.

He then told her that the first step of her treatment was to make the rounds of each house in the village and ask for tiny grains of mustard seed. She must only accept mustard seed from those houses in which there had never been a death. Kisa reacted with joy and relief to his words and immediately began her task. She imagined that the mustard seed would be utilized to concoct a medicine for her son.

The occupants of every house she came to were more than willing to provide Kisa with mustard seed, but it seemed that in each house at least one person had died. Part way through her search, Kisa came to the sudden realization that death touches everyone and that it is possible to grieve and come to terms with a loss. She knew then that she was not unique. Kisa immediately took her son's body to the public burning grounds and had him cremated. When the therapist saw her returning, he asked for the mustard seed. Kisa told him that the medicine had done its job, she was cured.

Definitions

Ritual

For the purpose of this study 'rite' and 'ritual' will be used interchangeably as they are in most of the associated literature

(Turner, 1969; van Gennep, 1960). A commonly used term, created by van Gennep (1960) refers to rituals utilized during times of individual status change, e.g. puberty, or time status change, e.g. harvest. The term 'ritual' implies a larger context of change (Denzin, 1974). van Gennep (1960) states that the purpose of ritual can be, for example, status change, purification, or protection. Rites also often have intertwined purposes. "It is not my contention that all rites of birth, initiation, marriage, and the like, are only rites of passage (van Gennep, 1960, p. 11).

Denzin (1974) defines ritual as:

a conventionalized joint activity given to ceremony, involving two or more persons, endowed with special emotion and often sacred meaning, focused around a clearly defined set of social objects, and when performed confers upon its participants a special sense of the sacred and the out of the ordinary. (p. 272)

There are only two modifications needed in Denzin's definition to fit ritual to the purposes of this thesis. The first is to delete the word "conventionalized." It is a common practice for rituals to be modified and new rituals to be developed (Rando, 1985). Flexibility is important for the psychotherapeutic use of ritual (Aguilar & Wood, 1979; Gordon & Gordon, 1984; Renner, 1979). The second is that the phrase "involving two or more persons" be changed to "at least one person and the symbol(s) of the loss." Rituals "may be a habitually repetitive behavior or a one-time occurrence" (Rando, 1985, p. 236).

The Encyclopaedia of Psychology (1984) cites many authors who agree that:

Rituals may be performed...for purely magical, mystical, or religious reasons, so as to gain some control over or mark the uncontrollable, often occurrences in the natural world, transgressions of the group's moral code, or the existential certainties of birth, death and the life-cycle transitions from status position to status position within the group's social structure....Rituals are also enacted for the emotional effects the performance bestows upon individuals. (p. 246)

Loss

This term is used to encompass the unwanted absence or change of a person, object, or belief (Colgrove, Bloomfield & McWilliams, 1977; Speck, 1985).

Grief

This term is defined as the emotional, intellectual, spiritual, and physical reactions and responses to the loss of a person, object, or belief (Speck, 1985). These reactions and responses take the form of a process (Kubler-Ross, 1969; Lindemann, 1979; Speck, 1985). Any loss, which touches an individual on a personal level, will be grieved to some extent (Colgrove et al., 1977; Rando, 1984; Worden, 1982). Styles of grieving are learned (Grollman, 1975; Hankoff, 1975; Templer, 1976).

Grief Resolution

This term does not imply a total lack of negative feeling when thinking of the loss. If that situation were to occur, it would be as if the loss of that person, object, or belief had no more meaning for the individual, and would no longer be retained in memory (Kubler-Ross, 1969). If individuals had previously described themselves as "actively grieving" they would no longer do so.

Although there may be some sadness when remembering the loss, the sharp, wrenching quality is gone (Worden, 1982). The individual reaches out to life again (Kubler-Ross, 1969; Worden, 1982).

Unresolved Grief

This term was used instead of the more common maladaptive grief, pathological grief or, morbid grief reaction because, as a label, it was felt to imply less judgement. This is the condition of delayed, distorted and/or unending reactions to normal grief (Lindemann, 1979). An individual can be unresolved in their grief for a variety of reasons. Among causes for such reactions are judgementalness about the individual's grieving process or lack of support from significant others and/or the community (Maddison, 1968; Rando, 1984); past unresolved grief which influences the reaction to the current loss (Lazare, 1979; Rando, 1984); restrictive values or beliefs about loss and/or grief, e.g., "Nothing bad ever happens to those who live properly" (Kushner, 1981), "If I feel the intensity of my grief I will die" (Jackson, 1957; Lazare, 1979; Rando, 1984) or "If I complete my grieving I will lose the bond with my loved one" (Jackson, 1957; Lazare, 1979; Rando, 1984); physiological or psychological stress or illness (Maddison, 1968); and lack of information about grief, e.g., not knowing that poor concentration, memory, and decision-making difficulties are common symptoms of grief and may affect an individual's self-esteem and intensify the symptoms (Rando, 1984; Reeves & Knowles, 1979). Whatever the cause of the unresolved grief, the individual often feels restricted, "stuck," less worthwhile, and

out of control (Worden, 1982).

Framework

This term refers to an activity that is undertaken in an attempt to meet a psychotherapeutic goal. The difference between 'framework' and 'technique' is one of breadth and focus. A technique usually implies a tool utilized for only one or a few purposes, dealing with a specific part of a larger concern. For example, the goal may be to provide insight or to lower anxiety when speaking in public. Framework is used in this study to imply a broader way of being with the problem where client and therapist jointly live within it and weave a series of activities to deal with the concern.

Psychotherapy

For the purposes of this study the term "counselling" will be subsumed in the term "psychotherapy."

CHAPTER II

Literature Review

The Grieving Process

Grieving is a healing process (Colgrove et al., 1977; Kubler-Ross, 1969; Ortega, 1957; Rando, 1984). The physiological and psychological reactions to loss are purposive. These symptoms, some of which include: low energy, poor concentration, shock, difficulty making decisions, and sleep disturbance; keep the griever focused on the loss (Larson, 1976; Worden, 1982).

Reeves (1987) states that initially this focusing is so intense that there is no energy for life-enhancement activities. As the grieving process progresses more and more energy is freed, first for survival and then for life-enhancement. If the physiological and psychological symptoms were not experienced by the individual or lasted for only a few days, the grieving person would have a difficult time adjusting to the loss.

A longer period of adjustment is needed because the grieving is not solely for the fact that the loss has occurred, but for implications associated with that loss, and for all the meanings connected with those implications (Colgrove et al., 1977; Lifton & Olson, 1975; Pincus, 1967; Rando, 1984; Speck, 1978). Common implications are the intrapersonal; interpersonal; financial; familial; societal; life philosophy; meanings of the loss connected with the past, present, and future; physical and psychological status;

and attitudes about loss and grief (Rando, 1984; Reeves & Knowles, 1979). Through the process of acknowledging, experiencing, and understanding each implication, an individual is able to adjust attitudes and behaviours to live in a consistent manner with the reality of the loss (Lifton & Olson, 1975).

This process of adjustment takes time (Kubler-Ross, 1969; Parkes, 1970; Worden, 1982). If the full impact of the loss, with all implications realized, was experienced by the individual at one time, it would mean psychological and physiological overload (Becker, 1973; Lifton & Olson, 1975; Yalom, 1980). Thus, unconsciously and sometimes consciously, we push all or nearly all implications away and then let them return at a manageable rate. Kubler-Ross (1969) calls this pushing away the stage of denial.

Reeves (1987) states that many grieving individuals view the term "denial" as implying weakness and rigidity, and therefore, attempt to force themselves through that numbing, spaced-out state. The term "emotional anaesthetic" has been found to be more acceptable to the griever. An anaesthetic is a tool utilized to keep patients from going into a fatal shock on the operating table. The natural emotional anaesthetic has the same function (Reeves, 1987).

Grief--Catalyst to Growth

Some writers (Heidegger, 1962; Kierkegaard, 1977; Yalom, 1980) view the experience of loss as an opportunity for individuals to become better than they were before the loss occurred. The psychological shock of a loss compels some individuals to look deeply

within themselves, to acknowledge and utilize personal resources hitherto unknown.

Ortega (1957) described the individual suddenly aware of a personal loss:

Instinctively, as do the shipwrecked, he will look around for something to which to cling, and that tragic, ruthless glance, absolutely sincere, because it is a question of his salvation, will cause him to bring order into the chaos of his life. These are the only genuine ideas; the ideas of the shipwrecked. All the rest is rhetoric, posturing, farce. He who does not really feel himself lost, is without remission; that is to say, he never finds himself, never comes up against his own reality. (p. 157)

Ritual for Grief Resolution

The rituals most commonly associated with loss in our society are the culturally developed, death-related ones--wakes, funerals, memorial services, viewing the body--although recently in the literature (Gordon & Gordon, 1984) there has been mention of rituals for divorce. There are conflicting views of the value of traditional death-related rituals. Some authors stress the positive role of the ritual (Fulton, 1965; Parkes, 1970; Rando, 1984; Yalom, 1980).

However, in a 1984 study, Doka was unable to confirm that participation in a funeral aided grief resolution. In his conclusions, though, Doka states that many of the individuals he studied attended but did not actually participate in the funeral ritual. He cites Huan (1980) who emphasizes the importance of personalizing funerals.

van Gennep's (1960) division of rituals into three main headings: preliminal, liminal, and postliminal may be important in determining

the value of rituals. The term "liminal" is derived from the Latin "limen" meaning threshold. van Gennep views the process of change as stepping over a threshold. Major thresholds in an individual's life may include: birth, entering school, puberty, marriage, and death. Much of our life is taken up with crossing thresholds and many cultures have developed rituals to acknowledge these changes. Turner (1969) states

The first phase (of separation) comprises symbolic behavior signifying the detachment of the individual or group either from an earlier fixed point in the social structure, from a set of cultural conditions (a "state"), or from both. During the intervening "liminal" period, the characteristics of the ritual subject (the "passenger") are ambiguous; he passes through a cultural realm that has few or none of the attributes of the past or coming state. In the third phase (reaggregation or reincorporation) the passage is consummated. The ritual subject, individual or corporate, is in a relatively stable state once more, and, by virtue of this, has rights and obligations vis-a-vis others of a clearly defined and "structural type. (p. 95)

The preliminal stage is one of relative equilibrium as a crisis is approached. The state of crisis lies in the liminal stage and the postliminal stage is the re-emergence on the other side. Reeves and Boersma (in press) believe that one reason the usual death-related rituals: funerals, wakes, etc., may not be seen as helpful or healing by participants is that the ritual is often designed to deal with one stage, e.g., reaggregation, while participants are in another stage, e.g., the liminal or margin stage. Participants need a ritual that provides structure and meaning dealing directly with the issues they are experiencing.

Other types of rituals are beginning to appear in the literature

dealing with resolved grief (Lettanzi & Hale, 1984; Lewis, 1983). Lettanzi and Hale (1984) in a study of bereaved parents suggest that journal or diary writing can be very therapeutic.

Ritual for Prevention of Unresolved Grief

Rabbi Earl Grollman has developed a ritual for medical staff at an extended care facility in an attempt to facilitate grief resolution (C. Johnstone, personal communication, October 20, 1985). The need for some type of structured grief experience was realized as staff often expressed concerns that when a resident died it was difficult to adjust to the empty bed one minute and then to quickly have that bed occupied by a new resident. The staff felt that the "quick turnover" interfered with the grieving process and was not respectful to the deceased.

At Rabbi Grollman's suggestion, now when a resident dies, the bed is wheeled into the corridor and every person who wishes assists with washing the frame. As they work, memories and meanings of the deceased are shared. The cleaning ends when each person feels ready to let the bed be used by someone else.

Traditional rituals are also seen as assisting to prevent maladjustment. Worden (1982) suggests that encouraging helping professionals to attend funerals of their clients or patients can help prevent burnout.

Ritual for Unresolved Grief

A computer search using the descriptors: rite, ritual, therapeutic technique, loss, and grief, produced few publications

(Rando, 1985; Renner, 1979) which dealt directly with ritual as a psychotherapeutic framework.

Renner (1979) and Rando (1985) have written of the importance of ritual in their clinical practices. Renner, as a pastoral counsellor writing to clergy, focuses on the development of religious ritual to assist the grieving process while Rando, the psychotherapist, concentrates on secular ritual. They suggest principles and guidelines for maximizing the creation and utilization of effective rituals.

What Rituals Accomplish

Both Renner and Rando view ritual as an important adjunct to the counselling process not a substitute for it. Renner states, "Ritual gathers the fragments that have surfaced in the counselling sessions and dramatizes them and gives them concrete form. Counselling adds free flow of sorrow in grief, but ritual provides it with form, whereby it's channeled toward wholesome creative ends" (p. 172).

Rando believes rituals can be powerfully therapeutic because they necessitate the behavioural expression of thought and feeling. This "acting-out" moves the client from passivity, helplessness, and emptiness to being an integrated actor in the grieving process. She adds that ritual being a right brain activity touches the unconscious more quickly than verbalization. This mind/body congruence also enhances the working through of such issues as guilt.

Both Renner and Rando agree that ritual needs to be meaningful for the client and full of feeling but not overly dramatic. Renner

feels that some familiar traditional elements, such as the Lord's Prayer for a Christian, make the ritual more effective and both counsellors agree that the parts of a ritual must be congruent with its purpose.

Rando states ritual legitimizes the grieving process and gives permission for the client to complete Lindemann's tasks of mourning: emancipation from the bondage of the deceased, readjustment to the environment in which the deceased is missing, and formation of new relationships. As well as "letting go," the grieving client can "hang on" in a more healthy way because the ritual encourages "an opportunity to interact intensely with the memory of the deceased for a delimited period of time without crossing over into pathological dimensions" (p. 238).

The lost, chaotic feeling many grieving people experience can be changed during the ritual because it is a structured, time-limited activity. Grieving before and after the ritual may not be so intense because of the deeply focused experience of the grief during the activity. The structure ritual provides can assist individuals with unresolved grief. They can feel safer dealing with unresolved issues within the structure of the ritual. Also the loss can be more easily accepted because of the conscious and unconscious and implicit and explicit statements made during the ritual.

Rituals can teach (Rando, 1985). Instead of just talking about the loss the grieving person acts it out, thus, deepening the learning that the loss is real. By focussing on the loss in this structured

manner, many feelings and meanings of the loss can be clarified.

The presence of other people can heighten the positive effects of the ritual (Renner, 1979; Rando, 1985). Rando (1985) states that

Therapeutic rituals may assist in fostering the family or primary group to become a more cohesive unit following the loss of a significant other through the bond of a commonly experienced symbolic behaviour, symbolic behavior, provision of an experience designed to help them cope with separation, and the statement of community support with a consequent strengthening of relational patterns among the survivors. (p. 238).

Renner sees the presence of others as allowing the grieving person's private, isolated experience to move into a communal sharing and support. He stresses, however, that this will only happen if the others act as a caring community.

The Role of the Therapist

Renner and Rando agree that the therapist has a useful role in the development and production of the ritual. Counsellors must understand the elements that are needed to produce helpful rituals and be sensitive to timing (Renner, 1979). To develop a ritual the counsellor needs to be aware of the client's context (Rando, 1985):

the psychological, social, physical, cultural, religious, and philosophical characteristics of the griever; the nature and extent of psychosocial support; the characteristics specific to the loss; and the particular stage in the grief process and the issues and possible conflicts attendant to it. (p. 239).

Once the client's context is understood, the ritual can begin to be developed. Renner stresses that the counsellor needs to have a compassionate attitude towards the client during this development. Rando and Renner caution that counsellors become clear about the

client's real need to have a ritual rather than automatically accepting the presenting problem. If the content of the ritual does not meet the real needs of the client it will not be seen as meaningful and will not lead to positive change. Part of this meaningfulness for Renner involves the client's theology. Development of a ritual that does not conform to the client's belief system will cause offense and/or confusion. Renner symbolizes the counsellor, during the ritual, as "a bridge between the patient's disturbance and his need" (p.171). Also the counsellor can represent the community if no others are present and, if appropriate, can represent God.

The Role of the Client

Renner and Rando stress the importance of allowing and encouraging the client to actually participate in the ritual. Renner (1979) states that

If he or she is an actor in the ritual event already in its planning and subsequently in its enactment, it is more easily and intensely appropriated by him as his own experience; and, as a supportive and sustaining event it contributes more directly to his integration. (p.172).

The client also must view the ritual as personally meaningful.

A search for other writers who describe ritual as a psychotherapeutic tool was made through numerous books and articles. Types of psychotherapy thought most likely to mention ritual were examined. This chapter will contain information and examples from Psychoanalysis, Existential, Jungian, and Strategic Psychotherapies, as well as cross-cultural and pastoral counselling.

Psychoanalysis. Freud (Breuer & Freud, 1955) viewed religious

and societal rituals in a negative sense--as based on guilt. Maladaptive, ritualistic behaviour on an individual clinical level was of interest to Freud. Since Freud, psychoanalysts speak of day to day habits such as greetings as adaptive rituals (Erikson, 1966). Other types of ritual may be maladaptive.

More recent psychoanalysts take a different stance. Siggins (1983) asserts that psychoanalytic sessions can be viewed as ritual. She gives an example of a client who experiences the death of a loved one and fears that the strength of grief will prove intolerable. She concludes by stating that "the ritual of the psychoanalytic setting provides a regular predictable form, which maximizes the freedom of thought and feeling in the analysand that is necessary for the work of the psychoanalysis itself" (p. 2).

Kafka (1983) emphasizes the importance of rituals and ritualized behaviour to anchor our reality and clarify boundaries between ourselves and the world. He sees them as helping people "maintain the psychological homeostasis necessary for the individual's functioning in a social context" (p. 32).

This examination of ritual in psychoanalysis will end with an example. The ritual is suggested by none other than Freud (Breuer & Freud, 1955). It appears in the case reports of the treatment of Fraulein Elisabeth von R. but is not mentioned as a therapeutic technique. Freud suggested to Elisabeth that she visit her sister's grave. Unless Freud saw this ritual as potentially helpful, there would be no reason for asking an analysand to undertake a task which

was certain to evoke intense affect. However, Freud, does not explain the reason for his intervention.

Existential Psychotherapy. The philosophical framework of existential psychotherapy stresses the importance of ritual in peoples' lives. Yet there is little evidence of ritual being utilized as a therapeutic framework. This lack may be due to the fact that existential therapists tend not to emphasize interventions. The authentic committed relationship between therapist and client is seen as the major tool for growth (Keen, 1978; Valle & King, 1978).

Existential thinkers (Becker, 1973; Keen, 1978; Sartre, 1971) view neurosis as a natural condition. Becker (1973) suggests that "the only thing that can 'cure' it [neurosis] is a world-view, some kind of affirmative collective ideology in which the person can perform the living drama of his acceptance as a creature" (p. 158). This has been accomplished in the past through societal myth-ritual complexes which channelled obsessions. "We might say it places creative obsession within the reach of every man, which is precisely the function of ritual" (Becker, 1973, p. 199).

Becker adds that ritual automatically provides safety and meaning to life and allows some aspects of existence to be experienced in manageable bites. Becker ends his discussion of ritual by bemoaning the fact that the cure for neurosis may be clear, but the way to "prescribe" the cure is not. He states "for one thing, he can't get living myth-ritual complexes...on a prescription form from the pharmacy. He can't even get them in mental hospitals or therapeutic

communities" (p. 159). He stops just short of the connection that since rituals are man-made they can be developed by therapist and client.

Zuesse (1983), like Becker, stops short of advocating that ritual be utilized in psychotherapy. He states that ritual produces a self-alienation which, paradoxically, can spur an individual to psychological growth. According to him, in order to participate in a ritual, an individual "must accept a limited role which is merely complementary to other roles; one gives up the intention to be self-determined" (p.41). The absurdity or paradox of ritual is that individuals move toward sanity as they experience this self-alienation. For it is only by experiencing the known structure that individuals can fully see themselves as they really are: finite, bounded, and completely interrelated with the world. Knowing and accepting who we are, we can grow and be healed.

Yalom (1980) comes closer to advocating the therapeutic use of ritual. To assist clients in moving deeper into their existential condition and the issues surrounding it, Yalom offers a number of suggestions including guided imagery, psychodrama, and other encounter techniques. He also briefly touches on ritual, although not naming it directly.

He says "simple milestones such as birthdays and anniversaries, can be useful levers for the therapist. The [existential] pain elicited by these signs of the passage of time runs deep" (p. 172). Yalom further states that the therapist can utilize naturally

occurring important times in a client's life and/or may contrive such situations. He gives, as example, Freud telling Elisabeth to go to her sister's grave and meditate there.

Jungian psychotherapy. Jung (1966) states that one of the most difficult tasks of the psychotherapist is helping the adult to grow up. The adult entering psychotherapy is given the "chance to shed all the fragments of egg-shell still adhering to him from his childhood days, and to withdraw the projection of the parental imagos from external reality" (p. 96).

He makes the point that prior to the advent of modern psychotherapy, societies attempted to facilitate and ease the transition from childhood to adulthood through the use of rituals at puberty, marriage, death, and birth. The rites "are probably designed in the first place to avert the psychic injuries liable to occur at such times; but they are also intended to impart to the initiand the preparation and teaching needed for life" (Jung, 1959, p. 97). Jung believes that religious rituals, e.g., baptism, confirmation, Bar Mitzvah, and funerals, have the same purpose.

He views ritual overall, however, as a poor tool, one too frequently "congealed in a rigid, often elaborate, structure of ideas" (Jung, 1959, p. 473). The rite loses richness and aliveness and ends with restricted, stifled participants. Jung did not speak about ritual as a psychotherapeutic framework.

Since his death, some Jungian oriented writers have taken a second look at ritual. Some (Campbell, 1972; Mattoon, 1981) suggest

that rituals are still important and, although not advocating ritual in therapy, believe that rituals can be made more therapeutic.

Campbell explains:

A ritual is an organization of mythological symbols; and by participating in the drama of the rite one is brought directly in touch with these not as verbal reports of historic events, either past, present, or to be, but as revelations, here and now, of what is always and forever. Where the synagogues and churches go wrong is by telling what their symbols "mean". The value of an effective rite is that it leaves everyone to his own thoughts which dogma and definitions only confuse.
(p. 918)

Campbell and Mattoon, agreeing with Jung that rituals assist the individual to grow to adulthood, advocate the development of meaningful rites. Mattoon is especially concerned with the current trend to do away with ritual. "The lack of transitional ceremony remains, however, and may account for some of the enthusiasm of many young people for entering religious cults or joining their peers in the use of mind-altering drugs" (p. 172).

Strategic psychotherapy. Strategic therapists work towards understanding patterns of communication and rules of the individual or family. They then introduce an intervention in an attempt to break old maladaptive patterns. It is believed that a new adaptive pattern will likely emerge. Reframing and paradoxical intervention are commonly utilized techniques and interventions are often given as homework assignments.

Various strategic therapists (Friedman & Pettus, 1985; Haley, 1973; Palazzoli, Boscolo, Cecchin & Prata, 1978) openly advocate the use of ritual in psychotherapy. The Milan group in their book

"Paradox and Counterparadox" (Palazzoli, Boscolo, Cecchin & Prata, 1978) devote a whole chapter to an example of a family ritual. They define family ritual as "an action or series of actions, usually accompanied by verbal formulas or expressions which are to be carried out by all members of the family" (p. 95).

By acting out the ritual, rather than talking about their problems, it is believed that the family will perceive themselves as a cohesive whole and naturally move into more adaptive ways of relating. The authors stress that a ritual be specifically designed for the family that will enact it. "The invention of a ritual always requires a great effort from the therapists, first an effort of observation, and then a creative effort, since it is unthinkable that a ritual proven effective in one family can be in another" (p. 97). Rituals in strategic therapy are always developed by the therapist without consultation by the client.

Friedman and Pettus (1985) describe a ritual to assist a family who were unable to allow an adolescent member to separate naturally. The family had become enmeshed in mutual dependency and triangulation. The family was Jewish and consisted of a father, mother, a fourteen year old daughter, and the perceived problem child, sixteen year old son (Sam). Sam exhibited many ritualistic behaviours, such as touching objects twice, which severely restricted his normal functioning.

The therapists clarified that the family was in a state of unresolved grief about the death of a child from the father.

marriage. The daughter had been killed in a car accident at age eighteen. The parents were not about to "lose" another child by allowing Sam to experience normal adolescent separation and differentiation.

The therapists prescribed a ritual which was to be enacted by Sam and a Rabbi who was close to the family. Sam was to "meet with the Rabbi for one-half hour each week at which time the Rabbi would 'prescribe' a series of prayers ('ordeals') for Sam to recite each morning. He was to say each two times" (p. 200). The ritual was designed in an attempt to relieve Sam's expressed guilt and to change his ritualistic behaviour into more appropriate, socially acceptable behaviour.

While Sam was undertaking this ritual, the family continued to see the therapists for a number of sessions. Sam's ritualistic behaviour did not go away completely, but it was greatly reduced, and a few years later he moved out of the family home. The therapists believe the ritual accomplished its purpose by allowing Sam to disengage somewhat from the enmeshed family situation.

Pastoral counselling. Religions have traditionally relied heavily on rituals to deliver their spiritual messages and to work through spiritual problems. Counselling that incorporates a religious or spiritual dimension is termed pastoral counselling. It is surprising, given the interest religions have in ritual, that only recently has it been viewed as a psychotherapeutic technique in pastoral counselling (Gordon & Gordon, 1984; Griffith, 1983; Renner,

1979).

Renner (1979) believes that rituals in counselling can provide a psychological and spiritual anchor to assist an individual who is in danger of disintegrating. He gives the example of Maree, who with her fiance had gone to him for premarital counselling. On the morning of the wedding day the fiance was killed in a car accident. At Maree's request, Renner met her frequently over the next few days to provide support and counselling in her grief. Maree wanted to view the body of her loved one and expressed the desire to place a ring on his finger. In clarifying this request, both the pastor and Maree agreed that the ring ceremony would symbolically represent all that the relationship had meant.

The ritual consisted of the pastor viewing the body first and then explaining to Maree what the deceased looked like. Then the pastor and Maree together approached the body. Maree placed the ring on his finger, talked briefly to him about their love, kissed his head, and then indicated that she was finished. The pastor said a prayer and they left together.

Cross-cultural counselling. With increasing numbers of immigrants, often from Third World countries, North American psychotherapists will likely find themselves dealing with clients from very different cultural backgrounds and lifestyles. In recognition of this situation, *The Counseling Psychologist*, in 1985 (vol.13) published an entire issue on cross-cultural counselling.

Important therapeutic tools in this type of therapy include

understanding and accepting the client's definition of health, as well as the client's perceptions of the world, upbringing, and life experiences (Ibrahim, 1985; Suinn, 1985). To use these tools effectively, therapists must recognize the ways in which their own perceptions differ from those of their clients.

Anthropology has made an extensive examination of rituals used by other cultures to help physically and psychologically maladjusted individuals. The ritual for healing is usually performed by the culture's equivalent of a psychotherapist. Rituals are viewed as a powerful method for dealing with psychopathology because they make a public statement about the individual's condition. Turner (1969) states, "It is the 'hidden' that is 'dangerous' or 'noxious'. Thus to name an inauspicious condition is halfway to removing that condition" (p. 26).

Aguilar and Wood (1979) explain that in order for a ritual to be effective it needs to be experienced as meaningful by the patient. Therefore, the therapist must treat it with respect, solemnity, and mysticism. The ritual also needs to be flexible enough to change when necessary to meet the individual's needs. They discuss the following therapist-conducted ritual used with a male Mexican patient with a mourning fixation, as follows.

First, the therapist creates a mood through poetry and initiates questions, such as, "What would you say to your mother if she were here now?" A funeral is then enacted with one person playing the deceased placed in a "blanket coffin" with lighted candles at head and

foot. The patient with the mourning fixation is then instructed to approach the coffin and say what needs to be said.

The therapist lets the scene unfold spontaneously or intervenes to provide structure where necessary. When the patient's verbalizations are complete, a "funeral procession" takes the coffin into another room and the deceased is "buried." To bring the scene to a close the whole group, including the "deceased," move back into the first room which has been cleared of all signs of the ritual. Normal activities are then resumed to show that life goes on. A coffee break usually follows which serves the purpose of a reception and acts as a bridge to daily activities. The authors assert that this ritual assists the mourning fixated person to move towards either healthy grieving or a completion of grieving.

Summary. All schools of psychotherapy would agree that Rational-Emotive Therapy's "rapid-fire active-directive-persuasive-philosophic methodology" (Ellis, 1973, p. 185) has a legitimate place in the therapy process. This intervention is used to bring a client's irrational beliefs to awareness so that a more realistic mode of thinking can take place. Therapists of the various schools would only differ on how effective a tool they believed this intervention to be. It is ironic that ritual is not universally given a legitimate place in psychotherapy when the few therapists who do admit to its usefulness suggest it has substantial benefits, many more than with the Rapid-Emotive Therapy technique just outlined.

The review of literature just concluded indicates that many

schools of psychotherapy have been interested in the phenomenon "ritual." Recent written clinical observations of ritual as therapeutic are useful to raise therapists' consciousness about a framework they have not previously utilized. Research raises consciousness even more. It is time research is conducted on ritual.

CHAPTER III

Foundations of Method

The present study is a phenomenological description of ritual as a therapeutic process used to assist individuals in the move from unresolved grief to grief resolution. Five individuals, all of whom state that they were helped by a ritual, were studied. They have experienced various types of losses including death of a loved one, loss of physical and mental abilities, and loss of creativity.

Appropriateness of a Phenomenological Approach

Traditional experimental psychological research, based on an antecedent natural science model, separates subject from object in a Cartesian duality (Colaizzi, 1978; Giorgi, 1970; Polkinghorne, 1980b; Valle & King, 1978). Colaizzi (1978) points out that traditional research in the experimental mode looks for causal explanations obtained through the calculative manipulation of phenomena. Phenomenology, on the other hand, is descriptive, looking for identification and understanding of phenomena, exploring, not by manipulation, but by meditative examination and a search for meaning.

We will first turn our attention to establishing the appropriateness of the phenomenological approach for understanding ritual as used in grief therapy. We will then proceed to describe how phenomenology was appropriately used in this particular study.

As the foregoing review of the literature indicates, ritual has not been widely viewed as a psychotherapeutic framework, nor has its

role been adequately described. This lacuna in the research is partly due to the inherent limitations in the traditional experimental approach.

Primary among these limitations is the problem of terminology. Terms need to be clarified from the beginning. The traditional experimental approach calls for definition of phenomena prior to research that will manipulate them (Colaizzi, 1978; Kling & Riggs, 1971; Kvale, 1983; Valle & King, 1978). Valle and King (1978) explain that the traditional experimental method attempts to study why a phenomenon is, while the phenomenological method attempts to study what a phenomenon is. But "what" must be established before "why" (Valle & King, 1978, Wertz, 1986). A limiting and possibly inaccurate definition may be fixed to some phenomenon before it is examined. Phenomenology, on the other hand, respects the complexity of a phenomenon, giving it meditative exploration and thoughtful description. This is especially necessary when dealing with concepts as rich and as complex as ritual and grief.

Since the phenomenon in the present study constitutes a psychotherapeutic intervention, the appropriateness of timing (When is the intervention effectively used?), and procedure (How should it be introduced to the client and implemented?) are important (Okun, 1987; Palmer, 1980). Palmer goes so far as to state that "the effectiveness of a therapeutic intervention hinges on its timing" (p. 114). Until information is acquired about when and how some individuals perceive ritual as being therapeutic, there is a strong likelihood that an

experimental study of ritual would include inappropriate structures (Giorgi, 1983). For all these reasons, the phenomenological approach, which describes the phenomenon and clarifies essential components, is "the crucial first step in psychological research" (Colaizzi, 1978, p.57).

Phenomenological Research

To further clarify the need for an initial phenomenological versus an experimental study of ritual, the phenomenological method is explained in some detail. The focus of phenomenological research is "experience as it is lived" (Colaizzi, 1978; Giorgi, 1970, 1983; Husserl, 1977; Misiak & Sexton, 1973; Polkinghorne, 1980a; van Manen, 1984). To understand any phenomenon, the structure or essences that remain invariant within that phenomenon must be clarified. "The researcher goes beyond a mere compilation of similarities among the examples (of a phenomenon) to a deeper level of description of the essential elements" (Polkinghorne, 1980b, p. 24). Van Manen (1984) describes phenomenological research as "the attentive practice of thoughtfulness" (p. 1).

"Methodology rests upon philosophy" (Colaizzi, 1978, p.54). The philosophical base for phenomenological research is existential psychology (Misiak & Sexton, 1973; Polkinghorne, 1980b; Valle & King, 1978). "Existentialism, as a formal philosophical school, seeks to understand the human condition as it manifests itself in our concrete, lived situations" (Valle & King, 1979, p. 6). There are many phenomenological methods because the researcher needs to be creative

in choosing the method most likely to clarify any one particular phenomenon (Colaizzi, 1978; Giorgi, 1983; Kvale, 1983; Misiak & Sexton, 1973; Polkinghorne, 1980b; Taylor & Bogdan, 1975; Wertz, 1983).

The following concepts are some of those essential to the existential-phenomenological approach, and since they influence this thesis, are explained here.

Objectivity

This term has a different meaning for the traditional researcher and the phenomenologist. The traditional researcher attempts to demonstrate objectivity by separating object from subject (Colaizzi, 1978; Giorgi, 1983; Husserl, 1977). Colaizzi (1978) describes objectivity from the phenomenological perspective: "When someone is said to be objective, it means that his statements faithfully express what stands before him, whatever may be the phenomenon that he is present to; objectivity is fidelity to phenomena" (p. 52).

Co-constitutionality

This concept refers to the belief that an individual and the world cannot exist without each other; the interrelationship is an essential part of their existence (Colaizzi, 1978; Husserl, 1977; Sartre, 1973; Valle & King, 1978). It is, therefore, meaningless to attempt to study individuals or the world separately (Yalom, 1980). "The human individual is contextualized" (Valle & King, 1978, p. 8). Thus, ritual is not separate from the individual undertaking it.

Situational Freedom

This concept means that individuals have neither absolute free will nor lead an existence completely externally determined (Arbuckle, 1975; May, 1961; Valle & King, 1978). Instead, people choose from the options imposed by the world (Arbuckle, 1975). May (1961) elaborates,

No matter how great the forces victimizing the human being, man has the capacity to know that he is being victimized, and thus to influence in some way how he will relate to his fate. There is never lost that kernel of the power to take some stand, to make some decision, no matter how minute. (p.41)

A choice must always be made; even refusing to choose is a choice (Sartre, 1973; Yalom, 1980). This concept is important in this study examining an individual's experiences of ritual. Even if individuals state that the ritual was developed by someone else and that they were just following directions, the concept of situational freedom views them as still having chosen the phenomenon.

Structure (Other terms: Essence or Form)

Structure is held by existential-phenomenological psychology as a foundation concept (Valle & King, 1978). A phenomenon may look different at various times or in other situations, yet its constant, essential ingredients will never vary (Colaizzi, 1978; Giorgi, 1970, 1983; Husserl, 1977; Polkinghorne, 1980b; Valle & King, 1978). "The researcher makes explicit the structure which is implicit in the various examples (of the phenomenon being studied)" (Polkinghorne, 1980b). It is the aspects that contribute to the essential description of ritual that will be explored in this study.

Worlds of Being

The existentialist Binswanger (1963) posited three worlds of being a person--the Umwelt, Mitwelt, and Eigenwelt. The three are interrelated: Umwelt is concerned with being a body in space, Mitwelt is our being with others, while Eigenwelt is our being a self in time. To understand a person's experience all three worlds of being associated with that experience must be understood (Binswanger, 1963; Keen, 1978). All three worlds are always with us. To clarify this point, Keen (1978) speaks of the Mitwelt. "Being with others is not something we turn off when we are alone and turn on in physical proximity to other people. It is a fundamental reference of all the activities of being a person at all" (p. 249). The three worlds have many levels of meaning and to describe this concept Keen (1978) uses the Eigenwelt. "What a person is in general and who I am in particular is a constant layer of meaning that organizes my experience of the world" (p. 253).

The Phenomenological Approach Used in This Study

The procedures for conducting this study will incorporate those outlined by various researchers, including, but not limited to, Becker (1986), Colaizzi (1978), Giorgi (1970, 1983), Kvale (1983), Polkinghorne (1980a, 1980b), Taylor and Bogdun (1975), and Wertz (1983, 1986). Procedures will first be described generally and then they will be outlined as they will be utilized in this study.

Assuming a Phenomenological Stance

The first step in the study is to think about ritual in a

different way, to redirect attention from the natural world of objects to the experiencing of those objects (Colaizzi, 1978; Husserl, 1975; Polkinghorne, 1980b). So, for example, instead of attending to a ritual as a ceremony that takes an hour and involves 32 people dressed in dark clothing, one would concentrate on what it is like to be experiencing the funeral of a friend. "Phenomenological research begins with a change of mind in which the researcher assumes a reflective point of view in which to observe his/her experiencing itself" (Polkinghorne, 1980b, p. 5).

Assuming this phenomenological stance raises awareness of the "givens" of a phenomenon. Givens are those aspects of the phenomenon that we know to be there but may not be within our perception at the moment. For example, it is impossible to simultaneously view all sides of a car. Yet, from each side an individual is able to name the object as a car. A side that cannot be directly experienced is a given; experience tells us it is there. Concepts with no physical basis in themselves, such as love or duty, also have givens. By directing attention to the givens in experience, presuppositions can be clarified. Presuppositions are expectations, prejudgements, preconceived answers to questions about ritual. "The ideal is to allow the modes and objects of consciousness to be seen as they are in their original appearance" (Polkinghorne, 1980b, p.7).

Awareness of presuppositions allows researchers to have some control over them. Although it is not possible to "bracket" or be aware of all presuppositions, it is important to clarify as many as

possible. Colaizzi (1978) suggests researchers ask themselves the following questions in order to clarify presuppositions.

Why am I involved with this phenomenon? How might the constituents of my uniquely personal personality condition my selection of this particular phenomenon to investigate? How might my personal inclinations and predispositions as to research value influence or even bias how and what I investigate? What are the hidden gains that I might acquire in investigating it in this study? (p. 55.)

Data Gathering

Experimental and phenomenological researchers view research subjects differently and utilize different selection criteria. "In general, the criteria for selection are concerned with the variability and richness of examples which can be offered by the informants, not with representativeness" (Polkinghorne, 1980b, p.20). Participants are also chosen who are articulate and willing to commit to repeated time and energy expenditure (Becker, 1986; Colaizzi, 1978; Misiak & Sexton, 1977; Romanyshyn, 1971; Polkinghorne, 1980b; Taylor & Bogdan, 1975).

Phenomenological research refers to participants as co-researchers not subjects. This term serves to emphasize that these people are not being manipulated so that a researcher can observe reactions and that they have some power to consciously influence the study (Taylor & Bogdan, 1975). Phenomenological studies usually consist of a small number of co-researchers. Becker (1986) in a study of various methods of conducting human science interviews explains that the number of co-researchers chosen to participate in the study are determined by whether the data gained is rich enough to meet the

study's goals.

The dialogal interview is an excellent method to understand a person's experience (Becker, 1986; Colaizzi, 1978; Taylor & Bogdan, 1975). "Trusting dialogal research allows the co-researchers to illuminate existential dimensions of their lives which previously could not be facilely questioned but which now can be interrogated, and hence ratified, rejected, or modified: realms of their existential condition are newly brought into play" (Colaizzi, 1978; p. 69).

Illuminating existential dimensions of their lives involves a psychological risk for co-researchers, due either to the meaning of the phenomena being explored or because the co-researchers are sharing deep personal information with a stranger (Becker, 1986; Taylor & Bogdan, 1975). Becker (1986) states that "the interview provides a human context that motivates the subject to take up the task of articulating complex, lived experiences" (p. 102).

The object of the interview is to obtain as full a description of the phenomenon as possible by entering the life-world of the co-researchers (Becker, 1986; Kvale, 1983; Taylor & Bogdan, 1975). In order to further this goal, Kvale (1983) lists twelve components the interview should contain. These include:

it is: 1) centered on the interviewer's life-world; 2) seeks to understand the meaning of phenomena in his life-world; it is 3) qualitative, 4) descriptive, and 5) specific; it is 6) presuppositionless; it is 7) focused on certain themes; it is open for 8) ambiguities, and 9) changes; it depends upon the 10) sensitivity of the interviewer; it takes place in 11) an interpersonal interaction; and it may be 12) a positive experience. (p. 174)

It is important that the researcher develop a trusting rapport with the co-researchers (Becker, 1986; Taylor & Bogdan, 1975). One element which Becker (1986, p. 105) states "may be essential to the building of rapport in the human science research interview" is that researchers often have experienced the phenomenon they are studying in their own life-worlds. Other elements Becker (1986) suggests, include: a quiet, private setting comfortable for researcher and co-researcher, a thorough explanation with nothing withheld of the structure and purpose of the research, ending when the co-researcher is satisfied, enough initial conversation not directly related to the research to allow both persons to be at ease with one another, an explanation of the unstructured interview format because co-researchers may be expecting and more familiar with structured interviews, unconditional positive regard by the researcher towards the co-researcher and all information shared, a non-leading clarifying stance by the researcher, and a researcher who has the attributes of "empathy, authenticity, care, sensitivity, responsiveness, transparency, playfulness, and curiosity" (p. 113).

Treatment of the Data

The purpose of the phenomenological method is to bring to awareness the essential structures of a phenomenon (Colaizzi, 1978; Giorgi, 1983; Husserl, 1977; Polkinghorne, 1980b; Valle & King, 1978). Valle and King (1978) state "that structure is made present to us as meaning, (so) one can now rephrase the task of the existential-phenomenological psychologist as one of disclosing the

nature of structure in the form of meaning (and in the present context, psychological meaning)" (p. 17).

The meaning a phenomenon has for a co-researcher is uncovered as the researcher repeatedly reads the transcripts and reflects upon what is read (Giorgi, 1983; Kvale, 1983; Polkinghorne, 1980b). Individual meanings are then described as themes.

Wertz (1983) suggests a five step model to develop a theme: (1) Empathic immersion in the world of description, (2) Slowing down and dwelling, (3) Magnification and amplification of the situation, (4) Suspension of belief and employment of intense interest, and (5) The turn from objects to their meanings. Wertz states that the steps overlap frequently as the researcher progresses through them.

Concerning the process of developing themes, Giorgi (1970) elaborates,

First of all, it should be kept in mind that reflection is not speculation; the former is always directed towards the actual and is based upon it, while the latter takes its point of departure from the actual and attempts to speak about the plausibility of certain types of possibilities. (p. 214)

Other researchers examining the data may pull from it different themes (Giorgi, 1983; Kvale, 1983). This is so because "no set of data are so univocal that they admit of only one possible interpretation" (Giorgi, 1983, p. 154).

For experimental researchers this situation presents a reliability problem. Yet the qualitative interview should not be judged on the same reliability and validity yardstick as traditional research (Becker, 1986; Giorgi, 1970; Kvale, 1983; Shapiro, 1986;

Wertz, 1986). Kvale (1983) elaborates, "While varying interviewer sensitivity may reduce the intersubjectively reproducible information, or reliability in the traditional sense, it will yield a more nuanced and wider picture of the themes of research" (p. 189). Wertz (1986) disagrees with Kvale that the study will not be reproducible.

Interviewing aims not at facts but meanings, and these are potentially invariant despite changes in the factual details of the data, whose changes does not necessarily imply instability or inconsistency of their meaning, to which the question of reliability must here be addressed. (p. 197)

Giorgi (1975) defines content validity in phenomenological research as "whether a reader, adopting the same viewpoint as articulated by the researcher can also see what the researcher saw, whether or not he agrees with it" (p. 96). Another validity concern often expressed about phenomenological research revolves around whether researcher's questions during the interview will lead the co-researcher and, therefore, distort the data acquired (Kvale, 1983; Wertz, 1986). Kvale responds that although researchers should refrain from asking leading questions as much as possible "the solution is not to try to eliminate such influences, but to analyze the different types of leading questions and their influence upon the answers given" (p. 190). He also says that involving the co-researchers in the process is a further validity check.

Taylor and Bogdan (1975) view qualitative researchers as emphasizing validity in their research because

qualitative methods allow us to stay close to the empirical world (and, therefore) ensure a close fit between the data and what people actually say and do. ..(so that the researcher) obtains first-hand knowledge of social life, unfiltered through concepts,

operational definitions, and rating scales. (p. 7)

Shapiro (1986) also makes this point. "This form of verification involves understanding in the original sense of that term - a standing under or with (the phenomenon)" (Shapiro, 1986, p. 176).

When themes have been developed that find agreement with the researcher and co-researchers the last consolidation takes place. "This achievement involves understanding diverse individual cases as individual instances of something more general and articulating this generality of which they are particular instances" (Wertz, 1983, p. 228). Wertz (1983) calls this consolidation the General Psychological Structure and states that only those themes that are found in all co-researcher's descriptions are included here.

The final step of a phenomenological study is to synthesize the themes until a short, precise description of the phenomenon is obtained. The description incorporates all aspects of the phenomenon's essential meaning.

CHAPTER IV

Method

Procedures in This Study

The procedures as they are used in this study will now be outlined.

Assuming a Phenomenological Stance

My presuppositions about ritual, psychotherapy, and phenomenological research were clarified through self-reflection and dialogue. I became aware of most of my presuppositions prior to interviewing the co-researchers. Some presuppositions became clear as I worked with the meaning units alone and with the assistance of others familiar with the phenomenological approach. Each presupposition is listed and explained below.

What is my personal experience of ritual?

- I delight in participating in a ritual to mark a special event in my life. The ritual heightens the meaning and feeling of the event for me and gives me a specific concrete reality to fix my memory on.
- I have been to some, usually traditional, rituals where I have felt so bored and disconnected (from others and the purpose of the ritual) that it was psychologically painful.
- Because most of my work as a psychotherapist involves people with loss and grief concerns, I hear many of my clients talk about ritual. They involve me in several ways; I feel

pleased when they found a ritual helpful, I hurt for them when they have had an unhelpful experience with a ritual, and I am often asked questions about ritual such as, "Should my kids go to the service?", "Are funerals necessary?", and "Will I resolve the loss if I scatter the ashes?"

- At times, I feel I have gained awareness/growth/healing during a ritual.

What has influenced my choice of the topic "ritual"?

- My personal experience that rituals are important to me. I know I will maintain interest in this topic during the years needed to conduct the study.
- The discrepancy between experiences of ritual. Sometimes the experience is growthful/healing and sometimes it is stagnating/destructive. For myself and others, I want to understand the essence of ritual as a growthful/healing experience.
- The questions I have about ritual have not been answered satisfactorily in the professional literature. If they had been I would not have needed to conduct this study.

What are my expectations/assumptions about ritual?

- I believe rituals have been used at times by Church and State to siphon off energy and keep people in line.
- Rituals can give participants a sense of deeply honouring a person who has died or a situation or object that is lost.
- Participants in rituals have the opportunity to get in touch with, and act out, traditional wisdom.

- Rituals can feel restrictive and meaningless if participants "just go through the motions".
- A ritual can be a powerful psychotherapeutic intervention to help clients take charge of a problem.
- Rituals can provide participants with a sense of specialness and importance within themselves.
- Rituals can give participants the sense of being an important member of their community.

What are some of my fears about investigating ritual?

- That my co-researchers' experiences of ritual will have so few common themes that it will be difficult for therapists to view ritual as a valid or useful psychotherapeutic framework.
- That by bringing ritual to the awareness of the therapeutic and lay community, it will gain the status of a fad. The area of loss and grief (like any other area of psychology) regularly produces fads which some therapists then use indiscriminately and some clients demand even when it is inappropriate for their situation.

What has influenced my choice of the phenomenological method?

- I am drawn to the phenomenological approach because it allows me to grow by encouraging my total involvement with the phenomenon I am studying.
- Phenomenological research is closely linked to existential psychology, my philosophical stance. Because of this, it is likely I will use this approach in the future to explore

other phenomena. I would not feel competent to use this approach without training and experience. The doctoral programme provides both and, therefore, gives me a opportunity to develop a new research competency which I will continue to use.

- I believe the phenomenological approach is the best method for studying this phenomenon.

What are my presuppositions about psychotherapy?

- I believe that the process of psychotherapy heals through an authentic, committed relationship between therapist and client. The two (or more) individuals working together on a common problem free latent resources and strengths.
- For the therapist to be authentic and committed in a relationship with a client, I believe, that at least, two factors are necessary. Firstly, therapists need to have experienced the process of learning deeply about themselves in a structured, disciplined manner; either in psychotherapy or autopsychotherapy. Secondly, therapists need training and then supervised experience in support, counselling, and psychotherapy.
- I tend towards an existential philosophical stance in psychotherapy and an eclectic approach to psychotherapeutic interventions. The existential beliefs that I use a great deal in my work include: the importance of the therapist/client relationship, and an emphasis on the four core human issues,

death, isolation, meaninglessness, and freedom. I favour an eclectic approach to psychotherapeutic interventions because I believe it is most effective to decide with my client what tool has the best opportunity of working in a given situation.

The presuppositions just outlined represent the initial step of clarifying my personal investment in the topic of ritual. Some implications of these presuppositions include:

It appears that in studying ritual I am seeking confirmation of my own experience. Therefore, I may influence the co-researchers in this study by indicating more interest when they touch on an aspect of ritual that is important to me. The converse may also be true. Also, I may see the themes I want to see rather than the ones co-researchers are attempting to describe.

I have a large personal investment in ritual. Ritual is important to me and I want it to be important to others, especially other therapists. Already I am being asked to give professional lectures and workshops on ritual. I need to watch that my own enthusiasm for the topic does not condemn differing opinions and beliefs.

As my interest in ritual becomes known, clients who feel ritual could help them with their loss will come to me. Because of this, I need to be even more careful to understand my clients and their life world and with their assistance choose the therapeutic framework that "fits" the best. It is very tempting for me to use ritual whenever possible because it is dramatic, exciting, and fun. These

are terrible reasons, if they are the only ones, to choose a psychotherapeutic intervention. This concern applies to prospective co-researchers for this study and other clients.

Throughout the process of interviewing, treating the data, and writing the results, I repeatedly returned to a contemplation of my presuppositions. I asked myself whether my biases were influencing this study so that I would miss the meaning that ritual held for each co-researcher. Also, returning to the co-researchers for feedback and discussing the material with other researchers helped to prevent my presuppositions from interfering in this process.

Data Gathering

This study was planned over the course of three years. During that time I talked of my research interest, when appropriate, at social gatherings, workshops and lectures (whether as facilitator or participant), and in psychotherapy sessions. About a dozen people approached me and indicated interest in being co-researchers.

Some, due to time or geographical restrictions, were not deemed suitable to include. Of the others, I chose five people, four women and a man, to take part in this study. I limited the total number to five not only because of the amount of work each interview would entail, but also because the study would retain enough richness and variety even if one co-researcher later self-selected out.

The five people to take part in the research were chosen to demonstrate differences in type of loss experienced, age, sex, cognitive level, and manner in which the ritual was initiated,

planned, and implemented. Two rituals were initiated by myself as therapist, two were client-initiated without a therapist, and one was initiated by a spiritual advisor. Each ritual was developed to meet the needs of the individual undertaking it.

The purpose of the study was explained to the co-researchers prior to their participation and no information was held back or distorted. All co-researchers signed a consent form which is included in Appendix B. Each co-researcher was interviewed once. The interviews, lasting between half an hour and an hour and a half, were tape-recorded. Interviews ended when co-researchers indicated that they had said as much as they desired. My initial instructions to the co-researchers followed this format:

"I am examining how participating in a ritual can help someone move from a maladaptive style of grieving to an adaptive one. You have told me you have had such an experience. Could you please tell me about it as fully as possible?"

When the following aspects of ritual were not spoken about spontaneously by the co-researchers, they were elicited by myself through the following questions:

- A. Describe who or what you lost?
- B. What did the person (or object or belief) you lost mean to you?
- C. Describe how you attempted to adjust to your loss before you developed your ritual?
- D. Describe the result of your attempts to adjust. What was that "place" like?
- E. What physical (or psychological or spiritual) symptoms did

- you experience in that place?
- F. In that place, what did the future look like to you?
 - G. Describe the ritual you undertook.
 - H. How did the ritual come into being? For example, who suggested a ritual: who designed it?
 - I. What did the ritual do for you?
 - J. At the present time, how would you describe your adjustment to your loss?
 - K. What else is important to relate about your ritual?

Treatment of the Data

After transcribing each interview, I read them repeatedly until I had broken the transcripts into meaning units. Upon examination of the meaning units, some appeared to be content related. These related units were grouped together and themes developed.

The co-researchers read each transcript to determine whether they needed to make corrections, additions, or deletions to ensure that their ritual had been adequately described. No changes needed to be made.

They then read the meaning units, themes, and metathemes and told me whether I had interpreted their words correctly. The themes that were a misrepresentation of the co-researcher's experience were modified.

My next step was to show the co-researchers their themes in relation to those of the other four. At this point, some participants added themes to their description, giving me illustrations of the new

themes in their experiences. When both the co-researchers and I agreed that the themes adequately described each ritual, the last consolidation took place.

The final step of the study was to synthesize the themes until a short, precise description of ritual as a therapeutic force in a person's life-world was developed. The description incorporates all aspects of ritual's essential meaning.

Pilot Study

A pilot study of one individual was conducted to demonstrate and clarify the phenomenological method. Themes and metathemes were uncovered, leading to a description of ritual as a therapeutic force in the co-researcher's life. Because of the richness of understanding that the pilot study added to the other four experiences of ritual, it was included in the study proper.

As all five transcripts were examined, a larger picture of ritual was gained. Therefore, seen in this broader context, some of the themes described in the pilot study were renamed.

CHAPTER V

Results

This chapter is divided into two sections: individual elements of each co-researcher's experience and a description and synthesis of elements in the experience of ritual common to all co-researchers. The section about the individual experiences includes personal information about each co-researcher, a paraphrase of each ritual, and a synthesis of each experience. The second section contains an overall synthesis of ritual as an existential journey in the lives of the co-researchers and a final description of ritual as a therapeutic force.

Individual Elements of Ritual Experience

Claire--Personal Information

But in the gray of the morning
My mind becomes confused
Between the dead and the sleeping
And the road that I must choose.
I'm looking for someone to change my life
I'm looking for a miracle in my life.
Justin Hayward

When Claire came out of her three week long coma in Victoria General Hospital, she was told that her father had also survived the car accident. Her mother, however, was dead.

Her injuries took most of her attention for both her head and body were broken. Among other injuries, her jaw and left leg were fractured, she had lost vision in her right eye, and she sustained a diffuse head injury. Some of these injuries would heal, others might

restrict her forever. This realization sunk in slowly and painfully, leaving her no psychological space to come to terms with the death of her mother. So she pushed her grief away.

At 24 years of age, Claire was living on her own, loving her full-time work with young children. Petite and slim, with a shy sensitive nature, she had good relationships with her parents, two younger brothers, and her friends. Altogether her future looked very bright.

It seemed to Claire that her life and her parent's car shattered simultaneously. She couldn't imagine living on her own again, much less working. She was concerned that men would find her physically and/or mentally unattractive. Ever a fighter though, to restore hope and find healing, she turned not only to the health care professionals but to family, friends, and faith.

Within a few months however, the neuropsychologist at the rehabilitation hospital became concerned about Claire's cognitive healing. It was being impeded by her inability to believe in and accept her mother's death.

Some of the symptoms of Claire's head injury, concreteness and difficulties with memory and concentration, would hamper counselling. But the psychologist felt it would be important to try grief counselling even if there were only a small improvement. Claire was referred to me.

My first impression of Claire was of frustrated determination. She was set on rebuilding her life but she didn't know how to do so.

My image of her was that the fact of her mother's death surrounded her like a clear plastic cube. She kept bumping into it but couldn't really see (with all senses) its reality in order to deal with it. And although she could glimpse the light outside, she could not pass through. She was stuck.

In our first few contacts, my goal was to tentatively reach into her cube, develop a rapport with Claire and let her see that my opinion of her was not nearly as low as her own. Due to the restrictions of her head injury Claire saw herself as a much less worthy person than she had been prior to her accident. We spent the first sessions exploring information about the grieving process and hearing the details of her accident remembered or told to her by other people. The effect of this time was a sense of relief which made Claire more comfortable within her cube.

The goal of therapy, however, was to help her find the strength to make the cube unnecessary. The walls of the cube were getting thinner but the stuck place was continually defined by her words "I just can't get on with life until I accept her death." Claire couldn't believe her mother was dead because she had been unconscious during the funeral. A strong Catholic, Claire longed for a different past, one in which she had been aware and able to mourn with others in the safety and structure of the Church. Since she had not experienced the funeral she could not imagine integrating the loss.

Claire had not experienced what should have been an important passage in her life. I suggested she conduct her own ritual to meet

that need. The thought of a ritual evoked a strong negative reaction. For Claire, a ritual must be done in the Church and she was certain that the Church would not allow another ceremony. She was equally certain that another ritual would deeply upset her dad.

I replied that if it were not possible or appropriate to develop a ritual we would look for another way to deal with her loss. I asked her, "If these two concerns did not exist, how would you feel about taking part in a ritual?" Claire replied that she would welcome it. She agreed to talk with her Priest and dad before our next meeting.

The next session Claire excitedly announced that both her Priest and dad were very agreeable to the idea of a ritual. The three of them had decided it would be a Mass. Claire was bursting with plans and decisions to make. In fact, Claire said she would be so busy developing her ritual she wanted to stop our meetings until it was over. I was delighted that she had gained enough confidence in herself to develop the rite without my continued direct support. I realized that Claire, without knowing it, was embarking on autopsychotherapy.

I saw Claire once more before the ritual when she shared a dream about her mother. She did not want me to take part directly in the ritual beyond my role as catalyser, clarifier, and supporter.

After the Mass, Claire accepted the reality of her mother's death and we never needed to deal with that issue again. My interview with Claire about her ritual was conducted two months after the ceremony.

Paraphrase of Claire's Ritual

Meaning units have been taken from the transcript of Claire's experience which can be found in Appendix A. These excerpts, as well as paraphrases and themes found within the meaning units are outlined in Table 1. Table 2 gives definitions for every theme mentioned by at least one co-researcher in this study. A generalized description of Claire's themes, listing the meaning units in which each is found, comprises Table 3.

The first step Claire takes towards her ritual meets with support and legitimatization of her grieving process. Her counsellor suggests the ritual and both her father and her Priest agree with the idea. Dad "suggested it be a total Catholic Mass." Claire is very pleased to receive their support. With the preparatory work she has done in therapy, she is very clear about the purpose of her ritual. "I said I need to have a service that will finally prove to myself that this is what happened."

Her Priest, Father Jean, suggested that she make as many choices as possible within the structure of a Mass. "I read through all the Gospels, all the readings and that, and the music, and picked out what I thought was appropriate."

Claire also writes a speech, invites friends and family to the service, and plans a reception for after the Mass. This organization takes time, she "planned it for about a month and a half."

Prior to the ritual, Claire deals with the issue of whether she is ready to accept the reality of her mother's death, an issue which

Table 1
Thematic Abstraction of Claire's Experience

Meaning Units from Transcribed Interview	Two Levels of Abstraction	
	1. Paraphrases	2. Themes
1. Well I picked each of the readings and each of them had something to do with how I felt about missing her and her not being in my life anymore.	Chose readings herself: to provide personal meaning of her loss.	Isolation Gathering information
2. I wrote a speech for the end of the service. And it was very personal.	Directly contributing to the service was important.	Courage to share oneself
3. And it (speech) made almost everyone have tears in their eyes and start to cry.	The guests were touched by her contribution.	Others' courage to share self
4. But I just wanted to finally have a chance to say goodbye to her and why I miss her so much.	She needed to say goodbye and state the reasons for her loss.	Isolation Unfinished business
5. And the main reason for having the service was because I never got to partake in the funeral service, which I missed.	She felt she had missed out on a very important activity.	Meaninglessness Unfinished business
6. And having family and friends there really helped, and made me realize that it actually had happened.	The fact that others participated allowed the reality of the death to sink in.	Confirmation
7. Because I always kept telling myself that she was away on a trip, and she was coming back (so ritual) made it more realistic.	The ritual brought her from denial to acceptance of the fact of the death.	Acceptance of death
8. I didn't believe it. I just kept denying it. Kept thinking that she was going to come back eventually.	She couldn't face reality of the death.	Death denial
9. Well, when I heard about it after I was kind of, it made me sad, because my dad didn't add my name to the card which had all the signatures of the people who were there.	She felt that she was not considered part of the family and that saddened her.	Isolation

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| 10. And I went and talked to the priest and I said I need to have a service that will finally prove to myself that this is what happened. | She wanted her priest's support in developing her ritual. | Need for support |
| 11. And so he (Priest) mentioned her name a couple of times too, which helped. | The rite was enhanced by the Priest repeatedly naming her mother. | Personalizing is important |
| 12. It wasn't just a service that he would have done for anyone. | The Priest made the rite personally meaningful. | Personalizing is important |
| 13. (Personalizing) helped because it could have been like a service for anyone otherwise. | It was important that the service felt unique. | Personalizing is important |
| 14. But we had a picture of her at the service; her and dad when they had their anniversary last year and there was a big picture of them there. And, um he (Priest) kept mentioning her name (pause, eyes teared). | Remembering the personal touches brings tears to her eyes. | Need for symbols |
| 15. Well, its (service) made me realize along with talking to you that it is over. | The service and counselling allowed her to accept the reality of the death. | Sense of completion |
| 16. But I'm facing that fact more now, cause I'm thinking about it and not putting it aside all the time. And being in the unconscious, thinking that she's dead. | The ritual helped her to unconsciously and consciously, deal with rather than deny the fact of death. | Acceptance of death |
| 17. Its made me a lot more open about death. | The rite helped her be more open about death. | Reduced anxiety |
| 18. I thought I had to start concentrating on my own life. | She realized she needed to stop dwelling on the death and put energy into her life. | Courage to be as oneself |
| 19. (Dad and me) didn't look like we were feeling that hurt cause I think, at that point, we had finally realized what had happened. | With the realization of the death came an easing of the emotional pain. | Catharsis |
| 20. But it was a great service. It was good having all those people there and talking to them before and after. | Contact with others at the service was helpful. | Need for support |

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| 21. I just remember thinking mostly why? And just the anger about why it happened to us. And why her and... | During the service thoughts and feelings surfaced that didn't make sense. | Meaninglessness |
| 22. Yeh, because then when you get that actual fact, like going to a funeral service I mean its telling you the truth of what happened. | Going to a ritual cements the fact. | Confirmation |
| 23. And so it (service) does bring it (feelings) out more, yes. | Feelings arise and are explored. | Catharsis |
| 24. I was glad that I was in God's house to share it with who I wanted; friends and family. | The ritual needed to reach beyond the individual to faith and community. | Sacralization |
| 25. And it was so nice being surrounded by people that I love. | She felt included by those that loved her. | Inclusion |
| 26. It was suggested that it be a total Catholic Mass...And that way we got to have some music. So we got to have a couple of songs and some readings and a combination of things. | It was helpful being surrounded by a known structure. | Structure is important |
| 27. But the Priest gave me the book with all the readings and everything. He says you have to choose one of each of them. | The Priest guided her in developing the ritual. | Need for guidance |
| 28. I didn't think I was capable of planning this. I mean anyone who had come out of what I had, I didn't think could plan one... Well its made me realize that I don't give myself enough credit at this point. | She moved from a place of powerlessness and incapacity to one of power and capability as she choreographed the ritual. | Realizing power |
| 29. Yeh, I'm glad that I had your suggestion. | She appreciated the suggestion to do the rite. | Need for guidance. |
| 30. It builds up the self-confidence a bit. | Developing the ritual helped her self-esteem. | Courage to be as oneself. |
| 31. So you have to realize you have to depend on yourself and pull yourself through. | She developed faith in herself and ability to help herself. | Accepting responsibility |

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| 32. (The ritual) was done perfectly ... It was thoroughly discussed before so it was done the right way. | It was important to plan the ritual so that it was done the way she wanted. | Perfectionism |
| 33. I talked to Father Jean and planned it for about a month a half. So it took some time but I read through all the Gospels, all the readings and that, and the music, and picked out what I thought was appropriate. | She was helped by being part of planning many parts of the ritual. | Purposefulness |
| 34. I'd just like to briefly mention that I had a dream, like, I told you the week before the service of her and I sharing a goodbye. And that made it feel like it was more realistic. | A dream prior to the service helped her prepare for it and let it feel more real. | Confirmation |
| 35. (Dream helped) a lot, yes. Cause she told me she wasn't going to be there long but she was there to say goodbye...And I felt I was finally ready for it (ritual). | The dream gave her permission to undertake the ritual. | Need for permission |
| 36. (post-service) We had a get-together at our place and supplied lunch for everyone. And we all sat around for a couple of hours and had a visit. It was really nice. | She enjoyed connecting with the guests. | Inclusion |
| 37. (post-service) Well it was great because it brought together a lot of people that hadn't been together in years. Like, in my life anyway, like friends. And um, it was really nice getting back together with them and um, talking about the old times when we were younger and what it was like when mom was there. | Having others there talking about the past was a beneficial tapping into roots. | Regression |
| 38. And not everyone had met her (mom) but they came for my benefit anyway, which really helped. | She appreciated the willingness of her guests to help her. | Others' courage to share self |

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| 39. I needed that support (others attending). | The support of others was essential. | Need for support |
| 40. My dad read that out (speech she wrote). Yeah, I didn't feel I had the strength to. | She was able to find help with the parts she couldn't do herself. | Others' courage to share self |
| 41. And it was especially hard on him reading it out but he was glad to read it. | Her dad was glad to read it even though it was an effort for him. | Growth of participant |
| 42. And I met everyone when they came to the door. When they just entered, I thanked them all for coming and we shared a few words that helped. | She shared herself with each guest. | Courage to share oneself |
| 43. Most people left in tears. They felt really bad but that's when we invited them all back to the apartment. They said they would come. So that was great. | It was special to have others touched by and willing to take part in the ritual. | Others' courage to share self |
| 44. Well its just made me realize that we all have to face death ...and it just makes us stronger and very lucky to be here. | Through the ritual she realized her mortality. | Acceptance of mortality |
| 45. We should take advantage of that time and share it with other people. | She decided to use her life to give to others. | Courage to share oneself |
| 46. Yes, because no one really close to our family has died before. My father's parents have but we weren't that close to them. But seeing her go, it really made people realize that, wow, this could actually happen at such a young age. | This loss has brought her face to face with her mortality for the first time. | Acceptance of mortality |
| 47. Its made us, dad and I, more religious too, because thanks to our Catholic religion that's helped pull us through all this. | Including her strong beliefs in the ritual, strengthened those beliefs even more. | Metanoia |

Table 2
Definitions of Themes

1. Isolation. The questers experienced a loneliness and/or separateness from others and/or partitioning off of parts of themselves.
2. Unfinished business. The questers were in touch with and disturbed by an unfinished issue that they felt needed to be resolved.
3. Meaninglessness. Due to the unresolved issue the questers experienced lack of meaning in their lives.
4. Lack of control. The questers felt powerless to diminish their anxiety.
5. Directionlessness. A bewilderment about the manner to resolve their anxiety was experienced.
6. Broken relationship. Some of the questers experienced the deep hurt of a relationship that has been wounded and no longer meets their needs.
7. Death Denial. One of the questers experienced an inability to accept the reality of another's death.
8. Need for symbols. The questers needed objects or activities to represent various important aspects of their situation, eg. their loss, the desired status.
9. Perfectionism. The questers needed to produce a ritual that was perfect in their eyes. To ensure that the ritual be perfect, creators spent time and energy carefully choosing ritual components that were personally meaningful.
10. Structure is important. The fact that a ritual is a structured activity felt like a psychological anchor and heightened meaning for the questers.
11. Purposefulness. Developing the ritual required physical and mental expenditure of energy over a period of time. This purposefulness demonstrated to the questers themselves and to others that they were committed to the ritual and its purpose.
12. Personalizing is important. Adding symbols and activities to make the ritual unique focused attention on the questers and the specific issues for which the ritual was developed.
13. Gathering information. Becoming more informed about all aspects of the ritual including the loss and how to conduct a ritual, heightened meaning for the questers.
14. Clarification. Understanding the loss and the desired new status was accomplished by talking with others and/or personal reflection.
15. Sacralization. Including the sacred in the ritual intensified its personal power and meaning for the questers.
16. Realizing power. The questers became aware of and used their personal power to impact on the ritual and then their world.

17. Control lessens anxiety. Taking charge of some part of the ritual had the effect of lowering the questers' anxiety.
18. Agitation. Initially during the ritual, the questers experienced increased heartrate and other physical symptoms of agitation.
19. Timelessness. One of the questers experienced a sense of suspended time during the ritual.
20. Need for support. The questers desired other people to encourage and back them up as they developed, participated in, or talked about their rituals.
21. Need for guidance. The questers required some direction or advice in developing or participating in their rituals.
22. Inclusion. During or as a consequence to the ritual, the questers felt they were viewed as an accepted part of their community.
23. Others' courage to share self. Other people risked sharing feelings, time, thoughts, and energy, with the questers before, during, or after the ritual.
24. Courage to share oneself. The questers risked sharing with others their feelings, thoughts, time, and energy during or after the ritual.
25. Need for permission. The questers needed the consent of at least one other person to either conduct the ritual or to take on their new status.
26. Need for witnesses. The questers needed other people to watch them during the ritual to give confirmation that the event had occurred.
27. Public statement of loss. The questers shared their reaction to their loss with other people.
28. Confirmation. The ritual verified a reality that had not previously been totally believed.
29. Acceptance of mortality. The awareness of and ability to tolerate the reality of personal mortality was gained by some of the questers.
30. Acceptance of death. The awareness of and ability to tolerate the reality of the death of a loved one was gained.
31. Contemplation of bodily fragility. The awareness of and ability to tolerate the reality of our bodies as fragile was gained.
32. Negativity as a part of life. The awareness of and ability to tolerate the reality that living involves negativity as well as positivity was gained.
33. Sense of completion. The unresolved issue felt finished by the ritual's end.
34. Regression. Part of the ritual involved the questers experiencing, through actions, feelings, or thoughts the present as if it were their past.
35. Reduced anxiety. Anxiety around the issues worked on in the ritual was lowered during the ceremony.

36. Extinction of anxiety. Some of the questers felt their anxiety disappear.
37. Catharsis. Some of the questers experienced a release of previously repressed emotion during the ritual.
38. Purification. A feeling of being psychologically cleansed was experienced during the ritual.
39. Courage to be as oneself. An acceptance of and ability to rely on oneself was gained by questers.
40. Accepting responsibility. The questers gained the ability to become morally accountable for their actions.
41. Growth of participant. Some participants found in the ritual a forum for clarification or resolution of personal issues or other sense of personal expansion.
42. Metanoia. Some of the questers experienced a profound spiritual or secular transformation.

Table 3
Higher Order Thematic Description of Claire's Experience

Thematic Clusters	Generalized Descriptions
1. Isolation (Excerpt Nos. from Table 1: 1, 4, 9)	Claire felt a deep interpersonal isolation after the death of her mother.
2. Unfinished Business (4, 5)	She felt very unfinished with her grief because she had not attended the original funeral or made a public statement of her loss.
3. Meaninglessness (5, 21)	There was no meaning for Claire in the funeral that had been done because she hadn't been present. Also her mother's death seemed senseless to Claire.
4. Death Denial (8)	She was unable to believe that her mother really was dead. She pushed away all evidence of the fact.
5. Need for Symbols (14)	Claire included many symbols of her mother and the relationship they had. Some of the symbols were a photograph, special readings, and the setting of the Catholic church.
6. Perfectionism (32)	Claire was very aware of her need to create a perfect ritual. For her, discussing it thoroughly beforehand helped to make the ritual just as she desired.
7. Structure is Important (1, 6)	The known structure of the Catholic Mass was a comfort to Claire. Within it she felt free to add many meaningful activities.
8. Purposefulness (1, 6)	Claire put much time and energy into planning the ritual. This enhanced the power and meaning of the experience.
9. Personalizing is Important (11, 12, 13)	For Claire, it was essential that the service had personal touches. A generic ritual would not have been meaningful for her.
10. Gathering Information (1)	Choosing readings herself gave Claire a feeling of ownership of the rite. She gathered all the material that was incorporated in her service.
11. Sacralization (11, 12)	Claire could not conceive of a secular ritual. Involving Catholic religion and church gave the service legitimacy and power.
12. Feelinging Power (28)	Prior to her ritual she felt almost totally powerless in the world. The rite connected her with the ability to powerfully impact on her world in a positive manner.
13. Need for Support (10, 20, 39)	Claire needed the support of her Priest, dad and therapist prior to the ritual. During the service she received a lot of support from the guests; a support that she viewed as very necessary.
14. Need for Guidance (27, 29)	She felt unable to develop the ritual alone. The guidance of her Priest and therapist was necessary.
15. Inclusion (26, 36)	She felt a warm sense of inclusion with guests during the Mass and afterwards at the reception.

21. Acceptance of Mortality
(44, 46)
22. Acceptance of Death
(7, 16)
23. Sense of Completion
(15)
24. Regression
(37)
25. Reduced Anxiety
(17)
26. Catharsis
(19, 23)
27. Courage to Be an Oneself
(18, 30)
28. Accepting Responsibility
(31)
29. Growth of Participant
(41)
30. Metanoia
(47)
16. Others' Courage to Share Self
(3, 38, 40, 43)
17. Courage to Share Oneself
(2, 42, 45)
18. Need for Permission
(35)
19. Public Statement of Loss
(2)
20. Confirmation
(6, 22, 34)
- Within the supportive structure of the ritual Claire was not only able to accept the fact of her mother's death but also of her own mortality.
- Due to the ritual, Claire can not tolerate the reality that her mother is dead.
- The ritual and the counselling process helped Claire feel a sense of completion.
- Claire regressed by talking with her guests about the past. This tapping into roots felt comforting for her.
- Due to the ritual she is able to tolerate the thought of death more easily.
- Suppressed feelings arose during the service, and with their release Claire experienced a catharsis.
- The ritual helped raise Claire's self-esteem and produced within her a willingness to concentrate on her own life.
- Claire realized that ultimately she must depend on herself rather than on others. She was willing to accept this self-responsibility.
- Claire had not realized her dad would change as a result of the ritual. She was pleased when she realized it was a growthful experience for him.
- Her religious beliefs were strengthened as a result of the ritual.
- The guests were emotionally touched by the service. They shared themselves by attending the rite, many for her benefit because they hadn't known her mother and also by sharing memories during the reception. Her dad shared himself by reading aloud a speech Claire had written.
- Claire shared her true feelings and thoughts in a speech that was read at the service and by connecting with each guest who attended. She also decided, due to the ritual, to devote more of her life to others.
- She believed that in a dream her mother gave permission for the ritual to take place.
- Claire knew she would not be able to accept the reality of her mother's death until she had made a public statement of her loss.
- The ritual confirmed for Claire that her mother was dead. The fact that family and friends attended and that her Priest allowed the ritual to be conducted in the church cemented the reality. Her dream also made the death more real.

reflected in a dream. "I had a dream...the week before the service of her and I sharing a good-bye. And that made it feel like it was more realistic. Cause she told me she wasn't going to be there long but she was there to say good-bye."

Following the dream she is able to give herself permission to participate in the ritual. "I felt I was finally ready for it."

Taking charge of planning her ritual is very beneficial for Claire. "I didn't think I was capable of planning this. I mean anyone who had come out of what I had, I didn't think could plan one....Well it's made me realize that I don't give myself enough credit at this point." She feels proud of her ability to organize the ritual, "It builds up the self-confidence a bit" and realizes she can make a positive impact on the world. Planning is also important in order to make the ritual as potent as possible. It "was done perfectly...it was thoroughly discussed before so it was done the right way."

The service is planned to make it very personal. This quality also makes it more potent, "cause it could have been like a service for anyone otherwise." Father Jean personalizes the service by talking about her mother, "He mentioned her name a couple of times too, which helped." Claire also personalizes it in a number of ways. Her parents "had their 25th Anniversary last year and there was a big picture of them there." She wrote a speech which her father read aloud, "and it was very personal," and chose personally meaningful readings; "each of them had something to do with how I felt about

missing her and her not being in my life anymore."

As the ritual progresses, she becomes deeply aware of her loss. "I just remember thinking mostly why? And just the anger about why it happened to us. And why her and...." Then, she finally accepts the reality of her mother's death. "Yeah because then when you get that actual fact, like going to a funeral service I mean its telling you the truth of what happened." Prior to the ritual she has been able to rationalize away the loss "cause I always kept telling myself that she was away on a trip and she was coming back [so the service] made it more realistic."

With the acceptance of the fact of death comes a shift in attitude, "Its made me a lot more open about death" and an easing of the emotional pain, "We [Dad and herself] didn't look like we were feeling that hurt cause I think at that point we had finally realized what had happened."

Once she accepts her mother's loss, Claire is able to expand her views about death. "Well its just made me realize that we all have to face death.... and it just makes us stronger and very lucky to be here. Well we are. We should take advantage of that time and share it with other people." She confronts her own mortality, "Wow, this could actually happen, at such a young age."

Another existential issue Claire comes to terms with is the importance of taking responsibility for her life. "So you have to realize you have to depend on yourself and pull yourself through." She realizes she had a choice of where to direct her energies and

decides "to start concentrating on my own life."

Her religious beliefs had always been important to Claire and provided her with a direction and meaning in life. The ritual enhances and helps her feel more supported by those beliefs. "It's made us, dad and I, more religious too, because thanks to our Catholic religion that's helped pull us through all this."

Other people have very important parts to play in the ritual. Opening the ritual to others allows them to witness Claire's realization of her mother's death. "I was glad that I was in God's house to share it with who I wanted; friends and family." Making a public statement of the meaning of her loss allows her to change. "But I just wanted to finally have a chance to say good-bye to her and why I miss her so much." The reality sinks in more readily since there are others acting as witnesses. "And having family and friends there really helped; and made me realize that it actually had happened."

Family and friends also have a supportive role. They support by being present, "it was good having all those people there and talking to them before and after," by caring for her, "and it was so nice being surrounded by people that I love," "and not everyone had met her (Mom) but they came for my benefit anyway. Which really helped," and by being touched by the service, "and it (speech) made almost everyone have tears in their eyes and start to cry." Claire also feels helped by having her priest and father take speaking roles in the service which she felt unable to do. "My dad read that (speech) out. Yeah, I

didn't feel I had the strength to."

After the Mass Claire invites the guests back to her home for a reception. Most people attend and spend much of the time helping her tap into her roots. "It was really nice getting back together with them and, um, talking about the old times when we were younger and what it was like when Mom was there." The ritual ends when the last guest leaves.

Overall Synthesis of Claire's Experience

It is not easy to be sure that being
yourself is worth the trouble, but
we do know it is our sacred duty.
Florida Scott-Maxwell

To accept the death of a loved one is one of the hardest tasks we face. But for Claire the task seemed impossible for that was not the only recent loss she had to grieve. Her wounded body and mind took much of her attention. Her self-esteem plummeted and her future seemed bleak as she became aware of the extent of her injuries.

During times of loss and injury a common desire is to return home and be enfolded in Mother's love and care. Claire experienced that longing deeply, for her mother had been her best friend and major support. Yet, that was no longer a possibility.

A healthy mind and body could barely tolerate the loss of such a loved one; particularly in a manner so sudden and violent. Claire's broken being felt a deep sense of anxiety. She felt isolated from her old self, her mother, and the world she knew. When hearing of activities such as the funeral, which should have brought home the reality of the death, Claire experienced a sense of meaninglessness

because she had not been part of the rite. She could not accept her mother's death.

Claire has much courage though. She entered psychotherapy asking for assistance to realize that her mother was gone. She was willing to search for a way to accept her reality but she was confused about the path. Planning the ritual gave her a meaningful, concrete focus for her life. For the first time since the accident she felt a commitment to a future; the day of the Mass.

Claire needed her ritual to be perfect, so much time and energy was given to creating a meaningful structure. Making the ritual personal by repeating her mother's name and including symbols of her mother's life heightened the power of the experience for her.

With her mother's death Claire's sense of a secure and stable secular home had diminished. This loss was offset to some extent by strengthening her connection to her spiritual home. This was accomplished by involving her faith in the ritual, sacralizing it by having it enacted in "God's house" and moving to the familiar rhythms of a Catholic service.

Prior to undertaking the ritual Claire felt worthless and powerless. She did not acknowledge the power and choice she had in her life. She gave away power to her therapist, priest, dad, and thought she was following their instructions for the rite. As she planned the Mass Claire became aware of her potency. She was deciding, directing,....choreographing a meaningful event. She began to see past her limitations to herself as she truly was: a very

capable being.

This new perception of herself was enhanced by the stance of the others involved in the ritual. Claire was aware of needing permission to undertake the ritual. What she was truly asking for was permission to re-enter society as an accepted, functioning member. A refusal to allow her the ritual would have been a refusal to allow her to heal and grow. Allowing her to attend a ritual developed by someone else would have diminished her worth in the eyes of herself and the community.

Claire also needed guidance to develop the ceremony and she received it. She was given a guidance with setting and props that left her free to use them as she thought best. The inclusion of others was important for many reasons. Claire was not left to grieve and grow alone. Many people attended the Mass to support her and assist her re-entry to the community.

They also shared themselves so that Claire was not the only one risking deeply personal thoughts and feelings. Claire's willingness to share herself demonstrated that she was ready to move to accepting reality. Her purpose in creating the ritual was to gain a visceral confirmation that her mother had died. This realization certainly occurred, but others were there as well.

She received this confirmation and then went beyond it to being able to tolerate looking at and feeling the fact of her mother's death and the resulting implications. Even there she did not halt; continuing to the core existential issue "acceptance of personal

mortality."

Accepting reality allowed Claire to heal and grow. She experienced a healing catharsis with the ensuing reduction of anxiety. Her healing gave Claire a sense of completion. She had engaged the mourning task of letting go and completed it successfully. The unexamined past can restrict a person's freedom and flexibility in the present. Part of Claire's healing process involved regression; tapping her roots so that the present could be built on a conscious, supporting foundation.

Claire blossomed as she moved through the ritual. Because of her head injury she had viewed herself, prior to the ceremony, as a weed; a drag on society never to be worth much. During the ritual she accepted responsibility for herself and accessed the courage to be herself. She became aware of her value and once more thought of herself as a worthwhile human being.

Claire had not anticipated that anyone else would experience growth in her ritual. She was, therefore, surprised and pleased that her father discovered an ability to share his feelings in public. Public speaking had always been difficult for him but he agreed to read her speech when told that she was unable to. Afterwards he stated that he viewed the ritual as being growthful for both Claire and himself.

Claire's journey took her from denial of her mother's death and her own life to an acceptance of both.

Anna--Personal Information

Oh I would not give you false hope
 On this strange and mournful day
 But the mother and child reunion
 Is only a motion away.
 Paul Simon

Anna and Tess felt stuck in a situation that is becoming increasingly common, that of a young adult living in the same house with one or both parents. Tess had finished school and was working. In fact, she was making more money than her mother! The old roles of mother and daughter were obsolete yet no new roles had been clarified. The actors felt increasingly angry, bewildered and frustrated in their relationship. Anna says that "it was just muddy water all the way through."

This situation was particularly grating to Anna for she was usually so clear in relationships. She projects a sense of strength and self-knowledge. These qualities along with compassion make her well-suited to her people oriented career. A single mother in early middle age, it was important to Anna to be a responsible, concerned mother to Tess.

Anna had been interested in personal and societal rituals for some time. The interest fit with her love of drama and art, a love which her daughter also shared. Although Anna had never developed a major ritual, she felt drawn to create one to help them let go of the old order relationship and pick up a new way of being with each other. She realized that mother and daughter had other options; seeking a new relationship by going for counselling or talking on their own.

She suggested to her daughter a ritual because of their mutual love of drama and because she felt that they needed symbols; "some symbolic gestures because of the power that is within them." Tess agreed with Anna's suggestion and indicated understanding of the underlying reasons for the rite.

Paraphrase of Anna's Ritual

Table 4, the thematic abstraction of Anna's experience, lists the meaning units found in Anna's interview as well as paraphrases and themes drawn from the meaning units. A generalized description of the clustered themes is then given in Table 5.

The ritual itself is conducted over a Saturday and Sunday. Preparations for the ritual last two months. These preparations include, together and individually, clarifying the old and new orders. "I found as I was going through my life doing other things, at one point I was washing woodwork and thinking about it, what would the symbol be of the old order?" Sometimes the focus was on grieving for the old parental relationship. "I would burst into tears you know, and sob with the letting go part of it."

Activities for the weekend are mutually chosen and Anna and Tess think about a present they will give the other at the Sunday party. As the special weekend nears, time is taken to "cleanse our space" by sorting through and pricing material possessions that are no longer wanted or needed. "You know, we did a whole, almost like a life review while we were getting ready to cast away. And so in letting go we also decided, 'What do we need to keep?'" On Saturday, the ritual

Table 4
Thematic Abstraction of Anna's Experience

Meaning Units from Transcribed Interview	Two Levels of Abstraction	
	1. Paraphrases	2. Themes
1. Coupled with some real confusion around whether I was her mother; whether I was her roommate.	She was confused about her role in relationship with her daughter.	Meaninglessness
2. And it was uncomfortable. Like there was no clear direction and I could see, it seemed to me that if we clarified what was going on and found a way to do it with some ceremony it would make it easier for both of us.	A ceremony could be used to move from a vague, uncomfortable relationship to a clear, better one.	Unfinished business
3. And she (daughter) said yes she was really, she she loved ...she was caught by the idea! of a ritual.	Her daughter felt positively intrigued by the suggestion of a ritual.	Need for symbols
4. (In discussion, the need for a ritual with her daughter) She had just succinctly got the rib of what this was about. Economic and social order and change.	Her daughter was able to grasp that economic and social change was the underlying reason for the ritual.	Clarification
5. And it doesn't mean that you're definitely going to like all of it (the new order).	Planned change isn't all positive.	Negativity as a part of life
6. So I had to wrestle with that (new order). And did and it became part of the transition too.	The awareness that the planned change would not be all positive was part of the ritual.	Negativity as a part of life
7. So we then set about individually thinking about some kind of a symbol that would stand for all of what it was we wanted to acknowledge and leave behind.	It was important to individually develop symbols for the old relationship.	Need for symbols
8. In my understanding of transitions there is that acknowledgement of the old and there's a time of in between when there is no order. Like when you don't know what the new order is. We were looking for some part of our ritual that would also stand for that in between time.	There is an inbetween time of chaos during transition which needed to be included.	Structure is important

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| 9. (the in between) It's like you have to completely let go of the old and be prepared to step off the edge into you don't know what before the new order creates itself or is created or happens. | Movement to a new relationship means first letting go of the old. | Metanoia |
| 10. The important thing about the first step was that we really wanted to fully acknowledge what we did have, and that wasn't just the sweet parts... We also needed to acknowledge the dark side of that. | The entire old relationship needs to be acknowledged; good and bad, light and dark. | Courage to be as oneself |
| 11. And we could acknowledge the the fullness of it (old order) and let it go because it was no longer truth. It was real as part of the old order. | Acknowledging the old order clarifies that it once had truth, but no longer. | Metanoia |
| 12. The in between time we wanted we both wanted a place of silence. And we took the better part of a day in that conclusion. | They wanted silence to present the inbetween. | Need for symbols |
| 13. So we spent hours on our own looking at it (old order), writing about it. | Silent time was used to clarify the old relationship. | Clarification. |
| 14. What I saw was happening too, was that even as we talked about it, and this was two months before it happened, we said lets look at it (relationship). | It took time and effort to prepare for the ritual. | Purposefulness |
| 15. And I found as I was going through my life doing other things, at one point I was washing woodwork and thinking about it. What would the symbol be of the old order? | The need to develop symbols of the old relationship surfaced frequently prior to the ceremony. | Need for symbols |
| 16. And even just thinking of symbols about what it was to let go of that parental...I would cry. I would burst into tears you know, and sob with the letting go part of it. | She found the search for symbols connected her to deep feelings. | Catharsis |
| 17. I think in finding a symbol for something it embodies many many meanings. That's the beauty of symbols. It's not just meaning, just one thing. It means many things. | Finding symbols meant a deeper clarification. | Need for symbols |
| 18. So we didn't do that one and we looked at others. | They searched for rituals that would apply to them. | Gathering information |

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| 19. | There was a ritual of transition that Starhawk talked about that might have been one of our models...But it was certainly in my mind as a prototype. | She consulted people who had developed rituals. | Need for guidance |
| 20. | What we came up with was a two day ritual. And the first day, the Saturday was to be cleaning day. And what we wanted to do was acknowledge and cleanse our space. Which was our home. | Cleansing was an important step towards change. | Purification |
| 21. | So we had a garage sale! Which is the contemporary cleansing. But it was much more than just a garage sale. For it was a cleansing; we did it for several days ahead of time. | Cleansing via a garage sale made her feel more connected to society. | Purification |
| 22. | You know, we did a whole, almost like a life review, while we were getting ready to cast away. Letting go we also do. What do we need to keep? | In preparation for the cleansing, she did a life review; what to let go, what to keep. | Clarification |
| 23. | And we had invited some other people to participate if they wanted to in the garage sale. And we made a celebration of it. | The cleansing needed to be celebrated. | Inclusion |
| 24. | (garage sale) And so that was the cleansing time. And we both did it; and with help. It was a witnessed event as well; which was really important. | The cleansing needed to be witnessed by supportive people. | Need for witnesses |
| 25. | It was really important to have other people acknowledge what you are doing. To validate it and reinforce it. | The witnessing validated and reinforced the activity. | Need for permission |
| 26. | We wanted the money, (from the garage sale) um, we had agreed we would use the money to buy the desserts for the feast which followed on Sunday. So That was preplanned. | The cleansing contributed to the rest of the rite. | Realizing power |
| 27. | We sent it out (invitation) to um, probably about oh, maybe, sixty people or so. Her friends, my friends, our friends. And we sent them much further afield than we ever expected people to come from. | It was important to have others know and appreciate the reason for the rite. | Need for support |

Because we also wanted friends plus relatives from afar to appreciate what it was we were doing even though we knew they wouldn't come.

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| 28. | They already knew that we were structuring a transition ritual. That was written on the invitation. So people already knew when they came, what they were getting into. So anybody who was nervous or shy about it or didn't know what was going on, had the chance to find out. | It was necessary that others participating in the ritual were preinformed. | Courage to share oneself |
| 29. | So while we were in silence, we had agreed to write to each other. And we had sort of guidelines for the letter we were to write. And it was to include what we really valued about the past of our relationship. And what we didn't like about it. What we were really glad to be letting go of. And uh, what we wanted for each other. So there was some real wish making. | Clarification of the old and new needed to be in concrete form. | Structure : important |
| 30. | And uh, we both took it very seriously and wrote at length. And it was a very emotional writing for me and I know it was for T. too. | They were personally touched by risking honest feelings in their writing. | Courage to be as oneself |
| 31. | And we had agreed to, that we would read the letters to each other privately. In case there are parts that either of us wanted censored. | They agreed to respect each other's request for privacy. | Courage to share oneself |
| 32. | The agreement had been that we would read what was readable publicly. But we had the right to withhold anything that we wished. And in fact what happened was that after we had shared with each other, we were willing to risk sharing in public. And that (sharing publicly) was, it felt really risky for both of us to do it. And also really important. | Public statement, though scary, was important to make. | Public statement of loss |
| 33. | We had also agreed to purchase or create a gift for each other. So part of the public ritual was to exchange gifts. | Honouring each other needed to take concrete form. | Need for symbols |

34.	And then when we had finished dinner, I had borrowed a drum ...So the drum was very precious to me. It has a sweet voice. And we used the drum to summons. So we called people all into the same room.	Meaningful activities were important to include.	Need for symbols
35.	And we used the sound of the drum to create the sacred space that we wanted. It needed to be sacred. People needed to listen.	The ritual needed to have solemn, sacred times.	Sacralization
36.	We talked about why we had needed to do the ritual and why we needed people to be there.	Stating the purpose of the ritual publicly was needed.	Public statement of loss
37.	And we asked people to join us in acknowledging what had been her childhood and my young motherhood.	It was necessary to publicly acknowledge the old relationship.	Regression
38.	And so we began by singing childhood songs. T and I sang 'Prunes' which was one of our favourites that we used to sing all the time while driving.	They sang songs that were personally meaningful.	Personalizing is important
39.	(Singing childhood songs) that really helped us create this journey back. The nostalgia.	Meaning was heightened with symbols of the old order.	Regression
40.	Those people were willing to share so beautifully. And we also lit a candle which was in the centre. And it became a symbol of what we were doing.	She was touched by the guests' sharing. A candle became a focus and symbol for them.	Others' courage to share self Need for symbols
42.	And what was so touching for me was that everyone in the room spoke.	Everyone participating verbally was deeply touching.	Others' courage to share self
43.	They spoke from such a heart place. Lots of tears, lots of tears. How grateful they were to be included. How honoured they felt about being called to witness. And how much they saw of value in what we were doing. The mending that we're doing.	The guests shared themselves in an authentic, committed way.	Others' courage to share self
44.	How they wanted to mend their own relationships with either their children or their parents ...There was lots of resolve. Lots of resolve came out of it. There were things that they saw that they could do too.	Some guests used the ritual to clarify their own goals and relationships.	Growth of participant

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| 45. Or for other people there was an enormous sadness to see that they didn't have what we had. So there, for some was a poignant kind of a sadness. | Some guests realized, with sadness, the difficulties in their relationships. | Growth of participant |
| 46. I felt really blessed by the depth of their sharing. | The deep sharing felt like a blessing. | Others courage to share self |
| 47. Yes, different people there got a lot out of it, were really touched and moved by it. The kind of outreach that our ritual had was really amazing. | She was surprised and gratified to see the guests touched. | Growth of participant |
| 48. For many people, weeks, months later are still talking about it. And still telling us what an effect it had on their lives. So it has really been, it has been powerful. | The changes guests experienced lasted long after the rite. | Growth of participant |
| 49. Some of them (speaking) stammered and fumbled, and it was all so heartfelt and sincere. Nobody treated it lightly. | The guests shared in a deeply genuine way. | Others courage to share self |
| 50. And when it came to the end of the rite we blessed them and thanked them for coming and invited them to stay for delicious desserts which we certainly did provide them. | To show her appreciation, she needed to give to the guests. | Realizing power |
| 51. We did everything first class. It was really important. | The ritual needed to be done very well. | Perfectionism |
| 52. And T. and I served all the desserts. Again it was taking the opportunity to thank each person personally for coming and being part. | Personally expressing appreciation to each guest was important. | Personalizing important |
| 53. (laughing) And it just had a let down in a wonderful place of appreciation and acknowledgement. | The rite ended with a lighter mood of appreciation and acknowledgement. | Reduced anxiety |
| 54. (About the new order) So, sure you slip back but we didn't have to stay there very long. We didn't have to wrestle with it. It was just done. | The rite solidly established the new order, so any regression was brief. | Sense of completion |
| 55. If we hadn't done the ritual we would have probably continued to niggle at each other and be a little grumpy about some things. | The ritual broke the negative old order pattern. | Sense of completion |

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| 56. The other thing that was positive that came out of it too was that as soon as we had complete the ritual, she also saw that she was free to leave me. Having declared equal status by having declared me as a roommate, she was able to make the switch into realizing that I didn't have to be her only roommate. | The rite encouraged clarity of needs and desires beyond the relationship. | Courage to be as oneself |
| 57. So with that she moved out about four months later. And she moved easily; very happily. There didn't have to be any tearing transition... Really easy for me. So it (ritual) paved the way for that. | The ritual set the stage for smooth, anxiety-free relationship changes. | Extinction of anxiety |
| 58. A lot of hurting places in both of us...the grieving we were doing that prompted the ritual? I was still part of that lack of clarity about who we were to each other. | Deep hurt was caused by the relationship being unclear. | Broken relationship |
| 59. So prior to taking on this ritual and the transition that went with it, I think what there was mostly in me was a kind of bewilderment because of the loss of the clear guidelines of how I was to behave with this person. | The loss of a clear-cut relationship Bewildered her. | Directionlessness |
| 60. But there were still so many areas which were uncharted. It just really felt like an awfully good idea to draft some new groundrules. | She felt a real need to take charge of making new rules. | Control led to anxiety |
| 61. I think part of what we wanted, what I wanted for sure and she certainly went along with this, was some symbolic gestures because of the power that is within them. | They included symbols because of their power. | Need for symbols |
| 62. So the symbolic gestures that both of us wanted and needed that summarized up a whole lot of talk. | A symbol consolidates many words. | Need for symbols |
| 63. And witnessing. We wanted other people to say, "I saw that happen, you can't fool me anymore you guys." You know, we really wanted that our friends be there. Endorsement that our friends could give. The validation. | Guests were necessary to validate and witness the transition. | Need for witnesses |

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| 64. And the making more real that happens when other people participate. | Reality was strengthened by others presence. | Confirmation |
| 65. Just that sense of drawing others in who loved us. Who were wanting to be, willing to be part of this new accord. That felt really important, a very loving gesture on their part and on our part to include them. | She felt it was important to be including of and included by others. | Inclusion |
| 66. So it was a ceremony that had a lot of meaning. Cementing of the social fabric that happened with it. Had we only done it with each other it would have been a lesser creation, for sure. | Including others made the experience richer and more meaningful for her. | Sense of completion |
| 67. It was a lot of fun. I really met that need for creation in both of us. Whoo! Yes! Being so vitally involved in a creation act, it's so life-giving. | Creating the ritual was a vital experience for her. | Accepting responsibility |
| 68. It was the birth of a new order for us. And we did it well! (laugh) And we had joy in doing it well. | I felt joyful about doing the birth of the new order so well. | Perfectionism |
| 69. It was a self-honouring, it was an other-honouring and it was a community-honouring too. All of those honourings that played out there. | The ritual honoured self, others and the community. | Sense of completion |
| 70. And it also enhanced that sense of being members of the community too. Of being validated within that community. | She felt more connected to and validated by her community. | Inclusion |

Table 5
Higher Order Thematic Descriptions of Anna's Experience

Thematic Clusters	Generalized Descriptions
1. Meaninglessness (Excerpt Nos. from Table 4: 1)	Old relationship had lost its clear meaning and was filled with confusion.
2. Unfinished Business (2)	Issue of old relationship was uncomfortable and unclear. Unfinished business needed to be resolved.
3. Directionlessness (59)	There were no guidelines to give clarity and direction to the relationship.
4. Broken Relationship (58)	The lack of clarity produced deep hurt, wounding the relationship.
5. Need for Symbols (3, 7, 12, 15, 17, 33, 34, 41, 61, 62)	Symbols to represent the old relationship, the state of the inbetween and the new relationship were included in the ritual.
6. Perfectionism (51, 68)	It was important for her to do the ritual "first class."
7. Structure is Important (8, 29)	The activities within the ritual were structured to give them more meaning.
8. Purposefulness (14)	A conscious decision was made to spend time looking at the relationship.
9. Personalizing is Important (38, 52)	She needed to make the content of the rite personal in various ways including sharing songs that were important to her and talking to each guest.
10. Gathering Information (18)	They sought for information about rituals to ensure that their's would be well done.
11. Clarification (4, 13, 22)	They needed to clarify the purpose of the rite and the old relationship.
12. Sacralization (35)	Giving the ritual a sacred component through drumming was very important.
13. Realizing Power (26, 50)	She used her personal power to make a direct impact on her ritual and guests.
14. Control Lessens Anxiety (60)	By making new ground rules she felt more in control and less anxious.
15. Need for Support (27)	She needed other people to support her through the ritual by appreciating what she was doing.
16. Need for Guidance (19)	She sought out the writing of someone she saw as an authority on rituals to help her develop her rite.
17. Inclusion (23, 65, 70)	The guests at the ritual helped her to feel included in their group and she felt she was including them in her life. She also felt a sense of inclusion with the larger community.

18. Others' Courage to Share Self
(28, 40, 42, 43, 46, 49)
- The guests actually participated in the ritual in an authentic way. Some went further and shared themselves more intimately.
19. Courage to Share Oneself
(31)
- She took the risk of sharing personal information that she would usually share only with intimates.
20. Need for Permission
(25)
- She wanted the guests to validate the change in relationship she wished to undertake.
21. Need for Witnesses
(24, 63)
- Having other people witness the ritual made it more meaningful and real.
22. Public Statement of Loss
(32, 36)
- She needed to tell other people what the old relationship had been like and what she had decided to do about it.
23. Confirmation
(64)
- The change in status felt real to her since other people had attended the ritual.
24. Negativity as a Part of Life
(5, 6)
- She saw the need of acknowledging and accepting the negative part of life as well as the positive.
25. Sense of Completion
(54, 55, 66, 69)
- The hurt was resolved and the new relationship firmly established she also felt more complete in relation to her guests and her community.
26. Regression
(37, 39)
- It was important to publicly tap the roots of the old relationship.
27. Reduced anxiety
(53)
- At the end of the ritual there was a feeling of lightness and mellowness.
28. Extinction of Anxiety
(57)
- Due to the ritual anxiety about further changes in the relationship was gone.
29. Catharsis
(16)
- The search for symbols caused a release of deep feelings.
30. Purification
(20, 21)
- She needed to purify her surroundings and herself prior to the ritual.
31. Courage to be as Oneself
(10, 30, 56)
- She acted in an authentic manner as she planned and participated in the ritual even when it was psychologically risky to do so.
32. Accepting Responsibility
(67)
- She took responsibility for creating the ritual and felt it was a deeply growthful decision.
33. Growth of Participant
(44, 45, 47, 48)
- She had not realized that others would also grow by participating in her ritual. Many guests told her the ritual had been therapeutic for them, which deepened the meaning of the ritual for Anna.
34. Metanoia
(9, 11)
- She took the risky step of letting go of the old relationship and embracing the new without guarantees that it would be better. The way she thought felt, and acted in relationship to her daughter was transformed.

proper begins with a garage sale; our society's "contemporary cleansing." To make it a meaningful cleansing Anna and Tess want witnesses "to validate it and reinforce it." So they invite some friends to participate, and "make a celebration of it."

Sunday comprises a time of silence and personal cleansing in the morning and a party in the afternoon. Part of the morning silence is taken up with writing a letter to be read to the other. The mutually agreed to guidelines for the letter include, "what we really valued about the past of our relationship. And what we didn't like about it. What we were really glad to be letting go of. And uh, what we wanted for each other."

Anna and Tess had agreed that they would read the completed letters to each other in private and then read only the parts they wished to to the guests at the party. "And uh, we both took it very seriously and wrote at length. And it was a very emotional writing for me and I know it was for Tess too." The reading is also emotional. It clarifies parts of their relationship and makes them feel closer to each other. They decide that although it will be very risky for them, it feels important to read the uncensored versions at the party.

Invitations to the party had been sent out to about 60 people. Relations and friends were included; even people that lived too far away to be expected to attend. They wanted those they knew "to appreciate what it was we were doing even though we knew they wouldn't come." It was important to Anna and Tess that the purpose of the

party was known. So the invitation read: "Come Celebrate" stating, "We're having a party to celebrate a time of transition in our household. Tess from child to woman and friend, Anna from mother to friend and roommate. Dinner - Potluck contributions appreciated. We'll supply decadent desserts."

Some people reacted negatively to the invitation. Some were confused and phoned with questions. Most liked the idea and 40 people attended.

The first part of the party is a traditional potluck dinner. When the meal is over, Anna summons the guests into one room by beating a drum. The drum has special meaning to Anna. Although not hers, she has used it in a drumming group for a year and a half. So she shares that part of herself with the group.

As the people seat themselves in the room "we used the sound of the drum to create the sacred space that we wanted....It needed to be sacred. People needed to listen." The group grows quiet and attentive. Then Anna and Tess explain the reasons for the ritual and that they asked the guests to come to witness the change in their relationship.

"And we asked people to join us in acknowledging what had been her childhood and my young motherhood." To start the reminiscing, Anna and Tess sing their favourite childhood songs, the ones that had whiled away long car rides. Other guests then share their special songs. "So that really helped us create this journey back. The nostalgia of it."

Everyone sits in a circle in the room with a lit candle in the centre. "And it (candle) became a symbol of what we were doing." After singing half a dozen songs Anna and Tess read their letters aloud. Then they present the gifts they had prepared. They were surprised that both had chosen shells to give the other. After hugging each other in thanks, Anna presents Tess with "copies of the bills she had agreed to be responsible for and she gave me an I.O.U. for the rent."

The focus then moves to the guests. They are given an opportunity to say anything they wish as the candle moves from person to person. "We wanted that light to go around the room." Everyone is given the option of remaining silent yet Anna is very touched by the fact that they all speak.

She is surprised and "really blessed" that many people see this ritual as a growing experience for themselves.

They spoke from such a heart place. Lots of tears, lots of tears. How grateful they were to be included. How honoured they felt about being called to witness. And uh, how much they saw of value in what we were doing. The mending that we were doing. How they wanted to mend their own relationships with either their children or their parents. Some said, 'I'm going to go right home and write a letter.' There was lots of resolve. Lots of resolve came out of it. There were things that they saw that they could do too. Or for other people there was an enormous sadness to see that they didn't have what we had. So there for some was a poignant kind of a sadness.

After the last person speaks, Anna and Tess bless them, thank them for coming, and invite them to stay for dessert. The dessert is also part of the ritual. Anna and Tess had specially ordered two cheesecakes and a black forest cake made by a friend who owns a

bakery. It is very important to them to have all parts of the ritual "first class." Personally serving each guest a luscious dessert is a special way of thanking them for witnessing.

The group splinters at this point "and then the place went pandemonium." For a short time there is singing, dancing, and chatting. This ending for the ritual is an unplanned delight. "It just had a let down in a wonderful place of appreciation and acknowledgement. And it was all over by about nine thirty, I guess."

The ritual fulfilled its purpose. Both Anna and Tess feel a change almost immediately. Their relationship seems clearer and more meaningful. They are finished with anger and grief. An unexpected positive outcome is that about four months later, Tess moves out. This transition is very easy for both mother and daughter. "Having declared equal status by having declared me as a roommate, she was able to make the switch into realizing that I didn't have to be her only roommate."

Anna is pleased that the ritual "was a lot of fun." The two had a need to create something new. "Being so vitally involved in a creative act, its so lifegiving....It was the birth of a new order for us." Because they had spent time and energy to do it first class, the ritual enhanced their self-esteem. "It was a self-honouring."

The ritual was also "an other-honouring and it was a community-honouring too." This aspect made Anna feel validated within the community. The ritual had given them much more than they had anticipated.

Synthesis of Anna's Journey

For communication to have meaning
it must have a life.
In a small way we then grow out of
our old selves and become
something new.

Hugh Prather

To love a daughter so much and be unable to connect is an agony. The way Anna was enacting her mother role seemed meaningless, full of confusion, and lack of direction. Anna was not one to leave unfinished business in her professional or personal life, however. She sought within herself and her interests for a path to clarity and meaning.

She and her daughter have a love of drama and the out of the ordinary. Anna sensed that just clarifying and agreeing to the relationship they desired would not be powerful enough methods to effect change. The new relationship would need to be brought to such strong life that regression to the old way would be unlikely.

For Anna, symbol and ceremony had touched her deeply in the past. Although she had never developed a ritual, she had heard of ritual's power and decided that was the most appealing route to take. Anna was consciously aware of the need for many layers of meaning in a rite. Meanings associated with the old relationship when it worked and when it didn't, meanings for the state of inbetween relationships, and meanings for the new state would need to be found or created.

Tess readily agreed to the need for change and the process to accomplish it. They agreed on a structure for their ritual and the necessity of taking time to clarify and develop symbols. They sensed

that potent rituals took time to prepare.

Designing the ritual led the two to joyous memories and memories of pain, to what was to be retained in the new relationship and what was to be dropped. This was the inbetween, a time when they were no longer completely in the old or in the new.

Before entering the new state, Anna felt the need for purification. This would ready them for the ceremony and be the first bit of healing of the past hurts. Purification needed to be grounded in their reality so they decided on a garage sale. The sale followed a "life-review" of their belongings. The money they received for the belongings they had no use for would assist their move into the new state. They realized their power to give appreciation and blessings to their guests, choosing to facilitate that with the power of money. They would purchase decadent desserts to thank their guests for witnessing the transformation of their relationship.

Another type of purification was undertaken Sunday morning. Anna and Tess cleaned the house in silence and then withdrew apart to think, write, and prepare themselves before the guests arrived.

The presence of others was essential to anchoring the new relationship. To ensure caring accepting participants, invitations were sent explaining the purpose of the ritual. Those who disagreed with the concept did not attend. It was important to Anna and Tess that all of their close friends and relatives were informed of their change of relationship so invitations were sent also to those who were not expected to take part.

Guests were needed to be witnesses. They also provided support, permission to change, and a sense of inclusion. Anna was deeply touched by how willing the guests were to share their thoughts, feelings, and issues. Anna used others as well in developing the ritual. As she decided on the content of the rite she turned to writers she respected for ideas.

Anna and Tess knew they needed to make a public statement of their restrictive state and the planned changes. They risked themselves by sharing feelings that had been private prior to the ritual.

The setting of the ritual needed to be solemn and sacred which Anna accomplished through the use of a drum and candle. Sacralizing the ritual heightened its meaning and power.

In this meaningful place, Anna and Tess regressed. They retreated to a time when their relationship had worked, singing special childhood songs from those early days. The guests helped create a warm wave of healing nostalgia by reciprocating with songs special to them.

The presence of others allowed the two to view their desired relationship as alive. This confirmation transformed the fantasy to reality. Further healing could now take place. The unfinished business was resolved bringing a sense of completion and diminishing of anxiety.

Growth was experienced throughout and after the ritual. Around the relationship there was a definite sense of metanoia. Anna also

grew in her ability to be herself and accepting responsibility for her life. The ritual was an extremely therapeutic experience for some of the guests as well. This journey had provided much more positive movement for all participants than Anna had ever expected. As Anna exclaimed, "Being so vitally involved in a creation act, its so life-giving."

Rose--Personal Information

A hand that is always open or
always closed is a crippled hand.
A bird that cannot open and
close its wings cannot fly.

Jalal ud-Din Rumi

Rose makes her living as an artist. Her work in public buildings and private residences is admired by many. Yet, there was a time a few years ago when Rose could not be creative. She was "somewhat depressed and at loose ends." This state of mind had lasted for a number of months resulting in Rose not eating well and being physically run down as well as psychologically drained. There was "no regular pattern to my life." She grieved her inability to be creative, yet felt helpless to change. Nothing similar had happened to her before.

Rose, like her artwork, is very striking. She talks about herself as a "tough nut" and "a warrior." Tall, strong, broad-shouldered, short-haired, with startling blue eyes, Rose appears more masculine than feminine. Middle age has slowed her down a bit; she no longer plays hockey, although she is still very much an outdoor's person. When I met her, Rose projected a solid feminine

sense which blended well with her masculine side. This balance was new she told me.

A few years ago, Rose was not able to clarify why she was feeling so low. Finally, though, at the tail end of winter, a month after she turned 40, "I seemed to come to a dead end with it all and I got angry." She contacted the local grocery store and was successful in charging a large order of food.

With food in the house she felt better and became interested in producing a drawing. For five days she completed a drawing a day. Although she had more energy and her spirits were higher, Rose felt that she had not come to terms with her depression or discovered a future direction for her life.

On the fifth night, Rose had a powerful experience which was to change her life. She went to bed at three a.m. after finishing her drawing for the day. Not yet asleep, she "heard this very sharp, very piercing, I call it a bird-like scream now but I think it could be the scream of any animal." She immediately thought of her pet goat, grabbed boots and coat and ran outside with one of her dogs to check its safety. The goat was untouched and peaceful.

On the way back to the house, she felt playful and made footprints in the new snow beside the path. Then stopped to watch a striking display of Aurora Borealis for a few moments. That is when she heard the scream for a second time.

She looked up and "saw this vision of a full silver moon with a gold eagle in front of it. The gold eagle appeared to me to be very close to me and screaming. The thing had been apparently broken. When someone tried to put it together again it had

been slightly juxtaposed so that the hard edges of the gold were refracting light on it. And light was coming from inside it and around it and it was a really startling and scary thing. I mean it just, it just looked like it was really damn mad at me."

Rose looked at the image, turned around and went back into the house.

She is surprised in retrospect that she gave the experience no feeling or thought at the time. The image was unconsciously repressed and not brought to awareness until the next evening.

The following day, Rose prepared for her niece and nephew to visit. They were to arrive that evening and "as I was vacuuming, I would have fleeting almost subliminal flashes of this image." At the end of the day, Rose felt the urge to go for a walk. Her walk took her to the lakeshore where she found herself meditating, a very uncommon activity for her. The quiet meditational moment "released the image."

Thinking about her experience, Rose became very excited and wanted to make certain that it had really occurred. She found her footsteps in the new snow and realized that she had been outside the past night. Never in her life had she had an experience so powerful and she was "very, very intrigued at that point to find out what it would mean psychologically."

Her niece and nephew arrived shortly after and Rose related her experience to them. Her niece, who had always been interested in the abnormal, suggested Rose ask the meaning of the image of a wise Metis woman she knew. Rose had met this woman a few weeks previously at a

party and agreed to contact her. The connection took several weeks of telephoning to realize. After Rose told her story, the Metis woman said that she would consult another wise woman and then go back to Rose.

At that point Rose accepted another friend's invitation to a birthday party for the Metis woman. It was to be in the mountains some distance away so Rose invited the Metis woman to drive with her, giving them an opportunity to discuss the image. On the drive, Rose was asked if she had come to any conclusions about the experience. "I should have because I'm imaginative enough. But I was just struck dumb by the enormity of it all being my vision."

Rose had never imagined being the recipient of an experience of this kind. "Indians and mystics have visions, you know. White middle-class WASP's don't." The Metis woman stated that a ritual needed to be performed to deal with the image. Rose must go into the woods, alone, and feed the eagle. Prior to the feeding she should "first of all acknowledge that God exists and secondly ask his permission to come into contact with this eagle."

These instructions did not sit easily with Rose. "All of which sounds simple enough unless you've been a raving agnostic all your life (laughs) and really egotistical and really inclined to rational approach to life. The scientific method and all the wonderful things we surround ourselves with (laugh)." Because she was so overwhelmed by the experience and wasn't able to make sense of it herself, Rose decided to trust the advice. She would perform the ritual that

evening at their mountain destination.

Paraphrase of Rose's Ritual

The meaning units, paraphrases, and themes of Rose's experience are outlined in Table 6. Table 7 gives the generalized descriptions of the clustered themes.

Rose purchases steak to feed the eagle. She is very glad the Metis woman is with her because, prior to the ritual, "I felt childlike. Like I felt as though I hadn't anyone to advise me or nowhere to start in order to give me an understanding of God or of whatever mystery this might be."

It is one month to the night of the image. The moon is full. The two woman walk in the woods for a time and then her guide says, "Well go by yourself because there is a nice open place through the trees there and you won't feel quite so intimidated. And I'll wait here."

Rose walks alone feeling somewhat apprehensive, nervous, excited, and sweaty. Walking through woods at night is an experience Rose would have stayed far away from previously. "But I seemed to have drawn on some reservoir of courage in order to do that."

Entering the clearing, Rose halts and verbally acknowledges God. She asks God for permission to speak to the eagle. Then to the eagle, she requests clarity on the meaning of her vision. After placing the eagle's food, she leaves.

Little is said when she rejoins her guide and they both return to the cabin and their beds. The next morning, Rose is eager to see if

Table 6
Thematic Abstraction of Rose's Experience

Meaning Units from Transcribed Interview	Two Levels of Abstraction	
	1. Paraphrases	2. Themes
1. I think I was apprehensive to talk with anyone who might think I was just overreacting.	She was afraid that someone would negatively judge her experience.	Isolation
2. I didn't really need to talk to someone who might think it was a psychological reaction to not enough food or not enough sleep or whatever, you know. Because it seemed to have stronger meaning for me than that.	The experience was a powerfully meaningful one and she didn't want it trivialized.	Personalizing is important
3. She drew me out and asked me if I had any insights into the symbol, myself. And I really didn't. I should have because I'm imaginative enough.	Unusually for her, she was confused about the meaning of her symbol.	Meaninglessness
4. This was even more difficult for me to accept in a way because the old Indian woman had suggested that I had to feed the eagle. So that it was going to be a kind of religious rite.	She was told to use symbols in her rite that were foreign to her.	Need for symbols Sacralization
5. And that prior to feeding the eagle, I had to go away by myself somewhere in the bush. And first of all acknowledge that God exists and secondly ask his permission to come into contact with this eagle.	The ritual involved her in many activities strange to her.	Purposefulness Sacralization
6. So, I had decided to trust this, these two people, and suspend my disbelief and do whatever they suggested that I do.	She did not know what to do herself, so decided to trust those she saw as experts.	Need for guidance
7. (on being told that she could not feed the eagle pork) But, I didn't really think it had anything to do with my eagle. But I hadn't thought it out clearly anyway. So I bought steak.	Although unsure of the reason for the rule, she agreed to it because she wanted the ritual done properly.	Perfectionism

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| 8. So I did (went alone into the clearing) and made my acknowledgements to God and I made my request to speak to this eagle and then I essentially had a discussion with the eagle. | Speaking to God alone at night was a brave act for her to do. | Courage to share oneself |
| 9. (talking to the eagle) It wasn't prayers as much as it was some questioning. Not necessarily asking it to validate itself but asking what the meaning of the symbol of the vision was. | She asked for clarification of her experience. | Clarification |
| 10. But then when I look back on the experience I realize how, how childlike I had become in my faith that this (ritual) would take care of everything. | Prior to the ritual she regressed and did the ritual with faith, not intellect. | Regression |
| 11. And I had forty years of age and I had no questions in my rational mind that any other animal or bird would eat that food. It just didn't seem possible. | During the ritual she suspended her rational judgement and relied on her faith. | Sacralization |
| 12. And so from that day to this I just simply at one level never questioned the fact that at some level this eagle is a spiritual guide of mine. | The reality of her vision was confirmed. | Confirmation |
| 13. I can only make contact with it through permission of God. It does seem to help ease periods of stress in my life. | She now turns to faith during stressful times. | Metanoia |
| 14. For a long period of time, I fed it on a more or less regular basis and I certainly fed it on the anniversaries of the night that I saw it. | She conducted her ritual herself, without assistance. | Realizing power |
| 15. But then another level of my self took over and I wanted to investigate the whys and wherefores of these kinds of phenomena. | She became interested in paranormal phenomena after the ritual. | Gathering information |
| 16. (Depression/stuckness) It ended! Totally! | Her unfinished feelings were gone. | Sense of completion |

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| <p>17. (Depression/stuckness) Oh, it shifted immediately... let's take it from the point of view of a psychological process. I think the process started when I thought I needed good healthy food to repair my body. Probably in a symbolic sense I was saying I needed to repair my psyche and my soul from every point of view.</p> | <p>She took responsibility for her healing.</p> | <p>Accepting responsibility</p> |
| <p>18. (After ritual) It struck me right away that my own masculine energies were being either misused or had been broken or damaged in some way. Not correctly put back together and were fighting me or angry, or working against me. And also obliterating some of the quieter, more feminine.</p> | <p>The rite clarified her oneness. She had not been in touch with her feminine side and her well used masculine side was damaged.</p> | <p>Isolation

Lack of control</p> |
| <p>19. And I had the feeling that the broken part, the part that I was probably misusing or hadn't developed properly or wasn't looking at, was overpowering the underlying serene feminine. And I think probably, I put the whole concept together within a month of feeding the eagle.</p> | <p>The ritual helped her to integrate her masculine and feminine sides.</p> | <p>Sense of completion</p> |
| <p>20. But the other thing that I was trying to look at was, why was it broken, why was it angry?</p> | <p>She needed to understand the meaning of her vision.</p> | <p>Unfinished business</p> |
| <p>21. I was really a bit nervous and a little bit excited and somewhat apprehensive and was a bit sweaty...</p> | <p>She was very anxious and excited during the ritual.</p> | <p>Agitation</p> |
| <p>22. ...and I was really delighted my friend was there to back me up.</p> | <p>She was very pleased to have the support of her friend.</p> | <p>Need for support</p> |
| <p>23. It was an unusual experience but I seemed to have drawn on some reserves of courage in order to do that.</p> | <p>She became aware of and able to access reserves of courage.</p> | <p>Courage to be as oneself</p> |
| <p>24. During that year after the experience with the eagle, my subconscious seemed to open up my consciousness radically.</p> | <p>Because of the ritual, she became much more aware and knowledgeable about herself.</p> | <p>Metanoia</p> |

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| 25. (Need for guidance) Yes, because I felt as though I hadn't anyone to advise me or nowhere to start in order to give me an understanding of God or of whatever mystery this might be. | She needed a guide to help with the ritual, particularly the spiritual aspect. | Need for guidance

Sacralization |
| 26. I think maybe I was reaching out to a kind of God concept or I wouldn't have had the vision. I think if I had needed just psychological balancing it would have been an entirely different experience for me. | She needed a personal relationship with God. | Metanoia |
| 27. And I'd always kind of stayed away from groups of women. | She felt uncomfortable around women. | Isolation |
| 28. But I felt very comfortable in that group of women. | She felt at home with the women after the rite. | Inclusion |
| 29. I felt like I was surrounded by supportive people and that there was even a kind of physical support there if I needed it. | She felt enclosed by the support offered by the women. | Others' courage to share self |
| 30. (Womens' role) Almost as though they were part of it. In a funny kind of way, almost as that moon. supportive behind the eagle. Quiet and serene. | The women represented support and peace for her. | Need for support |
| 31. There all the time. That only the eagle was out of whack. And the women were there to say, "It's O.K. You can handle this." | The women provided encouragement. | Need for support |
| 32. (relating a dream to the Metis woman on the way home) I was quite prepared to be told what that dream meant, when she put her foot on the brakes, slowed down, turned around, looked at me directly almost with the same anger the eagle had, and said, "You know damn well how to interpret that dream! Don't rely on me!" And I was struck dumb. I was hurt. But she seemed to free something in me. | Her guide strongly encouraged her to be independent after the ritual. | Courage to be as oneself |
| 33. For about a year after the experience, I would do the ritual on the same night each month. And I don't know at what point that stopped being good for me. But it seemed to demand too much from me. | She stopped doing the ritual frequently when she realized the large amount of energy it demanded. | Courage to be as oneself |

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| 34. I was not having enough time in between in order to gain confidence in myself because I think I had applied a lot of the power to the idea that both God and the eagle were external to myself...And I'm getting more and more confident that this is an inner process; not an external one. | It took her some time after the ritual to integrate the insights she had gained. She realized her power is inside, not all external. | Accepting responsibility
Metanoia |
| 35. I only do it at periods now when I'm feeling particularly unnerved about something or emotionally upset. When I feel I need that support. | She uses the ritual now infrequently, to give her support in the stressful times. | Structure is important |

Table 7
Higher Order Thematic Description of Rose's Experience

Thematic Clusters	Generalized Descriptions
1. Isolation (Excerpt Nos. from Table 6: 1, 18, 27)	She experienced isolation in two ways: As a disconnection from parts of herself and a sense of alienation from other women.
2. Unfinished Business (20)	It was important to her to resolve her questions about her vision.
3. Meaninglessness (3)	Her vision had no meaning she could understand. This confused her because usually she was able to see meaning in her experiences.
4. Lack of Control (18)	She was unable to control or heal the masculine and feminine aspects of herself.
5. Need for Symbols (4)	She was told by the wise woman that she needed to have religious symbols in the ritual. Feeling a sense of child-like trust, Rose agreed.
6. Perfectionism (7)	She followed specific rules to ensure the ritual was done properly.
7. Structure is Important (35)	The structure of the ritual relieves anxiety during stressful times.
8. Purposefulness (5)	She spent time and energy going into the bush and enacting her ritual there.
9. Personalizing is Important (2)	Her vision was very important to her and needed to be viewed as personally meaningful.
10. Gathering Information (15)	The ritual awakened her interest in paranormal phenomena and she felt an urge to gather information about this topic.
11. Clarification (9)	She sought for clarity about the meaning and purpose of her vision.
12. Sacralization (4, 5, 11, 25)	She conducted a religious rite which was a strange experience for her because she had not viewed herself as a religious person.
13. Realizing Power (14)	She realized she had enough personal power to conduct the ritual herself rather than rely on outside authorities.
14. Agitation (21)	At the start of the ritual she experienced nervousness and agitation. These symptoms vanished quickly.

15. Need for Support
(22, 30, 31)
- Rose needed support from two directions: from the woman she perceived as her guide and the group who were her peers.
16. Need for Guidance
(6, 25)
- She felt very child-like and in need of direction from someone she saw as wise in the way of visions.
17. Inclusion
(28)
- For the first time Rose felt the warmth included in a group of women.
18. Others' Courage to Share Self
(29)
- She had not planned for the women to be part of her ritual. They included themselves, however, and shared themselves in a very supportive way.
19. Courage to Share Oneself
(8)
- She was willing to risk going alone into the woods and also risk opening herself to God.
20. Confirmation
(12)
- The reality of her vision and the belief that she has a spiritual guide were confirmed for her during the rite.
21. Sense of Completion
(19)
- Her brokenness was healed. Her unfinishedness was completed. Her masculine and feminine sides were more balanced.
22. Regression
(10)
- She needed to become child-like and trust almost blindly in order to shift from her masculine to her feminine side.
23. Extinction of Anxiety
(16)
- Right after the ritual she experienced the total lifting of her anxiety.
24. Courage to be as Oneself
(23, 32, 33)
- During the rite she discovered reserves of courage within herself. She also became more willing to trust herself.
25. Accepting Responsibility
(17, 34)
- She started to accept responsibility for herself when she arranged to be fed. She added to this growth by taking responsibility for having some of the power of God and the eagle within herself.
26. Metanoia
(13, 24, 26, 34)
- Rose was transformed by her ritual. She accessed her feminine side and her spirituality.

the gift has been accepted. She returns to the clearing and is pleased to find the steak gone. She feels that no other animal would take the eagle's food.

Returning to the house, she finds herself talking with the women who are present for the birthday party. She is very surprised at how comfortable she feels with them for she has always felt apprehensive and, therefore, avoided groups of women. Women, in her mind, have always been more superficial than men.

These women give her much support as she talks about the ritual and Rose is able to feel and accept the caring. The women seem to have a role in the ritual. "In a funny way, almost as that moon, supportive behind the eagle. Quiet and serene. There all the time. That only the eagle was out of whack. And the women were there to say its O.K. 'You can handle this.'"

On the drive back home, Rose relates a dream to the Metis woman whom she is beginning to see as her spiritual advisor. The woman, who is driving, slows the car. "(She) looked at me directly almost with the same anger the eagle had, and said, 'You know damn well how to interpret that dream! Don't rely on me.'" Rose is initially hurt by the seeming rejection but quickly realizes that she does have the ability to be a responsible adult towards herself. "She seemed to free something in me." From that time on Rose did her own dream interpretation.

After the ritual, Rose's depression and stuckness are totally gone. The ritual starts a life clarification and healing process.

Rose starts the healing when she takes responsibility for nourishing her own body. "I think that - let's take it from the point of view of a psychological process - I think the process started when I thought I needed good, healthy food to repair my body. Probably in a symbolic sense I was saying I needed to repair my psyche and my soul from every point of view." The nourishment of her psyche comes when she opens herself to God, the other women and herself during the ritual.

Rose views the eagle as a spiritual guide. "I can only make contact with it through permission of God. It does seem to ease periods of stress in my life." The Metis woman tells Rose that it is strange she saw the eagle for it is a very masculine figure usually only seen by men. It symbolizes healing and creation. After the ritual, "it struck me right away that my own masculine energies were being either misused or had been broken or damaged in some way. Not correctly put back together and were fighting me or angry, or working against me. And also obliterating some of the quieter, more feminine (energies)."

For a while Rose conducts her ritual often and especially on the month anniversary. It is always done at night. But then Rose realizes that, by doing it so frequently, she is not integrating the awareness and knowledge she has gained. "I think I had applied a lot of the power to the idea that both God and the eagle were external to myself....And I'm getting more and more confident that this is an inner process, not an external process."

Now she conducts the ritual infrequently when she feels very

drained or goes through an emotionally upsetting experience. She relies on herself more and feels her masculine and feminine aspects are more balanced. The ritual was needed to make sense of the vision but it accomplished much more. As she recounted her ritual to me, Rose spoke of the great healing that has come from the experience.

Synthesis of Rose's Journey

Thus the art of life is not seen
as holding to Yang and banishing
Yin but as keeping the two in
balance because there cannot be
one without the other.

Alan Watts

Rose's concentration on Yang had become so extreme she was almost completely unable to nurture herself. The anxiety generated by malnutrition finally became strong enough to goad her into the nurturing gesture of providing herself with food. This one step demonstrated a willingness to change and her journey to wholeness began.

Rose's journey was to take her on an exploration of her long-repressed feminine side. Mothering herself by providing physical sustenance freed her stuck creativity. The drawings she produced felt good where in the past her art work had only engaged her intellect.

Five days of feeding her bodily and artistic needs prepared Rose to open her spiritual side; an aspect she didn't believe to exist. Her vision of the eagle was initially too overwhelming and so she repressed it.

She was too far along the path of metanoia, however, to be successful in pushing her spirituality or femininity away. When the

vision finally bloomed in her consciousness, Rose knew she needed help to understand and integrate it. Fortunately, help was nearby. Her cousin was able to direct Rose to a wise woman who could guide her further along the path.

Rose demonstrated her commitment to her quest by contacting the wise woman and arranging to meet; which turned out to be quite a difficult task. Once in contact with her helper, Rose regressed. She became childlike, trusting and accepting even when what was asked of her was foreign or sounded silly. Her masculine rational side was almost totally disengaged.

Rose came to the site of her ritual humbly and with gifts. The rite was full of feminine symbolism: a full moon above the dark clearing in the woods where she fed the eagle. The acknowledgement that God exists and the beginning of a personal relationship with the Creator opened Rose to her spirituality.

The "reception" phase of the ritual occurred the next day as Rose had her first positive experience of what it was to be a woman. The women who listened to her as she recounted her ritual, acted as excellent role models for Rose. They were sensitive, supportive, open, serene, and strong in their femininity. Rose's resistance to her Yin was just about gone.

Her femininity, however, had only grown to the level of a young girl. She was still dependent and relatively passive. On the ride home she tried to continue this dependent role by presenting a dream for analysis to the wise woman. Her helper harshly rejected Rose's

powerless role, shocking Rose into growing up.

Much change had taken place within Rose. She had transformed her unfinished business: meaninglessness, lack of control, and sense of isolation, to a sense of completion by confirming the power of her feminine half.

Rose had only matured, however, to female adolescence. She believed that most of the power she experienced was within and released by the ritual. Therefore, she conducted it regularly. As her maturing continued, Rose realized that she was not integrating her learning. The artist within her realized that the power was inside her not within the concrete production.

Now, Rose only conducts the ritual rarely, at very significant times in her life. She still views herself as a warrior, but now as a spiritual warrior. Her feminine and masculine sides work well together and Rose accepts the responsibility for being all of herself. She is so much more than she was before.

Ken--Personal Information

They cannot scare me with their empty spaces
Between stars - on stars where no human race is.
I have it in me so much nearer home
To scare myself with my own desert places.
Robert Frost

Ken remembers nothing of the accident; which is probably just as well. The memory would be very frightening. The police told him that if he hadn't been riding such a heavy motorcycle he would be dead. The four wheel drive vehicle that hit him rounded the corner in his lane travelling 70-100 miles per hour.

Vague memories of rhododendrons lining the entrance to the hospital, initially seemed to Ken to be evidence that he had driven himself there, but the extent of his injuries negated that. He was essentially unconscious for twelve days. The brief conscious periods were confused with a mixture of hallucinations and reality.

In all, Ken visited the operation room seven times. "My injuries ended up being a total of 29 fractures, um, my left femur was crushed, much like taking a branch and breaking it over your knee, and my kneecap was smashed. The tibia was cracked down the length of it. My left wrist had 11 fractures in it, comminuted, is that the word they use? And um, both thumbs, the trapezium bones in both thumbs were broken. My shoulder blades, the left one, the socket of the left shoulder blade was snapped off and the right blade had a crack fracture in it. My lower jaw had two cracks probably about equal distance, either side of, say centre line of the lower jaw, vertical centre line. And the upper jaw on the right side was cracked, and both condyls of the jaw have been broke off and healed on at the wrong angles....And then of course. I got hit in the head sufficiently that my upper denture, which was a complete one, was smashed.

Months after the accident, Ken was referred to me by his neuropsychologist. He was having difficulty adjusting to the fact of his head injury. Of particular distress to him was the high anxiety he experienced each time he drove past the accident site. Ken lived in the country and the only road leading from his home is the one where the accident occurred.

I was told by the hospital that Ken was in his early 30's yet when he entered my office he looked 20 years older. A tall man, he walked hunched and very carefully. Ken's face appeared closed and wary but that attitude did not suit him. The laugh lines around his eyes and mouth spoke of open friendliness that had taken its toll in the accident. Ken was obviously used to his athletic body obeying him

unhesitatingly. For as he slowly and awkwardly sat in the chair he had chosen, a frustrated helplessness clearly showed.

Initially, I attempted to desensitize Ken to the accident site with visualization and other techniques. Due to his head injury, however, he was unable to generate any anxiety talking about or visualizing the scene. He had to be actually there for the anxiety to show. Ken reported that driving past the accident site felt like driving over himself. He would experience intense hate, disgust, and anxiety, "that didn't leave my feelings for many, many hours of that day. The load stayed there for a long time. And I kept loading up every time I went by."

Also, in our discussions Ken stated how he felt generally powerless and restricted due to the injuries he had sustained. His self-esteem had taken a beating. He wondered if he might be somewhat to blame for the accident and yet no one was telling him because of his injuries.

As the desensitization techniques were not effective, I wondered if a ritual might be useful. Ken agreed immediately to undertake one, and in developing it I was careful to keep in mind his more general concerns of powerlessness and incompetence.

Paraphrase of Ken's Ritual

Table 3 lists the meaning units, paraphrases, and themes in Ken's experience, while the generalized descriptions of the clustered themes are found in Table 9.

The first step in Ken's ritual is to gather information about the

Table 8
Thematic Abstraction of Ken's Experience

Meaning Units from Transcribed Interview	Two Levels of Abstraction	
	1. Paraphrases	2. Themes
1. And (taking) my teeth out of a ditch and um, looking it over and spending some time thinking about what had happened there and trying to come to my own conclusions as to why I got myself into that predicament.	He spent time during the ritual clarifying the accident.	Purposefulness
2. You suggested that I go down to the police detachment and ask the sergeant about what he found and what they wanted to show me, not really knowing what they were going to say to me, or show me, but do it anyway. And that had a tremendous disarming effect.	Becoming more informed about the accident took away a lot of the anxiety	Gathering information
3. And then to confirm that I wasn't at fault helped to unload a little of the guilt.	Information helped him to feel less guilty.	Confirmation
4. (seeing pictures of the scene) but it brings the realism um, to, not to life, but it brings the realism out of it.	Reality sinks in more while viewing photographs.	Confirmation
5. (seeing pictures of the scene) What it did do was make me deal with it. It's a bit like, um, I guess people say if you're in an airplane crash as a pilot student, or just a pilot, the first thing you should do is get back into another airplane and face it. Don't let it sit in the offing as something you can't deal with.	Confronting the accident through photographs helped him come to terms with it.	Courage to be as oneself
6. I didn't have anything to do it with and didn't even know that I could go down to the police station and get this information for example.	He needed someone to tell him what to do.	Need for guidance
7. So I just didn't have a way where I had to face the situation. I just left it.	He was unable to find a way on his own to deal with his anxiety.	Directionlessness

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| 8. And then the hatred and all similar words that comes because somebody saw fit to drive on the wrong side of the road built up anxieties of hate and disgust and a lot of bad circumstances that didn't leave my feelings for many, many hours of that day. | Whenever he drove over the site his negative emotions overwhelmed him. | Unfinished business |
| 9. Somebody had to say, "This isn't a stupid thing to do, just go do it". It's a bit like not knowing whether your activity about something is going to be socially acceptable. Someone has to justify or rationalize you into believing that you should do it. | He needed someone to help him find a socially acceptable way to deal with his anxiety. | Need for support |
| 10. Yeh, certainly it became a good idea as soon as someone else said go do it, and what should I do when I got there. In fact that someone in a professional capacity would suggest doing this gave it a concrete idea, gave it concrete foundation. Gave me permission, that's right. | He needed an authority figure to give him permission to undertake the ritual. | Need for permission |
| 11. And I think I more or less said to them (boys), it was my responsibility not to leave this garbage on the street. So from their point of view, they didn't really get involved in, in, shall we say the psychological reasons for doing this. They saw it as a mechanical thing that they had to do. It was a help out thing. | He explained the ritual to his sons as his responsibility to clean up the accident site. | Accepting responsibility |
| 12. I think I would have been slightly embarrassed, still having someone else at that location, other than them. I didn't have to justify what I was doing any further than I already had. | It was important that those present at the ritual accept what he was doing. | Isolation |
| 13. And the younger fellow, who was involved in the accident with me, um, seemed to take a little bit of, ah, there was something in it for him, I'm not sure what it was... Something psychological. | He was surprised that the son who had been in the accident also benefited from the ritual. | Growth of participant |
| 14. (being at the site during the ritual) Well, no doubt there was an increased heart rate. | Being at the site initially agitated him. | Agitation |

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| <p>15. But back to standing in the location where this accident happened, I spent some time looking at why the driver had been in the location he was in. I saw where I was driving on the road, and found out that I was most right on the road. Right as opposed to left. And that he had managed to manoever to his left sufficiently to even remove my escape route. So I faced what had happened in that regard.</p> | <p>During the ritual, he clarified what had happened during the accident.</p> | <p>Gathering information</p> |
| <p>16. The aura of the place, the electric feeling of the place, of being there um, it was there initially but just standing there I seemed to forget about it. My mind got busy with other things.</p> | <p>The initial agitation disappeared as he participated in the ritual.</p> | <p>Extinction of anxiety</p> |
| <p>17. It wasn't as traumatic as I thought it was, I guess is the summary of the event and certainly dealing with it. diffused it even further.</p> | <p>He was surprised that the agitation decreased so much.</p> | <p>Reduced anxiety</p> |
| <p>18. It never did totally (diffuse it). It's hard to go to a place, a pinpoint on this earth and say, "Gee, I damn near died there."</p> | <p>He will never become totally neutral to the site for he nearly died there.</p> | <p>Acceptance of mortality</p> |
| <p>19. Bits of myself, my teeth, um, it was hard to imagine how a denture could be broken into so many fragments in your mouth and not cut your throat to pieces or your roof of your your mouth to pieces. Uh, it did cut up my lips pretty badly and I have had a fair bit of surgery. Um, I don't know how to describe that. That's powerful.</p> | <p>It was a very powerful feeling to confront his injuries by finding bits of himself.</p> | <p>Contemplation of bodily fragility</p> |
| <p>20. (collecting the teeth) We put it all into a bag and I took it down to the lawyer's office and they collected it for evidence. So there it became something useful I suppose.</p> | <p>The teeth he found served another useful purpose; as evidence.</p> | <p>Need for symbols</p> |

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| <p>21. Don't really know why but I kept one little fragment (tooth) myself. I think what I was doing was keeping enough of it that I could say to my boys when they get a little older, and they get a car and you know how children are, "Hey, this is what happened to me. Open my album and have a look."</p> | <p>He wanted a concrete symbol of the accident for the future to help his sons become safer drivers.</p> | <p>Need for symbols</p> |
| <p>22. (cleaning up the site) I knew that it wasn't there anymore. I knew that I had done what I could do to make this whole event less difficult. I had accomplished that.</p> | <p>He felt proud that he had removed evidence of the accident.</p> | <p>Sense of completion</p> |
| <p>23. Yeah, going to see them (police) was, well see what they did was they told me the circumstances that this other fella said caused the accident. He explained the circumstances, at least he saw it, how this thing happened.</p> | <p>He needed to find a meaning for the accident.</p> | <p>Gathering information</p> |
| <p>24. I needed to know what the reasons were.</p> | <p>Clarification was important.</p> | <p>Clarification
Meaninglessness</p> |
| <p>25. (after the ritual) It didn't have a disarming effect immediately but what did happen the first time round was, "Did I miss any garbage?" You know I went as I drove by looking to see if all those shiny pieces were coming back at me.</p> | <p>It was important that he had done a complete job.</p> | <p>Perfectionism</p> |
| <p>26. (feeling driving over site first time after ritual) Being there and now having dealt with that took the anxiety of that location away.</p> | <p>After the ritual, he could confront the site without anxiety.</p> | <p>Extinction of anxiety</p> |
| <p>27. And the biggest thing was really not so much picking up all the pieces, although they would be a lasting reminder on a daily basis, but going there and standing there. Because if you drive the road it's a bit like going to a scary place. Everytime you get closer and closer it becomes more anxious but if</p> | <p>He took back the power he had given to the accident site by confronting it directly.</p> | <p>Extinction of anxiety
Regression</p> |

you can go stand in that scary place and deal with it. and get it out of your hair, uh, then it wouldn't be a problem.

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| 28. I told my wife I was doing it and she didn't see it as important...I mentioned it to my in-laws and got a rather hurting laugh out of them, "What for?" Surprise. There certainly was no support. And it just made me feel a little bit more inadequate, or more alone. | When some people made light of his ritual, he felt isolated and less adequate. | Isolation |
| 29. There was no need to explain to anybody else. It was a personal satisfaction goal. It didn't have to have someone else's support or was justification. | Other people's negative judgement didn't stop him from undertaking the ritual because he felt it important to do. | Courage to be as oneself |
| 30. Oh yes, you had to have someone say, take you by the hand and say, "Do it. Here's what you will get get out of it. This is the value for it." | He needed someone to guide him in the ritual. | Need for guidance |
| 31. (saying no schooling provides people with the skills to deal with tragedy) In this particular case, psychotherapy to learn how to deal with things. And that's how I look at it. It's another kind of education. | He would have found it helpful to have been taught to deal with tragedy in a structured way. | Structure is important |
| 32. I was more in control. It meant that I had taken away a location on the earth, if you like, that I was unwilling to go to. | The ritual helped him to feel more powerful. | Control lessens anxiety |
| 33. I had taken away the power of that location. It didn't have any strength over me. It didn't have any effect on me psychologically. In that sense, definitely I was stronger and in control. And that really is the meat of why we did it in the first place as I see it. | The most important reason for the ritual was to take back his power. | Realizing power
Lack of control |

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| <p>34. Society, people, loved ones, family, whatever get annoyed, and I can understand it when you keep talking about something. It's part of your hourly conversations. And if one could get rid of all the need and deal with all the circumstances that causes them to talk about an event then society wouldn't be turned off by your continually bringing up this topic. And that sense, it (the ritual) away that part of things.</p> | <p>Prior to the ritual, he felt others pulled away from him because he was not dealing well with the results of the accident. Afterwards, he felt others accepted him more.</p> | <p>Inclusion
Isolation</p> |
| <p>35. Except to do a good job. You know one little piece left lying on the street, shining at you in the sun, glass or whatever it was, um, would. you might as well leave them all there. You have to get every one of them, because you don't need the physical visual reminder.</p> | <p>It was important to do the cleanup completely.</p> | <p>Perfectionism</p> |
| <p>36. I got down there specifically to do that job and I spent an hour and a half doing it. Um, as I got there I realized the importance of staying there. I was starting to see the benefit of being in that physical location.</p> | <p>Giving time to the ritual increased the positive effect.</p> | <p>Purposefulness
Personalizing is important</p> |
| <p>37. It meant I had really cleaned the place up. To the point where today if you said, "Let's go see if we can find a fragment of your bike on the road", I'd say, "Well I don't think you will, it's cleaned up."</p> | <p>He still feels proud of the complete job he did.</p> | <p>Sense of completion</p> |

Table 9
Higher Order Thematic Description of Ken's Experience

Thematic Clusters	Generalized Descriptions
1. Isolation (Excerpt Nos. from Table 8: 12, 28, 34)	He felt that others withdrew from him because of his inability to deal with the accident.
2. Unfinished Business (8)	Intense emotional reactions he could not get rid of, overwhelmed him everytime he drove over the site.
3. Directionlessness (7)	He didn't have any idea of how to resolve his anxiety.
4. Meaninglessness (24)	He had no reasons or meaning for the accident, so searched for some way to make sense of it.
5. Lack of Control (33)	The accident site seemed to have almost complete control over him whenever he drove by it.
6. Need for Symbols (20, 21)	It was important for him to keep a tooth as a symbol of the accident once he had taken his power back from the site.
7. Perfectionism (25, 35)	He checked that he had done a complete job of cleaning up the site. It was essential that all visual reminders were gone.
8. Structure is Important (31)	He needed a structure to learn how to deal with his anxiety.
9. Purposefulness (1, 36)	He took the ritual very seriously, giving it his full attention and a lot of energy.
10. Personalizing is Important (36)	The ritual had to be done on the site where the accident occurred. This place had a personal meaning which made it very powerful.
11. Gathering Information (2, 15, 23)	Gathering information about the cause of the accident and about his own actions relieved anxiety. He received information from the police and by examining the site.
12. Clarification (24)	The ritual helped him clarify the reasons for the accident.
13. Realizing Power (33)	He felt he took back the power he had given to the accident site. The power was now his to use again.
14. Control Lessens Anxiety (32)	After the ritual he felt more in control. Because of this he was much less anxious about being at the accident site.
15. Agitation (14)	As he approached the site to begin the rite he experienced an increased heart rate.

16. Need for Support
(9) He needed the support of the therapist in order to conduct the ritual. Without this support he would have worried whether this activity was socially acceptable.
17. Need for Guidance
(6, 30) He needed guidance to go to the police station and to conduct his ritual. Without guidance he would not have known what to do or how to go about it.
18. Inclusion
(34) After he had conducted the rite he felt he was accepted by family and society again.
19. Need for Permission
(10) He needed permission to conduct the rite from someone in a professional capacity. Otherwise, he would not have undertaken it.
20. Confirmation
(3, 4) The ritual of going to the police station confronted him with the fact of the accident.
21. Acceptance of Mortality
(18) He was able to accept the fact that he had nearly died at the accident site.
22. Contemplation of Bodily Fragility
(19) The realization of how fragile and vulnerable his body is was another way he accepted reality.
23. Sense of Completion
(22, 37) By removing all evidence of himself at the site he felt a sense of closure. His incapacitating anxiety was gone.
24. Regression
(27) It was necessary for him to return to the exact place the accident occurred to conduct his ritual.
25. Reduced Anxiety
(17) Even during the ritual he felt his anxiety diminish.
26. Extinction of Anxiety
(16, 26, 27) His anxiety about the accident site was gone by the time he had finished his rite.
27. Courage to be as Oneself
(5, 29) It took courage for him to physically and psychologically confront the accident site. Yet he knew he needed to do it alone. He also needed to rely on his own motivation because he received only negative judgement about the rite from his family.
28. Accepting Responsibility
(11) It helped his self-image to know that he was taking responsibility for himself by clearing up the site.
29. Growth of Participant
(13) He did not realize that participating in the ritual would be psychologically beneficial for the son who had also been in the accident. Ken was pleased when he saw his son's growth.

accident. He makes an appointment with the police, "and that had a tremendous disarming effect." He is told that the other driver has been found totally responsible. Ken is shown photographs of the accident, including some of himself lying amidst the debris. The photos are emotionally difficult to view but they do make the accident more real for Ken. For the first time he feels he is really facing it. "Yeah, I had to face it. It brought all these things that I was most willing just to leave and never look at, like having a bad picture, you never turn the page."

Gathering facts from the police is a very important first step in Ken's ritual. Yet he states he would never have thought to do it on his own. It was months since the accident and no one had ever suggested he do it. When I offer the task as part of a ritual, Ken shows immediate eagerness. "So I just didn't have a way where I had to face the situation. I just left it. But this was a positive approach to a method to face it."

For the next part of his ritual, Ken collects brooms, dustpans, garbage bags, and his two young boys. He chose his sons to be with him because he was unable to meet the physical needs of the ritual alone. When he had mentioned the ritual to the other adults in his family, he was met with nonacceptance, but he decided to do it anyway because it felt right.

Ken introduces the ritual to his sons by telling them, "It was my responsibility not to leave this garbage on the street." He did not explain the psychological reasons for the activity. After the

negative reaction Ken had received from the adults, he does not want any other adult present. "I think I would have been slightly embarrassed." With the boys, "I didn't have to justify what I was doing any further than I already had."

As he arrives at the site, Ken feels an increased heart rate. "The aura of the place, the electric feeling of the place, of being there um, it was there initially but just standing there I seemed to forget about it. My mind got busy with other things." The marks the police placed on the road are still present. Shiny pieces of glass and plastic glint in the sun but they don't bother him as much as he anticipated.

Ken's younger son had been involved in the accident as a passenger, but was thrown clear from the bike and suffered only a few bruises. At the scene, he tells Ken what he remembers of the accident. His father is surprised that the ritual seems to have an unexpected positive effect on his son. The boy seems more settled afterwards.

Ken and the boys spend an hour and a half at the site, picking up all pieces associated with the accident. They find four teeth and bits of glass and plastic. Ken keeps one tooth to show his boys as they get older how dangerous cars can be. The other teeth he gives to his lawyer for evidence and the rest of the debris goes into a garbage bag and then to the dump.

Picking up the pieces has an immediate disarming effect on Ken. "I knew that it wasn't there anymore. I knew that I had done wha

could to make this whole event less difficult. I had accomplished that. And I had gone there and dealt with being there."

Ken feels that he had taken his power back from the site. Though still restricted by his injuries, he feels a sense of pride and heightened self-esteem. Previously, he had often talked about his anxieties in driving past the site and thought that others tended to withdraw from him; not wanting to hear the story again. After conducting the ritual, Ken doesn't feel the same need to relate the story and feels that he is more acceptable to and accepted by "society."

The next time Ken drives past the accident site he feels a curiosity, "'Did I miss any garbage?' You know I went as I drove by looking to see if all those shiny pieces were coming back at me." Since then he feels no anxiety driving past the site. Sometimes he doesn't even consciously register that this place had any particular relevance to him.

Synthesis of Ken's Journey

You need only claim the events of
your life to make yourself yours.
When you truly possess all you have
been and done, which may take some
time, you are fierce with reality.
Florida Scott-Maxwell

Ken experienced many losses in his accident, the most crippling was loss of personal power. He perceived the accident site as an enemy that had conquered him. He was left anxious, bereft of meaning, direction, control, and connection to others. His sense of self was as thoroughly shattered as his body and cognitive abilities.

Prior to the ritual, it took all the self-responsibility he was in touch with to just accept the referral and come to psychotherapy. Ken desperately wanted the accident site to lose its hold on him, but he had no idea of how this would be accomplished. He hoped the therapist would have some power to help.

Ken came to his quest tentatively, with little commitment, but he did come. He laid his problem at the feet of the therapist and prepared himself to follow directions. Due to his cognitive deficits, talking about his anxiety was all Ken could accomplish. Getting in touch with the feelings he had as he drove over the site was impossible in the therapist's office.

His therapist suggested the idea of a ritual to Ken. He was aware that it might help his anxiety. The therapist's underlying goal was to have Ken act in a potent manner and to desensitize him to the dreaded place.

To touch Ken, the ritual needed to involve him in various concrete activities so that he could own his power. It must also be highly structured so that he could easily understand it.

The first part of the ritual, gathering information at the police station, relieved anxiety and provided some meaning and direction. The activity gave him hope that his unfinished business could be resolved. Ken's inner strength really began to show at this point, for he met opposition to his ritual. His wife and other relatives ridiculed his anxiety and undertaking. Nevertheless, he persevered.

The second part of the ritual took much courage. Ken rode to the

accident site armed with brooms, dustpans, and bags to battle for his power. His stated objective was to clear the place of all evidence of himself. Because it was important for him to do a thorough job, he asked his two young sons to accompany him. His injured body was neither strong nor mobile.

After an initial agitation as he reached the site, Ken quickly experienced a growing sense of power. He found himself able to tolerate the realities of the accident and of his fragile mortal body. These realizations were added to the confirmation he received from the police of not being negligent.

Acceptance of these realities produced healing. The next time he drove over the site Ken sensed a completion. His anxiety had vanished. He realized that he had had to regress, to go back to the site and tolerate it, before regaining his power. His was not the only healing to come out of the ritual. The son who had been in the accident with him also seemed more settled after participating in the ritual.

The accident site no longer held his power. Ken was even interested now in retaining a tooth as a symbol of the experience. Once again, he could be proud of himself and could accept responsibility for his life. As well, the ritual experience gave him some hope for the future; for he had other battles to fight. He had been able to win this one, maybe the future operations and court appearances would be manageable.

Sandy--Personal Information

a time to seek, and a time to lose;
a time to keep, and a time to cast away.
Ecclesiastes 3: 1-8

As Sandy neared the end of her University degree programme as a mature student, she became aware of an increasing feeling of unease. "I know when I'm at peace with myself and I wasn't." This distressing feeling had been with her for a long time but now it couldn't be ignored.

As she had recently entered her forties, Sandy felt a pressure to resolve her anxiety soon. She wanted middle age to be a time of peace and accomplishment. She was pleased that her intense, studious personality had enabled her to return to university and complete the degree she had started long ago. Now it was time to complete this unfinished business.

Sandy looked like a person who was carrying a load. Prematurely stooped, with hair beginning to gray, she blushed and teared very easily. She thought of herself as pretty average-looking, compact build and medium height. Her only really distinctive feature was her grey-blue eyes which sparkled when an idea or word intrigued her, for Sandy was very attracted to the written and spoken word.

Sandy had experienced a large number of losses and she knew her anxiety had something to do with them. These losses included her mother's death just after giving birth to Sandy, her first child's death by drowning at age three, her mother-in-law's death by cancer, her father's death by cancer, a school ski bus accident which involved

injury and death to some of her children's friends, the breakup of her marriage, the loss of her home, the breakup of the deep relationship with her best friend, and finally the death of a young girl who had been a close friend of the family. She was very close to her mother-in-law and had nursed her through the terminal illness.

The relationship with her father had been distant, but at the end they developed a closeness. "A few days before he died he held me in his arms and kissed me for the first time in my life." The loss of her home was a major blow to Sandy. She and her husband had built a home on the property she had grown up on, using many building materials that had come from their land. "My mother-in-law had died in that house. I figured my kids would get married from that house. I figured I'd die in that house....And yet it had to be sold."

Sandy knew the past losses were contributing to her feelings of unease. To clarify what aspects of the past needed to be resolved she decided to see a counsellor. Past experiences with counselling to deal with the death of her son had been positive, so Sandy was willing to reach out again once she had found the right therapist.

The counselling session clarified that she had come to terms in a healthy way with all losses; except for her mother's death. Identifying the problem was a "tremendous relief". Pushing away or ignoring the unease was not an option for Sandy. "It was something that would continue and would influence the rest of my life, if I didn't deal with it...I felt that if I continued to carry this within me it would influence the way I behaved in relationships."

Sandy realized that she didn't have a clear sense of her mother as a person. As she was growing up, her mother was rarely mentioned and only then in conjunction with her death. She had never been allowed to grieve. "Didn't get to know her, didn't get to say goodbye. And yet there was a little baby hurting. Not knowing how or why, but missing her mother."

The counselling session lasted two and one half hours and when she left Sandy knew what she needed to do. Now she had to decide how to do it. It was important to her to decide herself the route to take, so she did not return to the counsellor until her direction was clear. At that time a local newspaper carried a full page article on rituals which Sandy read with interest.

Two weeks later, at the second counselling session, Sandy told her counsellor, "I really need to experience my mother as a living person, I need to understand what happened--her death, and I need to bury her. And when I do that I'll lay all the ghosts at once." Her counsellor supported her in her goals and gave some suggestions about finding details of her mother's death. That was the last counselling session Sandy needed.

Paraphrase of Sandy's Ritual

The thematic abstraction of Sandy's experience is found in Table 10, while Table 11 lists the generalized descriptions of the clustered themes.

The first step of Sandy's ritual is to gather as much information about her mother as she can. She tries with the support of her

Table 10
Thematic Abstraction of Sandy's Experience

Meaning Units from Transcribed Interview	Two Levels of Abstraction	
	1. Paraphrases	2. Themes
1. (Not sure what specifically was bothering her) It was something that would continue and would influence the rest of my life, if I didn't deal with it.	She was confused about the feelings of unease but knew they had to be dealt with.	Unfinished business
2. I know that I can't get anywhere unless I have the right counsellor and I know what I need in a counsellor.	She was unable to sort her problem out alone and was sure of the type of helper needed.	Need for guidance
3. So I went away and I really believe it's the client that has to figure out what you have to do about something.	She took responsibility for the solution to her problem.	Accepting responsibility
4. So at this point I needed to do that myself (get to know the woman her mother was). So I set about doing that.	She needed to take action herself.	Purposefulness
5. Oh, (starting to cry) that identified for me why I've always hated the military. It did, I always had a deep feeling like a feeling of distaste and distrust for the military, and I know that's where that comes from.	She clarified her deeply negative feelings about the military.	Clarification
6. So the first thing I did then was to come to know her. To come to know the details of her death. To know the details of her original burial.	The first part of the ritual was to gather information about her mother.	Gathering information
7. And I found all along the way, people were so willing to help out. At the funeral chapel, the woman down there, she was just wonderful.	She appreciated the help others gave her.	Others courage to share self
8. When I decided I was going to do a ritual I knew it was going to be a burial ritual. Because when she died she was cremated and her ashes scattered so there was no place that I could I could (starting to cry) go. And I knew that I had to have a place.	She needed a place to go that she could associate with her mother, so the ritual needed to create that place.	Need for symbols

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| 9. So I went to the burial park and ordered a stone and they said it would take approximately three weeks to get there. And I thought, "Ideal". What I'm going through is mentally (starting to cry) I'm saying to myself. "From this day I've been told my mother is going to die." | She needed to go through the process of anticipating her mother's death. | Structure is important |
| 10. (Re: finding information about mother quickly) You see I was used to studying full time. I had a job to do. So I got on and went about it very efficiently (laughs). | She used the skills she had learned as a student to help with her ritual. | Purposefulness |
| 11. So I spoke to the people I wanted to join in the ritual and I was quite careful in their selection. | The selection of participants was made carefully. | Realizing power |
| 12. It was my child relationship to my mother which was the important relationship there (in ritual)...I couldn't be the mother; I had to be the child. So I knew I didn't want my children there. | Prior to the ritual she clarified that she needed to grieve her lost relationship to her mother. | Clarification |
| 13. And before I did it I told my children what I was doing and why. And I explained why I was excluding them. Because I didn't want them to find out about it later and well, "She didn't want me there." | It was important to let her children know about the ritual and why they were excluded. | Courage to share oneself
Public statement of loss |
| 14. But the people I did want there was the counsellor, for number one. Um, a husband and wife who were very close friends of both me and my husband...And another long time woman friend came. | She asked people to attend who she was very close to yet whose roles did not conflict with the ritual's purpose. | Need for support |
| 15. (Prior to ceremony) I was gathering thoughts and ideas and feelings. I'm a person who commits things to paper. I didn't commit anything until the day before. And um, by that time I'd sorted everything out in my mind. And wrote down an agenda of what I wanted to do. | Prior to the ritual she thought of what she wanted included. The day before she wrote an agenda. | Control lessens anxiety |

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| 16. And um, I had no feelings of time moving at all. It's a strange feeling. | During the ritual time seemed suspended. | Timelessness |
| 17. And you know, these were people who felt really comfortable together. | The group felt connected and at ease. | Inclusion |
| 18. All the time I've been thinking, you know, I didn't know my mother, I didn't have anything that belonged to her, you know I just don't have anything. | She felt very disconnected from her mother. | Isolation |
| 19. And so I had been gathering things that did belong to her. (Importance of having mom's things) Oh just tangible. | It was important to have concrete symbols of her mother. | Need for symbols |
| 20. And if you have something physically left of someone who's died, it's not like they just weren't there at all. | The articles proved her mother had existed. | Confirmation
Meaninglessness |
| 21. But I started showing the other people what I had collected. And my meaning in doing that was just to say, "This is what I've been doing to prepare for today." | It was important to inform the others of her preparations. | Courage to share oneself
Public statement of loss |
| 22. They wanted to get to know her. So when I would just hold something up for them to see and say, "I've got a copy of her birth certificate," they would ask to see it. What I had thought was going to take 1/2 hour must've taken two. | The guests spent more time than she expected looking at the articles. | Others courage to share self |
| 23. Oh they completely got caught up. They wanted to get to know her. | The guests participated deeply. | Others courage to share self |
| 24. (role S. wanted for friends) Witnesses. It's like the witnesses at a wedding. | She needed others to witness her ritual. | Need for witnesses |
| 25. (new role of includers) That was totally spontaneous; that wasn't planned. | She was surprised that the guests entered her world. | Inclusion |

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| 26. | At the beginning I said, "I don't have a word for what we are going to do today." And so I said, "Here's a whole stack of dictionaries. If you happen today to think, 'Ah hah, such and such a word fits', look it up and share it with us." | She asked for help to define the ritual. | Need for guidance |
| 27. | "You know, as we go through this this afternoon, let's talk about what it is we are doing. | She asked the guests to make comments on the ritual's process. | Inclusion |
| 28. | (Was a word found?) No, no, but uh, that's O.K. That sort of wasn't the whole point. It was just something to sort of aim for. Talk about. | The process of working together was more important than finding the right word. | Inclusion |
| 29. | We all went out in the garden and I picked certain roses to represent different people that my mother never knew. That had been significant in my life. | She needed concrete symbols of people significant to her that her mother had never known. | Need for symbols |
| 30. | So I picked one rose for each of those people. And I picked (starting to cry) another one for my marriage and another one for my home. | She also needed concrete symbols for her marriage and home. | Broken relationship |
| 31. | I asked each one of the guests to pick a rose or roses or any other flower that was significant for them. | Guests were asked to participate in choosing a concrete symbol. | Need for symbols |
| 32. | "I want you to really feel a part of this. At any time today if you want to add anything, you know we don't have a format. It's completely open to your participation; your suggestions. | It was important that guests have input into the ritual's process. | Inclusion |
| 33. | And so from there we went through the order of what would have happened on the funeral day. | She needed to re-enact the original funeral. | Regression |
| 34. | I thought that it was the actual building where the funeral had taken place. Actually it was a slightly more modern building that that same firm had moved to. But I felt quite comfortable about that. It wasn't a significant difference to me. | It was more important to have the flavour of the original funeral than the exact location. | Regression |

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| 35. The guests sat down in the pews and I read to them from your master's thesis that story about the grieving woman in India who went from door to door... It was really significant to me, and so I read from that. | She participated by reading aloud a passage about unresolved grief that was very significant to her. | Courage to share oneself

Public statement of loss |
| 36. Like it seemed to me that there should be a reading. Text, I don't know. At a wedding or a funeral there's always, somebody reads from something. | A reading was important because it's traditional. | Need for symbols

Sacralization |
| 37. (reading) Solemnizes it, ritualizes it, of course. Ah, makes it I guess, closer to other ceremonies that you've witnessed or been a part of. | She wanted her ritual to be similar to traditional ones. | Need for symbols

Sacralization |
| 38. So we just drove by there (Cenotaph) like I just wanted to show people, just to go through the steps. | Going quickly through the steps of the original ritual was enough. | Regression |
| 39. They scattered her ashes in the garden. So we went there um, just because that's where she ended up. And I don't have associations with the place. I wanted the others to go through the process. For me there had to be that pattern. | Even though the activities were not meaningful it was important to take the steps of the original rite. | Regression |
| 40. Then from there we went out to the burial park. To do it right this time. | The next step was to have a meaningful funeral. | Perfectionism |
| 41. When we'd got to the burial park, I'd asked people to say and do anything they liked until I knelt down to the grave. I said, "That's my private time." | Part of the ritual needed to be a private time for her by the space she'd chosen to associate with her mother. | Personalizing is important |
| 42. And I just talked to her and decided to let those things go to rest. | She spoke to her mother and chose to finish grieving. | Accepting responsibility |

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| 43. And I placed that (marker) in place. When I was ready. And I was. | It was important that she chose when to finish. | Realizing power |
| 44. So when I had placed the marker on there, I said "You know, I just feel so at peace." | After she finished she felt full of peace. | Sense of completion |
| 45. And then they each put a flower down and that was their time. | The guests placed their symbols on the "grave". | Need for symbols |
| 46. (after placing marker) Just a wonderful feeling of release of burden. Just wonderful. | Finishing at the plot, she felt the weight of unresolved grief lift. | Catharsis
Reduced anxiety |
| 47. After my stepmother and I had placed Dad's ashes, we had driven up to this restaurant and had a really pleasant luncheon. And I wanted to repeat those pleasant associations. | She wanted to link this ritual with a meaningful part of the ritual done after her father's death. | Perfectionism |
| 48. (purpose of luncheon) At many funerals, people will go back to somebody's house... for light refreshments. | A reception is traditional after funerals so she wanted one for hers. | Need for symbols |
| 49. Well for me, the stronger feeling was, after we buried Dad's ashes we did that, therefore after we'd buried my Mom's ashes, I'd like to do the same thing. A repetition of something that's gone well. | She knew the luncheon after her Dad's death had gone well and she wanted to repeat that in her ritual. | Perfectionism |
| 50. And you know, it's sort of a part of the funeral. That afterwards you will go back to the family's home. | The tradition of the reception makes it necessary to include. | Need for symbols |
| 51. (on choosing a Peace rose to symbolize her daughter) It's amazing how often you choose the symbolism without realizing that maybe later you'll grasp what the symbolism is. But you know, when we were driving from the restaurant, I thought, "Hey, Peace. Irene means peace." | Symbols often have unconscious as well as conscious connections. The unconscious meanings may later rise to consciousness. | Need for symbols |
| 52. But, uh, no it was in reading that newspaper article I thought, Ah hah! | Reading about using ritual to heal unresolved grief sparked her interest. | Need for guidance |

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| 53. (developing ritual) I'm a very independent person anyway. Um, I would probably take some (suggestions) and chuck some. | She was willing to listen to others in developing her ritual but wanted to make the final decisions. | Courage to be as oneself |
| 54. It needed to be pretty well tailor-made to that situation. | It needed to be a custom ritual. | Personalizing is important |
| 55. It had to be personally significant, to satisfy. | The ritual needed to have personal meaning. | Personalizing is important |
| 56. And I know that it was certainly significant for the people who participated. | It was meaningful for the guests. | Personalizing is important |
| 57. If someone had given me input at the planning stage, I would have been flexible. Once I decided we're going to do A,B,C, and D and wind up at such and such a place, I wanted to stay with that. | She would accept input from others while planning the rite, but changes would not be allowed once it was planned. | Realizing power |
| 58. Ah, just that there was some control over the events at a time when you're feeling very open and vulnerable. | The ritual provided her with a feeling of stability. | Control lessens anxiety |
| 59. Structure does give you something to hold on to. | When she was feeling out of control, structure felt like an anchor to her. | Structure is important |
| 60. Like I really feel that uh, what people feel most at a time when someone dies is a lack of control. You cannot control when death will come or to who. And I think it's that realization that, I as a human being cannot control that. If I cannot control that, so I have any control in my life? And I feel that ritual helps you feel that while you may not be able to control the event, you can control how it will impact on you. | The ritual helped her to tolerate the fact that she cannot control death. | Acceptance of mortality
Lack of control |

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| 61. People commented to me after, that they had really grown from the ritual. | The ritual produced growth in the participants as well as in Sandy. | Growth of participant |
| 62. It helped one person with her grief issue as well. | One guest found the ritual therapeutic. | Growth of participant |
| 63. I saw myself as a woman now, not as the daughter of a mother who died. | Her self-perception changed dramatically from child to woman. | Metanoia |
| 64. When kneeling at the grave I felt a feeling of spirituality which has stayed to the present day. | The ceremony at the plot elicited a feeling of spirituality which was not previously there. | Metanoia |

Table 11
Higher Order Thematic Description of Sandy's Experience

Thematic Clusters	Generalized Descriptions
1. Isolation (Excerpt Nos. from Table 10: 18)	She experienced a deep interpersonal isolation because she had no sense of connection with her mother.
2. Unfinished Business (1)	Prior to the ritual she knew her anxiety had to do with an unresolved issue but she didn't know which one.
3. Meaninglessness (20)	Prior to the ritual she had no belongings once owned by her mother. Due to this lack she experienced a feeling that her mother did not exist for her; there was no meaning attached to her.
4. Lack of Control (60)	She had not been able to tolerate the realization of how much lack of control she had over death and loss.
5. Broken Relationship (30)	During the ritual she also needed to include and grieve the two broken relationships in her life--her home and marriage.
6. Need for Symbols (8, 19, 29, 31, 36, 37, 45, 48, 50, 51)	She needed to include many symbols of both her mother's life and her own in the ritual. She also needed a place that symbolized her mother's grave so that she would have a concrete spot to go.
7. Perfectionism (40, 47, 49)	The ritual needed to be done perfectly so she included meaningful activities she had previously experienced and contrasted those with the negativity of the original funeral.
8. Structure is Important (9, 29)	She felt that structure helped her feel more in control. So she planned the ritual carefully beforehand.
9. Personal Effort (1, 29)	She knew she needed to put time and energy into the ritual to make it meaningful.
10. Personalizing is Important (41, 56, 55, 56)	It was important for her that the ritual had personal touches. This made it more satisfying.
11. Gathering Information (6)	The ritual could only be done after she had gathered information about her mother.
12. Clarification (5, 12)	She gained clarity about her distaste and distrust for the military as she gained information about the facts of her mother's death. She also realized that the child-parent relationship was the one she needed to work on in the ritual.
13. Sacralization (36, 37)	The ritual gained in power by having some activities traditional in religious rites.
14. Receiving Power (11, 43, 57)	She exercised power in choosing guests for the ritual, in deciding on the content for the ritual and in placing the marker on the "grave" only when she was ready.
15. Control Lessens Anxiety (15, 58)	Her anxiety lessened as she decided on the ritual's content.

16. Timelessness
(16) During the ritual she seemed to have no sense of the movement of time.
17. Need for Support
(14) Sandy chose guests who she knew would support her well.
18. Need for Guidance
(2, 26, 52) Sandy knew she needed the help of a therapist to clarify her issue. She then asked her guests to provide guidance, if they felt it was needed, during the ritual. She also received guidance in designing the ritual from an article she found on ritual.
19. Inclusion
(17, 25, 27, 28, 32) The guests included themselves in the ritual by showing a lot of interest in the activity. Sandy also felt included by them in a deeply touching manner.
20. Others' Courage to Share Self
(7, 22, 23) She was touched by how willing others were to go out of their way to help her with the ritual. Her doctor, the woman at the funeral parlour, and her guests gave much of themselves.
21. Courage to Share Oneself
(13, 21, 35) When she realized she did not want her children there she told them herself rather than try to hide the fact from them. She also shared the process she had undertaken with her guests and read aloud a passage that was personally meaningful.
22. Need for Witnesses
(24) She was aware of needing others to witness her ritual, "like at a wedding."
23. Public Statement of Loss
(13, 21, 35) It was important for her to tell her guests and children about her ritual and the reasons for conducting it.
24. Confirmation
(20) Her mother's belongings that Sandy collected had a special meaning for her. They confirmed the fact that her mother had existed.
25. Acceptance of Mortality
(60) She could tolerate the fact of her own mortality due to the ritual.
26. Sense of Completion
(44) As she placed the marker on the plot she experienced a strong sense of completion.
27. Regression
(33, 34, 38, 39) She needed to regress by first going through the motions of the original funeral.
28. Reduced Anxiety
(46) Her stuck feelings of grief abruptly released as she finished at the plot.
29. Courage to be as Oneself
(53) She was aware that in developing the ritual she could rely on herself.
30. Accepting Responsibility
(3, 42) She took responsibility for deciding how to resolve her problem. Then at the end of the ritual she chose to let her grief go and reach out to life.
31. Growth of Participant
(61, 62) She was pleased and surprised that her guests also found the ritual growthful. In fact one person was helped with her own grief issue.
32. Metanoia
(63, 64) After the ritual Sandy's self-perception was completely changed. She now viewed herself as a woman rather than a child. She also experienced an increased sense of spirituality which has stayed with her.

general practitioner to acquire the medical records of her mother's treatment and death, but they have been destroyed. Just making the effort to find them gives Sandy a settled feeling. She talks with relatives who knew her mother well, determinedly asking questions when they try to evade the issues.

Some information which she heard in bits and pieces as a child now comes clear. Her mother went into heavy labour on a Saturday and it was only on Wednesday that the doctor asked for a second opinion. The ensuing caesarean saved Sandy's life but her mother was so infected that she died three days later. She could easily have been saved. The sulfa drugs to treat the infection were available in the Veterans' Hospital across the road from the General Hospital in which she lay. The time was just after WWII however, and the life-saving drugs were available only to veterans. Sandy found "that identified for me why I've always hated the military." As a child she had overheard little bits of the story.

"When I decided I was going to do a ritual I knew it was going to be a burial ritual. Because when she died she was cremated and her ashes scattered so there was no place I could (starting to cry) go. And I knew I had to have a place."

So Sandy searches for information and one and a half weeks after her last counselling session she feels she has enough to proceed. She appreciates the support she is receiving from the counsellor, general practitioner and others. "I found all along the way people were so willing to help out. At the funeral chapel, the woman down there; she

was just wonderful." Now Sandy orders a gravestone made. She is told that it should be delivered in three weeks. "Ideal. What I'm going through is mentally (starting to cry) I'm saying to myself, 'From this day I've been told my mother is going to die.'" The three weeks are spent grieving, gathering some of her mother's belongings and talking to more relatives. "The day when the stone comes is unpredictable. Like the day of death. Whichever day they phone me and say the stone is in; three days after that I will have a funeral."

The stone arrives and Sandy contacts the people she wants to be with her at the "funeral." It is very important to her to include some and exclude others. Because "it was the child relationship to my mother which was the important relationship there." She did not want her children present. "I couldn't be the mother; I had to be the child." So she told her children what she was doing and why they were excluded. She has a close relationship with her stepmother but couldn't see her as being there because, "you can't mourn one mother with a perfectly good one standing beside you." Sandy told her stepmother about the ritual after it was over. Since she and her husband were separated she doesn't tell him then. Later, when they have reconciled, she will describe the ritual. It is important to make a public statement about her ritual to everyone who is significant in her life.

To be with her at the ritual she chooses her counsellor, a couple who had been very supportive for years, and a long time female friend. She also asks her former counsellor who is unable to come.

During the three days prior to the ritual, "I was gathering thoughts and ideas and feelings. I'm a person who commits things to paper. I didn't commit anything to paper until the day before. And, um by that time I'd sorted everything out in my mind. And wrote down an agenda of what I wanted to do." The ritual proper will include a time of reminiscence, a retracing of the steps of the original cremation, the "burial," and then a reception. Sandy imagines it will take two hours in all; it ends up taking five. The length of time is a shock to her. "I had no feeling of time moving at all. Its a strange feeling."

Everyone arrives at eleven in the morning and Sandy serves light refreshments. She finds that, although not everybody had been previously acquainted, she had the sense that "these were people who felt very comfortable together."

Sandy motions to a large stack of dictionaries. "I don't have a word for what we're going to do today." She feels "funeral" doesn't fit, but doesn't know what to put in its place. Throughout the day the others make suggestions. Nothing is resolved, yet the group has fun trying, making puns and other word plays. Sandy is not concerned with the failure to find an appropriate word. "It was just something to aim for."

All her life, Sandy had thought of herself as "aetheistic. And, well at least not a churchgoer. I'm spiritual but not church-oriented." Yet, she finds herself calling the dictionaries "bibles" all that day. A tiny dictionary has a cover almost identical

to a bible her mother owned which had been Sandy's grandfather's soldier's bible. After they discuss the similarities, Sandy's counsellor keeps the dictionary throughout the day. "He said he really felt that it had spiritual significance for him."

Sandy shows the guests her mother's belongings that she had collected. She had assumed that the others would silently witness this showing, but they make comments and ask many questions. Sandy feels a connection to the group and a closeness with her mother as she handles the articles, "and if you have something physically left of someone who's died its not like they just weren't there at all."

After two hours of looking through photographs and other objects associated with her mother, Sandy calls a halt. "We really did have to get on with the show." She leads the guests into the garden and picks roses to symbolize each important person in her life that she would have liked her mother to know. She also picks a rose for her marriage and one for her home. She feels the need to explain the significance of only two of them to the group.

Sandy asks the guests to pick roses or other flowers if they wish. She says to them, "I want you to really feel a part of this. At any time today, if you want to add anything, do anything, suggest anything, you know we don't have a (closed) format. Its completely open for your participation; your suggestions." After the flowers are picked, Sandy leads the group through the order of activities followed at her mother's original funeral.

They leave from the same piece of property and drive to the

funeral parlour. The building is not the same as the original one but since it is owned by the same firm, Sandy does not mind. Sandy feels very supported by the employee of the funeral parlour who tells her, "Make yourselves at home. Do anything you'd like."

Seating the guests in the pews, Sandy moves to the front and reads to them a story about a woman who is unable to come to terms with her son's death until she takes part in a ritual. Reading from a text is important to Sandy because it is traditional. That "makes it I guess, closer to other ceremonies that you've witnessed or been a part of." The reading solemnizes, ritualizes, and legitimizes the gathering.

After the reading, the group drives past the Cenotaph where the flowers from her mother's funeral had been placed. "I have a picture of the Cenotaph covered in all these flowers." Then they drive to the house where Sandy's grandparents had been living at the time. Her mom's ashes had been scattered in the garden. There is no garden there now and the place has no pull for Sandy.

It is very important for Sandy to share the old order with her guests. She wants them to contrast the old, sterile way with her new meaningful activities. "That was a botched funeral....That's why my aunts are still unresolved about the whole thing." Leaving the site of her mother's ashes, they drive to the burial park "to do it right this time." At the park, Sandy shows the guests where her other relatives are buried. Then they go to the plot Sandy has purchased.

Sandy asks them to give her silent space while she kneels at the

small hole traditionally filled by an urn containing ashes. "That's my private time." She places her roses one by one, as she talks to her mom about the people they represent. She puts the photograph of the Cenotaph funeral flowers in the plot as well. "And I just talked to her and decided to let those things go to rest." As she kneels there, Sandy experiences a comforting wave of spirituality. This feeling has stayed with her to the present.

There is a marker with her mother's name and dates on it with which Sandy covers the plot. "So when I had placed the marker on there, I said, you know, 'I just feel so at peace.'" As she makes this statement Sandy looks up and sees the counsellor standing beside her holding a Peace rose. The connection is touching.

The guests lay their flowers and Sandy basks in her feelings. "Just a wonderful feeling of release of burden." Then she drives them to the restaurant she and her stepmother had gone to after laying her dad's ashes. "And I wanted to repeat those pleasant associations."

Again the purpose of going to the restaurant was to ground the ritual in tradition. "It's sort of part of a funeral." As the group leaves the restaurant Sandy lets her mind float over the day. She realizes with pleasure that she had chosen a Peace rose to symbolize her daughter and that her daughter's name, which is the same as her mother's, means peace.

"It's amazing how often you choose the symbolism without realizing that maybe later you'll grasp what the symbolism is." The ritual was not just therapeutic for Sandy. She is approached by three of the

participants at various times afterwards, telling her that it was a growing experience for them as well. One person was living with an ongoing loss and stated that the ritual eased the grief.

Since the ritual, Sandy can think of her mother without any feeling of restriction. She takes her mother's photograph out of the ornate frame on her desk and substitutes her own photograph. "I see myself as a woman now, not the daughter of a mother who is dead." It was a powerful day and she keeps the tiny dictionary as a memento on her desk.

Synthesis of Sandy's Journey

You shall be free indeed when your
days are not without a care nor your
nights without a want and a grief.
But rather when these things girdle
your life and yet you rise above
them naked and unbound.

Kahlil Gilbran

Outwardly an adult and mother of young adults, inwardly Sandy was still a motherless babe. Not allowed as a child to grieve, she had pushed away her loss and thought it was resolved.

Other losses came Sandy's way and, finally, the place inside where she pushed her grief became too full. Sandy entered therapy. The more recent losses were worked through and when Sandy stopped the formal therapy process for a time, she was more autonomous. She made the risky adult decision to realize a long-held dream and return to university.

Towards the end of her university programme, Sandy experienced an increasing anxiety. It was vague but persistent and seeming to do

with relationships. She felt an urge to clarify and deal with this anxiety but made the mature decision to put off returning to therapy until the last few months of her degree were completed.

Once graduated, Sandy was ready to confront her anxiety. In a two and one half hour counselling session she discovered the still grieving motherless child within. Her therapist helped her to see that she would be unable to resolve her loss until she had made it more concrete. She could not say good-bye until she had said hello.

This made sense to Sandy and since the last few years had given her more confidence in her abilities she decided to find a way to know and grieve her mother on her own. A newspaper article gave her the idea of conducting a ritual.

Sandy's anxiety was composed of much unfinished business. She felt a sense of isolation, lack of control, and meaninglessness. Sensing that this anxiety would diminish when she had a clear solid sense of her mother as a person, Sandy set out on a quest for information and symbols.

She knew from talking to her relatives that the original funeral was hypocritical, sterile, and alienating. Her healing would be facilitated by creating a meaningful rite to honour both her mother and her bond to her mother, in contrast to the original rite.

Sandy felt some power of the ritual would be lost if she attended in her multiple roles of child, mother, and wife. The rite was to revolve around her child within, so she invited only guests who would not remind her of her other roles. She wanted to be able to regress.

The rite needed to be done perfectly with deep personal meaning for it was a tribute to her love for her mother and the love she knew her mother would have had for her. During the planning and the acting out of the ritual, Sandy realized she had the power to create the type of ritual she desired.

She needed the presence of others though. It was necessary to inform the world of her loss. The guests responded with support, guidance, and sharing of themselves. Sandy deeply appreciated the ensuing sense of inclusion and pushed herself to risk sharing her secret hurting places.

As her mother became clearer to her, Sandy accepted the reality of her life. Her mother had existed, given birth to her, and died. To be dead means to have had life. This realization expanded in Sandy to include herself, an ability to tolerate her own mortality.

To heal, the harsh jangling thought of the original funeral had to be dealt with. So Sandy regressed in time, leading her guests through the motions of that unhelpful rite and then to the contrast of her carefully planned one.

Her own tribute was a cathartic experience. A strong sense of completion followed the easing of anxiety. An added joy was the growth of some of her guests due to the rite. Growth begets growth.

Sandy could now let the grieving for her mother pass. She could be herself, transformed from a daughter with a dead mother to a self-sufficient woman. By getting to know her mother Sandy had found herself.

Combined Elements of Ritual Experience

This section consolidates the individual experiences of the co-researchers. Table 12 shows this consolidation. Elements common to all are described as a journey from unresolution to resolution.

More specifically, the co-researchers' quest can be conceptualized as an existential journey from anxiety to growth. Therefore, "quester" is an appropriate term to describe each co-researcher and the two terms will be used in all further discussion of results, conclusions, and implications.

Once they were uncovered for each of the questers, some themes seemed to be closely interrelated. They could be subsumed under one of seven metathemes: anxiety, meaning, choice, acceptance of reality, healing, and growth. Table 13 lists each metatheme with its corresponding themes.

The state of anxiety is one of a vague sense of unease or psychological disturbance. Meaning refers to the need to make sense of or find coherence in our issues, experiences, and ultimately in our existence. Choice has been discussed as a part of the existential concept of situational freedom. In this study "choice" is defined as the willingness to view ourselves as capable to make life decisions.

Acceptance of reality means the ability and willingness to tolerate the fact of the human condition; mortal, fragile, without complete control of the course of our lives. The themes included under Healing are descriptions of various ways the anxiety was resolved and/or of feelings associated with the resolution process.

Table 12
Consolidation of Co-Researchers' Themes

Theme	Anna	Sandy	Claire	Rose	Ken
1. Isolation		18	1,4,9	1,18,27	12,28,34
2. Unfinished Business	2	1	4,5	20	8
3. Meaninglessness	1	20	5,21	3	24
4. Lack of Control		60		18	33
5. Directionlessness	59				7
6. Broken Relationship	58	30			
7. Death Denial			8		
8. Need for Symbols	3,7,12,15, 17,33,34, 41,61,62	8,19,29, 31,36,37, 45,48,50, 51	14	4	20,21
9. Perfectionism	51,68	40,47,49	32	7	25,35
10. Structure is Important	8,29	9,59	26	35	31
11. Purposefulness	14	4,10	33	5	1,36
12. Personalizing is Important	38,52	41,54,55 56	11,12,13	2	36
13. Gathering Information	18	6	1	15	2,15,23
14. Clarification	4,13,22	5,12		9	24
15. Sacralization	35	36,37	24,26	4,5,11,25	
16. Realizing Power	26,59	11,43,57	28	14	33
17. Control Lessens Anxiety	60	15,58			32
18. Agitation				21	14
19. Timelessness		16			
20. Need for Support	27	14	10,20,39	22,30,31	9

21. Need for Guidance	19	2,26,52	27,29	6,25	6,30
22. Inclusion	23,65,70	17,25,27, 28,32	25,36	28	34
23. Others' Courage to Share Self	28,40,42, 43,46,49	7,22,23	3,38,40, 43	29	
24. Courage to Share Oneself	31	13,21,35	2,42,45	8	
25. Need for Permission	25		35		10
26. Need for Witnesses	24,63	24			
27. Public Statement of Loss	32,36	13,21,35	2		
28. Confirmation	64	20	6,22,34	12	3,4
29. Acceptance of Mortality		60	44,46		18
30. Acceptance of Death			7,16		
31. Contemplation of Bodily Fragility					19
32. Negativity as a Part of Life	5,6				
33. Sense of Completion	54,55,66,69	44	15	19	22,37
34. Regression	37,39	33,34,38, 39	37	10	27
35. Reduced Anxiety	53	46	17		17
36. Extinction of Anxiety	57			16	16,26,27
37. Catharsis	16	46	19,23		
38. Purification	20,21				
39. Courage to be as Oneself	10,30,56	53	18,30	23,32,33	5,29
40. Accepting Responsibility	67	3,42	31	17,34	11
41. Growth of Participant	44,45,47,48	61,62	41		13
42. Metanoia	9,11	63,64	47	13,24,26, 34	

Table 13
Metathemes and Themes

Metatheme - Anxiety

Themes

1. Isolation
2. Unfinished Business
3. Meaninglessness
4. Lack of Control
5. Directionlessness
6. Broken Relationship
7. Death Denial

Metatheme - Meaning

Themes

8. Need for Symbols
9. Perfectionism
10. Structure is Important
11. Purposefulness
12. Personalizing is Important
13. Gathering Information
14. Clarification
15. Sacralization

Metatheme - Choice

Themes

16. Realizing Power
17. Control Lessens Anxiety

Metatheme - Physical Symptoms

Themes

18. Agitation
19. Timelessness

Metatheme - Relationship

Themes

20. Need for Support
21. Need for Guidance
22. Inclusion
23. Others' Courage to Share Self
24. Courage to Share Oneself
25. Need for Permission
26. Need for Witnesses
27. Public Statement of Loss

Metatheme - Acceptance of Reality

Themes

28. Confirmation
29. Acceptance of Mortality
30. Acceptance of Death
31. Contemplation of Bodily Fragility
32. Negativity as a Part of Life

Metatheme - Healing

Themes

33. Sense of Completion
34. Regression
35. Reduced Anxiety
36. Extinction of Anxiety
37. Catharsis
38. Purification

Metatheme - Growth

Themes

39. Courage to be as Oneself
40. Accepting Responsibility
41. Growth of Participant
42. Metanoia

Finally, Growth refers to a positive expansion or enhancement of self.

The metathemes will be further described and their implications will be considered in the Reflections and Implications chapter. This Results section concludes with a description of ritual as a therapeutic force in a person's life.

Overall Synthesis--The Journey

The questers' journey revolved around anxiety. As the sense of anxiety grew, periodic attempts were made to deal with it. Denial, keeping busy, trying to wait it out, all failed. The point was reached where the sense of meaninglessness and unfinished business became so strong that a concerted commitment to search for a resolution was made.

The unresolved issue produced a distressing sense of meaninglessness. This feeling was combatted by transforming the Umwelt into a personally meaningful structure; a ritual.

The ritual needed to be a perfect creation. Perfectionism for the questers meant having each part of the ritual touch them deeply. To ensure this deep meaning they included a variety of symbols to stand for their old and new states and sought for information to heighten their understanding of the loss.

The purposeful commitment of time and energy to develop and implement the ritual also produced a sense of meaning. The Umwelt of the ritual was a stable, safe forum to resolve the loss issues.

No one had rescued the questers from their issues. They all realized growth and healing would come only when they were consciously

willing to make choices. During the ritual, the flavour of their Eigenwelt changed from an inability to an ability to deal with their anxiety. The questers realized the power within themselves to effect change.

The questers were not alone in the Umwelt of the ritual. The support and guidance of others were needed. Involving others gave the questers a strong feeling of inclusion. They were no longer alone with their problem.

The deep meaningfulness of the ritual, the willingness of the questers to own their power, and the caring inclusion of the Mitwelt provided the optimal conditions for the questers to face and accept their reality. Being able to tolerate the confirmation of their loss was the key to resolution. This key unlocked healing and growth.

By the end of their journey, all of the questers were able to transform their energy from anxiety to, first, healing and then growth. Part of the healing involved regression. By tapping into their roots or the roots of their problem, the questers were able to own their past as well as their present. The acceptance of their reality moved them to a healing sense of completion.

The questers had hoped to gain resolution from the ritual. They took from it so much more. The realization of personal power occurred as they developed and participated in the rite. This acceptance of power grew into the fuller acceptance of responsibility for themselves. They also grew in courage to be as oneself. The unresolved issue had created a lowering of self-esteem. The

successful completion of the ritual and the issue gave the questers a sense of potency. The journey ended in a coming home to self.

Description of Ritual as a Therapeutic Force

The elements of the ritual experience common to all co-researchers have been incorporated into a short description of ritual as a therapeutic force in a person's life. The description covers what this type of ritual is, when it is used, and what it accomplishes for the person undertaking it.

The description is as follows:

Ritual as a therapeutic force in a person's life is conducted when experienced anxiety after a loss is resistant to change through usual means. The activity is well thought out and carefully implemented by the quester to be personally, deeply meaningful. The participation of others, at some point, is always included. During or soon after the ritual, the quester accepts previously denied reality and experiences healing and growth.

CHAPTER VI

Conclusions

In this chapter discussion will focus on three areas: general conclusions which may be drawn from the data; the extent to which the presuppositions as stated in Chapter Three were met or unfounded; and the relationship of this study to literature examined in Chapter Two.

General Conclusions

Co-researchers experienced many of the same realizations and growths. This similarity did not mean, however, that co-researchers were similar in their personalities, lifestyles, or issues.

Two co-researchers felt unfinished about their mothers' deaths. Claire could not come to terms with the fact that her mother was gone, while Sandy was only too aware that her mother had died. She felt a void when thinking of her mother and in order to grow up had to first get to know her mother and then let her go.

Ken had given his power to the site of his tragic accident. He was unbalanced and felt terrorized while driving over the spot where he had nearly died. Rose also needed balancing, her lopsidedness had originated in a reliance on her masculine and rational half, and a negation of her feminine and spiritual half. The imbalance had become slowly more pronounced over the years until it had become difficult to exist physically, artistically, and psychologically.

Anna and her daughter loved each other deeply but couldn't live well together. The old relationship had to go and a new healthier one

be created.

The types of loss and anxiety co-researchers had experienced were not their only diversities. The ways in which the rituals came into being demonstrated their individual needs and interests. Three co-researchers entered therapy for assistance. Sandy left counselling once her issue was clarified and she decided to do her ritual after reading an article on the subject. She did invite her therapist to the rite as a witness.

Claire and Ken stayed in therapy and had the ritual suggested by their therapist. Ken remained in counselling while he planned and conducted his rite, while Claire stopped therapy for that duration. They both chose to conduct the ritual without their therapist's presence.

Rose sought for a helping authority to guide her in understanding her experience. The relationship was not formal therapy but was definitely therapeutic. The wise woman took a directive therapist role, suggesting the ritual and clarifying concerns, while Rose took the role of client. The wise woman was present during Rose's ceremony.

Anna did not enter therapy. She decided to conduct a ritual because the idea appealed to her. She received guidance through reading about the topic. All co-researchers agreed that their ritual helped them move from a maladaptive to an adaptive place and had been a positive experience for them.

My Presuppositions in Relation to the Data

Most of my presuppositions were confirmed by the results of this study. These presuppositions include: ritual heightens meaning and feeling; provides a specific concrete reality to fix memory on; questers can gain awareness, healing, and growth; questers can gain a sense of deeply honouring a lost person, object, or belief; ritual is a powerful psychotherapeutic intervention; it can help clients take charge of a problem; and questers can gain a sense of specialness and importance within themselves and their community.

My fears that co-researchers' experiences of ritual would have so few common themes that therapists would either not view ritual as a psychotherapeutic intervention or would have a difficult time utilizing it, have not been realized. The fear that ritual will gain the status of a fad is still present; even more so as the great power ritual has for questers has been clarified.

The section on presuppositions also included implications. The first implication, "It appears that in studying ritual I am seeking confirmation of my own experience," was dealt with in the following manner. To check whether I was ignoring co-researcher's themes and substituting my own, I returned to the co-researchers for feedback. To also determine whether I was missing or misinterpreting themes, three researchers well-versed in the phenomenological approach dialogued with me during the treatment of data phase. Finally, a layperson with an interest in this topic read and commented on the data.

The second implication read, "I have a large personal investment in ritual." My concern was that I might condemn differing opinions and beliefs. To date, the results of this study do not conflict with the professional literature. Time will determine whether this implication will arise.

The last implication, "As my interest in ritual becomes known, clients will come to me who feel ritual could help them with their loss," is occurring. I find that being involved in a regular peer supervision group where I can talk about personal and professional issues in my work is invaluable. I trust that if I do decide to introduce ritual inappropriately, my colleagues will dissuade me.

The one presupposition that was not confirmed in the study was "Participants in rituals have the opportunity to get in touch with and act out traditional wisdom." The closest co-researchers came to this point was to talk about the importance of having traditional elements in the rite, e.g. receptions. Another presupposition, "Rituals can give participants the sense of being an important member of their community," was given a much stronger weight by participants than I had imagined.

Results in Relation to Literature Review

Many of the benefits of ritual outlined in the literature were discovered in the present study. Table 14 matches themes with the writers who touch on those particular benefits or elements of ritual. Writers have been divided into two groups: those who view ritual as a positive, helpful force and those who view ritual as psychotherapy.

Table 14
Themes Described in the Literature

Theme	# of Questers	Ritual	Ritual as therapy
1. Anxiety	all	Jung, Turner, van Gennep	Rando, Yalom, Palazzoli et al.
2. Isolation	4		Rando, Renner
3. Unfinished business	all		Rando, Renner, Friedman & Pettus
4. Meaninglessness	all		
5. Lack of Control	3		Rando, Renner
6. Directionlessness	2		Rando, Renner
7. Broken Relationship	2		Rando, Friedman & Pettus
8. Death Denial	1		
9. Meaning	all	Moore & Myerhoff Campbell, Turner Mattoon, Becker van Gennep	Rando, Renner Aguilar & Wood
10. Need for Symbols	all	Moore & Myerhoff, Campbell, Turner, van Gennep	Aguilar & Wood, Renner
11. Perfectionism	all		
12. Structure is Important	all	van Gennep, Turner, Becker, Moore & Myerhoff	Rando, Renner, Aguilar & Wood
13. Purposefulness	all	Doka	Rando, Renner, Palazzoli et al.
14. Personalizing is important	all	Huan, Doka	Aguilar & Wood, Palazzoli et al.
15. Gathering Information	all		
16. Clarification	4	Turner, Kafka	Rando
17. Sacralization	4		Renner, Aguilar & Wood
18. Choice	all	Doka	Rando, Renner
19. Realizing Power	all		
20. Control Lessens Anxiety	3		
21. Ritualization	all	Jung	Rando, Renner

22.	Need for Support	all		Renner
23.	Need for Guidance	all		Rando, Renner, Palazzoli et al., Aguilar & Wood
24.	Inclusion	all		Rando, Renner, Palazzoli et al.
25.	Others' Courage to Share Self	4		Renner
26.	Courage to Share Self	4		Renner, Rando
27.	Need for Permission	3		Rando
28.	Need for Witnesses	2		
29.	Public Statement of Loss	3		Rando
30.	Acceptance of Reality	all	Campbell, Kafka, Mattoon	Rando
31.	Confirmation	all	Kafka, Zuesse	Rando
32.	Acceptance of Mortality	3		
33.	Acceptance of Death	1		
34.	Contemplation of Bodily Fragility	1		
35.	Negativity as a Part of Life	1		
36.	Healing	all	Zuesse	Rando, Renner, Aguilar & Wood
37.	Sense of Completion	all		
38.	Regression	all		
39.	Reduced Anxiety	all		Rando, Renner, Aguilar & Wood
40.	Extinction of Anxiety	3		
41.	Catharsis	3		
42.	Purification	1		
43.	Growth	all	Zuesse, Mattoon, Campbell	Rando, Renner, Aguilar & Wood
44.	Courage to be as Oneself	all		Friedman & Petta
45.	Accepting Responsibility	all		
46.	Growth of Participant	3		
47.	Metanoia	3		

Some elements discovered in this study were not directly mentioned in the literature. There may be three reasons for this. Firstly, the two writers who have examined ritual as psychotherapy in the greatest detail (Rando, 1984; Renner, 1979) do mention all the metathemes delineated in this study. Since the themes outlined below are close in meaning to their metathemes, it is likely that they would be accepted by these clinicians. The themes include: isolation and meaninglessness under the metatheme anxiety; gathering information under the metatheme meaning; realizing power and control lessens anxiety under the metatheme choice; need for witnesses under the metatheme relationship; sense of completion, extinction of reality, and catharsis under the metatheme healing; and accepting responsibility, growth of participant, and metanoia under the metatheme growth.

The second reason themes may not be mentioned in the literature is due to their idiosyncratic nature. All issues that a client brings to psychotherapy have both elements in common with all other psychologically distressed people and elements that are uniquely personal. It could not be expected that writers would touch on all of these idiosyncratic themes. These include: death denial under the metatheme anxiety; acceptance of mortality, acceptance of death, contemplation of bodily fragility, and negativity as a part of life under the metatheme acceptance of reality; and purification under the metatheme healing.

The last two themes not mentioned in the professional literature are regression and perfectionism. As a clinician utilizing ritual in psychotherapy, I was not aware of the importance of these elements prior to undertaking the research. Their discovery, I believe, is one of this study's major contributions to psychotherapy. This point will be clarified further in the section Implications for Psychotherapy.

Some elements and benefits of ritual described in the literature were not specifically named in this study. They include: the importance of flexibility (Aguilar & Wood, 1979; Gordon & Gordon, 1984; Renner, 1979) and ritual assists the griever to hold on in a healthy manner to the deceased (Rando, 1984). Although not isolated as themes in the current study, both of these points are consistent with and included within the elements discovered.

Chapter VII

Reflections and Implications

Many implications and reflections grow out of the initial work on ritual conducted in this study. This section will focus on implications for future research, the ritual process viewed as an existential journey and implications for psychotherapy.

Implications for Future Research

Ritual as a therapeutic force in a person's life has now been described. Much research can be carried on from this beginning. A phenomenological study of ritual as a negative experience in a person's life would give valuable information. It would clarify whether some people view the elements of ritual as negative that were viewed in this study as positive. It might also discern whether there are types of persons that even a well-developed ritual would not help.

Previously structured rituals are being increasingly utilized in courses and workshops on grief and loss. Some of the elements viewed as most important by the co-researchers involved personalizing the rite and putting time and energy into its development, activities which are not carried out in these structured group rituals. A phenomenological study of these, sometimes copyrighted rituals, would be useful for practitioners. These structured rites are much easier for therapists to implement, but are they as effective and/or do they serve a different purpose?

Similar studies could also be conducted on previously structured

religious and cultural rituals. Many authors cited in the review of literature (Campbell, 1972; Jung, 1959; Mattoon, 1982) give reasons for the increasingly wide perception that these rituals are dead, rigid, and unsatisfying. A study examining religious professionals' purposes in utilizing ritual would also be useful. Some interesting questions could be, "Are the goals for ritual held by clergy and their congregations compatible?" and "What elements do both clergy and their congregations see as important to include in rituals?"

Three of the co-researchers commented on the growth gained by other participants in their ritual. This growth was not expected by them. A study of participants' experiences in a ritual designed for someone else could be undertaken. Questions that could be answered include, "How do participants perceive their growth?", and "What elements of ritual do participants view as important?"

The existential approach to psychotherapy holds the genuine, committed relationship between client and therapist as the premier tool for healing and growth. This study has examined the client's experience of ritual as psychotherapeutic. Since the therapist also experiences what the client experiences, it would be useful to describe it from this second perspective. The therapist's experience of ritual will effect the client as the client's perception influences the therapist.

This study was limited to the experience of adults. This was not intentional; as I talked about my study interest at parties, workshops, and in therapy, the people who showed interest in becoming

co-researchers were adults. Research needs to be conducted on the experience of ritual for children. In my clinical practice I have helped children develop rituals and have listened as they talked about going to funerals etc. I have seen children move from unresolved to resolved grief through the use of rituals. My perception is that often children are more willing to deal consciously with existential issues and they have an easier time developing a potent rite.

This was dramatically brought home to me yesterday when we had a memorial service for my six year old daughter's dog. Tina's dog Amber had been killed by another dog while she was in a kennel and we were all grieving deeply. Tina and each of her friends who attended brought a flower or other symbol to the service and participated extensively, singing songs and sharing remembrances of Amber. Just before the shift to the reception Tina recited a prayer she created:

Thank you God for the nice dog you gave us,
 Thank you God for letting us be here today,
 Thank you God for letting us no' be dead!

The children ended with a discussion about the whys of mortality.

Due to my philosophical stance, I have explored ritual through existential eyes. A very interesting and valuable study could be undertaken examining ritual within a Jungian perspective. As I read the co-researchers' transcripts many myths and archetypes became visible.

Friedman and Pettus (1984) discuss a ritual utilized with an adolescent exhibiting ritualized behaviours. A study of individuals who exhibit this rigid, restrictive behavior and then use a ritual to

develop a more adaptive way of being could be useful. Another more specific type of client is the person who has experienced a head injury. Two of the co-researchers were head injured and viewed the ritual as being very effective in the resolution of their issues. This group of people is often difficult to assist in psychotherapy because of their cognitive and emotional deficits. Much research could be done in this area.

Research comparing ritual with other psychotherapeutic interventions conducted to meet the same goals could assist therapists in choosing the most appropriate intervention at any given time. Also, this study concentrated on ritual as a psychotherapy for unresolved grief. Is it a valid psychotherapeutic framework for other therapeutic issues and situations?

The last research area I see at this time revolves around the importance of the ritual's closure. All but one co-researcher had a definite end to their rituals. The co-researcher who continued hers finally realized that repeating the ritual was unhelpful. She was not able to realize her own power and take responsibility for herself while she saw the power as being in the ritual and not her self. Research could examine whether a definite end to a ritual is essential or if there are specific elements that if included could enable an ongoing ritual to be therapeutic.

The scope for research on ritual is vast. Describing the essential components of ritual in this study provides a clear framework for other explorations. I hope some of my suggestions will

be of interest to future researchers.

Existential Journey

The existential journey as outlined in the overall synthesis is not totally sequential. Some aspects of acceptance of reality, healing, and growth can be present early in the ritual while some of the original anxiety may be experienced towards the end of the rite. For easier reading, however, and since the trend follows the format in the synthesis, the existential journey will be described as if metathemes followed in order. Themes that have been experienced by at least four out of the five questers will be examined.

Setting Off--Goad to Begin--Anxiety

Anxiety is part of man's nature since we are ambiguous; neither solely animal nor angel, body nor spirit (Becker, 1973; Kierkegaard, 1977; Sartre, 1973; Yalom, 1980). Becker (1973) speaking of Kierkegaard states, "The fall into self-consciousness, the emergence from comfortable ignorance in nature, had one great penalty for man: it gave him dread, or anxiety" (p. 69).

Being a natural state, however, anxiety cannot be totally denied without an individual becoming so out of touch with reality that insanity ensues. Experiencing the other extreme is equally dangerous, so we attempt to put a cover on existential anxiety and pretend that it is not there. Ortega (1957) elaborates:

For life is at the start a chaos in which one is lost. The individual suspects this, but he is frightened at finding himself face to face with this terrible reality, and tries to cover it over with a curtain of fantasy, where everything is clear. (p. 157)

For the questers, the fabric of their curtain had been shredded by their loss. The manner in which they lived previously had nothing within it with which to sew the rents or produce a new curtain.

Some specific anxieties, a sense of unfinished business and meaninglessness, were experienced by all questers. Four of them were in touch with a sense of isolation.

Jung (1966) states that, "Absence of meaning in life plays a crucial role in the etiology of neurosis. A neurosis must be understood, ultimately, as a suffering of a soul which has not discovered its meaning" (p.83). Frankl (1963) agrees and his books are directed to elaborating this belief.

Fromm (1956) sees isolation as the paramount source of anxiety.

He states:

The awareness of his aloneness and separateness, of his helplessness before the forces of nature and of society, all this makes his separate disunited existence an unbearable prison....Being separate means being cut off, without any capacity to use my human powers. Hence to be separate means to be helpless, unable to grasp the world - things and people - actively; it means that the world can invade me without my ability to react (p.7).

Worlds of being

The three worlds of being a person--the Umwelt, Mitwelt, and Eigenwelt--with their many layers of meaning are treated with importance in the ritual.

Umwelt--the world of the ritual--meaning. The questers created the Umwelt of the ritual. To counteract the anxiety of meaninglessness, and unfinishedness, they produced an Umwelt that was safe, secure, with much personal meaning. Becker (1973) comments,

"People create the reality they need in order to discover themselves" (p. 158). Much care, time and energy was expended by the questers in developing their rites. "In the act of creation man transcends himself as a creature, raises himself beyond the passivity and accidentalness of his existence into the realm of purposefulness and freedom....To create presupposes activity and care" (Fromm, 1955, p. 41). Purposefulness and care were practiced by all of the questers. They added many kinds of meaning until their rite was perfect in a deeply personal way. The power of direct experience is much greater than talking or thinking about a phenomenon (Liang, 1969). So by creating meaning, the questers set the stage for healing and growth.

Liang (1971) also states that:

The experience of being the actual medium for a continual process of creation takes one past all depression or persecution or vain glory, past, even, chaos or emptiness, into the very mystery of that continual flip of nonbeing into being, and can be the occasion of that great liberation when one makes the transition from being afraid of nothing, to the realization that there is nothing to fear. (p. 36).

One method the questers used to bring meaning to the ritual was with the use of symbols. A symbol is a word, object, action, place, dream, or vision that has specific connotations beyond its obvious or usual meaning (Jung, 1964). The questers brought in many tangible and intangible symbols. Jung (1964) states that the purpose of the symbol is to take us out of our ordinary experience. "As the mind explores the symbol it is led to ideas that lie beyond the grasp of reason" (Jung, 1964, p. 21). So symbols help the questers to explore and clarify their issues and states of being.

The questers knew that the structure of the ritual was important. Campbell (1972) clarifies, "Literally read symbolic forms have always been - and still are, in fact - the supports of their civilizations, the supports of their moral orders, their cohesion, vitality, and creative powers" (p. 9). Other methods the questers had attempted to deal with their anxiety had been unsuccessful. The powerfully therapeutic Umwelt they created, did provide enough support for resolution.

Four of the five questers added another level of meaning to their rituals; that of sacralization. Interacting with symbols of a greater creative power connected the questers to the basis of all Life as well as to the core of their individual existence.

Eigenwelt--the quester's world--choice. During the ritual, the questers chose to be seen as creators, and as powerful actors in their created Umwelt. Yalom (1980) states that the goal of psychotherapy is to bring the patient to the point where he can make a free choice. Choice cannot be made unless we sense there are at least two paths for us to take. Prior to the ritual, the questers existed in a place of anxiety and meaninglessness. Some felt a strong directionlessness. They seemed to have no choice.

As they developed the ritual, they made more and more meaningful choices and became increasingly aware that the effect of those choices was a sense of personal power. They discovered the power to heal themselves.

Mitwelt--the world of us--relationship. Even if the questers had

no direct contact with an other as they developed and acted out their rituals, some of their feelings, thoughts, and actions would be shaped by the fact that they are not alone in the world.

In fact, though, the questers were aware that the direct inclusion of others was essential to their rituals. Becker (1973) says that we have a need for the support of others. Fromm (1955) goes further to state, "The necessity to unite with other human beings, to be related to them, is an imperative need on the fulfillment of which man's sanity depends" (p. 36). All of the questers spoke of the need for others to support them and of the gratefulness with which they experienced being included.

As well as the general need for others, there is a specific need for those that we can look to for guidance, those we believe to have qualities or skills we don't possess (Becker, 1973; Jung, 1969). Jung (1969) calls this need the "kinship libido." "It wants the human connection. That is the core of the whole transference phenomenon, and it is impossible to argue it away, because relationship to the self is at the same relationship to our fellow man" (pp. 71-72). All of the questers consciously sought and found someone to fill this role.

The passive presence of guests and questers at the ritual would not have been enough to produce inclusion. Both groups had to risk sharing themselves past the boundary where they would ordinarily halt. The ritual called for deeper intimacy than usual.

Point of Convergence--Acceptance of Reality

Strengthened by the structure of the Umwelt, the support of the

Mitwelt, and the awareness of personal power of the Eigenwelt, the questers were able to confront and tolerate the reality of their existential situation, which, of course, included their loss. Some of the questers needed the confirmation that death had impacted on their lives with all the personal implications that entailed. Others accepted the reality of other losses.

Yalom (1980) speaks of the benefit of accepting the reality of death in our lives. I believe the same could be said about other forms of loss, as they are all mini-deaths. Therefore, I have substituted the word "loss" for Yalom's "death" in the following quote:

Though the physicality of loss destroys an individual, the idea of loss can save him. Loss acts as a catalyst that can move one from one state of being to a higher one: from a state of wondering about how things are to a state of wonderment that they are. An awareness of loss shifts one away from trivial preoccupations and provides life with depth and poignancy and an entirely different perspective. (p. 159).

As well as helping us to live more fully, accepting reality assists us to face our future deaths in a more healthy manner.

Repeated encounters with annihilation followed by a sense of redefinition have (an) important function: they prepare the individual for eventual biological death by establishing a deep, almost cellular awareness that periods of destruction are those of transition rather than termination. (Grof & Grof, 1980, p. 23)

Acceptance of reality was the key that unlocked healing and growth. For knowing and tolerating our existential situation allows us many more options of how to live our lives. We can see our strengths and limitations and work with them well.

Journey's End--Healing

All of the questers experienced healing as a sense of completion, reduced anxiety, and a regression. Sense of completion meant that the meaning of the issue had changed to one that could be lived with. The energy that had gone into the loss could now be freed for other things; particularly a reaching out to life.

Reduced anxiety did not mean a fantasy covering existential dread. Instead, knowing that this natural anxiety will always be present, the questers consciously covered it with their new meaning. This meaning could be paraphrased, "Even though loss is a part of life, and sometimes even because of it, our lives can be rich and fulfilling."

During the rituals, all of the questers regressed to a time or place that needed to be acknowledged. Fromm (1955) suggests that if we do not have a sense of "rootedness" we will become insane. "He can dispense with the natural roots only insofar as he finds new human roots and only after he has found them can he feel at home again in this world (Fromm, 1955, p. 43).

The questers needed to experience the roots of their problem or the healthy roots that had been present prior to the loss. If the past had not been consciously brought into the ritual, it would likely have intruded anyway in a destructive manner. Ortega (1957) elaborates:

In order to live, the spirit must murder its own past, thus denying it, but this it cannot do without at the same time reviving the thing it kills and keeping it alive within itself. If it kills once and for all, it could not go on denying that

past, and because it denies it, superseding it. (p. 251)

Journey's End--Growth

Courage to be as oneself and the acceptance of responsibility for self were gained by all of the questers. Four of them also experienced personal metanoia and the growth of their guests.

Having the courage to be as oneself can be terrifying at times because it means "one separates himself out of the herd" (Becker, 1973, p. 171). Because the growing person is more able to tolerate this planned isolation, however, the result does not need to be a diminishing of self. On the contrary, Liang (1969) speaks of what can be gained by having the courage to be as oneself.

In 'putting myself into' what I do, I lose myself, and in so doing I seem to become myself. The act I do is felt to be me, and I become 'me' in and through such action. Also there is a sense in which a person 'keeps himself alive' by his acts; each act can be a new beginning, a new birth, a re-creation of oneself, a self-fulfilling. (Liang, 1969, p. 126)

A quality which is strongly interrelated with the courage to be as oneself is the willingness to take responsibility for personal existence. Becoming aware of and meeting needs is the sign of a responsible human being. Maslow (1968) states that this type of individual obeys:

The laws of their own inner nature, their potentialities and capacities, their talents, their latent resources, their creative impulses, their needs to know themselves and to become more and more integrated and unified, more and more aware of what they really are, of what they really want, of what their call or vocation or fate is to be. (p. 35)

Four of the questers found this growth taking place in some of their guests. This awareness was an added blessing because their

intent had not been to provide a forum for the expansion of others. Four of the questers also experienced metanoia; a transformation or change of heart. Metanoia came about as an opening to personal spiritual dimensions or the metamorphosing of a relationship.

Post Script

As I consulted with the questers about these themes, they were all very quick to clarify that growth did not mean "finish." This particular journey had ended but the infinitely vaster journey of life was continuing. All of the questers felt that the themes in this journey would recur many times in their lives.

Implications for Psychotherapy

The results of this study indicate that ritual is a valid psychotherapeutic framework. The most important implication for therapists revolves around ritual's potency. It is, therefore, an intervention to be used most appropriately only after its necessary ingredients and the deep impact it can have on clients are understood. The rituals described in this study took time and energy to plan and implement, qualities seen as essential by the co-researchers. Unless further research demonstrates that ritual can be equally effective done quickly, without much preparation, therapists should view this framework as one to be conducted over time. Therefore, it would not be appropriately implemented where rapid reduction of symptoms or quick consciousness raising is indicated.

In order for a ritual to be effective its goal must be clear. The co-researchers spent time, inside and outside therapy, gathering

information, deciding on symbols, and clarifying issues. Developing a ritual around vague or incorrect goals would be a great waste of time and energy and very discouraging for the client and therapist.

A great benefit of ritual is that it can be developed and implemented without the therapist. Some of the reasons clients may conduct a ritual without or with minimal intervention by a therapist, include: (1) financial restrictions may preclude psychotherapy; (2) the therapist may use ritual as an effective way to deal with dependency issues; (3) clients may wish to demonstrate, to themselves and others, their ability to coordinate such an important event; and (4) individuals may live in communities without helping professionals or with helpers inadequate to deal effectively with their concerns.

Just because the therapist does not play a large part in the ritual does not mean there will be no authority figure present. Co-researchers spoke of the importance of receiving permission and guidance. If therapists are willing to view cultural and religious leaders as having therapeutic potential, then the therapist, the client, and the community leader can work well together.

Over the years, I have developed contacts within various religious and cultural groups. When it seems appropriate, for example, because it would be meaningful for clients or for issues of inclusion, to have a community representative take part in the rite, I can bring in one of my contacts if my clients do not have one of their own.

Many psychotherapeutic interventions are developed for the

sophisticated, intelligent, and articulate client. It appears that ritual can also be effective with clients experiencing cognitive and emotional deficits. Two of the co-researchers in this study had head injuries and there does not appear to be any difference between them and the other co-researchers in the breadth and depth of the impact of their ritual experience. The only difference I noticed was in my role as their therapist. It was necessary to play a larger part in the ritual's development because of the head-injured co-researchers cognitive restrictions.

When the therapist plays a large part in suggesting and developing the ritual, it is very important that clients can relate to the finished product. The ritual must contain many elements with personal meaning to the client. All co-researchers spoke of the importance of personalizing their rituals. They personalized through the use of symbols, conducting the rite in settings that had personal meaning, inviting people they felt close to, and including activities that touched them deeply.

An element that is personally meaningful for one person may have no meaning or a negative meaning for another. For example, an important part of funerals in some cultures is for mourners to give part of themselves to the deceased by spitting on the grave. A middle class, Caucasian, North American therapist might, overtly or covertly, discourage this activity. Therapists must be very clear in their presuppositions about ritual when assisting clients.

The importance of personalization raises another issue. The

proliferation of previously structured rituals in grief and loss courses and workshops has been mentioned in the Implications for Future Research section. Some of the themes essential to ritual are lacking in these activities, including: personalization, taking time and energy to develop the ritual, and choosing participants to support and witness the client's movement. These lacks do not necessarily mean that previously structured rituals are ineffective. These activities should not, however, be viewed as equal to the type of ritual described in this study. Research needs to be conducted on these activities but until that occurs, therapists should explain to clients the differences between the two types of ceremonies.

Previously structured rituals undoubtedly produce some of the benefits of personally developed rituals. In my experience as a participant in loss workshops, I found that if the facilitator gave me permission and space, I could pull something personally meaningful out of the experience.

It is tempting for therapists to describe and clarify all parts of a client's experience. Part of the power of ritual comes from its mystery. As Campbell (1974) states, "the value of an effective rite is that it leaves everyone to his own thoughts which dogma and definitions only confuse" (p. 172).

Ritual facilitates movement from one state to another: unresolution to resolution. For this movement to occur, it is not sufficient to clarify and experience the old and new state. Clients need to go back beyond the unresolved state to tap their roots or the

root of their problem. Of course, this regression must be very personal. It can involve re-experiencing a childlike state: open, trusting, ready to learn and grow; or involve going back to the place where the loss occurred. It can be reminiscing about childhood or bringing in symbols of pre-loss days. Because I was not consciously aware of the importance of this theme, I did not suggest it to my clients. In spite of this, all co-researchers in this study regressed in some manner.

Another theme I was not previously aware of was the importance of perfectionism. All co-researchers needed to choreograph the ritual, not just well, but perfectly. Co-researchers knew what they needed to include for the ritual to be "perfect" and they did so. Some therapists would be concerned that this need to conduct the ritual perfectly could indicate or herald compulsive ideation and behavior.

This concern was not borne out by the co-researchers. During the ritual, if an anticipated element did not materialize, e.g., the chapel was not the one where the original funeral had been held, co-researchers accepted the change or showed flexibility and creativity in developing another meaningful activity. After the ritual, co-researchers showed no evidence that they needed to act perfectly in other areas of their lives. They spoke of their ritual experience as special and out of the ordinary.

In using ritual as a psychotherapeutic framework, therapists need to look to the ending of the activity. It is common for all persons to view a "good thing" as deserving of repetition. Some clients, like

Rose, would not want their ritual to finish and would repeat it frequently. Rose's experience of doing this was that she did not gain full benefit from the ritual. One of the powerful elements of ritual is that it is an out of the ordinary experience. Conducting it regularly can dilute it. The ritual was developed to meet a concern: deep anxiety and feeling unfinished. Without these reasons propelling the client, the ritual loses much of its reason for being.

Siggins (1983) speaks of the psychotherapeutic session as a ritual; a safe harbour for an anxious client. All therapists realize that a client is close to termination when instead of a harbour, the session feels neutral or restrictive. "It used to feel so good being here. But now its kind of boring and I'd rather spend the time with my new friends" said one client who had initially come to me painfully shy.

As the ritual of the psychotherapy session indicates, rituals do not need to be a one-time experience. They can be repeated, but only when the anxiety that initiated their creation is present. Clients still need to give time and energy to the repetitions. Just "going through the motions" will make for a meaningless, rigid, and stilted experience.

Worden (1982) suggests that helping professionals develop rituals to deal with the stress of working with dying and grieving people. If therapists are not aware of the grief and loss issues in their personal and professional lives, they are more susceptible to use their clients' rituals to relieve their own concerns. Self-awareness

can assist therapists to develop rituals to ease t existential pain engendered by being with clients as they experience their existential pain.

Finally, therapists can play a preventive role through education about rituals. Even therapists who do not specialize in the area of grief and loss will have clients anticipating or reacting to the deaths of family and friends. Clients may not think to talk about the funeral they are arranging or planning to attend, because they do not see it as a valid psychotherapy issue. If therapists introduce the topic, the potential of a healing experience is released with, as this thesis bears out, positive outcomes for the client.

Concluding Remarks

Ritual has the ability to be a powerfully effective psychotherapeutic framework. If used sensitively and awareness of its required elements, ritual can help people who are caught in an unresolved grieving process. Because ritual can be effectively used with or without the involvement of a psychotherapist, its scope for utilization is broader than some other psychotherapeutic interventions. It is my hope that those seeking help and those seeking to help will benefit from the experiences of Claire, Anna, Rose, Ken and Sandy.

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Appendix A

Transcript of Claire's Ritual

Nancy: O.K., if you could just tell me, in your own words, about the ritual that you did, the reason you did it, how it was developed, what you did, how you felt to do it, just anything you can think of. And then I'll ask questions to elaborate on different points if I....

Claire: O.K., if you need more ideas.

N:need more.

C: Well, I picked each of the readings, and each of them had something to do with how I felt about missing her....

N: Uh huh.

C:her not being in my life anymore, and, um, my dad read out most of those....

N: Uh huh.

C:and I wrote a speech for the end of the service. And it was very personal and it made almost everyone have tears in their eyes....

N: Uh huh.

C:and start to cry.

N: Yeah.

C: But I just wanted to finally have a chance to say goodbye to her and why I missed her so.

N: Uh huh.

C: And the main reason for having the service was because I never got to partake in the funeral service, which I missed.

N: Uh huh.

C: And having family and friends there really helped and made me realize that it actually had happened. Cause I always kept telling myself that she was away on a trip, and she was coming back.

N: So having the service....

C: Made it more realistic.

N:made it, O. K. And up to that point you hadn't really....

C: No.

N:believed in it.

C: I didn't believe in it. I just kept denying it.

N: O.K.

C: Kept thinking that she was going to come back eventually.

N: Um Hum. So you weren't able to partake in the original funeral....

C: No.

N:and so, can you say a bit more about how it felt for you not having done that. Not having been a participant in it,

C: Well when I heard about it after, I was kind of, it made me sad, because my dad didn't add my name to the, um, card which had all the signatures of the people who were there. But he didn't include my name because he didn't know if I would live too.

N: Ah, O.K.

C: So he didn't, I don't know, oh gee whiz! (teary laugh)

N: So you felt that you just hadn't been thought of as part of the family.

C: Part of it. Yeah.

N: Yeah. And so you felt unfinished....

C: It did feel unfinished!

N:not only with your mom's death, but with the family as well, I imagine.

C: Yeah. Didn't seem too realistic to hear that she wasn't here any more.

N: Uh huh, O.K. And so you felt the need to do something.

C: Yeah.

N: In order to...

C: To have the service.

N:Right. How did that come into being in the first place?

C: That was your idea.

N: Yeah, O.K. Can you....

C: And I went and talked to the Priest and I said, "I need to have a service that will finally prove to myself that this is what happened...."

N: Uh huh.

C:and I'd like to have some good, you know, some, to write a prayer for her or something.

N: Uh huh.

C: Like the speech that I wrote, that says a final goodbye. And make it as personal as you can."

N: Uh huh.

C: And so he mentioned her name a couple of times too, which helped.

N: O.K.

C: It wasn't just a service that he would have done for anyone.

N: Uh huh. So it sounds like it having it personalized like that was really important to you.

C: Yeah.

N: How, how did having it personalized help?

C: It helped cause it could have been like a service for anyone otherwise.

N: Right.

C: But we had a picture of her at the service, her and dad when they had their anniversary. They had their 25th anniversary last year....

N: Uh huh.

C:and there was a big picture of them there. And, um, he kept mentioning her name. (pause, eyes teared)

N: O.K., so that really hit home.

C: Yeah (laugh).

N: Yeah, good. (pause) How do you feel now because of it, or what feelings do you associate now with having done the service?

C: Well, its made me realize along with talking with you, that it is over.

N: Uh huh.

C: I finally have to recognize and accept that fact.

N: Right.

C: But I'm facing that fact more now, cause I'm thinking about it and not putting it aside all the time. And being in the unconscious, thinking that she's dead.

N: O.K. So it has allowed you to stop searching for her.

C: Uh huh. Its made me a lot more open about death.

N: Uh huh. And when did you notice that at all? Before the s rvice, or during it, or after it?

C: Well, I think I was pretty open about it before the service, but after it I put her aside.

N: Uh huh.

C: I thought I had to start concentrating on my own life.

N: O.K., so that came about after you finished it.

C: Yeah.

N: What was it like for you, how did you feel during?

C: During the service?

N: (Nod)

C: Actually people thought that dad and I were taking it, I don't know, we almost took it too good.

N: Uh huh.

C: Like they said, "You should have been (pause) more broken up or something." We didn't look like we were feeling that hurt....

N: Right.

C:cause I think, at that point, we had finally realized what had happened. We had accepted it partially, but we still weren't accepting it fully.

N: Uh huh. O.K., so during the service you didn't, you weren't as upset as other people thought you should be.

C: No, they thought we should be more upset....

N: O.K., so what were you feeling?

C:cause my dad and I were like holding the group up.

N: Yeah, uh huh.

C: But it was a great service. It was good having all those people there and talking to them before and after.

N: O.K. So you weren't feeling very upset.

C: No.

N: What did you feel? What can you remember experiencing during it?

C: (pause) I just remember thinking mostly, why? And just the anger....

N: Uh huh.

C: About why it happened to us. And why her and.

N: O.K., and that came up during the service.

C: Yeah.

N: Yeah. O.K., so that kind of crystalized somewhat, it made it clearer for you while the service was going on.

C: Yeah because then when you get that actual fact, like going to a funeral service....

N: Uh huh.

C:I mean its telling you the truth of what happened.

N: Right.

C: And so it does bring it out more, yes.

N: O.K., anything besides anger?

C: Um hum. I was glad that I was in God's house to share it with who I wanted; friends and family.

N: Uh huh.

C: And it was so nice being surrounded by people that I love.

N: O.K., so really special to have people that you cared for and that cared for you, and also God there.

C: Yeah.

N: Right, so when you were developing the ritual it was important then that it was a religious ritual.

C: It was suggested that it be a total Catholic Mass.

N: Um hum.

C: So my dad said yes to that.

N: Um hum.

C: So.

N: Who suggested that?

C: My dad.

N: Yeah, O.K. And how was that for you?

C: Oh that was fine. Yeah. And that way we got to have some music. So we got to have a couple of songs and some readings and a combination of things.

N: Uh huh. O.K., so you said that it was my idea in the first place to have ritual.

C: Um hmh.

N: You had a lot of input into....

C: Right.

N:how it would be developed. And it sounds like your father did as well, as well as your priest.

C: Well all my father did was he said it should be an entire mass.

N: Uh huh.

C: That's all.

N: O.K. And that felt O.K.?

C: (laugh) But the priest gave me the book with all the readings and everything. He says you have to choose one of each of them.

N: Uh huh.

C: Something from the New Gospel and the Old Gospel and....

N: Right.

C:the New Testament and that.

N: Alright, so you did most of the work on it.

C: Right.

N: Did anyone else have any input?

C: No.

N: So all of you. O.K. (pause). Can you remember what you felt like before I suggested the ritual? Do you know what was going on within you that had me suggest it in the first place? You said one of the things was that you weren't accepting the fact that your mother had died.

C: Uh huh. I didn't think I was capable of planning this.

N: Uh huh.

C: I mean anyone who had come out of what I had, I didn't think could plan one.

N: O.K. So you didn't feel you had the resources within you to....

C: Right.

N:plan something this special or this important

C: Uh huh. This important. Yeah, not that.

N: So how do you feel now that you know that you can plan something like this?

C: Glad that I did.

N: Uh huh.

C: Yeah, I'm glad that I had your suggestion.

N: Has it changed how you feel about yourself in any way then?

C: Well its made me realize that I don't give myself enough credit at this point.

N: O.K., so its helped your self-esteem.

C: Yeah.

N: I don't want to put words in your mouth. Tell me if I'm not right.

C: (laugh)

N: It sounds like what your're saying....

C: (laugh) Right.

N:you didn't feel as confident.

C: It builds up the self-confidence a bit.

N: O.K., and so that came about in planning it and doing it.

C: Yeah.

N: So it was mainly that you were feeling that, "I just am not able to say goodbye to mom....

C: Right.

N:I can't realize that she's dead."

C: Yeah.

N: And by doing this ritual, by doing the ceremony, that's changed. You've been able to say goodbye; finish off.

C: Uh huh. Being able to say goodbye, and I still talk to her once in a while,....

N: Uh huh.

C:you know, and I tell her I'll see her later. And I....

N: Yeah.

C:can feel her presence around me.

N: Uh huh. And how does that feel?

C: That feels good. Yeah.

N: Do you feel there's any restriction still around that acknowledgement of your mother's death? Is there any part of you that still doesn't believe it?

C: No. (pause) Part of me does because I looked up to her so much, cause she was a parent....

N: Uh huh.

C:and I respected her so much and she kind of pulled me through....

N: Right.

C:life. And it kind of feels like where she is now (laugh) like.

N: Yeah?

C: Yeah. Cause she's still not here....

N: You still want her.

C:to share anything with.

N: So you know she's dead but still want her.

C: Wish she were around.

N: Sure.

C: Yeah. So you have to realize you have to depend on yourself and pull yourself through.

N: Uh huh (pause). Do you feel that there was anything that you didn't do in your ritual that when you think about it now you wished you had?

C: No. It was done perfectly.

N: Uh huh. So just the way you wanted it.

C: Yeah. It was thoroughly discussed before so....

N: Yeah.

C:it was done the right way.

N: And how was that process? Who did you talk to about it? And how long did it take....

C: I talked to Father Jean....

N:planning it?

C:and we planned it for about a month and a half. So it took some time....

N: Uh huh.

C:but I read through all the Gospels, all the readings and that, and the music, and picked out what I thought was appropriate.

N: Right, O.K. And so a month and a half of quite a few hours.

C: Yes.

N: Yes.

C: Yeah.

N: Can you just kind of ballpark how many hours it would have taken in planning?

C: Oh, I can't remember. It seems too long ago.

N: Yeah.

C: (pause) A few hours I'd say.

N: Yeah.

C: Yeah. Which was a lot back then.

N: Uh huh.

C: Cause I couldn't concentrate on much at all back then.

N: Right, O.K. So a lot of you went into that.

C: Yeah.

N: Have I, is there anything that I haven't asked, um, that you would like to talk about, anything that seemed important to you? Or anything that I asked that you want to expand on?

C: (long pause) I'd just like to briefly mention that I had a dream, like, I told you the week before the service....

N: Uh huh.

C:of her and I sharing a good-bye. And that made it feel like it was more realistic.

N: That made the service seem more realistic.

C: Yeah.

N: So you were able to bring in your dream experience to the experience of the ritual....

C: Right.

N:and connect them.

C: Yeah.

N: So that helped.

C: A lot, yes. Cause she told me she wasn't going to be there long but she was there to say good-bye.

N: Uh huh, good. And then a week later you had the service.

C: Right. And I felt that I was finally ready for it.

N: Uh huh. And so you said you had friends come, and some family come.

C: Uh huh.

N: About how many people in total?

C: Oh, about forty people.

N: Wow, a lot.

C: Yeah. There was a lot more at the funeral but it, I just heard about it, so I can't believe how many that went. Apparently there was a couple hundred at least.

N: And forty came to yours.

C: Yeah.

N: Did you do anything after the church service?

C: Uh huh. We had a get together at our place....

N: Uh huh.

C:and supplied lunch for everyone. And we all sat around for a couple hours and had a visit.

N: Uh huh.

C: It was really nice.

N: Do you see that as part of the whole ritual?

C: Yeah.

N: Yeah. And so what was that like? You said it was really nice.

C: Well it was great because it brought together a lot of people that hadn't been together in years. Like, in my life, anyway; like friends. And, um, it was really nice getting back together with them and, um, talking about the old times when we were younger....

N: Uh huh.

C:and what it was like when mom was there.

N: Uh huh. So it was like tapping into your roots...

C: Yeah.

N:and connecting again.

C: Right. Sharing some experiences that we all had.

N: Uh huh. So a real pulling together....

C: Right.

N:the whole ritual. Not only an acknowledgement that she is gone, and an honouring of her, but a real pulling together. Everyone.

C: Yeah. And not everyone had met her but they came for my benefit anyway.

N: Uh huh.

C: Which really helped.

N: Yeah. (pause) So real support for you.

C: Right. Yeah.

N: Yeah.

C: I needed that support.

N: Good (pause). Can you tell me some of the things that you included in your speech about her?

C: (pause) I told her I missed her company most of all and just because I didn't think of her as a mother....

N: Uh huh.

C:because her and I'd gone beyond that relationship....

N: Uh huh.

C:cause we were good friends.

N: Yah.

C: And we used to share everything. So it felt like I was missing something...

N: Yeah.

C:by not having her around.

N: Yup.

C: And, um, it was unfortunate what happened to her but we still remember her and think of her all the time.

N: Uh huh. (pause) So talking about your feelings, now when you think of her being dead....

C: Uh huh.

N:and also that you're going to keep her memory alive.

C: Right.

N: Important. And did you read that out or did you have someone else?

C: My dad read that out.

N: Uh huh.

C: Yeah, I didn't feel that I had the strength to.

N: Yeah.

C: Yeah. But I said most of all that it had brought our relationship somewhat closer because I was never close to my father before. But now him and I share most everything.

N: Yeah.

C: Cause he never acted like a parent before....

N: Uh huh.

C:cause she always did everything herself.

N: Uh huh.

C: But he had to learn to become one. And he held me up.

N: Yeah.

C: So we supported each other....

N: Uh huh. So did you put that in your speech as well?

C: Yes I did.

N: So kind of clarifying the changes that had occurred because of the....

C: And it was especially hard on him reading it out but....

N: Yeah.

C:he was glad to read it.

N: Uh huh. Special for you that he did.

C: Yeah.

N: You orchestrated the whole thing. You didn't....

C: Right.

N:participate verbally....

C: No.

N:at that point in it. But you had set up what was going to be done, and when, and who was going to read and speak and....

C: Right. And I met everyone when they came to the door.

N: Uh huh.

C: When they first entered, I thanked them all for coming and we shared a few words and that helped.

N: Yup. So you did that with each person,....

C: Yeah.

N:made a connection with them.

C: Right.

N: And what happened at the end? How did people leave?

C: Most people left in tears.

N: Uh huh.

C: They felt really bad but that's when we invited them all back to the apartment.

N: Uh huh.

C: They said they could come. So that was great.

N: (pause) Good. Anything else that is important to share?

C: (long pause) Well its just made me realize that we all have to face death....

N: Uh huh.

C:cause someone always has died in our family.

N: Yeah.

C: And it just makes us stronger and very lucky to be here. Well we

are. We should take advantage of that time....

N: Uh huh.

C:and share it with the other people.

N: Uh huh. And has that philosophy or insight developed since the ritual? Would you associate it with the ritual?

C: Yes, because no one really close to our family has died before.

N: Uh huh.

C: My father's parents have but we weren't that close to them. But seeing her go, it really made people realize that, wow this could actually happen, at such a young age.

N: Right, so its brought a very scary and heavy reality into you life....

C: Right, yeah.

N:that hadn't really been there before.

C: No. It wasn't.

N: Um hum.

C: Its made us, dad and I, more religious too, because thanks to our Catholic religion that's helped pull us through all this.

N: Uh huh. (pause) Does it seem that anything around your beliefs have changed that you associate with the ritual?

C: (pause) I wouldn't say that our beliefs have changed, no.

N: Uh huh. O.K. So the intensity of them was the same before and after?

C: Uh huh.

N. O.K., good.

C: Its just having experienced something, even negative. That faith has helped.

N: Uh huh. Good. Well, thank you very much for this.

C: O.K.

Appendix B

CONSENT FORM

I, _____, consent to being a participant in this study about the experience of participating in a ritual.

I understand that my participation in this research is completely voluntary and that I may decide freely to withdraw at any point in the research process.

I further understand that my participation in this study will be kept confidential. Any names or other identifying information will be changed in the transcript process. A pen-name will be substituted for my name. Audio-tapes of the interview will be accessible only to the researcher and will be destroyed upon the completion of this study.

Signature

Date

VITA

NAME: Nancy Christine Reeves

PLACE OF BIRTH: Victoria, British Columbia

YEAR OF BIRTH: April 27, 1952

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION:

Certificate in Early Childhood Education and Care, Camosun College, Victoria, 1976.

B.A. in Child Care, University of Victoria, 1976.

M.A. in Counselling Psychology, University of Victoria, 1979.

RELATED WORK EXPERIENCE:

1987 cont. Director, Island Loss Clinic, Victoria, B. C.

- support, counselling, and psychotherapy for all types of loss
- staff of eight professional counsellors

Clinic contracts include:

- provision of Psychological Trauma Response Team for B. C. Ministry of Health, Mental Health Services, to be used in natural or man-made disasters
- consultation and counselling for Queen Alexandra Hospital for Childrens' Bereaved Parent Programme
- Employee Assistance Programme for Saanich Municipality

1979 cont. Grief Consultant and Counsellor, Queen Alexandra Hospital, Victoria, B. C.

1978 cont. Private counselling, psychotherapy, and workshop

practice. Have conducted workshops throughout B. C.,
Alberta, Nova Scotia, the Yukon, and Western Australia.

1981-85 (periodically) Sessional Lecturer, University of Victoria.

Ed-D 316 Verbal Communication, Ed-D 414 Group Processes,

Ed-D 487 The Teacher and Children's Death Concerns.

1979-81. Coordinator, Victoria Association for the Care of
the Dying (4 days per week).

1978-81. Trainer/Supervisor, NEED Crisis Line, Victoria,
B. C. (1 day per week).

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