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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

A GROUNDED THEORY INVESTIGATION OF JOURNAL WRITING

BY

JUDY CHEW

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND

RESEARCH IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR

THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

IN

COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

(SPRING, 1992)

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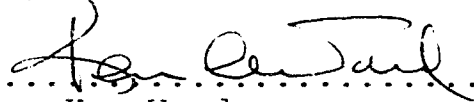Edmonton, Alberta, T6E - 4S6

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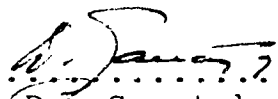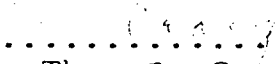
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The undersigned certify that they have read, and
recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
for acceptance, a thesis entitled A Grounded Theory
Investigation of Journal Writing, submitted by Judy Chew in
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ABSTRACT

Although the practice of journal writing has existed for centuries, it is a little understood and highly understudied area in the psychological literature. Attempts have been made to describe the benefits and drawbacks of this practice and to highlight the factors involved when an individual begins and maintains a journal. However, these efforts have been philosophical, anecdotal or testimonial. The present study is based on the grounded theory method. This is a discovery model of research which aims to generate theory that is grounded in data. To accomplish this goal, there is an exploration for processes. More specifically, there is a search for a basic social psychological process (BSPP) that accounts for all or most of the variation observed in the individuals involved in the particular phenomenon under study. Unstructured interviews were conducted with six individuals who had been journal writers for a minimum of one year. Recreating Self was the basic social psychological process found. This is a process whereby the journal writer resolves the basic problem of dissatisfaction with self by initiating changes in his or her behaviors, attitudes, and/or circumstances. The process consists of four stages: (a) Focusing on Self, (b) Exploring Options, (c) Composting, and (d) Maintaining Self. This model conceptualizes the cumulative and recursive process involved in the journal writer's cultivation of experiences and participation in self-development.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

And ever, as the story drained
The wells of fancy dry,
And faintly strove that weary one
To put the subject by,
"The rest next time-" "It is next time!"
The happy voices cry.

Thus grew the tale of Wonderland:
Thus slowly, one by one,
Its quaint events were hammered out-
And now the tale is done,
And home we steer, a merry crew,
Beneath the setting sun.

In Alice's Adventures In Wonderland
by Lewis Carroll

The completion of this work involved time and devotion
from many people. I would like to express my thanks to
John who has encouraged me along the way and waited
patiently, in anticipation of the Day of Celebration. To
the men and women who participated in the study and enabled
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Personal journal writing, whether it is structured or unstructured, is a means of self-examination, and in that sense, is psychological in nature. The journal is regarded as a book of recordings that capture important dates, events, experiences, and emotions. The details of these recordings can be referred to months and years later. On another level, the journal offers a means for problem-solving, sorting out conflicting or confusing emotions, exploring hopes and dreams, and dealing with realities. Journal writing is a means by which the journal keeper makes sense of and assigns meaning to life. To be a journal writer is to be a sojourner of the past, present, and future. There is a quest, a search for meaning and understanding through the exploration and development of self.

The practice of journal writing throughout the centuries has resulted in renown works by Augustine, Anne Frank, C. S. Lewis, Virginia Woolf, Dag Hammarskjold, May Sarton, and Anais Nin. Journal writing at present appears to have encountered a renaissance of sorts. The use of the journal has become more widespread in the twentieth century with the recognition and popularization by modern psychology of certain psychological insights and concepts of personal responsibility (Rainer, 1978).

Traditionally, research in the area of journal writing has focused upon specific problems such as test anxiety (Levi, 1985) or specific contexts such as public schools (Brand, 1978), or specific populations such as college students enrolled in a psychology course (Baron, 1978). Undoubtedly, previous research studies have broadened the scope of understanding of what journal writing involves to some extent but many questions remain unanswered. There has been a proliferation of how-to-journal books that encourage the use of journal writing for personal development and growth (Baldwin, 1977a; Capacchione, 1979; Rainer, 1978; Simons, 1973). However, the literature that promotes the use of journal writing is mainly philosophical, anecdotal, and testimonial in nature.

Counsellors and psychologists need to have a clearer picture of the processes involved when an individual begins a journal and what happens over time with respect to journal writing itself. Lacking this knowledge, the use of journal writing as a part of treatment or as an activity that is independent of a therapeutic context remains unclear. Also unanswered are such questions as how, when and why an individual could benefit from journal writing and under what circumstances it would be worthwhile to consider alternatives. There is little in the research literature pertaining to the usefulness and effectiveness of journal writing. Little research has been conducted to

examine the psychological processes involved in journal writing. Clearly, the testimonial and philosophical biases that are overwhelmingly in favor of journal writing are insufficient in providing an understanding of what is happening in the journal writing process.

My interest in journal writing stems primarily from working in counselling contexts. While I have not instructed clients in detail about how to make use of journal writing as a means of self-expression, I have been interested in exploring this area further in terms of what contribution journal writing might make for individuals in that context. In my counselling experience, clients have commented that they had been keeping a journal prior to or during their counselling experience. On other occasions, I have been asked by clients if keeping a journal of their counselling sessions might be useful. As a counsellor, I have made the suggestion to some clients to begin writing down their observations of their emotions or thoughts as a way of helping them capture a sense of what they were experiencing between sessions.

In my own reflections on journal writing, I realized that the client and I both assumed that journal writing was basically a good thing. The pragmatic attitude was one of trial and error--"if it works, use it" and "if it doesn't, don't use it". Little time was actually spent in exploring what the individual encountered in journal writing

regardless of whether the process was continued or not. Furthermore, even though I had personally engaged in journal writing to some extent, I had really not examined what the journal writing process entailed for me. My research interest in journal writing therefore was borne out of unanswered questions from a professional and personal standpoint.

The kinds of questions that remain unanswered are: Is journal writing simply a way of recording events, problems or disturbing emotions? What factors are involved when an individual begins a journal? What factors contribute to the maintenance of a journal, however regular? In what ways might journal writing be helpful before, during, and after counselling? Can journal writing itself become a problem? What are the disadvantages and potential dangers of journal writing? What role can the counsellor play in the use of journal writing in the therapeutic setting? Can journal writing fulfill some of the functions that a counsellor serves? Such questions are in need of answers particularly with the present day emphasis on the appropriate use of mental health services, the importance of the role of the individual in taking preventative measures, and the need for the counsellor to demonstrate accountability to self, client, and the profession.

The significance of this study is related to its method of research, grounded theory, which seeks to generate a

theoretical framework from the data to account for

processes. In particular, the grounded theory method

entails a search for a basic social psychological process

(BSPP) that explains problematic behavior and its

variations. The aim of this study, then, is to establish a

theoretical framework which explains the process which

individuals engage in with respect to journal writing. A

generated theory of this nature would have general

relevance to all individuals involved in personal journal

writing, and be of direct use to helping professionals.

A review of the literature will be provided in Chapter

Two. This chapter briefly outlines the historical context

of journal writing and distinguishes between diary,

journal, biography, and, autobiography. The

state-of-the-art of journal writing will be outlined with

an overview on some of the findings, concluding that little

research has addressed the psychological processes involved

in journal writing. In Chapter Three, a general

description of the grounded theory method will be given and

how the method will be implemented. Each stage is

explained in terms of the relevant conditions, contexts,

strategies, and consequences that pertain to it. The

theory will be discussed in terms of its relationship to

the existing literature and other research areas. Chapter

Four outlines the analysis process and the relationship of

the research data to the development of the theory. In

Chapter Five the significance of the theory and suggestions

for future research are addressed. This will be followed

by the conclusion and epilogue in which the researcher

comments on how the research study effected her.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

In a grounded theory research study the literature review serves a different purpose from that of hypotheses-testing research. This approach is designed to generate theory; not to test it (May, 1986). The main purpose of the literature review is to enable the reader to view the phenomenon as the researcher did at the initial part of the research project. Thus in keeping with the grounded theory approach, the pertinent literature in the area of journal writing is presented.

It is important to note that conducting research within the framework of the grounded theory method involves a preliminary search of the literature with the purpose of setting a context for the research study. In so doing, the issues and gaps in the research are identified and presented as possible areas of further exploration. Once a "discovered framework" has been established in the study, the theoretical literature then serves the purpose of providing a theoretical sampling source to confirm and enhance the developing theory. In keeping with the grounded theory method, this review is not intended to be exhaustive nor does it dictate the focus of the research, or provide a critical evaluation. Instead, this review is aimed at showing some of the gaps and the inconclusive nature of the research literature on the given subject.

Furthermore, the importance of timing in the sampling of the theory needs to be underscored to ensure that the researcher's distraction from her own study focus will be minimized. Glaser (1978), reminding the researcher of the caution that is to be taken, comments:

> This general warning against sampling outside the substantive area before an emergent framework is established cannot be heeded too closely and carefully. Besides undermining the relevance of the substantive area, the literature's focus frequently becomes a "pet" interest of the analyst because of its respected author. (p. 51)

Before a review of the literature is presented, a brief outline of the use of journal writing within a historical context will be presented. The distinctions between diary, autobiography, and journal will also be made.

A Historical Context

The growth and development of interest in the psychological aspects and psychotherapeutic application of writing in general, and journal writing specifically, have been documented in Baron's (1978) dissertation. Baron provides a very comprehensive review of the historical roots of journal writing which covers the period from the 1900's to the 1970's.

From a general perspective, written communication developed early in human history, beginning no later than with the earliest known cave drawings, or in the case with preliterate or illiterate people in the carefully preserved stories handed on, at times verbatim, from one generation

to the next (Simons, 1978). The uses of writing for psychological health and fulfillment may be traced to ancient Greece where poetry was first recognized for its healing powers (Brand, 1979). The Greek philosopher Gorgias drew a parallel between the effects of poetry on the soul to the expulsion of evil humours from the body, and emphasized the specific healing value of poetic language (Brand, 1979).

The origin of journal writing is not certain although authors (Baron, 1978, Simons, 1978) have pointed to biblical references such as Numbers 33:2 in which Moses is commanded to keep a written account of his spiritual progress. According to Simons (1978) the journals kept by the early tribes were an integral part of their travelling history. These journals provided a way for the individual and the community as a whole to reintegrate deed and discovery. McMurrary (1980) noted that deerskin, walls of teppees, the Bayeaux tapestry, pottery, and so on were the sources for these journal writings that portrayed the tribal elders' meetings and their decisions as to which events of the season should be recorded in paintings.

Personal journal writing has also been traced to Japan in the tenth century where it is noted that women had no other way to express what they felt than by writing journals. The journals were kept inside pillows and that is how these written expressions became known as "pillow

books" (Nin, 1975, P. 151). To these Japanese women, the journal served as a form of personal expression in which external realities, subjective fantasies, and fiction were explored (Nin, 1975). These journals were regarded as both literary and introspective and were based on the writer's inner time frame rather than on a calendar.

Journal writing has also been associated with religious and cultural traditions. Many Quakers and Calvinists in seventeenth-century England kept spiritual journals. It was during this century that journal writing became a fairly widespread practice. The keeping of journals has been a time honored practice in various religious traditions. From the <u>Confessions of St. Augustine</u> to the spiritual journals of the Society of Friends, the journal has represented an important means for the expression of spirituality. It was not until the seventeenth century that journal writing became a popular, widespread practice. The Quakers, for example, developed the journal into devotional literature to be shared among themselves as a means of spreading their religious beliefs (McMurray, 1980). For the Puritans, journal keeping was a tool for self-discipline and self-judgment. Puritan ministers living in the New World after arriving on the Mayflower taught children to use the journal as a way of keeping tabs on their conscience (Rainer, 1978).

There is evidence to suggest that the practice of

journal writing was found among Reformed clergymen in the
late sixteenth century. To these individuals the journal
became an instrument where their consciences were examined
and where they prepared themselves for encounters with God
(Mallon, 1984). The reasons and inclinations that drew the
individuals to write in a journal throughout the centuries
are captured in the following statement:

> ..we are dealing with an inclination which seems to go
> back to the dawn of consciousness and pertain to its
> essence- humanity's desire to contemplate or hand on in
> some fashion the important events, deeds, fantasies,
> dreams and hopes of people and therefore the need to
> record them (Simons, 1978, p.8).

Personal journal writing has proliferated into such fields
as education, literature, psychiatry, psychology, and
religion. An extensive review of the use of journal
writing in other disciplines has been presented by Fulwiler
(1987).

<u>Definitions</u>

<u>Journal</u>. The word "journal" comes from the word
"diurnal", and the Latin root "dies" which means "day"
(Berger and Berger, 1957). A journal is a private book of
dated entries kept by an individual over a period of time.
Included in these entries are thoughts, reactions, and
emotions about oneself, others, events or ideas.
Generally, the word "journal" is looser in definition than
"diary" and allows for a wider range of creative expression
in terms of form and content (Baldwin, 1977a). Dreams,

fantasies, sketches, quotations, and poems are some examples. The journal is "a connection of the self with the sel.· (Baldwin, 1977a, p. xiv). The personal journal serves as an instrument for personal growth and is a "tool for recording the process of our lives" (Baldwin, 1977a, p. 2). Although Rainer (1978) does not make a clear distinction between "journal" and "diary", she qualifies the meaning of journal writing. She asserts that the new conception of journal writing has little to do with the rigid, daily calendar diary sometimes kept by children, nor is it a record of factual material, such as trips taken.

Progoff (1975) developed guidelines for journal writing to counteract some of the limitations and negative effects that he perceived to be inherent in spontaneous journal keeping. He also provided a description of journal writing with directions that are consistent with others in the field. The intention of Progoff's (1975) structured journal, or psychological workbook is to provide a way to "reflect and carry forward the process of growth as it was taking place uniquely in each individual" (Progoff, 1975, p. 30).

Diary. Interestingly, the word "diary" shares the same Latin root from "diarium" from "dies" as the word "journal" (Berger and Berger, 1957). Traditionally, diary keeping suggests a more formal pattern of daily entries, providing primarily a place for recording the writer's experiences,

observations, and activities (Baldwin, 1977a).

Autobiography. The original Greek words "bios" and "autos" mean life and self, respectively (Gunn, 1982). The self who reads, whether it be the autobiographer or the reader of the autobiography, is the displayed self rather than the hidden self (Gunn, 1982). The following comment elaborates on this statement:

> It is by means of language (graphie) that self both displays itself and has access to depth; it is also through language that self achieves and acknowledges its bios (Gunn, 1982, p.9).

Essentially, an autobiography is a narration of one's own history, memoir, or recollections of fixed events which have surrounded and absorbed one's thoughts (Clark, 1935). Latta (1988) notes that the autobiography is the discovery of self in retrospect but adds that it focuses more on the major people and events which influenced the person's life and less on the individual's search for identity. Autobiography, in this sense, is not a mere recapitulation of the past. It also reflects the individual's attempt at self-representation within an historical context. The work of autobiography stands "as the writer's bid for a place in the world" (Wolff, 1979, p. 71).

Some researchers and writers in the field do not distinguish between the terms "diary" and "journal" (Baron, 1978; Berger and Berger, 1957; Baker, 1988; Nichols, 1973; Rainer, 1978; and Winslow, 1980). In this study the term

"journal", rather chan "diary" will be used in order to preserve the distinction between objective and subjective types of documents and in acknowledgment of the psychological aspects of maintaining a journal. This distinction, as outlined earlier in this chapter, is consistent with the views reflected by Baldwin (1977a), Progoff (1975) and Simons (1975).

THEORETICAL, PHILOSOPHICAL, and DESCRIPTIVE LITERATURE

Morita Shoma. One of the first suggestions for using journals in a psychotherapeutic context was made by a Japanese philosopher-psychiatrist Morita Shoma, in the early 1900's (Reynolds, 1980). Developed in the Far East, Morita Therapy incorporates journal writing as an important vehicle of interaction between the patient's world and the therapist's thinking. The journal is viewed as an effective tool in the treatment of "shinkeishitsu" which is the Japanese term for such neuroses as anxiety, phobias, and certain psychosomatic and obsessive-compulsiveness disorders (Chang, 1974, p. 208).

With the goal of reeducation, Morita Therapy provides a means for documenting psychological development, helping the individual to develop new perspectives on life and the world, and noting basic changes in personality structure that occur. In keeping a journal, the patient reflects upon daily experiences. The doctor takes the journal each evening and returns it the next day, often with comments on

the previous day's entry (Smith, 1981, p. 62)   The journal
is used as a means for retraining attention.   By being so
immersed in a task at hand or in some simple pleasure the
patient's symptoms are set aside.   The therapist's position
is that anxiety and feelings of inferiority are not
overcome by paying attention to the problems but by
attending to work because it is socially useful rather than
because it is therapeutic (Smith, 1981).

    C. Jung.   One of the central concepts in Jung's theory
is the process of individuation which refers to the
"differentiation of the various parts of the personality",
and becoming aware of the previously hidden components so
that these components can be synthesized (Herganhahn, 1984,
p. 54).   This synthesis leads toward the realization of the
self, which is a lifelong and difficult task, and unlikely
to be achieved fully by anyone.   According to Jung,
reaching a state of self-realization is dependent upon the
cooperation of the ego and its recognition of the messages
from the unconscious levels of personality.   Otherwise,
full individuation is not possible.   Thus, in order for the
individuation of the personality to take effect, everything
must become conscious (Hall & Nordby, 1973).   It is within
this context that personal journal writing has particular
relevance.   Jung's work with the unconscious was intimately
linked to his own personal journal which he maintained
throughout his adult life.   In fact, he was one of the

first psychological theorists to use the journal to
facilitate the self-realization process. For Jung, the
personal journal served several important purposes.
Paraphrasing McMurray's (1980) summary, these purposes are:

> (1) the journal provided a channel for discovering,
> recording and experiencing the process of
> individuation;
>
> (2) the journal was a place for self-confrontation in
> which the individual's struggle for self-knowledge as a
> part of the individuation process was accounted for;
>
> (3) Jung believed that whatever quality one could
> observe that is characteristic of an individual, it is
> very likely that the opposite could be found as well.
> The journal therefore provided a means for the
> awareness and acceptance of both these possibilities.

Jung recorded his dreams, fantasies of recurrent figures,
images and symbols from his personal unconscious as well as
his collective unconscious, the latter referring to that
which is inborn, universal and "has contents and modes of
behavior that are the same everywhere and in all
individuals" (Jung, 1959, p. 3).

Roberto Assagioli. Assagioli is recognized for his
development of psychosynthesis which examines human
development on the basis of the discovery and expression of
the self. One of the basic notions of this theory is "the
unfolding I" (Assagioli, 1965). Also of fundamental

importance in the development of an inclusive concept of

the human being is the idea of the "transpersonal"

dimension of an individual's experience, or in other words,

that which goes beyond the individual level. Assagioli

also focused on the development of the personality.

Psychosynthesis is moved beyond the psyche (personal self)

to reintegrating released energies around a unifying center

of awareness and will (transpersonal self) (Assagioli,

1965, 1973).

In terms of journal writing as an integral part of

psychotherapy, he outlined the following benefits:

> (1) facilitates assessment;
> (2) provides a means of self-expression;
> (3) acts as a technique of active training in
> concentration, attention and will;
> (4) provide release to emotions in a therapeutic way;
> (5) provide a sense of satisfaction on a symbolic level
> as writing can be a symbolic act of retaliation
> (Assagioli, 1965, p. 70-71, 103-104).

In relation to therapy sessions, the benefits of journal

writing include saving time as the therapist can read the

entries quickly. Journal writing can also facilitate the

client's openness, particularly when writing in the absence

of the therapist. In advocating the use of journal

writing, Assagioli states:

> ..to encourage him to show it to the therapist by
> pointing out to him the advantages we mentioned
> earlier: the saving of time in the sessions, and
> giving a more complete picture because he may otherwise
> forget relevant things that come to his mind between
> sessions. Furthermore, there is the fact that in
> writing one expresses different sides of the
> personality; some people are freer, less inhibited in
> writing than in speaking about delicate subjects
> (Assagioli, 1965, p. 104)

Leonard Pearson. In an attempt to broaden the spectrum
of treatment techniques, various psychologists (Burton,
1965; Ellis, 1965; Harrower, 1965; and Raimy, 1965) under
the leadership of Pearson published a monograph, The Use Of
Written Communications in Psychotherapy, that discussed a
range of topics related to written communication. Burton
(1965) regarded written productions by the client as
adjuncts to therapy. He cautions therapists against their
own bias of rejecting written communications as this
inevitably involves risking rejection of the client. The
advantages of written communications are listed as follows:

(1) The preparation of a "written production" ...by a
client is an expressive and creative act. It both
analyzes and synthesizes emotion in a deeply personal
way and, as such, works counter to repressive and
regressive forces in the personality.

(2) The content of the "written productions" provides
materials for analysis similar to dreams, fantasies,
projective tests, and other imaginative productions.

(3) "Written productions" can further interval-therapy
by providing for rehearsal of therapeutic hours. In
this way the development of insight and cognition is
encouraged.

(4) A "written production" usually has a wider social
base than an individual therapy session. In this
sense, it is more outer-directed for it involves
family, peer groups, authority figures, etc., in
greater quantities than in the sessions. Since society
is the place where the client ultimately makes his
life, written productions permit him a wider social
integration of analytic material.

(5) Under certain circumstances, the time required for
treatment may be eclipsed by the judicious use of
"written productions." (Burton 1965, p. 14-15).

Needless to say there are cautions and limitations with

regards to the use of written communication. The use of writing may also be viewed as potentially having a negative influence on treatment. Quoting again from Burton (1965), the disadvantages are listed as follows:

(1) A "written production" displaces the emphasis from the interaction between the client and the therapist;

(2) not all clients or therapists have the capacity or interest to use "written productions";

(3) writing can serve as a buffer or defense from the honesty of direct confrontation;

(4) having the client write down highly personal or private thoughts may create inhibition and reluctance;

(5) "Written productions" are imaginal rather than actional. They focus on the interior of the person; but externalizing may often be the need at certain stages of treatment. In this sense, introspection rather than integrative action may be promoted. (p. 13-14)

From his own experience as a psychotherapist, Ellis (1965) states:

...that not as much material was covered during a therapeutic session as tended to be covered when the patient and I were speaking; and, secondly, the patients sometimes seemed a little more reluctant to bring out certain aspects of their lives, such as their sex feelings and actions, when they had to write them down on paper than when they could speak them into my ears. (p. 25)

Ira Progoff. After a close examination of the spontaneous use of private journals, Progoff (1975), a Jungian-trained therapist, provides several precautions. He noted that journals are often used in situations where attaining particular goals has been difficult. In this

sense, the journal becomes a "self-testing" device that reflects on the extent to which goals have been attained (Progoff, 1975, p. 24). However, for a judgmental individual, spontaneous journal writing can "increase whatever feelings of guilt the person had before he began to keep the journal" (Progoff, 1975, p. 24). Furthermore, the keeping of a journal sometimes works against itself and has a negative impact, particularly when it is kept "without the guidance of dynamic principles and without a protective discipline; or when, under the guise of communication, the keeping of a journal is used as a strategem or as a weapon in order to impress our point of view on someone else" (Progoff, 1975, p. 25). Thirdly, when people use private journals as a means of helping themselves reach a certain goal, the definitiveness of the goal actually restricts the space in which the inner process can move. Once the goal is accomplished or interest in it has ceased, the practice of journal writing also ceases. Misuse of the practice of journal keeping leads to disuse and this disuse "leaves a vacuum in the person's experience" (Progoff, 1975, p. 25).

As a response to these problems, Progoff developed the intensive journal method as a way to "unify the personality and effectively achieve a kind of self-therapy" (L. A. Times, October 19, 1975). Emphasis was placed on developing the psychological workbook in such a way that it

could be self-sustaining if the individual worked with it alone. Such a method was aimed at sustaining the individual in the "interim times between his contacts with his therapist, or with his group, or with whatever type of dialogue he was working" (Progoff, 1975, p. 28). The journal approach, as designed by Progoff was a way of enhancing self-development and inner awareness, and also eliminating the therapist's value system and bias (Rainer, 1978). Progoff (1975) comments on how journal writing can effect therapeutic change:

> by providing active techniques that enable an individual to draw upon his inherent resources for becoming a whole person. It systematically evokes and strengthens the inner capacities of persons by working from a nonmedical vantage point and proceeding without analytic or diagnostic categories (p. 9).

Christina Baldwin. In One To One: Self-Understanding Through Journal Writing, Baldwin, a freelance writer and counsellor, underscores the assumption that the individual is capable of having an internal relationship with one's self or one's own mind in the journal writing process. She contends that in observing and in letting the unconscious come into the consciousness, a birthing of ourselves is possible. The notion of birthing is drawn from the original meaning of "therapist" which implies:

> an attendant, or midwife, one who made way for Psyche's head. Therapy implies the stretching of one's limbs or consciousness, of opening oneself to the imagery and activity of labor, and the therapeutic journey becomes an act of birthing. (Baldwin, 1977a, p. 5)

Baldwin's book presents an overview of what journal

writing is, providing guidelines as to how one may attempt to keep a journal, and highlighting the many benefits that may be derived from this practice. Included are exercises to enhance one's writing such as focusing on dreams, issues pertaining to self-identity, problem-solving, friendship, sexuality, and death. In her view, journal writing does not protect the individual from ambivalence. It enables one to deal with it, thus heightening the potential for experiencing discomfort, fear, and anxiety. On the other hand, Baldwin attests to the potential for the journal writing process to map one's progress, to validate experience and to provide companionship for what is basically a solitary passage (Baldwin, 1977b).

Tristine Rainer. Rainer (1978) is a college teacher of creative writing and journal keeping. After eight years of researching both published and unpublished journals, Rainer emphasized the journal as a means to change self-evaluation, enhance self-awareness, enable problem-solving, clarify goals, and facilitate creative expression. The journal was defined as follows:

> (it is) a practical psychological tool that enables you to express feelings without inhibition, recognize and alter self-defeating habits of mind, and come to know and accept that self which is you. It is a sanctuary where all the disparate elements of life-feelings, thoughts, dreams, hopes, and fears; fantasies, practicalities, worries, facts, and intuitions-can merge to give you a sense of wholeness and coherence. It can help you understand your past, discover joy in the present, and create your own future. (Rainer, 1978, p. 18)

Rainer asserts that the individual's discovery of a personal style of journal keeping is a crucial aspect of the self-knowledge derived from the writing process. She disagrees with the Progoff method as she perceives that his structured method limits the freeing of expression that plays an important part in releasing the individual from the very problems that triggered a search for resolutions through journal writing in the first place (Baron, Personal Communication: February 21, 1978b).

Rolf von Eckartsberg. von Eckartsberg addresses the intimate link between stories and psychotherapy. The psychotherapeutic situation is one in which the therapist is helping individuals help themselves. In accomplishing this, the therapist works with the client in "storying the emotional plot-line that lies behind the words of the initial story" (von Eckartsberg, 1986, p. 210). The meta-story of the client's problematic life is drawn out through the therapist-client interaction. Specifically, the personal emotional drama, the emotions of hate, envy, jealousy, guilt, and anger, etc.-and in their interplay are unraveled. von Eckartsberg (1986) views therapy as:

> a dialogal struggle for life-formative storying, for finding the story-formulation of our personal existence with which we can identify wholeheartedly, for which we can stand up, and which gives us a solid and trusted basis for creative and responsible action. (p. 210)

Psychotherapy in this sense, involves the therapist's assistance in helping clients realize and acknowledge the

problematic stories they are stuck in, to liberate
themselves from those stories that are unlivable and to
enable them to weave a new context by re-storying a life
that is livable and acceptable, with new possibilities for
hope and discovery.

A second important aspect of von Eckartsberg's work is
writing marathon therapy which attempts to assist clients
in regaining a closer and more accepting contact with their
"psychological feeling dynamic and its concomitant problems
and self-defeating obstructions" (von Eckartsberg, 1986, p.
213). When compared with psychoanalytic free-association,
the writing marathon process speeds up the work of
self-disclosure. The process involves the client's
revelation of the problematic areas, and the many and often
contradictory emotions that result from the time pressure.
Initially, negative stories of hate, fear, weakness or pain
surface. Gradually during the course of writing,
individuals write themselves free from these unlivable
stories. Through re-storying, the initial self-storying
that is negative and repetitive begins to recede. In their
place are the re-storying of hope, affirmation and
longing. One of the benefits of this form of therapy is
the monitoring that the individual receives during the
writing and the guidance by the therapists that is provided
during blockages and difficulties. von Eckertsberg (1986)
refers to the tangible and re-readable representation of

the person's psychological and existential situation as a "psychogram", an existential print-out and life-text that can in turn be developed and directed in the context of therapy to foster insight as well as behavioral change.

   Michael White and David Epston. As co-authors of the book, Narrative Means to Therapeutic Ends (1990), White and Epston introduce the assumption that problems are encountered by people when the invented stories of their lives (by self and others), are inadequate representations of their lived experience and that, in these circumstances, there will be significant aspects of their lived experiences that contradict these dominant narratives (p. 15). The use of narrative then becomes a crucial part of therapy as the therapeutic endeavor becomes a process of storying and re-storying the lives and experiences of these people (White and Epston, 1990).

   The examination of the use of narrative means in therapy revolves around a crucial question: "How can we enable the writing of personal and collective stories that liberate and heal when the dominant stories are so problem-saturated?" (White and Epston, 1990, p. xi). From a therapeutic standpoint, alternative stories need to be self-generated stories that can incorporate aspects of the lived experience that were neglected. These alternative stories challenge the "truths" that specify their lives and are woven in with alternative knowledge. Although journal

writing per se is not addressed in this form of therapy, the authors do include therapy narrative forms such as letters, certificates, and documents as means by which the individual can redefine the relationship with the problem by externalizing, questioning, and gaining power/knowledge.

Other. The literature is abundant with discussions on the application of journal writing to a wide spectrum of specific problems. For example, journal writing seems to be a viable method to: relieve tension and to moderate periods of confusion and anxiety (McKinney, 1976); to treat female adult survivors of childhood incest (Faria and Belohlavek, 1984); to provide a creative outlet for cancer patients (Rogers, 1978); and to enable therapists to engage in expanding self-awareness and self-understanding (Baker, 1988). In contrast with the literature that promotes the use of journal writing, there exists a number of works that caution or oppose its use. Allport (1961) comments that one must be alert to symptoms of self-deception, melodramatic expression, and rationalization. In a similar vein, Rainer (1978) says: "The abiding danger is that the journal writer may become passive in life, writing dialogues rather than talking with people, and turn inward rather than take action in the world" (p. 39). Not all individuals have the capacity to utilize writing as a form of therapy. Writing can therefore be "imaginal rather than actional" (Burton, 1965, p. 13).

CONTRIBUTIONS FROM NONEMPIRICAL RESEARCH

In Nichols' (1973) dissertation, an exploratory study was conducted to better understand the experience of journal writing as it relates to the process of self-discovery and how this might be relevant to the field of mental health. Using biographical questionnaires and indepth interviews, the findings of the study pointed to the benefits of writing. These benefits included the expression of feelings, providing a creative outlet, and the enhancement of self-awareness. Furthermore, the findings indicated that the gains of journal writing far outweighed the difficulties and drawbacks. According to Nichols (1973) journal writing is a useful tool for self-help as well as an adjunct to psychotherapy.

Using content analysis and descriptive statistics, McMurray's (1980) doctoral research studied journal keepers according to C. G. Jung's psychological type categories to examine how different psychological types interact with journal keeping behavior. His findings point to the identification of personality tendencies that are associated with various journal keeping behaviors. The suggestion is made for professionals involved in teaching a class or workshop or engaged in therapy with a client to consider psychological types. In this study the critical determinant of whether the journal is used by a person seems to lie in the intuition/sensation dimension (p. 37).

The introversion/extroversion difference indicated how the journal is used, not whether it will be used (p. 109). There is an indication that the extroverted/sensation types are the least effective journal keepers because they are more action-oriented and less inclined toward writing.

In her dissertation, Geissler (1981) provides a description of Karen Horney's work on self-analysis and its contribution to journal therapy. Taking three fundamental psychoanalytic concepts: the unconscious, free association, and resistance, an attempt is made to portray the links that exist between psychoanalytic ideas and journal therapy. Geissler (1981) noted that Horney's work provided a methodological base on which journal therapy can be viewed. Parallels are drawn between Horney's (1942) notions of self-exploration process and journal therapy as both involve: (a) coming to the recognition of a problem area of neurotic tendency; (b) discovering its causes, manifestations and consequences; (c) discovering its interrelationships with other parts of the personality and other problem areas.

CONTRIBUTIONS FROM EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

Using a pre- and posttest control group design with seventy-eight university students, Baron's (1978) doctoral research investigated the journal keeping process and the purported effects of this process. After twenty-eight days, the findings were as follows: (a) daily unstructured

self-evaluative writing (i.e., journal keeping) was not shown to yield statistically significant cumulative effects upon self-evaluation or self-actualization; (b) journal keeping did not yield statistically significant immediate effects upon self-evaluation; (c) the gains of journal keeping are more likely to be immediate and transitory rather than cumulative; (d) daily structured self-evaluation (i.e., filling out self-evaluative bipolar checklists on feelings and self-perceptions) did yield significant cumulative effects upon changes in self-evaluation and, for women, significant changes in self-actualization.

In a research study, Levi (1980) examined the efficacy of journal-keeping as a self-help technique for dealing with self-destructive behavior (test anxiety). Two writing therapies were designed to enable the exploration of whether it is more advantageous to treat target symptoms such as test anxiety or more global personality variables (e.g. self-awareness, self-efficacy, self-concept). The subjects were randomly assigned to one of the three following groups: Test Anxiety Treatment Group (TAT), General Anxiety/Attention-Placebo Group (GAP) or the No-Treatment Control Group (NTC). The pretest, consisting of the Achievement Anxiety Scale (AAS) and the Test Anxiety Scale (TAS), and self-report questions were given to all subjects. The findings indicated that all groups improved

significantly. The data from self-reports reflected the TAT group had greater improvement on behavioral variables related to test anxiety (e.g. test-taking behavior), while the GAP group showed more improvement on the self-concept variables such as self-awareness and self-efficacy.

Recent studies have focused on the health and physiological consequences of confiding versus not confiding in others about a traumatic event (Pennebaker, 1990; Pennebaker & Beall, 1986; Pennebaker, Hughes & O'Heeron, 1987; Pennebaker, 1988). The findings indicated that the failure to confide represents an inhibition of sorts. In fact, a significant form of stress is related to the very act of inhibiting or actively holding back the disclosure of important traumas (Pennebaker, Hughes & O'Heeron, 1987). Traumatic events associated with inhibition are evident in major or minor diseases (Pennebaker, 1988).

Pennebaker, Kiecolt-Glaser & Glaser (1988) investigated the effect of confronting traumatic experiences (through writing or talking) in terms of the general model of psychosomatics which points to the association of long-term stress and disease with inhibiting or holding back one's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. In this study, fifty university students were asked to write about either traumatic experiences or superficial topics for four consecutive days.

The findings of this experiment suggested that individuals who confronted upsetting experiences in their lives demonstrated improvements in physical health relative to control subjects. The greater health improvements were found in those who wrote about topics that they had actively held back. The findings suggested that the disclosure of traumas is simultaneously associated with improvement in certain aspects of immune function and physical health. Despite the clear disadvantages of writing (e.g. absence of an objective opinion or support from others), alternatively, there is a cost-effectiveness which enables individuals to deal with traumas at their own pace and create their own meaning and solutions to their problems, providing an alternative form of preventative therapy (Pennebaker, Kiecolt-Glaser & Glaser, 1988, p. 245).

In the study done by Edward J. Murray, Alisa D. Lamnin & Charles S. Carver, (1989) on the nature of psychotherapeutic change, Brief Psychotherapy was compared with Written Expression about stressful life events, including a control condition of writing about trivial events using college students as subjects. An effort was made to separate the effects of affective discharge, or simple catharsis, from the more complex cognitive and emotional changes presumably occurring in even brief psychotherapy.

The results demonstrated that Psychotherapy differs from written expression of similar content. While Psychotherapy involves the expression of feelings as well as a therapist-assisted resolution, the mere writing about stressful events does not. In the Psychotherapy condition, there were substantial cognitive, self-esteem, and adaptive changes. In the post-experimental questionnaire, the psychotherapy participants reported that the experience changed their feelings about the event. The adaptive changes in the Psychotherapy condition were greater than those found in Written Expression and were attributed to the interventions of the therapist. The absence of a therapist in the Written Expression condition resulted in the acceleration of the negative emotions as there was no therapist to facilitate basic attitude change and the shift to positive feelings. The mere Written Expression conditions accelerates affect with little self-generated re-appraisal and no signs of emotional resolution.

Summary. While the literature to date addresses journalling primarily in terms of perceptions of the structures and operations of journal writing, perceptions of the benefits derived from journal writing, and some of the perceived limitations, little attention has been given to the process that individuals encounter in journal writing. These perceptions arise from the experiences of a variety of individuals who reflect diverse theoretical

frameworks in their examination and evaluation of the activity of journal writing, an activity defined through the descriptive language of those who write about this activity.

Although some description of the processes involved in the area of journal writing exists (Progoff, 1975), a systematic formulation of these processes is lacking. What is not addressed through systematic research efforts is journal writing as process, a process with a potential for having consistently defineable markers. Journal writing might be appropriately regarded as an attitude rather than a rigidly defined set of structures, standards, and rituals. This present research will shift the focus from structure to process and seek to close the knowledge gap in the area of journal writing by way of addressing journal writing through those who practice this activity and through the research medium of grounded theory. The steps that will be taken in this exploration will be addressed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

THE METHOD

The research approach for any particular focus of study "should be selectively and appropriately used according to the nature of the problem and what is known about the phenomenon to be studied" (Field & Morse, 1985, p. 12). More specifically, the rationale for qualitative research of human behavior is expressed in the following: "Before you impose your theories on the people you study, find out how those people define the world" (Spradley, 1979, p. 14). In order to understand the psychological processes involved in the experience of journal writing, it is important to have the individuals describe their world so that the researcher can formulate patterns in their perceptions and behaviors and generate a theory that reflects their experiences.

The grounded theory method was selected as a suitable approach given the objectives of the present research to identify and explain the processes involved in the journal writers' endeavours to resolve a problematic area in their lives. In this method, "process" is defined as "the linking of sequences of action/interaction as they pertain to the management of, control over, or response to, a phenomenon" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 143). This approach is a qualitative research method in that it

involves the use of a "systematic set of procedures to develop an inductively derived grounded theory about a phenomenon" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 24).

The aim of grounded theory method is to construct a theory that is consistent with and illuminating of the reality being investigated. Theory may be defined as an explanation of the relationships among the facts that makes sense and enhances understanding (Thomas, 1985). More specifically, a grounded theory is one that is "discovered, developed, and provisionally verified through systematic data collection and analysis of data pertaining to that phenomenon" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 23). Because the notion of process has a "time dimension, stages, and turning points" (Fagerhaugh, 1986, p. 934), an analytic focus on process will help to integrate the "who, what, where, when, and why questions of the research problem" (Glaser, 1978, p. 134). The explanatory power of process analysis enables the problem under study to be viewed as a logical and understandable whole.

This chapter will introduce the grounded theory method, outline symbolic interactionism as its theoretical context, and describe the concepts and the research process. Issues pertaining to reliability and validity will also be discussed. This discussion will be followed by a section that will address the procedures involved in applying the research method to the proposed questions.

An Introduction to the Method

The grounded theory method was developed by Glaser (1978) and Glaser and Strauss (1967) in reaction to a research climate that viewed qualitative research as a helpful preliminary to the "real" methodologies of quantitative research (Charmaz, 1983, p. 109). It was also a response to their observation that much research was confined to the quantitative testing of hypotheses originating from the work of a few "favored" theorists (Turner, 1981). This method represents one approach to the qualitative analysis of data. Because of its emphasis on the generation of theory and the data in which the theory is grounded, the approach is termed grounded theory (Glaser, 1978).

As a discovery model, (Bigus, Hadden & Glaser, 1982; Charmaz, 1983; Layder, 1982; Mahrer, 1988) this method "allows us to discover what is there to be discovered" (Mahrer, 1988, p. 694). The questions of interest are: "What patterns can I identify in the problem and how are these problems related?" (Artinian, 1986, p. 16). The researcher attempts to formulate the main processes in the social setting with the goal of generating hypotheses that will have generalized applicability. Hypotheses or propositions suggest how phenomena might be related to one another. There is no particular commitment to specific kinds of data, lines of research, or theoretical interests

as this approach represents a style of doing qualitative
analysis, rather than a specific method or technique
(Strauss, 1989).

The basic goal of the grounded theory approach is to
"generate a theory that accounts for a pattern of behavior
which is relevant and problematic for those involved"
(Glaser, 1978, p. 93). This method allows the researcher
to gather data about a phenomenon of interest, build a
model, and generate a theory from data that are
systematically obtained from real-world situations as
opposed to analogue studies or field experiments. A
systematic approach of the procedures for data collection
and data analysis has been outlined (Glaser & Strauss,
1967; Glaser, 1978; Strauss, 1989; Strauss & Corbin,
1990). Glaser (1978) comments that the researcher can
provide those knowledgeable in the field of study or "in
the know" with substantive theory. "What the man in the
know does not want is to be told what he already knows.
What he wants is to be told how to handle what he knows
with some increment of control and understanding of his
area of action" (Glaser, 1978, p. 13). With substantive
theory, it is possible for the researcher to move from the
"empirical, experiential, descriptive" knowledge, to
knowledge that entails "ideationally organized"
conceptualization and theory (Glaser, 1978, p. 13).
Quoting from Glaser (1978), this movement provides the

researcher with several advantages:

1. He is able to anticipate additional kinds of consequences, conditions and strategies of an act besides what he knows of empirically.

2. He can expand his description and meaning of incidents by placing them in greater scope as his thought transcends the details he knows so well.

3. Concepts are easier to remember than incidents, especially fewer concepts which are integrated in a theory in the place of a multitude of unintegrated incidents. Thus his capacity is potentiated.

4. As the knowledgeable man's theoretical view expands, his social base can expand. He can take on the diversity of larger units, or many units, which if he was limited to only knowing incidents, would overload his capacity. As he learns to transcend particular incidents and transfer concepts to other situations, he can consolidate his broadening power as it opens up possibilities and opportunities. He can organize and map the unknown faster with his ideational tools, which detail new incidents as merely interchangeable with those of familiar underlying uniformities.

5. Men in the know can easily become locked in or status quo oriented, as their knowledge becomes stable, consistent and consolidates their position. With theory their perceptions are amenable to change since they can begin to see the processes, making for change and can modify their ideas to handle the new knowledge. They begin to transcend what was seen as inviolate, by seeing previous happenings as merely elements of patterns in process. They can work with familiar occasions purposefully.

6. By seeing his knowledge in a theoretical view, he can begin to capitalize on it in ways heretofore out of his perception. Possibilities of all kinds open up. His judgement is sharpened, as he sees variable new strategies, conditions and consequences. (p. 13-14)

Criteria For Grounded Theory

There are four central criteria that a well-constructed grounded theory must meet before it can be considered

appropriate to a phenomenon: fit, understanding,

generality, and control (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, pp.

237-250; Glaser, 1978, p. 3; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p.

23). According to Glaser & Strauss (1965), this involves

the following requirements:

> the theory must be enabled to understand and analyze
> ongoing situational realities, to produce and predict
> change in them, and to predict and control consequences
> both for the object of change and for other parts of
> the total situation that will be affected. (p. 268)

Rennie, Phillips & Quartaro (1988) explain these criteria

as follows:

> It should be believable in that it should seem to the
> reader to be a plausible explanation. It should be
> adequate in that it should present a comprehensive
> account that does not omit large or important portions
> of the data. It should be grounded in terms of the
> appropriate procedures and thereby inductively tied to
> the data. Finally, it should be applicable and should
> lead to hypotheses and additional investigation. (p.
> 145)

Theoretical Context

Grounded theory is a research method developed from the

implications of the symbolic interactionist view of human

behavior. The experiential, inner aspects of human

behavior, that is, how people define events or reality and

how they act in relation to their beliefs (Chenitz &

Swanson, 1986) are of central concern. People create

meaning in a situation and this leads to action and the

consequences of action. Thus, the focus is on the

experiential aspects of human behavior as well as self and

social interaction. For example, the study of journal

writing is examined in relation to the interpretation of events related to recreating self. The actions of the participants are determined by the symbolic meanings given to the experiences. As stated by Chenitz & Swanson (1986), "all phenomena and people are subject to redefinition and new meanings through interaction" (p. 6). Therefore, it becomes possible for new definitions of phenomena to create new self-definitions since meaning is created through self.

Advanced by George Mead (1934), the symbolic interactionist school of thought states that the individual acquires a sense of self through social interaction and by learning to see one's self from the perspective of the other. Blumer (1969) notes that symbolic interaction theory rests on three premises that are based on the following belief:

> The human being is not a mere responding organism, only responding to the play of factors from his world or from himself; he is an acting organism who has to cope with and handle such factors and who in so doing has to forge and direct his line of action. (p. 55)

First, "human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them" (Blumer, 1969, p. 2). Institutions, guiding ideals, other human beings, objects, activities of others and situations, or any combination of these are examples.

Second, the meaning of these things is derived from the social interaction that one has with one's fellows. Meaning is created by experience.

Third, these meanings are "handled in, and modified through an interpretative process used by the person in dealing with the things he encounters". (p. 2)

This perspective implies that social reality is a social context in which individuals interact to produce and define their life situations (Denzin, 1978). It also assumes that humans are capable of shaping and guiding their own behavior and that interaction is "emergent, negotiated" and "symbolic" because of the ways in which symbols, words, meanings, and languages are manipulated (Denzin, 1978, p. 7). Finally, the symbolic interactionist view requires that process be given primary focus in scientific investigations. Social processes involve time and its passage. An investigation is seen as complete when the sequences or phases that persons encounter as they move from one stage to another are uncovered and causally analyzed.

<u>Uses of Grounded Theory</u>

The grounded theory approach can make an important contribution in areas where access to various aspects of human experience are difficult or impossible to address with more conventional research methods. In Stern's (1980) view there are two instances in which a strong case for the grounded theory approach may be made. First, it is important in "investigations of relatively uncharted waters" where clearly no theory regarding a situation

exists (p. 20). It is beneficial and at times necessary to attempt to study complex areas of behavior where salient variables have not been identified. In these areas, theory testing cannot be done since the variables relevant to the concepts have not yet been identified. Thus one of the major uses of grounded theory lies in studies that are preliminary, exploratory, and descriptive in nature. This approach, then, can be considered as a precursor to further research.

Quartaro (1986) notes that the appropriateness of the grounded theory approach is also found in situations where some research has been conducted but where there remains a paucity of adequate theories, or no theories which serve as comprehensive explanations of all or most aspects of the phenomenon under investigation. The approach may also be useful as a means for "gaining a fresh perspective in a familiar situation and in demonstrating applicability to practical problems" (Stern, 1980, p. 20).

Description of the Method and Its Concepts

The use of the grounded theory method in studying a phenomenon involves the formulation and development of a provisionally verified theory through systematic data collection and analysis of data that is relevant to that phenomenon (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). A phenomenon of interest is selected and what is relevant to that area is allowed to emerge through the research process.

Process Theory

The assumption held by grounded theory researchers is that each specific group (e.g. journal writers) shares a specific social psychological problem that is not necessarily articulated (Hutchinson, 1986). This problem is resolved by means of social psychological processes. By "process", Glaser (1978) refers to a change that takes place over time and that involves the passage between at least two stages. Process is a way of linking the sequences of action/interaction as these relate to the management of, control over, or response to, a phenomenon (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The grounded theory method, thus, provides the channels to formulate and account for the social and psychological processes engaged in by individuals in their efforts to resolve problematic areas in their lives. When looking for processes, the researcher asks: "What is actually happening in the data? What is the basic problem(s) faced by the participants? What is the main story here and why?" (Strauss, 1989, p. 31) Furthermore, the researcher seeks answers to such questions as: "What kind of events are at issue here? How are they constructed? What do these events mean?" (Charmaz, 1983, p. 113)

Within the grounded theory context, attempts have been made to delineate the social and psychological processes engaged in by individuals attempting to resolve problematic

areas in their lives. Glaser & Strauss (1967) identify two types: a Basic Social Structural Process (BSSP), and secondly, a Basic Social Psychological Process (BSPP). A BSSP emphasizes a "social structure in process- usually growth or deterioration - such as "bureaucratization or debureaucratization, routinization, centralization or decentralization, organizational growth, admitting or recruiting procedures, succession, and so forth" (Glaser, 1978, p. 102). A BSPP, according to Glaser (1978) is a "social psychological process such as becoming, highlighting, personalizing, health optimizing, awe inspiring, and so forth" (p. 102). The BSPP, in comparison with BSSP, is more relevant to the study of behavior. For simplicity the phrase "basic psychosocial process" (BPP) will be used.

A grounded theory is a process theory as the Basic Social Process is the central category around which the theory is developed (Bigus, Hadden & Glaser, 1979; Glaser, 1978). The processes that involve an interaction between psychological factors within the individuals and their social environment are the source of investigation. Viewed in this manner, the BSP takes generic process as its basic analytic focus and consequent endeavors are directed towards formulating theories about the social process (Bigus, Hadden & Glaser, 1982). Unlike unit theory which is concerned with developing static descriptions and/or

conceptualizations of units and their properties (Bigus, Haden & Glaser, 1982) such as intelligence, personality traits, or journal writers, the BSP is an active and dynamic process, of which journal writing is an example.

In process theory, "the referent is the process itself, not the particular unit or units in which it is isolated" (Bigus, Hadden & Glaser, 1982, p. 253). Thus the BSP or core variable serves the purpose of explaining the variations that occur in the actions, perceptions, interactions, and interactional patterns found within the collected data from the research. Theory is generated from the analysis of the collected material. The theory identifies and explains these processes. Typically, one process serves as the "core", which draws together the rest and displays the primary means by which individuals attempt to resolve the particular problem facing them. As a theoretical conceptualization of the emergent generic process, the BSP can be applied to other sites and populations to further test for generalizability.

The Research Process

The process of developing a theory involves five stages outlined by Quartaro (1986), although Turner (1981) proposes that the research be divided into a series of nine stages. It is important to note that these stages are not a series of linear steps. Instead, the investigator operates within a matrix in which several research

processes are simultaneously operating (Stern, 1980).
Thus, the investigator examines data as they arrive, begins
to code, categorize, conceptualize, and to write the first
few ideas concerning the research report almost from the
beginning of the research study. From this standpoint, the
research may be viewed as simultaneous and/or recursive.
The five aspects of the research process are:

1. collection of data

2. comparison of data

3. integration of categories

4. delimitations of the emerging theory

5. presentation of the theory

According to Quartaro (1986) the first four of these stages
make up the constant comparative method, which constitutes
the core of the grounded theory method.

The Collection of Data

Initially, the selection of the participants is guided
by the emphasis on learning what is most central to the
phenomena being studied. Subject selection is open to
"those persons, places, situations that will provide the
greatest opportunity to gather the most relevant data about
the phenomenon under investigation (Strauss & Corbin,
1990). In open sampling, the selection of participants is
indiscriminate since it is still uncertain which concepts
are theoretically relevant. As the analysis continues and
a tentative theory emerges, individuals are selected on the

basis of the tentative theory. In other words, the researcher seeks to clarify variability and diversity within this focal area. The selection of the sources is guided by how clearly they represent the phenomenon and also how they differ from the initial sources in ways which appear to be relevant. Once the focal aspects are identified, the researcher looks for data sources which are more dissimilar or which represent a possible variation or an extreme case (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

The Comparison of Data

The constant comparative method is the foundation of data analysis in the generation of grounded theory. There are two analytic procedures that are basic to the coding process. The first involves making comparisons, the other involves asking questions. These two procedures aid in giving precision and specificity to the concepts in grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The method aims to develop a theory that includes as much behavioral variation as possible through the generation of theoretical constructs, along with substantive codes and categories and their properties. Hutchinson (1986) outlines the steps involved in developing a theory using this method as follows:

> While coding and analyzing the data, the researcher looks for patterns. He or she compares incident with incident, incident with category, and, finally, category with category or construct with construct. By this method, the analyst distinguishes similarities and differences of incidents. By comparing similar

incidents, the basic properties of a category or construct are defined. Certain differences between incidents establish boundaries; relationships among categories are gradually clarified. Comparative analysis forces the researcher to expand or "tease out" the emerging category or construct by searching for its structure, ...cause, context, dimensions, consequences, and its relationship to other categories. (p. 122)

As data are received, the researcher applies a system of open coding. This is the first basic analytical step which involves the breaking down of the data into discrete parts, examining the data closely, comparing for similarities and differences, and questioning the phenomena as reflected in the data. This involves conceptualizing the data, which means examining an observation, sentence, or paragraph and giving each discrete incident or idea, a name that reflects a representation of a phenomenon (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Important questions to ask are: What is this? What does it represent?

The choice of an analytic unit is arbitrary as some researchers (Glaser, 1978; Stern, 1980) recommend a line by line analysis of the interview material while others (Rennie, Phillips & Quartaro, 1988) express preference for breaking up the interview into meaning units of individual concepts conveyed by the interviewees. The analysis consists of descriptive summaries, which Glaser & Strauss (1978) refer to as "codes". These descriptive summaries are the invivo or substantive codes. Hutchinson (1986) refers to these codes as Level 1 coding or open coding

which means that each sentence and each incident is coded

into as many code units as possible to maximize theoretical

coverage. In the early stage of analysis, the code may be

idiosyncratic, closely reflecting the language used by the

participants or it may be the exact words used by the

participants.

Level II coding (Hutchinson, 1986) or categories result

when the incidents or coded fragments are compared and

contrasted to each other. As defined by Strauss & Corbin,

(1990), a category is defined as follows:

> a classification of concepts ...discovered when
> concepts are compared one against another and appear to
> pertain to a similar phenomenon. Thus the concepts are
> grouped together under a higher order, more abstract
> concept called a category. (p. 61)

The question that guides decisions about categories is:

What does this incident indicate? Each incident is

compared with other incidents. The question that follows

is: What category would include these similar incidents?

Finally, the emerging categories are compared with each

other to "ensure that they are mutually exclusive and

represent all the behavioral variations" (Hutchinson, 1986,

p. 120). At this level of coding, the categories are

generated and their properties or characteristics of a

phenomenon (category) are identified. Quartaro (1986)

notes that as the data analysis proceeds, the new data may

be accommodated in the existing categories or these may

lead to the re-examination of the category scheme that is

emerging. This analysis involves eliminating, splitting, combining or changing of the position of the categories in the developing hierarchy of concepts.

Level III codes (Hutchinson, 1986), or theoretical constructs are a combination of clinical and academic knowledge. These constructs provide meaning and scope to the theory (Glaser, 1978). Theoretical constructs serve the purpose of conceptualizing the relationship among the three levels of codes, "weaving the fractured data back together again" (Glaser, 1978, p. 116). While open coding fractures the data and permits the identification of some categories and their properties, theoretical coding "puts those data back together in new ways by making connections between a category and its subcategories" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Theoretical coding refers to the task of specifying the conditions that give rise to a category (phenomenon); the context in which the phenomenon occurs; the strategies by which it is carried out or managed; and the consequences of those strategies.

Glaser (1978) suggested a number of coding families from which to choose such as: coding families, process, cutting point family, and degree family.

Theoretical Relevance

Relevance is determined by the requirements for generating, delimiting and saturating the theoretical codes (Hutchinson, 1986). A saturation of codes occurs when the

researcher no longer receives new information which would
effect the emerging hypotheses. Saturation refers to
completeness at all levels, in that there is no new
conceptual information that indicates a need for the
construction of new codes or the expansion of existing
ones. According to Hutchinson (1986), the researcher
ultimately achieves a sense of closure by repeatedly
checking and asking questions of the data. Thus a code is
saturated if the researcher can answer through the data,
questions regarding the cause, context, consequences,
conditions, strategies and dimensions of the particular
category. Substantive categories are matched with
theoretical codes (Swanson, 1986). Glaser (1978) provides
a more detailed provision to questions of saturation (pp.
74-82), noting that no new categories, properties or
relationships among them are found in the analysis of
subsequent protocols.

Several grounded theory researchers note that
saturation often occurs after the analysis of five to ten
protocols (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Quartaro, 1985; Rennie,
Phillips & Quartaro, 1988). Glaser (1978) adds that the
practical limits of time, energy or money play a part in
the saturation process as does the researcher's ongoing
processing and reevaluation of the data.

The Integration of Categories

Through the process of theoretical coding, the emerging

theory is finally integrated and delimited. The concepts
are compared with variations and alternatives to these
concepts to discover their relationship. Related concepts
are compared with data for validation. The categories are
integrated into higher levels of abstraction. The central
categories are the ones which are highly "interrelated with
other categories and must occur across most of the data
sources, as these will be the basis for the theory that is
developed" (Quartaro, 1986, p. 7). The core category is
the most central of all the categories and thus plays a
vital part in the integration of the theory. The theory is
explained by a core category, that is, one which solves or
processes the problem addressed, explains as much variation
in behavior as possible and uses the fewest number of
concepts possible. It is the "main theme: - for what is
the main concern or problem for the people in the setting
under study" (Glaser, 1978, p. 94). The core category is
also characterized by its relationship to other categories.

There are differences between a core category and basic
social process which necessitate some distinction. Glaser
(1978) notes that BSP's are one type of core category thus
all BSP's are core variables, but not all core variables
are BSP'S. Furthermore, BSP's are processural and involve
a minimum of two clear, emergent stages. These stages
differentiate and account for variations in the problematic
pattern of behavior. While a core category is present in a

grounded research study, a BSP may not be present.

Memoing

    From the point that the researcher begins with the
first interview or observations, memo writing becomes a
vital and integral part of the research process. Memo
writing continually captures the "frontier of the analyst's
thinking as he contends with the data, coding, sorting, and
writing" (Glaser, 1978, p. 82). In this study, a record of
memos and process and analysis notes were kept in a journal
which reflected the changes encountered by the researcher
through the research process,

    The functions of memoing are multi-fold (Strauss &
Corbin, 1990, pp. 197-223). In order to generate a quality
theory, the descriptions of empirical events must be
elevated to a theoretical level. Memoing is an important
part of this process as emphasis is placed on
conceptualizing ideas. In essence, memos consist of
speculations about the analysis and the theory that occur
to the researcher as the work proceeds (Quartaro, 1986).
The advantage of memoing is that ideas can be captured and
set aside until the memos are eventually sorted and
integrated with the data analysis. This activity enables
the theory to emerge and to be modified as necessary.
Certain questions are asked in order to freely develop
codes that can be sorted and compared again and again.
Hutchinson (1986) outlines the questions as follows:

While memoing, the researcher asks what relationship
one code has to another. Are they separate codes? Is
one code a property or a phase in another? Is one
event the cause of another or the consequence? What
are the conditions that influence the codes? (p. 123)

Rennie, Phillips & Quartaro (1988) provide a

comprehensive list of the functions of memos. These

functions are as follows:

1. They help the analyst to obtain insight into tacit,
    guiding assumptions.

2. They raise the conceptual level of the research by
    encouraging the analyst to think beyond single
    incidents to themes and patterns in the data.

3. They capture speculations about the properties of
    categories, or relationships among categories, or
    possible criteria for the selection of further data
    sources.

4. They enable the researcher to preserve ideas that
    have potential value but which may be premature.

5. They are useful if gaps in the relation of theory
    to data arise, for they provide a record of the
    researcher's ideas about the analysis and can be
    used to trace the development of a category.

6. They are used to note thoughts about the similarity
    of the emerging theory to established theories or
    concepts.

7. They play a key role in the writeup of the theory.
    (p. 144)

In summary, memos are an analytic record of the

researcher's work and also play a vital role in both the

development of the theory as well as the preservation of

the auditing process.

Reliability and Validity

In all scientific research, whether quantitative or

qualitative methods are utilized, one must have "adequacy" and "rigor" through demonstrations of reliability, validity, and objectivity, which are terms commonly linked with quantitative research. In their address of the naturalistic paradigm, Lincoln & Guba (1985) present the issue of trustworthiness in the following question: "How can an inquirer persuade his or her audiences (including self) that the findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to, worth taking account of?" (p. 290) The authors further advocate the need in all research for criteria to establish the "truth value", "applicability", "consistency", and "neutrality" (p. 290) and in so doing, provide the parallel terms for naturalistic or qualitative research: credibility (internal validity), transferability (external validity), dependability (reliability), and confirmability (objectivity).

A. Credibility

Central to identifying the credibility or truth value of qualitative research is the ability to discover and fit the reality of its subjects (Field & Morse, 1985; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). That is, "How can one establish confidence in the "truth" of the findings of a particular inquiry for the subjects (respondents) with which and the context in which the inquiry was carried out?" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 290). The implementation of the credibility criterion involves a task that is two-fold: first, to conduct the

investigation in such a way that the credibility of the findings is enhanced and, secondly, to show the credibility of the findings through the consensus and approval of the participants (the constructors of the multiple realities being studied). There are a number of ways to establish credibility. First, "member checks" can be done; this means that the data is tested with members of the source group (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 301). Second, "peer debriefing" in terms of interaction with peers, professionals, or dissertation committee members is suggested (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 308). Third, the theory may be read by individuals who were not participants in the study but who have similar traits (Kus, 1986). Fourth, the period of "prolonged engagement" provides the investigator with an opportunity to build trust and rapport, and to deal with personal distortions and those introduced by the respondents (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 303).

B. Transferability

Applicability or transferability refers to the extent to which the findings of an inquiry have applicability in other contexts or with other subjects. The central question is: "How can one determine the degree to which the findings of a particular inquiry may have applicability in other contexts or with other subjects (respondents)?" (Guba, 1981, p. 80) Transferability between two contexts

may occur because of certain essential similarities (fittingness) between them (Glaser, 1978, Guba, 1981). To determine the extent to which transferability is probable, it is important to know a great deal about or to collect "thick description" about the "transferring and referring contexts" (Guba, 1981, p. 81). Transferability is also enhanced by the use of theoretical or purposive sampling. Rather than focusing on sampling that is representative or typical, the investigator focuses on maximizing the range of information uncovered (Guba, 1981).

C. Consistency

The question of concern is: "How can one determine whether the findings of an inquiry would be consistently repeated if the inquiry were replicated with the same (or similar) context?" (Guba, 1981, p. 80). Consistency is interpeted as dependability. The stability of data is an important concern. In qualitative research, reliability is determined by the ability of subsequent researchers to follow the same procedures with a similar sample to obtain simil results. However, exact replication research in hur ehavior is not possible but the use of clear and detailed descriptions of the individuals studied, the context, and the procedures followed in the study can enhance reliability.

Lincoln & Guba (1985) suggest that auditability should be the criterion of rigor. This means that a report is

auditable when another individual is able to examine the materials and concerns outlined, follow the development of the research (research process) and understand the account of how the findings came to be. Since no two researchers are alike, no two analyses will be alike. The exact replication of study results would not be attainable due to different researchers. If comparable data and methods were used, similar research findings would be possible. The "audit trail" takes the form of documentation (e.g. actual interview notes taken) and a running account of the process that is contained in the investigator's daily journal (Guba, 1981, p. 87).

D.   Confirmability

The issue of confirmability or neutrality addresses the following question: "How can one establish the degree to which the findings of an inquiry are a function solely of subjects (respondents) and conditions of the inquiry and not of the biases, motivations, interests, perspectives, and so on of the inquirer?" (Guba, 1981, p. 80). There are two steps that can be taken to enhance confirmability. First, confirmability is achieved by keeping an audit trail. This involves recording the methods and grounds of the insights of the researcher (Guba, 1981). A "confirmability audit" is important as it certifies that "data exist in support of interpretations" (Guba, 1981, p. 88). Second, the use of triangulation- that is, collecting

data from a variety of data sources or different methods to cross-check data and interpretations is important (Denzin, 1978). The acceptance of an item of information should be based on verification from at least two sources (Brink, 1989; Guba, 1981).

Strengths of the Grounded Theory Approach

The advantages for the researcher in using grounded theory are many. Although not exhaustive, the literature has emphasized some of the advantages of this approach. First, it promotes the development of theoretical accounts and explanations which conform closely to the situations observed so that the theory possesses the likelihood of being intelligible to, and utilized by those in the phenomenon studied. This in turn enables them to make comments and corrections (Turner, 1981). Second, the appeal and utility of the developed theory is enhanced as it is likely to be a complex rather than an oversimplified way of accounting for a complex world (Turner, 1981). Third, the researcher is directed to the creative core of the research process by this approach. The method also facilitates the direct application of both the intellect and the imagination to the process of interpreting research data. Fourth, the grounded theory approach can be a useful technique in investigating areas where the relevant variables have not been identified (Stern, 1980). Fifth, grounded theorists have argued that discovery is inhibited

when a certain theoretical position has to be proven or disproven as in the methodology characteristic of quantitative research. In the discovery model of grounded theory, the theory fits the data, and not vice versa.

<div align="center">Procedures</div>

The Selection of Informants

In qualitative research, the informants are chosen for their knowledge of the topic under study, their ability to communicate, and their willingness to share their knowledge and time with the researcher (Morse, 1986). Initially, the selection of the participants is based on those individuals who are likely to represent the phenomenon. This step is taken to ensure the generation of categories and consensus about their properties (Rennie, Phillips & Quartaro, 1988). As the study progresses, the researcher seeks to obtain a "purposeful or theoretical sample" (Morse, 1989, p. 110; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, pp. 176-193) in which the participants are selected according to the needs of the study (Bogdan & Biklen 1982; Glaser, 1978). The informants are selected on the basis of their particular knowledge or atypical experience related to the emerging theory. This selection of potential qualifiers of the emerging theory or variability is referred to as theoretical sampling by Glaser & Strauss (1978) or theory-based data selection (Rennie, Phillips & Quartaro, 1988).

Selection Criteria

A number of criteria were used in choosing journal writers for the research study. First, the individuals perceived themselves to be journal writers, not diary keepers as distinguished earlier in the study. This means that they wrote for personal, self-reflection and not for the primary purpose of documenting external events such as the weather or politics. Second, the participants were eighteen years of age or older. Third, the participants had maintained a journal for at least one year and were engaged in journal writing at the time of the study.

Prior to the study an arbitrary decision was made to exclude those individuals who had previous or present involvement in counselling of some kind. However, interviews with the participants indicated that those who sought counselling did not constitute a distinct group. While some were recently or presently in therapy, others had not been involved in any formal counselling. Thus a decision was made to include individuals who had previous or present contact with counsellors.

The informants who met the criteria were obtained from several sources: (1) the researcher, herself, participated in an Ira Progoff Intensive Journal Workshop. Permission was obtained from the instructor to briefly introduce the research topic at the conclusion of the workshop. Six individuals expressed interest in participating in the

study and a list of names and telephone numbers was
obtained.   (2) Participants were also located directly by
the researcher from contacts with colleagues and
acquaintances in the general population, or referrals from
articipants in the study.   Telephone contact with
prospective participants began in October, 1989, and the
research process was explained to each individual.   This
included an explanation of the purpose of the research
study, issues of confidentiality, the nature of the
conversations, and the time commitment of the interviews.
Participants were also informed that if they wished to
decline participation, this decision would be respected.
The participants were given a choice as to the location of
the interview.   Two individua.s chose to be interviewed in
their workplace, three to be interviewed in my office, and
one to be interviewed in her home.

The composition of the sample was controlled by primary
and secondary selection procedures.   This meant that the
researcher had some control in terms of who was initially
selected by phone contact and later during the interview
itself.   For example, after an initial phone contact, one
woman clearly saw herself as a diary keeper, not a journal
writer.   Another woman who initially expressed interest in
participating, later acknowledged her "resistance" to
talking about her personal life and being taped.   These two
individuals were excluded from the study.

The Participants

The participants in this study were three women and three men who were willing to describe and share their experiences of journal writing with me. All six informants were Caucasian. There were variations in terms of age (19-50 years), educational level (grade 12 to Ph.D degree), marital status (single and involved/not involved in a significant relationship, married, divorced), occupation, duration of journal writing (12 months to 20 years), and training received in journal writing. All six participants were writing spontaneously in that they did not view themselves as writing in a structured manner (content, style or frequency) that was dictated or stipulated by another source apart from themselves (e.g. counsellor, teacher, writing workshops, etc).

Data Collection

The Interview

Unstructured audio-taped interviews were used as the primary means of data collection. The interviews began with general and informal conversation to establish rapport with the participant, followed by an explanation of the purpose and nature of the research study. Any questions that the participants raised concerning the research were addressed. Overall, the participants were open and willing to discuss their journal writing. Several informants initially expressed concern about whether or not their

journals would be read by the researcher. The researcher assured them that access to their journals was not a requirement of the study.

After reading the purpose of the study, each informant signed a letter that provided informed consent to participate in the study (See Ethical Considerations and Appendix A). It was explained that the researcher would transcribe the interviews and all identifying information would be excluded from the transcription. The individuals were informed that if they wished to exclude comments from the transcript after reading it, this decision would be respected.

During the initial interview, the participants completed a questionnaire that elicited demographic information such as age, marital status, level of education, vocation, and length of time as a journal writer. This information provided details to reflect the diversity of the individuals' backgrounds.

In keeping with the grounded theory method which requires that the initial data collected typify the phenomena, the first two informants were individuals who had a lengthy history of journal writing. Both these individuals had begun journal writing as teenagers or young adults and involved a span of at least twenty years of journal writing. The researcher used several general questions as guidelines during the interview: Tell me

about how you first began journal writing. How did you come in contact with the idea of writing in a journal? What was happening in your life at the time you began? These two informants were interviewed separately, allowing for comparison of data.

The interviewing process with the six subjects took place between October 1989 and August 1990. The initial interviews ranged from forty-five minutes to ninety minutes in length. Subsequent interviews were generally of a shorter duration. The number of interviews with each participant ranged from two to three. A total of fourteen interviews were collected. During the ten months of interviewing, the distribution of interviews among the six informants was as follows: three interviews with the first two subjects and two interviews with the remaining four subjects.

Scripting

After each interview, the tapes were transcribed by the researcher. Any names or other information that could identify the participants were excluded from the verbatim transcriptions. This step served to protect anonymity. The opportunity of listening to the taped interviews allowed the researcher to consider the intonations and more subtle verbal aspects of the interviewees' conversations. Strauss (1989) comments on the importance of listening to the tapes intensely whenever possible in the following:

You may want full transcription also if you have the money to have the tapes transcribed - but then you must listen to the tapes intensely, and more than once anyhow. Why? To remind yourself of things that you observed that you didn't fully record; or to remind yourself of things you noticed during an interview and have now forgotten - or never noticed at the time. Listening as well as transcribing is essential for a full and varied analysis. (p. 207)

Transcripts of the first interview were read by a member of the dissertation committee as well as the peer group. This measure helped to monitor the process of interviewing and provided a check in terms of the researcher's interviewing style. Feedback was provided by these individuals and modifications in interviewing style were made.

The typed transcripts were sent by mail or given in person to the participants prior to subsequent interviews. Each informant was given a copy of the transcript to read over and make further comments or corrections. This procedure allowed for the correction of possible errors, facilitated the validation of the information, and provided a starting point for the next interview.

The changes or corrections that resulted from returning the protocols to the individuals were more stylistically related than content oriented. For example, two participants made grammatical changes and re-arranged sentences to enhance the readability of the transcript. One of these individuals also elaborated on several ideas

to provide more clarity. The individuals commented that their participation in the research had been helpful to them, particularly in terms of talking to another person about their journal writing. Several individuals noted that this sharing was a unique, first experience for them as they had not previously had the opportunity to reflect upon their journal writing in any indepth way.

In preparation for the analysis of data, the researcher took the following steps. After each taped interview, the verbatim transcripts were typed with double spacing and wide right hand margins to allow for the code words to be noted. Extra copies of each transcript were made so that during the open coding stage, meaning units or incidents could be coded into as many codes as possible to insure full theoretical coverage. Each statement was also numerically coded to reflect the participant number, interview number and the line number from which the statement originated.

A cut and paste method was used to organize the coding. The data were coded using the extra copies of material to allow for the maximum number of codes to be assigned to any one particular statement or series of statements. Each coded segment of material was cut from the copied material and clustered with other material according to its particular code. Similar codes were placed in their approriate envelopes. The researcher

checked to insure that the clustered material had appropriateness as well as fit. The labelling of the file folders was changed to reflect the more highly conceptual codes that were emerging from the data analysis.

Categorization

At each stage of coding, the constant comparative method was used to explore common meanings between and within interviews. For each set of two participants, a line by line analysis was conducted using in vivo or substantive codes. This level of coding helped to organize the material on a descriptive level and minimized the researcher's chances of straying from or distorting the substance of the data. During this initial stage of analysis or "level I coding" (Hutchinson, 1986, p. 120), the researcher used words from the informants' own language. Examples of early substantive coding in this research were "being shy and quiet", "being a loner", and "experiencing rejection".

To insure full theoretical coverage, open coding was implemented. This means that each sentence or each incident was coded into as many codes as possible. For example, an incident "as a kid, I'm sure it provided a place to vent" was coded as both "beginning: as a kid" and "self-expression: being able to vent".

For the next level of coding, Level II coding, the researcher used broader, more common descriptive terms that

were later subsumed in a larger category. The incidents were compared and contrasted to one another, and similar incidents were categorized under a conceptual label. For example, one participant's statement, "the process (journalling) has been a sort of rediscovering myself and rebirthing myself in different ways" was initially assigned the codes "being able to rediscover self" and "rebirthing self" and later assigned to the categories, "identifying the need" and "evaluating/appraising journal". New categories were also developed to represent information that did not fit into existing ones.

The Level III codes or theoretical constructs involve higher levels of abstraction, are derived from a combination of academic/clinical knowledge and reflect a "blend of descriptive and constructed categories with the former often subsumable under the latter" (Rennie, Phillips & Quartaro, 1988, p. 143). These constructs contribute theoretical meaning and scope to the theory (Glaser, 1978). Quartaro (1986) notes that central categories are "usually abstract and come out of the language and frame of reference of the analyst rather than the respondent" despite being grounded in specific datum incidents (p. 7). The development of relationships, patterns and processes in the data through constant comparison resulted in the grouping of material into broader conceptual categories. Examples from this study were "Focusing on Self" and

"Maintaining Self". As the analysis proceeded, it became clear that some categories were characteristics or properties of other categories.

The first four interviews were analyzed and coded using the constant comparative method outlined in this chapter. After four interviews were coded, a theory with four stages emerged. The substantive codes were linked together in hypothetical relationships. According to Glaser (1978), "theoretical codes conceptualize how substantive codes may relate to each other as hypotheses to be integrated into a theory" (p. 72). To organize the data from this study, a number of theoretical codes were selected from Glaser's (1978) list of coding families. These include stages, conditions, contexts, consequences, and strategies.

At this point, the researcher commenced a secondary review of the literature on topics such as counsell creativity, experiential learning, loneliness and isolation. Numerous published journals were also read so that the proposed theory could be illuminated or extended.

Based on the data analysis, the fifth and sixth informants were selected for the purpose of providing information to facilitate optimum variation in the study. Characteristics that were atypical to the findings were included so that new or incoming information would be saturated. At this point, the researcher began to consider a core category entitled, "composting: the cultivation of

experience" as it was a category that appeared frequently in the data. Initially, it seemed that several categories could be subsumed and organized under "composting" in a meaningful way. With further analysis, "composting: the cultivation of experience" fitted as a major category (Stage Three). It became evident from this investigation that the most central factors that accounted for journal writing was "recreating self". This was considered to be the basic psychosocial process. Further peer group meetings and deliberations helped to consolidate this category as most central.

Data were also obtained from numerous secondary informants to aid in the confirmation of the findings and the emerging theory. Field & Morse (1985) define secondary informants as "all other persons within the same setting, or people in similar situations in other settings" (p. 59). In this study, secondary informants provided data to confirm (verify) the findings and the emerging theory. After explaining the theory of journal writing to one informant, he expressed interest in having the researcher read his journal. This opportunity provided another source of validation for the findings.

The researcher looked for atypical cases, i.e. possible variations in experiences that did not fit the "typical" pattern. For example, the experiences of those who were longstanding journal writers were compared to those who had

written for a relatively short duration (one year). Other examples of comparison included those involved in a significant relationship versus those who were not; those who were engaged in some form of counselling versus those who were not; and those who had taken formal training in journal writing versus those who did not. The fifth participant was an example of an atypical case. Unlike the other participants who found journal writing to provide a means of dealing with social and/or emotional isolation and the accompanying experiences of rejection or anxiety, this individual noted that journal writing facilitated the cultivation and expression of creativity in professional pursuits. Being able to deal directly and effectively in social relationships were the reasons given for not needing to use the journal to deal with interpersonal issues.

Ensuring Reliability and Validity

As outlined earlier in the chapter, issues of reliability and validity are important considerations in research. The following is a descriptive summary of the steps taken by the researcher to deal with reliability and validity.

A. Credibility (Truth Value)

In this study, the researcher made use of the following activities or techniques to enhance credibility. These practices have been suggested by several authors (Guba, 1981; Hutchinson, 1986; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Verbatim transcripts of the interviews were used. Effort was made to obtain as much volunteered information from the informants as possible through the use of unstructured interviews. Credibility was enhanced by the researcher's prolonged engagement with the study. The interviewing process took place over the course of nine months. This time investment enabled trust and rapport to be built with the informants. Each informant was also interviewed at least twice. This facilitated the checking and rechecking of the collected data for fit. The findings were shared with the informants and checked with multiple sources such as the informants themselves, secondary informants (other journal writers, individuals in counselling who were journalling, journal workshop trainers, and counsellors), researchers, readers, and with different sources of similar information such as published journals. The resulting theory was also presented at a local conference and to two classes of graduate students taking a journal writing research course. Overall, the theory was found to be fitting and useful in articulating the concerns of those involved in journal writing.

The researcher was involved with a peer debriefing group which consisted of a study group of doctoral students who were at various stages of grounded theory research. These sessions provided an opportunity for the researcher's biases and findings to be explored, challenged, and clarified.

Furthermore, while analyzing the data, the researcher identified her own assumptions, ideas and values in the form of memos. The explicit acknowledgement of biases allowed the researcher to be more vigilant about the effects of researcher bias (Quartaro, 1986).

B. Transferability (Applicability)

In determining applicability, transferability was established by collecting descriptive data such as sex, age, marital status, occupation, level of education, ethnic origin, length of time as a journal writer, and formal training received in journal writing. As Guba notes,

> Transferability is itself dependent upon the degree of similarity (fittingness) between two contexts. The naturalist does not attempt to form generalizations that will hold in all times and in all places, but to form working hypotheses that may be transferred from one context to another depending upon the degree of "fit" between the two contexts. (p. 81)

The researcher looked for informants who would volunteer to provide information that facilit ed the development of the theory. This step was taken as a means of maximizing the range of information obtained. As noted, the fifth and sixth participants were interviewed with this goal in mind. For example, the findings pointed to the keeping of a journal as a result of an experience of significant change that was accompanied by sadness, loneliness, and anxiety. Efforts were made to consider individuals whose points of view were different. Journal writ s who experienced contentment and self-satisfaction

in their lives were also interviewed.

There are varying perspectives on the issue of transferability. Hutchinson (1986) states that:

A substantive theory can only be valid for the studied population. A quality theory will inevitably identify a BSP (Basic Social Process) that is also relevant for people in general. (p. 116)

Quartaro (1986), however, notes that small, non-random samples do not permit generalization to other populations.

C. Dependability (Consistency)

In qualitative research, reliability is determined by the ability of subsequent researchers to follow the same procedures with a similar sample to obtain similar results. The use of clear and detailed descriptions of the individuals studied, the context, and the procedures followed in the study can enhance reliability. Although a different researcher would not achieve exact replication of findings, similar findings would be possible if comparable data and methods were employed.

In this study, the "audit trail" took the form of a running account of the research process that was kept in the investigator's journal as well as documentation in the form of the actual interview notes taken and ongoing memos. The grounded theory research group consisting of doctoral students provided a channel for the process of analysis to be reviewed on an ongoing basis. Weekly discussions dealt with such issues as difficulties

encountered in the research process, conceptualizing
categories, and formulating hypotheses.

D.   Confirmability (Neutrality)

In terms of the conduct of the research as well as in
relationship to the research findings, there is the need to
consider the issue of freedom from bias.   In qualitative
research the focus and re   , ·   u··on the subjective
perspectives of the infor. ...   the subjective views and
creative resources of the   ·earcher has been criticized
for not maintaining appropriate neutrality.   In dealing
with the issue of neutrality, the researcher took the
following steps.

The research in progress and study findings were
checked with outsiders or colleagues.   The regular writing
of memos also helped to identify researcher bias (Strauss,
1989).   The researcher engaged in the practice of
reflexivity in which introspections and ideas were recorded
regularly.   This helped to account for the underlying
assumptions and methodological decisions made as well as
the reasons for making them.   It also enabled the
documentation of the processes involved as well as the
shifts and changes in the researcher's thinking.   In this
way, reflexivity provided a record of the variety of
information collected about self as researcher.   Berger and
Kellner (1981) note the importance of bracketing in the
following statement:

> If bracketing is not done, the scientific enterprise
> collapses and what the researcher then believes to be
> perceived is nothing but a mirror image of his own
> hopes and fears, wishes, resentments or other psychic
> needs; he will then not perceive anything that can
> reasonably be called reality. (p. 52)

The use of triangulation, that is, collecting data from a variety of perspectives, drawing upon a variety of sources, and using a variety of data collection methods were important considerations. In this study, the data collection sources included unstructured interviews with primary participants and secondary informants and the reading of published journals. These measures are in keeping with Guba's (1981) recommendation that documentation for every claim be obtained from at least two sources.

Lincoln & Guba (1985) note that when truth value, auditability and applicability have been adequately addressed, confirmability or neutrality in the research is achieved.

Ethical Considerations

Ensuring anonymity and confidentiality are important considerations for participants in a research study. Attempts were made to remove all identifying information which may have personally linked the individual to the research study. Each interview was identified only by numbers assigned to each subject and the number of the

interview. Thus the third participant (P), interviewed (I) for the second time was identified as P-3, I-2.

Adequate preparation of the participant in terms of the nature of the research is also an important ethical consideration. Prior to the interview, the participants each received an explanation about the purpose and nature of the study. Any questions that were raised about the study were answered. A letter of informed consent (See Appendix A) was signed by each participant. Individuals were informed of their right to refuse to respond to any part of the interview and their right to withdraw from the research study at any time. The potential risks and benefits of the study were also discussed with the participants. The participants were informed that the tapes and transcripts would be stored in a secured location and that upon the completion of the study, the tapes would be erased.

In summary, this chapter provided a descriptive outline of the grounded theory method, the concepts that are important to this method, and the issues of reliability and validity. This was followed by a discussion of the procedures taken by the researcher to implement a grounded theory study on journal writing. The chapter to follow will present a summary of the findings that resulted from this research endeavour.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE ANALYSIS PROCESS

This chapter will focus on the interpretations and results that were derived from utilizing the operational strategies of the grounded theory method. Each stage will be discussed in turn. Briefly, the basic social process that emerged from this research study was Recreating Self, which accounts for how journal writing behavior provides a channel for resolving the individual's basic problem: having to contend with self-dissatisfaction. This process takes place in four stages: (a) Focusing On Self; (b) Exploring Options; (c) Composting: The Cultivation of Experience; and (d) Maintaining Self.

Analysis of the Transcripts

As noted earlier, one of the initial steps of data analysis involved the coding of the transcripts on a line-by-line basis. This has also been referred to as Level 1 coding, open coding or invivo coding. In the formulation of the stages, each sentence of the raw data that appeared meaningful or captured the action in the setting was noted as a meaning unit. Often the exact words of the subjects were used in early coding. For example, the sentence "it (journal writing) was always when someone rejected me" involved the highlighting of "when someone rejected me". The sentence, "it was a place for me to be depressed, to feel sad" was highlighted as "a place to be

sad" and "a place to be depressed". Each transcript generated numerous meaning units.

For the next step, Level II codes or categories (substantive coding) were applied to the transcripts. This meant that a code word (or code words) was attached to each meaning unit (incident). Decisions about categories were made by asking such questions as: What does this incident indicate? Each incident was compared with other incidents. What category would include these similar incidents? Do these meaning units refer to the same thing? Can these meaning units be coded together? How could they be coded if they are different? Thus, the sentence, "it (journal writing) was always when someone rejected me" was coded Specifying Use: Rejection in reference to writing in the journal about rejection. In the process, the data that did not seem relevant were discarded. For example the sentence, "When he came home, everybody..the whole family went to Calgary with my mom and dad" was excluded from further coding.

As the data analysis proceeded and more transcripts were coded, additional codes as well as larger categories were generated. For example, when the code "Specifying Use: Rejection was applied to other transcripts, more examples of this code became apparent (e.g., parent-child issues, marital separation, and religious differences. Each of these examples reflected the experience of

rejection and were placed in a larger sub-category with the
label "Experiencing Rejection". This category reflected
the essence of the meaning units contained within it.

Level III codes, or theoretical constructs, were
derived from a combination of academic and clinical
knowledge. Experiencing Rejection was eventually subsumed
by a more conceptual category Stage One: Focusing On Self
since the experience of rejection appeared to be an
important aspect of contending with self-dissatisfaction.
The name of the major category Focusing On Self was
developed intuitively. It was a name that captured the
content of the categories satisfactorily. As Glaser (1978)
noted, theoretical constructs conceptualize the
relationship between the three levels of codes, "weaving
the fractured data back together again" (p. 116).

At this point in the data analysis, it became important
to pose certain questions during the coding process that
would enable the researcher to grasp the data and establish
theoretical codes. It was essential to make decisions
about how to label the categorized data in such a way that
a theoretical framework would be formulated to capture the
journal writing process. The questions the researcher
asked about her data were derived from what Glaser (1978,
pp. 74-82) refers to as conditions, causes, contexts,
consequences, strategies, and stages. Such questions
provided a structured way to analyze the data and served as

a preliminary step to discovering the Basic Social Process and its related properties. The following questions are asked of each category: "Is this category a condition of some other category? Is it a cause or a context? For example, what is the cause of journal writing behavior? It was learned that the individuals who began journal writing were confronted with situations such as relationship loss, separation, moving away from home, or relationship conflicts. These experiences often left the individual with the sense of rejection, anxiety, anger, or confusion. The context refers to the environment or setting where the behavior occurs. The journal writers cited numerous examples of personal change and transitions in their adult lives. The nature of the changes were physical, emotional, social, spiritual and mental.

In approaching the data with questions pertaining to coding strategies, the codes were organized in such a manner that Stage One: Focusing On Self was the major category. At this level of a. 'ysis, an attempt was made to sort the data in terms of distinctions. The task at hand was to clarify what each category is in relation to other categories, and thus, to develop theoretical links between the categories. These links will in turn lead to the development of a process and the generation of a theory.

The researcher systematically asked questions and

looked for categories that provided answers to these questions. The categories that addressed the questions of context were: transitions, personal/intrapersonal issues, and adulthood. The conditions for Focusing on Self were identified as experiencing: rejection, loneliness, confusion, anger, anxiety, and isolation. Turning to Self was noted to be the strategy used by the journal writer in response to the issues at hand. The consequences addressed were wanting privacy, fearing misunderstanding or further rejection, and reserving one's opinions or emotions.

Another coding family, a process, was reported as the analysis revealed four stages that referred to getting something done over time. The first stage in the journal writing process was the category, "Focusing on Self". The categories that matched the theoretical codes served as properties or characteristics of the major category. Furthermore, process is characterized as having time dimension, stages, and turning points. Gerunds such as Focusing on Self, suggest movement and change, or process, over time.

Overall, the four stages provide a developmental framework that accounts for how individuals contend with self-dissatisfaction using the medium of the journal. The framework also reflects the steps taken by the individual to re-create different aspects of life. Stage One: Focusing On Self captures the beginning of the journal

writing process and provides the essential links to enter the succeeding stages in pursuit of self-development.

The next section of this chapter will provide a more in-depth description of Stage One. Supporting quotes from the participants will be included as well.

STAGE ONE: FOCUSING ON SELF

The first stage in the process of journal writing is Focusing on Self. This the stage that provides the foundation for the succeeding stages. It is also the stage in which the basic strategy, turning to self, is adopted. See Table 2 for an overview of the contexts, conditions, strategies, and consequences that characterize this stage.

Table 2
Overview of Stage One: Focusing on Self

Contexts	Conditions	Strategy	Consequences
transition	experiencing rejection	turning to self	wanting
personal/ intrapersonal	experiencing loneliness		fearing
	experiencing confusion		reserving
adulthood	experiencing anger		
	experiencing anxiety		
	experiencing isolation		

I had taken a sensitivity workshop in my first year of college and that got me really interested in discovering about myself...I was at that time,

looking back, I was very shy, quiet, probably a bit
of a loner and not very good at expressing myself.
And that first term in university, I just really
started jotting down things that seemed meaningful to
me from the philosophy course and just relating all
those things to myself.

Contexts

In human communication the notion of context is

important as it recognizes the presence of factors in the

environment or setting where behavior occurs. These

factors are embedded in communication and thus serve to

define or provide meaning to the communication as well as a

frame of reference for the individuals in the

communication. Context represents the "particular set of

conditions within which the action/interactional strategies

are taken" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 96). Watzlawick,

Beavin & Jackson (1967) note the interplay between behavior

and context in the following comment:

> A phenomenon remains unexplainable as long as the range
> of observations is not wide enough to include the
> context in which the phenomenon occurs. (p. 20)

Personal/Intrapersonal

In Stage One, the events and changes occur within the

context of the individual's personal life. The changes

that an individual experiences result in the need and

desire to focus on the impact and meaning of these events.

The impact of the event or concern can be experienced

within the individual on emotional, physical, social, and

spiritual levels and thus, the context is intrapersonal.

These concerns may involve conflict or questioning of self

and/or others values, beliefs, or roles. One individual
noted how her deteriorating relationship with her husband
prompted her to examine herself:

> I was angry and didn't have anyone to share it with. I
> can remember taking a notebook and writing in
> it.. writing how I felt and describing the situation
> which had something to do with my husband leaving the
> house when we had lots of small children and I was
> really angry at him. I said to myself, "I should be
> more understanding. I'm the one working on improving
> myself". Then, when I went to write it out, it was
> like, all of a sudden, I'm writing this angry stuff...I
> was the kind of person that didn't ever voice what was
> bothering me. When people would ask, "What's the
> matter?", I'd always say "nothing" and that wasn't
> true, you know. A lot was the matter.

Generally, journal writing occurs in a private
context. It is a solitary activity- something that is done
alone. However, within this private context, the
individual is interacting with one or more aspects of self
or other individuals that exist in the real or imagined
world. These interactions shape the journal writing and
the journal writing, in turn, shapes the individual's
interaction with the world that exists outside of the
personal context. This becomes more evident by Stage III.

Change/Transition

> It started back in about 1959...so what's that? About
> thirty years ago. I was just out of high school in
> B.C. actually and it was just about time to go to
> university and I guess I thought this was the time of
> change.

The journal writer-to-be initiates Stage One by
participating in a context of change or transition. This
experience of change may have taken place in the past, is

occurring in the present or is anticipated in the future. In Stage One, the individual tends to perceive the events of change as negative and unwelcomed. Examples of change include moving away from home for the first time, coping with the death of a parent, dealing with chronic illness, beginning a new relationship, and experiencing interpersonal difficulties. The individual may view change as involving personal choice such as moving to another city or not involving much choice or control such as chronic pain or the death of a loved one. One individual described the change experienced in the pending loss of a parent:

> When we were told that the disease was terminal, I felt this tremendous weight on me as it meant that I would need to start growing up even faster..looking after family affairs, going to the hospital, wading through schoolwork, and basically having to get serious about everything, especially my first experience of someone close to me dying. Looking back, that was a painful and very long year. I seemed to write a lot then...like I needed to be alone a lot more.

<u>Adulthood</u>

Being an adult is an important part of the context in this stage as well as in subsequent stages. The notion of adulthood is one that is culturally defined. There are expectations and roles that are associated with this stage of life. Erikson (1968) addresses the importance of the capacity for productive work and intimacy in early adulthood, generativity in middle adulthood, and ego integrity (a feeling of completion and fulfillment) in late adulthood. These qualities represent signs of health.

People who do not develop a capacity in these areas will avoid close contacts and experience isolation, interpersonal impoverishment and despair.

The informants made reference to some of the developmental tasks they encountered such as dealing with the birth of a child, searching for an intimate partner, entering intimate relationships, and dealing with the despair of past failures and the absence of meaning in life. One individual, for example, mentioned several aspects of life that required his response as an adult:

> It's (the journal) been with me through getting married, moving East, going through a divorce, going through my first job experiences, my university education, through my father's sickness and his death and moving into new relationships. So, through all of that, it's been a source of sustenance to figure out, "Well, who is this--and what am I all about? What are my values? What is really important? What is my direction?"...and try to understand the issues and understand myself in relationships.

The strategy of Turning To Self is relevant for the individuals who are in search of belonging, love, and esteem. One informant articulates the sense of isolation and despair encountered and the journey taken to discover meaning in life:

> And the part I'm running away from is the sense of despair that I get sometimes when I can't find meaning in life. Like, what's the purpose of it all?" My head can answer that question, "Well, we know the purpose and that is to come here to earth, get a body, learn to run it and learn all kinds of things." What's the point? We get married, have children, they get married and have children. What's the point?

It is important to note that these conditions vary in

nature and extent among the individuals. Thus experiencing loneliness may be primary for one person, experiencing rejection for another, and experiencing isolation for yet another. Essentially, this stage involves the interacting of conditions among each other. This results in the stage, Focusing on Self.

<center>Conditions</center>

Experiencing Rejection

> My original writing was like a desperate little gasp that would pop out of me every so often. And I felt the need to express a lot of pain and I would write and..not physical pain but emotional pain. It was always boy/girl stuff and it was always when someone rejected me or I desperately loved someone who didn't love me. And only when I was unhappy did I write in my diary. Never wrote when, you know, love had bloomed or whatever. I wrote whenever it was being snatched away.

Experiencing rejection is one of the conditions of focusing on self. There are two types of rejection: interpersonal and personal. Interpersonal rejection may be initiated by one or more individuals toward another at a physical and/or emotional level. In this situation, the rejection is other-imposed or originates from the external realm. Personal rejection involves the individual's refusal to accept, use or believe some aspect of self such as a behavior or characteristic. This kind of rejection is self-imposed as the individual has chosen to set aside or abandon certain behavioral, emotional, or physical characteristics.

Examples of interpersonal rejection include marital

separation/divorce, parent-child conflicts, friendships

that involve strong value differences, and being a member

of an exclusive religious group. At times, the individual

is not in the position of being rejected but instead takes

the initiative to set aside someone or something such as a

certain value or behavior. One informant took steps to

terminate a relationship after years of trying to help her

alcoholic partner while another individual also left her

partner after a period of accusations of her unfaithfulness

and persistent threats of physical abuse. All of the

informants made reference to their experience of

interpersonal rejection as uncomfortable and negative while

they were in the midst of it. The rejection may be of a

temporary nature where reconciliation occurs at some point

or it may be longstanding. One informant spoke of the

ongoing rejection she experienced:

> I was actually afraid of and very dominated by my
> second husband. I really was unaware of how mean and
> cruel he really was and what it would do to my
> relationship with my son in later years. But you see,
> now my son hasn't forgiven me for staying with that man
> for that long, you know. So there's kind of like a
> wall between us because of that.

An example of a temporary experience of rejection is

expressed by one informant involved in religious work:

> We work with a companion. We're with each other 24
> hours a day. We're really never separate except when
> we use the restroom...And every Saturday night we kind
> of have a little discussion time where we tell each
> other our concerns. We try to build each other up but
> it usually turns out to be the time that we nitpick.
> It was a time that we got into a bout with words. We
> really started telling each other what we disliked

> about each other and things like that. Soon there was
> really no love in it and we kind of were going at each
> other's throat just really tearing each other
> down...And after it was over, I really felt bad about
> it.

As alluded to earlier, the individuals also spoke of

wanting to modify or eliminate some aspect about themselves

that they perceived as undesirable. Examples include the

desire to be less fearful of intimate relationships,

express anger appropriately, and become more socially

connected. One individual described his awareness of a

personal issue which he sought to resolve:

> It's like hurting yourself. I sort of felt I had to
> know everything and that's alright as an aspiration but
> I had to be right and that was a disease...I always had
> to win. Well, you don't make friends when you treat
> people like that.

This individual viewed his personal difficulty as a disease

which connotes an unhealthy condition and malfunction. Not

only is the individual undergoing a personal rejection of

an undesirable part of himself, but also interpersonal

rejection that results from personal shortcomings.

Rejections become relevant factors when they affect the

individual's sense of self-acceptance, confidence, and

adequacy. There is an awareness of something that has gone

amiss, something needing reappraisal and change. The

experience of rejection is often accompanied by fear,

anger, frustration, and loneliness. There may be specific

fears such as the fear of being alone, fear of trusting

others, fear of trusting one's ability to decide, and fear

of criticism. At this point, these emotions serve as causal factors in the decision to begin focusing on self.

Experiencing Loneliness

> Before I came out on my mission, my tension-breakers
> would be listening to music. I had a motorcycle that
> I'd just love to go out and ride. I did those things
> to ease some of the tensions and my loneliness. When I
> came on my mission, not being able to listen to music
> especially during emotional times...music was the thing
> that would always get me through. If I was ever tense,
> my motorcycle. I always had something that would take
> away whatever was happening at the moment. Then, when
> you're out on the mission, you're taken away from those
> things. You can't do them. So, personally for me
> there was a big loneliness. There have been a lot of
> times when I've felt alone especially when you're about
> a thousand miles away from home and your friends that
> have been your friends forever. And all of of a sudden
> you're with a lot of strangers.

Experiencing loneliness is another condition of Focusing on Self. What is characteristic about this condition is the sense of unhappiness and isolation resulting from the loneliness that stems from change and transition. This condition may be subjectively experienced as "feeling homesick", "being alone alot", "being shy and quiet", and "not being good at making friends". It is marked by a sense of having to go through an experience alone, missing something or someone to share the experience with, or recognizing the finality of certain losses such as divorce or death.

Several informants spoke of the difficulty they encountered after their decision to move away to a new city and the lack of close ties as well as their tendency to be

"loners" and avoid disclosing information about themselves.

Experiencing Confusion

> Well, when I was confused, when I was down and
> discouraged didn't know which direction to go or how to
> make sense of something in a relationship or something
> in my personal life, I could go to my journal and write
> about it and kind of explore the pros and cons and
> express the feelings I was having and try to sort it
> out . You know - some issue in a relationship with one
> of my girlfriends - that would be an ongoing kind of
> issue. I'd be confused about it and so I'd write about
> it this way and that way. And I'd tie it in with my
> readings, things I would learn in school and things I
> was learning from others.

Experiencing confusion is another condition that is

involved in the individual's initiative to begin focusing

on self. The source of confusion or being perplexed may be

interpersonal such as accusations by a significant other,

the deterioration of an important relationship or a hoped

for relationship, and the growing pains of establishing a

meaningful relationship with another individual. It is

also conceivable that personal factors may be involved in

the individual's experience of confusion. Examples include

the management of chronic pain, changing lifestyles or

behaviors, and dealing with existential issues such as how

to rediscover meaning in life and establish priorities.

> Well, when I see the words on paper, it's very simple
> for me to sort out what's the wheat and what's the
> chaff. And somehow when something is playing in my
> head, that's not so easy to do. For instance, I think
> - well, I have a million problems in my head. When I
> start writing about them on paper, I see that, no,
> there is sort of one thing that's really bugging me and
> I think I'll work on that as opposed to trying to work
> on a few hundred.

Experiencing Anger

> As embarrassing as this may sound at this point in my
> life, I'll admit that at one time, I lived in my own
> soap opera, fantasy world about men. I was too bashful
> and afraid to really get to know them so I lived out my
> days somewhere between a blurred reality and fantasy.
> I was madly in love with this guy in an unspoken, quiet
> and rather hopeless way for months and months. And one
> day he went off with my girlfriend. I was very
> devastated....and furious with my friend and definitely
> pissed off once I realized how the flames of a dream
> could be so quickly snuffed out. I was angry at life.
> Why couldn't I have this dream go on?

Experiencing anger results in part from the previous

conditions such as rejection and loneliness. Anger results

from the experience of conflict, disappointment and loss.

Displeasure and antagonism are directed against the

perceived cause such as spouse, room-mate, lover, friend,

God, or parent. Anger and frustration may also be directed

inward to oneself. One informant describes his own

perceived shortcomings and sense of self-reproach:

> I came from a background of rigidly controlling myself,
> rigidly evaluating, criticizing, judging everything I
> did very, very strictly. Before Progoff, if I made a
> mistake, and this could be anything from banging my
> thumb on a nail with a hammer or forgetting something
> or making a mess of something, then I would say to
> myself, "You stupid jerk or dummy. You're always
> forgetting things or whatever". In fact, I made up
> paragraph after paragraph of self-condemnation.

Anger against self results in the individual turning inward

even more and this reinforces the sense of loneliness and

isolation.

Experiencing Anxiety

Experiencing anxiety as a condition of Focusing on Self

is both common and pervasive among the informants. Anxiety

involves a kind of uneasiness of mind that revolves around an uncertain event. This may entail apprehension and uneasiness directed at anticipated outcomes and the possibility that the future may entail something negative or undesired. Anxiety may be the result of an experience of emotional loss, threat to one's physical safety/health, vulnerability or exposure of oneself to another, intimacy, or the inability to find meaning to one's existence. Anxiety is not only relevant in situations that are negative but also in circumstances that hold potential for being favorable and growth-oriented. Examples include relocating to a new city, career change, leaving a relationship, or beginning a new relationship.

> Little by little, I found that I liked to be with him and enjoyed being with him, which was quite shocking after being married for twenty-seven years to the same person. I shared lots of it in my journal, especially. It got to be an intimate thing. And, because that was all new to me, it wasn't something that I had someone that I wanted to share it with either. I guess I went there trembling because it was new and unknown and I was unsure of what was happening to me. They (time spent together) were pleasant rather than sad and mixed with a lot of anxiety.

Experiencing Isolation

> The rules and the things we're asked to keep and maintain out here are standards that most people would think were unrealistic, unreasonable, and crazy. Music, for instance, we're not allowed to listen to music. We're not allowed to watch TV. Videos are out of question, movies, even newspapers. They (the church) ask us to stay apart from the world for at least the next two years. We live a very high standard so it isolates us to a certain extent, but I don't mind it.

Experiencing isolation as a condition of Focusing On Self results in part from the conditions previously described. The experience of isolation is also an independent factor. Isolation may be experienced emotionally and socially. Emotional isolation refers to the subjective response to the absence of a "generalized attachment figure rather than a particular other" (Weiss, 1973, p. 75). There is a sense of not being connected to others, lonely, unable to express emotions or important issues, and not having the experience of caring, loving, and sharing intimately. At times, individuals encountering isolation of this kind may be in significant relationships yet these relationships are not perceived as providing what they desire. One woman spoke of her relationship to a man she was involved with:

> I was very unhappy at the time and maybe that (journal) was one way of dealing with my unhappiness and how to overcome without causing too much friction. Maybe that's an escape for me too, a way out from reality and the way things were. He was such a rotten person. I think that's why I did write a lot because I felt peace when I wrote.

Sometimes the fear of making decisions and changing was considered as too big of a risk and thus the decision was made to remain at least temporarily isolated in a relationship while exploring alternative channels to deal with the sense of isolation. Some individuals spoke of sharing with close friends, taking up interest courses to meet people, or becoming more responsible in helping the

relationship grow, while others spoke of turning more inward and remaining frustrated. Emotional isolation also arises out of decisions made in which the individual was aware of the possible emotions that may be encountered. Examples include going on the mission field, leaving a relationship, and beginning to change unwanted habits/behaviors. It is clear that both desired and undesired life events and choices can contribute to experiences of emotional isolation. The sense of isolation may be minimized to some extent in situations where the individual seems self-sufficient, values time spent alone, has attachments or relationships that are meaningful with others, and believes there is a higher purpose for the experiences of isolation.

Social isolation is the sense of being separated from or rest...ited in the nature and ...' c. .ontact with people in general, friends, activities and may be the result of external circumstances such as relocating to another city and being separated geographically from one's social network. It may also stem from being a member of an organization (e.g. religious group) that regulates the social, ethical and moral behavior of its adherents. Social isolation may arise from or lead to emotional isolation. Individuals who may have encountered a significant loss or difficult experience such as domestic violence, separation, death of a loved one may decline the

initiatives by others to socialize in the midst of their
difficulties. This can result in temporary isolation at
both these levels. However, it is important to note that
not all those who do encounter emotional or social
isolation regard it as problematic. One informant
describes her experience:

> I'm a bit of a hermit and I like to be alone more than
> others do...I like people and have friends but I don't
> have to connect once a day or week. I have my ideas of
> what I'd like in a good friend and comrade. Being
> rather new in town, I'm more connected to friends far
> away. So there is a feeling of isolation despite
> having the phone, post office, and acquaintances here
> to get to know better...and I write in my journal just
> to capture the sense of how certain friendships are
> developing, if I am lonely, and I think too, I tell
> only a couple of people when I'm down and out. That
> all seems realistic and acceptable at this point.

Strategy

Turning To Self

> When major events are happening or are about to take
> place, I begin to get very restless and confused,
> wondering what the outcome will be, should be or
> whatever. I can become such a worrier and so my body
> and mind usually tell me to take time out so that I can
> collect my thoughts and come through with some decent,
> acceptable decision or whatever. This is the time that
> I need to let things sit inside, have a debate with
> myself. If I don't, I usually end up with more
> regrets, guilt and crap.

The strategy of Turning To Self is adopted under the
conditions described. Strategies refer to the individual's
attempts to deal with an issue or problem. This strategy
signals the beginning steps taken to sort out a particular
event or concern, gain a sense of understanding, and
thereby make sense of the experience in question. It

begins here in Stage One and continues throughout the stages in some degree or another. Turning To Self is a strategy that entails focusing on oneself and thus pertains to the ability to experience solitude. This strategy is adopted as a means of coping with one's concerns. These include the fear of risking self, fear of criticism, fear of judgement, or fear of rejection. It also includes the emotional experiences outlined under conditions of Stage One. Turning to Self is associated with solitude or the state of being remote from others to a greater or lesser extent. It means spending time alone to make sense of one's life, to communicate with oneself, and to come to terms with some issue about oneself or oneself in relation to another.

The conditions brought about by change such as insecurity, restlessness, and new awakenings are "the ultimate realities of human existence" and represent a "necessary step to creation, t rebirth, to renewal" (Moustakas, 1967, p. 123-124).

Consequences

A number of consequences stem from the combination of these conditions and strategies. The consequences are as follows:

1. The individual is questioning some aspect of self, other, and/or its relationship to specific circumstances.

2. The conditions continue to exist.

3. There is a reservation, at least temporarily, with regards to interpersonal sharing and disclosing concerns, problems, and struggles.

4. The individual is searching for some kind of understanding and resolution to the situation encountered.

Wanting

> I'm trying to think of what motivated me to start journalling. There was the self-improvement stuff there. Like if I keep track of this, I'll be better able to see how I'm doing, measure my own progress, find ways of improving myself, reminding myself that I can change, develop, grow better and so on.

The meaning of "wanting" is two-fold. First, it means to feel a desire or wish for. Secondly, it implies that something is missing or needed. As a consequence of the conditions of Stage One, there is a lack of close, intimate relationships and stability accompanied by a sense of dissatisfaction with oneself. At this stage, the need for intimacy, stability, and self-satisfaction have not been met. Wanting change is, however, contingent upon freedom which is the "awareness of alternatives and of the ability to choose" (Wheelis, 1973, p. 15). Freedom, in turn, is "contingent upon consciousness and so may be gained or lost, extended or diminished" (Wheelis, 1973, p. 15). Hence, it is conceivable that for some individuals, the achievement of freedom may never occur or having been

achieved, may be lost.

All of the informants spoke of wanting in several ways. There is an awareness of gaps or deficits, both internally (e.g. being too introverted or critical of self) and externally (e.g. lacking a meaningful relationship or not being socially connected). These gaps leave a sense of need for completion, continuity, contentment, and connection. One informant described the growing pains encountered in his journey towards self-improvement:

> In an argument, I always had to win. Well you don't make friends when you treat people like that. So when I got into the Progoff stuff, looking at my own reservoir of feelings means accepting them. I'm willing to experience sadness. I'm willing to trust my inner private secrets to paper. That's somehow made it easier. If you were a friend of mine, the fact that I could disclose on paper meant that it was a little easier to disclose in person. To feel, to risk, to be vulnerable, to be seen as not weaker, indecisive...

The extent to which the individual begins to take steps to contend with the sense of wanting and self-dissatisfaction is dependent upon how others are perceived. If important thoughts and emotions are articulated with difficulty and a trusted other is absent, then turning inward is a likely response. Furthermore, if the individual has a preference for turning inward, it is more likely that private means such as self-reflection through journal writing are utilized. Others are not as certain which way to turn and this results in an exploration of possible sources of personal growth and

change or simply a moratorium of sorts. There is a hold
placed on taking the next step and risking.

<u>Fearing</u>

> I think there's an aloneness to a lot of things we do
> out here. Even the feelings that we have, whether good
> or bad, a lot of times, the good feelings are brought
> out and that's what is good about the mission. But the
> sad parts, the things that personally offend you, or
> hurt your feelings, you have to stay away from
> spreading it around...or gossip. You really have to
> stay away from it. So it fills up inside and what can
> you really do? Chances are if you go and talk to
> somebody about it, they're going to give you a lecture
> on why you shouldn't be that way. And so it's kind of
> nice you can write it down. The journal is not a
> person but it's something that you can turn to and
> express your feelings to without any fear or concern of
> what might happen.

The conditions of this stage of Focusing On Self bring

about an atmosphere that is characterized by fears,

uncertainty, vulnerability, and anxiety. Common to all

informants in varying degrees was a fear of criticism or

judgment, and particularly, a fear of rejection. There are

personal and interpersonal dimensions that interact with

each other, enhancing the effect of each and contributing

to the nature and extent of the fears. First, there are

the individual's perceptions of self. These are

subjectively experienced as "being a loner", "being shy and

quiet", "being socially awkward", and "being fear-bound".

These descriptions of self may be attributed to

interpersonal relating in the context of one's family of

origin or in the context of one's recent experience in a

relationship (e.g. marital difficulties or parent/child

conflict). Given these kinds of adverse circumstances the individual has adopted some means of coping. This may involve attempts to relate as well as to not relate to others. Examples include the influence of the family of origin in which the expression of sad or negatively perceived emotions is discouraged and inhibited; growing up in a family atmosphere that is described as critical and dominated by rules of right and wrong; or growing up as an introverted child that often felt like an outsider and stranger.

The informants spoke of their lack of familiarity and sense of permission in expressing themselves to another individual and how this issue played a part in heightening their fears of self-disclosure. The family, then can be viewed as one important source of external constraint whereby the individual growing up learns that opening oneself up to another is risky, unacceptable, or a sign of weakness. External constraints may also be reinforced by values and standards set out by institutions such as the church or workplace. Other fears may vary with the individual's immediate experience or that of the recent past. For example, the experience of rejection or threat of rejection may instill a sense of fear about the potential for further repudiation. There may also be the fear that the situation will be made worse by further disclosing such as several female informants who spoke of

their fear of further abuse by their partners.

Turning to self is a means of coping with the situation at hand. It is also a way of protecting oneself from emotional exposure such as embarrassment, weakness, or one's own anger. In some cases, it is a means of avoiding the possible negative responses of others such as ridicule, rejection, disagreement, or physical harm. The consequence is the development of two different strategies. The first strategy is "turning to self" and is developed in Stage One. "Covering up" is the second strategy which is developed in Stage Two. The conditions of this stage, in combination with the consequence of fear further reinforce the sense of isolation and loneliness.

Reserving

> I know I write in my journal a lot of things that I
> don't like to tell anybody else. It's just like a deep
> dark secret. You know if you ever tell anybody your
> secret, it's no longer a secret. Somebody else knows.
> They can tell other people so things that I don't
> really like to talk about, things like that, I write in
> my journal. I don't write in the exact same terms
> because even if anybody ever takes my journal and reads
> through it...I just let those meanings be meanings that
> only I can understand (secret symbols) and that they
> are going to be a little bit confused about.

To reserve means to hang on to, keep as one's own or withhold something such as feelings, opinions or information. Disclosure of one's experience is most likely when the other individual is perceived as a trustworthy person of goodwill and who is willing to lend a listening ear as well as understanding. Disclosing oneself to

significant others whose probable reactions are assumed,
but not known can be a frightening experience. Put simply,
the greater the uncertainty and anxiety about disclosing in
a certain relationship, the more likely the individual is
to take measures to minimize the possibility of
experiencing fear or anxiety. The response to fear and
uncertainty is to erect barriers so that one can be
protected from the exposure of oneself and to be assuaged
from the impact of negative conditions.

In this stage, attempts at reserving occur with varying
degrees of flexibility and effectiveness. There is little
flexibility in appropriating various adjustment patterns
such as moving toward people or moving against people,
depending on the presenting conditions. One informant
described his tendency to remain at a distance from people:

> Most people have their work and their friends and their
> families and other things. Of course, I had family and
> friends. I was married. I had five children and so on
> and I was married to my work in a way as well. I
> wasn't interested in sharing myself.

Reserving is minimized when there is a trusted, mutual
relationship that is geographically close. This was the
case for only two of the informants and this gap in
relationship played a significant part in their beginning
exploration of journal writing.

Reserving assumes new meaning when there are existing
close relationships that constitute a social/emotional
network or if the individual chooses the option of being

alone. In this sense, reserving connotes a setting aside
for one's own use. The capacity to be alone is regarded as
a valuable resource particularly when major life changes
have occurred. Often a time of reappraisal of these
changes and the accompanying confusion are needed.
Reserving then may be reflected in the desire to seek
solitude as a means of stepping aside from the pressures
and demands that have accompanied the changes. There is a
search for an understanding of the situation as well as an
exploration of the responses that the individual can choose
to make emotionally and physically.

Reserving is a consequence that extends beyond Stage
One although its nature and quality may undergo changes
over time as it takes on different characteristics. It is
important to note that several consequences may be
attributed to reserving. First, it accentuates the state
of tension, dissatisfaction, and sense of disorganization.
There is a facing up to one's reality. A further
consequence of reserving is the growing need to begin to
understand and to make sense of the situation at hand. One
way of exploring these experiences is to remove oneself
from present surroundings and see what emerges. This
initiative is not without its tensions. This sets the
stage for evaluating and appraising oneself and the
situation in Stage Two and for continuing to contend with
the uncertainty and anxiety.

Given the conditions of this stage and the strategy of reserving, the consequence is further alienating or estrangement of self from oneself and from others. This stems from limiting or avoiding interaction with others who may provide the kind of feedback or support that would enhance self-understanding and personal growth.

Focusing On Self

Focusing on Self, therefore, is characterized by the following: the individual experiences a set of conditions which results in several consequences and a strategy for handling them. The adult, in the context of transition, experiences loneliness and frustration. Confusion, a sense of rejection, and anxiety are also encountered. There is social isolation and emotional isolation. As a result, the individual is in a position of lacking and wanting. There are personal and interpersonal gaps to contend with. The individual engages in the strategy of reserving as a way of self-protection against the onslaught of further negative emotions. Turning :   ˈd, self-exploration and an examination of personal circumstances begin. There is a turning inward to discover a means of self-expression, understanding, and personal growth.

STAGE TWO: EXPLORING OPTIONS

Stage Two reflects the continuation of the developmental steps involved in the journal writing process.   A detailed discussion of this stage is presented next.

> I was taking psychology courses and of course, it was very much the humanistic stream of psychology at that point in time.   I was also taking a philosophy of religion course, a course of Buddhism, Shintuism, religions of Japan...And then I got reading people like some of the humanistic psychologists like Jourard on self-disclosure...and I just really got curious about myself and what was making me tick.

Stage Two is the stage of exploring options.   The individual begins to focus inward and takes steps to make sense of personal experiences in the midst of change.   This action stems in part from the conditions established in the previous stage.   The journal writer-to-be attempts to resolve the need to understand the situation and to find a means of expression that is safe, adequate and non-threatening.   The greater the fear of rejection experienced by the individual in expressing emotions or thoughts to another individual, the more likely alternatives to interacting with others are sought.   This step minimizes vulnerability and risk.

The informants provided examples of the different channels of self-expression and self-understanding.   These included courses in psychology, astrology, and creative writing.   Others included: talking to a trusted friend or

significant other, exploring religion, sensitivity

workshops, group therapy, journal writing workshops, seeing

a counsellor or psychiatrist, reading self-help books, and

k⌐ ɔing a journal. The commitment to journal writing and

self-improvement occurs by the end of Stage Two. See Table

II on the following page for an overview.

The goal of Exploring Options is to contend with the

conditions of Stage One. More specifically, the goal is to

acquire a sense of self-acceptance and inner contentment by

examining significant events, emotional responses, and

possible choices that exist. By focusing on one's

circumstances and the nature and extent of making important

changes in life, the individual is in turn able to acquire

a sense of control, meaning in life, and self-improvement.

Exploring Options thus becomes an integral part of the

individual's attempt to deal with the sense of

self-dissatisfaction. May (1969) affirms the importance of

healthy living and notes that the healthy human is

constantly undergoing change and growth. Thus the pursuit

of psychological health entails the examination of self as

well as a sense of responsibility and commitment to change.

<div align="center">Conditions</div>

Appraising/Evaluating Self

The potential journal writer takes measures to appraise

and evaluate various dimensions of life. The individual

defines this as looking inward, gaining a better

perspective, discovering what aspects of self need change, and looking at ways in which life circumstances could be enriched and improved. This step entails some exploration of self in terms of emotional responses to past, present, and/or anticipated events of change. The questions that are asked include: What was/is my reaction? Was the reaction a reflection of how I really felt? How content am I with my reaction and the decisions that followed? Could I have done something differently? What is necessary at present to bring about some of the changes I want?

Appraising self can take several forms. There is an appraisal of one's use of internal and external resources as well as contemplation of changes in attitude or behaviors. The informants referred to their appraisal of certain personality characteristics such as being passive and wanting to become more assertive; being critical and judgmental and deciding to become more accepting of others/self; and being unsociable or alienated from others and desiring friendships and intimacy. May (1953) describes the ability to view the world and to view ourselves viewing as "self-relatedness" which "gives humans the power to stand outside the rigid chain of stimulus and response, to pause, and by this pause to throw some weight on either side, to cast some decision about what the response will be." (p. 161)

Table II

Overview of Stage Two: Exploring Options

Conditions	Strategies	Consequences
appraising/ evaluating	turning to self	getting going
wanting		
mistrusting	covering up	modifying/switching
fearing		
wanting to remember		
being curious		

One informant described the importance of appraising herself
and to improve herself in general.

> Some of the things I write in my journal are a bad day,
> the feeling I had during the day and maybe why I felt
> that way or what brought the ending on. You can look
> back on it and think, maybe if I get into the same
> situation again, I can improve the way things happen
> and make the outcome better. You can also set yourself
> some goals and write them in your journal and then
> you've got a record of them because you decided you
> wanted to make those goals. And you can come back and
> say, "Hey, I made these goals, how did I make out? Did
> I really do things to help me get those goals? Where
> did I go wrong that I didn't attain that goal?"

Another form of evaluating/appraising involves a close

examination of the concern at hand. This involves

identifying the issue(s), determining the degree and extent

to which the issue is problematic for oneself or one's

relationships with others, and sorting out how the issue

may be ameliorated or dealt with. One individual noted his use of journal writing to examine a conflict he had with another individual and the awareness he gained as a result:

> When I wrote it down, I wrote down my tensions about it and just as I was writing, I realized that I really was at fault too. I thought I was just totally out of it. I was doing no wrong. But I realized that I had as big a part in it as he did. It helped me realize that I was wrong and in a way my journal helped me.

As noted earlier, the informants explored several options in search of understanding and self-improvement. In addition to internal resources, the participants explored the feasibility of external resources. For one individual this exploration period involved participation in a class for creative writing which facilitated reflection on her family of origin and her unhappy marriage. Later, some of her insights and new learning were shared with a group of close friends. For another informant, the Progoff journal writing workshop enabled uncomfortable emotions to be disclosed in the journal and eventually with others. This time of exploration for the individual also included the use of self-help books and personal as well as group therapy. For most of the informants, a significant, intimate relationship was lacking.

In examining oneself, there is a tendency to compare one's understanding of the present self to what one regards as more acceptable and ideal. The journal writer-to-be

recognizes that there is room for improvement. Exploring

Options therefore includes taking a look at what

improvement might entail and how this task could be

accomplished.

The notion of an existing difference between the real

self and the ideal self is addressed by Karen Horney

(1950). The real self includes those aspects that are true

about us at any particular time. The ideal self, on the

other hand, reflects what we would like to become. So, the

question at hand is, given where I am now and what I am

now, where can I reasonably hope to be in the future? The

ability to realistically appraise a situation and determine

adjustments to it is an important attribute of a healthy

adult. This journey is often a contrast from the past.

> Even in school, status- that was what I liked. I think
> I kind of thrived off it. This is just explaining a
> little about myself. I was the captain of our football
> team. I was a track captain. I was student body
> vice-president. I was vice-president of student
> politics...doing all those sorts of things. I thrived
> off it. I liked being in the spotlight and I liked
> people to know my name. I never really thought I was
> better than them but I liked to associate with my
> friends because I really felt that was what would give
> me my status. When I got on my mission, I found out
> that was kind of stupid. It didn't get me anywhere.
> It gave me a lot of attributes that I liked such as
> leadership experience. But the humility part- to be
> humble. I found that was more important.

The effect of exploring options is that the individual

can begin to take action, which means assuming a sense of

control in one's life.

Wanting

One of the main concerns of the journal writer at this stage is self-improvement. This is expressed as a need as well as a desire. To improve oneself is defined by the individuals as not continuing to repeat past failings, to be happier with life circumstances, to share oneself with others, to develop more self-awareness, to become a better person, to re-parent oneself, and to engage in a personal journey of growth.

> I wanted to become a better journal writer. I'm not sure what that means...just to do more of what I was doing to explore and work with and deal with self-development. I wanted the journal to be more involved with my internal life. I saw it as helping me to be a better person, to develop more awareness of myself. What an incredibly better way to do something about self-development through personal journal writing than to have somebody else do it, somebody else lead me.

Another individual spoke of the excitement and desire for growth that self-exploration through journal writing may entail.

> I think at first there was excitement of discovering that some people were really interested in these ideas and I thought they were really interesting- the idea of personal journey, personal growth, philosophy. I'd been introduced to this exciting new world. It made sense to me. The questions about myself and about the world just started coming. It seemed like I had opened a can of worms.

There are risks in making changes. On the one hand, this initiative may lead to relief, contentment, and enhanced confidence as new habits, attitudes, or relationships are cultivated. On the other, exploring

unknown terrain in the pursuit of new possibilities and

change may initially or temporarily result in

isolation/rejection from others, confusion, and anxiety.

Storr (1989) describes these possibilities as follows:

> Any form of new organization or integration within the
> mind has to be preceded by some degree of
> disorganization. No one can tell, unless he has
> experienced it, whether or not this necessary
> disruption of former patterns will be succeeded by
> something better. (p. 35)

Wanting Privacy

> At one point I struggled with, you know, writing
> absolutely everything I thought in my journal. I was
> afraid of writing some things or acknowledging some
> things to myself. So, I made a rule and I don't know
> when it was. It probably was several years later that
> whatever went into my journal was absolutely private
> and I'd never show it to anyone. That gave me the
> freedom gradually to write more and more things that I
> probably wouldn't admit to anyone else, kind of the
> darker side of myself. And that was very significant
> because it gave me a little more freedom to write down
> whatever I wanted to.

The desire for privacy and being alone is perceived by

the individuals as a period of time where they can think

and reflect on their concerns, examine alternative ways of

looking at and dealing with certain situations, and allow

themselves the time and space to gain clarity and

confidence. Wanting privacy may stem from the individual's

perception of the issue being too personal, confusing, or

embarrassing. For example, the desire for privacy may stem

from the lack of confidence or social skills to articulate

one's innermost thoughts to another person. Being alone to

write with privacy takes place in a safe and protected

environment. These characteristics are of primary
importance throughout the following stages and provide a
context for the journal writer to begin and maintain the
goals of attaining self-satisfaction and personal growth.

There may also be concerns that others are not
available or prepared to help. One woman, for example, had
a number of close friends with whom she spent time
socializing but she did not choose to express her
loneliness and lack of intimacy in her life with them. She
perceived her friends as being busy with their own
responsibilities and relationships.

The need for privacy may be short-lived and
intermittent, particularly in situations where the
individual is involved with one or more significant others
who are regarded as understanding, helpful, and caring.
In this case, the journal may be used in conjunction with
contacts with a therapist, friend, or connections are made
with others in a group context such as a course, workshop,
or therapy group where self-disclosure is possible.

The nature and extent of wanting privacy varied among
the individuals although all of the informants made
reference to the importance of spending time alone "to
reflect", "get it all out", "sort out", or "gain
perspective" on their situation. The effect of wanting
privacy is that the individual is able to focus on issues
with fewer inhibitions and without the scrutiny of others'

opinions and reactions. The effect of experiencing privacy is that the individual can engage in self-examination in an atmosphere of security and freedom.

Mistrusting

> I did not trust my feelings. In fact, I guess that's the way to say that. If I got too much into my negative side I would get so depressed that I didn't even want to carry on. It was just total despair. If I got into my joy too much, I figured I would become irresponsible, quit work, and go sit in a cabin in the mountains and enjoy life. Things were sort of in their extreme form. If I let myself have my feelings, or I'll die of despair or I'll run away and be irresponsible or I'll do something that's not going to be quite right. So, there was always a kind of strait jacket on the feelings.

To mistrust is to regard someone or something with suspicion or doubt. Mistrust in this stage occurs at two basic levels. First, there is a mistrust of one's own emotions, particularly if confronted with the decision of sharing them with others. Second, there is confusion as to who one really is, what one wants to do in the given life situation and insecurity with respect to personal weaknesses. As a consequence there is a tendency to regard oneself in anegative light and to be critical about these perceived flaws. Given this picture, it is not surprising that emotions are inhibited and there is a guard against being vulnerable. Examples also include decision making around issues of letting go/staying in a relationship; expressing anger or sadness/covering up with a facade of happiness; and being overcritical of self/accepting self.

Fearing

It never was even a consideration that I would disclose
to another person that I had something like a death
wish...a death wish for myself to put an end to the
self-loathing I felt then. I thought I was weird as I
felt like a loser and I also didn't know anybody my age
(15) who had thoughts like mine. So, I was afraid of
thinking in this way, scared that wishing bad things
might really bring bad luck...I was afraid someone
would find out about me, terrified that the thoughts
would keep on coming, and sort of numb because I was so
unhappy with my life and its insignificance. I was
depressed. That's the note on which my journal began.

A number of the fears described in Stage One continue
to be experienced in this stage. In this stage the fears
include the fear of rejection, criticism, and being known.
With recent rejection or longstanding rejection, the fear
of risking is greater. The main concern here revolves
around the question, I'm afraid, why take more risks?
There is a holding back of emotions from others
particularly if further rejection, anger, or criticism are
potential consequences. Interpersonal sharing holds the
possibility of these consequences. Thus the individual's
caution against further rejection is understandable. The
assumption is that if one does not open up then there is no
possibility of getting hurt. At this stage, inner security
and freedom are being sought by being alone and turning
inward to begin exploring.

Wanting To Remember

My journal is my memory in some sense because there's
lots of things in there that I've long forgotten. And
going back just glancing at them again...like when I
first met my wife, my reactions to that, my first
encounter, being wildly in love and things like that

that become part of life and you forget them. But my
journal has a lot of those details. It captures and
records parts of my life that I no longer remember very
clearly.

Stage Two involves the exploration of options that are

available as a means of self-understanding and personal

growth. At the same time, there is a desire to recapture

or store in memory significant thoughts, emotions, and

experiences. The desire to recall and recollect

experiences through journal writing serves several

purposes: (1) to be able to retrieve details of past

experiences easily. These details include those which the

memory may not be as capable of capturing; (2) to make

comparisons on how personal issues, attitudes, and steps

towards self-improvement have taken place over time; and to

gain some perspective of the issues and areas of growth

that still need attention. In this way, the journal is

perceived as a way in which the sense of personal history

and continuity can be preserved.

Wanting to Remember is a condition that continues to

play a crucial part in the maintenance of journal writing

in the stages that follow. Whether the remembering

involves capturing the details of growth, progress, and

resolution or documenting the experiences of disappointment

or stagnation, having the journal as a book of concrete,

visible recordings serves as an important aspect in

motivating the individual to write. The journal is a

preserver of memories, a marker of growth and a reminder of the need to continue taking the initiative toward self-improvement as reflected in the comments made by one participant:

> There are other times when I write just because, well my son got married this summer. And well, I really want to go back and look at it later and see how I felt. I had such mixed feelings, and so I wasn't feeling stuck so much. I just wanted to make sure I recorded the event. So, there's the kind of historical thing. I want to make sure I don't forget all the events in my life. But the other part of it is I'm somehow stuck there and this is a way for me to become unstuck if I start listening to myself.

Being Curious

> I'm curious. I think that's one thing that has been really strong in me for a long time. My curiosity is largely focused around people and what makes people tick, what makes me tick. Philosophical kinds of questions like, what's the meaning of life? I wouldn't say I'm a philosopher but I guess I'm as much of a philosopher as anyone in the sense of being concerned with existential issues...I've always been curious in exploring.

Along with the conditions of rejection, loneliness, and isolation, there is an accompanying desire to change which is partially prompted by a sense of curiosity and interest in seeking alternative ways of relating and living in general. Being curious reflects an eagerness for knowledge of self and others. There is a curiosity about understanding the situations at hand, discovering meaning of circumstances, and exploring ways in which changes in behavior, attitude, and relationships can be made. The ways in which individuals envisioned themselves changing varied to some extent although each addressed their

interest in finding how they could be different and better off in some way in comparison to their present circumstances. One individual spoke of her curiosity in turning inward and and learning to listen to herself as opposed to relying on external opinions. Others expressed a desire to discover how to risk with relationships and what it would be like to be connected emotionally and socially with others. Several mentioned their interest in finding ways to generate meaning in their lives by understanding the specific adversities they encountered. Maslow (1970) describes this kind of individual as being motivated by an unsatisfied hunger for contact, intimacy, belonging, as well as the need to overcome feelings of alienation, strangeness, loneliness, and aloneness.

The conditions of this stage combined with the sense of curiosity paves the way for the strategy of Turning to Self to be used. There is a desire for self-focusing and change. At the same time, there are fears that hold the individual back from sharing with others.

Strategies

Turning To Self

> I remember I became friends with an older girl from
> camp one summer and we wrote weekly for several years.
> It all ended suddenly. I never heard from her again
> and I felt like I lost an ideal mother figure or
> something like that. It hurt. I didn't want to have
> that kind of thing happen again so I kept to myself. I
> also didn't want to burden anyone again. So, I turned
> to my journal friend, Camilla. It sounds silly now but
> I wrote to a Camilla in my journal. It was like having
> a conversation with a friend, even though in reality it

wasn't. It was talking to an imaginary friend. It was safe and that felt good.

Turning to Self as a strategy to maintain distance from others and to avoid further risking and rejection was previously discussed in Stage One. By turning to self, there is a diminished risk of being judged by others, being in a position of displaying emotions that reveal vulnerability, and becoming more confused, embarrassed or anxious by having to contend with the advice/opinions of others. This strategy continues to be an important one in this stage as the individual chooses journal writing as a way of protecting self and enabling self-exploration. This strategy results from the conditions of this stage. Turning to Self is seen as an important strategy that will contribute to the decision to interact with oneself and often with others in the journal writing.

Turning to Self means that one is in some ways gaining a sense of control. There is a perception of control over others when they are not informed of what is happening. If others are unaware of what emotions or experiences are of significance to the individual, there is less to lose. Inadequacies and negative perceptions of self, therefore, cannot be revealed. Examples of Turning to Self include hiding emotions of hurt and rejection from a new partner in case the relationship fails, presenting a facade of contentment and self-reliance to others in the absence of a

significant relationship, and being quiet and reserved when loneliness pervades. In these circumstances, the journal becomes the place where intimate conversations with one's inner life are captured; it is also the holder of thoughts, emotions, significant experiences and important memories.

Turning to Self is a strategy that reinforces the experience of isolation. If one can not or will not relate to others, then spending time alone becomes a reality. However, there are tradeoffs to being alone in this way. These tradeoffs make journal writing and turning inward worthwhile. One of the main benefits is that of personal freedom in terms of the nature and extent to which certain issues or concerns are dealt with. In other words, the journal writer is able to set the pace in attempting to sort out issues and to discover how self-dissatisfaction can be handled. Choices can be made to explore more intensively, postpone looking deeper within or deal with the past, present, or future. The focus on one's inner life becomes a way of attending to self. For all the individuals involved, journal writing represented a time in which they learned to deal with aspects of their personal life in different ways and in more depth.

Turning to Self as a strategy also serves to diminish some of the loneliness and isolation that is experienced. Such gains were expressed as being able to "get it all out," "feeling safe," "sorting things out," "gaining

perspective," and "finding relief." One is more certain of
being able to discover what is really needed or desired,
irrespective of what others' expectations are. The
potential that being alone holds is underscored by Storr
(1988) as he states: "The capacity to be alone thus
becomes linked with self-discovery and self-realization;
with becoming aware of one's deepest needs, feelings, and
impulses" (p. 21). One informant who had encountered
difficulties in social relationships and friendships had
this to say about his new learning:

> What the Progoff journal and group therapy does is it
> allows me to venture down the well, into the darkness
> and to feel safe, safe to face despair. What are you,
> despair, trying to teach me?

At this point, consideration is made of other options
involving limited or minimal self-disclosure. For these
individuals the options consisted of daily affirmation
books, how-to books on journal writing, self-help books,
and journal writing workshops. The focus of exploring
these resources was to acquire new techniques in journal
writing that would lead to new ways in which improvement
could be effected in general.

Covering Up

> I think I lived my life primarily without feelings. Of
> course, we all have feelings. But I lived mainly in my
> head. I was a scholarly, bookish kind of person. I
> used my intelligence. I applied it to problems. I
> didn't allow emotional content. I was rational,
> objective, and critical. The kind of language that
> some people use is that I operated out of my head, not
> my heart. So, pre-Progoff, I was not expressing very
> much in the way of feelings either on paper, which is

> fine, or in person. If you and I had had a
> conversation like this ten years ago, I wouldn't even
> be saying any of this. First of all, it'd be none of
> your business. Secondly, if we were talking about it,
> I'd make sure that I was very guarded and gave you only
> headstuff. I'd never admit that there were tears or
> fears.

The pervading sense of self-dissatisfaction coupled
with the experiences of loneliness, rejection, or isolation
contribute to the development of the strategy of Covering
Up. To cover up means to protect or conceal. As alluded
to earlier, the conditions of this stage and the previous
stage result in the fear of further rejection or criticism,
hence the effort is made to reserve one's thoughts or
emotions. Covering Up involves concealing what one regards
as negative, weak, or inadequate about oneself. Examples
of covering up include loneliness, lack of close friends,
and lack of intimacy in certain situations such as on the
job. Only the characteristics that reflect competence,
strength, and a positive image are shown to others. In
the case of one individual, time was devoted to
demonstrating professional competence to colleagues and
taking pride in being a "workaholic".

The strategy of Covering Up can also be one that is a
way of living in which very little is revealed. One
individual who began journal writing as a way of gradually
opening up to others had this to say:

> I had a few friends but even they were treated by
> others as sort of social rejects which I was aware of.
> So I didn't really let them in my life because I didn't
> think I had much to offer them and I wasn't sure that

they had much to offer me. So, I didn't really give myself or them a chance but I went along and did things with them. They liked me as I presented myself as agreeable, cheerful - a good sport even though inside I felt I didn't belong and had no other place to go.

Covering Up may be expressed in a variety of ways such as making excuses to not socialize or to not get more involved in relationships, being critical and aloof, being painfully shy and awkward or in a slightly more acceptable way, creating an impression of oneself as pleasant, helpful, smart, hardworking but superficial. Having to win arguments and proving one's intellectual abilities may also keep others at arm's length:

Before if you asked me a question that I wasn't sure of, I'd have to go out and give you a whole bunch of academic answers and make sure you knew I was smart and knew what I was talking about...Before I always felt I couldn't be seen as not knowing something. I had to be right all the time. In an argument I always had to win. Well, you don't make friends when you treat people like that.

This strategy provides a protection against the onslaught of further discomfort and risks. This strategy is used in situations where the individual identifies with negative qualities such as being too serious, judgmental, unworthy or insecure. It also includes instances in which the individual is uncertain about what is being covered up. There is fear that others will discover something undesirable about the real self. The most practical thing to do then is to avoid getting close to others and build an emotional and social wall as a buffer. Horney (1945)

refers to the "detached" type of person in the following

description:

> What is crucial is their inner need to put emotional
> distance between themselves and others. More
> accurately, it is their conscious and unconscious
> determination not to get emotionally involved with
> others in any way, whether in love, fight, cooperation,
> or completion. They draw around themselves a kind of
> magic circle which no one may penetrate. (p. 75)

Consequences

In this stage, the conditions, contexts, strategies,

and consequences culminate in a pervasive sense of

dissatisfaction and uncertainty. Being in transition and

wanting to better oneself contribute to the consequence of

Getting Going, which in turn serves as an important

stepping stone to the move into Stage Three.

Getting Going

Typically a trigger or critical incident is involved in

the individual's shift from contemplating what to do to

active exploration of self and decision-making. The

triggers are often an intricate link of external (e.g.

events, others' opinions) and internal (reactions, ideas,

beliefs) input. The following example illustrates the

intricacy of Getting Going, which involves an interpersonal

dimension:

> I mostly went to it (journal workshop) because this
> friend and I had promised each other to spend a day
> together and so we decided that the journal keeping
> workshop would be our vehicle for spending a couple
> days together. It had nothing to do with the journal
> keeping although I had wanted to do it for years. It
> had to do with the fact that this friend and I were
> actually doing what we wanted to do which was to devote

a little time to our friendship.

Journal writing may be initiated before, during, or after exploring avenues of self-understanding and personal growth such as sensitivity groups, astrology courses, books or personal/group therapy. Triggers may be found in these sources of self-exploration as was the experience of one individual:

> When I first started doing this writing and self-improvement and things like that, I had taken three astrology courses. One of the things that you become aware of is that by doing your chart and putting all your family - if you did them on transparent paper and put everybody's chart on top of each other, you can see why you lived together as a family. That's one way of becoming self-aware of maybe some problems, some things you have to work on and within your own family, It was that that was the original spark that said, "Oh with such and such a person in your family, this is what you've got to work out".

Getting Going may also occur after a specific event. Most of the individuals were able to attribute the beginning of their journal writing to a situation that was perceived as unusual, unexpected, or traumatic. Examples include living alone in a new city, loss of a significant other through separation or death, domestic conflict, or beginning a new relationship. In the midst of a relationship marked by physical threats and accusations, one participant used the journal to express her anger and confusion:

> I think originally, it was just to help me over a troublesome period. I think that was when I first started. I was angry, didn't have anyone to share it with. I can remember just taking a notebook and writing in it, writing how I felt and describing the

situation which had to do with my husband leaving the
house when we had lots of small children and I was
really angry at him. Then, when I went to write it
out, it was like, I'm writing this angry stuff and I
remember, "Oh yeah, but you're supposed to be working
on this. You're supposed to be improving yourself".

Getting Going involves the desire to use the journal to
make important changes and to discover a greater sense of
satisfaction in life and with oneself. At this point, the
individual is also exploring how to make the journal work.
The individuals are also exploring various options of
self-expression within the context of journal writing
itself. The individuals spoke of wanting to learn to
journal the "right" way, acknowledging that they did not
"do it the way you're supposed to", or in the way that the
journal was intended to be used. There is some uncertainty
as to what is comfortable and effective for them in journal
writing. Some experimented with writing daily, while
others wrote more sporadically whenever the "urge hit", and
others used a more structured method that was taught in
books or courses.

Another characteristic of this beginning stage of
journal writing is the tendency to write about negative and
unwanted experiences almost to the exclusion of the events
and emotions that may be refreshing and positive. All of
the participants made reference to negative circumstances
that contributed in some way to Getting Going in their
writing. One informant shared about her beginnings in

journal writing and the tendency to express only certain

themes such as rejection or difficulties in relationships:

> I don't think I was very regular in those days -
> probably I'd go six months without writing anything.
> Probably the frequency could be determined by
> disappointed relationships. I sort of went back to it
> periodically in those early years of marriage but it
> was very fleeting.

Getting Going means to begin to take steps of action.

It implies going beyond just thinking, dreaming,

reflecting, and wanting to change. For the journal writer

this involves opening oneself up in the journal and

approaching real, imagined, or anticipated experiences in

the past, present, and future.

Modifying

Throughout this stage of Exploring Options, there has

been an accompanied sense of non-commitment on the journal

writer's part with respect to using journal writing as an

important tool in personal growth. Up to this point, time

has been spent searching and examining a variety of

strategies that would be of help. Exploring thus precedes

the act of becoming committed to journal writing. To

commit means to devote oneself unreservedly to something or

someone. It is not possible to commit oneself to the goal

of self-satisfaction if the need to identify the concerns

exists first or if there is uncertainty as to how to

include the journal in the process of learning and

discovery.

Exploring Options within journal writing is an important aspect of modifying. There is often a digression from the initial way of journal writing. New and helpful ideas are added from other sources such as how-to books on journal writing, psychology books, or religion. For some individuals, modifying the use of the journal meant a redefinition of their approach to writing. There was the perception that the initial writing attempts that were concrete and factual in nature were in essence diary writing, not journal writing. These individuals tended to become adherents of Progoff's structured method and were in agreement with his view that the "spontaneous keeping of journals in historical and contemporary times is marked by a self-curtailing effect" (Progoff, 1975, p. 24). In exploring the method as taught in the workshop setting, there was the opinion that the new experience of self-expression was much richer and more complete. For others who had written spontaneously and then learned a new method such as the Progoff method of writing, there was a decision to incorporate some but not all of the ideas as the method as a whole was perceived as "horribly complicated", "cumbersome", "excessive", "obsessive", or "unnecessary".

The result of modifying is that the individual is able to establish the ways in which journal writing is and will be relevant in a personal way. Modifying plays an

important part as it secures the individual's interest and commitment to journal writing. The more meaningful and relevant the journal writing process is to the individual, the more likely that an investment will be made in written expression throughout the next stage. In this way, modifying paves the way for the entry into and the expansion of options for self-exploration and change in Stage Three.

STAGE THREE

COMPOSTING: THE CULTIVATION OF EXPERIENCE

The structuring of Stage Three reflected the ongoing changes or process involved in the search for self-satisfaction. The movement over time captured by Stage Three was labelled Composting: The Cultivation of Experience. The following section will address this stage in more detail.

It takes a while for our experience to sift through our consciousness. For instance, it is hard to write about being in love in the midst of a mad love affair. We have no perspective. All we can say is, "I'm madly in love," over and over again. It is also hard to write about a city we just moved to; it's not yet in our body. We don't know our new home, even if we can drive to the drugstore without getting lost. We have not lived through three winters there or seen the ducks leave in the fall and return to the lakes in spring...

Our senses by themselves are dumb. They take in experience, but they need the richness of sifting for a while through our consciousness and through our whole bodies. I call this "composting". Our bodies are garbage heaps: we collect experience, and from the decomposition of the thrown-out eggshells, spinach leaves, coffee grinds, and old steak bones of our minds come nitrogen, heat, and very fertile soil. Out of this fertile soil bloom our poems and stories. But

this does not come all at once. It takes time.
Continue to turn over and over the organic details of
your life until some of them fall through the garbage
of discursive thoughts to the solid ground of black
soil (Goldberg, 1986, p. 14).

Stage Three is the stage of Composting: The Cultivation

of Experience. "Composting" and "cultivation" are

gardening terms that have relevance for the journal writing

process. Composting is central to organic gardening and

represents an imitation of nature's way to rebuild the soil

by encouraging the decomposition of natural plant particles

(Gerras, 1972, p. 45). It is a means by which waste

materials such as vegetable parings, leaves, grass

clippings, coffee grounds, and other vegetable matter can

be turned into a rich dark humus. Viewed as an

"intensified version of the process of death and rebuilding

which is going on almost everywhere in nature", the compost

heap is both a healing agent for the soil's wounds as well

as a symbol of continuing life (Gerras, 1972, p. 45).

> I go to group therapy which I never would have done
> historically because of my false belief that only weak
> people go to therapy. Previous to Progoff (journal
> writing method) I would never have gone to group
> therapy because I would have felt, "it's none of their
> business". Why would I go to a group, reveal my
> weaknesses and cry? Having worked with Progoff, I
> guess what I came to realize is why I wouldn't reveal
> myself. It finally dawned on me that when I'm working
> with the Progoff stuff, then when I'm more open with my
> journal, I'm more open with you, a friend of mine and
> we're closer as a result of me revealing myself, not
> more distant. If it's safe with a developed friend in
> the Progoff journal, well then maybe it's safe with
> real people. So it was an evolution and then if I'm
> safe with real people who are friends, who will keep
> things confidential and so on, well I guess I could go
> to group therapy because perhaps that would help

improve myself.

In this stage, the process of journal writing involves the accumulation and exploration (turning over) of significant experiences and emotions. Life experiences extend an invitation to the individual to let in new information and create new concepts and understanding are gained.

Table III: Overview of Stage Three
Composting: The Cultivation of Experience

Contexts	Conditions	Strategies	Consequences
intrapersonal	getting going	shifting time	finding a resort
solitude	wanting change	creative self-expression	balancing
	autonomy in self-expression	reviewing journal	gaining perspective
	opening self		accounting for personal change

Connections can be drawn between the frequent turning, fluffing, and watering that are necessary in hastening decomposition and the journal writing process as it requires the continued work with the raw matter of thoughts, emotions, and experiences. This work leads to understanding, healing, and personal growth.

"Cultivating" means to make fit for raising crops, as by plowing, fertilizing, or tilling. It involves caring and tending for plants or soil to promote growth and

abundance. The activity of cultivating the soil is an important part of the plant's environment. Healthy soil provides an anchorage for plants as well as a reservoir of needed moisture and nutrients. Cultivating implies looking into consequences, since people cultivate in anticipation of consequences (Glaser, 1978). Seldom does a gardener begin with ideal soil. Nearly any soil can be improved. With proper management and knowledge of how best to cultivate, fertile conditions can be created and maximized. Similarly, improvements and growth in an individual's life can be achieved given a safe and supportive internal/external environment. In the context of journal writing, cultivating involves the individual's efforts to attend to and work on personal concerns. Important decisions are contemplated and initiated. It is essential "to nurture the soils in which important ideas have taken root" (Napier, 1990, p. 12). Otherwise, the best of intentions remain only intentions.

Stage Three has the same features of Stage One and Stage Two. Stage Three is a result of Stage One, Focusing On Self and Stage Two, Exploring Options. The goals of self-improvement and understanding are actively pursued in this stage. These goals are accompanied by the desire to achieve self-acceptance. There is a perceived need and desire for mastery and control. The consequence of "getting going" in Stage Two becomes a condition for Stage

Three. The journal writer enters Stage Three with an awareness of the possible benefits of writing, privacy, a sense of safety, and freedom of expression.

The previous strategies of Turning To Self and Covering Up remain. Exploring Options continues throughout this stage but is qualitatively different. Emphasis is placed on finding ways to deal with personal issues. Other options may continue to be used such as creative writing courses, writing workshops, spirituality, friendships, and formal counselling. All of the individuals regarded one or more of these choices as important to them. However, there was often more intimate sharing in the journal than with other people. Several individuals commented that in addition to journalling for their own sake, it was valuable to keep a journal to enable their children and future generations to learn from their successes and the steps taken to resolve struggles or failures.

Stage Three is also characterized by variation in the length of time spent in this stage. Some of the factors that influenced the variation were: the nature and extent of issues in need of work, the amount of emotional pain experienced in dealing with the issue(s), and the writer's readiness to explore alternatives. The individuals who continued with writing noted the gains or benefits to include: being able to release emotions and experience relief; becoming clearer about an issue; and focusing on

new and healthier behaviors, attitudes or emotions. The
more the individual perceived journal writing favorably,
the greater the commitment to continued writing. The
presence of certain conditions, contexts, strategies, and
consequences enable the cultivation of experience.

Conditions

In this stage, Getting Going involves the individual's
focus on the personal issues. Getting Going also means
becoming goal-oriented. These goals are general, such as
wanting to express oneself or becoming less superficial.
The goals also include specific ones such as dealing with
the death of a parent or the possibility of losing a
significant relationship. Typically there are negatively
perceived circumstances which compell the individual to
find a resolution. The idea of Getting Going was presented
in the previous stage and will be briefly addressed here as
a condition of Stage III.

Getting Going

> When I was confused, when I was down and discouraged,
> didn't know which direction to go or how to make sense
> of something in a relationship or something in my
> personal life, I could go to my journal and write about
> it and kind of explore the pros and cons and express
> the feelings I was having and try and sort it out. I
> guess the process of writing helped to give me clarity
> and even when I was confused, I gradually learned about
> my own process in that if I was confused, I could go
> and write about the confusion. Through that I usually
> came to some resolution.

As alluded to earlier, there is a more acute awareness
of the desire to examine, understand, and deal with one's

circumstances through journal writing. Getting Going is prompted and maintained by the desire to come to terms with the issue.

Wanting Change

This condition is a consequence of Stage Two. The difference is that there is initiative and action taken by the individual in the hope of achieving change. In this stage, Wanting Change is linked with the condition of Getting Going. Once disappointments, discouragement, and regrets are brought to the forefront, the possiblity of changing for the better is contemplated. This becomes the driving force behind the attempt to "make it happen".

> What the Progoff journal and group therapy does is it allows me to venture down the well into the darkness and to feel safe, safe to face despair. What are you, despair trying to teach me? What is it you have to say to me? Rather than, "Oh my God, now what do I do?", Progoff introduced me to that idea and then it was reinforced by a psychologist that I visited. He'd say, "well, touch it (despair), talk with it, ask it what it wants". These two processes were working together and that started a process of opening myself up.

Autonomy In Self-Expression

> It's a friend that just listens..is willing to listen to anything I say. He's not going to criticize me for what I write down. He's not going to hold it against me and he's not going to bring it up at a later time and use it to thwart me I guess.

To be autonomous is to be independent, self-governing or self-determining. Maintaining a journal is reinforced by the freedom to bring out whatever experiences one chooses. Only the individual writer can scrutinize what

has been written. Being autonomous means the content as well as the process of writing are within one's control. External limitations are minimized in terms of who, what, how, why, and when to write. The effect of this autonomy of self-expression is that writing can take place apart from the judgment, criticism or reactions of others. Examples from the informants included: the freedom to capture sexual dreams/fantasies; express hopes and dreams that are too personal to disclose to others; and deal with difficult emotions.

The strategy of Covering Up continues to be used to protect oneself from being vulnerable. At times, the autonomy in self-expression means that minimal writing or no writing takes place at all. Several informants commented on their experience of having their privacy violated by others who read their journal without their permission. In these situations where the possibility of rejection, shame, or conflict existed, symbols, vague language or a personal form of shorthand was used as means of self-protection. Some chose to be more selective about the content of material in the journal, while others did not write at all for a period of time.

Autonomy of self-expression is also reflected in the steps taken in breaking away from negative, habitual patterns. Several informants noted that through journal writing, they began to exercise a non-judgmental approach

towards themselves. This was a novel experience for them.

Autonomy in self-expression was not attributed directly to

the journal, but rather the perception of how the journal

was a medium for exploration and expression. One informant

attested to the liberating aspect of journal writing in the

following comment:

> When I got into it, I realized the incredible value to
> me of his (Progoff's) non-judgmental approach, the fact
> that you can shut off your judge, let yourself have
> your feelings and your thoughts, your images, and so
> on. I came from a background of rigidly controlling
> myself, rigidly evaluating, criticizing, judging
> everything I did very strictly. My older journals were
> very self-critical. Now that I work in the Progoff
> journal I am more gentle with myself and as a result of
> that I am gentler with others.

Opening The Self

> The idea that my life is a gift to anybody, let alone
> to me is just one of these turning points that you get
> in your life. That's a nonjudgmental statement-
> doesn't matter how you failed or how sad you are or
> have not achieved what you wanted to achieve. Your
> life is unfolding and it's a gift to yourself and to
> others. So, I began to think of my life in more of an
> Eastern way. I was a workholic. Work was my life. I
> now understand that by working so hard I was avoiding
> the question of meaning in my life. If I kept busy, I
> could avoid my real work, making my own personal
> meaning for life...So, I began to look at myself and my
> life without being so afraid of what I'd find. Instead
> of being so terrified of what I would find, I'd say,
> "Hm, what would I find?

Opening the self is a condition of composting and the

cultivation of experience. This condition refers to the

journal writer's willingness to explore and embrace new

ideas and experiences. Opening self also refers to the

acknowledgment of the differences that exist between the

real self and the idealized self and a growing acceptance of what one could realistically aspire to become as opposed to what one should become, in some unrealistic and unattainable way. This condition involves taking steps to look inside oneself and to take risks for the sake of personal growth and self-improvement. Both personal limitations as well as potentials and resources are examined in journal writing.

As the journal writer becomes more open to addressing personal concerns, there is a concommitant effect of including the interpersonal dimension. This effect is evident in the individual's willingness to connect with those who may be understanding and supportive. On the other hand, there is an increasing awareness of relationships that are in need of change. Opening self also refers to the steps taken by the individual to deal with negative or difficult situations such as confronting someone, accepting the limitations or rejection by a significant other, and terminating an unsatisfactory relationship. By working in the journal and rehearsing the desired changes in relationships with others, possibilities may become reality.

<u>Context</u>

Being In Solitude

I know that if I'm stuck on something, then I can use it as a tool to explore and get through whatever it is that I'm stuck with. It's one of the many ways of

doing it but it does work for me. One of the questions
that I'd ask myself is, What is the situation? So I'd
write about it. What is it about the situation that is
really bugging me? How am I feeling about it? How
does it relate to the ways I've been in the past? What
is it bringing up for me? What are some ways that I
could work around this? What course of action am I
goi ŋ to take? Where would I like to see this go in
the future? What else can I relate it to in my life?
So, those are the kinds of questions that would run
through my mind as I write, one from the other.

The previous contexts of being in transition and being

in the intrapersonal context were highlighted. To some

degree the writer's role was that of the recipient, rather

than the agent, of change. The focus was on introspection

and contemplation rather than action. In this stage, being

in transition and being in an intrapersonal context take on

new forms, thus bringing different meanings for the journal

writer.

Put simply, journal writing is a solitary activity.

You can share your journal with others, but essentially the

writing process occurs in the absence of others. Since the

solitude of journal writing is "for ourselves alone and the

entries are for our own scrutiny, we are the only judge of

whether any particular entry we have made..is complete and

truthful" (Progoff, 1975, 142). Initiatives are taken to

create favorable transitions from circumstances that have

been perplexing, frustrating, or confusing.

The amount of time spent alone with the journal varied

among individuals and was influenced by the kind of

change/transition experienced, the sense of familiarity

with problem-solving and contemplation, the availability of and comfort with interpersonal contacts, and the sense of personal value placed on being alone.

The context of being in solitude sets the stage for the writer to interact with and cultivate a relationship with the inner self with experiences, and with others. Journal writing is relational as the individual is dealing with different aspects of self in the past, present and future on the levels of the personal, intrapersonal, and interpersonal. Furthermore, being in solitude facilitates the exploration of the physical, emotional and social realms of the individual in the absence of others' demands and expectations. As Progoff (1975) states:

> A human being begins his life as a seed of possibility, and these possibilities are unfolded, frustrated, transformed in the midst of the varied circumstances of his life. Out of the composite of our experiences and relationships in contact with our environment, we each build our unique life history. (p. 42)

The informants provided accounts of how spending time alone with their journal fostered new attitudes and ways of dealing with writing blocks, self-criticism, loneliness, and passivity. One individual who described her journal writing process as akin to self-hypnosis had this to say:

> I am a person who has had chronic pain for quite a few years now, since 1984. I do use the journal work on that. It's quite a difficult thing to manage and there aren't many medications that help very much, so you're into a kind of management problem. So talking to my body in the journal has been really helpful around what it needs and what it wants. I think I'm making quite a few strides. It's like self-hypnosis or any other self tools. It's one of a whole set of things that manages

things better.

Strategies

The previous strategies of Turning to Self, Covering Up, and Exploring Options for self-expression continue to be relevant for this stage and broaden in scope at this point. The focus here is Turning to Self in the journal and developing strategies within the parameters of journal writing that promote personal growth, self-understanding, and satisfaction. Although external influences can have some bearing on the individual's process of growth, the life of any person is ultimately an individual responsibility. Moustakas (1967) makes this assertion in the following comment.

> All that man can do is affect the environment in which potentialities can be fulfilled. Materials and resources can be provided which may enrich experience, but in real growth the individual alone determines his direction and his reality. Tenderness, care, personal warmth, confirmation, all affect the development of the individual and the enhancement of self. (p. 137)

Shifting Time

Shifting Time becomes an important aspect of the journal writer's efforts toward attaining the desired goals. Shifting Time refers to the movement, transfer, or change of time as it relates to past, present, or future. Progoff (1975) refers to the moving back and forth in time and into potentials as "stretching time like a rubber band that is being pulled at each end" (p. 141).

Shifting Time is used in this stage to explore ideas and options that may not have been explored earlier. For example, the use of journal writing can enable the individual to unearth the details of specific situations of the past. Returning to the past serves a number of purposes for the journal writer. First of all, it enables the writer to review certain details and to be reminded of positive circumstances. It can also provide a means to re-examine the past with greater thoroughness. Progoff (1975) notes the importance of memory, the memory of a crossroad in our life experience when we took one path and left the other. He adds that one of the goals of timestretching is to open out past experiences so that the latent possibilities contained in them can be exposed. The facilitative nature of Shifting Time is evident in the following comment:

> To place ourselves there so that we can feel it again, even in a sensory way, tends to facilitate the movement of memories. It becomes easier for us then to reexperience the events that occurred in that earlier time and to recognize the intersections and alternate possibilities that were present but hidden in the midst of the pressures of our life. (Progoff, 1975, 144)

Each participant spoke about the use of Shifting Time and the importance of contending with past, present or future concerns. While this strategy was applied in different ways, it was a common one for all. Several informants expressed their need to deal with unfinished business and to say good-bye to a relationship that had

terminated. Tobin (1971) defines the notion of unfinished business as "the inhibition of an emc.ion that was experienced at one or more times during the relationship" (p. 150). Shifting Time from the present to the past permits unexpressed and difficult emotions to be dealt with in the individual's own way and own time. This allows the individual to move beyond the position of being stuck, or hanging on as expressed in the following comment:

> I've also used it (journal) to explore unfinished business for me, like to write someone a letter to get my feelings out more clearly, to try and let go of something that I've wanted to move beyond in my life.

One woman described the benefits derived from shifting her focus of attention to the past in the following comment:

> It has allowed me to finish some relationships that are unfinished in my life so- a person I dated many years ago, just never said good-bye to and worked in the journal for quite some time and, actually ended up contacting the person, writing a letter and feeling quite finished with it and closed. That was a sort of thing that haunted me.

Returning to past issues in this way diminishes the need to cover up and mask the emotions that were once unresolved. A sense of resolution and relief are .ctained, thus affirming the individual's sense of accomplishment.

Shifting Time also involves moving ahead in time, from one's present to the future. It can be expressed in terms of fantasy, hopes, fears, or dreams. The individual is able to paint a picture of what is desired or undesired. Exploring hopes or fears of the future becomes a way of

problem-solving and goal setting. Anticipated issues or

aspirations can be addressed. One informant who had

experienced the termination of several difficult

relationships and encountered isolation in the company of

her married friends spoke of the importance of articulating

her hopes in the journal. By Shifting Time to the future,

she was able to reassure herself that her desires were

realistic and attainable.

> What I would want to find in a man...I would hope that
> I would find somebody that has similar interests and
> ideas, someone who would be happy and want to treat me
> nicely and share in things and have the same kind of
> basic family ideas.

Shifting time has the effect of transporting the

individual to the past, present, or future. Issues of the

past may be resolved. Parts of the self that were set

aside may be reclaimed. Possibilities for the future can

be activated. As Progoff (1975) comments:

> It expands the range of possibilities available to our
> life. By stretching our contact with the past and
> future in a fluid and symbolic way, it draws us into an
> intensive experience of the unity of the Now moment in
> which all of our life history, what is past and what is
> still to come, has its immediate focus. (p. 152)

Creative Self-Expression

> One of them (creatures), as I was dialoguing with her,
> became very clearly this image- of this creature with
> wet, damp hair, kind of walking out through a bunch of
> flames. And she was sweaty and sort of sinewey. I
> realized that this anxiety was this tortured creature
> but I also realized that she was relatively attractive
> to me. She was certainly thinner than me and looked
> like she was physically more active than I. So the
> dialogue I had at that time was, "You have some
> strengths, you have some beauty. You have some things
> to teach me". So as I begin to talk to her and see her

strengths, her weaknesses don't grab me from behind. It probably doesn't make much cognitive sense but it's an incredibly powerful tool to get me more centered, more aware of myself, and having everything synchronized. When I was six, I gave up my imaginary friends and here I am now developing new imaginary friends.

Creative expression is a means of dealing with one's environment and oneself that frees the imagination and allows the individual to experience alternative ways of exploring choices and possibilities. Creative expression may serve the purpose of expressing and/or correcting an unsatisfying reality. Creativity may be a channel for articulating painful experiences that one is not prepared to face and confront directly. It can also be a way of expressing one's joy, happiness, and sense of wellbeing.

This strategy provides a protective shield as well as a mechanism for releasing emotions. One individual who was recently divorced and involved in a new relationship explained how she portrayed herself as a little dog in a short story as a way to articulate some of the anxiety and fear she was experiencing at the time.

> The end result is that he is interested in a sexual relationship. Well, I'm not ready for this. So when I write in my journal, I sort of find it hard to find the words to say how I feel about this man. But in my journal, I could do it through an animal, like I could do it through a pet. And I have this owner that owned me. He had put me in a cage and I was to stay in this house. Well, I guess somehow it was like I had gotten out of the house...Not only did I have to stay in the house, but he put me in this little cage. And one day he came home to find me outside of the cage...I was still in the house but he was really mad at me. So now I'm back in this cage. He's got it all locked up. The next time that I get out of this cage, I'm gone. Like

> I run for it and leave an.. I'm on this long journey.
> It takes a long time and I'm worn out. I'm struggling
> and I'm hiding. It's not safe to be out in the open.
> It's like I'm the reader of this story...Like I get to
> see what I think or what I feel or what's happening to
> me. So, then it's like an understanding. Then I can
> see what was wrong, what I was doing and say, "Hey, it
> was ok for me to feel like that."

Creative self-expression provides an avenue for the

expression of pain, fear, or vulnerability. The use of

personification, imaginary characters, or inanimate objects

helps to distance the individual from difficult or painful

emotions. Creative self-expression through storying, is a

private journey for recreating the situation as well as the

solutions. Only the writer is aware of the meaning and

impact of the story. The use of this strategy in the

journal also has the benefit of enabling the individual to

return to the issue at a later point with a new sense of

readiness and awareness that may not have been present at

the time the issue was occurring.

The informants noted their use of creative expression

in the journal. Examples included the use of colors to

represent emotions, poetry, short stories, quotations from

readings, dialogues with imaginary or real characters, and

drawings. These forms of creativity enabled the

individuals to transcend time and space through the

imagination. This was facilitated by the strategies of

Shifting Time and Opening Self.

Reviewing Journal

You can also set yourself some goals and write them in

your journal and then you've got a record of them
because you decided you wanted to make these goals.
And then you come back and say, I made these goals or
how did I make out? Did I really do things to help me
get those goals? Where did I go wrong that I didn't
attain that goal?

To review something is to go over, or examine again, or
to reflect upon in memory. The journal, in this light,
serves several purposes. First, the journal provides a
source of self-evaluation. The writer can chart areas of
change and growth.

As the years went on, I could go back and look at my
journal. It was something that really gave me a sense
of the changes that I'd been through. And even when I
go back now, I look at it and I'm still dealing with
the same issues but at a far different kind of level, I
suppose of definite awareness. But, it was kind of
inspirational in that sense, in later years as I went
back and looked at it because I see this is where I've
come from and I suppose I learned to trust my process
through that because I knew that through the darker
times, I could work it out and reach some sort of
resolution.

Reviewing the journal enables the writer to monitor
issues, concerns or transitions that are being dealt with
and changes needed in order to accomplish a certain end.
The goals can be specific, such as deciding to see a
counsellor or taking the initiative to resolve a conflict.
The goals may be general, such as being more friendly and
sociable. Reviewing the journal may also trigger memories
of events and reactions that were involved. It provides a
means of reliving an experience in which the details are
less clear. The journal captures changes in the
individual's life that were positive and favourable. In

this way, it is an encouraging reminder of what is possible
and attainable. It also holds events that are described as
painful, difficult, and negative. Reviewing the journal
can provide markers of how growth and change have taken
place and where change may still be necessary or desired.

The informants spoke about the journal as a book of
memories that documented important changes such as falling
in love, falling out of love, losing a parent, becoming a
parent, or making shifts in attitudes/behaviors. As one
informant stated:

> It's kind of like a flashback. One reason why I like
> to read through my journal after I've written through
> it is- a lot of times after you've had a bad day,
> something has got you down, you can read about
> something you did in the past that was a special time,
> a happy time or whatever. You can read about it. It's
> like a flashback. You can remember it, relive it.
> You're lifted up.

Reviewing the journal is a temporary return to experiences
involving self and others. It can provide the assurance
and comfort of memories and positive action. Yet, in a
matter of pages, it can also bring back the reality of past
pain, confusion, and struggle.

Consequences

The conditions of this stage combined with the contexts
that exist and the strategies that are implemented, result
in several consequences which lead the individual toward
new understandings, behaviors, and attitudes. For all of
the informants, the journal writing process facilitated

awareness and desire for growth although differences

existed in terms of the nature and extent of the changes

involved.

Movement from Stage III to Stage IV is evident in the

consequences found in this stage.   Just as well-made

compost is deep brown in color, dry-crumbly,

sweet-smelling, and pleasant to handle, those individuals

who have encountered a resolution of certain issues

experience a sense of relief and an interest in continuing

to effect change.   Individuals who require more time and

space to work through the issues remain longer in this

stage.   Several individuals spoke of the loss of a

significant relationship and not being "finished" with the

issues involved.   Others expressed a willingness to move on

but needed to explore what channels existed to bring this

about.

> ...an important relationship ended quite suddenly and I
> went through summer and fall feeling numb and
> immobilized.   I spent much of my spare time alone,
> writing in the journal- ruminating, moping, reliving
> the pain, the dreams I had...One day the soothing part
> of being like this wore out suddenly as I experienced
> this immense boredom and repulsion for having wasted so
> much time on this man.   I got this urgent desire to get
> out there and live again.   The journal was something
> that took me back to the past...once I finished getting
> all that out, I felt a sense of life return.

The journal writing process can reflect the difficult

task of waiting for change to take place.   Several

individuals spoke of writing less, or not at all, as the

emotional pain and confusion seemed too great to bear at

that time.   In some ways, an analogy can be drawn between

important issues not attended to adequately and the

gardener who becomes discouraged.

> Many gardeners, at one time or another, start to build
> a compost heap, but often become disgusted with the end
> product- a wet, smelly, unusable mess.   If a compost
> heap is overly wet and soggy, and ill-supplied with
> oxygen, instead of decomposition, putrification occurs
> and wet, slimely, smelly stuff results.   (Andrews,
> 1987, p. 97)

Other individuals wrote minimally, changed the focus of

their writing or did not write at all in order to distance

themselves from the situation or gain a different

perspective.   In terms of timing, each individual

experienced this stage differently.   The timing and

regularity in examining issues varies for each individual,

just as each plant flourishes best if attention is paid to

its uniqueness in character and needs.   The benefits of a

well-decomposed and cultivated garden of experiences are

improvements in the fertility and texture of the growth

process.

Befriending Journal

> So the journal was a friend that I could tell things to
> and it was safe because you could tell the journal
> anything, basically and it wouldn't come back at you or
> say you were stupid.   I have a suspicion that without
> the journal, I would have been impossibly lonesome.
> Since I did not make friends easily and when I did make
> friends, did not disclose myself to them.   This became
> a friend, a buddy that I could talk to.

A friend is a person whom one knows well, shares with,

and confides in.   A friend can be a close acquaintance, a

person who is on the same side in a struggle, an ally.
Befriending the journal bears some similarity to the
process of building a friendship. The writer gets
acquainted with one's self through the writing process.
This involves taking a look inward to see the strengths and
acknowledging the limitations. As one journal writer
stated, "The journal is just me anyways".

In the journal the individual interacts and dialogues
with self and others who may be real or imaginary
characters. In the midst of pain, loneliness and defeat or
joy, success and contentment, the companionship of the
journal was present for the writers.

> The journal has been a part of my life history for over
> twenty years. It marks the different and significant
> changes that have come my way like my struggles with
> being a lonely teen, family problems...beginning to
> succeed..The journal has also been a part of my adult
> years although less so but it still captures important
> things that I've sorted out and some of the personal
> victories that I've experienced. So, in a way I've had
> a friendship with the journal, kind of like someone
> with a friend. Although it's not quite the same, there
> is this quiet kind of togetherness.

Just as a friend can provide honesty, support, critical
feedback and new insights, the journal can be a source of
-feedback. In this way, the journal is a safe place to
lect, explore, and practice anticipated changes.
Examples include: becoming more sociable, assertive, or
composed in interpersonal relationships and expressing
anger effectively.

Finding A Resort

> If I write in my journal, if I write down my anxieties
> and worries, the paper seems to capture them. They're
> out of me - captured and I can leave them behind me.
> I've said something about it. I'm freer, not so caught
> up in anything. It's very very releasing, calming.

To find a resort suggests that something is used as a
refuge or recourse. The process of journal writing brings
about a sense of refuge or recourse in a number of ways.
There is a sense of safety, security, and privacy with
respect to the issues and emotions expressed in the
journal. Writing in the journal is a private activity and
this permits the writer to "say it just like it is". The
writer has a means of self-expression without scrutiny or
judgment from others. The individual can evaluate personal
circumstances in the confines of the journal before taking
steps towards change. This privacy can instill a sense of
relief and permission. It also enables the individual to
trust and to get acquainted with emotions and behaviors and
become less fearful of limitations and others' responses.

Finding a resort means experiencing relief and solace
through the release of tension. One individual describes
the journal as a source of solace through the following:

> It's almost like I needed the journal out there as a
> part of me all those years. It was all like I needed
> to hang on to myself for years and years because I was
> that unsure. So that was part of the security, like
> the journal made me real. It's a funny way to put it
> but it was a way of hanging on to myself.

The journal serves the purpose of providing an external

security. The individual becomes more acquainted with the
inner self through writing.

By learning how to use the journal in ways that are
personally beneficial, there is an internal consolidation
of self that begins to occur. It is marked by a growing
sense of awareness, self-acceptance, and an acknowledgment
of limitations as well as assets. There is also
recognition and relief, knowing that changes are possible.

Balancing

> My intentions are to be more whole. I have a real
> tendency in my life to be an intellectual. Like just
> to be a brain and the body flops along behind- not to
> take care of myself spiritually or physically or
> emotionally. And the Progoff method formalizes to me
> that balance. It makes me work in a balanced way. So,
> I can't just write out of the intellactual part of me.
> So that formalizes me being more holistic. For
> example, I choose to do an awful lot of talking to my
> own body. That formalizes me as a brain getting in
> touch with me as a body.

Balancing involves openness in the journal. It means
letting go of the usual, unsatisfactory ways of dealing
with issues or concerns. To balance something means to
bring about a state of equilibrium. In terms of journal
writing, balancing was experienced by the informants in a
number of ways. There was a sense of balancing in terms of
expressing positive and negative emotions, attending to
different aspects of self such as the spiritual, social,
physical or emotional, focusing on personal strengths as
well as weaknesses, and extending oneself to others. For
example, one individual perceived himself as judgmental and

critical of self and others. For him, balancing meant a

growing acceptance of his weaknesses and a need to be more

accepting of others. For another participant, balancing

meant the new-found freedom for expressing sadness, anger,

or frustration.

Among the informants, the nature and extent of

balancing varied and reflected different changes. The

means of acquiring a sense of balance varied as well. One

individual, for example, refers to shifting time as the

focus of balancing self.

> I think I'm starting to get in touch with the child
> part of me that I haven't worked on. That's sort of
> new. I think as a young child I had some difficulties
> that I haven't really looked at consciously. Having
> done some therapy through the years and that sort of
> thing, I still feel there's stuff to work on there. As
> I'm writing, I'm getting more in touch with my feelings
> as a young child. I have a lot of memories of
> childhood but they're not feeling memories. They are
> thought memories.

The effect of balancing is a sense of improvement and

growing contentment. This balancing requires initiative

and motivation to look inward- a process that can be

confusing and frightening. Moustakas (1967) acknowledges

these effects in the following comment:

> Self-inquiry is a painful process in which life is
> viewed with a new perception, a new awareness. What
> was accepted, as a matter of course, now comes into
> doubt...The old perceptions no long hold. Each detail
> is considered from the perspective of a new self
> searching for a new identity. (p. 121)

The personal benefits derived from becoming more

balanced include interpersonal gains. Becoming more

balanced can create and enhance relationships which in turn reinforce the development and maintenance of those gains.

> Journalling has helped me to develop myself and to lessen my preoccupation with my fears and insecurities. It is still something that I have to work on but I am more conscious of strengthening my abilities and assets and being less dependent on external opinions on how I am as a person. I'm more at home with myself and with others now because I rely less on other's opinions and what I need to do for them.

Gaining Perspective

Gaining perspective means to arrive at a judgment of facts or circumstances with regard to their relative importance. As previously mentioned, the goals of journal writing included understanding and self-improvement. Gaining perspective, in light of these goals occurs in a number of areas and is expressed in several ways. The conditions and strategies of the Composting Stage contribute to the deepened understanding and discovery of self. Gaining perspective is a vital component for cultivating experience and caring for oneself. It results from making sense of the situations or issues. It may involve gaining a perspective on certain behaviors, reactions, attitudes, or experiences. A new understanding can be acquired as a result of reexamining issues. Gaining perspective also involves acquiring a greater sense of control as reflected in the following.

> As I learn to tame my anxiety and own it and personify it and talk with it, I begin to manage it so it doesn't sort of jump out and catch me unaware. I'm more aware of anxiety. It's becoming a part of me that I manage

as opposed to an unknown. It's sort of like the
difference between being in the jungle and having a
lion jump on me when you're just out for a daily walk
and being in a lion tamer's cage and having all the
skills to train the lion. It's not that the lion goes
away, but in a cage, you're a lot safer. The lion is
there and you're prepared for it.

The informants used a variety of descriptions to refer
to their gaining perspective. These include: "it's like an
understanding"; "and then I realized", "the journal always
catches me up when I begin to write in it", "I can catch
new things", and "it finally dawned on me".

Accounting For Personal Changes

I listen to myself better. I'm more tuned in to my own
needs. I hear myself when I'm stuck, much better.
It's a feedback loop for me as opposed to getting
feedback from other people. It has increased the
quality of some of my personal relationships and the
people that I've very close to. I am more honest and
clearer with them. And I think that some of those
relationships are of higher quality...for whatever
reason, I don't judge myself in the Progoff journal as
I maybe did in that old diary.

The desire for self-understanding and change began in
Stage One with the experience of important changes and the
accompanying emotions. In Stage Three, the results of
these attempts become identifiable. There is a recognition
of the positive changes that are occurring. These gains
are reflected in comments such as becoming "more gentle"
with oneself and others, "being less critical and
judgemental", "experiencing less of a need to be competent
in everything", "becoming less of a pleaser", and "being
more self-accepting". The changes are both personal and

interpersonal.

As the changes are recognized and acknowledged, the process of working through concerns brought about by life experiences is reinforced. The journal writing process is viewed as a tool for self-exploration and personal growth. Being able to read and re-read, and to visualize what has been written aid in providing several different ways for the individual to engage in the process of change. As one informant states:

> When I see the words on paper, it's very simple for me to sort out what's the wheat and what's the chaff... when something is playing in my head that's not easy to do. I think - well I have a million problems in my head. When I start writing..I see that there is one thing that's really bugging me and I think I'll work on that as opposed to trying to work on a few hundred. Sometimes I read my journal aloud for the same reason that hearing my voice read it, I can catch new things that are not in the words but are in the voice.

The cause of the changes are not always known, although all of the informants attest to the journal writing process as being a significant contributor to personal change. It is quite possible that writing facilitates a "learning that we know more than we know we know" when the "total self" is being expressed in a "non-planned" and "unstructured" way (Craig, 1983, p. 375).

It is also interesting to note that the changes that occur vary. What one individual regards as a significant change may, in another person's view, be just the beginning of change. While conscious goal setting in the journal may

be specified by the writer, there is an interplay of
motivations and actions that occur at an implicit and
subtle level. Several informants commented that initially,
they did not go to the journal for clearcut purposes such
as problem solving or reaching clarity on an issue, but at
a later point, they realized that the journal did produce
these benefits. The following statement points to the
subtleties of growth:

> ...and we often find ourselves drawn into a progressive
> description and reconstruction of the events of our
> life. We are drawn into a substantial process of
> writing, but not because it is writing. Eventually we
> will find that what we have written is valuable to us
> in that it has led us on a largely unconscious level to
> a fuller understanding and perspective of the contents
> of our life. And it is helpful at a practical level in
> leading us to make decisions...(Progoff, 1988, p. 4).

This realization sets in motion the choice to continue
working along with the process of discovery and recreating
self. Wheelis (1973) states:

> The more cogently we prove ourselves to have been
> shaped by causes, the more opportunities we create for
> changing. The more we change, the more possible it
> becomes to see how we determined we were in that which
> we have just ceased to be. (p. 87)

STAGE FOUR: MAINTAINING SELF

The theoretical codes developed for Stage Four can be
viewed as characteristics of the major category. This
stage reflects the last stage of the theoretical framework
of the journal writing process. It depicts the
developmental progression from the previous stage. A more
detailed outline of this stage is presented next.

I suppose it's like a couple who fell in love. They've been living together for quite some time and they're settled in. It feels very stable to me. It feels very useful. I maybe take it for granted. I don't rave about it as much as I used to. It's definitely the most powerful tool for self-awareness that I've found in the last two or three years.

Stage Four is the stage of Maintaining Self. As described, Stage Three involved the composting and cultivation of experiences. The conditions, strategies, contexts, and consequences of Stage Three enabled the individual not only to release tension and find expression through the journal but also to take steps to contend with personal and interpersonal issues. In so doing, a commitment to self-development and change is secured. Accompanying this achievement is the acknowledgment of the stability and sustenance that are found in composting and making sense of life experiences through journal writing. Attempts to contend with dissatisfaction and discover some kind of resolution are also realized in some areas, namely, improving relationships with significant others, leaving an unhappy relationship, and becoming socially involved.

In Stage Four, the journal writing process itself begins to change in several ways. First of all, there is a movement from the stage of Composting to that of Maintaining Self in that efforts are made to continue personal growth and self-improvement. However, the context is one which embraces the interpersonal realm as opposed to only the intrapersonal and personal realms as seen in the

previous stages.   In this stage, the individual perceives

personal gains that have been made.   There is an awareness

of wanting and needing to continue in this direction of

personal growth.

In this stage, Maintaining Self includes the

individual's attempts to secure changes that have been

made.   This may involve altering relationships with others

and cultivating new ones that affirm the positive changes.

For example, in making personal changes, there can be the

inevitable reaction of others that needs to be considered.

Several informants who began to express their relational

problems in the journal experienced further distancing and

conflict with their partners when they were "discovered",

either by their partner reading their journal or through

the partner's noticing the changes in behavior or

language.   One individual who began to be less passive and

compliant with family members encountered a period of

emotional flux as she was met with their disapproval and

disappointment.

> I had been all too aware of the need to get out of my
> rut, that is- to let go of the powerful ways in which
> others ran my life...So by the time I began to take
> action and control my own life after so many years, I,
> being the kind of person that I am, had counted some of
> the costs that would be involved-not all but enough to
> anticipate some flak.   There have been more tensions
> and conflicts about me deciding what I want to do and
> it's been tiring to deal with others' negative
> reactions.   The bottom line is though, the change is
> healthy and there are people close to me who are
> cheering me on.   There's no turning back even though
> I've had periods that come and go- of sadness and
> feeling very distant from those who don't accept me as

I am now.

Needless to say, the changes made are not consistently initiated and sustained without difficulty, pain, and anxiety. There may also be the accompanying experiences of isolation and loneliness as reflected in Moustakas' (1967) comment:

> Every person wants to move forward, wants to have new experience, wants to grow. No relationship can remain secure without becoming stagnant and static. Man strives for new directions and new awakenings, and as he does, old patterns and bonds are broken, creating a vivid sense of self- sometimes a feeling of victory, sometimes a feeling of defeat and despair. (p. 107)

In previous stages, the journal writer was the object and receiver of changes and transitions. That is, changes and difficulties happened to the individual. At this point, the context of living becomes one in which the author and subject of change is the individual. The journal writer becomes the initiator of the changes towards personal growth. Changes are viewed as opportunities to learn from and respond to in healthy ways as opposed to being powerless and controlled by others or by circumstances. This new perspective allows the journal writer to continue to be the initiator and sustainer of the desired experiences. The sense of self becomes more secure and this in turn reinforces confidence.

The concern and emphasis of Stage Four revolves around maintaining the recreated parts of self. The recreated self is characterized by fluidity and flux. Growth

continues to take place. Re-creating is an ongoing, non-linear process. One cannot attain a fully recreated self as changes continue to occur. It becomes important then to examine what factors preserve the integrity of the process of re-creating self and how this self is sustained. A summary of Stage Four is provided below.

Table 5
Overview of Stage Four: Maintaining Self

Condition	Contexts	Strategies	Consequences
expanding self		creative self-expression	consolidating sense of self
	interpersonal	accommodating other options	outgrowing the need
	continuity		being an exemplar

Condition

In this stage there is a broadening of the conditions under which journal writing is maintained, as well as an extension of the strategies involved in Maintaining Self. The consequences of the previous stage (e.g. accounting for personal change, gaining a perspective, and finding a resort) are carried over as conditions in Stage Four. These have been described in Stage Three and will not be reiterated in this chapter. The characteristics of this stage stem in part from the reasons that now motivate the journal writer. The motivation to journal changes. So, the

reasons why an individual continues to engage in some form of behavior (journal writing) in the present are not the same reasons that originally lead to the behavior. Specific to the journal writing process, the reasons for originally engaging in writing pertained to the desire to make sense of and contend with change/transitions in life that were perceived as negative. It was also propelled by the subsequent need to express and explore alternatives or options in terms of dealing with the situation at hand.

In this stage, it becomes clear that the desire to maintain and continue self-improvement, rather than to simply express loneli..ess or fears, becomes an important incentive for continuing with journal writing activity.

Expanding Se_f

> It (journal writing) was searching and a lot of anguish, a lot of angry feelings, a lot of sadness. More and more that's changed. Like if I write now, I'm as likely to write about really positive things as I am about more difficult things..The stories I've been writing about when I go back to the beginning...of breaking out of innocence and naivete, the story of rediscovering, rebuilding myself, the story of grief and loss. And now I can see that I could start to write a story as I would like to build my life or as I am building my life much more along the line of standing up for myself, taking charge of my life more. I suppose I've moved from writing to just really more troubled, concrete kinds of things to being able to play more and imagine more in my journal.

The journal writer continues in the effort to maintain the gains that have been initiated on personal and interpersonal levels. In essence, there is a discovery of the positive, acceptable and potential aspects of self,

hence there is more acceptance and contentment.

While the journal writer was becoming more committed to the journal writing process in the previous stage, in this stage, the commitment changes qualitatively. First of all, there is a broadening of this commitment which involves a more varied and different use of the journal. The expanding of self is reflected in the commitment to continued understanding and personal growth in general. As the individual adopts new ways of looking inward and new ways of relating, there is a growing absence of the one-sided expression of negative experiences and emotions. This results in a heightened sense of wholeness and completeness, the joining together of the different aspects of self. It is a manifestation of the responsibility taken by the individual. There is an expansion of self as journal writing is borne out of desire rather than out of need.

The second aspect is the consolidating of   desire for self-improvement and personal growth. Journal writing as an activity is transcended. This means that the individual experiences a diminishing need to use the journal exclusively. The condition of expanding self also reflects the individual's awareness of how and when journal writing is most useful. Relationships and interpersonal contacts have been cultivated and these fulfill some of the needs, particularly if there is a willingness to risk. The

journal is used in a more selective way. For some

participants, it means writing when "it gets really bad",

for others, it means drawing the positive and negative

together in the journal. As stated by one informant:

> Journal writing is for the real hurting times; if it's
> not really major, then I probably don't do a very good
> job of it. So all the spaces are actually all right
> times.

Strategies

Creative Self-Expression

As interest in expressing the internal life broadens,

so also do the channels of self-expression. Whereas

poetry, short stories, drama, drawings, and colors in the

previous stages often reflected the pain, frustration, and

loneliness of changes, this stage is marked by the use of

similar mediums to express the joy, excitement, and

contentment that are found in living. By this stage, the

individual has experienced the satisfaction of what Maslow

(1968) considers as belongingness and love needs which are

characterized by an unsatisfied hunger for contact, for

intimacy, for belongingness and by the need to overcome the

pervasive experiences of aloneness, strangeness,

loneliness, and alienation. The more basic needs have been

satisfied, thus opening the way for the individual to move

towards self-actualization. One woman, for example,

articulates her need to express her creative self.

> I think I'm a journal writer because there is a
> creative part of me that is stifled. A good part of my
> life has been spent pretending I'm a good

administrator, a linear, sequential mathematical kind
of person. There's just a creative creature in me
screaming to get it. That isn't very easily expressed
anymore. I used to act and I don't do that anymore.
That's partly my disability but partly just my life and
what I decide to do in my spare time. I don't know if
I'd be a journal writer if I really had an artistic way
of expressing myself, whether I'd still do it or
whether the artistic expression would take away the
need...It's just a process, like a creative way of
working on me. It's sort of like sculpting yourself.

The efforts made to broaden channels of creative
self-expression are a reflection of the movement toward
self-actualization which Maslow (1968) describes as the
"ongoing actualization of potentials, capacities and
talents, as fulfillment of mission (or call, fate or
vocation), as a fuller knowledge of, acceptance of the
person's own intrinsic nature, as an unceasing trend toward
unity, integration or synergy within the person" (p. 25).

Accommodating Other Options

Accommodating Other Options becomes an important
strategy in this stage. It refers to the resources
external to the journal writer that are considered as means
of understanding and expression. These options include:
seeing a counsellor, sharing interpersonally or joining
group therapy. Accommodating Other Options is aimed at
maintaining improvements, receiving feedback on other areas
that are in need of change, and satisfying the need for
relationship and intimacy. The use of the journal will
then depend on the availability and adequacy of the options
as well as the extent to which the goals for keeping it are

modified. The more adequate the options are experienced to be, the more likely that the journal will become one of several means of expression.

Several informants attested to using the journal less frequently when they were experiencing contentment and as problematic concerns were resolved. Others continued to use the journal to express their positive emotions and experiences. As one individual commented:

> I don't write in my journal that much anymore. But I do write a lot of notes to myself...It's interesting how it's (journal) a friend that I've sort of grown away from because I've gotten to be more articulate in talking with people and in kind of being with other friends, I think, and being much more active.

As the individual becomes more self-accepting, there is less fearfulness about reaching out to connect with others. There is a diminishing need to use the strategy of Covering Up or Reserving. There is also less need to focus inward on problematic areas of life and a growing emphasis on the strategy of Opening Self to others. At this stage, creative expression captures who and what the individual is becoming. The informants spoke about their desire to engage in outward creative expressions of themselves. Examples given included, initiatives to engage in drama, teaching others about journal writing, writing/publishing short stories, professional articles, and poetry, and sharing the journals with others. Being involved with external resources such as those listed above encouraged

the individuals to be more balanced. This stage reflects Horney's (1945) notion that the individual is better able to utilize moving toward, against, or away from people depending on which is appropriate at the time.

Accommodating Other Options refers also to utilizing personal/internal resources more effectively and depending less on the opinions of others. There is a heightened awareness of the different ways of relating. The informants spoke of "feeling connected with others", "becoming less of an introvert", "not having to hang on to myself", "being more sociable", "being more willing to risk in relationships", and "being less judgmental of self". One woman captured how she had become more content with her changes:

> I think I'm more motivated now than I used to be. I'm a pleasing kind of personality. I think I am less focused on making other people happy these days. I can still feel that pleaser in me. But somehow, I'm a strong, more centered person.

In Horney's (1950) terms, this strateg involves the gaining of the feeling of being "an active determining force" in one's own life (p. 157).

<div align="center">Context</div>

Interpersonal

The interpersonal context enables the journal writer to move beyond introspectiveness. This shift to the interpersonal allows for connection with others in individual or group settings. This, in turn broadens the

opportunities for continued growth. This context is borne

out of the strategies and consequences of the previous

stage, and is reinforced by the strategies of this stage.

Continuity

> It goes back to having that perspective of what is my
> process. So, if I'm entering a new situation and I'm
> feeling tight and frightened, now I know I don't have
> to wait two days to figure out what that is all about.
> I know I can sit down and I could write about it or I
> can just think it through. I'm just more articulate
> that way. So, to use it more consciously...I know that
> if I'm stuck on something, then I can use it as a tool
> to explore and get through whatever it is that I'm
> stuck with. And I know that that works. It's one of
> my ways of doing it but it does work for me.

In this stage, continuity becomes the context adopted

by the individual to maintain the identity and sense of

self that has been attained thus far. Continuity, in terms

of a context refers to the quality of being connected in

space, time, or development. This context of continuity

for the journal writer may be summarized as follows:

(a)   the continued efforts put forth to bring about

changes that are directed toward self-improvement

and personal growth;

(b)   the ongoing maintenance of gains made such as

self-identity, self-assuredness, and being in

control of one's life;

(c)   the connectedness between one's past, present,

and future. This fluidity in time enables the

individual to choose whatever time shifts seen as

esirable or necessary to re-enter in the change

process;

(d)   More basically, the context of continuity means
      that the process of journal writing and the use
      of other options for problem-solving,
      understanding and growth are now familiar to the
      individual. As a result, there is less fear of
      the unknown in terms of what may be found within
      or outside   f·

(e)   there is also   ity between the personal
      self and th   interpersonal self. The
      complementarity that exists means that either can
      enhance the other.

The context of continuity is a broadening of the
avenues that provide the foundation for the individual to
recreate and to continue to build an acceptable sense of
self. One can conceivably undergo setbacks or crises and
the concomitant conditions of Stage One. The context of
continuity implies that what is experienced and learned in
the previous stages, in turn, can be applied to new
experiences. It is not possible to come through
transitions and change the same person as before the change
occurred. Essentially, there is an extra increment of
meaning and experience added to the individual's
awareness. There is a spiralling, cumulative effect.

<u>Consequences</u>

<u>Consolidating A Sense of Self</u>

>   Over the years, I have grown gradually and somewhat
> painfully from being this awkward and indecisive, lost
> soul to being able to put my shortcomings in
> perspective and also to affirm my own strengths rather
> than to have to prove myself to everyone out there..But
> I've grown from the early days of journal writing. I
> don't need someone else to protect me because I can
> stand strongly on my own. Yes- I've occasionally
> dabbled with counselling, read self-help books or share
> with a close friend but now it's like these things are
> a refreshing drink rather than me thirsting and
> yearning for a well to find eternal solace in.

The consequences of the four stages of journal writing

are two-fold. First, there is a Consolidating of Self.

Secondly, there is Outgrowing the Need to write in a

journal. Rather than writing out of urgency or

desperation, the individual writes out of desire. These

consequences mark the process of self that is acquired at

Stage IV. The context is no longer one of unsettling flux

and tension. Instead, it is a context in which the

individual experiences the continuity that life is a part

of personal growth and change.

The effect of the individual'~ consolidating of self is

self-pacing. This means that the individual assumes

control in choosing when, how, or what to write in the

journal. There is evidence of the ability to act

independently of external pressures or expectations from

others. Initiative is taken to appraise and re-evaluate

the journal use as well as life events. Several informants

made references to renegotiating their commitment to
journal writing once they reached some resolution, desire
or clarity in their lives. This is expressed in terms of
"not having to write regularly" or when one does write,
there is less focusing on the negative circumstances, and
being less obliged to write as taught or advised by
courses, counsellors or workshops.

Another aspect of Consolidating a Sense of Self is the
consolidation of previous consequences such as Gaining
Perspective, Finding a Resort, Balancing, and Accounting
for Change. At this point, not only is the individual able
to experience this consolidation in terms of journal
writing and being in solitude but also through being in
contact and in relationship with others. Unlike the
initial stages that were marked by the individual's
uncertainty, loneliness, and lack of direction, this stage
points to the ascent on the spiral of continued growth.
Whether alone or in communion with others, the link between
the contexts of the personal and interpersonal are secured.

Outgrowing the Need

> I spend less time ruminating and less time meditating,
> sort of than I used to because I think my needs have
> changed that way..I probably express myself much more
> openly now and directly with just the way I live with
> people so I don't have the same need at all...I feel
> adequately connected with people around me. I'm just
> living my life.

As the individual comes to terms with and makes sense
of important issue., the need to write in a journal

diminishes. The informants described their outgrowing of the journal as "keeping a diary" in which important dates and events were recorded or mementos were slotted in as a calendar of happenings. Several individuals spoke about writing more sporadically simply to capture and preserve memories of experiences or writing about their issues/problems but with less reliance on the journal as they had learned to relate more openly in significant relationships. In acknowledging the transition from journal writing to relating with others Nin (1975) states:

> Because the diary was, as a Russian poet said, in some ways a solitary chant, but nevertheless a chant intended to be shared with others (p. 247).

Essentially, the journal became one of several options which they could choose from to deal with the issue or concern at hand. By Focusing on Self, Composting, and Maintaining Self, a re-created view of journal writing is ushered in.

Being an Exemplar

> I've considered training as a leader of the Progoff workshops. I'm really committed to the process. Having found them so exciting for me, I'm using more self-reflective activities for the people in the groups I work with...I've become much more aware of how to use more introverted techniques I call them...I can really see benefits in my work especially for people from special populations, families with special needs children.

On a personal and professional level, there is a strong interest in enabling others to learn of the benefits of the

journal writing process. From a personal level, individuals spoke of their effort and interest in promoting journal writing among their friends and with groups or organizations they were involved with. Furthermore, there was a sense of ease and openness about "telling their story" of growing through major life events/changes and how the journal was used. One woman who experienced a difficult relationship with her partner and who later was divorced had this to say about sharing her writing of personal experiences with a class of women:

> Astrologically, because I'm a Gemini, I'm a
> communicator and a storyteller. I think that what I've
> learned, I'm willing to share. I'm not the type of
> person that whatever has happened in their life, good
> or bad, they keep the secrets and they don't share.
> Like I'm willing to share my story, and if nothing
> else, maybe by example, they can see.

Being An Exemplar also has importance for the individual in terms of generations to come, or in terms of issues that may become more relevant in the future. This consequence bears the notion of immortalizing self, as living on is an effect of Being an Exemplar. Several individuals mentioned the importance of enabling future generations to learn from their journal writings about the issues/struggles that they encountered, and the manner in which these were dealt with. For others, the journal was a container of "truths" and important memories that may become important in the future. One woman described how her journal captured details of how her relationship with

her husband deteriorated. She thought that her children were too young at the time to fully comprehend the situation. In her view, the journal may be a helpful source of information in the future for her children to understand her perspective.

Being an Exemplar is also relevant from a professional dimension. Several individuals expressed interest in teaching others how to use journal writing for self-exploration and growth. Teaching workshops, sharing experientially with others about their own journalling, allowing others to read their journals, and publishing the creative expressions of their personal struggles and resolutions were some of the examples given.

The effect of Being an Exemplar is that the steps taken in the journey of personal growth and development are communicated to others. There is a reaffirmation of the individual's ability to face challenges and to re-create possibilities for living.

"To create and in creating to be created." Lequier, a French philosopher, authored this phrase which affirms the individual's ability to reassemble and shape existence, to confer meaning on life in the process of seeking it, and to create patterns of significance by pursuing them (cited in Scholar, 1984, p. 15).

SUMMARY OF THEORY

Basic Psychosocial Process: Recreating Self

The purpose of this study was to generate a substantive theory about the processes which account for the experiences of six women and men engaged in journal writing. The basic psychosocial process which emerged from this analysis was "Recreating Self". In an attempt to enhance one's understanding of the self as a psychological construct, Epstein (1973) notes that the self-concept is a self-theory that plays an explanatory role. This is reflected in the following comment:

> It is a theory that the individual has unwittingly constructed about himself as an experiencing, functioning individual, and it is part of a broader theory which he holds with respect to his entire range of significant experience. (p. 407)

There are three functions served by a self-theory according to Epstein (1973): "to optimize the pleasure/pain balance of the individual over the course of a lifetime; to facilitate the maintenance of self-esteem, and to organize the data of experience in a matter that can be coped with effectively" (p. 407).

The journal writing process involves a set of behaviors that develops over time and stems from the attempt to solve a basic problem, contending with self-dissatisfaction. Recreating Self is a psychological process as it focuses on change over time. The self is a changing self; it is a self that is affected by positive and negative