

ST. STEPHEN'S COLLEGE

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A STORY OF BECOMING:
FROM MISERABLE OFFENDER TO GOD'S WORK OF ART

MASTER OF ARTS
IN
PASTORAL PSYCHOLOGY AND COUNSELLING

2010

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ST. STEPHEN'S COLLEGE

A STORY OF BECOMING:
FROM MISERABLE OFFENDER TO GOD'S WORK OF ART

by

Barbara A. Baillie

A thesis submitted to the faculty of St. Stephen's College
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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I dedicate this to my husband Bob, for his support throughout this long labour.

ABSTRACT

In my introduction, I describe a spontaneous vision where an image of my inner child ran out from the adult me, crying into the arms of Jesus. My research focus was to discover the significance of this child image and her role in my midlife individuation process. I was interested in this because I was seeing clients at this midlife transition point coming with “inner child” issues. Using the lenses of Jungian psychology and Christian theology, I describe and analyze this individuation and healing process. Through references to my personal journals, essays, and art works, I describe the healing of self-esteem issues, of my image of God, of relationships, and of my negative view of sexuality. The appearance of the child in my vision signified three things: wounds from childhood which were affecting present day functioning; an imbalance in my life with too much work and little fun or playfulness; and the creative child archetype. To tell my story, I employed an autoethnographic methodology because it promised to allow for my blossoming creativity and flexibility—the fruit of my individuation journey. The healing of childhood wounds and negative inner messages was accomplished through scriptural prayer and coming to know my beloved-ness in God. Healing also came through the unconditional acceptance and compassion of numerous spiritual directors and counselors. Finally, I have described the emergence of the creative in my life through imagery and art making. Art making has functioned as a liberating activity and has provided a maternal matrix which can receive and contain my feelings and issues.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The Vision:

I was 36 years old, participating in worship at a Christian women's conference, when suddenly I was swept up into an incredible vision. As I watched, I saw my adult self as a mannequin splitting wide open and the child me running out crying. The child ran into Jesus' arms where he held her as she cried and cried. This vision carried an incredible impact. I had no idea of its meaning, but within my deepest heart, I knew it had immense significance. A few years later, the meaning of this vision started to unfold. I was 39 years old and embarking on the journey of midlife transition.

Carl Gustav Jung describes the life cycle as two phases, the first and second halves of life, each having a different orientation. The first stage, comprised of childhood and youth, is "oriented primarily to adaptation and conformity to the outer world" (Brennan & Brewi, 1982, p.1), or in Jung's terms, ego-development. The second half of life, with its stages of midlife and old age, "is oriented primarily to adaptation to the inner world" (Brennan & Brewi, 1982, p.1). Jung saw this as a time to bring to consciousness unconscious elements of the psyche so that they may be integrated. This is the time for the development of the full Self, the process of *individuation*.

The movement into the second half of life is characterized often by negative feelings and a loss of meaning. This is termed a midlife crisis. Usually, what is occurring is an eruption of unconscious elements into consciousness. We all suppress or repress certain elements of our personality in the first half of life in order to belong, to succeed in our careers or relationships. Sometimes, we have repressed aspects of ourselves because that particular characteristic was not valued by our parents, culture, or religion. However, at midlife these forgotten parts of ourselves may begin to emerge, causing us feelings of

anxiety, depression, fear, loss of control. On the other hand, midlife can be a time of opportunity, excitement, joy, as we discover and explore new aspects of ourselves.

The vision that I described at the beginning of this paper is an example of unconscious contents from my psyche emerging into consciousness. It signified an alert as to what was going to follow. At the age of 39, my midlife exploration of my inner self began.

Research Question: Many times, I have reflected on this pivotal period in my life. I have examined it through the lens of persona breakdown and the call to the true Self; I have described it as a spiritual process, but I have never looked at this time through the lens of this beginning vision, through my inner child's eyes or experience. What is the significance of my child self emerging in this vision? Was she an integral factor in my individuation process? Twenty five years later, I have a sense of her being at peace, no longer crying or in pain, feeling loved and accepted. How did that healing happen? What was the significance of running into Jesus' arms in this process? Also I have experienced a new blossoming of creativity in the areas of art and poetry. How is this linked to the child archetype? I wanted to examine more closely my midlife transition and individuation process through the experience of my inner child.

My new interest in the inner child arises also from my spiritual direction and pastoral counseling practice. Many of my clients, both male and female, come with issues arising from their midlife transition and individuation process. What I notice is the common occurrence of what I will call *inner child* issues in these clients. Unresolved issues from the past emerge at midlife. What is the best way to help clients with these issues? I wanted to investigate more closely my own journey to greater wholeness, paying particular attention to the inner child and issues from the past that affect present

day functioning. Spirituality and art-making seemed to be significant factors in my healing and growth, so this led me to my research focus. My research question is: What was the healing process of my inner child through the individuation process of midlife transition, and how did art making and spirituality contribute to that healing? Also, during this healing process, how did the child archetype manifest itself?

Personal Theology: My functional theology is rooted in scripture, Ignatian spirituality, and most importantly, my own personal experience of God. In this thesis, I describe my movement from belief in a distant, taskmaster God to a God of love, acceptance and empowerment. I grew up in the Anglican Church with *The Book of Common Prayer* (BCP) liturgies. From the language of these liturgies, I received mixed messages about God and God's relationship to humans. On one hand, I loved the image of God as the one who said, "Come unto me all that labour and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you" (Mt.11:28, found in BCP, p.77). On the other hand, I viewed God as a taskmaster God, demanding perfection. God seemed very high up, and we were at his feet: "miserable offenders" (BCP, p.5), "not worthy to gather up the crumbs under thy table" (BCP, p.88). I saw God as ascetical— against sex and frivolity—liking discipline and the more difficult way. I spent much energy trying to be loving, pure, ideal but always seemed to fail.

When I returned to church at age 28, experiencing a dramatic conversion through the charismatic prayer group, I knew in a very real way God's love and forgiveness. However, my old image of God was still very strong, although somewhat unconscious. My focus during any personal examen was on sin. Metaphorically, I examined my life with a magnifying glass, being scrupulous in regards to any behavior or attitude that did

not meet my standards of an ideal Christian woman. The scriptures I read and emphasized were Paul's letters exhorting people to live the perfect Christian life.

During my midlife crisis, I experienced an *epiphania* (resolution) in Jones' (1989) terms when I finally reached the end of my rope and yelled at God, "How much more do you want of me?" I heard God answer, "It's not me who's asking all that of you. I just want to love and support you." My image of God changed at that moment. I began to let go of my striving and realized I needed to let God be God, not me. I needed to accept God's grace, to let God work trust and surrender into me. For the first time, I felt poverty of spirit—knowing my need for and dependence on God. "Thus grace signals a *new relation* based on God's graciousness. Such an epiphania is purely God's doing, with faith the gift of trusting that graciousness" (Jones, 1989, p.160). Jones goes on to state, "Epiphania is gift and gift alone. And the test is whether one's will is relinquished in childlike-ness. What one feels is the joy of knowing that one's destiny is in the hands of God who is foolish lover" (pp.161-162). In this thesis, I describe my movement from sinner or miserable offender to knowing myself as a loved child of God, a work of art continually in process.

The image of God that I hold now is love, pure unconditional love. Jesus tells the parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15) to show us what God is like. This story of how the father behaves to both his sons is key for me and became even more meaningful after reading Henri Nouwen's (1992a) *The Return of the Prodigal Son*. This father loves his son so much that he even supplies the means for him to go away from all that the father stands for: his culture, his family, his religion, everything. Then the father stands, watching and waiting and longing for the son's return. When he sees him, even though a

long way off, he runs to meet him, throws his arms around him, totally re-instates him, and throws a party to celebrate his return. His love is unconditional. In the same way, he deals with the self-righteousness, judgment, and mean-spiritedness of the elder son. The father leaves the party to go find the elder son, invites him to the party, listens to his anger and bitterness, and explains that everything he has is his son's as well. In other words, "You could have had a party anytime you wanted." The elder son was resentfully doing all that was right and responsible but not entering into the joy and fullness of his inheritance. As Nouwen (1992a) puts it, he was "lost while still at home" (p.70).

The kind of love described in this story is the love God has for us. In my own life, I have found myself in the place of both these sons, and I have experienced the incredible acceptance and loving welcome of God. Through that love, I have experienced healing of the wounded child parts of myself and the emergence and freeing of the creative child. This is the thrust of my story.

Foundational to my theology is my view that God is the source of lifespan development, in that God has planted within us the blueprint of our maturation process and the potential of all that we can be. Sue Monk Kidd (1996) has a beautiful metaphor to describe this:

We each have an inner destiny, one imprinted in the soul. This destiny is contained in us the way a daffodil is contained inside a daffodil bulb. Each of us also possesses a very goal-directed energy that seeks to bring the seed of ourselves to fruition. It pulses inside us, trying to complete who we are uniquely meant to be (pp.120-121).

However, God is not only the source and initiator but also a catalyst and a co-worker in the process. Nemeck and Coombs (1987) describe it this way, "From the moment of inception to death, each person evolves towards increasing spiritualization.

Spiritualization is the process of our transformation in God, by God, so as to bring us to consummate union in love with him” (p.19). Nemeck and Coombs go on to state, “Each person has a unique spiritual direction. We are called to transforming union in God in such a way that each individual personality reaches in God the fullness of stature, the consummate blossoming of uniqueness and freedom” (p.20).

Ignatian spirituality holds the belief that humanity has been created and is being constantly created by God out of love. I believe that our call as humans is to fully and wholly become the unique persons that we are being created to be. Then we will be reflecting the facet of the image of God that we are meant to reflect. Together, all of humanity in our uniqueness and diversity will reflect the whole image of God (as far as that is possible).

Joseph Tetlow, S.J. (1989), when describing the Principle and Foundation of the Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius of Loyola, comments,

I can rather easily imagine that God is summoning a human person out of the chaotic instincts, desires, and inchoate ideas of the infant. I have had the experience of God summoning a full, integrated person out of the various madneses of teen age—the conflicting need to conform and to be an individual, the struggles with sexuality, the thirst for order and the rebellion against law. I know God illuminating my mind with insight after confusion... I feel God leading me out of selfishness and self-centredness, perhaps out of excessive dependence, into self-concentration and independence for the sake of mutual love. Every moment of every day, God summons me out of darkness, nonbeing, chaos, into light and love (p. 203).

This reminds me of one of my favourite images of God as the Potter (Jer. 18:1-6), working with me “hands-on,” working with the muck or earthiness of my life, bringing something beautiful from the muck, creating a “work of art” (Eph. 2:10). In my humanness, I need to co-operate with God, be moist malleable clay, passionately

receptive, trusting that God loves me and wants the best for me. In this thesis, I share my struggle to let go and trust the process, trusting the potter's shaping of my life and me.

Ignatian spirituality also contains the concept that God calls us to radical freedom: free from all that keeps us stuck, free from all that prevents us from being truly ourselves. My concept of sin involves areas where we are unfree, stuck, and not able to love. My individuation process is about coming to fuller freedom—letting go of inner binding attitudes and rules, allowing repressed aspects of myself to emerge, daring to move out of the boundaries.

Thomas Merton (1961) states, “The secret of my identity is hidden in the love and mercy of God” (p.35). Benner (2004) links knowing who we are in God, as loved even in our worst selves, to becoming all that we can be, our true self: “In order for our knowing of God's love to be truly transformational, it must become the basis of our identity” (p.49). As well, I agree with Nouwen (1992b) when he speaks of his inner conviction “that the words, “You are my Beloved” reveal the most intimate truth about all human beings, whether they belong to any particular tradition or not” (p.26). Nouwen sees this as the absolute core of spirituality, of relationship with God.

This too is my core belief: that we are beloved by God and that all people need to know that truth in the deepest part of them in order for them to grow into all that they can be. Then we will be contributing members of society, incarnating the unique facet of the image of God that we have been called to reflect to the world. Finally, we will be givers to others and givers back to God. Jung (1950/1953) too saw the importance of this, stressing that the positive values produced through the individuation process must be offered to the outer world or else one “remains an empty waster and windbag” (p.452).

One scripture that forms a core part of this theological stance is Jesus' answer when asked, "Which is the greatest commandment?" He replies, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: Love your neighbour as yourself" (Mk.12:30-31). Loving God with every part of ourselves: with our body, mind, emotions, psyche is only possible if first we know how loved we are by God. "We love because he first loved us" (1Jn. 4:19). Flowing from that knowing is love of God, love of ourselves, love of others. These are intertwined and flowing from one to another, all equally essential. Tetlow, when describing the principle and foundation of the Ignatian exercises, presents the concept of active indifference,

Any disciple of Christ will act on this principle first of all: I am being made by the passionate love of God for love, first of God and then in God of myself and of those around me. I choose what leads to love and refuse what leads away from it (1989, p.205).

Summing up, my theological stance arises from my own personal experience of moving through the individuation process, which I describe in this paper. It was a journey of opening and trusting in God's love, beginning to love myself, risking loving others, and receiving love from others.

Psychological Theory: In this thesis, I have used primarily the lens of Jungian psychology to reflect on my process of becoming. As I have indicated, I am rooted and grounded in Christian spirituality and scripture, but I have found Jungian psychological theory to fit best with my spirituality when describing my journey. Jung believed individuation to be a life-long process towards wholeness, "the expression within psychological life of the self archetype"(Stein, 1998a, p.188). This coincides with my theological view of becoming wholly the person we are created to be. My specific

interest in Jung's psychological theory lies in his contribution to the understanding of the midlife transition and the process of individuation initiated at this period of life.

Defining the Terms: Jung's fascination was for the world of the human psyche or soul.

Through self-observation and study of the inner processes of his clients, he "drew up a map of the human soul" (Stein, 1998a, p.6). He saw the psyche as consisting of three levels: (1) consciousness, (2) the personal unconscious, and (3) the collective unconscious (Jung, 1971b, p.38). *Ego* is defined as forming the centre of the field of consciousness. "The term ego refers to one's experience of oneself as a center of willing, desiring, reflecting, and acting" (Stein, 1998a, p.15). Jung saw ego as innate, existing from the earliest moments of consciousness, but he also saw it as growing and developing through what he termed "collisions"—"in other words, conflict, trouble, anguish, sorrow, suffering" (Stein, 1998a, pp. 28-29). As a person faced these difficulties and frustrations and found ways to overcome them, ego growth occurred.

In contrast, the *unconscious* includes all psychic contents that lie outside of consciousness. At times, the ego *represses* contents that are painful or undesirable into the unconscious. Jung saw the unconscious as made up of three groups: "first, temporarily subliminal contents that can be reproduced voluntarily (memory)...second, unconscious contents that cannot be reproduced voluntarily...third, contents that are not capable of becoming conscious at all" (Jung, 1959c, p.4). Collisions could also occur in this inner part of the psyche, in the personal unconscious. The personal unconscious is populated by what Jung termed *complexes*, which manifested as disturbances in consciousness. Complexes carry an incredible amount of energy, which is released when these complexes are triggered by something in the external environment. Stein (1998a)

describes a complex being constellated: "...one is threatened with loss of control over one's emotions and to some extent also one's behavior. One reacts irrationally and often regrets it or thinks better of it later" (p.43). As well, these complexes can be thought of as subpersonalities or personality fragments. When in the grip of a complex, one feels as if another person has taken control momentarily.

These complexes are usually formed because of a trauma, and Jung stated that "every complex contains an archetypal (i.e., innate, primitive) component" (Stein, 1998a, p.41). *Archetypes* are defined by Sharp (1998) as "a primordial, structural element of the human psyche, an instinctive, universal tendency to form certain ideas and images and to behave in certain ways" (p.38).

Mother and father complexes are two of the primary complexes that people possess. For example, in the mother complex, there will be emotional associations with a person's experience of his/her personal mother but behind this there is the archetype of the mother—"an age-old collective image spanning the opposites, from nourishment and security ('positive' mother) to devouring possessiveness ('negative' mother)" (Sharp, 1998, p.37).

Whereas Jung saw the personal unconscious as consisting for the most part of complexes, he described the *collective unconscious* as made up essentially of archetypes. His thesis regarding the deepest layer of the human psyche (the *collective unconscious*), was as follows:

...there exists a second psychic system of a collective, universal, and impersonal nature which is identical in all individuals. This collective unconscious does not develop individually but is inherited. It consists of preexistent forms, the archetypes, which can only become conscious secondarily and which give definite form to certain psychic contents (Jung, 1959a, p.43).

I have already mentioned the “child” archetype; other archetypes include mother/father, hero/heroine, warrior/amazon, wise old man/ woman, trickster.

Jung, as I have described, saw the psyche as consisting of many parts, a person not having *a* personality but many subpersonalities. Two important and divergent subpersonalities that form an important part of Jung’s theory are the *persona* and the *shadow*. Jung (1971a) terms the persona “a functional complex” (p.465) and states that it “comes into existence for reasons of adaptation or personal convenience, but is by no means identical with the individuality” (p.465). The persona, named after the Roman term for an actor’s mask, has to do with the face one presents to the world or the role that one plays in society. Jung (1971a) found two sources for the persona: “the expectations and demands of society” and “the social aims and aspirations of the individual” (p.464). A person, in order to fit in and belong to society, develops a persona that conforms to the values and expectations of that group, society, or culture.

Any parts of the personality that the individual considers unacceptable or incompatible with the adopted persona is repressed by the ego into the individual’s *shadow*, his or her personal unconscious. Stein (1998a) describes this phenomenon: “The shadow, a complementary functional complex, is a sort of counter-persona. The shadow can be thought of as a subpersonality who wants what the persona will not allow”(p.110). Being unconscious, it is often projected on others. When we find ourselves tremendously irritated with a characteristic of another person, often that is a signal that an unconscious shadow element is being projected.

Anima and *animus* are also important terms, referred to by Jung as “archetypal figures of the psyche” representing a deeper level of the unconscious than the shadow

(Stein, 1998a, p.126). Jung saw the anima as a feminine inner figure within men and the animus as an equivalent masculine inner figure in women. Anima/animus is a functional complex that is concerned with adaptation to the inner world. “The natural function of the animus (as well as of the anima) is to remain in place between individual consciousness and the collective unconscious... The animus and the anima should function as a bridge, or a door, leading to the images of the collective unconscious, as the persona should be a sort of bridge into the world” (Jung, 1961, p.392). Stein (1998a), in summarizing Jung’s theory on the function of the anima/us, states: “The anima/us is an attitude that governs one’s relationship to the inner world of the unconscious—imagination, subjective impressions, ideas, moods, and emotions” (p.130).

One of the most important features of Jung’s map of the soul is his theory of the prime archetype of the *self* or *Self* (capitalized by many Jungian authors to distinguish Jung’s concept of the Self as archetype from the ego-self). “For Jung, the self is paradoxically *not* oneself” (Stein 1998a, p.152), but is transcendent, beyond the psyche yet governing it from outside itself and circumscribing its entirety (Stein, 1998a).

Jung’s theory of the Self came out of his own experience in his difficult midlife transition time, after his break with his mentor Freud. Stein (1998a) describes this:

During this difficult time in his life, he made the major discovery that at bottom the psyche rests on a fundamental structure and that this structure is able to withstand the shocks of abandonment and betrayal which threaten to undo a person’s mental stability and emotional balance. This was the discovery of a deep, largely unconscious pattern of psychological unity and wholeness” (pp.152-153).

Jung termed this the *self* and saw it as the archetype of wholeness (Sharp, 1998). Jung (1953/1966), in describing the self, makes the following comments: “It might equally be

called the ‘God within us’” (p. 238); “So too the self is our life’s goal, for it is the completest expression of that fateful combination we call individuality...” (p.240).

The emergence of the Self in consciousness results in wholeness, and this process conceptualized by Jung is called *individuation*. This takes place over the entire lifetime: ego and persona development in the first half of life and the unification of conscious and unconscious aspects of the personality in the second half of life. “The development in the second half of life is the classic Jungian meaning of individuation—becoming what you are potentially, but now more deeply and more consciously” (Stein, 1998a, p.177).

At midlife (around 40), often a psychological transformation or shift occurs with unconscious elements beginning to emerge from the shadow. Jung sees the psyche as a self-regulating system, and this midlife shift is a call for the unconscious to be integrated with the conscious, to come into balance. In Jungian terms, this is “a shift from a persona-orientation to a Self-orientation” (Stein, 1983, p.27). In my theological terms, this is a call to become all that God created you to be.

This midlife individuation process of surrendering the ego’s agenda to allow the emergence of the authentic self can be extremely fearful and painful as one lets go of his/her persona identification and allows shadow contents to emerge. The period of my own midlife crisis that I describe in this thesis was extremely frightening and painful, but proved ultimately to be the source of the greatest spiritual growth.

Choice of Methodology: Because of my interest in my own midlife transition, I chose to follow an autoethnographic methodology, using myself as a research subject. Why did I choose autoethnography? One reason was the flexibility and uniqueness of the genre. As I approached the time of needing to begin my thesis, I began to feel apprehension: Thesis

time! It loomed before me like a huge insurmountable mountain. *Do I have to fit into the academic box, jump through the hoops, follow the traditional pattern? Once again, do I have to shut down my creative, independent child in order to follow the rules?* As I pondered these questions, a poem emerged as an expression of my feelings:

Heavy Burden

My Thesis—

I am excited, a new exploration, an opportunity for expression!
The child within me will gain a voice,
Be heard, her story told.

I consider the structure, the requirements, the timing...
The burden descends, becomes heavier, heavier, larger, enormous!

Structure, method, time constraint, **Deadline!!!**

“Do it right! Follow the rules!”

“Be a good girl...responsible. It all depends on you!”

“A job worth doing is worth doing well.”

“It’s no harder for you than it is for the others.”

“Make sure you do it properly.”

The voices echo in my head,
Muscles tighten and knot in my shoulders and neck.
Anxiety flourishes as pressure increases.
My mother’s voice, the voice of my culture
Forcing me into the animus way—
Linear, methodical, rational, academic.

But what is the problem?

I’ve excelled in this sphere for years.

Father’s daughter venturing where he could not go,

Living his unlived life... academics.

“I’ll bet you \$10 you can’t get on the honour roll.”

\$10 richer, achieving second place next semester,
gaining respect and admiration never before experienced!

The doctor’s son with shock and grudging respect, seeks me out, “Was that **you?**”

I had found my place — academics!

So what is this struggle now?

I’m at a different place:

Midlife individuation has begun and the feminine way has emerged.

I reject this rigid model trying to encase me in a coat of concrete:

Feeling oppressive, weighing me down, paralyzing my life energy.

What has this to do with my story?

How can the child's voice, the woman's voice be heard here?
 Once again my fire energy goes underground,
 forced into strait jackets, concrete culverts, preventing expansion,
 channeling me in ever boring, never-ending straight paths.
 I long to spread out,
 to flow through dips and gullies, up hills and down slopes, exploring, touching,
 tasting, smelling, meandering, undulating,
 expressing my creativity,
 ... my soul!

This poem flowed from my soul, expressing strongly the need for me to be true to my inner process. My time at St. Stephen's has been such an enriching time: courses that freed up my creativity allowed me to express my inner self. Academic—yes! But combining analysis with creativity, self-expression, inner soul development, they allowed for the whole person to be manifested. I did not want to use a method that would throw me back into an old constraining milieu. I needed to find one that would be freeing, affirming, and empowering of the new growth within me. I chose autoethnography because it promised to foster my blossoming creativity and expansiveness—the fruit of my journey of individuation. This method seemed to me to be an agent of empowerment, of allowing the voice of the child within me to be heard after so many years of silencing.

As well, one of my realizations through my work as a spiritual director, counselor, and art therapist is the value my own inner work contributes to my professional practice. Many of the suggestions I make for bibliotherapy, art making, prayer proceed from what I have found helpful in my own healing or liberating journey. Continuing to do my own inner work is paramount for my continuing growth and integrity. Ellis (2002) comments on how “engaging in the process of uncovering, going deeper inside yourself through autoethnographic writing, can stimulate the beginning of recovery” (p.401). Richardson (2008) sees this type of writing as therapeutic as well for the researcher; she states,

“Writing them loosened their shadow hold on me” (p.482). Many times in my training, I have written the process of my spiritual journey, and every time, new insights and awarenesses have arisen from that process. Once again, I would be processing and synthesizing elements of my inner journey that will benefit me, my clients, and hopefully, some readers of this thesis.

Literature Review: I have read widely on the topics involved in my thesis: inner child, Jungian theory, midlife individuation, spirituality, art-making, but I find it more conducive to autoethnography to incorporate the literature as appropriate throughout the telling of my story.

Overview: My thesis is the story of my midlife individuation process. Therefore, after Chapter 2, I am not going to use the standard thesis chapter structure because it does not suit this genre. I have divided the body of this work into sub-sections that correspond to major phases of my life journey. Literature references, theological and psychological reflections, analysis, and synthesis are interspersed within the telling of my story.

Appendix A contains my art-making pictures. Appendix B contains poems that are part of my creative output, but are not relevant to the inner child and individuation. I have used italics in an unconventional manner to show my inner thinking or introjects in order to provide clarity for the reader.

Chapter 2: Methodology: Autoethnography

Description and Suitability to my Exploration

Hayano (1979) is credited with the first use of the term autoethnography, using it to describe ethnographic research of a group in which the researcher is a member. Today this term encompasses a multitude of terms such as: narratives of the self (Richardson, 1994), reflexive ethnography (Ellis & Bochner, 1996a), autobiographical ethnography (Reed-Danahay, 1997), and interpretive biography (Denzin, 2008). Ellis and Bochner (2000) are two of the foremost proponents of autoethnography, defining it as

...an autobiographical genre that displays multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural. Back and forth, autoethnographers gaze, first through an ethnographic wide-angle lens, focusing outward on social and cultural aspects of their personal experience; then they look inward, exposing a vulnerable self that is moved by and may move through, refract, and resist cultural interpretations (cf., Deck, 1990; Neumann, 1996; Reed-Danahay, 1997). As they zoom backward and forward, inward and outward, distinctions between the personal and the cultural become blurred, sometimes beyond distinct recognition. Usually written in first-person voice, autoethnographic texts appear in a variety of forms—short stories, poetry, fiction novels, photographic essays, personal essays, journals, fragmented and layered writing, and social science prose (p.739).

Immediately, I felt interested in this methodology because my sources for exploration were to be primarily my personal journals (P.J.) (containing reflections, prayer, poetry, dreams, dialogues) and my art journals (A.J.).

Gergen & Gergen (2002), in referring to autoethnography, state,

In using oneself as an ethnographic exemplar, the researcher is freed from the traditional conventions of writing. One's unique voicing—complete with colloquialisms, reverberations from multiple relationships, and emotional expressiveness—is honored. In this way, the reader gains a sense of the writer as a full human being (p.14).

The Gergens are proponents of the importance of relationship in ethnographic research.

Much of traditional academic writing distances the reader from the writer. “The writer is

the source, the seer, the knower; the audience is positioned by the writer as passive or ignorant” (Gergen & Gergen, 2002, p.14). In contrast, autoethnography invites the reader into relationship with the researcher. This idea of relationship also appealed to me. A close relationship involves sharing on a personal level, revealing oneself beyond the mask or the role. It involves the sharing of vulnerability, of emotions and feelings—being real, engaging at a personal level. Ellis and Bochner (2000), in discussing autoethnographic work in the form of evocative narratives, state that “the accessibility and readability of the text repositions the reader as a coparticipant in dialogue and thus rejects the orthodox view of the reader as a passive receiver of knowledge” (p.744).

Denzin (2008) writes “we live in stories ... We need larger narratives, stories that connect to others, to community, to the morality, and the moral self” (p.119). I have experienced this in facilitating women’s groups, observing that story-telling of one’s personal history connects with others’ life stories. When women feel safe enough to share from a vulnerable place, the group begins to coalesce, to “clump” in my words. Of course, there are risks in sharing vulnerably. As a facilitator, I have to be alert to the risks, set some guidelines, and maintain the safety as the leader. But once a safe contained space is established, it is truly beautiful to observe the group members, who might differ widely in sexual orientation, religion, marital status, education, begin to share on a deep personal level, begin to experience emotional support, solidarity, community, and finally, empowerment.

As I share my story, there are deeply personal areas that must be included. I feel apprehensive about risking so much vulnerability. *If I share all the problem areas of my life, my inner thoughts, feelings and struggles, will the college decide I am not fit to be a*

counselor? However, I want to be true to my values and myself. I do not like to be set up as the expert, separate from the reader. Ellis and Bochner (1996a) write: “Our goal is to open ethnography to a wider audience, not just academics but all people who can benefit from thinking about their own lives in terms of other people’s experiences” (p.18). I want to connect with the reader, to come alongside, to share common ground, to invite the reader into my life. Then possibly, my individuation experience initiated at midlife might “inspire critical reflection on [the reader’s] own” life (Ellis & Bochner, 1996a, p.22). I very much resonate with Denzin (2006) when he writes,

I seek a writing form that enacts a methodology of the heart, a form that listens to the heart, knowing that “stories are the truths that won’t stand still” (Pelias 2004, 171). In writing from the heart, we learn how to love, to forgive, to heal, and to move forward (p.423).

My journey of individuation has been, for the most part, a journey from the head to the heart and has included the components that Denzin mentions in the above quote.

But that is not the entire reason I chose autoethnography as my thesis method. In a variety of ways, as a child, my voice was silenced. It was not acceptable to show “weak” emotions such as sorrow, hurt or fear. It was not acceptable to show vulnerability. Certain topics were off limits. When I began school, I chose to obey the rules because it would cause me less trouble. This was not a “bad” decision, but in doing so, I cut off the independent spirit of the child-self that I was earlier. I repressed or silenced her in order to fit in, to belong, to keep peace. Now is the time for this child part to be free to express her feelings, to tell her story, to express creatively through story, poetry, and art making.

Autoethnography also is defined “as a form of self-narrative that places the self within a social context” (Reed-Danahay, 1997, p.9). Autoethnographers (Ellis, 1999; Ellis & Bochner, 2000; Jones, 2005; Denzin, 2008; Jones, 2005) believe that we cannot

separate the personal from the cultural. As I tell my story, I will be embodying, reflecting the cultures within which I am situated: my family of origin with its British roots, the Anglican church with particular reference to the charismatic renewal, and more generally, the Canadian Christian milieu. Sparkes (2000) quotes Church (1995) in stating that

...the self is a social phenomenon. I assume that my subjectivity is filled with the voices of other people. Writing about myself is a way of writing about these others and about the world which we create/inhabit...Because my subjective experience is part of the world, the story which emerges is not completely private and idiosyncratic (Church, 1995, cited in Sparkes, 2000, pp.30-31).

Against this new genre of personal narrative or autoethnography have been critiques that it “might seem a bit self-indulgent” (Sparkes, 2002, p.210). Sparkes’ article is a response to an external examiner’s comment on an autoethnographic dissertation supervised by Sparkes. Clearly, the charge of self-indulgence hits a tender spot in Sparkes as this method is one he himself has employed in “The Fatal Flaw” (1996). Sparkes (2002) reviews the possible criteria to use when judging autoethnography:

What substantive contribution to our understanding of social life does it make? What is its aesthetic merit, impact, and ability to express complex realities? Does it display reflexivity, authenticity, fidelity, and believability? Is it engaging and evocative? Does it promote dialogue and show potential for social action? Does the account work for the reader and is it useful? (p.211).

Sparkes then goes on to caution autoethnographers that they “need to be aware that their writing *can* become self-indulgent rather than self-knowing, self-respectful, self-sacrificing, or self-luminous” (p.214). This sentence held particular importance for me as it was a comment that could be applicable to my entire journey. I aspired to self-knowledge, self-respect, self-luminosity rather than self-indulgence or self-pity. Self-sacrifice has negative connotations for me as it might have for many women, but I believe self-revealing would be a better descriptor of perhaps the same process.

Sparkes challenges misplaced assumptions by quoting many arguments from leading autoethnographers (Freeman, 1993; Church, 1995; Jackson, 1990; Gergen, 1999; Frank, 1995; Bochner & Ellis, 1996; pp. 215-222). In particular, I resonated with Frank's comment when speaking about the difference between thinking and feeling *with* a story rather than *about* it:

To think about a story is to reduce it to its content and then analyze that content. Thinking with stories takes the story as already complete; there is no going beyond it. To think with a story is to experience it affecting one's life and to find in that effect a certain truth of one's life (Frank, cited in Sparkes, 2002, p.219).

Sparkes concludes by stating that he believes the charge of self-indulgence is "based largely on a misunderstanding of the genre in terms of what it is, what it does, and how it works in a multiplicity of contexts" (p.222). A wonderful finale to Sparkes' article was his description of the same external examiner's reversal of opinion the following year. He had been touched in his own personal story through reading an autoethnography.

Method Outlined

1. Data Collection: First, I needed to get a general sense of the depth and breadth of my topic; I needed to find my outside resources. I read authors who wrote about the phenomenon of the inner child (Abrams, 1990; Bradshaw, 1988, 1990; Cappachione, 1991; Chopich & Paul, 1990; Gill, 1985; Miller, 1981; Missildine, 1963; Paul, 1992; Stone & Stone, 1985; Stone & Winkelman, 1985; Taylor, 1991; Whitfield, 1987). I read Jungian authors who write about individuation and midlife transition (Hollis, 1993, 2001, 2003, 2005; Leonard, 1982; Stein, 1998, 2003, 2006, 2006a; Woodman, 1982, 1990; Zweig, 1990). I read Jung's own thoughts about the child archetype, individuation and the second half of life (1959a, 1959b, 1971a, 1971b). I read Christian authors writing about midlife from a spiritual viewpoint (Brennan & Brewi, 1982, 1985, 1988, 1999;

Carroll & Dyckman, 1986; Kidd, 1990, 1996; Rupp, 1997). I read authors who wrote about the method of autoethnography (Anderson, 2006, 2006a; Bochner & Ellis, 2002; Burnier, 2006; Chang, 2008; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Denzin, 2004, 2006; Ellis, 1999, 2000, 2002; Ellis & Bochner, 1996, 2000, 2006; Jones, 2005; Sparkes, 2000, 2002; Tenni, Smyth & Boucher, 2003) and I read actual autoethnographic accounts (Mackie, 2009; Minge, 2007; Ronai, 1992; Sparkes, 1996).

2. Immersion Phase: Next, I collected all my written journals, my art journals, essays, artwork from courses and retreats. I immersed myself in my written journals, beginning in 1986 when I first began experiencing a crisis of negative feelings. I followed Ellis' (1999) suggestion of using a process of emotional recall to re-enter the memory in order to experience the emotions and details of the original experience.

3. Engagement: Tenni, Smyth and Boucher (2003) stress the need for the researcher “to engage strongly and deeply with what is going on for them as they are immersed in the data gathering and analysis process” (p.3). As I read my journals, memories of that painful time emerged. I journaled and drew some of my feelings, dialogued with my Jungian analyst and those in my support system.

4. Awareness: Ellis (1999) stresses the importance of entering back into your story and sharing from a vulnerable place so that your story touches the reader in her story (p.675). By journaling and art making my feeling responses to the material, I believe I moved to that vulnerable stance. Tenni, Smyth and Boucher (2003) write: “Underpinning all of this is both the need for awareness of self and paradoxically, the search for greater self-awareness—perhaps these go hand-in-hand” (p.5). I began to be aware of themes emerging, of new material that I now saw as relevant.

5. Writing my Story: As I read my journals, perused my art journals, essays and art from other sources, I wrote my story. Even though I knew this would produce too much material, I needed to express my story as a whole, highlighting events that were significant to me. Reading and writing led to pondering and new insights emerging. I was surprised at some of the different themes that emerged. My first draft allowed for an expression of strong feelings. I was not concerned with style or suitability. I needed to be real and to voice the feelings. Later I edited, polished, and shaped the writing into a finished product.

6. Data Analysis: As described by Tenni, Smyth and Boucher (2003), I moved “back and forth with the data, being personally entrenched and then moving back with a subjective and an objective view of themes developing in layers” (p.6). I moved into the emotional experience described in my journals, moved back out to ponder, then consulted resource materials, reflected, began to see themes emerge. In this phase, I experienced physical, emotional and intellectual reactions that I journaled as a means of processing. As well, I met regularly with my Jungian analyst in order to dialogue about the research and my inner engagement with it. This was my process as I moved through the journals of the decade of my 40’s. As I came to my 50’s, I also interacted with my art work and poetry. Often this engaged me at a deeper level. The art and the poetry seemed to capture something that came from a deeper place than my written prose.

As I moved back and forth from perusing my journals and re-entering memories, to reflection and consultation with other data sources, synthesis occurred. Themes and new insights emerged. I was seeing the big picture, seeing the hand of God in my life, seeing the new self emerging in and through the process of individuation. As I wrote my

story, I reflected, analyzed and synthesized at the same time. The structure of my thesis illustrates this by integrating story with theory, reflection and analysis. This reflects the integration of the different aspects of me: head, heart, body, soul.

7. Validity: I do appreciate the awarenesses and insights coming out of the writing of this thesis, but my main purpose in writing it is not to make broad generalizations. There has been much discussion regarding evaluating validity and trustworthiness when it comes to autoethnographic research (Sparkes, 2000, 2001; Ellis, 1999; Anderson, 2006; Ellis & Bochner, 2006; Denzin, 2006; Richardson, 2000). Richardson (2000) agrees with Ellis and Bochner that *evocative writing* such as found in autoethnographies cannot be assessed according to the old standards. She describes how “the ethnographic genre has been blurred, enlarged, and altered to include poetry, drama, conversations, readers’ theater, and so on” (p.9). With these types of evocative texts, triangulation will not serve as a means of validity because it assumes “that there is a fixed point or object that can be triangulated” (p.13). Richardson prefers the concept of *crystallization*, which promotes the concept of many-faceted ways of seeing or receiving truth. But also, she believes in holding autoethnography to high and difficult standards. She proposes five criteria:

1. *Substantive contribution:* Does this piece contribute to our understanding of social life?
2. *Aesthetic merit:*Does this piece succeed aesthetically? Is the text artistically shaped, satisfying, complex, and not boring?
3. *Reflexivity:* How did the author come to write this text?.... How has the author’s subjectivity been both a producer and a product of this text?
4. *Impactfulness:* Does this affect me emotionally and/or intellectually? Does it generate new questions, move me to write, move me to try new research practices, or move me to action?

5. *Expresses a reality*: Does this text embody a fleshed out sense of lived experience? Does it seem true—a credible account of a cultural, social, individual, or communal sense of the “real”? (pp. 15-16).

Sparkes (2000) cites Ellis (1995) as arguing

...that as a form of knowing, the validity of evocative storytelling is best judged by whether it evokes in the reader a feeling that the experience described is authentic, believable and possible. For her, the generalizability of the story is best judged by whether it speaks to the reader about his or her own experiences” (p.546).

I agree with Richardson, Sparkes and Ellis in their views. I have told my story in the best and most authentic way that I can. Now I believe and hope that validity and trustworthiness will be there if my story evokes feelings and emotions in the reader, if my story somehow touches their story.

8. Ethical Considerations: Ellis (1999) asks the question, “Are there any situations in which the ‘greater good’ outweighs individuals’ rights to privacy? In which you have a right to tell your story even if other characters in it object?”(p.681). This was a question with which I had to wrestle: How to be true to myself yet without hurting others? Of course, I am telling my story from my perspective. There are the perspectives of others that might differ widely from mine. I do not blame my parents in any way for the woundedness that occurred because I know I could not be the strong and grounded person that I am without the predominately good foundation that they gave me.

In reference to others, I have used pseudonyms and changed place names to preserve anonymity. I have read my thesis to my husband making sure that he is comfortable with my writing about the struggles in our marriage. I hope I will not inflict hurt with my words, but it is also paramount that I do tell my story in the way I experienced it.

Chapter 3: The Story of My Becoming: My Individuation Process

The Inner Child

As I perused my personal journals, I was amazed to find the footprints of the inner child all through them. I had been working with the wounded inner child without realizing it. However, she will tell her story in her own way:

It is time. The time has come to be born. To leave this place of nurturance, warmth and safety—a scary thought! Into what? Into where? I do not know, but I know it is time. This place grows too tight, too constricted. I will die if I don't move out, move on. Labour begins. Squeezing, contracting, pushing—I move down headfirst into the birth canal. I begin my journey. Moving downward, suddenly I am blocked! Contractions continue forcing me down, but there is something in the way. I struggle, fight to be born, strive for life. The pressure continues, pressing forward against the blockage. Crack! Something gives, and I move forward unimpeded once again. I emerge into the light. My mother is in great pain. Her tailbone—broken once in adolescence and never set—has broken again in order for me to be born. Father nowhere near. Where is he? Mum needs him here, but he is absent.

I am named Barbara—stranger, alien one—named from the same root as barbarian, the unknown ones. Does that name “Barbara” also name who I am—the unknown one? This feeling of not being known is a key theme throughout my life. I long to be known in the deepest part of me, the innermost part of me.

Born December 21st, the shortest day of the year, the longest night. Do I see myself as a child of the dark as another woman born on this day was called? No, I resonate more with the tradition of the passage tomb at Newgrange in Ireland. There the

ancients waited in the depths of the tomb in the darkest time of winter. At the solstice, a shaft of rays from the rising sun pierced through the darkness and lit the depth of the tomb with light—a promise that the sun will return to warm the earth once more! Winter and darkness were on their way out. Hope was enkindled in the darkest time.

I am new life—yet my mother is in darkness yet. She later tells me, “It was the worst Christmas of my life. I was stuck in the hospital, all alone, in pain, and your father was with his family celebrating Christmas.” The darkness continues for a time. Mum, suffering with post-partum depression, at times does not even want to pick me up. What effect does that have on me? Is this the source of my inner script, “*I have to do it alone? There is no one here for me. It all depends on me.*”?

My childhood is a happy one in most ways, rich in many ways. I live in a rural neighbourhood and am free to wander in nature, climbing trees, exploring the woods and bushes, building forts, and playing imaginative adventure games with my friends. Mostly I play with boys and one best girlfriend. I am a tomboy, envious of boys. I wish I were a boy! Boys are the favoured ones, the freer ones. “Mum, why can’t I take my shirt off too? It’s so hot. How come the boys are allowed and I’m not? I’m only five years old.” Many incidents in my childhood convey the message that there is something shameful about my girl’s body. In reaction, I compete, hold my own, keep up, excel at games and sports. I am one of the gang in the neighbourhood and with my male cousins.

Until puberty...when it all changes. Now the boys are stronger and faster, and now I am seen as an object of sexual curiosity. Now I am prey. My cousins trying to feel my breasts, trying to get me down under them to do who knows what. I hit, bite, scratch, and keep myself safe from molestation. My early experiences with boys at school are

similar. Boys, who I saw as friends, circle me like slathering wolves around helpless prey when one boy with whom I had cuddled, lied—telling all his friends that I had been all over him. A showing of great strength, outrage and denial causes them to back away and leave me alone.

Reflection: Interesting—my view of males and sexuality. Why do I describe myself as feeling like prey? Was it because of my experience with a pedophile at nine years old? The adult now takes up the child’s tale.

Joe—the child-molester—friend of my best girlfriend’s family. The man who loved kids, who played with us, took all of us to the beach in his truck, gave us money and candy. But one day, as I sat on his knee, he put his hand through my pocket and tried to touch my genitals. I resisted with all my might and climbed off his knee. Then he held out money, enticing me to come back. I stood, refusing, looking at him, inwardly saying to myself, “*Men are not to be trusted.*” His attentiveness, kindness, interest was all a lie! It was all an attempt to lure us into gratification of his lusts.

However, I did not reveal what happened, kept it inside, but insisted that Mum sew up the hole in my pocket. A month later, secrets were told, and I discovered that my friend and her brother had been truly molested while spending the night at Joe’s house. “We have to tell our parents,” I insist. Devastation for my friend’s parents, police, interviews, commands to keep secrecy, three years jail sentence for Joe the child-molester. But silence—keep silence. Don’t talk about it! Inside me, fear reigned. *Will he come and get us when he gets out? Be alert, vigilant! Watch for that red truck! Never relax your guard!* It seems to me this whole episode had a significant effect on my attitude towards men and sexuality.

Leaving this behind, who was I inside? I had a big inner world, rich in imagination and contemplation. I was sensitive, attuned to the natural world and the spiritual. Often I crept away from my friends, seeking solitude in nature, climbing into a tree to talk or sing to God, or wandering the beach by myself, letting wind and wave nurture my soul. I attended church and Sunday school and took my faith very seriously. I prayed fervently to be a better person and disciplined myself to sit absolutely still in church or to kneel through the entire service. I was incensed by my mother's casual attitude towards church and would rebuke her if she chatted to me during the service. Where did this sense of strict discipline and seriousness come from? Not from my parents who were nominal churchgoers. My grandparents were the church-centered, faithful ones. However, their faith was very private, never spoken about in my presence.

Sensitivity caused me to be easily hurt by those close to me. Friendship was an important value for me. I deeply loved those I chose as friends and was fiercely loyal to them. My idea of friendship was to be loyal to the death. You would never fight with a friend. I experienced hurt many times in my growing up. When friends excluded me or preferred others, it felt excruciatingly painful, like a betrayal of our friendship. I felt devastated each time, not knowing how to deal with it, until Mum advised me, "Pretend you don't care and play with others. They'll come back." Her strategy worked, but it did something to me inside, to my authenticity. "*Be tough. Never show weakness, hurt or vulnerability. Always be strong!*" I took this on as a script for life, but inside I still felt the feelings of hurt and betrayal. I hid those feelings deep within.

Weakness and hurt were not acceptable in our family. Bravery, toughness, strength were the admired qualities. An important childhood memory emerges of being

babysat at my grandparents while Mum and Dad went to a party. Mum returned to get us and told us Dad was across the road at his store. My brother and I ran over to find him. I found him stumbling around, barely able to stand. I yelled at my brother to get Mum while I tried to hold Dad up. I was terrified, not understanding what was happening. Later, as my aunt drove us home, I huddled in the back of the car, crying in fright. My mother snapped at me in anger, "Stop that crying!" The message was clear. Crying and fear were not allowed. I was only four or five at the time, but that message became ingrained in me. From an adult perspective, I can understand my mother's impatience and anger as she attempted to keep Dad's parents from knowing he'd had too much to drink. However, to this day, it is difficult for me to cry for my own pain.

I am the eldest and always felt somewhat outside the circle of childhood love and affection that my mother expressed to my brother and sister. I have many memories of Mum cuddling and playing with my two siblings but no memories of myself being included. I was the responsible one, and I seemed to receive more the rough prickly edge of my mother. Later, we became good companions, talking and sharing many personal stories, but warm nurturance was not something I remember receiving as a young child.

I was my father's daughter, Daddy's girl. It seemed as if I was passed to him for nurturing because Mum was caring for the younger ones. However, affection was always at my initiation. I sought out Dad, included him, and accompanied him whenever I could. Later I talked to him about business, golf and worked in his store as his bookkeeper. I tried to become what he wanted me to be. I sought to be his favoured one. But as I moved into teenage, Dad fell off the pedestal. He was helpless in an emotional crisis. He stalked away in total disdain when Mum showed pain and vulnerability as she was dying.

At this teenage transitional point in my life, I found nurturance and containment in my home church. A new minister, Mr. Long, interested in teens, welcomed me into the family of the church. I became active in a teen group, felt included and accepted as a full member of that congregation. My faith was very private, but I felt connected to God, trying to please by living my life according to his laws.

Literature review of the inner child concept

In this story, I have described some important parts of my childhood in order to give some idea of what formed the inner child part of me. Now I need to define what I mean by the term, “inner child.” What do others say about this concept?

Jeremiah Abrams (1990), in his introduction to his book, speaks of the inner child as “both a developmental actuality and a symbolic possibility. It is the soul of a person, created inside of us through the experiment of life, and it is the primordial image of the Self, the very center of our individual being” (pp.1-2).

The concept of the inner child first emerged in the psychological literature of the 1960’s. Carl Jung in his essay, “The Psychology of the Child Archetype” (1959b) wrote about the inner child archetype as a symbol of wholeness, often occurring at the beginning of the individuation process. There are different aspects of this child archetype as Jung writes, “The ‘child’ is all that is abandoned and exposed and at the same time divinely powerful: the insignificant, dubious beginning, and the triumphal end” (p.179).

Misseldine (1963) and Berne (1964) were the next two prominent authors to write on the subject of the inner child. Misseldine posits that our childhood, existing inside us, affects everything we do and feel. As a child, we have absorbed our parent’s attitudes, values, and feelings, and even though we have moved into adulthood, we retain many of

those absorbed stances. Misseldine is clear that we cannot ignore or push away this “inner child of the past.” He suggests that it is vitally important to respect and listen to this child’s feelings. We need to learn to be a kindly but firm parent to our own inner child, listening with tolerance but not letting this child part take over so much that we are acting in a childish rather than an adult way.

Berne (1964), in his popular book, *Games People Play*, introduced the idea of *ego states*, described as “a system of feelings accompanied by a related set of behavior patterns” (p.23). These ego states he divided into three categories, colloquially termed Parent, Adult and Child. Under certain circumstances, the Parent part of a person can be activated (the parental ego state), and the person will be reacting or responding in the same way his or her parent would respond. In the same way, the Child can be activated which means: “The manner and intent of your reaction is the same as it would have been when you were a very little boy or girl” (p.24). The significance of this book to the study of the inner child is Berne’s statement, “Everyone carries a little boy or girl around inside of him” (p.24). Berne sees the Child as “in many ways the most valuable part of the personality, and [it] can contribute to the individual’s life exactly what an actual child can contribute to family life: charm, pleasure and creativity (pp.25-26).

Other important figures writing about the inner child are Alice Miller (1981/1997), Charles Whitfield (1987) and John Bradshaw ((1988a, 1988b, 1990). These three stressed the importance of rediscovering the repressed emotions of the past. As Miller describes the vital importance of accepting a child as the person he/she is at any given time, with all his/her feelings and emotions, she emphasizes that if this does not happen, the child often begins to form an “as-if” personality or “false self” (1981, p.12). Whitfield

and Bradshaw agree, Bradshaw terming it “toxic shame,” and all three promote the idea of recovery and healing for the wounded inner child in order for the authentic self to emerge. Bradshaw (1990) states that, as the wounded inner child is accepted and nurtured, “the creative energy of their wonderful natural child begins to emerge. Once integrated, the inner child becomes a source of regeneration and new vitality” (p.xii).

Whitfield and Bradshaw emphasized the importance of this inner child recovery work with people who had grown up in alcoholic homes. They were prominent within a proliferation of writers in the 1980’s writing specifically for Adult Children of Alcoholic Parents (e.g., J. Woititz, 1983; J. & L. Friel, 1988; L. & J. Weiss, 1989).

The late 1980’s and the early 1990’s brought with it many books on how to work with the inner child: through voice dialogue (H. & S. Stone, *Embracing Our Selves*, 1989), journalwork (S. Kaplan-Williams, *Transforming Childhood*, 1988; C.L. Whitfield, *A Gift to Myself*, 1990), Inner Bonding Therapy (E.J. Chopich & M. Paul, *Healing Your Aloneness*, 1990; M. Paul, *Inner Bonding*, 1992), writing and drawing with the non-dominant hand (L. Cappachione, *Recovery of Your Inner Child*, 1991) and a combination of different techniques (C. L. Taylor, *The Inner Child Workbook*, 1991).

My own definition of inner child

So how do I define “inner child”? I agree with Jung and virtually all of the authors that there are many facets to this concept of the inner child. Certainly, the child motif emerged spontaneously in my initial vision just before I entered midlife transition. This seems to be consistent with Jung’s (1959b) statement,

As a matter of experience, we meet the child archetype in spontaneous and in therapeutically induced individuation processes. The first manifestation of the ‘child’ is as a rule a totally unconscious phenomenon. Here the patient identifies himself with his personal infantilism” (p.180).

Upon reading my journals during the crisis part of my life, I realized how I came to identify with the wounded and abandoned part of me. My crisis time was partly due to being overly stressed and responsible. I was very much in the mother role: in my immediate family, my family of origin, and in the church. Jung speaks of the child motif as being “a picture of certain *forgotten* things in our childhood” (1959b, p.161) appearing sometimes as a vision of oneself as a child, signaling perhaps that the person’s

present state may have come into conflict with his childhood state, or he may have sundered himself from his original character in the interests of some arbitrary persona more in keeping with his ambitions. He has thus become unchildlike and artificial, and has lost his roots” (p.162).

The child motif appears to compensate or correct the one-sidedness. In my case, I had become unbalanced, over-identifying with strength, practicality, and responsibility.

Jung, in the same article, speaks of the futurity of the child motif. The appearance of this motif signifies something new about to emerge. It

paves the way for a future change of personality. In the individuation process, it anticipates the figure that comes from the synthesis of conscious and unconscious elements in the personality. It is therefore a symbol which unites the opposites; a mediator, a bringer of healing, that is, one who makes whole” (p.164).

Resonating with this idea, I would also concur with Miller, Whitfield, and Bradshaw that certain woundedness in my childhood had led to the development of a false self or persona, and at midlife, I was being called to the true self. I needed to heal the wounds of the past in order to allow my true and beautiful child self to emerge.

Finally, Jung’s concept of the child representing “the strongest, the most ineluctable urge in every being, namely the urge to realize itself” (1959b, p.170) describes my emerging inner drive as I began this process of midlife individuation. I felt called, and I was ready to embark on the journey. Nothing was going to stop me.

Midlife Crisis

Ego development up to midlife

So who was I at this period of life? One of my strengths was academics. I had done extremely well in high school, graduated from university with a B. Ed. (Elem.) degree, and began teaching in an innovative program, working in that milieu for several years. Eventually, I met my husband Bob, married, and moved back to my hometown. In the fourth year of our marriage, pregnant, I left teaching to be a full time homemaker and mother. At the same time, wanting to reconnect with my faith community and raise my children as Anglicans, I returned to the church of my childhood.

This proved to be very significant. Right away, a couple invited us to dinner and told us about a new moving of God's spirit sweeping through the mainline churches. We were intrigued and started going to a prayer meeting that was a part of our local church. Through this charismatic group, my husband and I both had a powerful experience of God and the Holy Spirit. After our conversion, we began fervently to seek more of God and Jesus: reading and studying the scriptures, learning to pray and praise, and seeking to become more loving and peaceful. The prayer group eventually developed into a wonderful, loving and committed community, made up of a diverse group of people, many of us with young families. Together, we prayed, sang, praised, shared readings and tapes, and socialized. The church community became our extended family. It was an incredible time of intimacy, loving community, and commitment. And it was real. We were not putting on a Sunday-best front. We shared struggles and troubles and supported one another in prayer and practical help. Our faith was strongly focused on "being good Christians," following the Bible like a rule book, and examining one's life for sin.

So here I was, ten years later. I had been an academic and a successful, innovative teacher. Now I was a fervent Christian, a mother of four children, a homemaker, and I had begun taking leadership in the church. Our minister invited my husband and I to be elders in the church, in charge of the small pastoral home groups called Agape Groups. Like many charismatic groups of the time, our group felt it was important for men to be in leadership, to have headship. We assumed this to be the Biblical model. I was one of two women to belong to the elders. This led to a great deal of turmoil within myself. Often I spoke out with passion when I saw injustice or misrepresentation of the truth. But as I became more assertive and took leadership within the group, I felt guilty and condemned by myself. I was supposed to let men take leadership. I was not submitting myself to God's proper order of men's headship over women. The inner conflict seemed to be between emerging leadership qualities and my internalized rules that I must not usurp men's leadership. I must stay in the background.

The crisis of 1986

Then came the crisis that threw my life into chaos and turmoil. The Garden of Eden fell apart, or at least I felt expelled from it. Our rector was called away on diocesan business, so new parish leaders were hired who had a more authoritarian style. Carin, one of the new leaders, was a person I admired and respected, so I was shocked and horrified at her new stance towards me. She could not trust me to order Sunday school materials or books for the library. She grilled me on every item, asking me to justify everything on the list. What a contrast to our rector who was so grateful that I had volunteered to take on the jobs. Decisions were made about the Agape groups without any discussion with Bob

or me, although we were the elders responsible. It seemed to me that collaboration had disappeared, and control and secrecy were the names of the game.

An issue that caused me great pain involved the children in the church. We had a very successful Sunday school with excellent teachers and over a hundred children. The program included wonderful art activities. One project that my class had worked on for several weeks was a huge outline of Jesus with prints of the children's faces all over it and the caption, "We are the body of Christ!" The children were very excited and proud of their work. I mounted it in the hall for all the parents and congregation to see. Then Carin approached me, "Get that down right after church. Other people rent the hall. We want it looking nice for them, not cluttered up with kid's drawings!" I was appalled! Weren't our children valued parts of our congregation? That was just one incident of several where the children were discounted and criticized.

Then unexpectedly, during a day of prayer seeking God's vision for our church, Carin approached me to tell me she had finally forgiven me. This was a complete surprise to me as I was unaware of any division between us. She told me we would speak about it later. I was bewildered, and from her avoidance of me whenever there was a gathering, it was apparent that she still had unforgiveness towards me. We met several times to work it out, but she never could name anything I had done. It seemed to be about who I was. I was a person many consulted and viewed as a leader, and Carin resented that I knew things. Sometimes no one had told me anything. I just knew it intuitively. Alternatively, perhaps it was because she saw that I disagreed with some of her stances regarding the children and Agape groups. I do not know.

For months, she would not look at me or talk to me. I felt frozen out. I was devastated. Carin had been somewhat of a spiritual mother figure for me. This had been such a loving, nurturing community where I could be vulnerable and accepted. Now I felt expelled and rejected. At the same time, Carin was deeply loved and admired by everyone, so there was almost no one with whom I could share. People knew I was going through a bad time but did not know the reason why. I felt isolated and alone. My inner message was, *“There must be something wrong with me!”*

However, that was not the end of things. Everything seemed to break in on me at once. My family of origin experienced a relationship crisis between my stepmother and my new sister-in-law, and I was called on to mediate. Another family member suffered a mental breakdown and was hospitalized in our town. Other family members were phoning us and blaming us for the fact that she had had a breakdown. Then another very close friend told me she could not handle my intensity, and she stopped talking to me for months. Again, it was not anything I had done—it was about who I was. Now I really was in crisis. I shared my situation with my sister and father but found no support there. My sister told me I was just seeking sympathy, and my father walked away with a look of total disgust on his face.

In desperation, I turned to God and pleaded, “Help! I need help. I can’t do it anymore. I’m cracking up. Please send help!” I had always been strong. I had always been able to handle anything that came my way. I had a very strong will and could do anything that I set my mind and will to do. No longer. I was paralyzed, helpless, powerless, overwhelmed with pain and anguish. It felt as painful as my experience of grief at age 22 when my mother died. My friends were not supportive in the way I

needed. “Haven’t you prayed about it? Just turn it over to God.” They meant well, but it sounded so patronizing—did they think I hadn’t thought of that?

I turned even more to God. I prayed, “God, I don’t know why this is happening to me, but I have to believe that you love me and want the best for me, so I’m going to let go into this process and trust that you’re going to bring me through.” Everything changed after that, even though nothing externally changed.

At a conference, a friend praying with me when I was in the depths of despair spoke a word from God to me, saying, “No one can walk with you in this darkness. You must make this journey alone, through the darkness and the fire. Yes, the way will be difficult and you will suffer pain, but I will be with you and I will bring you through” (Personal Journal (P.J.), Oct. 1986). I felt such a reassurance in the truth of those words. It calmed me and gave me a sense of peace for that moment at least. Even though I was in such pain, now I knew I was where I was meant to be, and God was with me.

Next, I realized I needed to let go of all demands on Carin to forgive me or work it out with me. That afternoon, I approached her and told her I knew she was working things out with God, not to feel pressured, to take the time she needed. That night she hugged and hugged me for the first time in months. God was already beginning to act.

Spiritual direction: introduction to Ignatian prayer

Looking back over my journals, I see the hand of God at work. One weekend, I participated in a parish retreat led by Ken, who had just returned from a 30-day Ignatian retreat. Right away, this man appealed to something in me. As he shared about his retreat and the Ignatian Exercises, something in me quickened, and I said to myself, “I’m going to do that someday.” Up to that point, I had never heard of the Ignatian Exercises.

During that parish retreat, God moved in a mighty way. I am a person who rarely cries, but during that retreat, I started to cry and could not stop. I was at the end of myself. I couldn't handle everything anymore. I signed up to see Ken, the retreat director, and came out of that session with an appointment to see him in a month for spiritual direction. The minute I was out of his office, I felt panicky. *How did that happen? I had no intention of going to spiritual direction. God tricked me into it!*

I was 150 miles from where Ken was located, but I drove that distance every two weeks. Ken was such a gift in my life, especially because he accepted me in my weakness. My friends and family had always seen me as strong; they could not accept me in my weakness and struggle. They were impatient with me. I was not the person they knew and expected. However, Ken, my director, accepted me, received me, listened to me, and pointed me to Jesus and God. He introduced me to scriptural prayer using the Ignatian structure. Instead of reading scripture and applying it to my life, I was praying the scripture, receiving words of love as personally addressed to me, entering into gospel action passages with active imagination (Ignatian contemplation), and encountering Jesus personally with reference to my life. It was an incredible gift.

Reflection: Looking back through my journals written during this time of crisis with the intent of looking for the inner child, I see that this scriptural prayer was the first step in my healing of the wounded child part of me. The rejection/ betrayal of a mother figure (Carin), the discounting and lack of hospitality to the children of the parish, and the feeling of abandonment from close friends seemed to trigger a regression in me. It was as if I was re-experiencing the rejection and betrayal of childhood friends. The church had always been a safe, nurturing place for me, but that had ended. I had opened to this

Christian community in child-like innocence, feeling very safe and vulnerable, and now it had fallen apart. It was as if the ground had broken up under my feet.

Experiencing God's love through scriptural prayer

The Ignatian prayer structure provided stability, a structure where I could find safety and containment for my overwhelming emotions. Every day I was required to read over the principle and foundation of Ignatius as paraphrased by my director:

My task in life is to praise, love, worship, and serve God and to love and serve my fellow human beings. My task in life is not to spend my energy focusing on how to do the above. All created things exist to support me to the end of fulfilling my life task. Insofar as I am able to use any created thing to help me do my life task, I am free to use it. Insofar as any created thing distracts me, I must flee from it.

Then, starting with Psalm 139, I was to meditate on a phrase that had some energy for me, spending up to an hour in prayer, followed with a dialogue (colloquy) with Jesus, then a colloquy with God the Father, ending with the Lord's Prayer and ten minutes of journaling. Praying this particular psalm for a month was incredibly healing for me, opening up a deep personal relationship with Jesus/God and transforming my image of God and myself. Here are some excerpts from my journal:

Meditating on: "For you created my inmost being" (Ps. 139:13):

Jesus to me: Yes, and I created that inmost being in my image. I created that inmost being to be loved by me and to give my love out to others. And what have you done? You have covered her over, hidden her well. That is the part of you that I want to love to life. Let her come forth to be basked in my love, to be healed, to be made whole.

Father: I have made you my child. I want to love you to life. What kind of child do you want to be—one who is dependent, open to receiving love and returning it and in doing so grows in love and grace, bearing much fruit? Or one who is rebellious, closed to love, independent, going her own way, sowing seeds of death and destruction?

Me: I want to open myself to your love, Father, to be loved and to grow.

Father: Then open up that innermost being that I have created. Open it up to me and let me love her into life. Let me carry you during this time. Let go of everything. (P.J. Jan.17, 1987).

In this dialogue, God calls the inmost part of me “her.” Later as I prayed with the phrase, “Surely the darkness will hide me” (Ps. 139:12) more was revealed through the colloquies:

Jesus: You try to hide under the cover of darkness. You tell everyone your sins and the yucky parts of yourself in order to hide the part that I have made in my image. Why don’t you like that part of yourself? Let it shine through.

Me: What part is it?

Jesus: Your woman part—the gentleness, the kindness, the quietness, the weakness, the hurting, sensitive part that loves so deeply and longs to be loved in the same way.

Me: I hide because it hurts too much to be hurt. I’ll die if I get hurt again.

Jesus: No, because I am here. I am your shield. Let me be your shield, your protector (P.J. Jan.19, 1987).

This theme of God calling me into love continued for months with many fears and resistances arising in me: fear of trusting, fear of vulnerability, fear of being hurt, and fear of losing myself. I had never acknowledged fear because I had labeled fear as weak; I could never show weakness or even admit it to myself. Remember the unspoken motto in my family of origin: *“Be tough!” Hurt, crying and fear are not allowed!*

A big part of my resistance to letting myself be loved was my sense of sinfulness and unworthiness. My inability to accept forgiveness concerned sexual sin. Early in my teenage years and in my strict religious discipline, I vowed to God to be chaste until my marriage. Then I fell in love, experienced sexual passion and broke my vow. I felt huge guilt and remorse over this sexual sin area of my past, not being able to forgive myself..

Through my prayer, gradually I realized God loves me as I am, with my humanness and my faults. I began to have prayer experiences as a child sitting on Jesus' and God's knee, being hugged and held, experiencing God as *Abba*, Daddy, delighting in me, calling me precious one. As I meditated on the phrase, "He satisfies my desires with good things so that my youth is renewed like the eagle's" (Ps.103:5) I realized God was satisfying my desire to be loved by my father,

...telling me, "I love you no matter what you do. You don't have to achieve academically to be loved by me. I love little ones like Billy (a Downs syndrome child) just as much. I love you as a girl. Girls are just as precious to me."

This struck a chord in me because in my family of origin, males certainly had precedence and I always felt less important because I was a girl. I felt like I needed to prove myself to be as good as any boy (P.J. Jan. 27, 1987).

He is loving my little girl part like the daddy she never had, filling her with love, rocking her and comforting her, being strong for her. This little girl will be renewed, will be completed (P.J. Jan.29/87).

Reflection on the effects of prayer: Reading over the journals that I wrote during this time of spiritual direction with Ken, I see that much of what was happening in my prayer was a freeing up of my rigid ideas, rules and fears. First of all, my image of God was changed from a hard task-master God, demanding more and more of me, a God who focused on my sinfulness, to a God who accepted me unconditionally, loved and delighted in me. This was a God who wanted to strengthen and support me, who wanted to fill me with his love so that I would be a source of love for others.

Secondly, in the prayer times, I felt called to relinquish my fear of psychological techniques. My one experience with psychology had been an Education course taught by a professor steeped in Freudian psychology, who delighted in trying to shock us. I did not respect this man and had consequently made a judgment that all psychology was useless, manipulative, and dishonest. Now here I was with a spiritual director trained in psychology, encouraging me to read Jungian books and to trust his suggestions. I began to surrender my fears and open to this new world.

Gradually, in the colloquies with Jesus and the Father, I heard the call to grow up and become the bride of Christ. This I met with great resistance at first:

Me: Why am I afraid? Why don't I want to be grown up? I just want to be protected and comforted and loved. I don't want any responsibility. I hate being grown up and bearing all that weight.

God: But no, you will be grown up in Christ, not in yourself.

Me: All right, I will trust you. I will let you do it in me even though I'm afraid.

(Thought: When I was little my dad loved me and comforted me, but when I was big he wasn't there any more. I had to bear my own load.)

Will you still be there for me, to love me even if I'm grown up?

God: Of course. I will always be here. Remember Jesus was grown up and I was always there for him (P.J.Jan.31/87).

Here again, I see regression. My exhaustion and burn-out from being overly responsible, the hurt and betrayal of friends, had led me to regress into a child-like state, a wanting to be cared for and protected, not wanting to go back out into the adult world.

Sexuality emerges as a theme

Part of my fear of spiritually growing up to become the bride was my distrust of men. I didn't really trust Jesus because he was a man. God seemed safe because, in my

imaging, he was spirit and the father I longed to have. As I wrestled with this call to grow up and become the bride, the memory of Joe the child molester arose and my fear of men when it came to sexuality: *“My fear of men—they’re all sex maniacs. You cannot trust them. Remember Mum saying, ‘You can’t be friends with a man—they always want something more’* (P.J. Feb4/87).

This fear of sexual violation proved to be a huge barrier to fully trusting Jesus/God, to completely opening to their love, to allowing myself to grow and mature in my faith. During one imaginative prayer experience, I came into a pact with Jesus where we became blood brother/sister, but still I held back from full surrender. I wrote,

Resting against Jesus with his arm around me, I ask, “Why is so hard... why does it hurt so much to let you love me?”

Jesus: Because you have closed yourself to receiving love for so long. All those channels need to be opened up. You are still resisting.

I see a picture of a child, absolutely tense and rigid, curled in a foetal position, clutching herself, arms tightly wrapped around herself, resisting with every fiber of her being.

Jesus: Relax, just relax.

This statement sends me into a spasm of fear because men have said this to me when attempting to seduce me or pressure me into sexual intercourse.

Jesus: I will never force you. Just rest in me (P.J. Feb.6/87).

As I struggled with trusting Jesus/God, I also struggled with fears about trusting Ken, my director, terror at being vulnerable. It seemed like he had x-ray eyes peering into the innermost recesses of my soul. Often I sat there with my eyes covered or closed, so he couldn’t see into me. He challenged me to be vulnerable, but that felt terrifying to me.

Stone and Winkelman (1990), speaking of the vulnerable child within as the carrier of vulnerability in intimate relationships, state *“It is one’s vulnerability which*

makes intimacy in relationship possible and, conversely, it is this same vulnerability and apparent lack of power which the protective primary selves most fear in relationship.”

(p.183). This certainly named my fear of Ken having power over me.

An amazing incident occurred which further illustrates what Stone and Winkelman are describing above and what was occurring within. One particular day, I was arguing with myself in my journal regarding fully trusting God, when suddenly I had an image of the inner part of me that was resisting. The name Queen Boadicea came into my mind as I saw a fierce warrior queen with red hair, spikes on her helmet, armour with a short skirt (Roman-like clothes), driving a chariot pulled by four horses. She was holding a club or mace in her right hand, bashing all the men’s heads, and then trampling them with her horse and chariot. I wrote in my journal, “She hates men. She loves to conquer them. She is terrified of being loved. She hates love because she knows that is how she’ll be vanquished. She’d rather die than give in” (P.J. Sept.12/87). I was shocked, bewildered, wondering if I was going crazy. At this point, I had never heard of inner figures in our psyches or inner archetypes. But here she was emerging spontaneously from within me. I remembered vaguely the name Queen Boadicea from my school days but did not remember anything about her. After my research, I recognized many aspects of her personality within me: her fight for truth and justice against oppressors, her willingness to fight to the death for what she believed, her leadership abilities. In the dialogue where she emerged, it is clear that she is in the role of protector/controller (Stone & Winkelman, 1990) of the vulnerable child part. As I argued for totally trusting God, the dialogue proceeded as following:

Queen B.: No one is going to own me. No way I’m giving up my power to anyone. You’ll just surrender yourself, and then He’ll have you where he wants

you. Sure, everything seems so loving and gentle right now—but just wait. It's a trap so you'll trust Him and then watch out! Just like Ken your spiritual director. Don't relax your guard with him either.

Me: I'm not going to listen to you. It's not true. I can trust Jesus and the Father and I can trust Ken because God has told me I can. Jesus will be my shield and protector. He will never leave me nor forsake me. In Him, will I put my trust. Moreover, He will win you over too. He loves you too. You have been so hurt haven't you?

Q.B.: So what? I can take it. I'll never be hurt again. No one will have the chance.

Me: Why don't you open up those hurts to Jesus? He will heal them. He will hold you and comfort you. He loves you so much.

Q.B.: Why did you start talking about my hurts and caring for me? Now I'm feeling all sorts of pain and crying inside. I don't want anyone to love me. I can fight anyone who uses power against me. But I can't fight love and caring. How did you know that I'm so vulnerable to being loved? But I hate it! I hate it! Get away from me. I'm taking off. I can't stand this anymore (P.J. Sept. 12/87).

Connections to theory

Alice Miller (1981/1997) speaks about the transference stage of analysis as the most difficult stage. "The patient begins to be articulate and breaks with his former compliant attitude, but because of his early experience he cannot believe this is possible without mortal danger" (p.18). Looking back over this time with more knowledge of the dynamics of therapy, I can recognize that I was in a strong father transference with my director. Yes, it did feel like I was in mortal danger as I began to share my innermost emotions because my father was intolerant of emotionalism. An Amazon figure had emerged in order to defend and protect the vulnerable child part of me.

Jung posited that

there are indeed psychic entities outside of consciousness, which exist as satellite-like objects in relation to ego-consciousness but are able to cause ego disturbances in a surprising and sometimes overwhelming way. They are the gremlins and inner demons that may catch a person by surprise (Stein, 1998a, p.40).

These Jung termed *complexes*. Stein (2006) describes Jung's idea of a complex as a "festering emotional wound, often mostly unconscious, that has a life of its own. It harbors resentments, hurts, and angry and hurtful intentions, and it bubbles to the surface in spontaneous and often surprising ways" (p.111). This inner figure of Queen Boadicea represents a complex containing an Amazon archetype. This complex probably was constellated originally because of my wounding due to absent father, child-molester Joe, experiences of feeling like prey in the sexuality/relational area. There is huge energy in this complex. As I grew in consciousness, so did my awareness of its triggers.

Call to trust: Yet in spite of Queen Boadicea's resistance, I wanted to trust, to let go of my fears. Finally, I realized I could not even trust through my will. I had to step out in faith, in spite of my fear, saying to God, "In you I put my trust." I needed to ask God to help me. Gradually, I felt more at peace in trusting Ken as my spiritual director, trusting God. I had an image of being carried along in a river, totally out of control, not knowing where I would end up, but Ken walked along the bank reassuring me I was right where I was meant to be. "Just lie back and let the river carry you, the river of God's spirit."

Thomas Green (1981) writes, "The 'marketplace' of our lives is where we live and love and where, to a large extent, we discover God" (p.7). Confirming my image above, Green calls us to become floaters, not swimmers: letting go of all one's own effort, trusting that God is at work in the pain, suffering, and circumstances of our lives.

In my dark marketplace, as Green (1981) terms it, I was still dealing with relationships and extreme feelings of hurt and abandonment. The psalms were particularly meaningful at this time because they expressed the same kind of anguish and pain that I was feeling. I prayed them as if they were my words, and I felt God meeting

me as I poured out my agony, “How long O Lord, how long?” (Ps.6). I noticed in the psalms that often, after the initial pouring out of lament, there is a shift where the psalmist says something like, “But I trust in your unfailing love” (Ps. 13:5) or “The Lord has heard my cry for mercy, the Lord accepts my prayer” (Ps. 6:9). I recognized this, from my own experience, as the place where the psalmist has felt met by God and so can shift from petition and lament to praise, trust, or surrender.

The most comfort came from praying with Ignatian contemplation the scenes where Jesus is betrayed by his friends. I knew that Jesus had experienced what I was experiencing. I felt him with me in it; I felt deeply for his pain as he experienced the pain of betrayal and abandonment. Up to this point, I had never used imaging in prayer or in any other context. However, as I practiced this type of prayer, the world of images and symbols opened up to me. I began to dream powerful dreams which scared me at first but which led me to explore this new realm. I began to read Jungian books on dreams as well as those on mystical theology. Something big was in process. I was still in much pain, but I was moving through it and discovering wonderful new inner worlds.

Connections with the literature on midlife

Jungian analyst and author, Murray Stein (1983), sees adulthood as being “as ‘developmental’ as childhood or adolescence is” (p.2). He considers midlife “to be a time when persons are going through a fundamental shift in their alignment with life in the world, and this shift has psychological and religious meaning beyond the interpersonal and social dimensions. Midlife is a crisis of the spirit. In this crisis, old selves are lost and new ones come into being” (p.3).

Stein (1983) views the midlife transition as comprised of three stages: separation, liminality, and reintegration (p.27). The separation phase involves separation from an earlier identity, the persona. Both Stein (1983) and Hollis (1993) describe the period before midlife as being a time of heroic thinking or following the heroic pattern. When considering the concept of psychic energy, *libido*, “the ‘hero’ represents a specific configuration and movement of it: libido moving dynamically forward—into sometimes adaptive and often defensive directions—but essentially in an expansive motion outward and forward” (Stein, 1983, p.33). Stein describes this mode of functioning as “coming to serious crisis through the experience of a clear-cut defeat, especially if the defeat is large enough and occurs at a critical moment in life, such as the midlife point” (p.33).

How does that fit with my own experience? Clearly, I had accomplished the ego tasks of the first half of life. I had proved myself academically, been successful and innovative in my teaching career. I had accomplished Erikson’s (1950) task of intimacy/isolation by marrying, raising children, forming close relationships in my parish. I was successful in home making. I was confident in whom I had become. In the Christian milieu, I was taking more leadership, proving to be a source of pastoral care and counseling for many women. I remember thinking, “I know all there is to know about Christianity!”

What arrogance! I was plainly heading for a fall or what Stein calls a major defeat. It came in the area of relationships—an area that women value most. With the collapse of two key relationships and the lack of support from others from whom I expected support, I was devastated. I had always seen myself as strong, able to handle

anything (my persona). Now, I felt powerless, overwhelmed by my feelings, weak and vulnerable. Stein (1983) describes the effects of suffering a major defeat:

Then a 'crack' can open in the identity between the ego and this persona, between 'who I now feel I am' and 'who I have appeared to be in my own eyes and in the eyes of others in the past.' When that former identity and the dreams it was based upon get deflated and lost, there is a sudden realization of the ego's vulnerability and of the shadow personality, as well as of the limits on life's ascendance and on its expansive movements forward.... This moment of conscious realization is critical for the purpose of separating from a former persona identification" (p.33).

I felt like I was cracking up, but what was cracking open was my persona identification. I presented a persona of strength, of having it all together. The vision at the beginning of my paper where I described the adult me splitting open was now a reality.

Interesting synchronicity of wording: Crack! My mother's tailbone broke allowing me to move through the birth canal. Crack! My persona shatters allowing my true self to begin the birthing, emerging process.

Hollis (1993) speaks of one of the

greatest deflations of midlife expectations [as being] the encounter with the limitations of relationships. The Intimate Other who will meet our needs, take care of us, always be there for us, is seen to be an ordinary person, like ourselves, also needy, and projecting much the same expectations onto us" (p.34).

Often this is a marriage partner, but in my case, I believe I had projected this on to the Christian community to which I belonged. We had covenanted with each other, helped each other financially, materially, emotionally, and spiritually. We were a family. But now, in my time of crisis, I did not feel supported or even understood. This felt very hurtful. Eventually, I did withdraw my projections from this group, realizing they were human with their failings and foibles, but it took time.

Another shock that I experienced, Hollis describes as well. I saw myself as laying down my life for my friends, so why did it go so wrong? Hollis (1993) describes this as

the collapse of our tacit contract with the universe—the assumption that if we act correctly, if we are of good heart and good intentions, things will work out. We assume a reciprocity with the universe. If we do our part, the universe will comply” (p.41).

In my case, the unconscious deal or contract was with God. I was overwhelmed with the unfairness, the injustice of it all.

At the same time, there emerged the realization that I could not will to get through this crisis. I no longer had control of my life. I felt powerless. This is where my faith in God proved to be invaluable in moving out of this first stage into the second, *liminality*. Through my spiritual director’s acceptance of me in my chaotic emotional state, I could believe that God also accepted me. My director embodied or incarnated God for me during those two years. In addition, my turning to prayer and meditation on scripture was key to my process. I realized that unconsciously I had been playing God, thinking I could do it all. But, it was too heavy trying to be God. I couldn’t do it anymore. I prayed Mary’s prayer, “Let it be done to me according to your word,” and Jesus’ prayer, “Not my will but yours.” I let go into what was happening, trusting that God would bring me through. I realized what it meant to be “poor in spirit,” knowing one’s total dependence on God. I believe I entered what Stein (1983) terms liminality or the stage of ‘floating’ (pp.34-44). This seemed very similar to Green’s (1981) floating image: trusting God.

Midlife writers (Stein, 1983; Hollis, 1993; Brennan & Brewi, 1982; Carroll & Dyckman, 1986; Rupp, 1996) speak about the midlife transition as a death experience—death to the old self or the persona with which one has identified. This next stage of liminality I would call the tomb stage. It is dark, and nothing seems to be happening. Kidd (1990), while in midlife transition, discovers a cocoon, which becomes her symbol of what she is experiencing:

I had come upon a cocoon.

I was caught suddenly by a sweep of reverence, by a sensation that made me want to sink to my knees. For somehow I knew that I had stumbled upon an epiphany, a strange gracing of my darkness. I took my forefinger and touched the bottom tip of the tiny brown chrysalis and felt something like light move in me. In that moment God seemed to speak to me about transformation. About the descent and emergence of the soul. About hope (p.12).

Stein (1998b), in his book, *Transformation*, also uses the metaphor of the cocoon or chrysalis to describe his midlife transition stage of liminality. Specifically, he uses the metamorphosis of the caterpillar to butterfly to illustrate the developmental unfolding of a person at midlife. The incubation or pupa stage is the stage of liminality, an in-between stage, a stage of total introversion where nothing appears to be happening. But inside that chrysalis, there is a breakdown going on, a dissolving of old structures. In humans, this can be a dark night of the soul. Ego action ceases, and a person is acted upon.

Stein (1983) describes it this way:

...in liminality the soul not only comes free but also awake. This aspect of our being, the psyche, which usually goes unnoticed and slumbers while we are busy and active and appears only in dreams, comes free and fully awake during liminality. Through death and defeat, we become awake to soul because our other modes of consciousness have ceased functioning” (p.60).

Formerly very extroverted, I now sought silence and solitude. My attention was inward, on the movements of my soul or psyche. A new kind of self-awareness was being birthed.

Clearly, the period of liminality is not just a tomb, a place of death and destruction. It is also a womb, a place of new life, new birth. Stein (1998b) goes on to describe the metamorphic process:

In passing from one form to another, the butterfly draws upon the latent structures that have been present all along but were undeveloped, hidden from view, or disguised by other features. The change from caterpillar to butterfly is a transformation in which underlying latent structures come to the surface and assume leading positions, while other features that were prominent change

radically or disappear. In this, we recognize an important feature of psychological transformation in human adults (p.15).

So too, within a person, there are gifts, “still latent and hidden by the adaptive structures and requirements” (p.10) of the first stage of life. These begin to emerge in this midlife metamorphosis, giving “birth to the *true self*, and this personality becomes filled out and actualized in the second half of life” (p.10).

Emergence of the shadow: Commonly, what begins to emerge from the unconscious does not at first seem to be latent gifts because they are repressed contents of what Jung terms the *shadow*: “rejected pieces of the personality that were left undeveloped, and cast aside sometime in the past, for one reason or another, in the rapid movement forward of personal history” (Stein, 1983, p.78). They do not seem to be gifts because these are parts that we have rejected as undesirable. Now, we are confronted with them. Hollis (1993) describes this insurgence of the shadow as

part of a corrective effort made by the Self to bring the personality back into balance. The key to integration of the shadow, the unlived life, is to understand that its demands emanate from the Self, which wishes neither further repression nor unlicensed acting out” (p.44).

The shadow contains the latent possibilities, new directions, and energies for the future.

In the early stage of my midlife crisis, I had a powerful dream that terrified me. I believe it was a dream that illustrated shadow contents. To set the context, I was suffering at this point from feelings of depression, powerlessness, feeling overwhelmed by the events in my life and the surging of emotions of grief, anger and fear. A few days earlier, in my role of homemaker, I had made an appointment to have a demonstration by an Electrolux Vacuum salesperson. However, the morning it was supposed to happen, I felt

too depressed to go through with it, so I had phoned and canceled. Then I lay down on the couch and went to sleep. This was my dream:

In my dream, I am sleeping on the couch when suddenly I realize there is someone in the house. I can't wake up, can't open my eyes, but I know there is someone there. Finally, I open my eyes, and there before me is a massive buxom woman, wearing a blue-black brocade evening dress and a hillbilly type black hat. She has red straggly hair and blue eyes caked with bright blue eye shadow. She is selling vacuum cleaners. I am terrified, sensing that there is something not quite right about her. She seems to be witch-like or crazy. How did she get into my house? I jump up and start yelling at her to get out. I run to the phone and phone Electrolux, but that reinforces my fear because their hesitation confirms that there is something wrong with this woman. My impression is that she is not really who she's supposed to be. I keep yelling at her to get out. Finally, she rushes down the stairs and opens the door to go out. When she opens the door, two women with Salvation Army bonnets peer in. The Electrolux lady exits, forcing them out as well. There is a raging storm outside. I run down to the landing to lock the door behind her, but I find that the lock has been broken. I can't lock her out. I try to put the chain on, but she has broken the chain. Now she's trying to force her way back in, and I'm trying to force her out. Finally, I know I can't keep her out—she is too strong for me. I let go. She falls inside, and, in sock feet, I take off outside, running as fast as I can, down to the store to phone the police. She is running after me, yelling, "All I want is a few minutes of your time!" As I cross the main road, there is so much traffic that I'm caught in the middle of the road. I am running down the white line (P.J. Jan.14, 1987).

I woke up from this dream terrified because it felt so real, like it had really occurred. I felt like she was going to kill me. *She's a witch!* Looking at this dream now, I believe this is a dream about my shadow. I was afraid of my shadow and had tried to shut it out, but the locks were broken. I needed to deal with it. However, I preferred to run out into the storm (the unconscious?) rather than face it. On the other hand, the shadow figure had a maternal, nurturing, quality (the buxom figure) and was offering to help me clean up. Also, it seemed linked with salvation and the army of God. Both these figures were at the door. Was this a type of duality, like a Janus figure? Was this dream a reaction to the suppression of my feminine power in the masculine milieu of the church community of which I was a part? Stein (1983) continues his comments about shadow elements, "Life still clings strongly to them. And actually the seeds of the future lie in these neglected figures, which now return and call for restoration and attention" (p.78).

Analysis: I had leadership abilities, but I repressed these because I did not want to usurp the leadership of the men. In addition, I was trying to be so good, so holy, never expressing my feelings of anger and hurt as I dealt with the breakdowns of the two friendships and my feelings of injustice and betrayal. I tried to be loving, laying down my life for others. Also, in my ministry in the church, I was trying to give to others, to lay down my life. As a result, I had no boundaries. People were phoning me at all hours, and I couldn't say no or quit anything. I was burning out. Considering all this, I wonder if this figure represented the powerful wild woman archetype that Clarissa Pinkola Estes (1992) writes about in *Women Who Run with Wolves*—the instinctual archetype, a part that is not tamed or bound by convention. This is the part of me that I needed in order to set

boundaries, to break out of the power of the collective, to express true feelings, to run free following my own path.

While considering shadow, I also need to examine the original vision of the crying child running out from the inside of the split adult me. This speaks to me of my persona of strength splitting open to reveal the wounded child part of myself. Stein (1983) cites Jung as often referring to a return to the mother: “a point in the individuation process, typically occurring at midlife, when themes of early childhood, of symbiotic union with the mother, and of a heightened need for nurturing and psychological intimacy are constellated” (p.90). Hollis (1993) stresses the importance of the midlife task of separation from parental complexes, “for the simple reason that those powerful influences supported the false self..., the provisional identity acquired during the first adulthood. Until we can recognize the reactive rather than generative character of the first adulthood, we are literally not ourselves” (p.61).

Hollis (1993) in particular stresses the importance of early childhood influences on the formation of the provisional personality or persona:

We may even conclude that the unexamined adult personality is an assemblage of attitudes, behaviors and psychic reflexes occasioned by the traumata of childhood, whose primary purpose is the management of the level of distress experienced by the organic memory of childhood we carry within. This organic memory we may call the inner child, and our various neuroses represent strategies evolved unconsciously to defend that child (p.10).

In keeping with the theory of Hollis, I can see that the persona or provisional personality acts as a defense or protection for this inner child part. Naturally, the primary influence on our lives during childhood is the parent-child relationship. Therefore, conclusions about the world in general and one’s self in particular are based on “the very limited

experience of a specific set of parents responding to particular issues” (Hollis, 1993, p.12).

Alice Miller (1981), in her book, *The Drama of the Gifted Child*, speaks, as well, of the development of the false self in reaction to inadequate parenting. Near the beginning of her book, she poses the question, “Sometimes I ask myself whether it will ever be possible for us to grasp the extent of the loneliness and desertion to which we were exposed as children and hence intrapsychically still are exposed as adults” (p.5). She is speaking from her own experience and from what she has observed in her clients. She is not referring to people who have been obviously deserted or abandoned or obviously uncared for or neglected but persons who say they had a good childhood yet are suffering with depression or anxiety. Some of her basic assumptions are

- The child has a primary need to be regarded and respected as the person he really is at any given time, and as the center—the central actor—in his own activity. ...we are speaking here of a need that is narcissistic, but nevertheless legitimate, and whose fulfillment is essential for the development of a healthy self-esteem.
- When we speak here of “the person he really is at any given time,” we mean emotions, sensations, and their expression from the first day onward (p.7).

So what significance does this have? I believe the crying child that emerged from my unconscious was representative of the wounded or neglected inner child that had been repressed since childhood. Hollis (2005) states that “The power of these primal, formative experiences in programming our sense of self, our sense of the world ‘out there,’ and how we are to relate to it can hardly be overemphasized” (p.47).

Summary of my midlife crisis

Much of my midlife journey centred around relationships. I was catapulted into the crisis by a failure in relationships with two close friends and the surprising lack of

emotional support from friends and family. God then led me into a spiritual direction relationship which served as an important catalyst for proceeding with my inner journey. My director provided a safe place for me to do my inner work. I experienced with him what Nouwen (1975) describes as hospitality:

... primarily the creation of a free space where the stranger can enter and become a friend not an enemy. Hospitality is not to change people but to offer them space where change can take place. ... The paradox of hospitality is that it wants to create emptiness, not a fearful emptiness, but a friendly emptiness where strangers can enter and discover themselves as created free; free to sing their own songs, speak their own languages, dance their own dances; free also to leave and follow their own vocations. Hospitality is not a subtle invitation to adopt the life style of the host, but the gift of a chance for the guest to find his own (p.p. 71-72).

A huge part of my ability to persevere in the process was my use of Ignatian prayer methods, which deepened my emotional intimacy with God and Jesus. I prayed the scriptures, hearing God's loving words penetrate my heart of fear. "Do not be afraid. I am with you. I will help you. I will uphold you with my strong right hand" (Isaiah 41:10). When overcome with strong emotions of agony and anguish, I would pray the words of the psalmist and feel God's response in his/her presence. As well, I was getting to know the human Jesus through praying action passages in the gospels. I saw that he had experienced all the human emotions. He knew what it was like to be human. He knew what my experience was like, and I could feel him with me in it.

Most of all, my image of God had shifted from the taskmaster demanding more and more of me, to a God who loved me even in my weakness, who was there to love and support me, to be my source of strength and replenishment (see Poem 1 in Appendix B). As I made this shift in my image of God, my paradigm of prayer shifted from a required discipline to a time of intimacy, a time to experience being loved by God, a time of drawing on God's strength for the day, a time for centering in my Source.

Ignatian contemplation was my first foray into using imaging or the imagination in prayer. At this same time, I began reading two Jungian Christian authors, Morton Kelsey and John Sanford . I read all about dreams and the way dreams are messages from the unconscious. One incident that Morton Kelsey (1980) related stood out because I had never heard of anything like this. He describes how he imaged or personified a dark mood in order to free himself from it. One day, I experienced a very dark heavy mood descending on me, so I decided to try this technique of active imagination. I closed my eyes and let an image of how I felt emerge from within me. My image was a giant spider web to which I was stuck. On the other side of the web, there was a huge black spider throwing loops and loops of web over me, binding me with the sticky coils. As the spider approached to kill me, I cried out to Jesus to save me. Immediately, from the centre of the web, a large crystal or diamond arose and shot out a ray of light or a laser beam, zapping the spider and killing it (P.J. May 11, 1986). Instantly I was freed of the dark heavy mood. It was astounding!

I believe this use of the imagination and imagery was the beginning of something new in my personality. For most of the first part of my life, I had operated in the logical, rational, linear world. Now I seemed to be moving into the right brain, starting to appreciate the symbolic, the intuitive, the imaginal, and the mystical worlds. As well, I had moved from an extroverted, doing type of behavior to spending much time in solitude, silence, prayer, retreat, and inner work—more a “being” type of modality. I was allowing myself to feel my emotions in order to discern what they had to tell me. Here I see the inner child in the original vision having symbolized the birth of something new, the creative, feeling, right-brain side of me.

The Prairie Years: After the Crisis

Following the two years of my negotiating the crisis part of midlife, my husband felt called to the Anglican priesthood, and we moved with our four children to a city in the prairies. Here too, I see the hand of God at work through the motif of the child archetype. In his article, “The Psychology of the Child Archetype” (1959b), Jung writes, “‘Child’ means something evolving towards independence. This it cannot do without detaching itself from its origins: abandonment is therefore a necessary condition, not just a concomitant symptom” (p.168). Abrams (1990) writes about the experience of abandonment being an initiation into life, setting us in motion on our journey (p.61). I had experienced abandonment and betrayal, but the pain of it acted as labour pains, birthing me into something new. I could let go of my attachments to my parish community. I could move willingly to begin an incredibly new and exciting journey.

I planned to return to teaching in order to finance my husband’s return to school and to support our family, but it was not to be. Friends, fellow parishioners, and relatives decided to support us financially as Bob moved through theological college. In a series of synchronicities, I began auditing three courses, which, at the urging of one of my professors, I changed to working for credit. I was back at school, loving every minute of it. I loved especially the spiritual formation and the pastoral theology courses. I was in my element. No longer feeling powerless or depressed, no longer feeling locked in to fundamentalist ideas, I was free to explore, to grow and learn and express my ideas.

I had been apprehensive at the thought of moving from B.C. because I feared moving to a spiritual wilderness, but it proved to be the opposite. I discovered a retreat centre in our city that offered a training program for spiritual directors the following year.

I applied and was accepted. The program had a significant focus on working your own spiritual or inner journey consisting of: awareness exercises, personality systems, art making, imaginative exercises, and focusing. This provided a wonderful balance to my academic studies, as well as an environment for my inner work.

Connections with Jungian theory

At this point, I believe I was in the latter part of Stein's liminal phase of midlife transition. "The phase of the midlife transition when this pit is entered and when the process of dissolving the old psychological structures and reforming them around a new psychological core takes place is the liminal period" (1983, p.108). I had experienced a dark pit, a death. My question throughout the crucifixion period was, "Who am I?" I had to die to my image of myself as the strong one who could handle anything, who could do anything with my strength of will. Now I knew myself to be both strong and weak. I too had emotions of hurt, sadness, fear. I too could be helpless and powerless. Moreover, it was acceptable to need God, to be dependent on God.

However, the process of individuation was far from over. Stein (1983) describes the liminal stage: "Here a radical sort of introversion and immersion in the unconscious has taken place, and the inner world consequently becomes more real and charged with energy than the outer adaptive context" (p.120). Moving from a focus on my outer world, I felt an inner call to pursue my inner journey; it seemed to be my spiritual or soul path.

Our move was the beginning of the reintegration stage of my midlife transition. I was thriving in the outer world of academics at theological college, but I was balancing that with inner process work in some of the Pastoral courses and in my spiritual direction training. Stein (1983) warns about the danger of this period when the ego tends to want to

“solve the problem of the opposites and of the psychic tension they create by accepting one side (and identifying with it) and rejecting the other (and repressing it)” (p.138). The Self desires the integration of the opposites. I believe I was being true to the Self as I held the tension between my inner and outer worlds. At times, that was difficult because I felt the tension or pull of each.

The prairie years were an incredible time of personal growth. Individuation, as defined by Stein (2006a), is

an innate tendency—call it a drive, an impulse, or ... an imperative—for a living being to incarnate itself fully, to become truly itself within the empirical world of time and place, and in the case of humans to become aware of who and what they are” (pp.xii-xiii).

I was through the crisis time and embarked on this journey of individuation, finding out who I was, starting to live out who I was.

Theological shifts away from the collective stance

Theologically, I moved away from my rigid conservative stance. Jung considered one source of the persona to be “oriented ...by the expectations and demands of society” (Jung, 1971c, p.464). The charismatic renewal group to which I belonged had shaped strongly my Christian persona. In James Fowler’s (1984) stages of faith, I had been at the Synthetic-Conventional stage where I held the strong values and beliefs of the conservative charismatic renewal. “In this stage one is embedded in her/his faith outlook, and one’s identity is derived from membership in a circle of face-to-face relations”(p.60). Now I was beginning to examine these previously unexamined beliefs and values. I wrestled with my concept of sin in regards to divorce, homosexuality, sexual sin: researching, praying, wrestling with God on these issues. My own experience of helplessness and struggle was a doorway to compassion for others. My focus was less on

Paul's letters setting out moral behavior and more on how Jesus was pastorally with those he met. I no longer believed in a black and white world or in willpower Christianity. I was leaning more to the concept of opening to God in order to let God work in me. My own prayer experience led me to realize that Christianity was not so much about following the rules and morality but about God's love for his people.

Fowler (1984) named this stage, Individuative-Reflective Faith and saw two fundamental movements at the heart of a transition to this stage:

- (1) There must be a shift in the sense of grounding and orientation of the self. From a definition of self derived from one's relations and roles and the network of expectations that go with them, the self must now begin to be and act from a new quality of self-authorization. There must be the emergence of an "executive ego"—a differentiation of the self *behind* the personae (masks) one wears and the roles one bears, from the composite of roles and relations through which the self is expressed.
- (2) There must be an objectification and critical choosing of one's beliefs, values, and commitments, which come to be taken as a systemic unity (p.62).

I was beginning to trust my own experience of God in my prayer, rather than what others said God was like.

I was becoming more grounded in my sense of self, but I was still in process. In my journals, I noticed a struggle going on between wanting to be liked by everyone, wanting to belong, and the strong inner calling to be real, true to myself. This was particularly intense at theological college concerning the women in the program who were strong feminists. This was my first encounter with feminism or inclusive language, and my first reaction was negative. I could not identify with these angry women at all, yet I also did not seem to fit with the other spouses of men training for the priesthood. This was not an uncommon experience for me—feeling that I did not fit with other women. I wrote, "I don't like myself because it seems as if I belong nowhere" (P.J.Feb.12/89).

Self-discovery

The Enneagram: An important piece in the growth of my inner self and discovery of who I am came through the personality system called the Enneagram. Here, I recognized myself as an “8” type personality: a leader, seeing life as a battle, valuing truth, honesty and justice, appearing always as the strong one, fearing vulnerability, feeling anger as my prime emotion. This system seemed to name who I was. No wonder I felt like I did not belong with other women. This personality type is what our society says a man should be, not a woman. *It was ok to be me!* There were other women who were “8’s” as well. *There was nothing wrong with me!*

I began to work with this system, realizing that not all people approached life the same way I did. My husband was in the relationship or *heart* centre in the Enneagram system, so truth was relative to him. He would not tell the truth if he thought it would impair relationship. For me, truth was the most important value. How could you have a relationship if there was a lack of truth? The Enneagram helped us to understand each other so much better. I began to understand how God has created each of us to be our unique selves. We are not all the same, and our diversity is wonderful.

Through this new insight, I became aware of the source of my resistance to identifying with feminist women. I hated to identify with “the oppressed” or “the victim role.” This went against the grain of my “8” persona, one who is strong, who can do it alone. I was a feminist, but I realized I did not hate men or want to get back at them; I tended to identify more with men.

Amazon archetype: Closely related to the characteristics of the “8” personality is Linda

Leonard's (1982) description of the armored Amazon. Leonard, in her book on healing the father-daughter relationship, describes the effects of a detached father on a daughter:

...if the father is not there for his daughter in a committed and responsible way, encouraging the development of her intellectual, professional, and spiritual side and valuing the uniqueness of her femininity, there results an injury to the daughter's feminine spirit" (1982, p.10).

Leonard discovered in her work two conflicting patterns existing in the psyches of wounded women: the "eternal girl" and the "armored¹ Amazon" (p.15).

The "eternal girl" or *puella* was not one that I recognized in myself until I entered this midlife crisis time. As I read over my journals from this time, I recognized emerging characteristics of this pattern: the "helpless victim caught in feelings of self-pity, depression and inertia" (p.16), feelings of wanting someone to take care of me, feelings of being helpless.

Leonard's "armored Amazon" pattern was more familiar to me:

In reacting against the negligent father such women often identify on the ego level with the masculine or fathering functions themselves. ... So they build up a strong masculine ego identity through achievement or fighting for a cause or being in control and laying down the law themselves, perhaps as a mother who rules the family as though it were a business firm" (p.17).

Leonard's description very much fit who I was. My father was a good provider but was largely absent emotionally and even physically as he managed a grocery store and played golf in his free time. Always, I sought to please him, to become what he wanted me to be, until my twenties when he fell off the pedestal. One pattern that Leonard describes is a daughter's reaction against the father and even men in general because they have proved unreliable. This seemed to be one root of my mistrust of men and my judgment that men were useless in an emotional crisis.

¹ Leonard uses the American spelling, "armor," whereas I use the Canadian, "armour."

However, at midlife, I experienced Ken, my spiritual director, who truly was there for me emotionally and spiritually. That awakened the inner child who wanted to be close to her father, to feel protected and safe and delighted in. At the same time, I was very achievement oriented and ran my family with a strict routine and discipline. I was much more the disciplinarian, organizer, and financial overseer than my husband. In many ways, he was like my father—a good provider but largely not involved in the emotional problems in the family or the discipline.

Leonard goes on to describe this type of woman:

In effect, she is trapped in an ‘Amazon armor,’ a powerful persona which may not correspond to her basic personality since it has been formed out of a reaction and not out of her inner feminine center. Quite often she is cut off from her feeling and receptivity and the strength of her feminine instincts” (p.61).

This certainly seems to be a description of my Queen Boadicea inner part. It also describes how I was before my midlife crisis, so out of touch with many of my feelings.

When reading Leonard’s descriptions of some of the different modes of behavior manifested by an “armored Amazon” in reaction to a negligent father, I resonated with most of them. I saw that I had taken on the “superstar” role in the area of academics and spirituality, areas where my father did not succeed or had no interest. As well, I saw my tendency to over-work and over-achieve in my academic studies. I graduated at the top of my class at theological college, collecting numerous prizes for excellence.

I also saw myself in the “dutiful daughter” role described by Leonard. This was a role I was performing before my burn-out/midlife crisis. I was being overly responsible and dutiful as a Christian—in the church and towards family and friends. There was no room for fun or play or creativity. Once, I had a dream of a dancing maiden in a yellow

and green dress trying to get a very stiff, proper, old-fashioned, Presbyterian minister to dance with her but to no avail. I believe this minister figure symbolized an inner attitude of duty, properness, seriousness, and responsibility.

The final pattern of Leonard's with which I identified was the "warrior queen," described as "a strong and determined fighter" (p.75). "In the fighter pattern, the father and often all other men are rejected and despised as weak, and the daughter feels that she alone is strong enough to do what has to be done" (p.77). I did not despise all men, but I certainly had a judgment that, in the emotional/relational area, men were useless. Even during my teaching career, I thought that men were quite useless in organizing and carrying through with programs. When my mother died, it was I who held the family together, who was there for Dad— far more than he was there for my siblings or me. My mother had always been the one to handle any emotional crises in the family; Dad was a good provider but was very passive and uninvolved in family dynamics.

I believe my initial vision of the adult me splitting in half releasing the child me could easily describe the armour of the Amazon falling off to reveal the eternal girl. Leonard sees these two patterns as often existing together, alternating from one to the other, in women experiencing a father wound. I was an oldest daughter so followed more consciously the pattern of the armored Amazon (a common occurrence Leonard has noticed in eldest daughters).

Leonard also describes the armored Amazon's desire to be in control because it makes things seem to be safe and secure. Often, along with that control may go "an overdose of responsibility, duty, and a feeling of exhaustion" (p.79). This certainly described my situation at the time of my midlife crisis. I was terrified of letting go of

control, and safety was something I longed to feel. In many of the dialogues with my inner child, she expresses a need for safety.

Leonard goes on to state that the armored Amazon needs to “accept her shadow of weakness” (p.81). Her persona is strength and power (like the “8” on the Enneagram), but “underneath that shell of strength one often finds helplessness and dependence and an overpowering need that can consume those around her” (p.81). This describes so well what had happened to me and what was emerging in my prayer. I needed consistently to accept and embrace my weakness—to let God be God, not me.

Image and art making: The next phase in my individuation process was the opening up of image making and art making to work with inner psychic contents. One significant time during my spiritual direction training, we were asked to sit with the question, “Who am I?” and let our body tell us who we were. In my imagination, I saw a mother eagle, flying, soaring up high, so free. Next, I, as the eagle, swooped down, landed on my nest and began feeding my young, content to be the mother, nurturing, protecting, safe. Then, once again I was in flight, soaring, circling, seeking. This meditation showed me I am both—mother and strong eagle. They are not in contradiction. God seemed to be saying, “It’s ok to be a fierce mother!” (Reflection Paper, May, 1990). It felt like such an affirmation of the two sides of me: my fierce warrior side and the nurturing side.

The art making began with getting in touch with the inner child and drawing her with the non-dominant hand. As I tried to imagine a path in my childhood, I couldn’t find one not filled with fear. I was shocked, not conscious of living with so much fear as a child. But then I remembered my very active imagination that kept me constantly vigilant, fearing that Indians, bears, cougars, or wolves might jump out and pounce on

me. The child who emerged looked like a waif or like little Orphan Annie (see Figure 1).

I realize her fear is my fear, so I ask her, in the dialogue, what made her scared.

Child: I'm scared when I'm out of the place where I'm supposed to be.

Adult me: Yes, like when I'm out of my boundaries. I feel safe within my boundaries. I only can go somewhere unknown if I'm with someone. Even then I'm scared because I don't really trust anyone. Do you trust anyone?

Child: No. No one is completely safe. Just when I feel safe with someone, they yell at me or get mad and I don't know why. I need to be on guard every minute—watching—making sure I'm ready for the attack.

Adult: Yes, I know. It's the same for me. *I feel really upset, despairing.* We need to get rid of this fear. ... I'm so tired of living this way, being on guard all the time. I want to let it go. (Spiritual Direction Journal, Nov.11/89)

I go on trying to convince her that we need to trust God, but she's not sure she trusts **me**.

The second time I drew her, only one eye was peeking out from behind a tree (see Figure 2). This is a younger child self, judging from the one word answers in the dialogue, very shy and hiding because she does not feel safe. Another time she says, "I hate myself. In the subsequent dialogue, she tells me she longs to be held and safe in her dad's arms. He does hold her but only at her initiation. "I always had to seek him out. I had to please him, to talk about what he wanted to talk about." (P.J. Sept 15/89).

Clearly, there was inner wounding that needed to be healed. The child part of me felt unloved, that there must be something wrong with her. She also did not feel safe and secure. However, this pain and fear was often expressed through the armoured Amazon or "8" behavior of anger, strength and control. Inside, I wrestled in agony with these two parts of myself. On retreat, I try to let go of all battling: My prayer/poem:

Lord God—you made me!
So often, I wrestle and rebel against my very nature.
I think, "Why am I this way?"
I despise my very being:

This being that strives with fleshly strength, that strays after foreign gods;
 This being that rages in violent anger and separates itself in arrogance and pride;
 This being that is too lazy for your discipline,
 And in sloth neglects all that gives life.
 How can God love such a one as that?

But then I remember...
 You **made** me; **You** made **me!**
 You created me this way!
 Why so imperfect? But it is not for me to question God.
 Your ways are above my ways;
 Your thoughts are above my thoughts.
 You are **God!**

Nestled in the palm of your hand,
 In you I live and move and have my being!
 Thank-you Lord for your immense love.
 To love one such as I,
 To love me with all my defects and rottenness—
 I can scarce comprehend it.
 But it is so.

This struggle between knowing and experiencing God's love and feeling self-hatred continued for some time. I decided to image this self-hatred part of me and to dialogue with her. I pictured her dark and dripping with slime. Her name was Self-Loathing.

Self-Loathing: You think you're so good, but you're not. Just look at you!
 You've never been able to measure up.

Me: Measure up to what?

S.L.: To the standards that are set. You're never good enough. You're not a good person like you want to be.
Thoughts flashing through my head: Taking my clothes off in front of the neighbor kids when I was four years old, swearing, telling dirty jokes, disobeying.

S.L.: No one was ever happy with you. They always wanted you to be better or different.
Thoughts: No one ever delighted in me as me. I always have to do more.

S.L.: You were never good enough and you never will be.
Thoughts: Mum telling me I'm boring, selfish. Why didn't you get all A's?

Me: Yes, God delights in me and loves me the way I am. God made me the way I am.

S.L.: Oh sure, you don't measure up there either. Look at you. Your Christian life is a mess. God expects better than that.

Me: No, he loves me the way I am. Come on out into the light of his love, feel his love.

S.L.: No, I don't want to. *Shrinks back.*

Me: You'll be changed, transformed. Come on.

S.L.: *So tense and resistant, yet feeling God.*

God: How can you hate part of my creation? How can you hate one of my precious children? That's what you're doing when you hate yourself. Come and be loved (P.J. May22/90).

Connections with Jungian theory

Stein (1998a) speaks about the Jungian concept of shadow in the personality, "Shadow induces shame, a sense of unworthiness, a feeling of uncleanness, of being soiled and unwanted" (p.122). This describes perfectly this slime-covered image of myself, named Self-Loathing. One of the tasks of individuation is the bringing to consciousness as well as the integration of shadow aspects of oneself. Stein (2006b), in his article, "Individuation," comments:

In this stage of integration, a strong need arises to join the opposites of persona (good person) and shadow (bad person), of masculine and feminine, of child and adult, of right brain and left brain, of thinking and feeling, of introversion and extraversion" (p.212).

Stein (2006a) also emphasizes the importance during individuation of integrating "figures and energies that are emerging continually from the depths of the psyche" (p.xiv).

During these prairie years, as I continued on my inner journey of individuation, many inner figures appeared in my dreams and in my working with active imagination.

An important synthesis occurred during a retreat with a Jesuit priest called Harold. Two images of myself had emerged during visualization exercises: a pouncing tiger and to my surprise and disbelief, a beautiful red rose bud opening up to become a full-blown rose. In my all-or-nothing style, I would have prayed with one image and tried to eliminate the other, but Harold advised me to stay with both images, to ask how they can go together. As I prayed with the two images, in my imagination, I saw the tiger pouncing on the rose:

Suddenly the rose is huge, and the tiger is falling, falling into the depths of the rose. The depths of the rose are very deep and mysterious. We land (the tiger and I) on softness, richness, luxuriance—like velvet. We are surrounded with the beautiful scent of the rose, my favourite fragrance. The tiger is now a playful kitten. I cuddle him, pet him, play with him until he purrs.

Next, the tiger smells the rose, and it acts on him like catnip. He becomes like Tigger in the Winnie-the-Pooh books—very bouncy and playful. His energy has become play, bouncing down the road. Tiggers like roses! (P.J. July 18/90).

Incredible feelings of playfulness were released after this experience of prayer. Something was coming into balance. Next, I heard God calling me by name, “You are my Tiger-Rose! You are mine, precious to me. I delight in you—all of you, everything about you!” (Art Journal (A.J.), July 19/90). In my art journal, I drew the images of the tiger and the rose. The drawing seemed to have a numinous quality (see Figure 3). I was tiger: fierce, protective, strong, wild, free, **and** I was rose: delicate, fragile, easily bruised—yet sensitive, deep, rich, mysterious, soft, whole, centred. (P.J. July 19/90).

The union of opposites is an important part of Jung’s individuation process. Here was the archetype of the playful, creative child emerging from the union of opposites in

my psyche. The child did not appear in an image, but the coming together of the opposite sides of my personality released a tremendous playful energy. As I moved in that energy while still on retreat, I climbed trees, pretended to be an eagle as I ran down the riverbank, and fantasized about pinching a very image-conscious priest's bum. I was amazed at my outrageous thoughts!

The images of tiger and rose stayed with me for a long time. At first, I was intrigued by the tiger image. I loved the strength, fierceness, and wildness of the tiger. I discovered that the tiger was the symbolic animal for the "8" personality on the Enneagram. Cats were also my favourite animal and appeared often in my dreams. Later the rose became more significant. It seemed to represent my feminine nature—the part of me that I had hidden or repressed. This was a beautiful part of me, but it was fragile, delicate, tender and easily bruised. I was afraid of that bruising, that fragility. Some time afterwards, I had a significant dream that continued to unfold for years.

Ruby-rose ring dream: My friend Judy is a jeweler in this dream. We are standing in her store at closing time, and I am helping her put things away. Suddenly, she says, "Barbara, I want to give you a ring. You have been so good to me. Here, pick one." She takes out some rings. Most have small inexpensive stones. We take them over to the open door and hold them up to the light. Suddenly, I see a ruby ring, so beautiful, large, with petals cut in the shape of a rose. I hold it up to the light and admire its beauty. I begin to try it on, when suddenly, I notice that there is a group of men gathering, watching us. They look ominous and threatening. I say to Judy, "I think you need to do something. Those men are coming closer." Quickly, she reaches out with her foot and slams the glass front door shut. But I'm still terrified—sure that they're going to break in and rob us.

They're gathering in front of the large glass windows, staring at us. I try to appear assured, not afraid, yet I'm terrified. I feel the presence of evil. I go to the back of the store (Dad's old store) to phone the police. Then I go into Dad's inner office (with no windows), still acting nonchalant, and I lock the door (a thick wooden door). I am still terrified when I wake up.

Reflection: The rose ring seems to be a symbol of my femininity or even of wholeness, a symbol of the Self in Jungian terms. The rose is like a mandala with overlapping petals radiating out from a centre. Jung himself drew mandalas to express his inner situation. He writes, "Only gradually did I discover what the mandala really is: ...the self, the wholeness of the personality, which, if all goes well is harmonious, but which cannot tolerate self-deceptions" (Jung, 1961, pp.195-196). My dream seems to be about revealing my true self in its feminine expression, bringing it to the light, letting the light shine through it, revealing its beauty and transparency. What about the men who seem to be threatening? Could this be my negative animus? Jung (1953/1966) states, "The animus does not appear as one person, but as a plurality of persons" (p.207). What is this dream saying to me? A part of me is fearful of allowing my true self to emerge. Is the animus saying, "Get out of sight! It's not safe to expose this part of you"?

Jungian theory stresses the importance of listening to dreams because they express the unconscious. Johnson (1986) writes, "Dreams are dynamic mosaics, composed of symbols that express the movements, conflicts, interactions, and developments of the great energy systems within the unconscious" (p.19). My unconscious, through this dream, was revealing to me the blocks to full individuation, to full expression of the Self.

My Thirty-Day Ignatian Retreat

Having completed my Masters of Theological Studies degree, I embarked on a very significant part of my inward journey. I made a 30-day silent retreat participating in the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola. Harold, the Jesuit who had directed me earlier, was my director on this long retreat. The Ignatian Exercises consist of a very definite structure, praying with scripture through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. It is vigorous, consisting of five one-hour prayer periods a day. There is a call to full surrender to following Christ, expressed in the final **Take and Receive Prayer**:

Take, Lord and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and my entire will—all that I have and call my own. You have given it all to me. To you, Lord, I return it. Everything is yours; do with it what you will. Give me only your love and your grace. That is enough for me (Fleming, 1978, p.141).

My retreat began with a significant struggle. Right away, I reacted to the retreat house statues of Jesus and Mary. Jesus had an oiled ringlet beard, and Mary had her hands clasped in a pious prayer stance. In my journal,

I cried out to God telling him how angry I felt towards religion and the church. I said I could not accept him if he was white and pure with a curled beard—gentle Jesus, meek and mild. I could only embrace him if he was passionate, caring, living in the sweat and shit and struggle of the world. I felt the same about Mary. I cannot relate to gentle Mary, ever virgin, ever pure, without sin. I don't believe it. I think she was terrified about being an unmarried pregnant woman—terrified of the consequences—being stoned or rejected by Joseph. But in the midst of her fear and uncertainty, she trusted and said yes.

So why do we set up Jesus and Mary and the saints in this way in order to cut them off from us? I hate it and want to smash all these white plaster statues that confine me and condemn me and make me feel inadequate (P.J. Apr. 29/91).

Harold was great as I expressed my reactions to him. He said I was reacting to the atmosphere of the place; he totally agreed with me. I felt very accepted.

The white plaster statue image recurred the next day as I struggled with my fear of totally opening to God's love. I was hearing God's words, "I have chosen you" and "Fear not for I have redeemed you," (Isaiah 43:1). I pondered the meaning of "redeemed": liberate (as from slavery or captivity) by paying a price, repair, restore. Then I thought of the white plaster statues (personae) of me as good wife, good mother, good Christian, good minister's wife. I wrote:

I smash these statues. I am redeemed, liberated from bondage to these false idols. I am always so self-conscious, thinking, "Are people accepting me? What are they thinking of me? Am I wearing the appropriate clothes?" I need to break from bondage to others' opinions and look only to God. Be aware of God's opinion and be who God is calling me to be: authentic, real, living for God (P.J. Apr. 30/91).

The ruby-rose ring dream came to mind the next day and I heard Jesus say,

Do not be afraid to come out of that locked office room—to be your whole self, including your femininity and sexuality—you, Barbara Tiger-Rose, Gentle One—as **woman**. I have made you **woman**. I have created you in my image as **woman**, and I saw that it was very good! Do not be afraid to come out into the light before all men, and let my light shine through your essence, through your beauty, through your rose-self. Don't be afraid to come out into life with all its

temptations, its dangers, its joys and fulfillment. Live life to the fullest; participate with your entire being. Don't lock yourself away behind rigid barriers and locked doors. Yes, there is pain in life. There is bitterness with the sweetness. But experience it to the full. Trust in me, little one (P.J. May 1/91).

The sexuality issue emerges again

At this point in the retreat, I was praying about my propensity for sin in order to experience the grace of knowing myself to be a loved sinner. Of course, my sexual sin past emerged as well as my fears of ever falling into that kind of sin again. I realized that, in many ways, I had locked away my sexuality and femininity in order to be safe.

I've set strict, rigid boundaries and borders around myself. I have watched myself like a hawk. I have locked myself away; now I am being called to come forth and I am terrified! This is sin—locking oneself away from love and life in order to be safe (P.J. May 1/91).

I was amazed at the re-frame God gave me during this prayer. God manifested understanding of my depth of despair after the death of my mother when I was only 22; he saw me seeking life and love and joy and freedom from pain and death. "Don't you think I knew you couldn't show your hurt and weakness at home, so you sought to be cared for and cherished and protected elsewhere?" (P.J. May 2/91).

Next, in my colloquy with Jesus, I saw the following: a big sign with **Sexual Sin** written on it with black letters, then a big brush whitewashing out those letters and writing appearing in blue letters: **LIFE!** I saw it happen, and I cried and cried. I heard Jesus ask me, "Can you celebrate that part of your life?"

I prayed with Luke 15, the parable of the prodigal son. I saw the celebration held when the younger son returns home. I felt God's joy and celebration for me as I returned home. Then I saw balloons rising and the word, "CELEBRATE" in red letters (see Figure 4). I knew myself as a "loved sinner," and I knew the overwhelming love and forgiveness of God. Finally, I could put this guilt and shame behind me.

God was not finished with the sexuality issue yet. Throughout the entire retreat, the themes of love, trust, sexuality, and intimacy kept arising. The rose image representing love and vulnerability and femininity presented itself often in the colloquies with Jesus or God the Father. First, the rose was shown to me as a sign of God's love:

Spiral, many-faceted, deep, beautiful, soft, wonderful fragrance. As you go around the spiral, from one petal to another, you experience God's love from one person or in one particular way. Then, that experience with that petal or person comes to an end, and you move on to the next one. It does not make sense to look back to the former petal trying to receive love from that one. God's love is being manifested through another petal, another person, another way, another perspective. And sometimes, there are gaps between the petals bringing emptiness and loneliness and darkness (P.J. May 2/91).

I realized that this was a call to what Ignatius calls *active indifference* or *detachment*. As I look to God as the source of love, I need to be open to seeing it and receiving it from whatever source God chooses to use. All is gift, freely given and needing to be freely received, but never clung to. It is like the manna in the desert: the Israelites were provided with it daily as a source of nourishment, but they were not to store it up or it ended up full of worms.

As I experienced the tremendous love and acceptance of God while praying the Prodigal Son story, I found myself filled with fear. I realized I feared being loved. I journaled:

Me to God: I am not comfortable with love. I want order, structure, and control. Love is out of control, crazy chaos, waves of unpredictable intensity, heights of ecstasy and depths of bitterness and loneliness, passionate desire, longing, longing, death and life in all its fullness.

God: My love is not the kind you fear. My love is everlasting, steadfast. It is protecting, caring, enfolding, deep and steady. I enfold you in my wings—like inside the rose. Rest in me. Sink deep in my love. Trust. Be enfolded in peace and warmth and rest (P.J. May 2/91).

As I entered into closer intimacy with Jesus and God, I was also experiencing intense intimacy and closeness with Harold, my director. The spiritual director/directee relationship can be one of deep intimacy because directees share their most vulnerable selves: their struggles, their feelings, and their spirituality. Once, I listened to a tape by Scott Peck where he stated that spirituality and sexuality are very closely related. That statement stayed with me because I have found it to be true. The mystics often described their closeness and union with God in sexual terms. A friend of mine who also made a 30-day retreat experienced strong sexual feelings during it. This is my prelude to saying that I too felt sexual feelings towards Harold as we deepened the intimacy in our sharing. I felt very perturbed over this as I was married, and he was a Jesuit priest. Moreover, what was also disturbing was that he was not a person to whom I would normally be attracted. I tried to sort out my feelings:

I have been rocked most of the night with feelings of attraction to Harold. Feel real love and caring for him—as if I want to hold him and have him hold me. But it is so weird. It is like some deep down innocent untouched part of me is being

touched, and I am terrified! It is almost as if I would like to flee right into sexual lust or an affair in order to avoid connecting on this other level. (P.J. May 7/91).

This proved to open up a place of insight. I realized that in my past, after the death of my mother, I entered into sexual relationships with the men I was dating in order to avoid the excruciating intensity of intimacy. I was afraid of being loved, so I moved to the level of sexual relations to avoid love. It sounds very confused, but it was true for me.

I realized that I felt many of the same fears when I began spiritual direction with Ken and began to be vulnerable to him. Yet it seemed obvious to me that God had put Ken in my life. At the time, I had felt tricked by God into agreeing to go to spiritual direction, but during those years of direction, I experienced through Ken the unconditional love of the Father. I knew God the Father loved me even in my weakness, helplessness and neediness. So what was this Harold attraction about?

This time I think the purpose of God is for me to experience the love of Jesus as intimate friend or brother for the whole of me as woman. I need to enter into the relationship as a whole woman, with every part integrated, not holding back or protecting any part. I think this love needs to be *philia*, perhaps leading to *agape*. Tyrrell (1989) summarizes Rollo May, stating that “*Philia* or friendship is “resting” and delighting in the being of another person; it asks nothing of the other person except that he or she be himself or herself” (p.106) (P.J. May 8/91).

Connections with Jungian theory

Leonard (1982) writes about the Amazon woman needing a softening of her armour in order to find “a creative relationship to the feminine in herself and the feminine in men” (p.83). Because an Amazon woman has initially identified with the masculine,

Leonard suggests that perhaps “her armor can be softened by a loving masculine figure” (p.83). For Leonard an image of “The Man with Heart” came up in her dreams—a positive animus figure who is caring, warm, and strong and likes her as a woman. She gives a full description of his qualities, embodying all that a positive father relationship would provide, and concludes with, “He is the soul-mate, the inner friend and lover who accompanies a woman on the journey and adventure of life” (p.114).

An inner man with a heart did not appear in my dreams, but rather appeared in my life circumstances. The first person was a minister, Mr. Long, who was pastor at the time of my confirmation. He was extremely significant in my life in that he was the first person that really “saw” me. He saw my spiritual side and my leadership abilities at a time when I had no idea that I could be a leader. Moreover, he delighted in me! As my cousin and I came out of church, he would put his arm around each of us, look at us with a beaming smile and ask us, “So how are my two favourite girls today?” I felt so appreciated and accepted in my hometown church, and much of that was due to him. He moved away, but when my mother died, he drove 150 miles for the funeral, took me in his arms, hugged me, and said, “If only you’d called, I would have come!” It was the best thing anyone could have said to me! At that time of my life, I did not know that I could ask anyone to be there for me. I believed I had to do it alone.

Ken was another man with a heart, accepting me in my pain and weakness and giving me the tools of prayer. Now, there was Harold. He was more representative of the feminine in men. He was extremely introverted, quiet, gentle, and protective. Before my midlife crisis, I would have discounted Harold as wimpy and useless because I only valued strength. Now, I was seeing that there were many ways of being strong. Because

he was gentle and self-effacing, yet wise in spiritual direction, I began to trust him and open myself to caring for him. I was experiencing him as soul-friend. At the same time, I felt that this was dangerous territory and needed to be kept in the light.

My call to ministry: The second week of the Exercises required me, as a disciple, to follow Jesus in his public ministry, asking for the grace to know him more intimately, to follow him more nearly, and to love him more dearly. I saw Jesus' gentleness and compassion with people and realized he was not calling me to be at his side in order to do battle against the spiritual forces or to proclaim the kingdom. No, I was being called to "be with" the sick, the wounded and the broken in their pain, bringing my openness and compassion and deep caring in order to draw out life from their situations.

Mary: You have a passionate, compassionate, caring heart. All your tiger passion will be used in deep caring and a "being with."

Jesus: this is a time for your gentleness, your womanliness. You will stay close beside me and be with me. It is a time of "being with," not doing. Learn from me and stay close to me so you will be safe and I can protect you from harm.

Father: All your passion and strength is good. It is how I created you but now you will learn how to use it in a different way (P.J. May 10/91).

This call was revealed in more detail in my prayer with the raising of Lazarus from the dead. In the colloquy with Jesus, he was very specific in his instructions:

Jesus: This is how I am going to use you—to call people into life, to call people out of death, out of the cave where they stinketh, out into the light, into life. You have that deep caring and love for them, and I will use you in this way. You are gifted for this. However, your weakness is that you will see where they are bound and where they stink, and you will want to try to deal with that before they have come out into life and light. They cannot be unbound first. They must come out

into life and light first. Remember that! This is a time for using your loving, caring, and deep compassion, not your capacity for challenging and truthfulness and exposure (P.J. May 14/91).

This was a very profound moment in my retreat. I was surprised by this call and by the warning. Later, I saw this unfold in my ministry of spiritual direction.

Jesus and the inner child: Another significant prayer period was with the passage of Jesus and the children. I was there as a child in the scene watching Jesus lifting the children up, swinging them, tossing them in the air, absolutely delighting in them, even rolling around with them on the grass. I was standing there feeling very shy, but Jesus saw me and invited me to come. Then it was my turn. He spoke to me of all the times in my childhood when I worshipped him, when I believed, when I made acts of love.

Jesus: I have known you from the beginning. I was listening when you talked to me. I knew the innermost secrets of your heart. I knew you in that huge inner world that you shared with no one: your sensitivity, your awareness and perception, your hurts and bruises, your joys, your enjoyment of my creation, your worship of me. I saw you grown, and now I delight in you as a woman. I rejoice at you becoming the person I am calling you to be. Keep coming into my love to be healed, transformed, and made whole. Then you too will be love—my love, to shine as a light in the world (P.J. May 12/91).

Praying through the third week of the Exercises was intense and painful as I journeyed with Jesus through his passion and death. I deeply felt his love for me and all humanity as he endured the suffering and rejection that led finally to his crucifixion. Our

call was to “be with” Jesus as he went through this time, and as I did that, I felt intensely identified with him in his pain. A poem emerged (see Poem 2, in Appendix B).

Poetry seemed to be a way that the creative child archetype was manifesting itself. Whenever I was deep within myself in touch with my feelings, a poem would spontaneously emerge. After writing this poem, this question arose within me, “What does love mean to me?” I see Pilate saying, “What is truth?” and using this as a cop-out, as a way of avoiding responsibility. He knew the answer but was afraid or reluctant to make a stand for the truth because it might jeopardize his comfort, position, power. I wonder... is this what I’m doing when I say, “What is love?” Am I avoiding love? Do I avoid standing for love, committing to love, out of self-protection? (P.J. May 20/91). I wrestle with these questions and come to the realization that neither Bob nor I know how to love or be loved. Both of us are afraid of intimacy and vulnerability.

Praying the passage on the disciples going to Jesus’ tomb and meeting the two angels there, I was struck by the words said to the disciples, “Why are you looking for the living among the dead?” God spoke to me through these words. So much of my fear around trusting to love came from my rehashing experiences of hurt and betrayal from the past. Why was I digging up the moldering old stinking corpses of the past? That is not where the risen Christ is.

Finally, using Ignatian contemplation, I prayed the passage of Jesus’ resurrection appearance on the shore of the sea of Tiberius (Jn. 21).

The disciples are seated with Jesus around a fire as he cooks their breakfast. I am on the outside, not sure that I would be welcome, not sure that I’m really one of

them, that I truly belong. I feel more comfortable on the outer circle, listening, feeling the closeness, but still able to run away at any minute.

But Jesus calls me to him. He holds me and looks deep into my eyes.

Jesus: I love you and I want you close beside me. You are mine, precious one. You are welcome wherever I am, whoever I am with or talking to. You are welcome to come and sit close beside me at my feet, always.... I put you here because I love you near me. I enjoy being with you. I delight myself in you. I call you mine, but I give you free will, so I ask you, "Will you be mine? I long for you to be mine."

Me: "Yes, Lord, I will be yours. I want to belong to you."

This moves me to tears. "Is it really true that he loves me like that? I am always welcome, wherever he is. I will never be an interruption or a nuisance. I always am welcome. I will always belong." (P.J. May 23/91).

These words of Jesus touched something deep within me, "You're always welcome, no matter whom I'm with, no matter where I am." This has proved to be a touchstone for me. Obviously, this touched a wounded place in my child of the past. Whenever I feel lonely or rejected, I go back into this prayer experience and once again, I feel welcomed into the circle, sitting close to Jesus, at his feet.

Praying with this passage once more, I hear Jesus addressing me:

Jesus: Barbara Gentle One/Wild One, Tiger-Rose, Childlike Innocent One, Shy One, you are wild and fierce and free, but I am gentling you... not breaking you or taming you because you will always be wild and free, free to race away, to run with the wind in your hair. But I am gentling you so that you will not be afraid of being loved and of loving.

You will feel comfortable in my circle of intimacy, love, and peace. Then you will be able to love with your wildness and your fierceness and your passion.

I am gentling you with my love. (P.J. May 25/91).

Gifts of the retreat

On the final day of the retreat, I wrote a letter to God thanking him for the gifts of the retreat. I will quote some of it here:

First of all, the rose—the woman part of me—with all my sexuality, gentleness, vulnerability, shyness, childlike innocence—all those parts that have been hidden away, so fragile, so afraid, so untouched, but now revealed, having been loved and having loved. You have wooed me Lord, patiently called me and loved me and led me deeper into the rose of your love. But as well, you have gently opened me, lovingly entered into the rose part of me, revealing new depths, parts of me before unknown, bringing them to light, to life, to love.....As I think about this retreat, I think this has really been a healing of my child part, my feminine child part (P.J. May 25/91).

Then I hear God speak to me:

As you open to me your rose part of you—woman-part, vulnerable-part, part made for love—I enter you and move deep within you, bringing love to those tender untouched places. Then you have moved as well deep within my fiery rose of love, the fire that purifies, casts out fear, melts the dross and leaves gold behind. Rose-within-rose, love within love, you within me, me within you until finally we are one—we are love! (P.J. May 25/91).

This retreat grounded me in my love of God and trust in God. I knew that I was loved. I felt loved and embraced by God and Jesus. This retreat also grounded me in my prayer, which is of course my relationship with God. My prayer shifted after this though, from a dialogue style to a prayer of quiet. I felt the spirit of God within me. God was Other, but God was also within. It was a felt inner sense of God, an inner knowing.

Post-Retreat: Re-integration and Struggle

I have described how the inner child archetype was beginning to manifest itself through image, symbol, art making, and poetry. During my retreat, I was softened, gentled by the love of God. Leonard (1982) states that “the Amazon’s transformation involves softening, allowing the receptivity in herself to be so that it can unite with her already developed strength in the creative expression of her feminine spirit” (p.84). After this retreat, my creativity blossomed out in my work. I was hired on to the program staff of the retreat house to do spiritual direction and retreat work. Various women’s groups in the Anglican dioceses asked me to give talks and retreats. I began to give workshops on Ignatian prayer. I taught Enneagram at the theological college and eventually was hired there to teach the Spiritual Formation and Spiritual Companionship courses. After a few years, I became the coordinator of the 19th Annotation Program of the Ignatian Exercises at the retreat house. At first, I felt hesitant to speak to large groups, but I trusted God and the creative spirit within and moved out into this new territory. It was a time of harvesting the fruits of my journey. I was in Stein’s (1983) reintegration stage of midlife.

I persevered in continuing on my inner journey as well. An important component of that was working with Clarissa Pinkola Estes’ book (1992), *Women Who Run with the Wolves*. I formed a group of women who wanted to read and work this book through the catalyst of the concepts contained in it. We spent two wonderful and incredibly fruitful years with the book and each other. My view of femininity was transformed. A few years earlier during a counseling session, the therapist asked me to free associate with the word “feminine.” The words that I spoke were, “pink, frilly, nice, weak, wimpy, helpless, phony”—such negative associations. However, Estes’ view of feminine being linked and

rooted in wild, instinctual, free, intuitive was something that deeply resonated within me. This described my inner self—a part of me that had remained hidden because it did not seem to fit with society's view of the nature of women. Reading and working with this book was tremendously empowering. Later, three of us facilitated groups of women working with this book and our discussion questions. We saw women being so empowered in their inner instinctual selves as they too discovered the wild woman archetype. My creative energy was flowing, birthing, empowering myself and others.

God working with me through relationships

However, once again, I faced difficulties in relationships. First, I experienced problems with Nona, a woman who had played a significant role in my spiritual life and in my training as a spiritual director. She had been my mentor for 6 years, had encouraged me to be part of the program staff at the retreat house, and had worked with me on the 19th Annotation team. She had always been supportive of me, but now we were co-leaders of a three-year program to train spiritual directors, and her attitude towards me began to shift. First, she told me straight out that she wanted the program to terminate when she left, that I was not to expect to take over the leadership because I was Anglican not Catholic. I reassured her that I had no such ambitions.

The first year of the program went fine, but the following year Nona started obviously excluding me from the leadership. My name was not signed to the letters going out to our candidates' directors; I was not asked to present on the enneagram even though I had expertise in this field; I was occasionally excluded from team meetings. Even the participants in the program noticed what was occurring and came to me to ask about it. I

did not want to sabotage the program, so I made light of it to them, but inside I was angry and hurt.

Then Nona approached me and told me she was irritated with me because I had agreed to teach a course at the theological college. She told me she had no compassion for me and could not support me in it. She said I had taken on too much. I admitted that perhaps that was true, but why should that irritate her? Then she jabbed her finger down and said, “Your responsibility lies here at the retreat house! How dare you take on these other things and abandon your commitments here!” Wow! That certainly sounded like a parental message. I was amazed at her reactions and her parental attitude especially when my commitment to the retreat house was only part-time. Later in the discussion, she started to cry and kept saying, “Maybe you don’t need my support. Maybe it doesn’t matter to you?” Next, she said, “I guess it’s like when your daughter grows up and leaves home.” I thought, “Bingo!” I would have liked her support, but I did not **need** it. I guess since I had stopped going to her for spiritual direction, I was now somehow a threat to her or she felt that I had abandoned her. I did hold my ground with her during that discussion, but it was becoming increasingly uncomfortable to be part of the team. I wrestled with God as to what I should do. I wrote:

God, I feel so hurt and full of anger towards Nona. I can’t go on working in the program. It is really doing damage to me. Outside it all looks great. We all get along fine, but inside ... I feel like I am being discounted, ignored, excluded and then I feel very one down. ...

Mary, why does this keep happening to me with women? Why do certain women attack me? I feel so much more vulnerable with women; I don’t expect to be broadsided.

Mary: You are a strong woman and a strong woman threatens some women. However, you need to be yourself and name what is going on.

Me: Jesus, you know how this feels. I need your help to know how to deal with this. I feel so angry and full of rage, yet I do not want to act out of that.

Jesus: I too felt anger, rage, and betrayal, but then I trusted my heavenly father to be God. Look to the Father, trust him and all things fall into place.

In prayer, I decided that I did not care about being up front or being recognized or important. I was not doing this for any of those things. I wanted to be there for the participants, helping them learn to become spiritual directors, helping them with their own inner process. I felt called to let go the way of power and to follow the way of love. I was working for God not Nona or Irene (the other team member). In my journal, I wrote:

When I visualize the situation with Nona, it is as if she is the big momma/mother and she wants me to stay the little kid. I am excluded, resisted, ignored. But I am too strong for that. I will not go into that little child place. I will not be one down. I can choose to relinquish leadership and power, and I can choose to be there for the participants. (P.J. May 3/96).

In the end, I felt God vindicated me. My favourite scripture for myself as an "8" was 2 Chronicles 20 where Jehoshaphat is facing a vast army. He seeks help from God stating that they do not have the power to face this vast army. God answers through a prophet,

Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army. For the battle is not yours but God's.... You will not have to fight this battle. Take up your positions; stand firm and see the deliverance the Lord will give you, O Judah and Jerusalem. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Go out to face them tomorrow and the Lord will be with you (2 Chron. 20:15, 17).

So they go out to face the enemy praising God, and God gives them a miraculous victory.

The chapter ends with "And the kingdom of Jehoshaphat was at peace, for his God had given him rest on every side" (2Chron. 20:30).

I too felt God had fought the battle for me because, at the final weekend before I left (to move to BC), the participants of the program said incredibly affirming things to me, loving my energy and passion and my openness. Two people said it had given them permission to be open themselves, where before they had feared that part of themselves. They liked my integrity in my journey with God and my honesty especially about my struggles in my journey. One woman said that I had made a place of safety for her that helped open up and heal places she thought never would be healed. Irene, the other leader, said she would miss me; she liked how I could connect ideas and conceptualize. I was overwhelmed by the support and appreciation. Nona had tried to push me down, to keep me out of the leadership, to silence me. I had decided I did not need power or leadership. I wanted to be there for the people. Leadership is not about being up front!

Shortly after this began, a relationship issue arose with Brenda, another person with whom I worked at the retreat house. It started with a misunderstanding over a meeting time, which unleashed a barrage of anger towards me in the form of sealed notes. I asked Brenda if she would like to meet to discuss things, but she refused. Once again, I felt hurt and pain, not understanding why this had happened. I had counted her as a good friend. It triggered in me the hurt inner child, feeling the pain of betrayals by friends.

Feeling apprehensive as I considered going to Curt, my counselor, I wrote:

I want to enter the pain, feel the pain, be accepted when I'm in my pain, be heard when I'm in my pain. I want my pain to be validated. The hurting little girl in me wants to be heard and received and held (figuratively) and told, "It's ok that you're feeling pain. It is ok that you feel like crying. It is ok that you are afraid to

risk, that you are afraid of rejection. It is ok to be hurt and afraid. It is ok to be a kid. No one is going to give up on you or reject you” (P.J. Apr. 8/96).

As I shared this with Curt, he said it was very important for me to do this work now for my integrity—important spiritually. This felt so validating. It was if he had given me permission to feel my feelings. He had given the little girl part of me permission to be a little girl, to have a voice. She needs to be heard, received, cherished, cared for, and accepted just as she is. Then the inner child me surfaces:

Child: I am very shy. I peep out from behind a tree or out from behind my mother’s legs. I’m afraid of this world because I don’t know the rules. I think I’m doing the right thing, but people turn on me and get angry or embarrass (shame) me, and I don’t know why. I feel hurt and want to cry, but mostly I am supposed to pretend I do not care and that I am not hurt at all.

“Be a brave girl!” “Don’t be a cry baby!” “Show them that you don’t care.”

When I feel it’s safe and someone tells me it’s ok to feel pain, then I begin to venture out. I need a lot of caring and accepting. I have a lot of pain and bewilderment. I don’t know the rules. I try to care and like people and speak truthfully but people get mad at me.

Adult: I write, Wow! The feelings I’m feeling: so much anguish yet not overwhelming. Just like something has opened up and I can feel these feelings once more (P.J. Apr.8/96).

The situation continued for many months. Brenda acted in public as if nothing had happened between us, yet several times, wrote hurtful, attacking notes. In one letter, she compared herself to David and me to Goliath and talked about how I dumped a huge bowel movement on her. I am totally bewildered as there was nothing concrete to apologize for or to examine. A poem emerged:

Tossing, turning... agony,
 “No rest for the wicked!”
 Am I wicked?
 “What have I done to you?” I cry.
 “What have I done to you?”

I only cared.
 I loved you and called you friend.
 I pushed your cause,
 Sang your praise,
 Involved you,
 Made you a partner.
 And now you call me down,
 See me with wrong motives,
 Unhearing, evil,
 Dumping my shit.

Mind-fucking! That's what this is.
 Protestations of eternal love
 Mixed with epithets and evil names.
 No openness there
 To what I might feel.
 I am the enemy—the Goliath
 To be attacked and felled.

“Goliath is not a man
 With feelings or hopes or dreams.
 He is the enemy, the epitome of evil.
 Vanquish him. Cut him down,”
 To reign victorious—hero of the day.

Did Goliath feel alone and shunned, never belonging
 Because he was strong and powerful?

“He doesn't feel. He is never weak.
 He's Goliath—enemy of us all!”
 “Take your chance, try your strength
 Against Goliath. He can take it all.”

I come to expose the lie:
 Goliath does not want to die.
 Goliath too was a man,
 A man with feelings, hopes and cares.
 He felt fear and loneliness.
 He wanted friends and family—people to care.
 He needed places that were safe,
 Safe to cry and feel his fear.
 I know he needed this
 Because I too am Goliath!
 (Morning Pages Journal (M.P.J.) Feb.11/96)

Again, I felt paralyzed in this situation of wounding by a friend. However, my body came to my rescue. I was feeling pain in my neck and throat as well as tension in every part of me. I decided to ask the four questions suggested by Capacchione (1989) and to answer with my non-dominant hand. Here is the dialogue:

Question: Who are you? **Answer:** Your esophagus.

Question: How do you feel? **Answer:** Sore, tense, blocked.

Question: What caused you to feel this way?

Answer: You are swallowing things that you should not be swallowing. They need to be spit out—vomited out.

Question: What can I do to help? **Answer:** Speak up. (M.P.J. Feb.19/96).

I was amazed at this dialogue. I knew that my body was speaking truth. I was swallowing abuse and swallowing my feelings. Why don't I tell Brenda how I feel? What am I afraid of? False beliefs: *I am tough. I can take it. Never make a scene in public! Don't be emotional!* These were old messages keeping me silent (M.P.J. Feb.19/96).

The next time I saw Brenda, I told her that I was not going to pretend that things were all right between us when they were not. I was prepared to meet and work things out. Because I thought we had a face-to-face relationship, I was not going to accept any more sealed notes from her. They upset me, and I felt abused by them. It was not an easy encounter, but I felt better having brought everything into the open. Afterwards, I felt so set free, and the pain in my esophagus was completely gone.

Analysis of the situation

So what was this all about—two relationships that had been close and then had greatly deteriorated? Both women were saying cruel things to me, yet at the same time, saying they loved me, cared for me, and wanted to be friends. Brenda's cruel notes all

had sticky notes with comments about friendship or her caring for me. Nona had cried, saying perhaps she cared too much. Yet their behaviour certainly did not match with my idea of friendship. I needed to process this.

One possibility came to my mind as to the root cause of the problems. Several years ago, when Brenda and I were working as directors on the 19th Annotation team under Nona's leadership, Brenda had suffered an emotional breakdown and was hospitalized for severe depression. Up until then, Nona had applauded her work as a director but after her recovery, did not trust her to lead in any way. I noticed this new discounting of Brenda and felt it was unjust, so I questioned Nona about it. I believe I spoke in a non-aggressive manner, but perhaps she felt it as an attack. In the second situation, I challenged Brenda when I saw her making sharp, hurtful remarks to Eileen, the third member of our team. I then became the enemy. Perhaps I should have stayed out of those situations or left the person singled out to fight her own battles. However, I am a person who hates unfairness or injustice, so I am not sure I could have remained silent. Interesting though, neither of these women mentioned the specific incident, so I do not think it was a conscious attitude.

The other thing I realized was that once again I was very stressed out with too much to do. I was traveling 150 km. each week to the city, spending two or three days there doing spiritual direction, teaching at the college, organizing the 19th Annotation program, participating in the spiritual directors' program, supervising some of the participants, then home, family, teaching Sunday School, role of minister's wife. I realized that when I felt stressed in the area of work I withdrew energy from

relationships. Perhaps Brenda and Nona were feeling somewhat abandoned by me, which they expressed by anger. I am not sure, but I do recognize my pattern.

During this time, I felt close to the burn out feeling that I had experienced in 1986. In my Morning Pages journal, I wrote:

I don't think I do well with my emotions. Either I cut them off or I am swamped by them or paralyzed by them. Thinking of inner figures: my Childlike Innocent One—trusting friends totally—gets broadsided, wiped out by an angry friend. Then Queen Boadicea goes on the warpath wanting to lash out, get revenge. So inside me this teeter-totter is going on. Who is in ascendancy: Queen Boadicea, the Childlike Innocent One or the Thinker, the rational one? *“No scenes in public! Don't lower yourself to her level. Think it through. To whom much is given, much is expected.”* Inner messages from my mother and from scripture keep me silent (M.P.J. Apr.7/96).

Yet when I, in desperation, started back to therapy, I finally was able to express my feelings and somehow let go. I felt very safe and validated by Curt and the work we did. He was another “man with a heart.” Almost immediately, there is a shift in the tone of my journaling:

There is a new joy welling up in me, a new flowering, and a part of me coming alive. I remember this part of me when I went to Ken, to Harold, and even to Nona. Some part of me that usually is repressed, stuffed away, begins to come alive, to dance.... So is all this inner life and joy just because Curt is caring for my inner child? (M.P.J. Apr. 11/96).

Inside I hear a refrain resounding in my heart—“You are loved!” Why do I feel that now? It is something to do with having a safe place, a validating place and something to do with “father” or a man. Why not a woman? I have never found a woman heroine, never really admired or looked up to a woman. I have liked women. I respect and admire certain women, but mostly they feel so different from me. I identify with very few women. (M.P.J. Apr.13/96).

“Genuine transformation requires vulnerability. It is not the fact of being loved unconditionally that is life-changing. It is the risky experience of *allowing myself* to be loved unconditionally” (Benner, 2003, p. 76). This quote describes perfectly my experience of risking vulnerability in order to receive love and caring and in the risking, being changed.

My encounters with the breakdown of these two friendships led me into looking at how I define friendship. “What is friendship? I think I need to redefine it. Perhaps I take more than I give. Perhaps I take certain things for granted that other people do not. Maybe I have expectations for friendship that feels demanding to other people. But it seems to be more when I take off the focus, remove some of the energy that people get angry” (M.P.J. Apr. 14/96). In my musings, I realized that I had certain values around friendship that others did not necessarily share. I called them values when in actual fact they were probably rules. I needed to reassess them in order to discern if they were really my present values.

The first one was, “If I’m a friend, I’m a friend to the death.” I realized that I counted loyalty as a high value, but it was unrealistic to expect to be friends to the death. I have had many friends at different times in my life, but they have moved on and so have

I. The relationship has changed. Yet psychically, I was still carrying these friends, feeling guilty because I did not feel the same way about them anymore, guilty that I was not keeping in touch. My new definition of friends is that they are companions on the journey for a time. It is all right to let them go and welcome a new companion.

A second rule that I had was, “Never fight with a friend.” By that, I meant that I would never be cruel to a friend or want to hurt them. However, often that had translated into repressing my feelings or not holding healthy boundaries when I felt injured or attacked. I also believed in being honest with a friend, especially when I saw injustice or cruel behavior to others. Then I would challenge my friend, not out of spite or wanting to hurt, but out of concern and wanting the best for her. Obviously, others did not share this perspective with me. Perhaps they viewed me as unsupportive or attacking.

I was seeing that I was not the perfect friend that I hoped to be. I did withdraw from Brenda when she started to make negative comments about Eileen. I could have handled that much more diplomatically. In addition, when I get busy and focused on work, I neglect relationships. Then when I feel under attack, I really withdraw into my inner castle, and it is hard for me to speak up or deal with the issue. I can fight for others but not easily for myself. Friendship is not all about rules. Different people have different ideas about friendship. Much of my hurt and feelings of betrayal come from my expectations that others share the same rules around friendship and from my illusion that I was being the perfect friend.

However, there were gifts arising from these painful situations. I was learning to speak up in order to hold boundaries or to share how I was feeling. I was no longer accepting abuse passively and pretending that I was not affected. I no longer was

regressing totally into the hurt wounded child with the message, “There’s something wrong with me!” I was analyzing my part in the situation but realizing others play a part as well.

Art making

During this same period, a significant event occurred where I used art making to reframe negative messages. Several of my students asked me to preach at their ordination. As I prayed about my sermon, I felt led to share from my spiritual centre, rather than preach in the formal sense of that word. Before the service, the bishop greeted me, saying he was looking forward to my sermon. I delivered it in the way I felt led. I was true to myself. Afterwards, the bishop did not approach me, and immediately, I thought, “He probably hated it!” The ordinands were pleased with my talk, but inside I could feel my inner child reacting, “*Bad girl! You didn’t do it properly!*” At home, I drew simply the dynamics that were going on inside me (see Figure 5) and dialogued with the inner child. In Figure 5, the bishop figure (parent, authority, critic) is very tall and forbidding; the child me is very small, and the congregants are even smaller. In the dialogue between the adult and the child me, I reassured her, “It’s ok to do it your way. It was not bad, just different.” Then I redrew the picture with myself much larger and the hearers equally large (see Figure 6). I wrote, “Who matters to me? Whose opinion carries the most weight? I want to be good, to please, but I can’t anymore. I have to be true to myself. But it hurts.” It was amazing how drawing those two pictures set me free from the self-doubt and condemnation. I was able to let the situation go. A few days later, I received a very nice thank-you from the bishop.

This example illustrates how art making and dialoguing had become an important part of my process, allowing unconscious contents to be externalized in order to interact with them. This brought awareness of destructive patterns and complexes and allowed me to move into more consciousness and freedom. Carl Jung used imagery and art making as a “vivid source of personal insight into his situation; this in turn, informed the development of many of his psychological theories” (Edwards, 1987, p.92). Jung encouraged his patients to make visual representations of their dream and fantasy material because he saw the value of actively engaging the images, allowing the effect of the image to deepen, to be experienced. Jung refers throughout his writings to the technique of *active imagination* in which the drawing and painting of images can play a crucial part. In active imagination, the client is encouraged to enter into a relationship with his/her image through imaginative inquiry and dialogue.

Art making defined: Art making differs from art. I do not consider myself artistic in the way that artistic was defined in the era in which I grew up. People were artistic if they were outstanding in the way they could draw or paint or sculpt. They could produce a wonderfully aesthetic product. Many of us who were ordinary in those talents felt that we were not artistic, so we dropped that area from our lives. McNiff (1998) states that even now “there is a pervasive sense in our culture that creative expression is restricted to an anointed group” (p.1). McConeghey (2003) goes on to state,

But art-making is important for everyone, whether they are talented or not, because art encourages that poetic process which gives life to spontaneous aesthetic impulses. Those who are interested in the service of the psyche—both the personal psyche and the *anima mundi*—see art as a correspondence with the soul (p.11).

Jung himself used art making as a part of his self-analysis. He made “a clear

distinction between ‘art’ and products of the unconscious” (Schaverien, 1992, p.80). The visual images that arise from the unconscious have more in common with what Jung termed active imagination. Schaverien states that Jung encouraged his patients to paint in order to make unconscious contents accessible and more understandable for themselves. “His position was one of respect for the process and the product of image making” (p.81).

Personally, I have found art making or image making valuable in working with both unconscious and conscious contents. As the term suggests, art is made but it is made not necessarily to make a beautiful picture or a saleable product. Allen (1995) writes,

Art making is my way of bringing soul back into my life. Soul is the place where the messiness of life is tolerated, where feelings animate the narration of life, where story exists. Soul is the place where I am replenished and can experience both gardens and graveyards. Art is a way of knowing who I am (p.ix).

Like Allen, I too found art making to be a way of knowing who I am. First of all, it was a way to express the inner state of my soul. I am a person with strong inner emotions which for many years I repressed. But now, I was feeling those emotions, and at times they felt overwhelming. Then I would pick up a pastel and express my feelings in an image. For example, in Figure 7, I express in an image the feeling of “having a massive amount of energy, potential, talent, ability—like Niagara Falls, but it’s all bottled up, contained, trapped. Only a little trickle is allowed through” (A.J. Sept. 21/98). Many times, I expressed in images my feelings of anger or feeling constricted (see Figures 8 & 9). This proved extremely helpful in externalizing my feelings, making them easier to work with because they were separate from me, not so overwhelming.

Reflection: In writing this thesis, I notice a pattern that had escaped my attention previously. During my retreat, Jesus made a specific call to me: to call people out of the tomb into life and then to work with them in their unbinding. I see the same pattern in my

own healing journey. Through praying the scriptures and experiencing God's loving words penetrating to the depth of me, to the wounded child parts of me, I was being healed and infused with life. As I walked as a follower of Jesus through Ignatian contemplation (coupled with spiritual directors who somehow incarnated God's love), I experienced a deeply loving, caring relationship which gave me the courage to walk out of the cave (tomb) of my fear of vulnerability and intimacy. Now I was out of the tomb but still bound in many ways. Art making proved to be a means of freeing me.

One area of binding was in this area of thinking it all depended on me. Here again is the emergence of the armoured Amazon aspect of me: the superstar, the dutiful daughter, the martyr. I call this my Messiah complex or God complex, carrying the world, thinking I have to be responsible for everyone and everything. The scripture verse, "Be still and know that I am God" (Ps.46:10) reverberated in my ears, heart, and psyche over and over. I knew it to be true, but old messages and programming kept resurfacing when I was under stress. Many times I worked with this complex through art making and prayer. First, when I felt so stressed out, I would sit with the emotion, feeling where it was in my body, and then letting it emerge into consciousness in an image. As I drew the image, words came: inner internalized messages that were impacting me (see Figure 10). The image showed me what was going on inside. I could choose to relax and let these old messages go. Often this led me into prayer, relaxing in the love of God, just being.

Another time, this complex emerged in a dream image of a man emptying a can of gasoline and threatening to light it with a match. I worked with this dream in active imagination, reentering the dream with some protective figures to accompany me. I faced this dream figure and realized he was Hannibal Lector from the movie, *Silence of the*

Lambs. Hannibal the cannibal! I couldn't bring myself to talk to him, but a tree caught my eye, and I went and climbed into it, feeling the safety and containment of the tree. I felt held by the tree. I talked to the tree, and it told me that I needed to recreate out here in nature (P.J. Jan. 25/95). Then I drew a picture of Hannibal the Cannibal (see Figure 11) with the inner messages that cannibalize me, threaten to burn me up, kill me. I began to realize that nature helps me to replenish, to get into balance, to allay my drivenness.

In addition, I began to realize the importance of dialoguing with my body when it felt tense and sore. I used Capacchione's (1989, 1990) technique of drawing the body, showing the painful parts, then dialoguing, writing with the non-dominant hand. My shoulders and back told me that they felt tight, tense and sore. The lower parts felt pinched and numb, out of alignment. When I asked them what caused them to feel that way, they answered, "Too heavy, too much to carry. You burden me. You are unbalanced, no fun. Too controlled. You keep up a good front but hide things in the back. Not free to be yourself." This was an important dialogue because I realized how my body could be a real friend, letting me know when I was out of balance or taking on too much the burdens of the world. It could be the indicator of the presence of my Messiah complex or the armored Amazon in Leonard's terms.

Back to BC: Another Stage in the Inner Journey

In 1996, we moved back to B.C. I was 49, about to begin a new decade. Each decade brought something new. What was this one going to bring? On the prairies, I had found energizing, life-giving work—an expression of who I was. I had found a way of living from my true Self that was more than my roles of mother, wife, minister's wife.

Now I was back in my home diocese, and once again I was thrown back into the role of the minister's wife—honorary president of the Altar's guild and the Women's Guild, by virtue of being the wife of the minister. I was seen, not as a member of the parish in my own right, but viewed as a derivative of my husband. My role of mother was proving to be life draining as I struggled with teen-age rebellion, indifference, and lack of helpfulness. My husband was caught up in the busy-ness of a new parish, so his support for me seemed lacking. I felt very constrained and angry at my life situation. It seemed like it all depended on me. How could I be true to myself and not feel constrained by the expectations of my culture? This proved to be the main task of this decade.

I believe this decade of my fifties was another huge step in my individuation process and part of the midlife transition, however late. My children were in their twenties and late teens. The stage of active motherhood was coming to an end. I felt no longer needed or valued as mother. Spiritual direction in this new place was slow to take off. What was God doing now? Was this time for more inner work?

The sexuality issue resurfaces

I soon discovered the inner work God had in mind for me to do. Always, God calls us to radical freedom; therefore, areas where we are not free emerge from our

unconscious at appropriate times. What exploded into consciousness during this time were my attitudes and fears around sexuality. Certainly, the signs of problems in this area were there earlier, but this complexed area erupted with a vengeance when a minister friend left his wife for an affair. This man had been our beloved friend—a man of integrity. I reacted with anger and judgment far beyond what the event warranted. My director challenged me on this judgment, so I determined to discover what my incredibly strong reaction was telling me. I prayed with the passage of Jesus and the woman taken in adultery (Jn.8:1-11) and found that I had great compassion for the woman, but if I imagined the man taken in adultery, I was ready to stone him. I had no compassion at all. It was not logical. I knew married women who had affairs while married, and I did not feel so judgmental towards them.

I gradually realized I viewed men, for the most part, as sexual predators—not to be trusted. I had formed that judgment at the time of the child molester incident. My mother's cautions reverberated within me, "*You can never be friends with boys/men. They always want something more.*" This viewpoint was reinforced by some of my adolescent and later experiences with boys/men. Furthermore, I had high expectations for clergy. They should be morally above reproach! I was furious with my friend, feeling betrayed.

I knew I was over-reacting. I realized I was very uncomfortable with the whole topic of sexuality. This was an area where I was still unfree. I very much associated sexuality with genital sex, and I had many negative experiences and messages leading me to view sex and sexuality with distaste. I was discussing my problems in this area one day with Karl, my spiritual director, and he leaned over and said with such conviction, "But sexuality is **beautiful!**" That statement pierced through all my biases and preconceptions,

and I heard it as I had never heard it before. I knew that he really believed this, and he was a celibate priest. Perhaps I had better take a new look at this.

Subsequently, I was praying with Ps.139 and the Genesis creation account, imaging God creating every part of my physical being and then saying, "It is very good!" This triggered all my negative memories of being shamed around my girl's body and my sexuality/femininity. I remembered the molestation attempts and boys surrounding me as if I was some kind of prey. My child self had suffered much woundedness in this area. Then I heard God's voice saying, "Let me remold you in your sexuality. Let me refashion you. Let me work out the impurities that cause you to crack. Let me make this area a work of art." I answer, "Yes Lord, please do" (P.J. June 14/ 97).

This seemed linked to my experience of risking intimacy with Harold on my 30 day retreat. In that relationship, I had opened my feminine side to a man, risking myself, trusting that I would be safe from sexual exploitation. However, that relationship ended badly. After my retreat, I realized that Harold had fallen in love with me and was acting quite possessive. I wrote, telling him that this was inappropriate, that I was married, so we could be only friends. A year later, when I saw him, he discounted our relationship by saying it was just sexual attraction. I felt very hurt and angry by his dismissal of what was to me a deep spiritual friendship. I also felt guilty that perhaps I had misled him in my attempts to find a soul friendship. I decided I had to lock back up my feminine self, to run back into that inner office. I imaged my sexuality as locked in a chained trunk on the bottom of the ocean. It was not safe to be open, tender, soft, vulnerable.

However, God was once more calling me forth, wanting me to re-evaluate this issue. There were many questions I needed to address: Who am I as a woman? What does

it mean to be woman, to be feminine? How can I be in my feminine self and relate to men in close friendships, in intimacy? How can I be more intimate with my husband?

Connections to the literature

As I pondered these questions, I realized that sexuality does not just mean sexual activity. Nelson (1978) defines sexuality as “our self-understanding and way of being in the world as male and female” (pp.17-18). He goes on to state that “*sexuality* involves much more than what we *do* with our genitals. More fundamentally, it is who we *are* as body-selves who experience the emotional, cognitive, physical, and spiritual need for intimate communion—human and divine” (p.18). Norman Pittenger, in his preface to Nelson’s (1978) book, summarizes Nelson’s thought:

Our sexuality is the ground or base, as he [Nelson] insists, for our capacity to enter into relationships which are life-enhancing, life-enriching, and provide the possibility for humans to *become* what God would have them become: namely, fulfilled, integrated, sharing, and free recipients of the divine love (p.6).

As I read that quote, I realized that this was an expression of my inner longing.

Ferder and Heagle (1992) describe some of the causes of psychosexual injury and how it affects the adult capacity for mutuality and intimacy. They describe the effects as being similar to imprisonment or bondage. “Even those whose journey toward integration has been only slightly injured or delayed will speak of being trapped in discomforts and confined by the tightness they feel around their sexuality” (p.136). I have described how I felt like I wanted to bury my sexuality in a chain-bound chest at the bottom of the ocean. Yes, I felt like my sexuality was tightly bound. Ferder & Heagle (1992) go on to state, “Anything that causes us to associate our sexuality with shame, fear, harm, anxiety, anger, physical pain, unhealthy guilt, failure, incompetency, or violence can lock up our sexual energy” (p.136). All of the events that I have listed are linked with feelings of

shame, anger, pain, and fear. These events plus experiences during my dating years sensitized me to react very strongly if I felt there was an attitude towards me that seemed to be in any way predatory or overly lustful. It was very important to me to be liked as a person. I withdrew if the relationship was too focused on sexual expression. As well, my dualistic Christian attitude caused me at times to despise my own passionate nature. I felt like my sexual desires were somehow too earthy, not very holy.

Once again, I began to hear God asking me to open up to the rose energy within me. I felt the pain of being “not known” by my friends and family. At the same time, I was feeling very much “known” by Karl, my new director, also an “8” in Enneagram typology. He too has felt not known in his community of Jesuits. He saw this as a typical experience of the "8" personality. People just see the tough, confident exterior, not the fragile, sensitive, loving interior.

As I experienced Karl’s liking for me, his enjoyment of my company, and his understanding, the inner child part of me wanted to rush into friendship with him. This was not the wounded child part but, what I term, the Childlike Innocent One (CIO). I cautioned her in a dialogue, telling her that we need to go slowly:

Me: We need to let relationship develop gradually. Because I am not a child, men misinterpret this kind of intensity and it gets me into hot water.

CIO: What do you mean? Can’t we be best friends? I like him and he likes me.

Me: I know but remember Harold? That didn’t work out and I felt burned and betrayed. I lost a lot of trust in God.

CIO: Yes, that’s right. We made a mistake with him. But Karl is an "8." Won’t he be more like us?

Me: Perhaps, but let’s just take it slowly. My priority is to maintain the spiritual direction relationship. That is more important right now than friendship (P.J. Apr.14/98).

I continued to move into vulnerability with Karl, and once again, my fears around trusting surfaced. Yet vulnerability also opened up something wonderful within me.

Vulnerability releases all my inner processes. Suddenly there is an Other—one who sees me, recognizes my existence, understands that I am here. I long to talk, to express all those thoughts and feelings that have been unexpressed for so long. I am received, known. It feels so wonderful. I come alive, out of the tomb like Lazarus. Now perhaps I can be unbound. (P.J. Apr. 19/98).

During this time, I felt as if I had opened the lid on Pandora's Box. I was re-evaluating my attitudes and rules around sexuality, even exploring what sexuality involved or encompassed. As I opened this area, I realized I needed to look also at the areas of intimacy, femininity, relationship, love, as well as sexual expression. On the one hand, I was struggling with my fierce, self-righteous, moralistic judgments of my minister friend and on the other, I was drawn to closer friendships with men, especially other spiritual directors. I believe this period of my life was basically another encounter with shadow contents. This area of sexuality had been repressed in so many ways. This seemed to be confirmed in my prayer and in a dream.

Sexuality as shadow

As I attempted to work through my over-reaction to my friend's affair, I prayed for eighteen months with Nouwen's (1992a) book, *The Return of the Prodigal Son*. I found myself very much in the role of the elder son, the proper, obedient one who stays at home but is also the resentful, bitter, judgmental one who cannot enter the joy of celebration. As Nouwen terms it, he is "lost while still at home" (p.70).

Another time, I had a dream where a woman (representing my shadow) was being very affectionate and demonstrative to a man, and I was disgusted by her public display of affection and sexuality. Shortly after this dream, I was on a ten-day retreat praying with the scripture passage of Luke 7 where the sinful woman is anointing Jesus' feet. I had intended to enter the scene as the woman, but God had other ideas. Suddenly, I was there as Simon the Pharisee judging the woman with disdain and disgust. Shocked, I realized I had much in common with Simon. I hated a public display of affection or emotion. I was very practical, self-sufficient, and focused on what was "proper." Yet here Jesus was rebuking Simon and commending the woman who loved much, who was washing his feet with her tears and her kisses. She was not caring what others thought or felt. She was demonstrating her gratefulness and love freely and spontaneously. I realized I was very moralistic and self-righteous, rigid, and ungenerous in this area. I began to see the contrast between love/spirit and efficiency/law.

Gerald May's book, *The Awakened Heart* (1991), spoke to me at this time. He opens the book with a quote from William Blake about the purpose of humanity:

"And we are put on earth a little space/ That we might learn to bear the beams of love."

May (1991), agreeing with Blake, expands on this quote:

There are three meanings of bearing love: to endure it, to carry it, and to bring it forth. In the first, we are meant to grow in our capacity to endure love's beauty and pain. In the second, we are meant to carry love and spread it around as children carry laughter and measles. And in the third, we are meant to bring new love into the world, to be birthers of love. This is the threefold nature of our longing (p.1).

As I read this, I realized that the first part was the most difficult for me, yet this is the area where God had been working in me the last few years with all my different experiences in relationships with friends, spiritual directors, and counselors.

May goes on to state that “efficiency is the ‘how’ of life” and “love is the ‘why’ of life” (p.3). Love should come first, but so often we sacrifice love for efficiency. “Some people are so caught up in striving for efficiency that love seems like a luxury or even an obstacle to efficient functioning” (p.4). I realized that I often fell into this trap, putting efficiency before love. Efficiency is linked with expectations, which are rigid. Expectations in relationships are always where we get hurt because of the rigidity of these. Love, on the other hand, is linked with hope, which is open-ended (May, 1991).

In this prayer meditation, I saw the woman symbolizing love, affection, generosity, openness, humility, service, hope, and Simon (and myself) identified with efficiency, practicality, self-sufficiency, selfishness, pride, properness, and rigid expectations. It seemed to me to represent the Two Standards of St. Ignatius: the way of Christ versus the way of Satan (or in this case, the world). Our world is one where efficiency is worshiped. We give face value to the way of love, but we judge people by what they accomplish, by their efficiency.

Jesus was calling me to be more like the woman in Luke 7. In prayer, he asks me, “Do you accept yourself as woman? Can you be emotional, affectionate, physically demonstrative in public, not afraid to show your love, letting yourself be real in front of others, not caring what others think, only what I think?” Then in my journal, I wrote: It is ok to cry, to be tender, to love, to touch affectionately, to go against societal norms, to let down your hair, to be disapproved of by others. (P.J. Sept.24/00). My family, coming from British roots, saw any demonstration of emotion in public to be anathema. In my drive to “be tough,” never to show weakness or vulnerability, I had repressed into my shadow the softer, gentler aspects of affection and receptivity.

Love, intimacy and marriage

This moving towards more vulnerability and acceptance of my womanhood led me further towards the exploration of love and intimacy. I asked myself, “Have I ever felt loved?” I know I have been loved; I think I’ve felt loved at times in my marriage, but for me it’s so important to be loved by someone who truly knows me, or else it feels as if they are loving the image of me, loving what they want me to be (P.J. July 16/98).

I knew there was so much more to love than what Bob and I were experiencing in our marriage. I felt like I had been so wounded over the years and had erected many walls and protections. I remembered God’s promise, “I will give you a heart of flesh for a heart of stone.” I had the impression that within my heart of stone lies a heart of flesh. The heart of stone is all the guards, protections that I put up. The heart of stone needs to be broken, smashed in order to release the heart of flesh. Lord, be my fortress, shield, protection. Smash the stony ramparts that I have built around my heart! (P.J. Aug.19/98).

The next few months were up and down in regards to the love and sexual intimacy in our marriage. As I opened in vulnerability to my director and began to reframe sexuality, I opened more to Bob in love. At one point I write, “I feel so loved, by God, by myself, by Bob—just loved. I feel attractive. I like myself. I like my body. I feel powerful. I feel I have choices. I am content, happy and I feel loved, especially by God (P.J. Aug.25/98). We had wonderful times of making love, and then it was as if Bob forgot all we had talked about, and I would once again feel alone and unloved.

Reflection on sexual sin: Dealing with these issues and dealing with the issue of my minister friend’s adultery brought up all my negative judgments and fears about men and sexual sin. The Presbyterian inner figure emerged strongly with his black and white

pronouncements that sin is sin and committing deliberate sin means hellfire and damnation. That threw me back once more into deep regret about my “sinful” life of my twenties and my fear of my sexuality arising from that. Once again, God asked me to reframe my thinking on that period of my life: to see it as a time of freedom and health.

I am shown an image of myself as a young woman, confident, open, loving, and sensuous. My relationships were not sordid and dirty. They were loving, affectionate, warm and giving. No one was hurt or used. The relationships were mutual and there was respect on both sides. So was that sin?

I reflected on the whole topic of sexual sin. This has been a prime focus for the Christian Church throughout the ages. “*Sex outside marriage is sinful. Once you are married, sex is beautiful, a sacrament. The two become one.*” But is that true? I think of the many married women to whom I have listened. What about women who feel pressured into having sex after an exhausting day of housework, meal preparation, and caring for children? Husbands lash out in anger when refused. The collective messages resound in her ears, “*It’s your duty! Never refuse your husband! Your body belongs to your husband.*” What about women who after 30 years of marriage have never enjoyed an orgasm? What about women who fake enjoyment and are afraid to disclose their lack of pleasure? But he never asks. The act is not mutual but for the satisfaction of one partner. Is this not sin? Seems to me like there can be much sin within marriage: sin meaning lack of love, not caring for the other. God, is our whole view of what comprises sin in error?

My struggle in my marriage continues. My conviction from the beginning has been, “Marriage can survive midlife!” But there is very much a redefining going on.

It's weird; it's as if a deep part of me is very committed to Bob and our marriage, and I know I love him at some deep level. It is the "rock" part of me, the steadiness, and the loyalty. But another part of me is in a life and death struggle to save my marriage. This part of me touches into the deep betrayals, abuses, hurts, feeling missed in many ways and feels so angry with Bob. This is the defender of the vulnerable child/adolescent part of me (P.J. Oct.5/98).

At the same time, gradually, I was moving more into vulnerability with my spiritual director. Again, the fear of crossing boundaries arose. I reviewed the relationship I had with Harold. I realized that God used him in my life so that I could dare to venture into vulnerability and spiritual intimacy. However, I ran ahead of God, tried to make it happen, and Harold misread me and wanted to move into a love affair.

I think whenever there is a relationship between men and women, there exists some kind of attraction, so there is always the temptation or the natural inclination to flirt, to try to attract the other. It is not that you want to have a sexual relationship with them; you just want to attract them, to play the dangerous, titillating game. I had been repressing my sexuality, my femininity; then I had experienced a real "aha" moment of integration while being directed by Harold—the acceptance of both parts of myself (tiger/rose). With his seeing and cherishing that rose part of me that no one else saw, it was like my dream come true. He knows me! But it all fell apart. I feel ashamed when I consider how naïve I was. However, instead, I must consider it as information. The way of the cross for me is opening to intimacy, to vulnerability with God and others. It is a crucifixion, a dying to being in control, a letting go of power to embrace total powerlessness, to

be crucified by love. The big issue of anguish here is not how sinful I was but how I opened myself and gave myself in all innocence and trust, and it went all wrong. Now I feel called to trust again at perhaps the level of soul-friend/*anam cara*, and I am terrified that I will do it wrong again (P.J. Feb.21-22/99).

O'Donohue's book, *Anam Cara* (1997) proved significant at this time. He describes an *anam cara* or soul friend in the Celtic tradition:

In everyone's life, there is a great need for an *anam cara*, a soul friend. In this love, you are understood; you are at home. Understanding nourishes belonging. When you really feel understood, you feel free to release yourself into the trust and shelter of the other person's soul. ... The *anam cara* is God's gift. Friendship is the nature of God (p.p. 14-15).

I was experiencing this *anam cara* relationship in my spiritual direction with Karl and wanted more of it. At the same time, I was terrified because I felt that I was opening myself to be hurt or to be misunderstood. As I prayed, it seemed like God was calling me to risk, to open more to love and intimacy and friendship.

As I moved into more vulnerability, I analyzed my fear of intimacy. A memory came back to me that affected my ability to trust men in particular. When I was about 4 or 5 years old, I was playing some kind of make-believe adventure game with the neighbourhood kids. I was on Harry's team. Three years older than I, Harry was ingenious, inventive, attractive—the king of the neighbourhood! This particular time, I was on his team, running alongside of him as he encouraged me, "Come on, Barb!" It felt euphoric, being pals, in companionship with Harry. The next moment, with no warning, he shoved me to the ground. I landed flat on my face, the wind knocked out of me and my mouth filled with dirt. So much for trust! Whenever I begin trusting a man and feeling companionship, this old experience rears its ugly head.

My journal continued to reflect my inner chaos. It was as if everything that was stable was falling apart: my roles as wife and mother, my ministry, my rules of life. I was back in Stein's stage of liminality. In prayer, I received the image that the garment I have made of my life is being unraveled completely. It is as if God was saying, "So that is what you made. Now let's see what I can do." A poem is birthed:

God,
 I feel so unraveled, so insecure.
 Nothing is tied down, nothing neat;
 Ends are loose, falling all away.
 What connects to what?
 Where is the weave, the warp,
 The strength of the garment?

"There is no strength. It is gone,
 ripped asunder, pulled apart thread by thread.
 You can trust this garment no more—
 It is under construction,
 Not destroyed, but pulled all apart
 To be rewoven by the master.
 This time there will be no defects,
 No hidden knots or holes,
 No ugly seams or patches or loose ends.
 The master weaves a seamless garment—
 A work of art."

But how to be in the meantime?
 It seems so much like the void,
 The nameless, shapeless void,
 Chaos, nothingness.
 "Let the Spirit brood over the void;
 let the Spirit hover and speak all into existence."
 Let my soul wait for the Lord;
 My soul waits and in his word, I put my hope.
 In your word, I put my hope;
 My soul waits (P.J. Apr.18/99).

For four years, I was in what seemed like a cosmic struggle with God, Karl, Bob, and myself. Once again, it seemed as if I was dealing with mid life issues: issues of my

marriage, issues of rules versus values, issues of the power of the collective voices versus my true self, issues of letting go of my protections in order to be my true Self.

During this time, I found a group of men and women with whom I felt very much at home, all spiritual directors in the Ignatian tradition: spiritual but real, earthy, and grounded. I moved into friendship with Constance and these two men, who seemed safe. I started to re-evaluate all my negative judgments of men. This was part of the pulling out of the threads of the tapestry of my life. Many of those threads were about not trusting men.

I review my ruby-rose ring dream. I enter back into the dream imaginatively. I am very attracted to the ring; I want to hold it up to the light so that I can see the beauty of the light shining through it. When I see the men coming closer, I think that they will steal my ring, possess it, and rip it from me. The men look dull, hypnotized, shuffling along methodically, in a catatonic state, like automatons. I sense I am to keep holding the ruby rose ring up to the light in spite of the men drawing closer and closer. I need to stand still, face the light, hold up the ruby rose ring to the light, and not fear...

Jesus/God speaks to me: “You say you cannot abide hiddenness. You want everything in the light, yet look at this area of your life: your femininity, your sexuality, your creativity. You run into the windowless back office and lock the door, hiding from the light. You have been imprisoned by your masculine automatic response—your methodical, lifeless, pragmatic side—locked away, possessed, imprisoned by fear” (P.J. Apr.15/00).

May (1991) describes *expectation* as “truly passive, frozen into paralysis or compulsive repetition. Once an expectation becomes solid, you cannot give it up. It digs into your spiritual skin like a tick, infesting your attitudes and behavior” (p.82). Working with this dream shows me that my expectation of men is that they are the enemy. My expectation is that if I expose the rose part of me, I will be shamed, exposed, defiled, robbed, possessed, ripped off, and abandoned. My old way of looking at men being attracted to me had a lot to do with the Joe the child molester incident. He was nice to me in order to entrap me. It seems as if I had made a judgment on men at that time, and I imposed that on each situation with men, seeing and reading entrapment when it did not exist.

Dialoguing with inner figures

An inner figure arose once again who seemed to be important in this call to allow my feminine part to be more forthcoming. This was the dancing maiden (DM) part of me who first emerged in a dream where she was inviting the strait-laced Presbyterian minister to dance. This time I imaged her lying on the ground and every time a bubble of emotion arose, the Presbyterian minister stomped on it (see Figure 12). In the dialogue, the minister figure (PM) seemed very similar to Simon the Pharisee, rejecting dancing as frivolous and emphasizing the importance of being disciplined, practical, pragmatic. The dancing maiden, inviting him into the dance, represented my feminine, free, fun side.

DM: But Jesus came eating, drinking, and celebrating. He had fun!

PM: You are certainly not Jesus. Look what happened the last time you were free.

DM: You mean in my 20's?

PM: Yes. You were way off track, into sin big time. You didn't listen to me at all.

DM: I know. That is why I'm inviting you to dance. I need you to be with me for balance.

PM: I'm too afraid to let go of control. We will end up totally losing control. I don't want to be so fuzzy-thinking and feeling-driven like so many people I see.

DM: I am not the same person I was in my 20's. I am much more aware. I'm in touch with Jesus and all the other inner figures. I know my centre in God. You have to let the feminine have more power. Come and dance with me. Let's be in sync!

PM: I resist pleasure and good feelings.

DM: Why?

PM: Because if I go there, I forget to be on guard and then I get hurt (A.J. Sept/2000).

Through this dialogue, I heard the call again to trust and to love. I needed to risk opening to love, to let go of my fear-based rules.

My reading seemed to confirm the direction I was taking in regards to a new attitude towards friendship with men and acceptance of my sexuality. In the book, *The Dance of the Selves* (1992), Ferrier writes, "Sometimes your feminine wants you to move in a certain direction but only for a period of time. She is using the new direction to dislodge you from your rigid patterns. Once you are more flexible, she is able to guide you in a way that might have been too frightening at first or something for which you were not yet prepared" (p.43). Later the author writes,

In order to attain that state of joy and passion, you will have to drop the guidelines that you used to follow as a blueprint for your life. You will need to develop the courage to live life in what I call the state of freefall—committing yourself to stepping out in space and expecting a path to build beneath your footstep (p.48).

This seemed to fit so much with my image of the weaving of my life being dismantled thread by thread in order to be rewoven by God.

I persevered, allowing God to open this area of unfreedom within me. Once again, on retreat, I wrestled with my sense of shame, fear and guilt around my sexuality,

but this time I was aware that the inner Presbyterian moral law keeper had been triggered. I needed to deal with this complex once and for all. A memory surfaced of an activity during my spiritual direction training where we stepped back imaginatively into our female ancestors, viewing life and God through their eyes. I had a strong resonance, a felt sense of oneness, with my mother's paternal grandmother. I knew little about her except that she was extremely religious and legalistic, a strict Presbyterian. She had her first child out of wedlock, then married and bore 12 more children. The family was very poor, being crofters in the Scottish highlands. Her husband drank. My grandfather and great uncles would not set foot in a church because of their experience of her religion. However, when I stood imaginatively in her shoes, I felt great compassion for her. Somehow, I felt I understood her, and in many ways, I was like her. I knew she stood behind this moralistic Presbyterian minister figure. I needed to dialogue with her.

This proved to be an incredible dialogue. I suspected that being brought up in the strict puritanical milieu of the Scottish Presbyterian church, she had never forgiven herself for getting pregnant outside of marriage. I asked her about that, and she responds:

Great-grandma: You don't understand. I was loose, and I was punished for it. You make your bed, and you lie in it. But my children were brought up to know what was right, and I made sure they were God-fearing and obeyed God's laws. They weren't to follow my path.

Me: Have you met Jesus, Great-Grandma? Let's talk to Jesus.

G.G.: He is my saviour, died for my sins.

Me: Yes, but let's talk to him. Jesus, how is it you want us to live? By the rules?

Jesus: Love is my rule, always love. Let it flow out like a river to all you meet.

G.G.: Love? That is what got me into this mess! Love, smov! Good practical sense and hard work, I say!

Jesus talks to her about love and how he loved and was killed for it, but he did not blame loving or close himself to it. I too speak to her about the love of God I have experienced.

G.G.: The shame of it! I loved him and I gave myself to him. Then he left and I found myself with child. The shame on my family, the shame at the kirk, my shame for all to see! It wasn't until after the babe was born that he came back, and we were married. Never will that happen again to me or mine if I can help it!

Me: (*very emotionally involved now*) But Granny, you were young, alive, passionate, and full of love. All that was God-given. You gave yourself in love and passion—was that sin?

I start sobbing at this point because I am speaking to the 18 year old me.

The dialogue now is between my 18-year-old self and me as an adult. The conversation ends up being about the teen's feelings when Mum was diagnosed with breast cancer.

18 year old: It was so awful standing in the hallway at Grandma's and her telling us in hushed tones, "**Your mother has cancer!**" It was if she was telling us, "**Your mother is going to die!**" We already knew about the cancer, but this was so ominous. I felt sick and there was no one to talk to, no one to hold me and let me cry.

Later when Mum had cancer again, I was full of emotions and again no one with whom to talk. I think I broke out sexually and in drinking because I needed human contact. I needed to feel loved. No one ever filled that place though—that void of loneliness, emptiness, need and grief. I really needed God. I was searching.

Adult: That was what you really needed to do. You needed to search. You needed to be held, to be loved, to feel desirable and sexual, and to be a woman. I am sorry for locking you out.

G.G.: (*emerging once again and addressing the Presbyterian minister figure*) Get out of that ridiculous black cassock! You look like a crow or a raven—a harbinger of gloom and doom and death. Get ye into a kilt, mon, and dance the hieland fling! The lost has returned home and we are going to have a bonnie fine party! (see Figure 13) (A.J. Sept.18, 2001).

This led to a meaningful conversation with my mother about our relationship.

Through this, I realized how critical I had been of my mother, pointing out her defects, where she was acting hypocritical. Again, this was my strong values or rules around

truth causing problems in relationships. I realized that my mother did truly love me, but often I had pushed her away, not receiving that love. I also realized that Mum was comfortable with her own sexuality, even though she conveyed caution to me. I often saw her flirting in a harmless way with men, but I judged it as inappropriate, frivolous. I identified more with her responsible, practical side than her carefree, fun-loving side.

After these dialogues, I felt incredible creative energy surging up in me, wanting to express this coming home of a part of me. Walking up from the beach, I turned a different way and discovered a banquet room complete with banquet table (an old well cover). I decided to have a celebration, a banquet for all my female ancestors to celebrate what in me had been dead but was now alive, had been lost but was now found. I spent the day gathering shells, rocks, berries, plants to symbolize the personalities and gifts of my mother, grandmothers, and great-granny. I set a place setting for each woman at the table. This was to be a party for all the lost parts of myself. Then I toasted each of my female ancestors and spoke of the gifts that I had received from them. I had been so gifted by these women. They had passed on to me strength, steadfastness, courage, faithfulness, joy, passion, wisdom, humour, honesty, love of learning, faith, spunk, and so much more. I had received so much love and never really realized it. It was an incredible feeling of integration and creative energy. The next day, I returned to my banquet room in the woods and received the greatest gift of all. In the night, some creature had come and eaten the berries on my banquet table. The gods had accepted my offering!

Analysis of the dialogues: What was the significance of this inner dialogue and resulting creative expression? In this imaginative dialogue with my great-grandmother whom I visioned as acting moralistically and harshly from a sense of shame, I actually was

extending love, forgiveness, and acceptance to the young part of myself who was lost to me because of my sense of guilt and shame. In the celebration of all the gifts I had received from my female ancestors, I had appropriated and appreciated the different feminine parts of myself. It was the Prodigal Son story active and alive in my own life and psyche. It also greatly reduced the power of that Presbyterian minister voice acting like a moralistic and killjoy watchdog.

Midlife liminality revisited: abiding/trusting

During another retreat, the issue of trust surfaced once again. I had an image of being on a raft in the middle of the ocean during a storm. Suddenly, the raft begins to break up. I am terrified as I fall into the water. A log appears. The log seems to be Jesus. I am overwhelmed with tears and gratefulness as it seems I have been saved. Then the scene shifts. A paper-thin coracle drifts up to me. I am invited to get in and let it take me where it wills. The name of the coracle is Abiding/Trust. I don't want to let go of the log. It seemed like the log was Jesus, so why do I have to let it go?

I pondered this image that had emerged. Once again, the memory of Harry pushing me into the dirt came back. That memory is so seared into my psyche, preventing me from trusting. Then I reminded myself how I have experienced trusting God, and it was truly safe to do so. God was once again asking me to trust, to abide. Finally, I realized that the log I was clinging to was survival, and I am holding onto it with all my strength, my will. It is part of the old way of being (the raft). Yes, God has provided it, but it is the old way. That coracle looks so light and flimsy with no means of steering, only a sail. It really is about trusting! (P.J. May 21/02).

I was not quite ready to commit myself to that flimsy coracle, so I went for a hike up into a wilderness park. On my hike, I tripped, and there before me lay a beautiful lady slipper. Spontaneously, I said aloud, “Why does something so beautiful grow in such hard places?” (*Memory of the gorgeous giant yellow lady slippers on the prairies growing in the roadside gravel*). Saying this and realizing what I was saying touched me profoundly. This was a God-incidence, God speaking to me through creation. This was what Jung termed synchronicity. I now was ready to get into the coracle of Abiding/Trust, letting go of all my anxieties and fears to God and opening myself to love. Stein (1998a) describes this in Jungian language: “the ego must experience ‘letting go’ in order to expand the horizon to include positive and negative aspects of the whole personality” (pp. 192-193). I was back in the liminal stage of floating. I had to relinquish this strict moral rigidity towards sexuality and intimacy and allow these aspects to come forth and be part of me.

On the same retreat, I hiked once again up into the park, this time going to a new viewpoint. I hate retracing my steps, so I descended by a different path, following a rude map. I walked and walked and was getting rather concerned because it seemed I had traveled much further than the map showed. Finally, I came to a cross-path where the sign down pointed in a different direction than the map indicated. I started to feel disoriented, a little panicky. I wasn’t sure of the way. Perhaps I had made a mistake and misinterpreted the signs. Which to choose—the map or the sign? An inner voice spoke to me, “Trust the signs, not the map. Keep going in the direction you’re going.” This spoke to me spiritually as well. “Trust the signs (of God the Spirit within you) not the map (the conventions, rules made by other people) (P.J. May 25/02).

A Mini-Sabbatical in Chicago

That same year I made a decision that proved important in my individuation process. I decided to go on a mini-sabbatical to Loyola University in Chicago. As I embarked on this month long journey, I felt quite apprehensive. I realized that this was the first time I had ever flown somewhere by myself to a place where I knew no one. I was completely alone and independent in this endeavour. I believe that was significant.

The first course, “Expressive Arts and Spiritual Mentoring,” proved to be incredibly meaningful in my inner journey of individuation. One of the texts for this course was Moore’s (1994) *Soul Mates*. Moore describes a soul mate as

someone to whom we feel profoundly connected, as though the communicating and communing that takes place between us were not the product of intentional efforts, but rather a divine grace. This kind of a relationship is so important to the soul that many have said there is nothing more precious in life” (p. xvii).

I found this book related to my growing relationship with Karl. I was experiencing a deepening spiritual connection with him that felt like the description of soul friends. This felt very scary to me—contrary to previously held rules or conventions regarding the behaviour of a Christian married woman. Moore describes it this way:

...that is the way of the soul—at times it seems to be at odds with the desires and rules of surface life. When we devote ourselves to soul, other attachments have to be loosened, and when we grant soul its own intentionality and purposes, we may have to ease our attachment to long-held values and expectations (p.xv-xvi).

Surfacing inner life scripts

What proved even more valuable were the course’s art activities that opened up some previously unconscious areas of my psyche. One activity was working with our families of origin, choosing a particular age for ourselves as the vantage point. Modeling in clay the felt sense of each family member, I arranged the pieces of clay showing

relationship distances, alliances, different family dynamics (see Figures 14a & b). Next, I wrote the message each member was conveying to me and the message I was giving to each of them. I spent a long time on this exercise, pondering, going deep to retrieve the unconscious messages that were given and received. Much valuable material came to consciousness through that exercise. I saw that my role in the family was to include my father, to extend relationship to him, due to my mother's focus on my sister and brother. My two siblings had virtually no relationship with my father at that time.

Margaret Keyes (1974) writes in her book, *Inward Journey*, "The way you discover how you got to be the way you are is to look at the messages from the family of your birth and the decisions you made about them" (p.22). Some of the messages I received, whether or not they were intended, were, "Don't be yourself. Adapt yourself if you want to be loved," (from Dad); "Don't be yourself. Show only your strength. Never reveal vulnerability. Life is a battle," (from Mum, Dad & my brother).

The message that had the most impact on me because it was entirely unexpected was the message by my 8-year-old self to me, "*Tenderness and gentleness are not for you.*" I had no idea that I was going to write that. When I did, it affected me deeply. I was flooded with tears. I knew I had internalized this message unconsciously and made it a life principle or script. Moore (1994) writes that we gather our mythology of love from our parents. This message became part of my mythology and affected me in two ways.

First, I interpreted that message to mean that love, gentleness and tenderness would not come my way. Or more to the point, love in my life would not consist of gentleness and tenderness. This became a more intricate philosophy as I had experiences of love that were not gentle or tender: "*Love will never live up to its promise. It may start*

out ok, but sooner or later, the other shoe will drop (remember the Harry incident!).”
“Love always hurts. I’ll never love again” (after my mother’s death).

Moore (1994) comments, “these statements of personal, vernacular philosophy have considerable impact on a person’s relationships” (p.34). This was certainly true in my life. Whenever a person was tender and gentle in a loving relationship, I felt great anxiety and fear, waiting for the axe to fall, resisting letting my guards down, even becoming more guarded and vigilant. As well, I chose partners who were aloof, guarded, not liking vulnerability either. Then, within the relationship, if there were any sign of insensitivity or discounting, I would overreact, say to myself, “*See, I knew it! Love never works out,*” and I would withdraw into my fort of guardedness. This was the root of my fear reaction that surfaced every time I found myself in a vulnerable relationship with a spiritual director. Not all directors, but some seemed to be the catalyst for the call to enter a deeper intimacy and vulnerability. I believe God was calling me to let go of this personal life script and risk having a different experience.

The message, “gentleness and tenderness are not for me,” also conveyed the message to me that I would never manifest these qualities. After all, I was to be invincible, tough, never revealing softer emotions or vulnerability. My marriage had always been a struggle, especially in the affection, tenderness, sexuality area. I had loved my children dearly, but as they grew, I had to think consciously of being affectionate. It did not really flow naturally. This was an important realization.

But again, here was an area where God was calling me to change, to risk, to move into new territory, to “enlarge the place of your tent” (Isaiah 54:2). I realized that I had been moving more into deeper relationship, into soul friendships where I had risked

vulnerability yet was having a different experience of love that was not grasping, self-seeking, or exploitative but accepting, empowering, tender, and gentle.

It is not easy to expose your soul to another, to risk such vulnerability, hoping that the other person will be able to tolerate your own irrationality. ... Yet this mutual vulnerability is one of the great gifts of love: giving the other sufficient emotional space in which to live and express her soul, with its reasonable and unreasonable ways, and then to risk revealing your own soul, complete with its absurdities” (Moore, 1994, p.30).

Another message from this family of origin exercise was not a surprise, “You have to do it alone.” However, what did surprise me was a seemingly contradictory message, “But you have to stay in the boundaries!” As a child, I was very independent and confident about going out of the set boundaries. Twice I ventured out, knowing where I was going and how to get home. Both times, my mother angrily met me with a switch: “Bad girl! You went out of the boundaries.” I can certainly understand her anxiety and fear now as a parent, but, as a child of four, I felt perfectly safe and capable.

These two conflicting messages held a great deal of power over me as I grew into adulthood. I was independent and confident except when it meant going out of the boundaries of conventional society. Even going to Chicago caused me a great deal of anxiety because I had gone out of the boundaries of what a “good Christian wife” does. It was becoming apparent that I was feeling restricted and confined by the institution of marriage. At first, it seemed like it was **my** marriage, but as I pondered this, I realized it was more about my image of marriage adopted and internalized from the culture:

My marriage has been a safe place, which now feels like a prison. However, it is not the marriage that is the prison; it is not Bob who is the jailor. I am the jailor and the prisoner. The bars and locks are of my own making. In a way, I am institutionalized. I know this life in here, and I’m used to it. It’s secure even

though it has become too small for me. God says, “Enlarge the place of your tent, stretch your tent curtains wide, do not hold back” (Isaiah 54:2) (P.J. June 27/02).

R.M. Stein (1990) writes, “For many women, marriage seems to have become more of an oppressive prison than a sanctuary” (p.39). He goes on to state “Historically, men and women not only have been biologically dependent on each other, they also have been dependent on each other for psychological completion—men have carried the so-called masculine qualities and women the feminine” (p.41). But now Stein sees the “breakdown in traditional marriage, family, and community relationships as part of an evolutionary process leading toward higher levels of psychological integration and wholeness” (p.41). This viewpoint makes a great deal of sense to me. I was not against marriage. I had no desire to break up my marriage, but I felt that it could be so much more than what I was experiencing. The image of marriage and the roles of the partners in it needed to be broadened, freed up from the cultural and traditional constraints. I needed to feel free to venture out of the boundaries.

Sexuality and spirituality

The second course, “Embodiment: Sexuality and Spirituality,” also proved to be confirming the way God was leading me. I found Nelson’s book, *Embodiment: An Approach to Sexuality and Christian Theology* (1978) to be a rich resource and a means to further freedom. Nelson states,

Sexuality is a sign, a symbol, and a means of our call to communication and communion. ... The mystery of our sexuality is the mystery of our need to reach out to embrace others both physically and spiritually. Sexuality thus expresses God’s intention that we find our authentic humanness in relationship” (p.18).

How different this explanation of sexuality is from my narrow definition that sexuality equals genital sex! No wonder God wanted me to enlarge the place of my tent.

Nelson examines the dualisms existing in our culture: first of all the dualism of self and body resulting in mind alienated from body, thinking opposed to feeling. “If the mind is alienated from the body, so also is the body from the mind. The depersonalization of one’s sexuality, in some form or degree, inevitably follows” (p.39). He goes on to describe the history of spiritualistic dualism and sexist dualism, both of which have a strong impact on our attitudes towards sexuality. *Spiritualistic dualism* is rooted in “the body-spirit dichotomy abounding in Greek philosophy and culture at the beginning of the Christian era” (p.45). Nelson describes *sexist dualism* as “the second major root and expression of sexual alienation, intertwined with and at least as important as spiritualistic dualism” (p.46). This was present in ancient Israel as well as in the early Christian church. “It was the subordination of women—systematically present in the institutions, the interpersonal relations, the thought forms, and the religious life of patriarchal cultures” (p.46). Spirit, mind, reason were seen as belonging to the higher, more spiritual way, identified with male-ness. Body, sensuality, emotions were considered suspect, more base, something to be overcome and linked with female-ness.

Connections to culture: the power of the collective

This was the culture in which I was raised, both in my British family of origin and in the Anglican Church. From the beginning, I received the impression that my female body was something to be hidden away. The shaming experiences around feelings and displays of affection increased my motivation to repress these feminine traits. During confirmation, we had to swear that we would resist “the sinful lusts of the flesh.” What did that phrase mean to me at age 15? It meant “sex.” One more nail in the casket nailing my sexuality into its negative box.

In my family of origin, the boys were the inheritors of land, business, coin collections; the women would be provided for and taken care of by their husbands. I was now in the process of rejecting this cultural view, of becoming an individual free of these restraints. Why should I be lesser because of an accident of birth? Because I was female, did that mean I was less intelligent, less independent, and less capable? Even though I had a great deal of education, was it even possible for me to support myself? Certainly not as a spiritual director! I could return to teaching, but that did not seem to fit with the person I was becoming. I had followed my mother's, my grandmothers' paths, staying at home, raising my children, keeping the household, and being supported financially and materially by my husband. There was nothing wrong with that path, but I wanted more at this period of my life. I needed to have more meaning in my life. I felt called to a different vocation, to help others, to empower others, especially other women.

As Nelson (1978) described some of the continuing costs of sexist dualism, I discovered some of my own experiences. "Through their internalization of an identity which is other-than-the-norm, women frequently experience immense anxiety over social disapproval should they attempt to express a positive self-image and a new consciousness of self-worth" (p.65). This was my experience as I first moved away from the fundamentalism and self-negation of my experience of the charismatic renewal's spirituality and even when I decided to go to Chicago for a mini-sabbatical. Many women in my position blamed men for their imprisonment but actually, I felt more pressure from other women, pressure for how a woman, a Christian wife should be. It was interesting how many women said to me, "Isn't it great that Bob lets you do this," or "How's Bob going to manage while you're away all that time?" I heard messages from my

internalized collective saying, *“You’re so selfish. What will people think? What about your kids? This isn’t proper. You are not being a good wife. You’re doing it wrong.”* I drew a picture of the power of this collective on me (See Figure 15).

Nelson (1978) also lists emotional dependence as a cost of sexist dualism with some of its manifestations being: “the fear of going out in the evening without male accompaniment; rigidity in following rules and orders; seeking the advice of the man before making important decisions; the stifling of intellectual creativity” (p.65). These were some of the shackles I had shed. I believed myself to be strong and independent, yet I had been so impacted unconsciously by these collective cultural messages.

While in Chicago, I considered taking the courses for credit, using them towards a Masters of Pastoral Counseling degree. I loved the deep work I was experiencing. As soon as I began this consideration, I felt incredible fear and anxiety. *“I can’t do it alone. What will people think? My marriage won’t survive if I do this alone.”* I realized the absurdity of these thoughts and worked with the medicine wheel we had created in the course, doing the standing meditation facing the north saying, “I **can** do it alone! I **can** do it alone!” Then I went and paid my fees. This felt like a break-through. I was not going to let the collective fear messages control me.

It did prove to be a break-through. When I returned home, I explored the institutions in Canada that had a similar program and discovered St. Stephen’s College in Edmonton. Wonder of wonders, the college had just added an art therapy specialization. I was immediately attracted to this after the valuable fruits of the expressive arts course in Chicago. I applied and was accepted. I felt new fire energy rising within me in me as I started out on this new part of my journey.

Implications for my marriage: Most importantly, my time in Chicago confirmed my path towards breaking out of the box of conventional marriage. I came home and said to my husband, “We need to have an un-marriage ceremony. The old model is no longer working. We need to set out a new vision for our marriage.” Rupp (1996), in her midlife book, describes her conversations with married friends in midlife.

I heard them speak of their old maps, of things in their marriages that worked well but had become inadequate. . . . Their understanding of what marriage meant was also changing. They struggled for how to allow other intimate relationships into their own, when to stand up for one’s own direction of growth and when to compromise (p.64).

This seemed to describe my experience so well. My husband was quite open to this idea, even though we had no idea how this would unfold. For my part, I realized I needed to stop struggling so much in our marriage. I needed to stop trying to change Bob. I needed to come to the place of accepting him where he was, letting go of wanting him to be different than he was. However, that also meant I did not want to keep selling out who I was, trying to adapt to what he wanted me to be. I needed to be true to myself, to follow my own path towards wholeness, to become the person God created me to be. So often, I, like many women, had refrained from my desiring or even my recreation, because my husband was not keen on that particular plan of action. No more. I was not going to hold him back, and I was not going to be held back. We never did sit down specifically to revision our marriage, but a new model began to evolve where we were not so fused, but were free to follow our individual passions, friendships, vocations. This did not happen over night. There was a time of struggle as we moved out of the collective strictures of marriage.

The Creative Child is in the Lead: A New Chapter Begins

The call to the emerging feminine manifested in several areas of my life. I took up watercolour and began painting flowers and birds, subjects that would not have interested me previously. I found myself concentrating on flower gardening rather than vegetable gardening, formerly always my focus.

As well, I finally relaxed into trusting Karl, my spiritual director, and experienced a place of resting and refuge. One day, when I felt the old fear rising up, I realized it was the inner child part of me fearing that I would be molested (arising from the child molester incident). But with this awareness, I said to her and myself, “I’m an adult, not a child. I just have to say no.” How simple! Nevertheless, it was huge. That fearful, hurt child part had persisted in flooding me with fear. Now my adult self had taken the lead, was acting as the protective parent, grounded in reality and in the true Self.

My time at St. Stephen’s college opened up another part of me, and this time, the child archetype was in the lead. I was experiencing the creative child now, not the wounded child. The creative, divine child was leading me into new territory, expanding my horizons in new counseling techniques but especially in the field of art experience. Art making opened up areas of “stuck-ness” for me and led to new insights in ways that I could never imagine. I will describe two examples of how I used art making.

Mandalas bringing insight and freedom

One important course was the mandala studio course. It felt like a retreat as I accessed deep unconscious contents, using white pencil on black paper, bringing light into the unconscious. Some important mandalas that emerged during the course were my “soul’s purpose” mandala (see Figure 16) and my inner critic mandala (see Figure 17).

Both of these images arose from my unconscious as our professor led us deep within ourselves. As I worked with these images, I gained much valuable information.

In my “soul’s purpose” mandala, I felt that the mandala had a dual meaning. First, it symbolized to me my call to blossom, to become all I am created to be as woman, to unfold my beauty as I am held by God’s hands receiving the warmth of God’s love. As well, it seemed to be an invitation to allow myself to feel and express sorrow, to let my tears flow because they will be received and held and actually will water and nourish the beautiful flower part of me. Secondly, I feel that I am called to hold others as they undergo this process of becoming their true self, to hold them in their sorrows and their joys. I wrote a poem expressing this:

I hold you in a sacred space,
 Holding, receiving your tears, your joys,
 So that the flower that is your inner soul
 May be watered, nourished, fed,
 Causing you to open, unfurl
 Revealing the beauty of all you are.
 God holds me in a sacred space,
 “Underneath are the everlasting arms,”
 Holding, receiving my tears, my sunny times.
 My inner soul opens,
 Unfurls like a blossom,
 Revealing inner beauty, fragrant scent.
 All that I am, all that I will be,
 Ever in God.

As I work as a spiritual director and a pastoral counselor, I do hold and receive people’s joys and their sorrows. I try to incarnate God’s unconditional love and acceptance. As these clients begin to know God’s incredible love for them through prayer and hopefully through my acceptance and compassion, I see them begin to blossom, to open more and more to God, and as they do, more and more of their inner beauty is revealed. They begin the journey of becoming all that they are created to be.

Susanne F. Fincher, in her book, *Creating Mandalas* (1991), talks about the symbolism of a flower in a mandala. The sentence that most resonates with me is this: “You may want to consider the possibility that flowers reveal your soul’s work, a growth process unfolding through your relationship with the archetype of the Self” (p.126). This was amazing, considering this mandala was created to show my soul’s purpose.

During the Mandala course, I started comparing myself negatively with the others in the group. I noticed that my mandalas consisted of concrete images while others were more abstract. It seemed theirs were more beautiful, and that perhaps I was not doing it in the right way, not doing it “properly.” My inner critic image showed me clearly what was going on within me. The image was a two-headed Tyrannosaurus Rex (see Figure 17). I was shocked, surprised and even amused at first. I did not even know that I could draw such a creature, but the final drawing looked quite realistic and very ferocious with prominent teeth and claws. At first, I discounted this image, thinking, “I don’t have problems with an inner critic. I know it’s there, but I don’t let it really affect me.” However, having brought this image to consciousness, I have since become very aware of how strongly this inner critic affects me.

McNiff (1992) describes how important it is to dialogue with the images that emerge in one’s art making. He describes his experience: “When I perceive the painting that I make, or the dream that I have as other than myself, I set the stage for dialogue. The painting might have something to say to me, and so I take on the role of listener rather than explainer” (p.105). He goes on to state that “image dialogues always expand possibilities for being influenced therapeutically by paintings and dreams” (p.109). I include here my dialogue with the critic in my mandala:

Critic: See, you can't do this the "right" way! Look at how the others are doing it. They are creating beauty. They are taking time, blending, and getting beautiful effects.

Me: I like my images. They speak to me.

Critic: Why do you keep resisting abstract images? It's all about control, isn't it?

Me: I don't think so. I think concrete images are more important to me.

Critic: See, you never fit in with how other women are. You're not good at this.

Me: But I'm enjoying myself, and I guess that is most important.

Critic: What is wrong with you? It's no harder for you than it is for the others.

This dialogue with my inner critic touched into my core wound message, "*There must be something wrong with me.*" I am aware of this message surfacing at certain times, and one of them is when I feel like I'm not fitting in with other women, when I feel different.

This was an important realization, and further dialogue with this inner critic image led me in another direction. Pat Allen (1995) encourages us to get to know our inner critic.

The critic holds very valuable information. The critic holds our deepest fears; resistance shows us that we are on the right track. If we shift our perception, our critic can be seen as trying to spare us the pain of change, the shame of fear" (p.48).

I sat with my image of my critic and considered some of Allen's questions: "What fears does it mirror?... What sort of pain does it want to protect you from?" (p.49).

The answer lay in the area of "beauty," an area that seemed like a foreign land to me. I began to explore the theme of "beauty." What is beauty? Did beauty have value in my family? I considered my childhood home with reference to beauty. I could not think of any one time when Mum was concerned with beauty. She did a very small amount of

gardening, but I cannot remember her bringing flowers in to decorate. In the decorating of the house, there were no things of beauty beyond a few nondescript pictures on the wall. I wondered where my mother expressed her creativity. She did no crafts, did not sew, did not really enjoy cooking or gardening, and was not musical or artistic. She was a lot of fun, was intelligent, and people loved her, so that was where her talents lay. In our family, usefulness, practicality, and meaning were much more important.

Do I want to create beauty? Is it a value for me? Does beauty not have meaning? Or is it that I don't know the language of beauty, very much as I don't know the language of music? It is as if I'm in a foreign land. However, I do see beauty in nature and in flowers. I see beauty in some people's landscaped yards. I saw beauty in the other women's mandalas. Not all of them were beautiful to me, but the ones with fluidity in line and blending were beautiful. As I look at my mandalas, I do think my soul's purpose mandala is beautiful because it touches my heart. The other ones are meaningful and I like them, but they are not beautiful in my eyes.

One head of the critic is saying, "I will define what beauty is and your pictures don't qualify. You are not like other women. There is something wrong with you! The other head is saying, "Beauty doesn't matter. It is fluff, superficial. Only meaning and practicality count. Beauty is just surface icing—no depth." All in all, this interaction with the Inner Critic mandala has alerted me to the power of this inner critic and its negative influence. It has also brought to consciousness my discomfort with the concept of beauty. It seems as if I have an inner standard for beauty—perhaps even some negative attitudes.

Reflection on Beauty: As I reflected, I knew there was a point in time when I realized that I would never be beautiful in looks according to society's standards. Moreover, often

I found that women who were beautiful in that way were not people to whom I was drawn—they were preoccupied with looks, clothes, men, material things. Perhaps I felt I could never compete, so I chose a different route. I had a roommate in my twenties who was quite beautiful, but the men she attracted were men who wanted a beautiful woman on their arm. They were not at all the kind of men who were attracted to me. The men who liked me liked to debate and to discuss. They engaged me at a depth, and that is what I liked. From that time, I unconsciously rejected beauty as being associated with shallowness, surface icing, lacking depth. It was not a field in which I could compete.

I believe this dialogue with this inner critic revealed another area of the feminine that I had rejected or minimized. Following this new awareness of my narrow, restrictive view on beauty, I read John O’Donohue’s book, *Beauty: the Invisible Embrace* (2004) in which he calls the reader to awaken and to surrender to beauty. He has many definitions of beauty but the one that spoke to me most was this one:

Ontologically, beauty is the secret sound of the deepest there ness of things. To recognize and celebrate beauty is to recognize the ultimate sacredness of experience, to glimpse the subtle embrace of belonging where we are wed to the divine, the beauty of every moment, of every thing (p.51).

For me, it is when I experience the “God-ness” of something—in a person, in a situation, in nature—that I am touched by beauty, by the divine. Beauty is not a rigid construct defined by society or the collective. I knew this in my head but somehow I was holding unconscious judgments and standards set by the collective and myself. Thank-you inner critic mandala! (Baillie, July, 2006).

Art making as spiritual process on retreat

The second example I will describe involved taking art making into my private retreat. At this time, I was conscious of an image arising from within me of two aspects

of my life and two aspects of my nature. It was as if I was living a divided life. The image was like a dream image—an image of a divided house. I took a large sheet of pastel paper and using chalk and oil pastels expressed the image that was within (see Figure 18). First, I drew the left side of the inner house, a gloomy dark space with narrow hallways. This part of me was decorated with a huge picture of an all-seeing, ever-vigilant eagle-eye on the wall and another picture of my two-headed inner critic. The cast of characters that populated this part of the house consisted of the Iron Maiden, Miss Proper and the potentate that dominated the area—the mad Queen of Hearts.

Shaun McNiff (1992), in his book, *Art as Medicine*, comments,

Experience in art therapy has repeatedly shown that meditation on the significance of the image for its maker and/or interpreter furthers, rather than obstructs, the making of art. Meditations on images and talking about them amplify their expression and help us to see things that we did not see before” (p.67).

As I meditated on my picture, I felt the strong negative energy, the demanding energy of the picture. Before I actually drew the picture, I had ascribed this part of my life to my struggle in my marriage. But now that I had put the image onto paper, I found that the picture called me to add one new detail. I added a miniature door to the picture. I find this often happens when I use art making as part of working out my inner process. I do a picture, and it calls for something more. Often, this leads on to something new, an insight or new aspect or a new picture. I knew that the door led to the other side of my house, where it was like a spa, where it was light and pink and gold and round and open. There I could relax, let my guard down.

As soon as I drew the miniature door, I knew that the black guarded part of my life was not due solely to the stresses in my marriage. It was there to guard access to that

other room. I was not going to let anyone into my secret garden. No wonder, I could not seem to bring that soft, warm part of myself into the other part of my life. I was guarding an idealized dream, an illusion, perhaps a delusion. There was secrecy, protectiveness, and hiddenness linked to this pink room. I was escaping to the comfort of this inner place to avoid dealing with the issues in my life. I had drawn the pink room. My next drawing was Poof! as my illusion/delusion went up in smoke.

My retreat continued, but I was feeling much pain and fear around letting go of this place of escape. Now I needed to face clearly the guardedness and negative aspects of me. I felt under spiritual attack, as if demons of discouragement, depression, hopelessness were oppressing me (see Figure 19). Feeling very fragmented. I decided to create a mandala expressing my inner state (see Figure 20). I showed it to my director, and he asked me to pray with the Ignatian meditation on the Incarnation.

I still felt very down even after reading and praying the first time. I fell asleep for about half an hour. Upon waking, I gazed on my mandala and realized it was expressing the incarnation—light coming into the world of chaos and fragmentation, and the entire situation was held in God’s hands. I looked up the first chapter of John’s gospel and read, “The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not overcome it” (Jn. 1:5).

Suddenly, I realized this could be true for me right now. I drew a series of mandalas (See Figure 21): first, one with all the dark demonic images swirling, then second, light

driving the demons out, overcoming the darkness. Jung (1959) states that mandalas are

instruments of meditation, concentration and self-immersion, for the purpose of realizing inner experience... At the same time, they serve to produce an inner order—which is why, when they appear in a series, they often follow chaotic, disordered states marked by conflict and anxiety. They express the idea of a safe refuge, of inner reconciliation and wholeness” (pp.383-384).

As soon as I drew this mandala of light overcoming the darkness, I felt set free from the dark oppressing thoughts and feelings. It was amazing! Immediately I was at peace. Judith Cornell (1994) describes this, “When a practitioner willfully illuminates and embodies a sacred image from within the psyche while in a meditative state, spiritual transformation, physical healing, and the integration of personality fragments can result” (p.3). I had experienced this.

A day or so later, I knew something new was emerging after this vanquishing of the chaotic dark by the divine light. It was the creation story happening within me. The image that emerged spontaneously from my psyche was a rainbow coloured spiral shell of a creature called a nautilus. I was not even sure what a nautilus was, but “nautilus” was the word I heard within me. Next, I saw the image in my mind’s eye. Later, I looked up the symbol of a nautilus and was absolutely amazed. Apparently, “the shell of the chambered nautilus is symbol of beauty and proportional perfection” (Armon, 2001, p.1). Susanne Fincher (1991) quotes Jung as saying, “We can hardly escape the feeling that the unconscious process moves spiral-wise round a centre, gradually getting closer, while the characteristics of the centre grow more and more distinct” (p.133).

She goes on to state,

Jung is referring to the process of individuation through which the ego takes up its proper position as an entity revolving around the Self, the true center of the personality. Jung also finds the spiral reminiscent of the tantric symbol for life force” (p.133).

Fincher (1991) concludes that the spiral, then, “serves as a symbol of the revitalization of life through contact with the divine, creative, healing energies of the deepest layers of the psyche” (p.133). This final statement seemed to embody everything I had experienced on

my retreat as I journeyed from chaos and darkness, through incarnation and the coming of light to overcome the darkness, and finally, to something new coming to birth.

The rainbow colours of the nautilus also proved significant. Jung “suggests that the appearance of rainbow colours in mandalas is related to wholeness, the goal of individuation” (Fincher, pp. 131-132). Fincher (1991) cites Kellogg as describing mandalas with rainbow colours to be indicative of the “rainbow experience”, that is, “a rebirth of the person occasioned by a profound ordering of the psyche” (p.132). Fincher goes on to suggest that

When rainbows appear in your mandalas, you may be celebrating the joy of coming through a dark time. Perhaps some of the wounds of your inner child are being healed. Rainbows in your mandalas can be like a gift of encouragement from the gods. The rainbow experience can be your psyche’s way of liberating powerful energies for healing (p.132).

I was amazed at these descriptions of the significance of my spontaneous image, especially how the image expressed so completely what was occurring in my prayer.

Clearly, art making was proving to be instrumental in working through the problems in my attitude towards our marriage. In this exercise, inner parts of myself emerged: the Eagle Eye and the inner critic, ever-vigilant, never relaxing their critical guardedness for a moment; the Iron Maiden totally covered from head to foot in armour and with sword ready to do battle; Miss Proper with her no-nonsense, no humour attitude, and rigid rules of propriety; and the mad Queen of Hearts who shouts, “Off with his head!” whenever displeased. These were not congenial figures to work out a loving marriage. I believe these were all aspects proceeding from the armoured Amazon archetype.

I kept on drawing and using this method to sort out my feelings and some of the painful patterns in our relationship that trigger these inner aspects of me. I used a Progoff Journaling technique to write down the stepping-stones of my husband's life in order to see where some of his woundedness originated, woundedness that sometimes burst forth in hurtful behavior. This brought light into the situation: light and clarity.

I turned to scriptures where people were in despair and hopeless and God brought hope into their lives: Elizabeth and Zechariah in their barrenness and Joseph as he faces Mary's illegitimate pregnancy. Light into darkness. These scriptures brought hope to me in my situation.

My final picture was a fun one. I took the initial drawing of the dark gloomy part of the house and brought light into it (see Figure 22). The iron maiden took off her armour; Miss Proper loosened up, dyed her hair and bought a new dress; and the Queen of Hearts baked some tarts. The eagle eye took a snooze, and the inner critic was out to lunch. I loved doing this drawing; it felt very freeing. But it is not yet a reality inside. There is much to do in our marriage before I can relax some of my guardedness.

What is God asking me to do with respect to our marriage? Allen (2005) in her book, *Art is a Spiritual Path*, speaks about the importance of stating an intention which is "how we join with the Divine and how we access our internal wisdom" (p.19). She cautions us not to use the verb *want* in our intention as this word expresses a state of lack. My intention and prayer since my retreat is to open myself to a more positive light and life-filled view of my life, my marriage, other people, and my place of work. As I made this intention, an image emerged which I drew in my journal in the form of a mandala (see Figure 23). I call this the Skin-shedding Mandala. It was time to let go of negativity,

unforgiveness, grudges, eternal vigilance, and armoured guardedness. I realized on the retreat that the first picture (Figure 18) was informative in that it symbolized how I was approaching much of my life at present.

The final significant event on my retreat, which embodies the concept of poetic possibilities, was the message of the sundial. On the lawn of the retreat centre where I was making my retreat, there was a sundial. I have worked at this centre for six years and have passed that sundial every day but never paid any attention to it. But during this retreat, suddenly it took on energy. I kept looking at it, walking around it, reading the inscriptions on it. Finally, at the end of the retreat I realized what its message was to me. On the top of the sundial I read, “I mark none but sunny hours.” I drew this as a mandala. It was telling me to look for the positive, for light and life. The light will overcome the darkness. I was amazed at how God can speak through everyday objects.

I felt very excited by this new area of art making, for my own process and as a process I could employ with clients. Repeatedly, I had stated my need for a safe place in which to be vulnerable. I needed safety and space in order to reveal fully the softer, more tender parts of myself. I was discovering that art making was that safe place and in particular, the mandala. Fincher (1991) describes in this way:

When we create a mandala, we make a personal symbol that reveals who we are at that moment. The circle we draw contains—even invites—conflicting parts of our nature to appear. Yet even when conflict surfaces, there is an undeniable release of tension when making a mandala. Perhaps this is because the form of the circle recalls the safe closeness of the womb....Drawing a circle may be something like drawing a protective line around the physical and psychological space that we each identify as ourself (p.24).

(Baillie, May, 2006)

Chapter 4: Concluding Remarks

My story is told. My journey of individuation continues, but many changes have occurred in these last 20 years. The wounded child part of me that emerged in my opening vision has experienced a great deal of healing. How did that healing occur?

First, it is important to notice the areas of her woundedness. She did not feel safe or secure, loved and delighted in as she was. I don't blame my parents, but it was her (my) experience, my sensitivity, my interpretation. Marion Woodman (1982) writes "most people in this generation, male and female, do not have a strong maternal matrix out of which to go forward into life" (p.16). Perhaps because of my mother's post-partum depression, this child part of me did not find the strong maternal matrix that Pearce (1977) emphasizes is so important. He describes the infant, in its developmental process moving out from the mother, it

can do this fully and successfully only to the extent that the mother is his/her absolutely unquestioned safe place to which s/he can always instantly return and be nurtured. Only when the infant knows that the mother matrix will not abandon him/her can that infant move into childhood with confidence and power (p.21).

Woodman (1982) cites Pearce and the importance of this maternal matrix as essential for a woman connecting to the feminine. In her other book, *The Ravaged Bridegroom* (1990), Woodman states

that a father's daughter whose lifeline is to her dad may try to dismiss what is not there for her in her mother. Dad has always been her cherishing mother and father. Why bother with what never was? If she decides to go into analysis, she will almost surely seek a male analyst because she respects men more than women and her energy is more vibrant with men" (p.73).

This seems to describe my situation. My father was not especially cherishing or nurturing, but I somehow looked to him as that source because my mother was focused on my siblings. Then, with my experience of Mr. Long, who seemed to see me and

delight in me, I experienced the church and male ministers/priests as a nurturing or maternal matrix. Hence, my consistent seeking out of male clergymen for mentors, spiritual directors, counselors. This also seems to fit with the devastation I felt back in 1986 when I was rejected by a spiritual mother figure and shut out of the leadership. When I saw the children being discounted and marginalized, my child self reacted in pain and anguish. My church had always been for me a container of safety, acceptance, encouragement, and empowerment. No wonder it felt similar to the death of my mother.

This crisis triggered my wounded inner child: the child who felt she had to do it alone, the child who was hurt by close friends, the child who wasn't allowed to cry or show vulnerability. But, I/she was received, accepted, and contained (held) by Ken, my first spiritual director. This proved to be the testing ground and template of how my process played out over the next 20 years. Filled with fear of vulnerability, over and over I dared to trust God, directors, and counselors with my innermost self. I believe this was connected to seeking the reassurance, protection, and validation from a father figure. This seems to be complete. In Karl, I did find refuge, love, and tenderness. He was very like both my father and mother in temperament. He even smoked the same brand of cigarettes. No longer do I feel that longing to have a father figure in my life. It is done.

As I researched this thesis, I was shocked at the extent of the wounding in the area of my sexuality. My sense of myself as female, my attitudes towards my body, my view of men as sexual predators had a huge effect on my world view and sense of safety. It was amazing to see how one incident of attempted sexual abuse acted as such a destructive seed within my psyche, later fed and watered by other incidents confirming

my initial negative judgment about men and sexuality. It was as if I was seeing through a particular lens and not seeing or hearing the positive things that were communicated.

In this sexuality area, my mother's attitudes and words had a strong negative influence on me. She was comfortable with herself as woman, with her sexuality, and she could flirt in a good way, enjoying herself, having fun. Yet she so often shamed me in the same area, telling me not to hold hands or show affection in public and giving me many warnings about men and sex. She was trying to keep me safe, but it impacted me very negatively. My mother was such a strong positive influence on me in so many ways. She was intelligent, strong, confident, fun, and loved by so many. She always told me, "You can do anything you set your mind to!" She encouraged me to be well rounded, academic, and independent. Because of the strength of her personality and my respect for her and her opinions, I was strongly influenced by the negative messages as well. If I had discounted her as a person, I might not have been so affected.

Nelson stresses that sexuality is "a very basic dimension of our personhood" (1978, p.17). My woundedness in this area, occurring at a very young age, impacted my self-image and self-esteem. My core wound message surfaced whenever there were problems in relationships: "There must be something wrong with me!"

Misseldine (1961) writes about the effects of the "inner child of the past"—a set of feelings and attitudes brought from childhood" (p.20), on our present day functioning. We overreact to a situation; feelings that seem childish and unreasonable surge up within us. The wounded inner child has been triggered. Schwartz (1995) in his Internal Family Systems (IFS) model speaks of *exiles*, "child-like parts [which] are chronically ignored in the internal system: consequently they are constantly vulnerable to becoming terribly

upset” (p.96). When this happens, boundaries dissolve, and the exile with its feelings “obscures the Self’s resources and, in a sense, merges with the Self or takes control of the system” (p.96). This injured child part of me affected my adult responses and reactions to relationship.

The initial vision showed the child part of me running into Jesus’ arms and sobbing there as he held me. I believe this illustrated how I was to be healed. I needed to know my “belovedness” as Nouwen (1992b) terms it. First, I needed to know God the Father’s love for me, God’s acceptance of me in my weakness and neediness (the most unlovable part for an “8”). I received this through praying the scriptures and through my director, Ken, incarnating God’s love. Next, I needed to relate to Jesus, the person of the Trinity who came as human. This was more difficult because he was a man, and I was reluctant to trust a man. Harold stood in the place of Jesus for me. He was very non-threatening and gentle, so I moved closer to intimacy and vulnerability with him during my 30-day retreat. At the same time, I was experiencing close discipleship with Jesus.

What was surprising was the number of times God had to deal with my sense of shame and guilt around sexual sin. Over and over, this area came up until the dialogue with my great-grandmother ultimately set me free. Finally, God called me to come out of the tomb, the locked office, to let the light shine through the beauty of my femininity, to allow myself to love and be loved. Here imagination and art making began to be instrumental in helping me come to freedom. I began letting God unravel the weaving of my life: the rules and judgments I had made around men, relationships, and marriage. I entered into friendships with men, and I experienced a deep soul friendship with Karl, my director. I found a new truth, “Tenderness and gentleness **are** for me!”

The question of my initial vision, “What was the significance of running into Jesus’ arms?” seems obvious to me now. I needed to experience the love of God/Jesus—to be held in that love, accepted in all my feelings, contained—in order to experience healing in that wounded inner child place. This happened in my prayer as well as in the caring therapeutic environment with spiritual directors and counselors. This fits so well with Carl Rogers’ model of therapy, which sees the quality of the therapeutic relationship as the primary agent of growth in the client (Corey, 2005). It happened in my art making.

In the last few years, the creative, fun-loving child has been leading me into art explorations, new ways of counseling and spiritual direction, and a new way of being with my husband and children. I have related only a fraction of the ways art making has been a gift in my life. It has taken me deeper into myself and God on my retreats. An insight arising from the writing of this thesis is that art making (and particularly mandalas) is providing a nurturing, holding container for my emotions, for my inner self. It provides me with a maternal matrix, with a connection to the feminine. I continue creating mandalas, expressing my inner conflicts and feelings in order to let go of them and become centred once again. I feel at peace, grounded, held.

To conclude, I will depict a series of three mandalas drawn over several days showing a progression that seems to illustrate my journey. The first shows a negative oppression of something trying to emerge (see Figure 24). The next exhibits something coming to birth or fruition (see Figure 25). The third one speaks to me of the flowering of the true Self— an expression of my inner being (see Figure 26). I am no longer a miserable offender full of self-loathing. I am grounded in the love of God, in love of self, and love for others. I now know myself as God’s work of art! (still in process!)

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Appendix A



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3 June 11



Figure 4



Figure 5

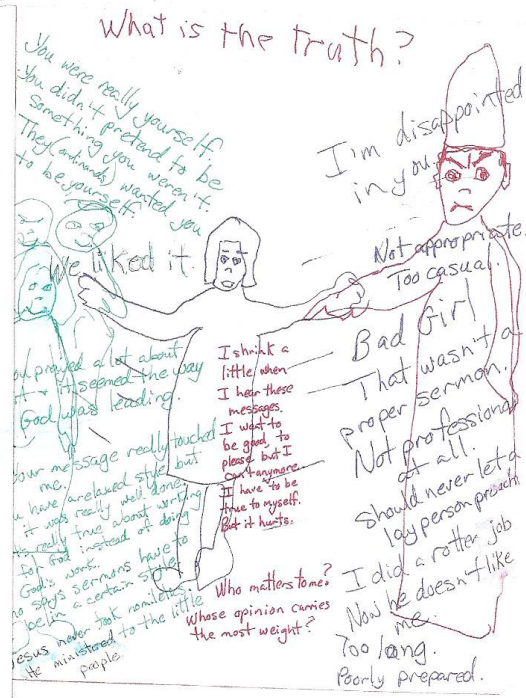


Figure 6

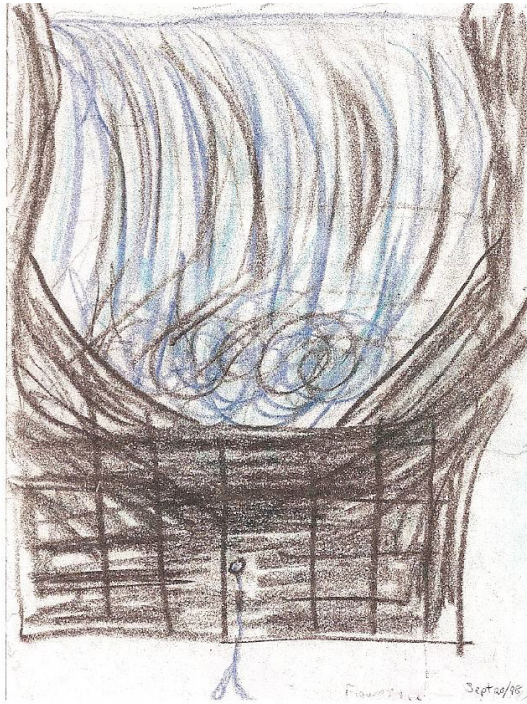


Figure 7

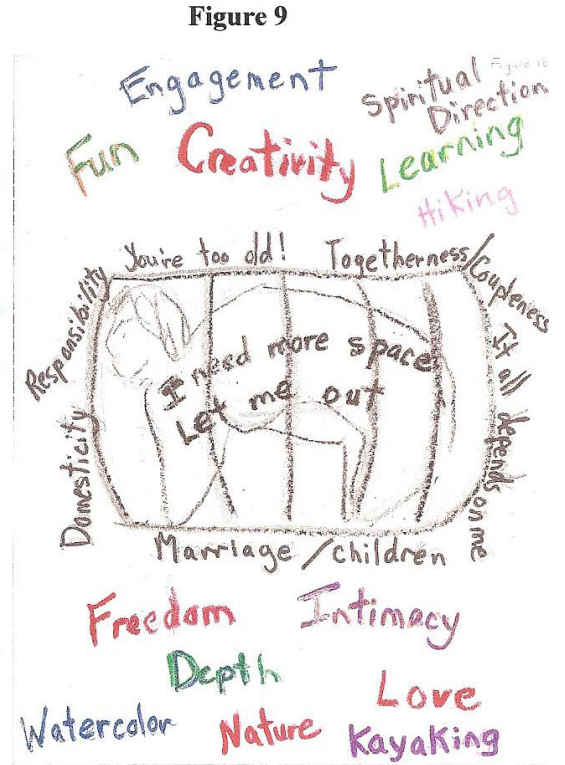


Figure 9

Figure 8





Figure 10

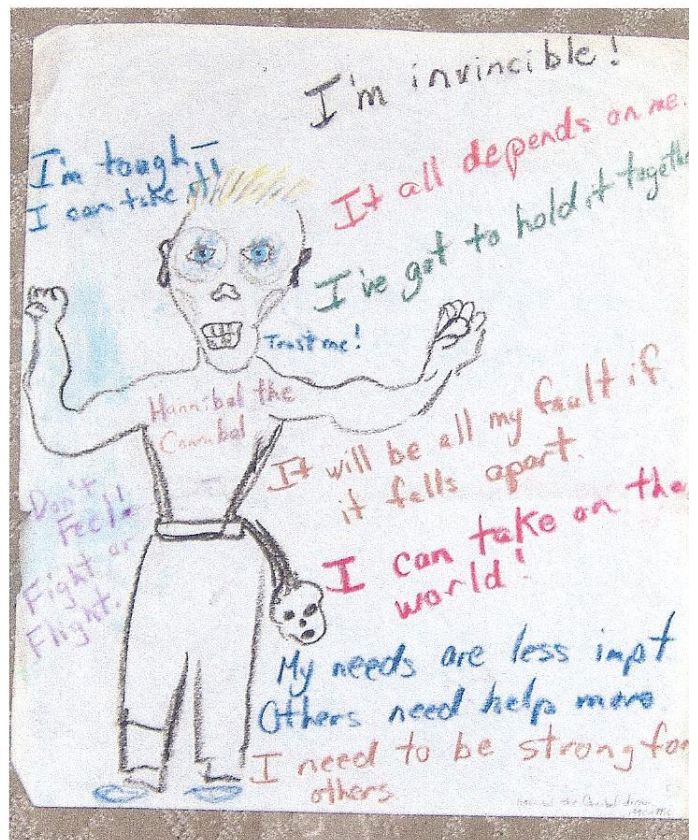


Figure 11

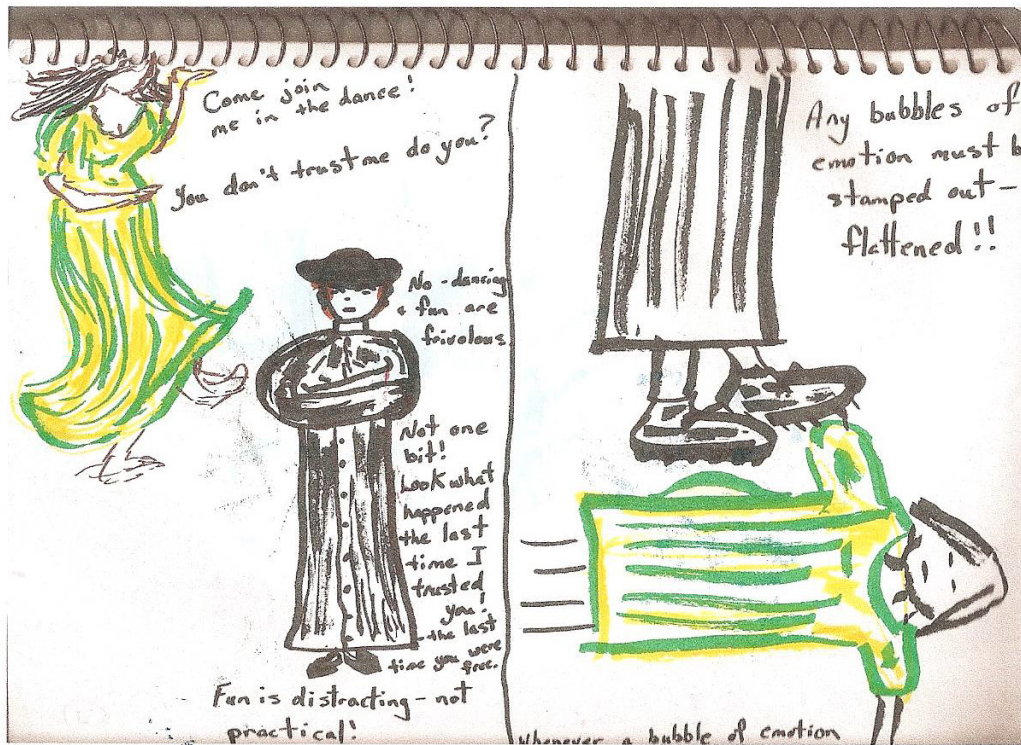


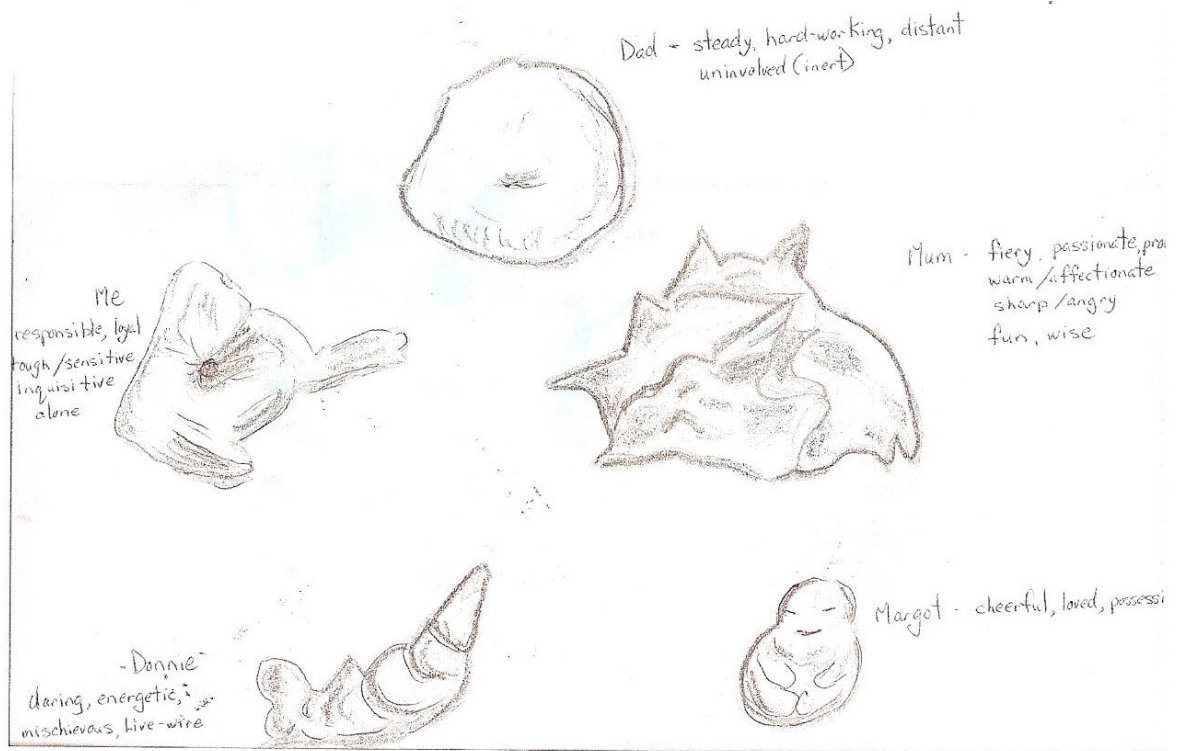
Figure 12

Great-Grandma Munro

Presbyterian Minister
Calvinist Noy-Sayer

"Get out of that ridiculous black Cassock - you look like a crow on a raven - a harbinger of gloom + doom + death. Get ye into a Kilt, mon + dance the fling. The lost has returned home + we are going to have a bonnie fine party!"

Figure 13



Figures 14a & b: Family Sculpture

My Family Sculpture

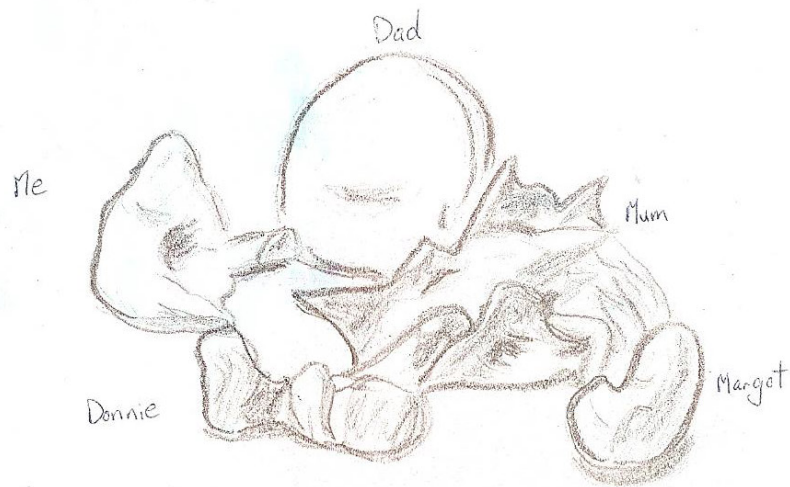




Figure 15



Figure 16

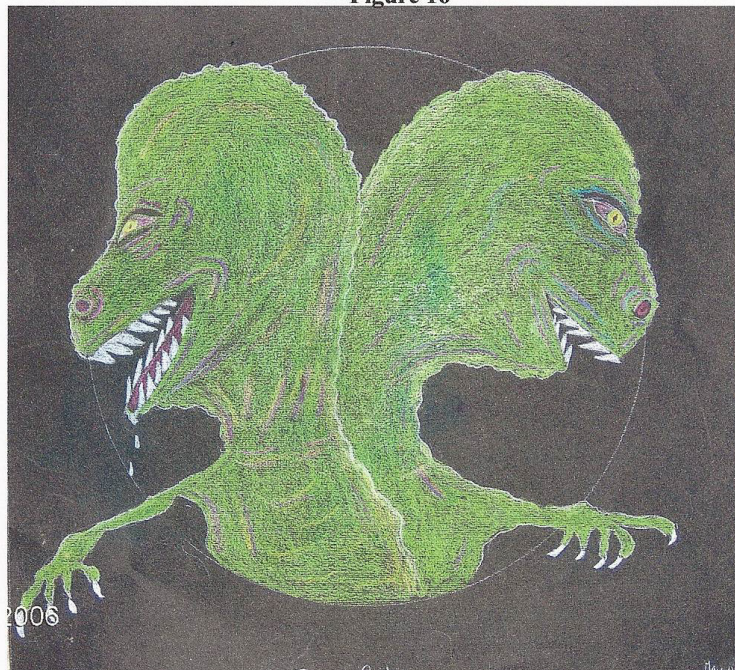


Figure 17

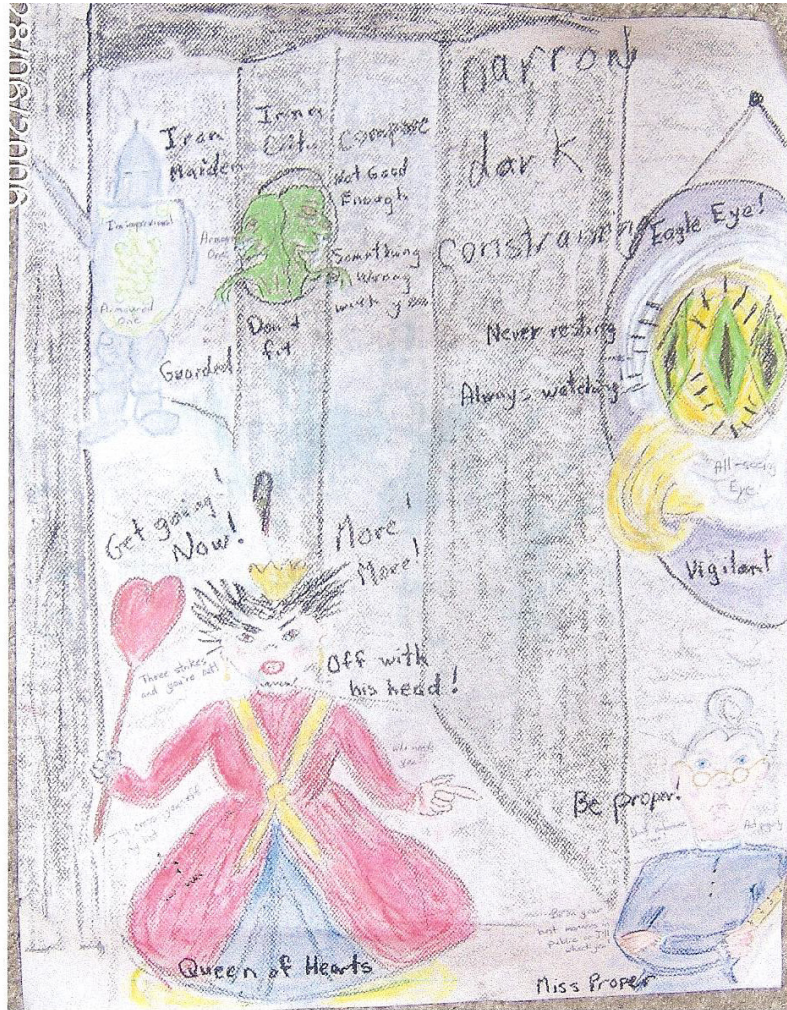


Figure 18

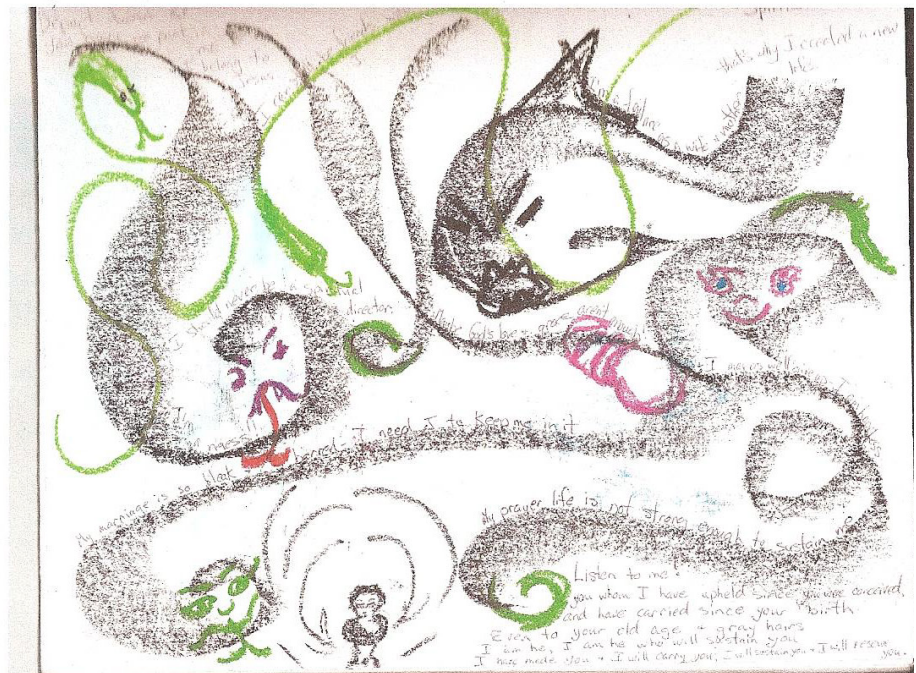
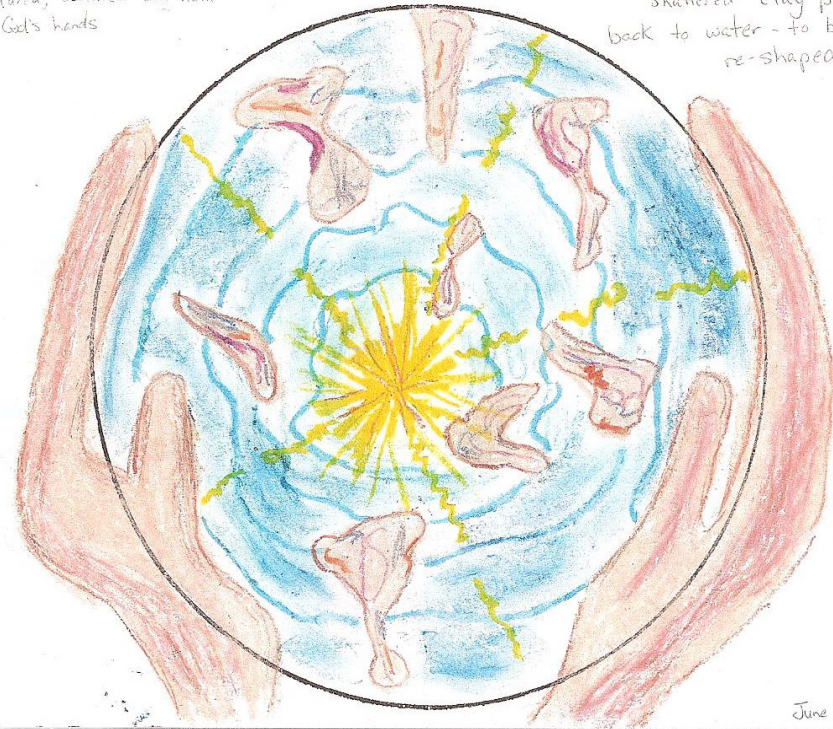


Figure 19

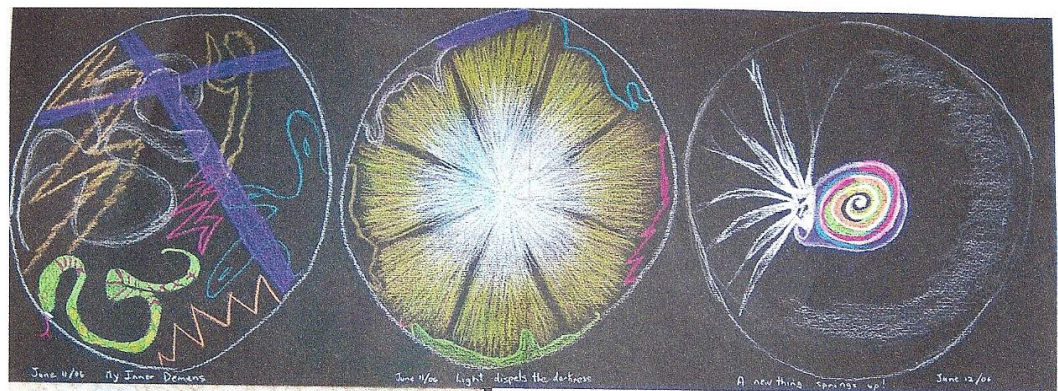
Fractured, scattered but held
in God's hands

Shattered clay pieces
back to water - to be
re-shaped.



June 11/06

Figure 20



June 4/06 My Inner Demons

June 4/06 Light dispels the darkness

A new thing springs up! June 12/06

Figure 21



Figure 22

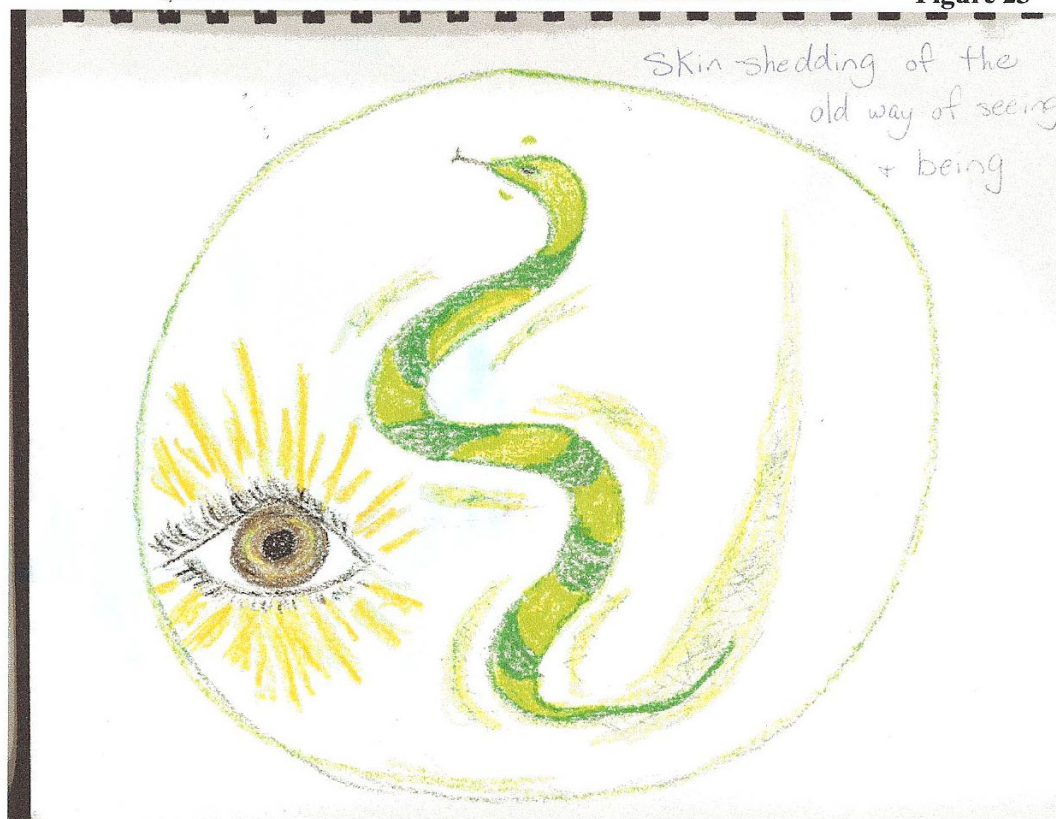


Figure 23

Figure 24



Figure 25



Figure 26



Appendix B

Poem 1

God, so high and lifted up,
 I can only see your feet.
 Me, miserable offender,
 lying prostrate on the ground,
 confessing my sins.
 God, lofty and mighty,
 always asking more of me,
 "You can do better!
 Give more, do more, give 'til it hurts!"
 Demanding God, moralistic God,
 "No fun, no sex, work harder!"

Then one day...
 I stood.
 I'd had enough.
 "Enough!" I say,
 "I'm exhausted, burned out, wounded, drained by giving to others.
 I've had enough!
 How much more do you want of me?"

Then... my God-image shattered into a million pieces
 as I heard the divine voice softly whisper,
 "It's not me that's asking all that of you.
 I just want to love and support you!"

Poem 2

I look out into the crowd...
 The maddened, hate-filled faces
 Spewing anger, derision, murder
 From their mocking twisted lips,
 “Crucify him! King of the Jews,
 Blasphemer! Fraud! You deserve to die!
 Son of God, save yourself!”

I look out upon this frenzy, chaos of evil,
 And I am filled with love—
 Not gentle, joyous, heart-warming love,
 The kind that romantic lovers share—
 But gut-wrenching love, wounding love,
 Love that tears at my entrails,
 Causing anguish and pain with every breath.
 Don’t you see my love?
 Don’t you know how much I care?
 How much I share your pain, your struggles?
 Don’t you see me entering into your world,
 Sharing every breath, every gasp with you,
 Knowing your aloneness, your anguish?

No, you see me as an enemy, a foreigner,
 Breaking into your ordered lives, creating havoc.
 You hate the light, the truth I bring,
 The love I have for the humble, the poor, the rejected.
 “Destroy him! Crucify him!” they cry.
 But still, in the midst of this—I love!
 Wounded love, love’s wounding... the wound of love.
 But love—requiring all I have, all I am. I give.
 I give it willingly... I die for you,
 For love.