Men Leaving Hierarchy: on the Path of the Phoenix

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Doctor of Philosophy
(Social Ecology)

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DEDICATION

To:
DW, MS, ROC, PS, IH, JL

... who let me into their worlds to help makes maps for others who are embarking on their own journeys, and in memory of Tolstoy and Jung who made their own maps, but many times wished for someone else’s to guide them.

As a researcher I have felt honoured, privileged, and responsible in this journey. If I had not felt that responsibility and interest so keenly, I may have given up on the PhD and written more poems, or a book, instead! Maybe I still will.

Importantly,
to
Jacob and Erica
Rian
Stuart Hill
Rogs
Iris
Kathleen M.

Friends who hung in there
and
my Muse:

Thankyou.
I would like to acknowledge the help and support of the University of Western Sydney, especially those in what was, originally, the School of Social Ecology, and in its several ensuing permutations. I found the whole environment that Foundation Chair, Professor Stuart Hill and his staff created at that time, inspiring, challenging and creative. It richly fed my spirit as well as my mind and heart. Without their support (including, but not restricted to, a scholarship) and inspiration, I would not have attempted or completed this work.

I wish to acknowledge my supervisors, in particular, Professor Stuart Hill, Foundation Chair of the School of Social Ecology, now Head of Programs, Social Ecology, in the School of Education, (then) Associate Professors David Russell and Martin Mulligan. Martin had the kindness and graciousness to pass me into another’s care when he felt our topic areas no longer overlapped. David talked to me in my own language, knew my ways of thinking and was able to describe them in images that have sustained me since. Professor Hill’s perspicacious wit, keen intellect, vast knowledge, and his passion for his subject, have been both supportive and, at times, through ties to hierarchy, very challenging. All have made a valuable contribution to my progress. I also wish to acknowledge the inspiring work of Judy Pinn, whose Social Ecology Residential workshop sparked this research.

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Hierarchy, through the auspices of the Commonwealth Public Service, has supported me for part of the period of my research, with study assistance, experiential revision in a variety of hierarchical scenarios, and steady, waged work. These have been invaluable and appreciated.
STATEMENT OF AUTHENTICATION

The work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original except as acknowledged in the text. I hereby declare that I have not submitted this material, either in full or in part, for a degree at this or any other institution.

.................................................................

Susan Mackenzie
University of Western Sydney
July 2007

Ethics declaration  Approval N°: 99-14

The work presented in this thesis, and the processes used to develop it, has complied with all ethics requirements as approved and agreed.


Principal Researcher : ___________________________ Date: July 2007

Susan Mackenzie.

Principal supervisor : ___________________________ Date: July 2007

Professor Stuart B. Hill
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Abbreviations

AWA: Australian Workplace Agreement
CEO: Chief Executive Officer
ComCare: Australian Commonwealth workplace health indemnity scheme
APS: Australian Commonwealth Public Service (APS or Public Service)
IP: Intellectual Property
Mage: Wise man or woman; helper and/or teacher; strong elements of magic and mystery about them
NFSB: New Futures in Small Business (ACT Government funded course)
PS: (Commonwealth) Public Service
RM: Regional Manager
RMIT: Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology
Self: An unchanging, resilient, core sense of wholeness, Jungian term for whole Self
self: Persona; individualised ego-consciousness of identity, partial self
SES: Senior Executive Service in the Commonwealth Public Service
SLaM: Spirituality, Leadership and Management – a non-sectarian organisation committed to integrating spirituality, leadership and management aspects into work
SMEs: Small to medium enterprises
WBE: Western Business Model – my own term describing business based on separation from a sense of community and which demands ever-greater productivity, profit, control and predictability resulting in concentrations of wealth. A derivative of Capitalism.
Abstract

Research into transitions which explore the personal changes of those undergoing them, especially men, are still rare, particularly in regards to a changing sense of self and lifeworld.

Research into the movement of men out of hierarchy, the dominant structures of work institutions in the western world, is rarer still.

Using hermeneutic and phenomenological frameworks, this study tracks the journeys of six men by in-depth interviews and discussions as they move out of hierarchical structures to recreate their work and, in varying degrees, themselves.

As a means of looking beyond events, and for their metaphoric and philosophic perspectives, the Hero and Phoenix myths are used to further explore levels of meaning identified within the transition processes.

Drawing on the work of Jung, Bridges, Neville, Campbell, O’Connor and Gareth Hill, the six stages into which I have organised the transitions are compared to the six key phases of the Phoenix myth. A Jungian framework informs the interpretation of the underlying significances demonstrated in the men’s processes of regeneration.

The men’s individual responses to their transitions are also identified and described, from subjective and proactive perspectives. Changes in the men’s self-perceptions and their changing relationships to authority, brought about by their shifting loci of control, are documented.

Analysis of the stages most likely to be suitable for proactive intervention (as conscious or organised responses to the process), are indicated.
Primary and secondary preconditions for successful transitions out of hierarchies are postulated.

The men’s self-reflections illuminate experiences of uncertainty and clarity, confidence and exploration, compartmentalisation and synthesis. The role of an ‘inner voice’ (an unchanging core identity) and their changing relationship with these aspects of Self, is articulated as critical factors in the men’s ‘successful’ transitions.

Integral to this research is the concept that the power of an individual’s experience can inform those who share a similar experience. Therefore applications of the research, and strategies to manage and facilitate transitions out of hierarchical environments, are suggested.

This thesis is written in support of my hypothesis that transitions can be mapped; that they are journeys on several levels of personal and practical transformation; and that to proactively engage with transition processes requires not only an understanding of the stages of the process itself, but also an understanding that changes in self-perception and self-relationship will also occur for those undergoing them.
**Biography: Susan Mackenzie**

*Dip.A.Ed.(VA); MAppSci(Social Ecology); PhD candidate(UWS)*

My first profession was one of 18 years as an Art teacher in secondary education. It included positions as classroom teacher, Head Teacher, K-12 Art Consultant and as an In-Service trainer for the NSW Education Department. I then became a freelance professional and personal development consultant, holistic counsellor and practitioner for 10 years, as well as tutoring in Social Science and Communication subjects at TAFE, and Ways of Knowing, Social Processes and Communications-based subjects for Southern Cross University. I wrote the initial outline and booklist of the Southern Cross University’s first Wellbeing unit, reflecting my enduring interest in integrity (self-congruence), individuation (self-development), meta-skills and intuitive and transformational learning.

During my Masters (in Social Ecology at the University of Western Sydney) a personal response to mass downsizing and work environments diversified by outsourcing, resulted in investigating the transition of Semco, Brazil, from an autocratic organisation to one made up of small self-directing units. The present study grew out of that research. To ‘walk in the shoes’ of those I was researching, I returned to hierarchy, working in the Commonwealth Public Service for most of this PhD candidature, mainly in Human Resources areas (Learning, Development and Change Management, but also diversifying into web creation and design, and to e-business environments).

As part of my interest in transformative learning and wellness, I have designed and led many courses on myths and metaphors for personal, professional and community change; run community education programs in transpersonal and intuitive development; co-published a book on Australian Bush Flower Essences with Marie Matthews; created a set of contemplation cards, and presented at the 3rd International Transpersonal Conference in Adelaide in 1998. I was coordinator and convenor of the 2001 Spirituality, Leadership and Management Conference in Canberra, ACT, where such presenters as Dexter Dunphy, Debashis Chaterjee and Ros Moriarty featured. I have also been part of a community action group, helping to represent their concerns on an ACT Government Consultation Committee, where we achieved a successful result. I write poetry and other words.

Predominantly, my career to date has been in areas of transformational learning (in and out of specific educational environments), personal integrity and transpersonal development, in individual, group and organisational environments. This thesis is an extension of that interest.
Summary of New Knowledge Contributed by This Research

Researched in this study is an ecology of the self, individual and shared, of six men in response to moving out of hierarchical work and, in so doing, reshaping their relationships with themselves, their external work and their sources of personal authority.

The research draws on, but is not part of, previous research which considers transitions as problematic, or which primarily focuses on maintaining organisational and hierarchical continuity. In particular this research is positioned in a context of sustaining and developing personal well-being, and in deriving wisdom.

Moving out of hierarchy for men remains, remarkable, as hierarchies are such a socially explicit and widespread means of providing powerful cultural and personal needs (for instance: belonging, value, status, and access to resources and support), and when most of those in work remain in them. For men to move out of hierarchical dynamics and cultures is especially courageous and significant as, historically and currently, it is men who primarily inhabit, create and rule them. This study documents why and how the men in the study left hierarchical work systems. It documents their transitions toward work which arose from, and was led by, their increasingly important internal drivers. Not only did all the men move away from hierarchical work, in the process they also all underwent various degrees of personal transformation, which changed their sense and concepts of themselves. This, too, is included as part of the research.

1 “…forty-eight percent of American men are now employed by one of the top ten giant corporations, or by the US government...” Robert Bly, Wingspan, cited in (Biddulph 2002) p 153.
It is proposed that transition out of command-and-control paradigms may reflect an inevitable human movement toward individuation, and may be a significant part of that process.

Within the thesis I have identified and documented:

- the journeys of six men moving out of hierarchies to self-initiated work
- the subsequent reshaping of their relationships to external authority
- six specific stages of the interviewees’ transition experiences, including characteristics and indicators for each
- various layers of change in the men as a result of their transition experiences
- six diagrammatic ‘maps’ showing each man’s transition journey out of hierarchy
- identification of the interviewees’ three identified approaches to transitions: by ‘catapult’, along ‘incremental ledges’ and ‘step by step’
- primary and secondary preconditions identified as critical for successful transitions out of hierarchy
- the critical role of retaining an awareness of an unchanged and continuing self (‘Inner Self’, ‘Higher Self’, ‘Core Self’) during transitions
- the men’s experiential and proactive responses to their transition stages
- proposed core elements for all personal transitions
- the Phoenix myth as a metaphor useful for understanding both internal and external experiences of transition, transformation and serial regeneration
- parallels between the men’s transition processes and the Phoenix myth, including common stages of transition, and metaphoric symbolism for transformations
- the Hero myth as a dominant Western social metaphor supporting competitive, externally orientated goals and hierarchical environments
- relationships of the Hero myth to the Phoenix myth and discussion of the proposition of their complementary roles in human development
- comparisons of the men’s transitions to male ‘mid-life crisis’ processes, transformation experiences and processes of individuation; identification of these as core processes and tools for reshaping relationships to external authority
- tentative conjecture that the identified stages may also apply to organisational change.
My research adds support to the continuing and vital role that myth, metaphor and story play in meaning-making and social and personal transformations.

Towards the end of the documentation of my findings I discovered a PhD thesis by Alexander Nelson (1995), grounded in the educational field of Transformative Learning. His research was built on the experience of six men who had left the Roman Catholic priesthood to marry, as did one of the men in my study. Even though Nelson’s research focussed on the role of imagination in transformative learning and autobiography, and he had not intended or focussed on identifying the stages of the priests’ journeys, similarities between the journeys of the men in his study and mine were clearly evident.

I have therefore included an analysis of the transitions of the men in that thesis, for comparison, and to demonstrate a growing body of knowledge in the area of personal experiences of transitions out of hierarchy, the personal transformations attendant to those experiences, and their relevance to various fields of study.

Finally, I considered the problematic issue of the gendered nature of language and its construction. I have devised the terms relational and positional for describing traditionally gendered polarities of perception, to enable inclusion of the non-gendered complexities of human nature and, more importantly, to contribute to the ongoing dialogue directed at excluding gender-oppositional frameworks (Steinem 1983; Tannen 1991), without excluding the potentialities and characteristics of gender itself.
Overview


“The cultural subliminal message is that efficiency, performance and being a winner are everything. For my generation, the subliminal messages were different. We knew if we were smart we’d go to university. If we were good with our hands, we’d go into a trade. If it was business we did well in then the private sector was the place. And if all else failed there was the Public Service to carry us. The message was that there’s a place for everybody. It was a secure subliminal message”

... and as a response to the downsizing phenomenon of the 1980s and 1990s in Australia, I chose to explore and document the experiences of six men leaving hierarchies and their subsequent changed relationships to external authority. I wanted to plot a model of successful transition, to enable men (and women) to be better able to negotiate the complexity of current work environments, the exodus of the Baby Boomers from the paid workforce, and rapidly changing social authority frameworks.

Hypothesis

I have taken the position that it is possible to map successful transition models (of which there may be several) out of hierarchy, and that the processes and understandings within these transitions can also be plotted and, to some degree, managed, both internally and externally to the individual.
“Through a story, an individual creates meaning out of daily happenings, and this story, in turn, serves as the basis for anticipation of future events” (Pradl 1984 p.1)
When I started my thesis, in the School of Social Ecology (now part of the School of Education), at the University of Western Sydney, it was led by its Foundation Chair, Professor Stuart Hill. The School encouraged research that was integrated with living, by praxis. The research environment valued the researcher’s underlying personal knowledge, experience and beliefs, since these inform our research (Moustakas 1990; Van Manen 1990). The discovery and application of knowledge that created a positive social influence was valued. Diversity was, and is, valued, in line with the principles of Social Ecology. I have chosen, therefore, to place myself in the Social Ecology context for this study.

Theses from that School are not necessarily in the traditional academic mode of the third person, and are usually qualitative rather than quantitative studies, as is this one. This thesis is based on the in-depth exploration of the lived experience of six men. It is a combination of the documentation of their experiences; my understanding of those experiences; interpretation of the data provided by the men; my own experiences of doing this research; exploration of both scholarly and popular writings, and deep reflection for the analysis and synthesis of the experiences researched.

As the natural environment of the interviewees was not the academic one, and in recognition that their influences were from a diversity of areas, the sources cited in this thesis also come from a range of literature, reflecting popular, philosophic and academic contributions.

In many ways I, too, undertook the transitions described here. Consequently I make myself, as the researcher, visible. Not to do so would be to ignore or deny the person who is the means by which the men’s transitions were researched (complex information synthesiser and responder), and the filters used to understand, decode, analyse and document them.
Both the Method and Methodology chapters are quite long. As a researcher, I wanted to give others a realistic insight into my/a research process (Pinn 2001). I would have found it most useful and it may be useful to others. I have found reading most traditional linear, report-style theses unengaging. Through reading distilled results and insights, I gain an insight into the main outcomes, but am excluded from what and who distilled and shaped that information.

By careful selection I can represent the men and their processes in several ways. I need to have confidence that a researcher has represented their knowledge with care, veracity and wisdom. With surface representation I cannot know that.

Therefore my thesis includes my process, too, and to an extent, myself, to enable others to have a fuller perception of the lenses through which the results have been derived. Consequently, as the research is about journeying between certainties, by cyclic and divergent paths, this thesis is written in the style of a journey thesis (Brew 2001b p. 25 and 132) and approached as layered research (Brew 2001b p. 25), with its style of language and structure reflecting that process. Its key method has been discovery:

“In contrast to the direct, linear … approach, the … approach of circumambulation looks at a problem from all sides and at many levels, circling around it and seeing all the relationships … to value the process rather than seek only the end result.” (Shepherd 1993 p.153)

**Options of Engagement**

As such a complex approach is quite wordy, on pages 27-30 (and on a loose-leaf page for easy reference), I have included several options of engagement with the thesis. These reflect the multi-layered, multi-voiced - and hopefully holographic - ways this thesis has been constructed:

- iterative loops (reflecting the cyclic patterns of the interviews)
- as three (main) transitions stages (Restlessness, Transition and Renewal)
- as layers of engagement (from surface to companionable); and
- as topic groupings.
In recognition of the intertwined nature of living, learning and researching, the thesis content and method are also intrinsically wound together with myth, metaphor, story, philosophy and contextual references. However, to make the research more directly visible in the traditional form, Methodology is discussed in its own chapter (Ch.5), as is Method (Ch.6).

Within the thesis, description (direct and indirect), of the men’s experiences and of the research process itself, as a co-emergent entity, is embedded. The research process was a continuum of dialogue, experiential reflection, creative expression and analysis. The act of ‘allowing’ exists within it, in tandem with analytical investigation. Complex interview techniques, the use of metaphor, deep listening and personal literary responses were integral to the research process, with my research process itself as a topic in the thesis.

During the research, layers of both certainty and doubt were challenged and stripped away, with others replacing them, and new knowledge illuminated by these processes (Shepherd 1993 p.153).

The information from dialogue with the men interviewed was analysed in various contexts (experiences, pattern recognition, meaning-making, metaphor and mythology). It is presented concretely as well as through several layers of interpretation, including the literal and the symbolic (Brew 2001b p.25).

For instance:

- Physical – biographical events and contexts
- Emotional – feelings and emotions accompanying their experiences
- Mental – knowledge plotted, analysed and mapped
- Transpersonal – experiences in the context of personal meanings and their development through symbols, myths, metaphors and beliefs.
**PhD Research**

The major roles of a PhD are to reflect a high level of expertise and to locate oneself within a scholarly community (Brew 2001b; Lee 1998). With the advent of phenomenological and other experientially based research, including research arising from the study of women’s ways of knowing (Belenky et al. 1997), the nature of that scholarly community is no longer strictly defined by quantitative, positional limits, but is emerging as a vital multi-perspective (Brew 2001b p.98; Hodge 2002 p. 1), ‘multi-lingual’ investigation of reality,

“… since no one discipline will provide more than a fragment of what is needed.” (Hodge 2002 p.2)

I think it may be common for researchers to encounter issues raised by their research which may at first appear to be incidental but, when expanded, reveal a greater significance. In this study, two of these issues were gender and language use. A third was the role of two myths: the Hero and Phoenix myths.

**Relational and Positional Syntax – Beyond Gender**

As a woman interviewing and researching men, issues of gender needed to be taken into account, especially in the choice of research conceptions and syntax. In analysis of the texts used in this research (academic, popular, allegorical and interview texts) and observation of cross-gender conversations, I sought to understand and define the gender differences of language in a non-gendered way. The critical difference I found was that men, generally, used positional and interventionist language, whereas women, generally, used allegorical and relational language (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger & Tarule 1997; Epstein 1991; Maddock & Parkin 1993; Moir & Jessel 1991; Schmid Mast 2004; Shem & Surrey 1998; Shepherd 1993; Steinem 1983; Tannen 1991). Therefore, to move beyond the stereotypical ‘genderisation’ of perception and description by the commonly used *masculinist* and *feminist* categories, which I find divisive, I have adopted the terms ‘*positional*’ and ‘*relational*’. I conceive these terms as descriptive points on a non-gendered continuum which describes perspectives rather than gendered stereotypes. By adopting a variety of
viewpoints across that spectrum, I have felt able to present diverse perspectives and perceive them in, and for, the men’s stories.

“Each principle sees the world through different lenses and therefore perceives different worlds.” (Shepherd 1993 p.13)

The ‘relational’ term is used to convey a perspective (reflected in language and sentence structure) which focuses on experience, description, connectedness, metaphor, options, holism, exploration, identification of process, experiential values, and inclusiveness (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger & Tarule 1997; Braud 1998b; Jung cited in Shepherd 1993 p.11).

The ‘positional’ term is used to convey a perspective which favours activity, intervention, intent, abstraction, goal orientation, prescriptive evaluation and decisive and definitive language. It positions events and responses ‘out there’, and categorises and defines (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger & Tarule 1997 p.72; Brew 2001b p.55; Rowan 1987 p.2; Jung cited in Shepherd 1993 p.11; Steinem 1983 p.176 and 180; Tannen 1991).

An example of the difference between the two is in the use of ‘which’ (relational/descriptive) and ‘that’ (positional/spatial). The use of ‘that’ to position a noun (for instance ‘that house’, ‘the house that we all know’) has, from my perspective, an effect of distancing the subject spatially and relationally. ‘Which’ - ‘the house, which we all know’ - is more commonly used in this thesis as a way to convey a sense of description and as an expansion of the information already given, i.e. ‘which’ is used to reflect a continuing elaboration of the connection between the speaker and the subject.

From my studies I also identified a directional element to these two perspectives. The positional perspective was discerned as favouring linear (emerging) and elevating (increasing) metaphors, which principally refer to an evident or known, external world. A relational perspective was observed to use descriptors such as ‘arising’ and ‘developing’ in recognition of inner and, largely undefined, evolving experiences.
Positional language, being more concerned with measurable perspectives, may often be considered more ‘accurate’ and, consequently, more valid, a positional perspective in itself (Brew 2001b; Shepherd 1993). A relational perspective, being more concerned with descriptors (rather than judgements) and being more fluid and open-ended, may use terms which allow for the inclusion of the unknown or yet-to-be-known, ambiguity and uncertainty. Relational language more commonly hints at or described multi-level and transpersonal aspects.

As is discussed later in the thesis, capacities to manage these latter elements were critical to the success of the men’s transitions, and may well be a core competency for effective personal transformations.

Decisive language, with its many verbs and references to mental or physical action (‘analyse’, ‘investigate’), may be assessed as ‘strong’, certain and sure. These are characteristics aligned with generic, masculinist, interventionist stereotypes which, although framing traditional academic genres (Brew 2001b p.53, 162 and 164; Shepherd 1993; Steinem 1983 p.189), I did not consider appropriate for the core (dominant) language of exploring the subjective experiences researched here.

However, a positional perspective has great relevance for processes of analysis and differentiation, judgement, categorisation, value comparison, and where the matter researched is actively manipulated or acted upon. Therefore this style of language is used in the sections most aligned with these principles, such as method, methodology, categorisations, conclusions, processes and intentions.

As colours in a tapestry combine to make meaning, with each one predominating as the image requires, I have interwoven these two threads in an attempt to create a rich description of lived experience (Steinem 1983 p.189), of the men interviewed and my experiences of researching their transitions and transformations.
Most chapters begin with a story or a quotation in the relational style.² For instance, in the introductory story, which is there to raise the topic of decay and re-creation of self (a core theme of the research), a small box is laid on a table. I quote:

“Slowly I open the lid. Tilt to the light to see. Inside is filled with soft dust.”

A positional perspective may write: “It is filled with soft dust”, but this would lose the textural and spatial characteristics of the issue of containment, and omit the symbolism. The research is about what that ‘inside’ is; about discovering what ‘container’ can hold the men’s experiences and their changing meanings.

The activities of deep listening and observing (seeing) are sometimes regarded as passive occupations. Yet deep listening, strategic questioning, meta-listening, meta-cognition and meta-thinking enable me to perceive, supported by compassionate criticism (Boyd and Myers as cited in Imel 1998), significant inconsistencies, patterns, passions, pains and resistances (Flavel 1981; Sacks 1986). All these elements contributed to my “discerning reflective listening” (Moustakas 1990). As such, they were active and perceptive tasks as and part of the research process (Moustakas 1990 p.118; Shepherd 1993 p. 104). When the perceptions gained from these activities were incorporated into conversations, deep dialogue and, several transformative changes occurred (Boyd & Myers 1998; Cranton 1996; 2000; Grabov 1997; Imel 1998; Mezirow 1991; 1995) in the men and myself.

‘Seeing’, likewise, from my experience of some twenty years as an Art teacher and through my love of aesthetics, has become a complex, multi-perceptual art in itself, not limited to processing visual stimuli from physical objects (looking) (Berger 1972; Franck 1973 p.3; Morgan 1997). It can register subtle information and changes in both people and environments. The subtlety of perception gained by combining clear seeing and deep listening has had a core role in my gathering of knowledge and developing a deeper understanding of the men’s processes and

² After writing the major portion of the thesis I read Angela Brew’s 'The Nature of Research' (2001a) and discovered that she had structured her book in a very similar way: a story and/or quotation to begin each chapter, followed by reflections and analysis of the topics raised in them. The stories, on the whole, stood alone, yet illustrated or referred, usually indirectly, to the themes of the chapter, as do mine.
changes in this study. It was through these skills that I was often able to explore and understand unspoken and uncertain areas of their experiences and reflect back patterns, themes and significances.

**Thesis as Exploration**


Part of the purpose of this variety is to emulate reality. Each of us is immersed in our own experiences. We interpret and reinterpret our world in practical, emotional and meaning-making ways. Memory is revisited and re-interpreted constantly, as these men and myself found. Present reality is decoded through present lenses and priorities, but also past ones. We are never clean slates, and the images on these slates are forever changing. The world is a mirror we modulate.

Who we are and how we are in the world is also modulated by the society in which we live. We are underpinned by mythologies, perceptual filters and value systems, often covertly so.

I use two myths to act as prisms for both the men’s experiences and my analysis. One is the Hero myth (Campbell 1993; Segal 2000), with its long history and permutations of maps of masculinist and socially valued, heroic endeavour. The other is the Phoenix myth (Herodotus in de Selincourt 1997; Pliny, the Elder 77AD), with its theme of serial immortality and the endless capacity of the psyche to recreate and reinvigorate itself and its world.

As a metaphor for hierarchical questing, the Hero myth is used; for the regenerative transitions of these men leaving hierarchy, the Phoenix myth is used.

Jungian frameworks (Campbell 1988; 1995; Hill 1992; Jung 1967; 1969; 1995; O’Connor 1996) are the main conceptual structures used to describe internal, personal and developmental aspects of the men’s transitions.
The Nature of Truth

“As we have seen the “truth” has many faces, depending on the perspective of the observer. Even in science each new truth is partial and incomplete as well as culture-bound.” (Shepherd 1993 p.153)

It was so simple as a child and adolescent. Information was presented as true, that is as static, unchangeable and inviolate. It made life simple. To learn something once meant never having to relearn it. There was security in that: atoms were made up of neurons and protons; our solar system had so many planets; parents stayed married; the sun rose each day.

It was not long before it became clear that some truths were temporary, and my life since has been about finding which information is true and which transitory, conditional or just plain convention. For the sake of sanity and social continuity, we all agree on ‘working truths’, that is ‘operative truths’; truths that are collectively agreed for the time being. For instance, although this chair I sit on is largely space between very small particles, I operate on the presumption that it will hold me, that this table will also hold the laptop and that my fingers will not pass through the keys, even though they, too, are largely space. This may not always be so.

As a researcher I am mindful that the ‘truth’ of the information and ideas presented here is therefore primarily contingent on its clarity and coherence, congruence, relevance and present usefulness (Gaba & Lincoln 1994; Reason & Bradbury 2001 p.31) and that, while-ever there is consciousness and the passing of time, all so-called truths remain open for revision (per Foucault in Lechte 1994 p.110; Reason & Bradbury 2001 pp.203 and 204), as those contained here will no doubt be (Reason & Bradbury 2001 pp.205 and 207).

Multi-Layered Engagement – Iterative Loops, Layers, Topics, Stages

All bar one of the six men interviewed in the study chose to begin their interviews with a chronological overview of their lives. In subsequent interviews, topics and issues raised in the first interview were revisited. We returned to discuss them at greater depth, or addressed those subjects from different perspectives. My thesis content follows a similar sequence. An overview of the content is given first, with key issues raised in that overview, and then returned
to later in the thesis. Some topics, such as Myths and Metaphors and Hierarchies, are given their own chapters, to enable deeper engagement with the topics.

The overall **structure** of the thesis itself also echoes core transition and change stages, as identified by Bill Bridges and others (Anon 2003; Beer et al. 1990; Boyd & Myers 1998; Bridges 1996b p.17; Cohn 1978; Cranton 2000; Delin & Tranos 2003; Goodman 1979; Gray 2000; Menon 2000; Mezirow 1995; Ministries 2003; Nelson 1995; Nicholson & West 1988; Nortier 1995; O’Connor 1996; Sheehy 1977; Solomon & Levy 1982).

From the literature listed above, a common three-part pattern for transitions emerged:

- a beginning, characterised by restlessness and ill-ease
- a middle period characterised by confusion and uncertainty
- an arrival stage of renewal and consolidation (Bridges 1996b p.86-87).
These three stages are represented in this thesis in its three sections (plus

**Prologue and Appendices**: ‘Restless’ (what is unsettled), ‘Transition’ (processes of transformation and change; lost-ness and confusion) and ‘Renewal’ (emergence of a re-constituted or adapted self). The contents of these sections are:

**Prologue**: parameters of the thesis, the research, researcher, and processes.

**Restless**: reflects what is constituted as the ‘ground’ and context, including sections on the key topics: socially located context, the men, hierarchies, myth and metaphor, transitions, method and methodology, found in the body or in the appendices. The literature review and social context, part of that ground, are embedded in the text.

**Transition**: is the section of the thesis which documents and analyses the combined and individual men’s transition experiences. In it are defined the six stages of their transitions, their levels of engagement with their transitions, including descriptions of elements of their personal transformations, plus comparisons between their transition stages and key phases of the Phoenix myth.

**Renewal**: summarises my findings, proposes parameters for leaving hierarchies; includes discussion of related topics; documents possible applications and my conclusions.

**Appendices**: The interviews were rich in content. Direct quotations, even selected ones, from the over 600 pages of text transcripts of the interviews, could take up enormous space. Therefore I have moved several support chapters to the Appendices. The content of the appendices are designed to give deeper insights into the men themselves through records and analysis in their own words; by detailed overviews of their lives; and through their experiences of their transitions and of their changing selves.
As the men made their *transition journeys in three ways*, the thesis itself may be read similarly:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essentials - Leap</th>
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<tr>
<td>Abstract(11)</td>
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<td>New Knowledge (14)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overview and Hypothesis (17)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prologue A, B, C (18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stages - Making the Journeys Ch.8 (216) and Collective Ch.9 (235)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaving Hierarchies - Journeys and Maps Reviewed Ch.10 (260)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conclusions Ch.12 (308)</td>
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<th>Background - Ledges</th>
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<tr>
<td>All of the above plus:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Located Research Ch.1 (69)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Methodology Ch.5 (135)</td>
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<td>Method Ch.6 (165)</td>
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<td>Meeting the Men Ch.7 (206)</td>
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<th>Ground - Step by Step</th>
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<td>All of the above plus:</td>
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<td>Myths and Metaphors Ch.2 (84)</td>
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<td>Hierarchies Ch.3 (104)</td>
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<td>Transitions Ch.4 (122)</td>
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<td>Transformations Ch.11 (291)</td>
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<th>Details - Companions</th>
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<tr>
<td>All of the above plus:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Appendix A: Detailed Overview of Each Man’s Life - my summary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix B: In Their Own words - detailed description of each life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix C: Each Man’s Journey - experiences of individual transitions, in their own words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix D - Individual interview process and quotes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix E: Example of Interview Process, with Quotations: outline of an interview process, in DW’s words.</td>
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Table 1: Multi-level engagement with men’s transition (*Mackenzie* 2007)

The thesis may also be read through the following *perspectives* or *voices*:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Mapping successful transitions of men leaving hierarchy</th>
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<tr>
<td>Research processes</td>
<td>By the men and myself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitions</td>
<td>Stages, drivers, layers of engagement, personal transformations, parallels to key phases of the Phoenix myth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contexts</td>
<td>Social, work, psychological and transpersonal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allegory</td>
<td>Hero and Phoenix myths; stories and poems</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Table 2: Overview of thesis perspectives (*Mackenzie* 2007)
**Formatting**

With a mix of sources – books, internet downloads, journal and newspaper articles – I have chosen to italicise all titles of sources, rather than follow the tradition of italicising titles of books, but italicising the titles of journals, rather the article in them.\(^3\)

I have chosen to use single quotation marks for quotations from the interviews, and double quotation marks for quotations which inform the research from other sources.

Citations of sources in the text are in a reduced font to minimise interruption of reading meaning. Citations from the interviews are referenced as follows: *(PS2/Q75/P26).* Decoded, this means that the quotation came from the second interview with PS, question number 75, on page 26 of my record of the transcripts. Some of the purposes of including the quotations’ sources is to give the reader a sense of when certain information came up, if the topic was a reiterated one, and, of course, an indication of where quotations can be found if direct access to them is required.

All tables and figures are original and devised by myself and cited as *(Mackenzie 2007)*, unless otherwise specified.

\(^3\) This is based on practicalities: how I look for a reference item. I look for the title of a book or article; not the journal title.
The door opened.

“Come in,” she said. “I want to show you something.”

I move in after her.

The room is dark.

A pale light shines through a window, past a curtain half drawn aside.

She shuffles ahead, seating me at the round table. On it, the velvet brushes my arm, its patterned pile uneven on my skin, its fringe lying loosely against my thigh.

She busies herself in the corner, heating water over a small burner. I hear the sound of a tin opening, the rasp of a spoon in dry leaves, the clunk of pottery and water rushing into clay. I look around the room, layered with books, bones, stones. Feathers and pieces of cloth lay random on surfaces. Delicate, ornate vases glow in the dark.

She puts a small silver container on the table. Its lid is worked in a raised pattern, intricate, yet strong.

She places delicate cups and saucers down. Sugar. Milk (the clink of teaspoons on fine china).

“Milk?”

“No. Black. No sugar.”

She sat down, elbow above the table. Arm strong between (the sound of an old chair bending to familiar weight and a familiar form).

She pushes the box towards me.

“Open it,” she says.

I look at it. The room holds an air of waiting, being ready. I have no awareness of choice. The small box sits there: ponderous and potent, lit by low light. Kinetic. Still. It is ready to be opened and it is time. I am just there - a convenience in its journey.

Slowly I open the lid. Tilt it to the light to see. Inside is filled with soft dust.

“I don’t understand.”

“What you will become. When your mind and your muscles fail you. When your blood slows and stops in your veins. When your energy is no longer fuelled by the pumping of your heart. When desire and passion no longer lift
you into action."

She watches his face; his fingers delicately, slowly, firmly place the container
down, closing the lid. His fingers run along the rim - back and forth, back
and forth, back and forth again, impatient.

"Why do you show me this now? I am fit, well, strong. I have a new child, a
wife, a good job, a home, money in the bank …"

"It will pass. I want to know what you will do and be when it does."

I look long into her soft, steady gaze. She is serious.

"Mum …"

It may seem odd to begin a thesis with a story, but this is hopefully not an
ordinary thesis.

It is the story of six men, who, with the aid of a magical bird, achieve a certain
immortality. Not because they have robbed the Fountain of Youth, but because
they have found a way to face ‘death’, be reborn, recreate themselves in the
world, and thrive.

The stories and quotations at the start of each chapter are an invitation for the
reader to think about the topic presented, on one or more layers: mental,
symbolic, practical, emotional or transpersonal. Multi-dimensional or
multilayered engagement is common with Heuristic and Hermeneutic
Phenomenological methods of research, in which tradition this thesis is offered
(Kellehear 1993; Moustakas 1990 p.49; Van Manen 1990 pp.115 and 116). Sometimes the stories
and quotations act as summaries or keys to the topics under discussion (Brew
2001b).

When I began this research I was hoping to map successful transitions, by men,
out of hierarchy, to see if there were any discernable patterns, and to understand
the changes, if any, that the men themselves underwent in the process. There is
presently little research in this area (Sinclair 2000; 2001) sometimes as mysteries to be
explored.
An enduring connection exists between men and hierarchies, and between hierarchies and bureaucracy. Hierarchies, based on command-and-control models (Bookchin 2005a p.70; Clark 2004 p.4; Hamilton 2006 p.191; Morgan 1986 p.211 and 275; Schmid Mast 2005a; 2005b; Toffler cited in Swan 1998; Elliot Jacques in Trinca 2002 p.50), are the structures most commonly used in work to ‘make things work’ and, as such, reflect “man’s sense of creativeness ...” (Stern 1985 p.285). They are predominantly still led, peopled and created by men. Only men have been chosen to be interviewed for this research, they being ‘native’ to the territory (Sinclair 2000 p.9; 2001).

My original research questions were:

• to what extent is there a predictable and successful pathways for processes of regeneration, internally (within oneself) as well as externally (within the world)?
• what are its necessary preconditions and parameters, if any?
• what are its main indicators and stages?
• what are its definable or predictable outcomes?
• what are possible applications of the research into these questions?

To answer these questions, I have researched the experiences of two triads of men, DW, MS, ROC, and PS, IH and JL, who volunteered to share their experiences of transitioning out of hierarchies. I have traced their stories in-depth: how they deconstructed and rebuilt their work and, in some cases, their self identities and their worlds (Boyd & Myers 1998 p.264; Moustakas 1990 p.123-124). All the men left established positions in hierarchies, the still-dominant work structure of the Western world, and followed paths toward greater self-determination and autonomy. They left a trail, documented here through their memories and their changes, as told in their interviews.

4 At various stages of the research, as part of the research process, I set myself questions, as a checklist, like the ones here. Several sets of these appear in the thesis.
On a micro-level the research explores, in depth, the transition processes of six men as they moved out of hierarchies to reinvent their work.

On a macro-level the research is concerned with the wider topic of men moving from an external, command-and-control, hierarchical, competitive model of being (Hero myth) towards ‘self-determination’ and greater individuation (Phoenix myth). It further explores Bookchin’s (2005b pp.66-67) suggested role of social ecology, as specified in “The Modern Crisis”:

“Social ecology ruptures the association of order with hierarchy. It poses the question of whether we can experience the ‘other’, not hierarchically on a scale of ‘one to ten’ with a continual emphasis on ‘inferior’ and ‘superior’, but ecologically, as variety that enhances the unity of the phenomenon, enriches wholeness, and more closely resembles a food web than a pyramid.”

Relatively little has been published on researching:

- men’s emotional and conceptual experiences of transition, especially of their world-view, or self view, when changing work
- self-initiated work moves; and
- transitions to altered relationships with external authority, especially at work (Sinclair 2000; 2001).

Most of what has been published focuses on documenting an employee’s re-adaptation in an organisation after its change (Gray 2000 p.4), or the capability of employees to enable an organisation to return to full functionality after structural reorganisation (Nicholson & West 1988).

Most of that research has focused on workplace transitions from a problem perspective, especially in relation to anxiety states, responses to changing states of employment, status or health, with little reference to individuals’ life contexts (Carroll 1990; Cohn 1978; Menon 2000 p.16 & 133; Nicholson & West 1988; Schaeff & Fassel 1990).

Much organisational change literature also suggests people avoid change and only do so when forced by external events or drivers (Kanter 1983 in Beer, Eisenstat & Spector 1990; Carroll 1990 p.19; Neil 1999a; Osherson 1980; Untermeyer 1925).
However, Transformative Learning, a development in the educational field, recognises the value of self-initiated change and internal drivers in relationship with external factors. These drivers are recognised as critical to ‘learning events’ (Mezirow 1991; 1995) through which a person changes their *lifeworld* (Habermas in Lechte 1994 p.186), their concept of themselves in that *lifeworld*, and their greater understanding of the meaning of their experiences (Boyd & Myers 1998; Cranton 1996; 2000; Grabov 1997; Intel 1998; Mezirow 1991; 1995; Nelson 1995).

Such diverse views on transition processes may well be the result of researchers’ different lenses of perception, rather than actualities. It may well be that when a researcher is attuned to action, response learning and external drivers, they will predominantly identify and document those (Beer, Eisenstat & Spector 1990; Bina Brown 2006; Carroll 1990; Doherty & Tyson 1993; Duvall 1992; Goodman 1979; Kramar 1999; Osherson 1980; Ken Phillips 1999; Stewart 2001). When a researcher is attuned to psychological and sociological elements, they may be more likely to recognise inner drivers and responses (Beck & Cowan 1996; Bridges 1995b; Cohn 1978; Dunphy & Dick 1981; Duvall 1992; Hamilton & Mail 2003; Handy 1995a; McKenna 1997; Nelson 1995; Nicholson & West 1988; O’Connor & Wolfe 1991; Osherson 1980; Stace & Dunphy 1992).

The resultant diversity of views is gradually weaving a rich fabric of understanding of the phenomenon of transitions and transformations.

However, it should be remembered that, even as late as 1995, *transition* was rarely recognised as a process or entity in itself. For instance, although *change* is a term listed in the 1995 Oxford Companion to Philosophy (Honderich 1995 p.129), *transition* is not.

**Transition**

William Bridges’ seminal works, principally dealing with the world of work and corporate change (Bridges 1995b; 1996a; 1996b; Delin & Tranos 2003), and on whose work the analysis of the stages identified here is built, clearly distinguish between *transition* and *change*.
He focuses on *transition* as a process people (and possibly organisations) use to move across a space between certainties. He identifies that ‘space’ as a ‘place’ in itself, rather than being equivalent to a ‘terra nullus’, and as having characteristics of a definable nature. These, he suggests, may be learned and accommodated, even managed and shaped. He acknowledges that the movement between old and new states of being is neither immediate nor direct. This is the ‘space’ explored in this research.

The perspective of this research is to also view transition as a normative state, rather than viewing transition from a therapeutic point of view or as a problem. As such, I suggest transitions require conscious adaptive skills and responses to maximise personal and, in this case, professional benefit.

**Finding the Interviewees**

In the process of refining my topics and finding my interviewees, many women told me of their husbands, spouses, brothers and friends who had, for various reasons, left long-established hierarchical positions, whether through retirement or retrenchment, the more solitary path of illness or via other life dislocations, to follow an inner imperative or a dream. Many men told me this was their story, and I came to discover the journey out of hierarchy was far more common than I had thought at the outset.

From these conversations, and through many men referred to me or met directly, six men came forward who were willing to self-reflect and to talk with me, in-depth, about their journeys.

Each had spent at least 10 years in work organised along hierarchical lines, all with some success. Each had made a transition away from that hierarchy, either willingly or not so willingly. Each had remained in or returned to the workforce. Each was logistically able and willing to give the time needed to discuss and reflect on their experiences.
The interviews explored the men’s thoughtful reflections on their process and the regenerations they experienced. They also reflected their changing self concepts including, for some, changing views on success, self, power, masculinity, manhood, and their wellbeing in the world.

Although the research investigates the experiences of these individual men, it extrapolates the possibility of similarities to other men (Moustakas 1990 p.90), especially in relation to their capacities to reinvent and regenerate themselves (Nelson 1995).  

My study also addresses the nexus of men and work (Doherty & Tyson 1993; Sinclair 2000; 2001). Work for many men is such a powerful influence that they derive significant meaning and purpose from it. Working significantly influences their sense of themselves, and their locus of control (Doherty & Tyson 1993 p.80; Fox 1994 p.2; Hamilton 2006 pp.200-01; Menon 2000 p.16; Pleck & Sawyer 1974 p.94; Turner 2006). All the men interviewed were aged between 40 and 59 years old, although the transitions documented here did not necessarily occur in that time span.

One of the men (PS) played a very significant role in this research as he had gone through two transitions, from two of the most socially powerful hierarchies (religion and civil service). His first transition was when he left the Catholic priesthood in his late 20s; the second when he left the Australian Commonwealth Public Service in his late 50s.

The other transitions in this study occurred in the men’s late 30s and their early 50s. Consequently, the possible role of what is called ‘the mid-life crisis’ has been taken into account in the study, as were various transpersonal elements.

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5 It may well extrapolate to women also, but that exploration is not within the parameters of this research.
**Mythic Themes**

The Phoenix myth is the tale of a magical bird who, sensing its impending demise, builds its own pyre from scented wood, self-immolates; undergoes a ‘worm’ or chrysalis stage; emerges, and flies to Heliopolis, the altar of the Sun. There it leaves the ashes of its old self and returns to Earth to live a new, reinvigorated and Earthly life (Herodotus in de Selincourt 1997 p.17; Pliny, the Elder 77AD; Gaskell 1960; Lam 1996; Warner 1975).

The Hero myth represents a focus on external rewards, on standing out from the crowd, on seeking personal glory, and on an external goal.

“They are the agents of change ... They’re the agents of evolution really, and its always been like that in our narratives – not just fictional stories, but those of our scientific, artistic, religious and political heroes.” (Miller, in Turner 2007 p.34)

The Hero myth is probably the dominant myth of the Western world (Richard Brown 2006; Campbell 1993; Hook 1955; Palus et al. 1990; Pearson 1991; Segal 2000; Senge 2002; Sinclair 2000).

“... stories are instrumental in socially and philosophically shaping the world ... but the determining influence or energy comes from the dominant narratives.” (Kellehear 1993 p.27)

The Hero myth is also intrinsically connected to hierarchies and the command-and control power paradigms underpinning them. For Campbell, arguably the major mythologist of the twentieth century, and writer of the classic text, ‘The Hero with a Thousand Faces’ (Campbell 1993), the Hero myth is considered intrinsic to our culture. As such, award-winning film-maker of the ‘Mad Max’ films, George Miller, followed

“Campbell’s thesis – that all religions and myths are basically one endlessly shifting and evolving hero’s journey ...” (Turner 2007 p.34)

The generic plot of the Hero myth speaks of an individual, generally male, who performs great deeds to gain great glory, aided by minions and sages (or mages). It is a myth focussed on deeds in the world and on individuals with vision who

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6 This topic is further explored in Chapter 3: Hierarchies
give great energy, who display courage, perseverance and determination to achieve their goal and who, by some unique skills or qualities, stand above the crowd. Their focus on the external world prevails over internal transitions or transformations. They are often portrayed as rescuers (Stuart B. Hill 1999b).

These two myths came to underpin this study and its interpretations as the main patterns and drivers emerged.

One of the roles of metaphor is to enable us to consider our beliefs and volitions. In that tradition, I considered the following questions:

- What would make a man leave the hierarchical and heroic traditions, with all their opportunities for glory, reward and social validation?
- What makes the Phoenix precipitate its own end, arrange its own immolation, then rest, reform and re-emerge?
- What makes a man precipitate his own ‘end’, arrange his own ‘immolation’, then rest, reform and re-emerge?
- What makes you or I do that … over and over?

I have drawn from a range of references to discuss these questions: on masculinities as found in Western society, in particular Australian, North American and British cultures; mythology; fiction and non-fiction, academic and popularist literature; biological sciences; management and organisational studies; media; philosophy, and my own and the individual men’s experience.

**Limits of the Study**

This work does not presume to be a psychological study, nor does it aim to address the full ramifications of changing an individual’s locus of control from external to internal drivers, nor of masculinity or male self-concepts. It does, however, hope to portray the individual experiences and journeys of these men, overlayed with metaphor and, develop maps and signposts for possible use by
others to successfully navigate out of hierarchies, to personally, socially and pragmatically viable alternatives.

The research is not designed to identify or advocate specific alternatives to hierarchies, nor alternative ways of working. It is focussed on the experiences of transition out of command-and-control paradigms. Rather than being ‘arrival-focussed’, the study therefore values the journey and travellers themselves.

The research does not presume to provide definitive answers. It does seek to:

- provide further and new insights into men’s changing relationship with work and power through the individual experiences of the men interviewed
- act as a stepping stone or doorway to further research on moving out of hierarchies
- explore enduring and changing concepts of ‘Self’, as expressed in that process
- offer possible applications of the knowledge in this study
- honour the journeys that these men and others (of both genders) make and continue to make in exploring the possibilities of the human condition
- enable self-regeneration to be more widely accepted as normative
- add to the discourse on the role and influence of the Hero and Phoenix myths in the Western world.

*Where To?*

While I was researching the men’s exit from hierarchies, I kept wondering where they were going ‘to’.

Common and central to all the forms of transitions considered has been the capacity and willingness, of those undergoing them, to self-reflect. This may yet prove to be a requirement of all successful personal transitions. It certainly
enabled greater proactive engagement and increased opportunities for choice for these men.

All but one of the transitions researched here occurred in the wave of downsizing in the mid-1980s to well into the 1990s. A period of personal re-evaluation was a consequence for those caught in this social upheaval. These reflections, for men, often focussed on topics such as personal goals; relationships with the external world, especially those concerning work and institutions; and themselves (Paul Stevens and Susie-Linder-Pelz, cited in Clare 2000; Leser 2000; Stevens & Gardner 1994). Such a process can be compared with the characteristics of, and experiences encountered in mid-life crises (Bergman 1991 p.10; Group 2001; O’Connor & Wolfe 1991 p.50; O’Connor 1996).

However, the full expression of the men’s changes of world and self-views could not be contained within that framework. Several of the men’s changes indicated a movement toward greater self-autonomy, and certainly towards greater self-reflection and congruence. Therefore conjecture on individuation as a potential or inherent path in the psyche, and its possible connections to the Phoenix and Hero myths, has been included.

**A Woman Researching Men**

Part of my preparation for this study was learning more about men and their lives, including experiences of being a man, ‘male templates’ and drivers, mythology relevant to men, biological factors, and information on men and their relationships to their work, power and identity.

As a woman researching men, like Anna Ford (1985), Amanda Sinclair (2000; 2001) and Maggie Hamilton (2006), I was alert to gender differences; that I was passing on a message from a world I was not fully part of, nor ever could be. This had both advantages as well as disadvantages. The bridges of shared humanity and experience, a willingness to hear the men’s stories and their journeys, to listen deeply and to speak for them, carried us across the divide and brought unexpected benefits for both the men and myself (Ford 1985 p.5). Like Maggie Hamilton (2006 p.2), I found out:
“...they were genuinely surprised that a woman was interested enough to listen to their story, let alone write about it ... For too many, this was the first time anyone had asked them in depth about their lives and their experiences in the world.”

As such, the opportunity to tell their stories was considered a rare and valuable experience by several of the men, as it was for me to hear them. Telling their stories gave a shape to its mythology, added an awareness of ‘being seen’, and of self-validation (Formaini 1991 p.5; Meade 1993 p.157; Nelson 1995; Stern 1985 p.139).

As this is not a gender-comparison treatise, the interface of men and the feminist movement is only touched on when relevant to the topic. Consequently, I do not include a comparison with women’s transitions from hierarchies, although I include some of my experiences in that regard.

**Skills I Bring**

I bring to this study years steeped in observation of people and life, analysis of meaning in text, image and spoken language. First, as a child sensitive to more than was visible; later as a teacher of Art, English, Communication and Ways of Knowing; then as a holistic counsellor and Intuitive. I became adept at the perception and understanding of symbols, layers of meaning, themes and patterns, character and personality types. A personal interest in spiritual matters in a practical world added a further dimension to my way of looking at life.

In essence, my personal ontology is grounded in philosophic, transpersonal, visual and mythic elements. My way of relating to the world is from a symbolic interrelatedness and I see life as a rich canvas of meaning to be appreciated, to learn from, and which endlessly reveals possibilities to live more proactively, and with greater wisdom and well-being.

Hence the mythic, poetic, philosophic traits evident in this thesis, and its emphasis on analysis of meaning through pattern, significance and theme.
In the Social Ecology Context

This study is not focussed on an ecology of social groups. What is being researched in this study is an ecology of the self – individual and shared - in relationship with hierarchy. At first I thought that the ecology studied would be of the self in relation to organisations (in a hierarchical ecology). However, instead, the research and thesis evolved as an exploration of an internal ecology of the self and its relationship with the external world, including, but not confined to, hierarchies.

In the context of Social Ecology, within which this research was conceived, the study of hierarchies and their effects is critical, as are explorations of alternative ways of being in the world, be it work, governance or social structures.

Murray Bookchin, (1995; 2005a; 2005b; 2006), who founded the first School of Social Ecology, regarded hierarchies and the psychology embedded in them, as the cause of humans’ exploitive relationships with Nature and each other (Stuart B. Hill 1999b). It is clear that hierarchies perpetuate power inequalities, with all the potential for abuse this entails. For Bookchin, the solution was to eradicate hierarchies altogether.

“… it is crucial for students of society to ... eliminate hierarchy per se, not simply replace one form of hierarchy with another.” (Bookchin 2005a p.27)

Though I do not completely share Bookchin’s view, nevertheless I will be discussing the strong role and position hierarchy has had in shaping the psyche and society of the men interviewed. It is clear that hierarchy is a resilient form and one accepted and valued by many, especially in religion, business and government contexts. Its pretensions to certainty tap into a strong human need for security. Yet its command-and–control power dynamics, by definition, limit full expression of co-existence between individuals, within societies, and between humanity and Nature. As such, dependence on hierarchy is in itself limiting.

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7 “Social ecology, in effect, is a concept of an ever-developing universe, indeed a vast process of achieving wholeness to the extent that it can ever be fully achieved by means of unity in diversity…” (Bookchin 2005a p.11)

8 “It [hierarchy] refers to highly institutionalised and highly ideological systems of command and obedience. Etymologically, the word derives from the ancient Greek term meaning “priestly forms of organization” (Bookchin 2005a) p.24
It may be that hierarchy is only an interim step in humanity’s development towards self-determination and cooperative existence with our planet and each part, be it ‘alive’ or inanimate.

While it would be naive to imagine this view to be held by all people, it has been important for the men interviewed, who have moved away from submission to such institutions, and who are challenging the place of hierarchies in doing so.

However, as hierarchies play such a significant role in the spectrum of human social organisation, although not necessarily a sustainable one, in all likelihood they will remain as a permanent variation in the matrix of human group relations.

One thing is certain – hierarchy as a normative social structure is being challenged by the technical, social and knowledge developments of the last, and this, century.

“Our institutions are based on the belief that people at the top should have the power to coerce and dominate. These institutions are now increasingly ineffective because people no longer accept that traditional leaders have the ability to decide how they should live their lives.” (Theobald et al. 1998 p.4)

Further discussion and conjecture on these developments are explored in Hierarchies (Ch.3), in the larger context of social development of consciousness. Unlike Bookchin, I am willing to entertain the possibility that there

“... are predetermined ends or a telos in natural evolution that guides life’s development inexorably toward consciousness and freedom ...” (Bookchin 2005a p.31)

**Self as Researcher and Journeywoman**

Through circumstances that touched me personally in a surprising way, but which reflect an abiding interest in recreation, especially by turning a negative to a positive, I became interested in men recreating themselves and, in particular, moving out of hierarchy. This was the theme of my Social Ecology Master’s research (Mackenzie 1998) - that of looking at men and organisations moving out of hierarchies in an effort to find alternatives to competitive, power-over structures,
and yet remain viable businesses and members of society (in that instance, through examining such a change in the Semco company) (Semler 1994).

My particular interest in men coming out of hierarchies arose out of a strong response to the massive retrenchments and downsizing which began in organisations in Australia in the 1980s and continued into the 1990’s, especially in large organisational structures such as the Australian Commonwealth Public Service (see Footnote 1 in Briggs 2005 p.3). I saw these mass retrenchments as a harsh birth from an age of secure, plentiful and reliable work, seen as a right, especially for men after World War II, to an era of uncertainty and flux in an emergent world of work based on speed (Handy 2001 p.101), technology, and profits before people. The dislocation from concepts of loyalty, including care of both those who are capable and those who are vulnerable in society, and a shift to a financial base line over social cohesion, seemed like a rough birth. That birth was into a new age of the networked worker, the commodity trader of the self, the serial and part-time employee and the de-personalisation brought about by an increasing use of technology and outsourcing (Handy 2001 p.36). Work as a reflection of the broad social makeup and its values seemed fractured and disconnected; or was it just showing a new set of values that reflected dislocated ways of work and new social balances (Handy 2001 p.12; Preston 1999 p.4)?

A personal concern became evident for me in the apparently callous disregard of retrenched or ‘redundant’ individuals, especially ‘traditional’ men still operating in a loyalty-and-stability work mode. I felt something needed to be done. The alternative seemed to be for our society to risk massive cultural ennui and escalating care costs for those unskilled in the new, strange and apparently hostile land of non-loyalty-based work, where financial and job security, and personal status, were no longer assured.  

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* “In 1991 Dr Richard Smith, executive editor of the British Medical Journal said: “The evidence that unemployment kills - particularly in the middle age group – verges on the irrefutable. There is a 37% excess of mortality for unemployed men aged 45-55. For this group, losing their job is a major life event akin to losing limb or a family member” (Critchley 2002 p.99)
In my reading of the origins of the changing Australian work environment of the 1980s and 1990s (Dunphy & Stace 1995 pp.25-7) there seemed scant regard for considering the capacity of those affected to make the internal and external changes necessary, let alone providing effective support for them to do so (Critchley 2002 p.23). It seemed a reflection of the mindset ‘out of sight, out of mind’, where the employee, once deemed redundant or superfluous, was no longer considered a responsibility of the employer.

In the ensuing years, this concern has been validated, as contract work and downsizing grow and Australian Workplace Agreements (AWAs) become the new norm. New Australian workplace reforms undermine collective bargaining, and most of those retrenched have been middle-aged men (Burgess 2001 p.1). The age of the ‘organizational nomads’ (Dunphy & Stace 1995 p.55), zig-zag (Tarrant 2002 p.2) and portfolio careers (Handy 2001 pp.3-4), has arrived.

In many cases the retrenching employer has been the Commonwealth Government in one of its guises, reflecting a radically changed relationship between it and its constituents. Most of the decisions to ‘downsize’ (as it has become known) were being made by (mainly) male politicians and business leaders, ironically, most of them from the very era when loyalty and job security was a ‘given’ (Commonwealth of Australia 2006).

As such, not only were individuals and their work affected, but the social fabric and society’s relationship with Government was also affected. The concept of Government as a patriarchal, caring provider was badly shaken.

It was sobering to think that, even before 2000, during the period of the lowest numbers in the Commonwealth Public Service,

“According to a 1997 Sydney Morning Herald/AC Nielsen-McNair poll, almost one third of Australian households have felt the pain of retrenchment.” (Leser 2000 p.22)
When I began this research it was 1998. The radical job losses in the Commonwealth Public Service (from 165,000 in 1990 to 115,000 in 2000 – approximately 30% loss of jobs) were almost over (State of the Service Report 2004-2005 Chart 'Change in the Size of the APS' in Briggs 2005 p.3). Middle managers, men and long-term workers were among those most affected (Richard Begbie 2000; Burgess 2001; Clack 2000; Perlman 1998). The full import of the changed job environment was just being realised.

Part of the purpose of the downsizing of that period was to move ageing workers out of the paid workforce to make way for the young (who have come to be known as the ‘X’ and ‘Y’ generations), who were regarded as such enthusiastic heralds of burgeoning technology developments. However, the exodus of the ageing cohort, known as the ‘Baby Boomers’ (people born between 1946 and 1965) has other implications and will potentially mean massive superannuation payout costs, skills and labour shortages (already evident as I complete the study) and a radical shift in our taxation and welfare base.
In the last couple of years there has been a ‘back-flip’ from making way for the young to introducing policies to retain older workers, and even to delay their retirement (Commonwealth of Australia 2005; Education 2004 p.2; Kinsella-Taylor 2000; Statistics 2005). The size of the Public Service is again on the rise (Public Service Commissioner 2005; 2006b). 10

The rapid development of the Internet and computer technologies (such that, when I began this research, information was transferred by ‘floppy discs’; the internet was barely used; most journals were accessed by microfiche; email was uncommon, and ‘spam’ was still only a tinned meat!) promised untold riches for some and vast productivity advances for business. It also changed the way we work, from being geographically located workers to the reality of distance-networked workers. Virtual reality has become a commodity, so that there is now a lucrative market in buying and selling virtual real estate and a range of virtual merchandise (BBC News 2005). Over the same period, there has been an exponential proliferation of knowledge through and on the internet, although with varying degrees of credibility. Outsourcing and portfolio careers have become the norm (Handy 1997a; 2001; Brandon Phillips 1999 p.33).

As a society we also have been in transition, swinging quickly in our exploration and rejection of options, while enthusiastically accepting others. Questions of sustainability, fundamentalism, freedoms and wealth disparities are topical. Natural disasters have tested our sense of global care against our drive for global business. The ice caps are melting and global warming is now widely accepted. Diversity in Nature is declining and use of her resources is rising dramatically. Rapid change is becoming the norm.

Within this nexus the play of individuality and the search for purpose and success in the world continues. Gender issues, multiculturalism and religious polarities test our tolerance for diversity. The impacts of mobility and difference are everywhere.

It may well be that we are in a global transition whose sequence is similar to the men’s sequence, as identified in this study, as these characteristics have strong
similarities to the polarisations and tensions of Stage 2 (p. 128) of their experiences.

The events and developments described are the backdrop within which this research began and has existed; it is the world within which the men and myself live and play a role.

**Perspective Taken**

The uniqueness explored in this research is of a cycle where the conscious destruction of the status quo is accepted as part of a ‘normal’ process of growth and living, in contrast to (what I call) the Western Business Model (WBM), which, disregarding ebbs and flows as part of market forces, demands ever-greater productivity, profit, control and predictability.

Its core concepts include:

- an awareness of a larger/broader pattern than economic goals of unending increase in production and wealth and aspirations for the endless ‘more’ of material possessions, power, status, physical prowess, beauty, and youthfulness. To explore this scenario I use the metaphor of the Hero myth
- a pattern to include ‘death’ (deconstruction) as a positive and enlivening factor being facilitated through the process of conscious ‘self-destruction’ and the creation of a renewed or new self, reinvigorated. To explore this scenario I use the metaphor of the Phoenix myth
- links between maleness, men, and competitive work structures (in this case, hierarchies); success defined by possessions and power over others; quasi-tribal norming factors
- the impetus to individuation, including the role of mid-life review and reframing, often called a ‘mid-life crisis’.

The reference in the *first* of these points is to ever-increasing wealth and productivity and harks back to a Utopian ideal. Fundamental to this is a desire to be insulated against unpleasant aspects of life such as isolation, decay, decline,
death, loss, powerlessness, uncertainty, confusion, scarcity and exclusion (Bantick 1999a p.4). The first point also smacks of the desire for a ‘preferential heaven’, that is ‘for me but not necessarily for thee’, arising out of the competitiveness intrinsic to the WBM and capitalism.

The second point refers to a path resulting from increased self-reflection, spiritual and philosophic awareness and an interest in re-evaluating and modifying personal psychological and practical frameworks and drivers (Boyd & Myers 1998 p.264). It also speaks of confidence and capability that is withdrawn, remodelled and returned to the external world.

The third point is a socially contentious one. Hierarchical work environments - principally religion, business, finance, defence and government - continue to be dominated by men as visible leaders and as possessors of power and wealth (Hamilton 2006 p.91; Sinclair 2000; Trinca 2006 p.32-48). Out of these environments have come cultural concepts of success characterised by objective measures such as position, title, job classification and salary. These criteria, as Associate Professors McColl-Kennedy and Dann, and others (AAP 2000 p.C8; Saltzman 1991; Semler 1994; Theobald 1997b) note, are preferred and supported by men, while women choose more relational and values-based criteria, such as enjoyment in their work, fulfilment, and peer recognition.

The environments men work in and have created are, historically, hierarchical, with success being measured by possession of élite goods and by degrees of directive influence over others.

Another question arose: is hierarchical grouping an inevitable or imperative pattern for men, and if not, what is the likelihood of it changing and, how might this happen?

The fourth point listed above refers to inner psychological journeys of meaning-making, purpose and congruence. As consciously developing beings, humans are able to use self-reflection for greater self-knowledge and to develop deeper
understanding of our world and what happens to us. This was evident in this study.

A sense of an inner transpersonal presence was common to the men interviewed: DW, MS, PS, IH and JL, although not all called it by the same term. The other man (ROC), too, had a sense of his ongoing individuality, but he did not describe it as a constant reference point, though it was obviously influential in his decision-making.

The men’s developing relationships between an ‘inner self’ and their transpersonal goals inevitably required conscious responses in relation to their own transpersonal development within their transition processes. Each of the men was already in an ongoing process of seeking deeper engagement with an inner sense of integrity and purpose. That deepening engagement was accelerated by their transition processes and, in turn, accelerated the process itself. Of the six men, DW and MS, who most clearly described their transition processes in terms of self re-definition, were consciously moving towards inner and outer congruence of their lives and, as such, most strongly understood their transitions as having a transpersonal framework.

**Personal Interest in the Topic**

Regardless of the pervasive business and government expectations of continuing increases in productivity and decreases in costs, there is no system, man-made or natural, that maintains unrelenting increase for any length of time. The Phoenix cycle of aliveness, dissolution, renewal and recreation appears to hold us all, be it the stock exchange or the dominance of one society over others, a blossom, or a building torn down by age and nature.

It has been interesting over the time of the research to watch the speed at which employers and employees alike have adapted to the new, mobile, transitory, fluid workforce.

Many employees have gained transition and mobility skills; learned to trade with less and get more (through consultancies, contract work, limited loyalty and personal career goals over corporate success). They have capitalised on their corporate knowledge and networks to trade to competitors, or made their skills and knowledge available on the open market. They re-valued and redefined their
skills and knowledge base. Intellectual Property (IP) protection, risk and knowledge management, become adversarial weapons and powerful negotiation tools. Contractual knowledge increased. Currency of knowledge overtook the value of corporate wisdom and history.

Others built new worlds and new businesses on the basis of their repackaged and re-launched skills, knowledge, interests and experience, often providing services back to the same employer, and often at a significantly higher cost. Transitions from directed to self-directed work - out of hierarchy, towards self-determination - are becoming common, although not always planned!

The capacity to relocate and re-invent oneself is ages old. The ability to do this is becoming far more commonplace. The incidence, whether forced or chosen, of needing to relocate and re-invent oneself, is almost the norm. The willingness and necessity to do so is becoming imperative, but the social recognition of this as a norm is still virtually non-existent and, it seems, rarely lauded, except when it occurs in crisis, by necessity, or for conquest.

The workplace in Australia is presently and predominantly made up of permanent or ongoing employees but there is also a strong trend towards part-time workers, contactors, consultants and the self-employed (Bina Brown 2006). Most CEOs are now on three to five year contracts. In 2002 the average tenure for a CEO was 2.4 years (Tarrant 2002 p.18). Baby Boomers have begun to retire from the workforce, and will increasingly do so over the next 5 to 20 years (2011-2031) (ABS 1999 p.6). I am one of these, as are the men in this study.

The loss of this mass of work, social power and corporate knowledge is a massive reduction of a valuable national and social resource. If it is not redirected positively, the Baby Boomers may need to be sustained through potentially long and costly retirements. We may have more than a quarter of our adult population not in the workforce, capable of playing an active role in society, yet being supported by government subsidies and charities.

In the context of such a mass movement out of full-time work by a significant proportion of the workforce, understanding and facilitating the capability to

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11 Whether outsourcing carries with it a high cost for the less able (the individual), and an increased benefit to the more able (the organisation), is a moot point, but not one I shall explore here.
change and to re-image oneself in a constructive way, in work and society, is becoming both imperative and critical.

What does a ‘successful’ transition from hierarchically dependant work to self-determined work (whether by employee, employer or contractor) look like? How does it come about, and how do individuals change in the process?

“Some of us are searching for new ways to work that will more fully express ourselves rather than our learned desire for masculinity ... We can find ways to work with involvement, with cooperation, and in emotional contact with self and others.” (Pleck & Sawyer 1974 p.95)

This research is designed to contribute to that capacity.

**Work, Men and Identity**

Work, usually in a hierarchical form and detached from home, has been the primary domain and creation of men in the Western world since the Western Industrial era (Bookchin 2005a p.27; Hodson 1984 p.94; Toffler in Swan 1998).

Work, before the Industrial Revolution, except in times of war or want, was more often integrated with the home, seasons and immediate community, and happened geographically close to these. The work of farmers, shopkeepers, servants, tradespersons, clerics and nobles were integrated with the rhythms of community, home, biology and nature (see interview with Shoshana Zuboff in Stewart 1991 p.92).

Since the introduction of mass mechanisation and the necessary massing of workforces, our embeddedness in the complex social and communal fabric has been disjointed and fractured (Biddulph 2002 p.28). The rising technological wave has brought parallel strands of individuality and mass-identification.

“... the entire push towards uniformity, sameness, homogeneity, one-size-fits-all, was a reflection of the industrialisation process ... a mass society ... imposes a very heavy burden of conformity.” (Toffler in Swan 1998 ABC radio broadcast)
New global rhythms are forming: from the long pauses of night and day to the narrow fluctuations of the 24-hour business world and the over-riding norming effects of the international languages of English, money and power.

In the wake of the computer technologies revolution, some of the key characteristics of industrial-era work have been reversed. Many people now work from home, far from their office and their clients. Many divisions, such as domestic and work sites, inherited from the industrial way of working, are becoming redundant. Technology enables work, ideas and images to be sent thousands of kilometres in seconds; cooperative and contract work challenges the place and role of hierarchies, as does the move from manual work to mental work, facilitated by technology (Friel 2002).

“The distinction between worker and manager really goes back to a distinction between mental and manual work. That distinction is no longer appropriate because manual work is disappearing – quickly.” (Interview with Shoshana Zuboff in Stewart 1991 p.88)

For many people, especially men, work has been the dominant way of identifying and creating themselves, of knowing their place in the world and of measuring their value (Hamilton 2006 p.200-1; Pleck & Sawyer 1974 p.94; Trinca & Fox 2004 p.9). The carrier of those identifications, if it is an organisation, has vastly different meanings when the structure is command-and-control driven, such as a hierarchy, compared to one that is self directed or cooperative.

“The corporation both dispenses power to the individual and renders that same individual powerless.” (Whyte 1996 p.147)

Embedded in hierarchical (command-and-control) organisations is the metaphor of organisation as (male) parent, and employee as child. Some consider this negative and unsatisfactory:

“Modern corporations … taking on the role of the parent who cools and secures everything, but in so doing, rimes everything it has touched with bureaucratic hoarfrost” (Whyte 1996 p.83),

... some as positive and preferred:

“What is needed is a diagnosis of the dysfunctionalism in our society and a recognition of its roots in the disruption and destruction of the public sector –
that domain where the community can see its common interests being protected and pursued ... When these institutions, which are the vehicle for common action across the whole society, and for the benefit of the whole people, are able to fulfil their true function, then they will be acknowledged as serving a State which should be regarded as a Parent ... it will be the source of stability and security, as well as direction and opportunity.” (Petrosian 1995 p.15)

Rather than demonising or eulogising the parent role a third way may be possible, to:

“... treat the world or the organisation as a mythological equal, a peer instead of a parent, a co-partner on the path instead of an all-powerful provider or persecutor.” (Whyte 1996 p.122)

Moving out of hierarchy may essentially be moving to this third position, or variations of it.

Gareth S.Hill (1992 p.27) proposes a Jungian matrix of archetypal interplays within organisations and individuals as a personal development framework. In that schema we move between aspects of Self, described as static and dynamic masculinity and static and dynamic femininity and that, intrinsically, we seek familiarity and relationship with all four.

The dynamic feminine is the caretaker of chaos, creativity, aesthetics and play. The dynamic masculine is her equivalent, but expresses himself in adventure, challenge and creation of territory in the public domain. Government, as the ‘State’, in this matrix, is cast in the role of a parent (static masculine) in its ‘power-over’ authority role.

In a hierarchical patrivalent society the dynamic feminine, in her freedom from rules and conventions, is regarded as a threat to the order, dominance and patriarchy that hierarchy is built on (Sinclair 2000; Theodore & Lloyd 2000). Artists, poets and writers dance to her tune. Whereas the static masculine follows the rhythmic beats of order and parental leadership, the dynamic masculine follows the rousing tunes of competitive achievement. The static feminine is the caretaker of gestation, birth, nurturing, reflection, death and regeneration. With her focus on being and becoming, this gender aspect does not focus on goals, purpose and action, such
as is required in a task-focused environment (Hill 1992). Instead she nurtures that part of ourselves attuned to cycles, of Nature and of life.

In relation to that Jungian framework, the interviewees, from their descriptions, were men of the static and dynamic male sectors. The majority of them appeared to be in the process of moving to relate more closely with aspects of their dynamic or static feminine aspects, as illustrated in the homeward journey of Odysseus (Bridges, 1996, pp 47-52), although this was not necessarily understood by them in this way.

The journeys that the men in this study underwent could be interpreted as a journey of the *dynamic masculine* (endeavour, Hero) through the *dynamic feminine* (transition process, Phoenix) to the *static feminine* (meaning-making) to reach the *static masculine* (certainty), the framework proposed by Gareth S. Hill (1992 p.5).

On a sociological level, moving out of ways of work and contracts of employment based on servant-master relations, could be considered as a social transition between dependant adolescence and adulthood (Bridges 1996b p.107; Hill 1992).

There are many ways of moving from teenage-hood - with its imbalance of privileges to responsibilities skewed to youth - and adulthood, where responsibilities and privileges are carried on our own shoulders, or shared with institutions and other adults. The mass downsizing of the 1980’s and early 1990’s in Australia could be interpreted as one such transition.
The World of Men

What began as an exploration of transition from hierarchy has taken me more and more into the world and writings about those whose change I am exploring - men - and about their life passages.

Surprisingly, compared with that which crams the bookshelves under women’s studies, there has been relatively little literature published on men (bibliography and discussion in Flood 2002 esp. p.203; Ford 1985 p.1; Hamilton 2006; Tolson 1977 p.151). At the start of this research, some eight years ago, I would go into a bookstore and ask the way to the ‘men’s studies’ section and usually be met with a blank look. In some ways it appeared to be the ‘fish and the water’ scenario: if one is native to the element it is taken for granted, unless it is threatened. Few men, comparatively, write on men, and relatively few women do, although there is ample reference to men and gender issues in feminist and relationship literature. Most publishers have been men; most of their subjects, until the last 100 years, have arisen out of the male domain, presented from a masculine perspective, but rarely focus specifically on men, men’s issues (Flood 2002 p.203) or their personal experiences (Bergman 1991; Sinclair 2000; 2001). It is a gap now gradually being filled.

Issues of Self-Reflection and Articulation

The research in this thesis gains a lot of its value and information from the ability of the men interviewed to articulate and self-reflect on their personal experiences and responses on various levels (for instance, emotional, analysis, somatic and transpersonal).

Even when men develop self-reflective interests and capabilities, they may then be hampered by lack of opportunity to express and share those thoughts, while the lesser developed capacity of men to articulate nebulous experiences and concepts, hampers their ability to express those self-reflections at all (Belenky, Clinch, Goldberger & Tarule 1997; Clark 2004; Ford 1985; Hamilton 2006; Shem & Surrey 1998; Tannen 1991).
Shem and Surrey (1998), in ‘We Have To Talk: Healing Dialogues Between Women and Men’, explore the tentative inner dialogues and self-reflections of men and women and their attempts to articulate them, with poignant examples of gender impasses. Their book served as a reminder of those who still struggle with these skills and clarified for me what some of those skills are.

‘The other thing was, with both of you, you talked about your inability to verbalise things at certain times. In just doing the interviews that ability has increased tremendously ... So both of you have become much more articulate in this area. You are able to name things, and describe processes, and place them in context, and give value to it, and describe abstract things and relation[ship] things a lot more than you were [able to] at the beginning.’ (Joint: SM/Q60/P28)

It may be that, when men are called upon to express intimates aspects of themselves and their feelings, that they find, as Tolson did, that,

“We began to discover that we had no language for feeling. We were trapped in public, specialised languages of work, learned in universities or factories, which acted as a shield against deeper emotional solidarities.” (1977 p.135)

The deeply embedded masculinisation of reason, its value attachment to and for men, and the subsequent negative value attributed to emotions, uncertainty and multi-layered perceptions, especially those attributed to women and ‘non-reason’, can be an impediment when researching these areas with men (Lloyd 1984; Steinem 1983).

Heather Formaini (1991) in ‘Men, the Darker Continent’, explores the fears and facades of men as they battle in their relationship with just these topics: uncertainty, intimacy and what are deemed feminine aspects. She and others, such as Professor Anthony Clare (2000), frame a world that is solitary and beleaguered, fraught with fear and compensatory behaviours, while also raising issues that inform us of the pressures within male psychology which inhibit their capacities to deal with self-reflective and feminine aspects of themselves (and others): critical matters of power, self-esteem, relationship and anger.

“To some men, women represent a disturbing challenge to self-control, a challenge to the very essence of being a male ... a concept characterised by self-reliance, independence, emotional control and a deep suspicion of intimacy.” (Clare 2000 p.24)
One of these challenges involves moving from thinking that is oppositional, hierarchical and based on categorisation, to developing and using descriptive, non-judgemental and allegorical thought and language, and to be able to move more freely between the two, as appropriate.

Linda Jean Shepherd’s (1993) exploration of the masculinity of science, and the marginalisation of the feminine in that field, added further understanding for me of why things feminine are so difficult for men to incorporate within themselves:

“In Western culture the successful man is considered to be objective, intelligent, logical, rational, independent, forceful, risk-taking, courageous, aggressive, competitive, innovative, and emotionally controlled. These qualities have been highly valued in our culture and are well-rewarded financially.” (Shepherd 1993 p.5)

Or, as Dr Oliver Sacks (1986 p.80) explained in his detailed phenomenological study of his experience of injury and loss of the use of one of his legs for a time:

“I had thought, in the pride of reason ... that whatever was worth accomplishing in life could be accomplished by reason and will, by that strong masculine sense ... enterprise ... vigilance and activity, which had previously characterised my endeavours. Now, for the first time in my life perhaps, I had tasted, been forced to taste ... the profoundest passivity; and to realise this was the only proper attitude at the time ...”

**Men and Hierarchies**

There is a close tie between hierarchical organisation and the demonstration, development and reinforcement of traditional masculinity (Biddulph 2002; Clark 2004; Eisler 1993; Peek 2003).

“They need the hierarchy and the rules, for without them they would be unable to tell if they were top or not - and that is of vital importance to most men.” (Moir & Jessel 1991 p.179)

Traditional ‘male’ work, characterised by uniform-like clothes, domestically removed sites, command-and-control models of organisation, orchestrated tasks, and language differentiated from the domestic arena, has been the norm in Australia for the full occupation period, and in other industrialised countries for many hundreds of years before that. So also has been the concept of wages for defined and set hours at work. The primary organisational structure for work in
the Western world has been that of a hierarchy. ‘At work’ in the Western world has largely meant being disconnected from home, community, nature, domesticity and the intimacy of being a whole person with others.

Career, a progression in work to greater ‘success’, including influence, status and material superiority,

“... portrays the idea of a logical, planned, rational movement which is always vertical … supported and encouraged by organisational structures, policies and practices. Not only have structures been traditionally hierarchical but the policies and practices instituted perpetuated the aspirations of climbing the career ladder.” (Doherty & Tyson 1993 p.128)

As such career, too, has been inexorably tied to reason, masculinity and hierarchy.

Hierarchy is an organisational structure based on “dominance differences among group members” (Schmid Mast 2005b p.1). They have been commonly used to localise and regulate large numbers of people for military, mechanical and administrative tasks, whether for production of tangible objects for trade, managing information, or for exercising power, as in religion, commerce, government or war. Hierarchies remain the normative form of work structure in the Western world, particularly in government and industry, despite the many changes brought about by technology and centuries of democracy (Nelson 2001 p.15). The power paradigm of such structures is dominance and submission, based principally on interdependent power, and knowledge differentials.

“Deferral to that higher masculine authority [father figure] is as much a component of masculinity as is dominance over a subordinate.” (Peek 2003 p.8)

Hierarchies are intrinsically tied to the Hero myth by their structure which rewards the man [sic] who succeeds, who stands out, who exerts most influence and who wields most power (Sinclair 2000). It is also intrinsically linked to patriarchal systems and structures. The boss, sometimes colloquially called ‘the old man’, in Gareth S. Hill’s (1992) matrix, represents the static masculinity (father-figure) of his gender quadrant.
Through rising education levels and the ever-widening influence of media and internet, knowledge is no longer the domain of the privileged few. Consequently, knowledge and power differentials are being reduced (McGillion 2000 p.18). Technologies, such as laptops, mobile phones, mobile internet connections and digital streaming, now allow flexible work venues, time frames across time zones, and many diverse work ways. Much of what we produce, and own and sell, is today largely intangible, such as knowledge, information, and the means to create more knowledge, or variations of existing knowledge or information.

Despite this, hierarchies remain the dominant work structure worldwide. Yet:

“As recently as the sixties, words like hierarchy and domination were rarely used.” (Bookchin 2005a p.66)

Hierarchies never exist in pure states. Part of their resilience lies in their capacity for a diversity of power and interpersonal paradigms to coexist within their framework. However, the acceptability of all such flexibilities are contingent on their capacity to maintain the system itself (Dalmau 1991 p.29; Jantsch & Waddington 1976 p.62). As Nicholson and West (1988 p.6) conclude in their study of managers changing positions:

“... it is in the nature of organisational design to absorb and neutralize [sic] most disturbances ...”

For men, hierarchical structuring of interpersonal relations begins early. Boys at play exhibit characteristics common to hierarchies:

“The boys race around, their hormonally inlaid aggression channelled into games of action, competition, dominance and leadership.” (Moir & Jessel 1991 p.65)

More recent research on adult males, as reported by Marianne Schmid Mast (2005b p.2), indicates:

“…men prefer inequality in status/power among social groups … men are more motivated to lead in hierarchical organizations [sic] than women ... men in all-male groups have been shown to be more hierarchically organized [sic] than women in all-women groups ...”

It seems very clear that there is both a social and biological drive for men toward hierarchy but, as yet, the relative influence, degree and compulsion of that nexus are unresolved (Newberger 1999; 2001).
Although there has been much contentious discussion about the relative roles of social training and biological determinism, in the context of English (UK) research:

“Girls will opt for more sedentary games, and if they build, will tend to build long low structures while boys go for toppling height in their creation.” (Moir & Jessel 1991 p.59).

It is interesting therefore that our major building mode for work, law, administration and business are in the form of ‘toppling height’, reflecting the values and the institution of the hierarchical forms of work within them.

**Moving Out of Hierarchies**

“The will to power and the need for status differentiation run deep in our natures. So it takes exceptional leadership to help people get over that and, more importantly, to fashion alternative sources of psychic satisfaction.”  (Stewart 1991 p.94)

“Hierarchy is not merely a social condition; it is also a state of consciousness, a sensibility toward phenomenon at every level of personal and social experience.” (Bookchin 2005a p.68)

Moving out of hierarchy is, therefore, a radical and unusual step, especially for men.

External focus, command-and-control models of organisation and decisive action have been widely characterised as masculine, whereas an internal focus, self-reflection and immersion, have been characterised as feminine. Hence movement of focus from one to the other domain has been interpreted as heavily gendered. Changing power dynamics and value relations are, therefore, also deeply embedded in the process of moving out of, or away from, a hierarchical, masculinist, model of organisation. To move out of hierarchy men must also move away from the ‘norm’ of masculine work, if not masculinity itself (Newberger 2001 p.1; Schmid Mast 2005b p.1-2).

Self-reflective abilities and activities, such as assessment or reassessment of one’s place in hierarchy in relation to one’s beliefs, revealed itself as a necessary precursor to moving away from command and control models of organisation.
within this study. Reviewing personal relationships to concepts of femininity and masculinity may be fundamental to men (Stern 1985; Willeford 1994 p.7) if their modes of work and organisation are to be explored.

To make such a move, it appears men may need to deal with any personal fear or rejection of the feminine (Clare 2000; Hill 1992; Kimmel & Aronson 1999; Stern 1985) and develop closer relationships with their feminine aspects or archetypes (Giesbrecht 1998; Hodson 1984; Pinkola-Estés 1993; Tacey 1997; Theodore & Lloyd 2000).

To move from hierarchies means to move out of power paradigms of unequal relationship. As such, moving out of hierarchy entails a psychological journey to other power structures, other ways of being and other concepts of self-in-the-world, our ‘lifeworld’ (Habermas in Lechte 1994, p.186). It entails moving from impersonal to personal bases of relationships, and out of clearly differentiated power matrixes. It also requires finding or creating alternative situations where needs of income, prestige and work are still adequately met.

This may be a challenging task when,

“Industrial era systems wrapped these three aspects of life [work income and prestige] into a single package.” (Theobald 1997b p.40)

in such a transition as described above, terms such as ‘success’, ‘career’, ‘power’ and ‘authority’ may gain new meanings. For instance:

“The horizon for career growth is no longer vertical, but increasingly horizontal in nature. Vertical career ladders have been replaced by matrices, lattices and mazes where the breadth of experience and ability to move sideways as a career progression are becoming the norm.” (Doherty & Tyson 1993 p.129)

It is not just institutional socialisation that men must leave when moving out of hierarchy. Stevens and Gardner’s (1994) explorations on the powerful influence of male abandonment issues underscores the psychological difficulty of leaving hierarchies. Retrenchment becomes abandonment by the ‘father’, as embodied in the patriarchal structure (Clark 2004 p.10). In that metaphor, after being pushed away by ‘mother’ (domestic life) and abandoned by his ‘father’ (hierarchical
work), a man becomes an orphan in the world. Through that abandonment by his ‘mother’ in the private sphere, and his ‘father’ in the public sphere (Stern 1985 p.19), he is forced to create or learn a new mode of engagement with his world. Moving out of such an environment demands enormous faith and versatility at best; and enormous commitment to change.

The post-war (WW11) generation reflected a deeply ingrained, high dependency on work to provide security and prestige. As ROC, one of the interviewees, described,

‘... when the office I was in was totally restructured and the [main] office was closed down completely, all these people, 90 staff, were scattered to the four winds. Some of them were very senior positions and some of them were older men. One particular chap who had actually, in the ‘50s, left school and obviously could have done a number of things, but chose the Public Service because it was a sought after position - you had to sit exams just to get into it; it had a career path; it had security; it had after-work security in terms of superannuation and so on - so it seemed a very prestigious thing to do, in some ways. He was three years, or two years, off retirement and all of a sudden he is told there is a restructure and he was no longer required. He was devastated because it was supposed to be forever [my emphasis].’ (ROC1/Q15/4P)

‘... There was another case where a chap in a more senior position was ruthlessly, I guess, given the flick. He was no longer required. He was getting past it. Once upon a time he would have been maintained in some way within the system. He would have been given ‘duties’ ... He was given the flick and [he] said to me that he was just totally devastated because he had always imagined the department to be his friend [my emphasis]. What made it worse [was that] one of his so-called friends was the one that actually had to come and tell him he was no longer required.’ (ROC1/Q16-17/5P)

‘[sic] Had an impact on everybody, from those men I described before who had all sorts of problems because the culture that they grew up in and were part of and they had developed didn’t exist any more - and all of a sudden they were out. They couldn’t understand that - to the people who were the ‘little punters’, who were the cogs in the wheel downstairs in the office punching the machines.’ (ROC1/Q20/P6)

Men strongly value work and its place in their lives.

“In most societies, being employed carries with it status and perceived importance ... an understanding of one’s place and importance in the organizational [sic] hierarchy, including all its trappings of influence and social status.” (Menon 2000 p. 7)
Allegiance to the work environment also taps into deep psychological reservoirs for men because:

“It is here that often they feel most at home, because at work they have the chance to make their mark, to test themselves against those around them and to enjoy a sense of community ... Even when men choose to step out of work for a while, many find themselves itching to get back, because they long for the routine, the challenge, the camaraderie. The sense of achievement.” (Hamilton 2006 p.201)

Consequently,

“work role transitions ... are among the most significant forms of social change and their effects on individual’s self-concept cannot be underestimated.” (Menon 2000 p. 8)

Unfortunately,

“… some people have internalised the value of working to the extent that work has become the dominant characteristic of their being. In effect their social and economic identities have merged.” (Menon 2000 p.16)

Leaving or losing work under these circumstances, means far more than losing a job (Professor Cummins in 2003 p.3). As ROC related when describing the dismantling of his Regional Office:

‘We were talking before about some people who their only importance came as a result of the position they held, not as a result of the person that they were. So, without that position they wouldn’t be who they are and that is why they are reluctant to deviate from whatever path they sought. So hence the guy driving from Tweed to Port Macquarie. He had other options in his life but I would hazard a guess that it was so important that he had this position of power and what it brought, that he really couldn’t do anything else. (ROC1/Q81/P0)

‘There was an issue before I think I was describing about part of the culture, particularly with men in senior management positions, of being locked into a career for no other reason than because they feel that they can’t do what they were doing as a lesser professional, a lesser job. I think I was describing people who really get so much kudos and so much recognition for the job they do but when you look at it objectively it is only because of the job they do. If they didn’t do that job then all these people patting them on the back wouldn’t actually recognise them in the street. It is like that top forty thing. When you are in the top forty everyone wants to know you, wants to pat you, but once your record goes off the top forty then you are a nobody again.’ (ROC1/Q22/P6)
However, when hierarchies no longer meet the needs for ‘prestige’ (either as status, self-worth, valued meaning or well-being), nor match more mobile work styles, and when social power dynamics change in the light of increased access to knowledge and education, many individuals are directly or indirectly having to face leaving parental archetypes. The need to choose or create alternative structures for themselves and their work becomes more urgent.

“The [hierarchical] organisation has emerged strongly but pressure from a well-educated, highly individualistic workforce continues to challenge the way workplaces operate.” (Trinca & Fox 2004 p.12)

Though large organisations represent hierarchies most clearly, they are not Australia’s main employer; these are its small to medium enterprises, characterised by strong individual development and control:

“Small businesses alone employ 49% of all private sector employment” (Statistics 2001) and “58 per cent of the jobs growth between 1996-97 and 2000-01 [was] generated by small business.” (Cabinet 2006)

Not all work is hierarchical. However, most people in Australia have employment in hierarchical traditions of power-over, servant master-ship, where the employer has legal ‘right to control and direct’ (Ken Phillips 1999).

My research is part of a wider social exploration of alternatives to such ‘unnecessarily’ narrow ways of being male, and such ‘unnecessarily’ narrow ways of being at work (Hamilton 2006 p.3).

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12 There is no reason to think that these small businesses are not hierarchical in structure; however, they demonstrate a range of organisational structures more closely related to individual endeavours rather than large organisations.
Part 1: Restlessness and Preparation

‘Intuitively I knew that I was not doing what I should be doing.’ (MS1/Q16/P8)

This section represents Stages 1 and 2 of the six-part transition process identified in my study. It lays the ground of the research and illustrates the social and work contexts within which the men’s stories are located and out of which their rising tensions arose.

In ‘Restlessness, some operating truths and 'certainties' are confirmed and challenged. Growing uncertainty, restlessness and meaning searches characterised Stages 1 and 2 as the men either chose to reach out into uncertainty and its unknowns, or were pushed there. Through understanding their experiences in these stages we can come to better understand their transition processes in Stages 3 to 6, as documented in Parts 2 and 3.
“The young man paused at the bookshelf. It covered the entire wall bar a narrow space between it and the ceiling. Of a deeply golden-tan colour, it glowed in the soft light of the room.

Books filled most shelves, standing up and lying flat to make the most of the space. Interspersed were piles of paper and small objects - a shell, a rock both smooth and rough; a piece of delicate cloth; a fragile glass sphere; a squat and happy bronze Buddha. Even an old leaf or two lay there, curled and dry, yet still bearing the beauty of its original form, reminding us of winter – and of spring.

His hand reached for a favoured volume: ‘Awakening the Heroes Within’, by Carol Pearson (1991 pp.17-18). Tattered at the edges, corners turned down, underlinings and pencilled notes throughout, he despaired that he had never been able to curb his mother’s passionate and responsive relationship with an author and their world.

Inside the front cover he read her pencilled scrawl:

“I found this a wonderful book, both for its usefulness for my research and its relevance to me, in that order. There is one drawback. Though written by a woman, she barely mentions the fact that traditionally the hero’s journey is a male province. In almost disregarding this she leaves out women to a large extent, even though she is a woman herself. On the other side of the equation, as a woman who has found herself living half in the male world (with intelligence, independence and a ‘quest’) and half in the female world (with intuition and nurturing and aesthetic creativity), the information in it, and the assumption that women also have access to the myth, was refreshing.”

Mackenzie © 2000
My literature review is embedded throughout the thesis. It places the research in-situ with current academic knowledge; it also describes the cultural context of the research and the lives of the participants at the time of the research. The background knowledge for this research comes from various genres within text (academic and popularist writings, including text media, fiction and poetry), as well as image genres (art and media), reflecting our multi-media world.

I am aware that whatever is cited is not a complete picture. As Steven Kates states,

“Like any academic work, it is, in a sense, out of date the minute it is finished ...” (2000 p.15)

Comparisons between Cohn’s (1978) research on his subjects’ self reflections on emotions and sense of status, and Menon’s (2000) study 20 years later, reveal vastly differing social beliefs and mores. Comparing the two studies is a salutary reminder of the need for Kates’ acknowledgement (Kates 2000).

Cohn’s (1978) study, from the early period of organisational analysis, reveals clear changes in our work and societal framework since then. His thesis is especially useful for this study because he illustrates the social and work context in which the interviewees began their working lives, i.e.

- non-working men were not included as ‘non-labor force participants’, only as retirees (1978, p.84)
- males were the reference point; “a female family head is by definition unmarried or separated from her husband”, i.e. the ‘head’ of every family and couple is considered to be male:

  “… the traditional roles for women are the true source of gratification and self-definition, and that even among women who do work, the work role and their commitment to work are of secondary importance” (1978, p.86)

Whereas I present an overview of my reading in this chapter, further sources are included throughout the thesis. The methodology sources are located in the Methodology chapter (Chapter 4) and the Method sources in the Method chapter (Chapter 5) and will not be covered here. Hero and Phoenix myth sources are predominantly covered in the Myth chapter (Chapter 2)
“Men, on the other hand, are taught that employment is a requirement of adulthood and that social expectations are such that unemployment carries a social stigma” (1978, pp.86-87)

- there is no talk of inner selves or Jungian matrixes. Rather, the external, group world, is considered as the primary shaper of individuals: “... our evidence supports ... basic notions that the individual’s social world determines his [sic] attitudes about self” (1978, p.92). Compare this to findings by Nicholson and West, twenty years later, who state: “As one’s social world changes so does one’s represented self, but one’s tastes and likes are more deeply embedded in temperament, transcending particular settings and interactions” (1988 p.125).

As such context and character were considered important aspects of the men and their experiences (Mair 1989 p.266) in this study. The detailed biographies of the men (Appendices A and B), and this chapter, on Context (Ch.1), reflect that value.

However, quality research maintains its relevance over time (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger & Tarule 1997; Brew 2001b; Gomez 2004; Mezirow 1991; 1995; Nicholson & West 1988; Shepherd 1993; Van Manen 1990).

My personal and professional history, in teaching, holistic counselling, learning and development, and transpersonal studies, has given me a solid practical base from which this thesis arises. In line with Social Ecology as a praxis research area, and for both context and the academic positioning of my research, I have drawn on literature on the following themes:

- men, including biological and sociological analysis of gender and progressions of the male psyche, including ‘mid-life crisis’ literature; men in media, and mediated images of men
- hierarchy, authority, organisations and work as a social construct and gendered psychological environments
- mythology, including sociology of myth, and myths as metaphors for living
- socially located and social context for the span of the research (including tracking a year of the Canberra Times, after my move to that predominantly hierarchical city, for relevant pieces on work, hierarchy, maleness and success)
- transition and change theories and experiences, principally in the area of work and personal transitions
• research methodologies and methods, including qualitative, interactive and feminine ways of researching
• transpersonal psychology and philosophy, emphasising consciousness of Self, individuation, meaning making and archetypes
• social ecology, particularly in relationship to power paradigms and ecologies of the self.

Social Context

Like you and me, the men in this study all live in a soup of media and specialist reading decided by interest and necessity. Five of the men’s lives were anchored in non-academic environments and thus were not directly shaped by academic writings or influence. Consequently, I have taken references from popular sources, as well as academic ones, throughout the thesis.

As part of ‘walking in the interviewees shoes’, for credibility, and to refresh my experiences of hierarchy, I moved to Canberra and, after a couple of years, went to work in the Commonwealth Public Service, i.e. for most of the research period. Before that I had freelanced for some 10 years as a Communications and Social Processes educator in tertiary institutions, and as a personal and professional development consultant. I taught transpersonal subjects in community education and worked with individuals and groups in, out of, and transitioning from, hierarchies.

At first I sought to immerse myself in the local Canberran culture (Moustakas 1990). As part of that process, and to create a snapshot of the context the research began in, I took out a subscription to the ‘Canberra Times’. It revealed that traditional hierarchical structures were strongly evident here, both at work and in the wider society, as were the rational imperatives of government. Men featured prominently in positions of power. The full impact of over a decade of downsizing in the private sector was being felt and the trend was being duplicated in the public sector. Subsequent social fears and pains were being expressed widely, sometimes quite graphically:
“So the “Honey, I’ve shrunk the Public Service” attitude still thrived in 1999 as the outsourcing monster continued to feed on the carcasses of shed public-service jobs.” (Burgess 1999a p.9)

Two years later (at the end of 2000), Australian Bureau of Statistics’ figures showed that Canberra was no longer predominantly a Public Service town, reversing earlier figures showing the Commonwealth Public Service had employed 60 percent of Canberra’s workforce in the early 1990s (ABS figures cited by Gentle 2000, p.4).

Over that first year in Canberra, the local and national papers described a work environment characterised by downsizing and selective retrenchments in both the Government and Private sectors. Some of the issues included:

- employment insecurities and workplace changes: “If anything characterises the decade [1990s], it is the overwhelming insecurity people feel, particularly with respect to their employment. It is a feeling that is well-founded” (Perlman 1998 p.38)
- retrenchments: “CSRs mass sackings [of the mid-1980s] legitimised the corporate slash and burn, and gave a string of other Australian companies and institutions (including the Commonwealth and State Public Services in the early 1990s) permission to follow suit” (Leser 2000 p.19). The passing of the ‘old’ Public Service as “stable, capacious, careful – has gone forever,” was lamented by Stewart (2001 p.6). Older workers were more likely to be retrenched (Burgess 2001 p.1; Brandon Phillips 1999 p.32). Of these, 68% were male. Those aged 45-54 years, represented the highest proportion (96%) of retrenchments from full-time positions (Commonwealth of Australia 1997). More workers were retiring before reaching age 55 (AAP 1999a)
- work and longevity: Besserglik (1999 p.10) made the sobering observation that, statistically, “until recently men worked until they retired, and usually died a year or two later”
- unemployed older workers were less likely to get work again (Richard Begbie 2000 p.13; Gentle 2000 p.4) or regain their own job (Clack 2000 p.5), and were increasingly described as being ’squeezed out’ (AAP 1999b p.3)
- massive numbers of job losses: between 1985 and 1999, “3.4 million jobs had been snuffed out across Australia” (Leser 2000 p.19). The loss of Public Service positions and conditions, including SES tenure, were noted as

14 Curiously, at this time, a Redundancy Information Kit was released by the ACT Chief Minister’s Department specifically aimed at women (1999)
critical points reflecting the Commonwealth Government’s interest in adopting private sector business models (Mulgan 2000 p.9; Neil 1999a p.15)

- a rise in cynicism: for example, when Telstra announced record earnings in 2000, yet decided to cull 10,000 of their employees over the following two years: 2000 – 2002 (Sibley 2000 p.9)

- a rise in casual and contract work\(^5\) (Dennis 2001 p.11; Brandon Phillips 1999 p.34) and new workplace rules (McRae 2000 p.31). Ken Phillips (1999 p.29) suggested that contracts removed us from the inequality of master-servant relationship, a view not shared by myself, Ohlsson (2005 p.22) or Robinson (2005 p.50)

- an ageing workforce, described as being overtaken by a wave of Baby Boomers approaching retirement (Australia 2005; Statistics 2005; Teh 1999 p.60)

- increased stresses and hours of work (Dennis 2003 p.11; Wright 2000 p.9)

- a rise in what was perceived as negative paternalism - or negative static masculine, (Hill 1992) - expressed in increasing obligations and impositions on welfare recipients (Jayasuriya 2000 p.9).

The work environment, and particularly the relationship between employees and their employers, was changing swiftly (and would continue to do so throughout the research period). A result of this changing relationship was a shift to more short-term or contracted work, less job security and increased outsourcing.

The passing of an implicit social contract of care for all those in our society (Tim Costello cited in Preston 1999 p.4), coupled with attendant feelings of betrayal and compensatory behaviours, was profound (Christmas 2001 p.17; Faludi 1999 p.6; Perlman 1998 p.38; Petrosian 1995 p.15).

The former NSW Premier, Nick Greiner, in a paper presented to a national strategic conference five years earlier (1994), stated there was a need to

“recognise the anxiety and confusion and a sense of loss [that] pervades the community.” (from S.M.H. November 26, 1994 and in Petrosian 1995 p.15)

Such malaise and anxiety instigated many public discussions on re-defining work values and the value of a more ‘balanced’ lifestyle (Clare 2000; Tarrant 2002).

When Nick Sherry (Labour MP backbencher) attempted suicide in 1997 (Peake 2000, \(^{15}\)

\[^5\] “The part-time workforce grew by 47% between 1986 and 1996. In the same period full-time employment growth was only 7%” (Brandon Phillips 1999 p.34)
and when Victorian ALP member Greg Wilton succeeded (R Begbie 2000a p.11), discussion became even more strident in the public domain. For Sherry, work had come first: “Everything else came second – relationships, family”, said Petre in Milliner (1998, p.27). Petre, in his reflection on his own transition from being ‘a classic fast-track, hard-nosed workaholic’ (ibid) discussed other executives’ negative balance of work and family, and how he found himself laughed at for taking family time. The social ambivalence between work and family values was crystallised when an apology was demanded from the, then, Victorian Police Minister, Bill McGrath (1999), for criticising officers who took stress leave:

“Mr McGrath said officers who went on stress leave let down their colleagues and should have known policing was a tough job.” (C.T. Aug 2nd 1999 p.4)

Several of the interviewed men shared the perspective of successful working men as being ‘driven’ or in the role of driving others, for example:

‘... people who seem to succeed in the work environment are often, in my perception anyway, you know the tough sort of walk-over-everybody type of people.’ (IH1/Q3/P2)

The difference in value between the domestic and the work sphere continued to be unresolved.

A vivid overview of the changes wrought in the world of work in Australia since the mid 1980s, culminating in the early 1990s, was summarised in Leser’s Good Weekend article, ‘The Lost Men ‘ (March 25th 2000 p.18). Using particular examples as well as statistics, Leser described the devastating effects of the first waves of downsizing on the displaced workers. The culling of older workers, and a move to portfolio careers (Handy 2001) had begun. Leser (2000) also refers to other similar, recent research of the time (including: 1998 research by Cheryl Kernot; Drake Management; the 1997 Sydney Morning Herald/AC Nielsen-McNair poll; reflections by Paul Stevens from the Centre for Worklife Counselling in Sydney; and research by Susie-Linder-Pelz, director of Good Decisions, a company specialising in mid-life careers). Such research, and that of Doherty and Tyson (Doherty & Tyson 1993) on executive redundancy, reflected an increasing awareness and concern for mid-career men losing their jobs:
“In the late 1990s it was almost impossible to find senior managers prepared to go public about losing their jobs for a series in the Sydney Morning Herald about the massive downsizings. These men – and they were mainly men – were wary ... The social stigma around downsizing and forced redundancies was still very high and the psychological and economic impact on people at all levels was harsh.” (Trinca & Fox 2004, p.42)

Responses to the spectre and reality of downsizing and massive job losses in the 1980s and 1990s refocussed workers in a variety of ways. For some, scarcity and insecurity of work resulted in a highly developed focus on work and minimisation of non-work hours. Still others found opportunities for career achievement by relying on innate or learned entrepreneurial skills. For others, loss of trust in their organisations tipped them towards re-evaluation and self-reassessment of their lives, some with negative outcomes; others with more positive results. The men in this research came from that latter cluster, as they sought to gain greater control and meaning in their lives.

Contributing to the public debate on work-life balance and contemporary relationships to work, Semler came to Canberra in March 2000 (Centenera 2000; Cooke 2000 p.7). As author of ‘Maverick’ (1994), the story of the turnaround of Semco, his now giant company, from being an authoritarian hierarchical organisation to entrepreneurial self managing units, he joined others, such as Robert Theobald (Theobald 1997a; 1997b; 1998; 1999; Theobald et al. 1998) (who, three years earlier, had also toured Australia), in asking the working community to reconsider the role and meaning of work, this time in the light of its significance as an expression of self and ecological concern (Theobald 1997a; 1997b; 1998; 1999; Theobald et al. 1998). Theobald (1997b p.39-40) spoke of ‘right livelihood’, a Buddhist term,

“... to express the desire of people to make a living in ways which satisfy themselves and respect ecological necessities.”

In the United Kingdom, Charles Handy, in ‘The Hungry Spirit’ (1997a), sought to address an ennui which called for greater meaning in work. Four years later he published ‘The Elephant and the Flea’ (Handy 2001), in which he further explored changing relationships between workers and organisations. In so doing he
developed the idea of the ‘portfolio career’ as a means to manage and potentially flourish in the emerging, fluid work environment (Handy 1995b; 1997a; 1997b; 2001).

All the while, as discussions on reassessing work and its role were happening, the counter-current of more intense focus on work was becoming pervasive:

“Work is now at the centre of people’s lives; it’s the thing they do to make money and meaning.” (Trinca & Fox 2004, p.3)

These polarities, coupled with significant discussions of a general shift in the work market, from matter to mind-work, as recorded in Neil (1999b, p.15), and to a ‘mind economy’ (Gittins 1999, p.13), made for a complex dynamic of work and identity during this period. To this, add the effects of the fluidity between work and private lives as brought about by technology, especially in relation to emails and mobile phones. For many, as work seeps into non-work hours, “there is a seamless connection of time on and off the job” (Trinca & Fox 2004, p.9), and it is clear that work and private domain boundaries are in flux.

Overall, my research began in a climate of work and masculine identity confusion, anxiety, re-evaluation and radical change. There were uncertainties and conflicting values in the work environment, reflecting symptoms of an overall transition occurring, not just within the Australian workplace environment, but also globally. Men (and women) were thrown more on their own volition, whether prepared for it or not.

Internally, the ‘lifeworld’ (Habermas in Lechte 1994, p.186) of each of the men interviewed was also complex, changing, and becoming ever more fluid.

**Ideas of Manhood**

In the midst of the conflicting pressures of the radically changing work world of the 1990s, the idea of what a ‘man’ was, how he acted in the world and what his roles were, was also being questioned.

One outcome of the feminist movement was an awareness that there had been relatively little published directly on men and their inner lives, even as late as the
1960’s. What literature there was, as described in Tolson (1977) and Pleck and Sawyer (1974), principally explored what men did in the world and the personas and values projected by them.

From the late seventies, literature on men, albeit largely on men acting in the exterior world, trickled onto shelves and computer screens, but by the 1990s (Flood 2002, p.203) many more were being published. Men’s changing roles and self-concepts became a rich area for comment and discussion. The fraught world of masculinist studies was clearly described in Michael Flood’s (2002 pp.203 - 214) thorough study of the literature on men and the complexity of masculinist definitions, terms, and terminology.

In the 1980s and 1990s a flush of self-development literature for men was beginning to be published.

“At one estimate in early 1998, one new book a week was being published on the subject of men [in Australia alone].” (Sinclair 2000, p.16)

Websites for men, such as www.Askmen.com and www.menstuff.org proliferated.

The effects of stereotypical public roles of men, such as competitiveness, stoicism and detachment from intimacy, had come to be viewed with concern by the late 1990s (7 Myths of Men and Stress [Brochure] 2005; Bergman 1991 p.11; Clare 2000; Faludi 1999; Harvard Medical School psychologist, Levant 1997; Nunn 1998, in Woman Spirit, p.43; Sinclair 2001)

Constraints on men, imposed by such stereotyping, and the limitations of gender bias and division, were being defined and articulated (Tacey 1997). A characteristic of the new literature was the targeting of disillusioned and ‘civilised’ men seeking greater ‘aliveness’. These men contributed to a movement that was redefining men’s identity and roles in an increasingly feminised public space. Such texts as ‘Iron John’ (Bly 1990) advocated a view of maleness centred on the vitality of wildness, while also validating self-focus and reflection. Unlike Robert Bly’s (1990) warrior world, Keen (1991 p.83) explored the capacity of men to ‘self-measure’, and take time for reflection on the larger issues of purpose, grief, death
and despair, all of which challenge a man’s sense of control and dominance. Such movements, from control paradigms and focus on the external world, to focus on interior worlds, may be regarded as indicators of a willingness to undergo changes in the personal self. Self-reflection may also be recognised as a precursor to personal re-evaluation, and an interest in autonomy and individuation (O’Connor & Wolfe 1991).


Such publications (as well as workshops and recordings) encouraged a mytho-symbolic perception of life and men’s roles within it, as I have aimed to do in this thesis.

During the research period, the socialisation of men was increasingly discussed and analysed (Beynon 2001; Birren & Schaie 1990; Clark 2004; Eveline 1995; Kimmel & Aronson 1999). Previously, socialisation was regarded as essential for ‘the making’ of a man. In that mode ‘What is a Man? 3,000 years of wisdom on the art of manly virtue” (edited by Newell 2000), presented a framework of history and tradition based on concepts of men as heroic and steadfast, reaffirming the traditional value of men in times of challenging and changing roles. Other literature (edited by Kaufman 1987), explored the sources of such concepts of masculinity and questioned their validity for present times, while others raised the question of how much of the men’s movement was, and is, actually pitched to recreating the patriarchal ways it attests to be questioning: an interesting point (Tacey 1995; 1997).
Not all of the literature from the period of my research, and just preceding it, focussed on positive aspects of maleness (Biddulph 1997). Yossi Berger (cited in Lyons 2001, p.5), National Health and Safety Officer for the Australian Workers’ Union, comments,

“Males, not only in Australia, are encouraged to think they are related to John Wayne, that they have balls of steel and lungs of leather.”

Dyer’s chilling article (2000, p.9) on the torture and death of Konca Kuris for challenging male dominance in her Islamic culture, and the equally chilling statistics of men as killers in our Australian culture (Clare 2000; Flood 2002; 2004; Moyer 1997), presented a darker side of the masculine psyche. Others, such as Abjorensen (2000) presented a view of men unrelated to the organised, rational and functional world of men and work that is regarded as synonymous with organisations, and which the participants in this study reflected.

From a behavioural position, anger in men was depicted as one of the major masks men used to cover low self-esteem, as a means of prevailing, and as an expression of the fear of losing control (Bantick 1999a, 1999b, p.4; The Law Report on National Radio by Lobez 1998). Such defensive behaviour is consistent with the view of most men wanting to appear invulnerable, in response to internalised expectations of society and masculinity:

“The cultural subliminal message is that efficiency, performance and being a winner are everything.” (Costello, cited in Preston 1999, p.4)

The negative effects of this, for instance Vietnam veterans not seeking help for trauma, suggest a conflicted dynamic in contemporary concepts of masculinity (Donovan cited in Bantick 1999a, p.21; Connell 2005; Hamilton 2006; Laurance 1999, p.30; Moyer 1997; Price 2001, p.59; Ward 2000, p.12-13).

Masculine expectations to provide, and to be seen as being ‘in control’ (Clare 2000; Sinclair 2000; 2001); the varied roles of fathering (Biddulph 1994; 2000; Hamilton 2006, p.190; 1998, p.38); ‘macho’ maleness (Brewer 2000; 1999, p.19; Manelis 1998; Warden 1999); the overwhelming role of men as perpetrators in domestic violence (Bergman 1991; Moyer 1997), and suggestions that a role of violence was as a means of alignment and
intimacy with other males (Orr 2000, p.17), offers a complex and conflicted view of masculine identity over the past 20 years.

The common dislocation of feeling and action (noted and referred to in the present research as the capacity and tendency of the interviewees to segment their lives into ‘boxes’, especially during stressful or discordant times) was well illustrated in Turner (2002), Hamilton (2006), Clare (2000) and in the words of ex-soldier, Ron Morris, when recalling his war years:

“As a soldier, you might come up against the nicest person in the world,” he said, “but your job is to kill him.” (cited in Gentle 1999 p.32)

Reshaping Relationships to Authority

In summary, much of the literature I read explored the issue of men reshaping their relationship with external authority, especially men’s relationships between their own authority and that of work or social structures, such as hierarchies.

Many of the current work and social changes – increased contract and casual work; the perspectives of generations ‘X’ and ‘Y’; relinquishing reliance on paternalistic structures; spiritual refocus; and reassessment of values in organisations - reflect this process (Ostrow 1995).

Reflections on Men, Work and Maleness

When I began my research, it was the middle managers and ‘traditional’ men, who were not used to such change, not skilled or trained for it, who were the main ones being retrenched or made redundant; forced to sink or swim in the new, workplace currents (Richard Begbie 2000; Commonwealth 2005; Doherty & Tyson 1993 p.84).16

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16 In the Commonwealth Public Service alone, between 1992 and 2000 (the year of its lowest numbers between 1992 and 2007), 30,504 (24,424 permanent) men, compared to 19,647 (14,884 permanent) women, left the PS. Although a proportion of these left for reasons such as illness, the vast majority left through redundancy and retirement, either chosen or forced upon them. In comparison, between 2000 and 2007, 8,720 men left the PS compared to 24,198 women. 2000 was also the year when more women than men were employed in the PS, and have been every year since then.
As I reflected on this, I experienced a sense of outrage, more based on the seemingly disrespectful and arbitrary rewriting of the social rules of the post-war social contract of work for the warriors and a place for all (Preston 1999; Raskin 1984) than any economic reasons. I felt that the men had been betrayed by their own leaders, and were ill prepared to deal with this challenge (Critchley 2002 p.23 and 98; Doherty & Tyson 1993 p.76).

Along with my rage at the perpetrators, I felt great compassion for the disorientated men. I decided to see if I could discover a map of a successful transition process to guide unprepared men, unskilled in flexible careers, out of hierarchies and the command-and-control model, through ‘nowhere’ (Bridges 1996b p.14) and the ‘vale of uncertainty’, to a new certainty that would be less fragile than that associated with their prior reliance on external authority. I decided I would ask men who seemed to have successfully travelled that journey, or begun it, how it was for them, what they went through, what their paths were, and what they discovered. Little did I know that I would find it was a lot more than their work and their skills that changed.

Some 25% of the Australian Public Service will retire or cease work in the next five years (Commonwealth 2005; 2006b). In Western Australia, “41% of full-time permanent public sector employees will be eligible to retire by 2010” (Centre Undertaking Research in Vocational Education 2004). The most financially advantageous age for a worker to leave in the Commonwealth Public Service, after some 20 year’s service, if a member of the CSS Superannuation scheme, is only 54 years and 11 months. Most will be still ‘young’: still capable, still healthy, still interested in and still active in their communities.

These are mostly men (and women) of my generation, raised by men and women of my parent’s generation. They are the men (and women) who have survived the 1980’s and 1990’s waves of retrenchments, job re-specifications; radically...

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17 “US research indicates that more men commit suicide when they are fired than when their wife or child dies.” (Hodson 1984 p.99).
changing computer technologies and work ways. Most will be leaving from choice rather than force.

Such early retirees represent of a wave of men (and women), from business as well as government, who will cross the territory that I have sought to map. They will not be doing it in dribs and drabs, as lone individuals, but together, as successive waves crossing a desert together, finding oases, arriving ‘en masse’ at the world of retirement and self determination, or, possibly, at chaos and ennui.

The men interviewed for this research came from two distinct Australian subcultures: the self-reflective and hedonistic culture of the NSW North Coast and the more reserved, cerebral culture of a city begun for Government administration, Canberra, Australia’s capital. The research is somewhat ‘sanitised’ - involving educated and thoughtful men; men who had held sustained and salaried positions of relative power and responsibility within hierarchies. They had had wide social and personal choices. However, they also reflected the middle aged, middle management cohort most affected by the downsizing phenomenon of the 1980s and 1990s (Leser 2000, The Lost Men) in Australia.

Their obvious ‘normality’ was essential to this research. I was not trying to discover how extraordinary men changed (for that would support the Hero myth yet again), nor study men in therapeutic situations (for that would present change as a pathology), but how ‘normative’ men change. This was so that ordinary men could identify with the interviewees, and in so doing, see the relevance of this research for themselves.
Ch. 2: On Myths and Metaphors

"... we are more convinced than ever that stories are one of the most potent tools we can use to transform our lives. Stories speak to our subconscious mind. They lay down blueprints for living a better life. They offer practical solutions to our everyday problems and model creative behaviour that works. They heal our wounds and remind us of the grandest aspects of our nature. They lift us out of our habitual day-to-day lives and awaken us to infinite possibilities. They inspire us to do more than we originally thought possible." (Canfield & Hansen 1995 p.xvi)

Myths and Stories

Stories, myths and metaphors are powerful agents which illustrate, demonstrate and elucidate the workings of the human psyche and the deeper or multiple meanings of a situation (Pinkola-Estés 1993; Russell 1986; Woodman & Dickson 1996). They are also powerful means to facilitate change, to explain the dynamics in a situation through symbols, and to explore stories, and stages of stories, as symbolic of life situations (Meade 1993 p.284).

"The ancient wisdom of Myth is ... locked in code ... A different consciousness, a change in mental focus away from the literal, is required to unlock the meaning of Myth." (Wilshire 1989 p.97 and 98)
Stories can present us with metaphorical solutions to be interpreted and applied to our lives, as we choose.

Part of the influence of metaphor is attributed to its capacity - be it by analogy, anecdote, myth, correlation, illustrative story or in visual symbol form – to encapsulate complexity in manageable and comprehensible ‘bytes’. This capacity is activated when personal meaning is reflected in the metaphor or it is felt to be of relevance or significance to an individual (Campbell 1988; 1995; Canfield & Hansen 1994; Jung 1967; 1969; Pinkola-Estés 1993; Segal 1998).

From my experience of running workshops on myths as metaphors for living, it became evident that metaphor enabled many people to conceptualise problems, issues, and the means to address them, in a way that a direct approach – either emotional or intellectual – did not. In this vein I have included the Phoenix and hero myths as powerful myths in relation to the men’s transitions.

Joseph Campbell in his classic, The Hero of a Thousand Faces (1993), has clearly illustrated the flexibility and universal relevance of myth in general, and the Hero myth in particular. Authors such as Pinkola-Estes (1993), Jung (1967; 1964; Segal 1998) Gareth S. Hill (1992), and Moore and Gillette (1990), have gone further; analysing myths as psychological and archetypal patterns.

Metaphor and allegory are the stock-in-trade of the storyteller, enabling the teller to escape the strict confines of logic, reason and 'fact'. Even Plato used

“personified archetypes ... in his most philosophically earnest moments, as if the depersonalised language of metaphysical abstraction were no longer suitable when directly confronting the numinous essence of things.” (Tarnas 1991 p.13)

By their very nature, stories, with their layering of image, meaning and rhythm, may be understood on many levels, in many contexts, in many ways (Stern 1985 p.69). They may be understood in a specific context, or explore a layer of specific meaning, or refer to deep psychological truths, or simply accepted as a tale for children and sooth-sayers.

The role of the storyteller is to be telling, and telling about, several layers of meaning at once. They pass on deep meaning in a simple form; allow the listener to bring the richness or poverty of their own knowing to the telling; reveal to us hidden meanings and personal truths about our social conduct, and show us treasure maps of the psyche.

“Here lies the wisdom of artists, and the words and parables of prophets, spoken obliquely so that only those who have ears to hear can hear and the less mature will not be shattered.” (de Castillejo 1973 p.15)

There has been a recent resurgence in the study and use of myths as metaphors, building on the work of Joseph Campbell (1993), psychologist Carl Jung (1964) and others such as Raglan (1936) and Kaye (1996). In studies of organisations, Schaef and Fassel (1990), Handy (1995b) and Neville (2005) use myth as a metaphor for understanding and engaging with dominant power dynamics. In men’s studies, Biddulph (2000), Meade (1993), Bly (1990; Bly & Woodman 1992), Woodman and Dickson (1992; 1996) and Moore and Gillette (1990) access and use myth and story to explore and reinterpret old and new notions of men. Pinkola Estes’ (1993) powerful
analysis of myths for women draws our attention to the psychological layering and relevance of myth to individual circumstances.

Myths and stories have been used, among other things, for corporate change and analysis (Kaye 1996, and others, as cited above), kindergarten and early childhood learning (Latham 1996; Mallan 1995), adult education (Neville 1991; 1995; 2005), social action (Macy 1991; Suzuki & Knudtson 1993), inspiration (Canfield & Hansen 1995; Shah 1979; 1990), entertainment (entertainer Eric Bogle and story-teller Russell Hibbs), and to explore psychological processes (Formaini 1991; Hillman 1979; Jung 1964).

Joseph Campbell (in Segal 2000 p.17) considered the functions of myth as four-fold:

“... to instil and maintain a sense of awe and mystery before the world; to provide a symbolic image for the world ... to maintain social order by giving divine justification to social practices ... and above all to harmonise human beings with the cosmos, society, and the parts of themselves.”

Each culture has its beliefs and behaviours encoded in story. Whether a story is a variation of a traditional myth, or is one created for the moment, for political, spiritual or material means (for instance: the dominance of the Aryan race; the superiority of the white races in Apartheid; the ‘divinity’ of Chairman Mao), they can have a powerful influence on individuals and societies.

**Stories of Significance**

In relating their experiences, all of the men interviewed used anecdotes and stories, especially in relation to moments when they revealed or discovered experiences of significance which had shaped their lives and now revealed their inner values (Biddulph 1994; 2000; Ford 1985; Hamilton 2006). Such stories were sometimes tragic (as in Perlman, in Biddulph 2000 p.105), and sometimes inspiring (as in Carr, in Biddulph 2002 p.70). Each man became his own storyteller, revealing his own wisdom and his own script:

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* I have chosen these three examples because of their strong significance in the 20th and 21st centuries. They are also chosen because their rise, dominance and decay are within living memory and could have been observed in one lifetime. Arguably they could be understood as negative variations of the Hero myth, as well as examples of myth creation and popularisation. More positive myths, such as Earth as Gaia - alive and responsive; the passive resistance of Ghandi and Mandela, are ongoing. They, like the Phoenix myth, are from a strand of spiritual mythologies which aim to speak to our inner worlds; and act as inner impetuses for outer action.
“They have to tell us our own story, one that links our past with our present and shows us how we can progress to a better future. The successful storyteller helps us find order amid the apparent chaos, helps us distinguish between causes and effects and between major and minor causes, then proceeds to tell us what we should be doing about it.” (Gittins 1999 p.13)

**Media as Storyteller**

Film and media have become a reflector and strong creator of our modern social psyche. To some extent they have taken up the role of the village storyteller, the wandering minstrel and the ‘mage’ in one. Their influence and reflection of society is pivotal to our growth and awareness as a culture. Depending on our viewpoint, visual media reflects the mass mediated reality and desires of many people, creates it, or acts as a cyclic iterative loop between the two.

The ability of media and film to access and modulate the spectrum of thought in the culture from which it comes, is enormous. Waves of common themes roll from studios the world over. News is quickly edited to reflect popular or political views, especially programs of political commentary. It is not only in story books, by starlight or campfire, that myths are created and shared.

**Cultural Myths**

Layered into this thesis are myths and stories. Some are real; others fictional. They act as alternative means of presenting many of the ideas and knowledge researched.

Of the two major myths discussed, the Hero myth represents a hierarchical and competitive mind-set; the Phoenix myth represents an alternative - serial immortality through a capacity for regeneration and self-determination, following personal self-reflection and reassessment.

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19 Such as the spontaneous editing of photos of ‘the Falling Man’ out of public view, after September 11th 2001, in the USA, to preserve a projected myth of heroism and resilience in defence of the nation’s espoused core values. It was feared the image(s) of a man falling would project failure, futility and defeat in the face of terrorism, with the negative social consequences of that (‘The Falling Man’, directed by Singer 2006).
Every society has myths and stories whose basic format and content informs the culture, its social norms, its beliefs, values and the peoples’ sense of identity and meaning, as individuals and as a culture.

One of the abiding and influential Western myths (but not limited to the Western world) is the Hero Myth (Sinclair 2000; 2001). In fact some writers feel it is far too dominant.\(^{20}\)

*The Hero myth* has a basic plot of a man or youth, often displaced from his origins and birthright (Campbell 1993; Pearson 1991 p.74; Segal 2000). Through trials and feats of courage, usually with the help of a ‘mage’ or magical being(s), he reclaims his birthright by conquering dangers and opponents. As a result he receives rewards and honours. It is a myth that, in its positive forms, illustrates dedication to a noble cause, courage, endurance in the face of adversity, the power of friends and mentors, and the value of honour and justice. In its negative forms, it validates dominance by coercion and force and, in the process, reduces women and helpers to props of power, banishes emotions, uncertainty and failure, and speaks of the ever-present fear of the despot: ‘*get up that I may take thy seat*’.

*The Phoenix myth*, by contrast, speaks of a single magical bird who anticipates its death after a long life, self immolates, rests in ashes, reforms and flies to Heliopolis, the city of the Sun god. There it leaves the ashes of its old self, bound with myrrh, and returns to Earth to live a new and vigorous life span. It is a myth which demonstrates and illustrates a vastly different relationship to death and dissolution, and to the roles of personal internal courage and commitment. It reflects a willingness to risk all and a trust in one’s capability to recover, recreate and endure. It talks of courage, grace, personal choice and internal power. It acknowledges the transpersonal dimension, and redefines ‘success’, ‘achievement’ and ‘wellbeing’ outside the hierarchical sphere. In its negative form it can validate destruction, minimise the value of achievement, encourage

\(^{20}\) See (See Henderson 2000 p.33, for discussion on only "the male quest tale" being told).
attitudes of *laissez faire* and surrender to inevitability; trivialise beauty and service, and give undue focus to inner ennui.

**Key Elements of the Phoenix Myth**

In its widespread popular form the Phoenix myth focuses on the triumphant moment when the Phoenix rises from its own ashes as a new and glorious bird.

Although the Phoenix myth is most commonly known in its shortened form, the story is more complicated and has several phases. It is primarily the overlooked phases - the sense of impending demise, preparation of the pyre, the period in the ashes of uncertainty, the period after the fire has died down and before the Phoenix arises glorious and ‘new’ - that my research explores. It is in this section of annihilation and in the process of renewal that the ‘miracle’ of rebirth and transformation occurs.

The popularity of this phase of the myth is attributable to the appeal of its theme of the Phoenix’ conquest of death and its survival against all odds, i.e. its heroic elements and the similarity to the core plot of the Hero myth.

However, this superficial version is a distraction from its fuller meanings, one of which is a proactive response to re-creation, and the development of the normality of creating endless triumphs from endless deaths *(Toynbee in Bridges 1996b p.131; Pearson 1991 p.44).*
The myth contains the following nine key elements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Myth Elements</th>
<th>Symbolic and Practical Meanings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A long, vibrant and harmonious life</td>
<td>Far sighted visionary, beautiful, heals and sings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An awareness of its own impending death</td>
<td>Surrender; inner sense of inherent path</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gathering scented wood for its own byre</td>
<td>Preparation; respect for experience and process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting itself alight</td>
<td>Proactive facilitation of own deconstruction including letting go; choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A period of amorphous identity and form in the ashes of its old self</td>
<td>Resolving and settling the past; chrysalis, ‘worm’ state; ‘nowhere’, ‘in neutral phase; confusion and exploration; grieving and review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A budding re-emergence and reformation of self</td>
<td>Identification of ‘core’ Self or ‘what still lives’, despite ‘dying’, e.g. values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shaping the ashes of itself into an egg of ash and myrrh</td>
<td>A responsibility for and to the vestiges of its former self; grieving and letting go; closure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flying to Heliopolis, to the altar of the Sun God (Helios/Apollo)</td>
<td>Relationship with the transpersonal or transcendent; crystallisation of past learning and experience; ‘what is’; clarity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-emergence as a revitalised and recreated being, a revitalised version of its original Self</td>
<td>Continuity, selective regeneration; revitalisation; reinvigoration, return</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Nine elements of the Phoenix myth (Mackenzie© 2007)

The myth is linked to rituals of initiation and reflects the view that:

“No great change can occur, no birth, without something dying. The lizard [a salamander, as representing the Phoenix in its legendary capacity to live in flames] moves from the waters of birth to the fire of death, and everyone watching sees something of himself or herself dying in the fire and something else coming out of the flames ... Thus, in the fires of initiation, each person ... allows things to begin anew.” (Meade 1993 p.119)

Like the Norse Ragnarok legend (cited in Bookchin 2005a p.81) “the legend belongs to a little explored area of mythology that might be called the ‘myths of disintegration’ “ and may be placed in the myth cycles of re-creation and regeneration (Campbell 1995 p.9-10).

The Phoenix myth is an enduring one, both adaptable and relevant to widespread cultures and belief systems. It is part of both Eastern and Western mythologies. It was recorded in Western writings by Pliny, in approximately 77 AD (Pliny the Elder 77) and in Herodotus, about 430 BC (Herodotus, Book Two in Bulfinch

21 An embalming aid
although it is referred to as existing well before that (de Selincourt 1997 p.17). Some of its aspects are incorporated in other, larger stories, such as that of Quetzalcoatl:

"... at the shore he immolated himself upon a funeral Pyre, and birds with multi-coloured feathers arose from his ashes." (Campbell 1993 p.359)

... and for the Gallas of East Africa:

"The Gallas of East Africa tell how God sent a bird with the message that men were to renew their lives by changing their skins." (Warner 1975 p.41)

Like all myths, its details have changed over the years, and been adapted by various cultures. For instance, the inclusion of its fiery death did not appear until the 4th century AD (Claudian and Lactantius in Warner 1975 Phoenix entry).

The Phoenix is said to exist as a beautiful and peaceful bird whose sighting bestows great good, even miracles, whose song is so beautiful that even the sun pauses to listen to it, and whose tears heal wounds (Rice 2006; Rowling 1998).

Popular novelists, such as J. K. Rowling (1998 p.155), use the Phoenix character to portray loyalty, regeneration and magic, along with the ‘heroic’ characteristics of endurance, courage, honour and surviving seemingly impossible odds.

In Feng Shui tradition, the Phoenix is a symbol of our visionary capacities,

"for collecting sensory information about our environment and the events unfolding within it." (Lam 1996 p.39)

Bachelard (1990a) explores the Phoenix myth in the context of poetry and symbol, as the ever-regenerating psyche of reinterpreting the world and our experiences anew, in the poetic genre. J.H. Stroud, in the Foreword to Bachelard’s ‘Fragments of a Poetics of Fire’ (1990a p.viii), explains its power:

"The fire and the Phoenix are awesome and analogical images of the human spirit responding to the challenges of existence."

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² (Bachelard 1990a p.95; 1990b) give many references re the origin and history of the Phoenix.
Curiously, in the light of these factors, there seems to have been little published research into the myth itself or on its social integration. Even Joseph Campbell (1993 p.366), has little to say about it. Yet it pervades our literature and our psyches, appearing most often as psychological support in times of crisis (Lesser 2002 responding to the September 11 attack in the USA), and as a guide to transformation (Bachelard 1990b; Gaskell 1960 p. 572).

Tradition has it (except in Chinese mythology, where there are both male and female Phoenixes) that the Phoenix is always male. With our Western stereotype of men as creatures of action, of competition and conquest, who build power-over structures and are very protective of their ‘territories’, be they personal, property, territory or status, the image it represents is a challenge to our social psyche.

“In some cultures, such as our own, extroversion is highly valued, our cultural heroes are people of action; people who have made an impact on the world through sport, entertainment, finance or whatever. We do not give the same adulation to the mystic, the poet, the hermit or the theoretical scientist, and people who get too involved in their interior worlds are likely to be locked up for their own good.” (Neville 2005 p.139)

The tale is also extraordinary in Western mythic tradition because it flies in the face of the Western materialistic, economic-rationalist goals of constant, linear upward growth, ever-increasing expansion and escalating gains. Ironically, the Western Business Model (WBM) persists in this focus despite the evidence of years of carefully constructed and collated charts and data to the contrary, be they from the Stock exchanges of the world, Real Estate indexes, countries’ GDP or the limited lifespan of Fortune 500 companies (only some 40 years) (Senge 1992 p.17).

There is a paradox here. Why would this be so?

One reason may be that the myth is not referring to the parameters reflected in either economic materialism or acquisitive individualism; the Hero tradition of conquering against all odds for the sake of a bestowed prize and a position of authority over others; nor the Darwinian concept of the survival of the fittest.
Its adoption by the Crusading Christians in the Middle-Ages, as a symbol of the Christ figure, hints at its reference to psychological and transpersonal realms, rather than to worldly action in business, war, finance or governance. The myth, in that role, deals with an inner world, a psychology of resilience and renewal, and of a serial immortality of the psyche. It is also a tale of relationship between an inner and outer self, and of acting from that inner sense in the world. It may even be an archetypal blueprint for passage through the world of the inner self, through ‘mid-life crisis’, toward individuation.

The Phoenix myth speaks of long-term recurrent existence; of a capacity to live and be reborn, revitalised, out of apparent annihilation; of accepting and aiding in that annihilation; of a period of clumsy vulnerability and emerging strength; of clarity and changing perspective; of dedication of its new and past selves to a metaphysical power of vitality, clarity and action in the world.

"The Phoenix is the sum total of its poetic expressions, a play of multiple correspondences: fire, balm, song, life, birth, and death." (Bachelard 1990a p.62)

Within the mythic tradition, the myth of the Phoenix includes quite an extraordinary feature. This element is the ability to deal with an ebb and flow of existence rather than by the more left-brain, linear path of goal focus. It confronts our ability to destroy and decay as well as our ability to create, nurture and sustain, and to accept both these aspects as part of the regenerative cycle of life. It does not tell of the passive death and recreation by the intervention of an outside force, such as for Osiris (Campbell 1995 p.10). The volition for both death and rebirth is within the bird itself, and the myth suggests that this potential resides within us all. The myth reminds us that it is possible to ‘die’ and yet be reborn, renewed, and that we do it (at various levels) over and over.

**Fixed and Changing?**

Part of the tradition of stories is as psychological tools of change. We are all its characters. We can be our own fire, we can be the holder of our own history, we can take the flight to the City of the Sun to know ourselves, and we can be both the dying bird and the recreated one.
A woman grows within herself a new being begun by the union of herself and her lover. The child is developed in her own body, yet her system must expel it for it to have full and independent life. Through this experience over aeons, women are conditioned to not only create out of their own being, but also to nurture that being and then let go of it.

Men, by contrast, create by idea and action. Their creations are carried and gestated by thought and intent, and then made solid by physical and mental action, often collectively. Forms and their constant permutations are the creative field of the masculine.

The central theme in the Phoenix myth is just this, with itself as the ultimate form created and destroyed, recreated again and again. It is done with consciousness, grace, active involvement, and by resolving fears.

The myth carries recognition of a 'something' that survives massive changes in material form, a 'something', that can carry knowledge and self-identity forward from one iteration of form to another (such as corporate knowledge; cultural and language traditions of dispersed groups) although the former may have seemed totally destroyed.

That abstract element, constant through all the phases of the Phoenix process, exists before the fire; anticipates the fire; builds the fire; gives itself up to the fire; survives the fire and arises anew and thriving out of its ashes.

“To leave all that we are in the world; to see what remains; to recreate our self in the world: this is the Phoenix walk.” (Mackenzie 2001)

What is it that survives such a massive change as death or destruction, yet can live in peace and fearlessness, display great beauty and remain an icon of inspiration?

What could this be that remains after the fire; that exists beyond form and yet is still the Phoenix of before?
... in the midst of change ... one has an inner sameness and continuity which others can recognise and which is so certain that it can be unself-consciously taken for granted.” (Cole cited in Goodman 1979 p.56)

We change work, houses, cities, relationships and even religions. In business we may decide to dismantle a team, or cease producing a product and produce a newer or better one. We may close one business and open another.

These are quite simplistic examples and not uncommon, but this capacity - to sense an impending end and both prepare for and accommodate it - is often fraught with tones of 'failure' and 'mistake' rather than accepting that, in some cases, it is the best decisions possible. As DW, one of the men whom I interviewed, related:

'“You've done the right thing. Don't think that you're a failure or anything. Closing a business down is actually good management; if it's not working you can't save it,” he said. “If you'd let it go on and the creditors closed it down that would have taken you to bankruptcy; that would have really been bad,” he said “but you've made a decision that's a business decision.” And he said “You've done the right thing.”’ (DW4/Q5/P5)

Another critical stage is also often overlooked: the flight to Heliopolis. At Heliopolis dwelt the Sun God, Helios (Apollo, as the Greeks called him, God of Reason) (Wilshire 1989 p.93). In the myth, the Phoenix carried its old self to the City of the Sun as an egg of ashes bound with myrrh (a powerful image of life and death in one: egg = life; ashes = death; myrrh was an ointment for anointing the dead), to place on its altar. There the Phoenix acknowledges its mythological links to the eternal setting and rising of the Sun and the clarity of 'what is' that Apollo brings (Andersen 1850; Bachelard 1990b; Bulfinch 1934; de Selincourt 1997; Nigg 1995).

“... the myth of Apollo ... is the myth of logic, rationality, detached observation, scientific enquiry, obviousness, understanding exactly what is what.” (Neville 2005 p.17)

It may even have reminded the gods of the mortality of Earthly life!

Through receiving the clarity of the light of the Sun God, and letting go of its outmoded past the Phoenix is made ready to return to the realities of Earthly
living and in so doing, combines mythological, philosophic, transpersonal and practical traditions.

“In the Greek version, manifestation is attributed to Apollo, imaged in the clear light of the sun, who makes everything obvious, who shows things as they are.” (Neville 2005 p.6)

The Phoenix leaves Heliopolis and returns to Earth to once again live a (revitalised) life.

**Masculinist Paradigms and the Phoenix Myth**

In symbolic traditions a bird represents the realms of spirit or spirit in form. It is a messenger of the abstract, of beliefs and of metaphysics. Therefore any interpretations or applications of the Phoenix myth must take into account attitudes, beliefs, inspirations, psychologies and inner realms.

“The Phoenix is an archetype of every age, inherent in the experience of fire; for we will never know for certain whether fire derives its meanings from images of external reality, or its power from the fires of the human heart.” (Bachelard 1990a p.64)

With its references to integration and movement between inner, outer and transpersonal worlds, the Phoenix myth may well be a very useful map of an integrated psyche. As a messenger or a map for the psyche in times of transition (especially those of mid-life crises, individuation or other self re-creations, plus the breadth of worldly transformations embedded in events such as changing work and professions), the Phoenix may be an excellent candidate.
**The Hero Myth**

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**A Beauteous Youth**

He stands tall  
Flesh satinned and slicked,  
Muscles smooth,  
Bursting from clinging cloth cut spare.  
Thighs swathed in coarse flax,  
Belt firm over flat-bellied loins.

High-tilted chin  
Hair tip-gilded, spiked,  
Neck-chain falling fluid on firm flesh,  
Features taut;  
Caught in the dark vanity of youth.

Beautiful, swollen masculinity,  
Pneumatic pleasure,  
Promised passionate release.  
Potent, swollen flesh straining,  
Proud, beautiful,  
Bloom gleaming  
As luscious ripe fruit.

A young god, lost, unaware  
Of mortality and age  
Silent within him,  
Dormant under his youth’s strident clamour.

Relentless, waiting within,  
Death holds the trump.  
It sits, a kernel, pitted, hard  
In his smooth, sweet flesh.  
The battle-cry not yet come,  
The Caller, polishing, taking Breath,  
Preparing to play,  
Silent witness to mortality:  
The sweet seasonal fruit of eternity.

Forgive me that I look inside your smooth exterior,  
Forgive me calling up that kernel, Death,  
Forgive my sensuous remembering  
And forgive my lingering regrets.
Go, live your season, free of my remembrances.
Go, stretch your beauty far upon the sky,
Burst sweetly,
Know your song.
Hold to your melody against my deep refrain
’Till Time
Heralds in the Bugler’s call,
Heard long upon the air:
Strut on.

The Hero myth has become a dominant and enduring archetype in the Western world. It is a masculinist myth celebrating achievement, despite exile, difficulties and invisibility. In it the path to glory is etched through challenge, struggle and conquest; by standing out from others, usually by excelling in physical expertise and sometimes cunning; prizing physical beauty and perfection, hierarchical authority and earthly rewards (wealth, access and influence). A magical or mysterious element, and mysterious and powerful mentors or companions, are common components of the myth.

The basic form of the myth speaks of a son or youth in exile who, through struggle, perseverance and bravery, reclaims his birthright and gains glory (Campbell 1993 p.245-246; Segal 2000 p.14). That birthright is usually one of manhood, power and influence, authority and distinction. Traditionally, along with his birthright, comes wealth, a beautiful woman, personal love and happiness, not to mention honour, respect and, usually, some territory or ‘kingdom’. One of the most well-known versions is that of King Arthur or, more recently, the Star Wars, Harry Potter and Lord of the Rings epics. The list goes on.23

The myth serves another social purpose in history: of harnessing the energy and passion of young men, and their testosterone drive, to meet social demands:

“… heroism deals with the first half of life … birth, childhood, adolescence, and young adulthood – involves the establishment of oneself as an independent person in the external world.” (Rank, 1909, cited in Segal 2000 p.13)

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23 See Segal (2000) for an overview of those scholars who, since the 19th century, have analysed the common plots and variations of Hero myths.
It also inculcates the ideas of going ‘out’ for power, prestige, reward and status; coming ‘home’ for praise, comfort, security and rest. Hence the homily: ‘A man’s home is his castle’.

Its purpose for women is another story altogether. Women are usually portrayed in the Hero myth as prizes and booty. Paradoxically, some women also wield power over the Hero, both as inspiration and motivation, but still only exist within the story’s narrow confines:

“It’s not just in fairytales that the hero wins the heart of the most desirable women.” (Hamilton 2006 p.190)

From another perspective, as one of the interviewees remarked about gender relations on the docks of Sydney,

‘… there is a dreaming of a relationship but it’s much more along the lines of the hero sense, that you win the woman.’ (DW3/Q30/P9)

**Masculinist Paradigms and the Hero Myth**

When taken as a pattern for work/home, gender, maturity or ongoing power relations, the Hero myth becomes problematical, especially in this age of information, few loyalties, greater mobility in career, and strong individualism.

We have relied on

“... the hero, the myth in which man has always lived. But in what myth does man live nowadays?” (Jung 1995 p.195)

The idea of a man going out to work, where he ‘battles’ all day to gain and bring home rewards for his efforts, fits nicely with the Hero myth. As Tony Abbott, Federal Member for Warringah, in New South Wales, in 1998, said (in Leser 1998 p.19):

“... I think there’s a kind of heroism, frankly, in the father that is prepared to put in the hours, do the work that is necessary to provide the family with the things that it needs.”

A classic Western version of the pattern may be recognised in: years of struggle or suffering at work (bravery and fortitude) for their families (honour and
chivalry) that culminates in retirement (attaining one’s own kingdom) and ‘ease’ (living life to please oneself and enjoying one’s gains). This scenario is now being severely tested in the light of mobile careers, the prevalence of forced redundancies, high divorce rates, an increasing retirement age, and ongoing demands to meet mediated social expectations.

Working from home goes against the Hero’s archetype; so does having a woman partner who either works equally beside the man, who leads, or who goes out on her own to work (to gather, do service or do battle), away from home.

“In media, many comedies are based on men looking incompetent in the domestic environment. This serves two causes - it affirms the position of women’s capability in the domestic arena, and it affirms the premise that men should be ‘out there’ in the wider world, doing ‘men’s things.” (Conversation with RM, September, 2006)

The hero myth does not focus on sustained effort or domesticity, unless there is a heroic task with a heroic prize at the end. Fulfilling, constructive, ongoing behind-the-scenes work also goes against the archetype. Variations of the heroic myth tell of a temporary foray into a scenario to bring glory, and then to be gone (Churchill, Anzacs, corporate raiders); or by acting as an agent to restore good when a ‘kingdom’ is threatened by ‘evil’ (as the USA described its reasons for its invasion of Iraq).

**Today’s Heroes**

The influence of the idea of men as achievers, capable and in control, underpins much of the influence of the Hero myth in our Western psyche (Faludi 1999; Palus, Nasby & Easton 1990; Sinclair 2001; Singer 2006).

Such imagery, and the expectations behind it, cloaks a parallel need to be able to manage uncertainty, chaos and loss of direction. It is from the use of these skills that clarity arises from chaos, control is instituted and clear directions are re-established. Yet these skills are rarely clearly articulated, given value or identified for development.
“... the common neglect of the personal supports the widespread perception that our problems can only be solved by heroes (mythologised rather than real people).” (Stuart B. Hill 1999b p.3)

Still the rich (BRW eNewsletter 2004; Skeffington 2004), and the powerful are, or are primarily depicted as, men, and accorded fame, attention and deference, affirming the non-ordinary world as the realm of the Hero (Birmingham 2004; Reuters 1999 p.7; Sinclair 2000; Vanity Fair, November issue by The Conde Nast Publications Ltd 1997; Williams 2000).

The link between executives, work and the world as the arena of heroes, is well illustrated in Palus, Nasby and Easton’s ‘Executive Identity and the Hero’s Story’ (1990) and in Sinclair (2000; 2001).

Dodge Morgan, record-breaking world circumnavigation yachtsman, epitomises the Hero character: high in ‘agency’, “striving for individual differentiation, as manifested in strivings for mastery, power, achievement and self-assertion” (Palus, Nasby & Easton 1990 p.502); with a characteristic “need for achievement and the need for power ... both correlated with managerial success” (McClelland as quoted in Palus, Nasby & Easton 1990 p.502).

Note the similarity to a description of successful executives. Typically they are:

“... socially ascendant and self-confident, persuasive and self-assured, aggressive in moving into a central role, confident, flexible, catching on rapidly, moving into action with energy.” (Bentz, 1986 p.32, as quoted in Palus, Nasby & Easton 1990 p.506),

seeking an

“... often heroic and glorified sense of self, frequently at the expense of intimate relationships.”(ibid, 1990 p.506)

It would be easy to think that what is discussed here is esoteric and unrelated to the research. Yet the themes, and sometimes the very plots common to myths of the Hero, surfaced in the interviews, and revealed how deeply the myth is entrenched. As DW commented:

‘It’s scary and it’s threatening to their little empire so, of course, if that is going to threaten their empire, then they have to do something about protecting it.'
And that’s where the protection mechanism, or the idea of the man being the protector and provider, gets dysfunctional. This is what I feel is that sense of obsession or possession … the man’s house is his castle; whatever he does is okay. Anything outside of that is threatening and it has to be dealt with; dealt with either violently - domestic violence - or withholding, or a number of things. And it also sets up the scenario: if I am the king, if I am the person that can do what I want, then if I need to get the new car, and it doesn’t matter about the kids having no shoes on them … And that also comes with a sense of affairs and so forth, that conquest also. Like, I’m the king of this castle and what’s wrong with going out and expanding out a bit?” (DW3/Q40/pp10-11)

Yet for the twentieth century mythologist, Joseph Campbell (1993 p.388), the Hero myth ultimately represents an inner journey:

“The modern hero-deed must be that of questing to bring to light again the lost Atlantis of the coordinated soul.”

It may be that this is the common link between the Phoenix and Hero myths and what the Phoenix myth intrinsically represents.
In the Kingdoms of Patriarchal Hierarchy many kings sat on many thrones, in many-mirrored throne-rooms, murmuring recitations of knowledge and power.

Wandering the corridors of their castles were many maidens, who sang and danced and wore bright clothes of many hues. Sometimes they wandered into busy, lit rooms where the kings and the courtiers sat.

Sometimes they were welcomed and hung with bright ribbons and fruit.

Sometimes, they were quickly silenced and ushered out into the byways by back doors.

Sometimes youths courted them; sometimes their smiles were met with frost.

Confused at finding no lasting place of resting and welcome in the halls of their fathers, the young women gathered together to share their stories and the dreams that wandered through the pathways of their waking hours.

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One day, while gathered together, the maids heard a sound of sweet and haunting music and, through a nearby window, the flapping of giant wings. Looking up, some caught a glimpse of the plumage of a beautiful, brightly coloured, bird. Each one rushed after it - some climbing up to the windows, some running out onto the balcony, some down the stairs and away.

They followed the magical bird as far and as best they could, some to high mountains and some to the depths of the earth and beyond, some to small rooms and small lives, others to vast and different kingdoms and continents.
Every one had a tale to tell, and was lit by a mysterious light, seen deep in their eyes. Many had a far-off gaze and a strong, deep calmness about them, as if touched by a deep memory of peace; others wore a mantle of longing and were haunted by an elusive memory, while others found endless inner comfort.

Thereafter they met and shared in whispers, and haunted the castles no more. And the castles muted; the bright ribbons faded; the trees no longer bore fruit; the flowers no longer bloomed.

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Back in the halls, the kings and courtiers talked on. Their voices continued to echo, their knowledge and status confirmed, and confirmed again. The mirrors were endlessly polished; the servants were endlessly called, and endlessly served. The halls were made more and more grand, hung with banners of intricate workings. Trumpets and gongs sounded, and grand edicts were delivered by sombre messengers.

One day the clocks on the walls of the castles stopped. They stopped just before it was time to go home, but no-one noticed, and no-one rewound them, and no-one left. The kings and courtiers got older, the banners became faded, the mirrors dusty.

The kings had the banners replaced, had the dust banished by sealing the chambers, and had all the mirrors painted with images of themselves in their prime. Courtiers who got older were banished, and replaced by young men with their faces covered by masks so that each one looked the same. They were allowed to speak only one phrase each, with a bow before and after.

Their masks showed the king in their youth, made in a shiny grey patina, and were so devised that the courtiers could only see out of them by looking straight ahead.

In time the courtiers forgot to take them off as they slept at the kings’ tables, and the masks became one with their own features.

At first they didn’t mind, but soon they realised they could not tell each other apart, and many a time they would miss a friend as they passed to their right or their left, bumping into things as they went.

The kings saw this. Rather than have the masks removed and remodelled they had lines drawn on the floor so that the courtiers and servants would be able to follow the same path again and again, and not be obstructed.

Servants, too, were given masks, but theirs were dull grey. The courtiers’ masks shone, setting them above the servants. However, it was not long before the shiny grey masks lost their gleam and it became hard to tell the servants and the courtiers apart.
Upset by this, the courtiers petitioned the kings. To do this they had to stand in a long line, each one saying only the phrase allotted them, with a bow before and after. It was all so disjointed the kings, lulled by the endless bowing, fell asleep long before the courtiers had finished.

As a result, the courtiers wishes were misunderstood, and each received, instead of a more esteemed mask, a badge that said "King’s Man". It was better than nothing, they thought, so they put them on.

**Hierarchy and Work**

Hierarchies, like water for fish, are still very much taken for granted (Rohde 2001). They are strongly identified with men, and men with them (Schmid Mast 2005b), since hierarchical organisations as we know them - often straight-jacketed into columnar high-rise office blocks - have, on the whole, been devised and maintained by men for the world of work, war, government, and the organisation of large groups (Clark 2004 pp 9-10).

As power structures, hierarchies encourage competitive relationships (Clark 2004; Macy 1991 p.xi) and maintain command and control power dynamics (Eisler 1993 p.106; Sinclair 2000; Woodman & Dickson 1996). They contain and utilise the competitive drive of its participants for group and individual benefit (Biddulph 1997 p.21; Clark 2004; Macy 1991 p.xi; Moir & Jessel 1991; Newberger 2001). Hierarchies also strive to validate and justify power inequalities, and confer preferential value on those within the structure, rather than for those ‘outside’ of it (Rowan 1987; Zuboff 2004).

People within hierarchies are organised by rank. Power is concentrated in the hands of those in the top levels, who hold the most executive power and receive the most reward (Clark 2004 pp.11-12).

A common metaphor used for progression in a hierarchy is of a 'ladder' or 'tree' that one 'climbs' to get to the 'top'.

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24 See Brew (2001b p.76) for a story in a similar vein and Rennie for a similar metaphor (2000 p.26).
There are three main ‘prizes’ in hierarchies:

- clear status and levels of regard
- belonging, including sense of place
- security – a subset and result of the preceding ‘prizes’, represented by regular and predictable remuneration, security of position and the right to aspire to the top role.

Most people within hierarchies work in the lower levels of the organisation, each level down being larger than the one above. In this way, a virtual pyramid is created. When there is a bulge in the middle, that is ‘too many’ people vying for the upper levels, it is common for retrenchments to occur, as in the 1980s and 1990s in Australia.

Beyond work, we observe hierarchies in most social structures, from the ‘traditional’ Western ‘family’ where, until recently, the ‘head’ of the household - almost always male (Cohn 1978 p.84) - had the final say; to master/apprentice and teacher/pupil relationships where authority differentials remain clearly defined. Our early experiences of institutionalised hierarchy, through family, religion and schooling, socialise us to accept hierarchical command-and-control models. Having been a teacher in Secondary and Tertiary institutions, as well as being a student, I have been part of that socialising process, both as a ‘moulder’ and ‘mouldee’.

Hierarchical culture has little place for emotions. Michael Rennie (2000 p.26) succinctly explains the common dislocation of self from one’s ‘whole self’ for work:

“A lot of people running companies in Australia today are men in their 40s and 50s who were not brought up to socially express their emotions. Instead, people have been trained to put on a mask when they go to work.”

Although there is a critical relationship between work and wellbeing, (AAP 2003), work can also be experienced as a prison, or as a monster draining life (McCall Smith 2004; Tolson 1977 p.146).
Managing the differing needs of work and domestic or personal life has been an ongoing topic for dialogue over this last decade (Adamson 2002; Clare 2000 p.22; Kessler 1996; Rogers 1998 p.60; Tolson 1977), especially in regard to the close nexus of men, work and identity (Jung in Clare 2000 p.20; Pleck & Sawyer 1974; Sinclair 2001). Petre, in his article on the strong reactions to his book “Father Time” (1998, 27 June p.26), describes the contradictory nature of work, personal identity and the needs that his interviewees experienced and expressed. He found that, although there was vehement public defence of their long work hours, many executives privately lamented that they had little time with their children (also Perlman 1998 p.32).

The pace and pressures of corporate life are often cited as the reasons why executives leave. Dissatisfactions with high powered, competitive work appears to reflect personal drives that are unfulfilled, including: creativity, close personal relationships and a slower pace of living (Thomson et al. 2002 p.44).

The dynamics of hierarchy are concerned with exerting power-over others, and deferring to power, status, positions of (relative) power, competition between its members, compliance, and deference to patrivalent patterns (Bookchin 2005a; Hill 1992; Kaufman 1987 p.xv). In addition to these characteristics, hierarchies are also concerned with security, and being a member of a (dominant) ‘tribe’. There is familiarity and, for many, a sense of security in being part of that structure (Schmid Mast 2005b p.2 and 4). That feeling of security is based on a sense of belonging; on a familiar framework of rules and values (though the rules themselves may be obscure, assumed, ever-changing, and covert); on predictability; on an assumed and predictable future, and on reliable provision of rewards. Overt rewards may include practical ones, such as wages linked to one’s status in the organisation (for participation and contribution to the existence and growth of the organisation itself), the opportunity to move up the power-ratio structure, and of being granted authority over others. When the organisational aims, values and practices align with their employees’ values and goals, there is a strong sense of purpose.
Since unequal power dynamics and relations are at the root of hierarchies (Worsthorne 1988) and enshrined in the work ‘contract’ (Stuart B. Hill 1999a; Ken Phillips 1999), Schaef and Fassel (1990) portray them as imposing psychologies of dependence and addiction on their workforce.

The link of hierarchy to religion, especially the Judeo-Christian religions (Nichols 2000), binds three strong social psychic pillars together (authority, security and religion). Each one acts as a support for the others. Breaking away from hierarchies requires much more than leaving a job; a profound personal shift is needed.

**Leaving Hierarchies**

I have found relatively little literature published specifically on the psychology of leaving hierarchies (Barrentine 1993; Macy 1991; Schaef & Fassel 1990). Instead, I have found it addressed indirectly through discussions and research on such topics as:

- downsizing; redundancy, contract and casual work (Burgess 2001 p.1; Doherty & Tyson 1993; Handy 1997a; 2001);
- changes in organisational structures (Friel 2002; Senler 2000; Stallibrass 1989; Walton 1985)
- integration of archetypes (Hill 1992; Jung 1964; Larsen 1990); and
- individuation (Jung 1995; Levinson et al. 1978; Maslow 1954; 1966; Read et al. 1968).

Rosener (in conversation with Flower 1992), Bookchin, (2005a) Macy (1991) and others have explored the notion of alternatives to hierarchies, but the likelihood of them disappearing as a social structure remains unlikely.

Outside the patrivalent, static-masculine (Hill 1992), hierarchical power structure, its rewards cannot be bestowed; and nor can its controls be effected. To explore alternative structures of work, meaning, and concepts of manhood, affiliation with hierarchical structures need to be re-evaluated. To make that transition requires undergoing a period of chaos or uncertainty. For order-bound dwellers of hierarchy, such a journey would be likely to be terrifying.
“The greatest fear for men is losing control of their lives.” (Bantick 1999a p.21)

Best that a myth be put out there that says ‘death’ or terror awaits those who attempt the journey. In some ways the Earth is still flat, and monsters still wait at the edge for the unwary, or for the daring explorer.

And so the Phoenix myth is buried; the Hero Myth is perpetuated and the ‘static-masculine’ presides; hence the story introducing this chapter.

**Hierarchies and Heroes**

What might be the connection between heroes and hierarchies? Why would a man with a strong drive to stand out from the crowd, and for personal power, to be seen as a leader, and to exert significant influence, wish to enter a layered, usually large and intractable, organisation?

One answer may be the element of competition, the ‘challenge’: the opportunity to contest, compete and conquer, the opportunity of winning, to climb to ‘giddy heights’ and claim a victor’s prize (Sinclair 2001 p.1), yet in a relatively ‘safe’ environment which also meets his social needs and responsibilities. Hierarchies enable this.

‘I notice that in many positions of management it is almost like fighting cocks. You go in the morning and people strut their stuff. The first thing they strut their stuff with is your appearance, you know, certain tie. That is the first kind of power role play that you do in the morning when you arrive at the office. It is kind of, “I’m here. Nice suit, nice tie, crisp white shirt.” From then all these games occur, I guess, if I can call them games, under the guise of work. Deals are made.’ (ROC2/Q25/P5)

The desire for dominance and competition is visible early:

“Boys’ games involve rough and tumble, bodily contact, a continuous flow of activity, conflict, a large space, longer periods of involvement, with success measured by active interference with other players, the outcome clearly defined, and winners and losers clearly identified.” (Moir & Jessel 1991 p.60)

To support this notion, strong parallels exist between the traditional characteristics of the hero: strong personality and character; purposeful, decisive, influential; able to bring others along with him, even into risky ventures or
territory; determined, resourceful and focussed on gaining leadership through power; sustained by power and motivated by reward, recognition and regard (Palus, Nasby & Easton 1990; Sinclair 2000).

The small scale hero (the neighbourhood hero, the anti-hero, the family hero, the homely hero, the sporting hero, the once-off hero) may be understood as a holographic extension of that heroic pattern.

For those who do not or cannot excel, then belonging, at least, and the sense of support and group identity that comes with that, is offered.

As long as they belong there is a chance to get to the top, if not of this firm, then one like it. Learn the rules and ‘go for it’. On the way up, morsels of incremental power will be bestowed as the applicants prove themselves ‘worthy’. Direct access to the ‘top dog’ is considered a privilege. Belonging to the élite is power. Such is the ‘game’ as ROC, one of the men interviewed, explained:

‘I would notice that people would actually hold me in the same awe. So it was the same kind of institutionalised myth-making that you have, if that is the way to put it; the hierarchy promotes this aura. The fact that you turn up in a suit and tie again was part of that issue. You often held a brief case or you had a blue book with a pen. You were doing something important, you looked very important. You were always ushered into the boss’s office and you never got to talk to anyone else just the boss. It was subtle little power plays that happened.’
(ROC2/Q28/P6)

However, the position of hero is not one expected to last. A lasting hero becomes a legend, an icon, and an abstracted ideal that is no longer mutable. Time will tell if such men as Major-General Cosgrove, Fred Hollows, Mandela, the Dalai Llama, even Bill Gates (PA 1999 p.2), all who have been cast as heroes of our times, will become legends, or fade from our history.

Ironically, in regards to the same period as mass downsizing was prevalent:

“Future historians may look at the 1980s and 1990s in the US as the era of the hero CEO. From Lee Iacocca to Andy Gove, from Bill gates to Jack Welch, a handful of corporate leaders came to be viewed as the personification of their organisations and the source of their success. The public ... hailed them as heroes.” (Kellerman 2002 p.2)
Wage differentials (reward ratios) between heroes and followers increased in that period of instability, and continue to remain a social concern.

Most CEOs are now only on three to five-year contracts, encouraging them to enter the fray, play the hero - for bonuses, power and glory - and then go, encouraging short-term heroics at best; serial exploitation at worst. Our childhood hero stories continue to play out before us!

**Hierarchies as Socialising Agencies**

Hierarchies are as much socialising structures as task structures. Normative behaviours, dress, language, processes, values and ethics are strong.

Allegiance to the hierarchy is demonstrated in many ways. The more subtle expressions include normative dressing, obedience and acceptance of certain levels of fear (in relation to being dispossessed or excluded, ‘betrayed’ or undermined, ‘failing’, or losing relative position and influence or power) (Menon 2000), and acceptance of ‘servant-master’ agreements (Ken Phillips 1999 p.61).

‘You see people who start off with a bit of a pony tail or an earring or whatever. As they kind of get along you see the ponytail disappears, the earring disappears. So they kind of make this metamorphosis and their body shape changes and they become colourless. The people who don’t, and who survive, are kind of the odd people out.’ (ROC2/Q69/P15)

Within hierarchical organisations, there is simultaneously room for cooperative and team structures, networks and freelance contracting, as well as its traditional command-and-control practices.

But within hierarchies it can be dangerous to be too different:

"Boys drift into gangs because they instinctively seek leadership … The gang exerts a price - it takes away your individuality. In the gang world there is intense conformity based on fear. If you are different, you are not a man, and will be persecuted, reviled, beaten up, even killed.” (Biddulph 2002 pp.61-62)

Whistleblowers are feared and derided. A traitor in their midst is regarded as something to be feared, and is a recurring theme in the literature and history of power structures. Taylor (1999), in ‘Dogs are Barking’, and De Maria’s ‘Deadly
Disclosures: Whistleblowing and the Ethical Meltdown of Australia’ (in Campbell 2000), tell of the secrets that organisations hold, and the dangers to those who disclose them.

John Rowan (1987 p.2) asserts that men set up hierarchies not only to work and socialise in, but also to categorise the world. He lists that categorisation as a sequence (in order):

“... men; women; children; animals; plants; nature”.

It may be that hierarchy is a means of categorisation amongst men as well as within (work) activity, for the sake of certainty and order, definite rules of dominance exist when men socialise or work, and its role is well embedded:

“If dominance was not there, all would be undercut,” a male friend commented to me in conversation and, in the same conversation, referring to Irigaray (1993), he went on, “There is no option to dominance. Submission is death or ostracism.” (Conversation with RM, 3/03/06)

What is this ‘all’ that would be undercut, and this ‘difference’ that is so feared?

The ‘all’ appears to be power-over operating systems, linked ostensibly to an individual’s and species survival, and to maintaining structural order (Hillman 1995a; 1995b). Yet the very development of humans and modern societies threaten these notions; they loosen and alter boundaries of selective safety and competition. Globalisation and world communication systems such as the Internet no longer allow the level of control or simplistic organisation that selective allegiance, educated élites and competition previously allowed.

Metaphors of Hierarchy

Some authors and social analysts, such as Schaef and Fassel (1990), Handy (1995b; 1997a), Hodson (1984 p.94), Dalmau (1991 p.13), Neville (1991; 2005) and Gareth Morgan (1986; 1997), approach hierarchies as psychological structures, organisations of dependency, even as addictions. Others use metaphors to describe hierarchical
structures and the dynamics within them as a variation of boys’ clubs; yet others describe them as pseudo-tribal structures. In the literature consulted, hierarchies were variously described as:

- a modern expression of feudalism
- groupings of people sharing an affinity with certain value systems and operating structures – sometimes described metaphorically through the values represented by mythical figures such as Zeus or Apollo.
- a sophisticated version of man and his need for a ‘shed’ or a ‘place to hang out with the guys’
- a layman’s creation of ‘a Kingdom’, as the power of Western aristocracy wanes
- a (patriarchal) family
- a social ‘rudder’, ‘crucible’ or ‘anchor’
- a machine
- a brain
- an organism
- or even the modern equivalent of the primitive hunt.

Robert Theobald, from an article in the Canberra Times (1999 p.12), from part of an address to the Visions for a New Century Conference at the Australian National University, spoke of three social stories which humanity has followed to date:

- hunting and gathering
- agriculture
- industry.

This last, he claims, has brought a focus on material possession, increased competition and striving for “more power over people, over other nations and over the environment” (Theobald 1999). He suggests a fourth (post-industrial) story is emerging requiring reassessment of our values and the reappraisal of the importance of the other three stories. It is interesting (and perhaps coincidental?) that such themes are part of not only the present global discourse, but are played out in the dynamics of the male mid-life crisis (Clarke 2004; Greenwald et al. 2002; Gale Group 2001; Newberger 2001; O’Connor & Wolfe 1991; O’Connor 1996).
All this is at a time when an increasing proportion of our working population is moving into the traditional mid-life (review) period and, in doing so, by their sheer numbers, in Australia and many Western countries, may change our dominant social values.

Myths commonly drawn on for corporate and organisational management and understanding are often taken from the Greek pantheon, which was ruled by hierarchical and, for the most part, egotistical and despotic deities. It is a paradox, considering that Western democracy had its origins in Greek culture, that it is most often Zeus, as patriarchal head of the Greek Pantheon, whose values we base the structures of our major institutions on:

‘... the power that brings order to chaos ... is about the hierarchical exercise of force.’ (Neville 2005 p.268)

Hierarchies in Flux

As a workforce becomes more and more literate and knowledgeable, the blind acceptance, whether of orders, processes or facts, is less and less likely. Being older is no longer enough to gain authority or positions of power; nor is being male, having money, land or title.

Men and women are no longer content with stereotyping. Some women fight on the battlefront; some men parent and nurse. The worlds of hierarchical work are no longer the sole domain of men, although most leaders in major areas of public power – business, politics, warfare and religion - are still men25. Ways once regarded as the province of women - networking, business by relationship and trust, emotional intelligence - are now increasingly understood as the very processes needed to maximise profits in the changing work world characterised by flexibility and knowledge currency. Many processes previously in the domain of the feminine have been appropriated to work environments by ‘male’ language and forms, for instance, Coaching and Life Coaching, networking,

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Servant Leadership (Greenleaf in Senge 2002), ‘co-ords’ (co-ordinated units), Emotional Intelligence (Goleman 1996), and even Spiritual Intelligence (Zohar & Marshall 2001).

Over the last hundred years hierarchies’ power and structure have been constantly challenged by increased worker education, mobility and outsourcing, and an increasing equality of the sexes.

In contrast to many older cultures, our younger generations are now the caretakers of much of the knowledge and tools (computer-based technologies, consumer mobility, knowledge access and virtual realities) that are needed by the older or the more influential to remain powerful in their world.

This is giving rise to a critical change in social dynamics. Coupled with breaking the unwritten ‘social contract’ of the post-war years’ work for warriors and a place for all (Preston 1999 in CT Nov 1999 p.4), let alone other factors such as the rise in religious fundamentalism and increasing concerns about the earth’s ecology, it is clear we are in the grip of deep social change.

Nevertheless, hierarchies are still here, and still predominate as work structures within which large numbers of people are gathered and organised daily for work or activity. Large proportions of our workforce still prefer to or need to trade their time and skills for money in hierarchies, rather than create self-initiated or cooperative work.

**Elements of Self-Destruction in Hierarchies**

It should be recognised that hierarchies are only one of the useful stratagems for human grouping and task achievement. In the light of the changes brought about by mass education and new technologies, they may no longer deserve such a dominant place as has been accorded them these last several hundred years.

This is especially so with the trend of the present work force to be moving to a greater proportion of contract, outsourcing and freelance workers, as well as more flexible work hours, work-ways and work-sites (Kramar 1999 p.28). According
to social commentators such as Charles Handy (2001), and Bridges in 'Jobshift' (1995a), the era of the in-house, paid job is waning.

Social factors and changes in the last two centuries, many unrelated to organisations themselves, have irrevocably altered the way hierarchies work, including the power relations inherent in them.

For instance, in Australia:

- ongoing educational opportunities for all have created a better and more widely educated workforce
- the right to vote has increased the influence of women and indigenous peoples
- women’s rights to equality and paid work have changed the gender and power demographics in hierarchies, and in the workforce in general
- wider social support and recognition is being given to social sectors that are traditionally non-hierarchical - artist’s, philosophers and entrepreneurs – by the increase in the number of wealthy individuals and the ornate character of public celebrations such as the Olympics.
- our society is affluent enough to have ‘spare time’ and increased choices, and is exercising these choices
- increasing longevity is changing the dynamics of both succession and leadership
- work-ways evolving out of new technologies no longer require such an adherence to a geographical place and common work hours as traditional hierarchical organisations once did
- youth, as the major holders of knowledge and skills in the new technologies, are noticeably shaping our world, and carry more influence than previously accorded youth in traditional hierarchies
- increased access of citizens to technologies of global communication and knowledge means the old dictum of ‘knowledge is power’ has become a double edged sword: information is quite freely available, so holding it for advantage is more difficult; quick access to most knowledge is no longer the privilege of an élite few
- freedom of information enables the transparency, or lack of it, of civic and organisational governance, to be scrutinised
- opportunities for mobility of work enables workers and managers to change employment and careers if dissatisfied or as part of their
professional development. The era of long-term employment is fading, with its inherent loss of corporate knowledge and stability

- globalisation ensures that many viewpoints and ways of living are known and increasingly accessible, not just those versions which our leaders may prefer us to know

- the proliferation of media, and its roles as social reflector, watchdog, entertainer and shaper of society, has shifted power away from traditional authority bodies such as family, schools and Government

- constitutions which give equality to all members of society, challenge the inequalities of power-over structures

- bargaining groups, such as unions, shareholders and activists, bring wider internal and external influences to bear on organisations

- in the era of growing numbers of contract workers, even CEOs have short-terms contracts, usually three to five years, often carrying their corporate secrets with them when they leave or publishing them through media, print or Internet

- many means to gain power, wealth and influence - such as the stock market, media, film, music, technology, entrepreneurship - are no longer dependent on the incremental progress fostered within hierarchical organisations and are accessible to large sections of the population, rather than being limited to privileged élites.

Forces that maintain the organisation’s constant renewal and mutations, but which may also act as destabilising elements, operate within all hierarchical structures.

Some factors which contribute to this destabilisation, in addition to those listed above, are:

- the risks inherent in the concentration of power, resources and decision-making in the hands of few key personnel

- masculine biology, in which males experience a lessening of agenic ‘drive’, about the same time as many gain significant prominence in the hierarchical pyramid; a time associated with ‘turning inward’ to question and reassess the value of their lives lived so far. Many are aided in this by their more reflective partners

- an allegiance to production and profits that often overrides relationships, loyalties, and communities and environmental responsibilities
• valuing mental prowess, coupled with competitive drive and the ability to create profits or convince others of their capacity to do so, over holistic care of their workforce

• dislocation from the community within which the organisation exists, and from the biological and emotional needs of its workers (including geographical dislocation and overriding circadian and natural rhythms). Regularity, control and predictability are the preferred work-ways within traditional hierarchies

• the constant drive for ‘improvement’ that creates an increasingly knowledgeable workforce, through training and development as well as through increased access to educative and informative tools including the Internet, television, print, telephones and fellow-workers

• competitive and challenge-based work ways that inherently generate levels of stress for those caught up in or, conversely, who are marginalised by its demands.

• increasing litigation, which in itself serves to enforce ownership (dominance) and control, can drain and redirect many of the resources of business and government

• disproportionate value given to those possessing the ‘new’ IT skills – these now increasingly being the young and mobile - and not necessarily those grounded in corporate knowledge, ethics, wisdom or loyalty

• ‘power-over’ authority, wielded by fear of exclusion from resources (wages), belonging or approval, and by promises of (future) reward and recognition. With the mobility of the modern educated workforce, and the proliferation of work options, these powers only hold sway over those deeply entrenched - either institutionalised or financially embedded - or those marginally skilled

• decisions not always based on clear and impartial information. Information can be filtered and manipulated to suit the preferences of the dominant decision-makers and resource-holders

• status, measured in wage levels and/or the capacity to wield degrees of power, especially as the income ratio between staff and leaders widens

• control measures and high personal accountability, if based on compliance and control rather than usefulness, can stifle initiative, individuality, innovation and the risk-taking that is needed for growth and change

• concentration of resources rather than fluid circularity: ‘blind-canyoning’ of resources rather than spreading the resources into the next phase of the organisation or community (for example, to research and development, new products, training, charities, community activities, environmental care, social cohesion, individual benefit and added value)
• co-existence of command-and-control models of authority and organisation along with collegiate and team-based structures. This often occurs within the one organisation, and within the one job; a fluid and not-so-fluid movement between these models may occur hundreds of times each day. Such coexistence means workers, managers and leaders all experience differing rules of engagement. It also sets up a tension when the ‘rules’ of one way of working clash with another. In practical terms this means an ultimate and inevitable reversion to hierarchy. This, in turn, can be a source of tension as workers have equal say one minute, and are overridden the next.

In summary, hierarchies experience a constant interplay of conflicting forces. The disequilibrium of those forces can be harnessed for positive aspects such as vitality, innovation and creativity. They can equally be directed toward oppression, control and destruction:

“Our problem is that power – military, political, economic, and informational – is located at the top of institutionalised hierarchies scattered around the planet ... The sole purpose of hierarchical structuring of ever-larger societies is to increase power vis-à-vis a competing other – which means there is a constant threat and insecurity and potential for violent struggle.” (Clark 2004 p.11)

In Australia, as elsewhere, schools, prisons, clubs, sports, hospitals, politics, economic institutions, government and especially the armed forces and police force (note the word ‘force’), still predominantly operate as hierarchies and are all subject to these dynamics.

**Dinosaurs or Constants?**

The negative view of hierarchy held by such people as Murray Bookchin (2005a p.73), Michael Kaufman (1987 p.xv), and Steve Biddulph (2002), may hold strong elements of truth, but as expressions of the social psyche, hierarchies may never disappear. Their structure and power dynamics reflect and attract a certain psychology, usually attributed to males, of competitive, power-over clan-like structures that serve both the dynamic and static masculine psyche (Ford 1985 p.213; Friel 2002; Lawler 1988; Nichols 2000; Rohde 2001; Romme 1996; Schaef & Fassel 1990; Schmid Mast 2004; 2005b; Sinclair 2001), and those content to trade their services for security.
On the societal level, beyond individual experience, massive structural changes would need to occur to displace hierarchies from their dominant position:

“First there is the hierarchical power structure itself. Those who benefit from it (the politically and economically most powerful) will resist change. Second, there is the “infrastructure” that hierarchies have put in place: banking and investment systems and other micro-economic institutions; the ways work is organized [sic] and products are distributed; [military and defence and] the ways justice is administered – indeed even how justice is defined. These patterns of daily interaction take many years, even generations to modify and reconstruct.

Finally, there is the most difficult entity of all that needs to be addressed: namely, what are to be our new “ways of seeing the world”? ... What new stories, what justifications are forthcoming to give shared meaning and purpose to the group?” (Clark 2004 p.12)

However, since hierarchies do not address all human needs and, if the value of those excluded aspects increase for individuals as well as for societies, other forms may well become increasingly powerful.

**Preparing for Change**

Crisis is often an impetus for change. However, waiting until a crisis occurs often eliminates options that are available in less pressured and constrained circumstances.

Moving to a conceptual position of early intervention, anticipating the need for change, planned cyclic reorganisation and re-creation are more sophisticated and viable options in our modern global complexity. To arrive at this mode of operating, new perceptions of social, work and power viability need exploration and testing. This research aims to contribute to that task.

No-one can presume work for life any longer, certainly not within one organisation. New skills are needed, and quickly. Job brokers have appeared to fill the need of work mobility. However, many people still lag behind with expectations of care from employers in return for ‘loyal service’, and without the skills to anticipate and prepare for change.

The commonly seen trait of many men to not act till necessity demands is no longer enough (Diamond n.d.).
Ch. 4: Transitions

“A transition can be said to occur if an event or non-event results in a change in assumptions about oneself and the world and thus requires a corresponding change in one’s behaviour and relationships.” (Schlossberg 1981 p.5, cited in Carroll 1990 p.10)

Change and Transition

Change is traditionally spoken of as the shift from one certainty to another, in itself a very linear, static masculine perspective (Donovan in Bantick 1999a p.21; Cairnes 1998; Covey 1990). Change programs within organisations often focus on parameters or processes needed to reach a new goal with minimum ‘disruption’ (i.e. chaos and uncertainty) while maintaining productivity throughout the process.

However, over the last 20 years or so, important progress has been made in understanding the complexities of changing our personal, as well as our organisational, lives.

The work of Bill Bridges (Bridges 1995b; 1996a; 1996b; Delin & Tranos 2003) in the 1980s was a landmark in transition studies (as distinct from change studies). He astutely identified the difference between change and transition; the first (change), being the recognition that a person or situation has moved from, as I call it, one ‘peak of
certainty’ to another ‘peak of certainty’. The second (transition), was defined as the actual journey between those peaks, characterised by periods of uncertainty, exploration, re-assessment and reorganisation.

Bridges’ important works, ‘Transitions’ (1996b), and ‘Managing Transitions’ (1995b), shifted our focus from the practical process of changing from one position of certainty to another position of certainty, to the process of moving between certainties. In this he provided us with a more sophisticated understanding of the psychological steps involved in transitions and change. He identified the need for

“developing new skills for negotiating the perilous passage across the “nowhere” that separates the old life situation from the new”  (Bridges 1996b p.14)

... to which this research is a response.

Bridge’s other major contribution was to intimate that the person undergoing the transition can play a significant role in shaping that transition and in reshaping themselves. Most other literature on change considers the participants as being disempowered, and in operating from fear of threat and fear of threat to their survival (Carroll 1990 p.40).

Bridges discusses personal transitions as a process of (men and women) seeking or moving towards the feminine (Bridges 1996b p.49), building on Jungian ideas, as outlined in Gareth S. Hill (1992) and Theodore and Lloyd (2000). Before focussing on transition itself, Bridges had expressed his ideas in the context of career moves (1995b; 1996a), and in relation to changing work structures. In ‘Jobshift’ (1995b pp.196-197), he differentiated between the three stages he identified as being needed for internal transitions, with the two stages (old and new way) identified for change.


Unlike the initiating impetus and drivers of the transition processes of the men in this study, which were consciously influenced by beliefs, myths and metaphors (e.g. the making of a Samurai sword for DW, as a metaphor for becoming a ‘fine man’), Mezirow (1995) defines rationality as the main impetus for transformative learning. He also defines transformative learning as only occurring after, or in response, to some major or critical life crisis, and therefore essentially as a reactive rather than proactive process (Mezirow 1995 p.50). Consequently Boyd and Myer’s (1998) and Nelson’s (1995) work is more relevant to this study through their inclusion of the significant role of arrational elements, such as myth, metaphor and imagination, as core contributors to personal transformations.

**Mapping Transitions**

Most research on transitions has developed out of crisis studies (Carroll 1990 p.10).

In her study of individuals going through forced changes in employment, and of adaptation to organisational needs rather than individual development, Patricia Carroll (1990 p.80) defines eight stages: Immobilization [sic], Minimization [sic], Anger, Depression, Letting Go, Testing, Searching for Meaning, and Integration. As part of that study, Carroll (1990 p.40), also gives us an overview of stages of transition as defined by several authors through five major life transitions: bereavement, death, divorce, transition itself, and job loss.

Though embedded in the genre of forced employment and crisis transitions to meet organisational needs (Gray 2000; Menon 2000) Carroll’s work is one of the few I found which defines the responses of those involved as pivotal knowledge for the research and for understanding the process as undergone. Another, Prakash
Menon (2000), also incorporates emotional and physiological effects when considering differences between forced and self-instigated change in jobs.

As an almost lone voice, in a study of six large corporations, Beer, Eisenstat and Spector (1990) highlighted the necessity of willing involvement for successful change. Businesses’ recurring present-day lament of the high rate of failure of change programs, is anticipated in their study.

While transition is embedded in many contexts (e.g. education, careers, personal growth, social work, relationships), it is also an area of study in itself. Its permutations appear to be as multiple as the combinations of personality, experience, circumstances and motivation allow.

Though their contexts may vary, transition literature overwhelmingly tends to map transitions by stages, as do I.

Bridges (Bridges 1996a; 1996b), like Sheehy (1977) and Brossman (n.d.) aligns his theories of transition with initiation rites (Elkin 1964), and recognises the following three stages (five in Wallace, cited in Rowan 1987): separation, ‘nowhere land’ and reintegration. He analyses transitions largely in relation to emotions, and places great emphasis on the ‘leaving-and-grieving’ part of the process as a necessary step for subsequent full reintegration.

Bridges’ (1996b p.17; and noted earlier in Nortier 1995 p.40) three-part process, with overlapping and, at times, co-existing phases, is made up of:

- Phase 1: when the individual must let go of their old ways
- Phase 2: when the individual goes through a ‘neutral zone’ of confusion, alienation and helplessness
- Phase 3: when the individual makes a new beginning.
Several other transition theorists suggest variations on this model. Nortier, in his article for the *Journal of Management* (1995 p.38), explored transitions of individuals within an organisation during its own transition and, in doing so, expanded the transition process to five stages. These reflect Bridges’ three stages, but also include the stasis of the initial ‘peak’ (departure) and resettling on the end (destination) ‘peak’ and has close similarities to the processes and stages of my framework, bar the absence of my Exploration and Preparation, and Clarity (Heliopolis) stages:

- **Phase 1**: Initial equilibrium, when the individual is secure and effort is correlating to results and rewards
- **Phase 2**: Separation stage, when an experience is felt of efforts no longer reaping the rewards or outcomes previously experienced
- **Phase 3**: Crisis stage, when the ‘last straw’ arrives, often suddenly, and highlights the reasons for the dislocations experienced, ‘flipping’ him into uncertainties and confusions
- **Phase 4**: Rebirth stage, a tentative stage, when new meanings and new directions emerge
- **Phase 5**: New equilibrium stage, when expressions of certainty and comfort with the new circumstance emerge (Nortier 1995 p.38).

In the area of careers’ transition, the research has concentrated mainly on management or executive levels, and on the capability of the subject to move to new organisational requirements with least disruption (Nicholson & West 1988), influenced by the individual’s fears of redundancy.

In ‘Managerial Job Change: men and women in transition’, Nicholson and West (1988), reflect that perspective in their study of managers moving into new positions in a hierarchical organisation with as least disturbance as possible and maximum adjustment to the (hierarchical) organisation. The cycle they postulate has four iterative phases – Preparation, Encounter, Adjustment and Stabilisation - Preparation being both the first and the last stages. The sequence is construed as iterative and continuous, the precursor of yet another stage, cycling endlessly. As in my study, a *consciously* unsettled stage (Forewarning), a ‘tipping point’
(Encounter) and consolidation stage (Adjustment) are part of their sequence 
(Carroll 1990 p.31).

Ellen Goodman, by contrast, in her book ‘Turning Points’ (1979), largely explores the concept of transition from the perspective of those who had change, and so transition, forced upon them. Her framework differed from most other change and transition literature accessed: rather than identifying transition stages as a movement forward, her sequence suggested retrograde management of circumstances.

The stages she suggests are:

- creating solid ground
- adding or subtracting a (key) element
- managing and dealing with the outcomes.

Although a very interesting concept, since it adds the element of having to renegotiate trust in what has, until then, been ‘solid ground’, (which was also the starting point of this research), this sequence, does not specifically accommodate intentional personal growth. Nor does it accommodate the concept of pre-existing, and continuing, inner drivers; and it again lays the impetus for change on external forces.


A table comparing a range of transition frameworks follows:
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Table 4: Examples of several ‘stage’ frameworks of transitions 1935 – 2007 plus Phoenix myth stages (Mackenzie© 2007)

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Carol Pearson (1991 pp.9 and 12) describes four transition processes from a holistic perspective, and includes psychological aspects. She acknowledges the symbolic and personal change processes inherent in transition, similar to my use of the Phoenix myth in its theme of reformation and transformation, and transition as a map in personal, organisational and social contexts.

“These four abilities – to strive, to let go, to love and to create – teach us the basic process of dying to the old self and giving birth to the new.”

Recognition is given to the importance of grieving in transition processes by Mezirow (1991; 1995), Boyd and Myers (1998), and others from the field of Transformative Learning, an area which has made rich contributions to transition studies.

A variety of transition sequences cited by Carroll (references cited in Carroll 1990 p. 40) are notable in that they all begin with negative states or states of disempowerment: shock (Hayes and Greenwood); or shock, numbness and disbelief (Raphael, Lindemann and Parkes); denial (Kubler-Ross); disillusion (Kessler, Bohannon and Kaslow and Schwarz) and immobilisation and disengagement (Hopson and Adams, Brammer and Abrego, and Perosa and Perosa).

Nicholson and West (1988 p.9), present a more hopeful and iterative model in their comprehensive study of both proactive and reactive change in job change of managers than several other sources, though their Encounter phase is described as inevitably problematic (ibid 1988 p.97).

Menon (2000) also approaches transitions from a problem perspective and, like most other work transition studies, analyses responses to changing work rather than personal changes experienced within the transition process itself. He lists a selection of negative ‘emotional consequences’, such as separation anxiety, grief and anger, as well as various stress-related illnesses: viral infections, ulcers and migraines (Menon 2000 p.5).

26 Metaphoric overtones of birth and rebirth link Pearson’s (and Nortier’s) perceptions to the Phoenix myth as a template of transition, including elements of personal development.
It is no surprise that Carroll (1990 p.9) concludes:

“Transition is seen as a period of disequilibrium for the individual”.

Once again, by the use of pejorative language, transitions are cast as negative in experience and as interruptions to normative well-being and stability, all highly questionable concepts in our age of Chaos theory (Wheatley 1988; Wieland 1992), virtual realities and endlessly mutable emotional realities.

My concern, shared by Nicholson and West (1988 p.1), is that

“... change is too often treated as a troublesome aberration – an external force that disturbs the stable patterns of daily life.”

With such an approach, that transition in itself is problematical, efforts to resolve the disequilibrium or resist the change become inevitable factors. This is understandable in forced changes but it cannot be assumed this is so where subjects are changing willingly, as was the case for most of the men in my study. My research findings question such presumptions.

There is a fine line between ‘disruptive’ transitions, which upset the status quo and may yield either ‘good’ or ‘bad’ results, and ‘destructive’ transitions, which inevitably yield negative outcomes. Both terms, by implication, favour the status quo, rather than ‘the unknown’, chaos or change. Yet there are many deconstructions which are beneficial, although all may not begin pleasantly. A tsunami may allow reconstruction of an area that was once crowded and unhealthy; a famine may encourage innovation in water use; poverty may encourage development of micro enterprise; high petrol prices may spur on development of alternative fuels and modes of transport. Such events as marriage, welcome births and planned relocations can all bring revitalised living, but they, too, demand deconstruction of previous ways of living.

Therefore, the focus of my research is neither judgemental nor pathological. Instead, I have taken an interested learner stance to identify processes and personal changes experienced by the men. The very title of my thesis – ‘Out Of Hierarchy’ - clarifies that I consider it an open-ended journey. The destination, “Where to?” remains speculation, based on an individuals’ emerging sense of self and direction in relation to their work and sense of purpose. I have discussed various aspects of this speculation in Ch.11.
The approach adopted in my research is to assume the validity, integrity and worth of the men and their processes, grounded in the men’s active participation in the workforce and in (re-)shaping their lives. I also presume that a capacity for proactive responses is fundamental to human nature, whether accessed or not.

Psychologically developmental factors, including meaning making, personal control and reframing identity, modulated the experiences of all the men interviewed. Therefore aspects of Transformative Learning research have been included: discussion of its stages, primary transition agents (rationality and extra-rational responses) and generative sources (Boyd & Myers 1998; Grabov 1997; Imel 1998; Mezirow 1998).

However, a therapeutic, intentional learning or teaching focus for this study would have added dimensions of inequality and privilege, and may even have contributed to a perception of a fundamental ‘wrongness’ of the men’s experiences, either in part or whole. This perspective was, therefore, not adopted. Nor is approaching transition as if it is a problem, as that would mean adding a (seemingly unnecessary) element of pathology to an already complex process (Schae & Fassel 1990 p.21), and does not reflect my findings.

**Men in Transition**

Published research specifically on men’s personal experiences of change was rare a couple of years before this research began,

“Research into individual transitions triggered by change is rare …”(Nortier 1995 p.32)


However, more and more personal examples of men in transition (Clare 2000; Ministries 2003), are being published, especially in regard to downsizing, forced changes and managing crisis driven change, giving us insights to particular way
men manage transitions, and providing pointers to their common experiences (Walker 2004).

Therefore, there still remains huge potential for exploration and documentation of knowledge on the experiences of men in transition, especially in relation to their identity as men, inner volition (Willeford 1994 p.4), processes of self actualisation, personal definitions of success, and their capacity to address such issues (Tolson 1977), be it through work or their personal lives.

“I argue an even greater need to highlight men’s experiences in organisations. Almost all men participate but few talk about how their organisational life affects them as men.” (Sinclair 2001 p.9)

My research aims to address this issue and add to the body of knowledge available on it.

Though it was originally designed to map:

- the successful transition process(es) of six men out of hierarchies
- key stages of those transitions based on the commonalities of their experiences
- changes in personal drivers and volitions,

... the research developed into more than this when internal impetus and self-referential development emerged as initiatory factors in the study.

The research was therefore extended to consider the men’s personal processes and changes in relation to exploring an aspect of an ecology of the self related to moving out of the hierarchical ecologies; changing relationship to ‘Self’ as well as changing ‘self in the world’, as a personally transformative process.

Menon acknowledges that in career transitions “individuals appear to embark on a process to redefine themselves” (Menon 2000 p.5). When this proved to be the case in my research, that process became a focus of my study.
Whatever the process, it became clear in the research that, ultimately, when researching men (and women) leaving hierarchy, I needed to recognise:

“It’s a journey from one identity to another ...” (Bridges 1995b p.37)

As such, I came to focus on the first two of the main qualitative research categories, as listed below:

- experience of events (phenomenon) and meaning-making
- identity, sense of self, selfhood, social interaction,

...while also having to consider the other two:

- social constructions, social rules, sense making and socio-cultural systems
- discourses, power, and ways of knowing (Lawler 1998 p.71).

**Successful Transitions**

Nortier (1995 p.33), makes contradictory assertions regarding the nature of change:

“Change is a process which, in all cases, is first of all external to the individuals who are going to undergo it.”

... then on the same page asserts:

“This move may be intentional and provoked, natural and spontaneous, or forced and undergone.” (ibid 1995 p.33)

Such comments illustrate ‘the infancy of transition studies at that time’ (Nicholson & West 1988 p.15) only a few years before this study began.

In contrast to Nortier’s assertions, the transitions of the men in this study primarily began in response to an internal driver. When it did not, external drivers corresponded to internal drivers, or highlighted these, which then became the primary driver itself. In other words, a precondition for change already existed. The external event drew attention to that precondition, which then became the primary driver.

Change that begins or is led by an inner driver or volition, because of its origin within the individual (or group) may well be a characteristic of successful transitions (Willeford 1994 p.4).
Nortier (1995 p.36) and Nicholson and West (1988 p.9) predict that the capability of an individual (and an organisation?) to make successful transitions increased by previous experiences of successful transitions. This finding is substantiated by the experiences of the men I interviewed. Such experience may also be cumulative or collective, with each transition being more successful than the last; or aspects of previous transitions may be brought to bear in diverse combinations, to bring about later success.

Nortier (1995), based as his research is in corporate environments, acknowledges that many of the characteristics of transition relate to uncertainty and are rarely articulated. To do so could place the person in a vulnerable position in the hierarchy. They would then risk censure as they would be identifying themselves as not being aligned with the command-and-control model, which requires allegiance, submission, certainty, clarity of action and task focus.

The information in my research records and analyses some of these experiences of uncertainty, changing self-perception and self-reflection and these illustrate both the men’s inner and outer journeys of transition (Boyd & Myers 1998 p.280). I include an analysis of these processes from both subjective and proactive positions, rather than from positions of perceived helplessness.

Nortier (1995 p.34) concluded:

“... transition belongs to the realm of the subjective ...”

... and therefore, to a large extent, is unacknowledged!

The willingness and ability of the men to explore and articulate this aspect of their experience is therefore especially valuable. Few published studies refer to the life contexts of individuals undergoing transitions, nor to the life-shaping events or the personalities of those involved. My research reflects on and values the individuality of the men involved and, through analysis encoded in their interviews (see especially Appendices A, B and C), proposes preconditions for increasing the probability of ‘successful’ transitions (see Ch.10 and Ch.12).
Qualitative methods of research are based on the premise that, when it comes to understanding human experience, the separation between researcher and researched, between subject and object, is a fiction. Experience, and the meaning attributed to experience, are not immediately observable and accessible to a true/false analysis and therefore lie outside the boundaries of a positivist framework" (Hunter 2004 electronic source).

This chapter, written in the first person, reflects the natural entwining of myself as a researcher and the research methods adopted for this study. As such it is written in discursive mode (subjective and exploratory).

Around my feet plays my new kitten, Precious Botswana. She has come to me at roughly three months old, an age when she is either playing, exploring, eating or sleeping. I watch her engaging with her world: the exuberant leap onto and into the familiar; the cautious step and sniff at the new. Once coded and placed, she is onto the next adventure in codifying and finding her place in the world, and developing her relationships within it.

As young children, we did the same, openly and obviously; as adults we notice and assess a new person, new information, the new neighbours and new possibilities just as quickly and astutely, although we do not so openly admit or show it.
As humans we are ever responsive and interactive with our environment. As sentient beings, on coming across a new object or idea, in the interest of survival and at the behest of our biology, we immediately engage in a meaning and context search. Once we have explored and defined the new, we then attempt to place it in our own world of present and past experience, or our world view in relationship to ourselves.

As researchers, we are trained as sophisticated thinkers and conscious beings. As academics and philosophers we are trained and practised in reflective analysis of our world. That world includes ourselves, our relationship with it and it with us.

The interviewees and myself recognised that understanding of our external worlds was an extension of our interior views of the world, our beliefs and our views of ourselves (Denzin & Lincoln 2005 p.21).

In choosing to use a hermeneutic (Anderson 2000; Crotty 1998; Hunter 2004; Laverty 2003), phenomenological framework both objectivity and subjectivity, my own and my subjects’, are incorporated, as is relevant knowledge from other researchers, and accepted empirical ‘facts’ (Reason & Bradbury 2001 p.203).

As a researcher I made choices as to how to place myself in relation to my topic. These choices were largely made in relation to the nature of my research, my beliefs and my competencies. For an empiricist topic, I would have, in all likelihood, chosen an empiricist method. For this research, designed as it is to more deeply understand the human condition, I have chosen a paradigm and methodology that manages uncertainty, individuality and diversity and can incorporate my own humanity as well as those of my co-researchers.

I saw my role to truly represent my ‘subjects’ experience, but also to derive meaning that contributes to academic and broader societal knowledge (Brew 2001b; Fontana & Frey 2005; Grundy Unpublished; Holman Jones 2005; Reason & Bradbury 2001). I am an object of my research as well as being the researcher of the topic. As an object of my research I contributed reflections, self analysis, experiences, and expressions of my own knowing, in poetic and other forms.
“The researcher positions the inquiry from within her or his unique and personal experience. The hermeneutical perspective, from which intuitive inquiry originates, assumes that we are continually influencing our environments anyway and therefore interpreting our experiences regardless of how objective we may appear to be.” (Anderson 2000 p.5)

Those I was researching were also researchers: researching their own history, experiences and themselves. Between interviews they reflected on the content and experience of their histories, returning with observations and insights, they prioritised topics of interest, gave new input and reflections and their own analysis. They did it by reviewing and reassessing their life and themselves in it, through their own, and my, understanding of them as they shared their journeys and their experiences.

“Phenomenology aims at gaining a deeper understanding of the nature or meaning of our everyday experiences.” (Van Manen 1990 p.9)

The men also reflected on what I reflected back to them during the interviews, and reviewed the texts and notes of those interviews. Tasks associated with the interviews, such as, for some, creating personal timelines correlated across ages, identifying life landmarks, health and relationships, also acted as self research tools.

Although I am not a man, I, too, reflected, as the interviews and research proceeded, on what the similarities and differences, of our experiences of moving out of hierarchy and moving from external impetus to internal impetus, were.

Some overlap of life experiences with my interviewees, a non-judgemental stance, and a willingness to hear their experiences, enabled us to have dialogue, to engage credibly and to delve deeply (Anderson 2000 p.5). That overlap also prefaced mutual respect and trust.

In contrast to the direct, linear, approach, I chose the ‘feminine’ process of circumambulation as the basis of my methodology. This perspective meant I approached the topic from many sides and on many levels (from Shepherd 1993 p.153).

As a teacher of English, way back when, I would embark on the fascinating analysis of poetry and text – finding and revealing the closely meshed layers of meaning, word use, metaphors and cadence.
As the poem or text was steadily rent apart, peered into, dissected and probed, all the while marvelling and admiring the stratagems, I would wonder if it could ever be ‘reassembled’. Could the analysts, including myself, be ever able to read and respond to the piece as an integrated whole again?

In time I found the answer lay with the power of the whole. Once the whole poem or text had once more became our focus, it was clear that, if the strength of it was greater than its parts (not just more than its parts), then the dissection actually added to its value. The analysis acted as prisms for the senses, providing multi-faceted and multi-layered understandings, held conscious at the same time as reading the poem’s surface meaning. This also ran true for the analysis of images throughout my years as an Art teacher. The vehicles of meaning were multilayered and potent instruments in themselves, as well as in the messages they carried. So it was for the interviews as well.

In fact, the process of this research has been like reading and analysing poetry. First, in hearing the men’s stories of their experiences; then dissecting their meanings, layers and stages; defining these; marvelling at the coherence and value of it all; then representing the men and their experiences as ‘wholes’, hoping the essence still survives; a Phoenix journey in itself (Kellehear 1993 p.41; Van Manen 1990 p.8).

One aim of the research process was to be as democratic as possible, with the interviewees, as well as myself, being able to gain from the experience (Reason & Bradbury 2001 p.202). This did eventuate, to varying degrees, for each of the men in the study (Value). Yet research, by its very nature, is hierarchical. Being based on power differentials, however subtle they may be, the final ‘say-so’ lies with the researcher who gives final form to the research, and ‘births’ it into the public arena. It was therefore even more my responsibility and aim as the researcher to document the research as ‘truly’ as possible for the participants.

**The Search**

A methodology can be a scary thing when one begins research. There are questions to ask and practicalities to face. So it was for me. It predicates many possibilities and many limitations. It also influences the degree of truthful representation that is possible and what is being communicated. A ruler will tell me the height of a child; a poem may tell me more accurately about the potential embedded within that child.
However, as I moved further into my research it became clear that, as I clarified my intent and as the process unfolded, methodologies that suited my needs became clearer. There really was no decision - only discovery of congruence and affinity (resonance) with the subject and the intent.

I did not look for a methodology per se. Rather I looked for descriptions of methodologies I, as an individual, already use to learn about and understand my world. Several were found in hindsight and, as I proceeded, the structure and purpose of my methodology became clearer, so that I was able to more easily recognise it in others’ methods and research.

Through those methodological choices I could more clearly define my own worldview (ontology) and my interrelationships with that world (epistemology).

In choosing to explore the realities of my interviewees and to look for meaning, structure and pattern in those experiences for the benefit of others, I was operating and deriving meaning and values within a constructivist social research paradigm where

“... the learners construct their own knowledge on the basis of interaction with their environment.” (Gagnon 1999 electronic source)

Essentially, therefore, the ontology, epistemology and methodology for this research needed to be qualitative. It needed to be based on the actual experience of people; take into account meaning, symbolism and patterns; to include self reflection and interpretation by both myself and those involved. It needed to include reference to the experience (of the topic and the process of researching) through published works and interaction, and allow for intuitive and holistic understanding and methodology, plus self-reflective analysis by myself and the participants.

Phenomenology, as

“the study of lived experience ... the world as lived by a person, not the world as something separate from the person.” (Laverty 2003 p.2)

with its an emphasis on both experiencing and understanding lived phenomena (Van Manen 1990 p.9), and on recognising a person as a self-interpreting being in, and of, the world, was an obvious start as an ontological framework for my study.
Hermeneutic phenomenology, with its emphasis on text ‘speaking’ from a particular vantage point (that of the person experiencing the phenomenon) and analysis of that text for “interpretation to find intended or expressed meanings” (Laverty 2003 p.3), was also deeply relevant. Since I was using transcripts of interviews as part of my research methodology, language and textual analysis for meaning was to become a key part of deriving understanding of the men’s experiences.

In summary, I chose:

- A hermeneutic phenomenological perspective (Crotty 1998; Heidegger 1962; Hunter 2004; Husserl 1970; Kellehear 1993; Laverty 2003; Van Manen 1990) with Intuitive aspects (Anderson 2000; Braud 1998b). This perspective honours the validity of the unique experiences of the individual and tries to truly represent it as lived. It recognises that individual experiences can also tell us about the experiences of others

- Heuristic elements, as described by Moustakas (1990). This approach honours the empathic nature of humans and their holistic knowing through deep immersion and reflection on experience, and through drawing together knowledge of the mind, emotion and body

- to draw from modalities which valued and used metaphor and story, such as Narrative therapy, Narratology and Narrative Inquiry. Such modalities emphasise the value and validity of individual experience as told by the person(s) who experience them. They also recognise the power of poem, story, metaphor and myth in conveying multi-layered, significant meaning and knowledge (Chase 2005; Fontana & Frey 2005 p.651; Lasky 1999; Nelson 1995; Pradl 1984; Van Manen 1990 p.70).

In the same tradition of validating and valuing the experience of individuals (Pinn 2006), the contexts those experiences are set in, and the intent to seek knowledge that can be used for improving the well-being of people, I also drew from Action Research. Several of its methods, especially strategic and convergent interviewing (Dick 1993; 2002; Peavey 1992; Peavey & Hutchinson 1992; Reason & Bradbury 2001), deep listening, pattern perception, metaphor analysis and active dialogue, were essential parts of my methodology.

Phenomenological ontology has its roots in Husserl (1970), Gadamer (Crotty 1998 p.100), Hegel (1953), Ricoeur (1981) and others. It is a non-dualistic ontology, seeking to avoid the dualism of mind and matter for which Descartes is famous. It is a ontology which values subjective experience and local contexts, but which is also
transferable to larger contexts. Descriptions and studies of transpersonal dimensions are evolving within the paradigm and, to some degree, are included in this study (Anderson 2000; Braud 1998a; 1998b). Hermeneutic, Heuristic and Intuitive Research all develop from that ontology.

Consequently, my research is based on constructivist, Phenomenological, Hermeneutic (Heidegger 1962; Stern 1985 p.69; Van Manen 1990), Heuristic (Goodman 1979; Maslow 1966; Moustakas 1990) and Intuitive Research models (Anderson 2000; Braud 1998b).

For the unstructured interviews, I used strategic (Britten 1995; Peavey 1992) and convergent questioning (Dick 1989; 2002); deep listening, meta-thinking and meta-cognitive knowledge (Flavel 1979 p.906; 1981; Jantsch & Waddington 1976; Peavey 1992; Peavey et al. 1986; Sacks 1986). I also used analysis of the texts generated from the interviews, and dialogues within those interviews. My interview methods are further discussed in their own chapter (Ch.6).

Phenomenology

Phenomenology, as a qualitative methodology, has grown steadily in validity and popularity over the past 20 years or so (Denzin & Lincoln 1994; 2005). The Hermeneutic aspects of phenomenology honour and analyse the layers of information and meaning inherent and embedded in experience and its articulation (Kellehear 1993). Charles Handy (2001 p.16) states my position well:

“I think that you only learn by living – and then reflecting on the living.”

Hermeneutic phenomenology reflects our capacity to glean and mine shared meaning beginning with both the experience and the expression of those experiences, direct and indirect, by the individuals involved.

However, Van Manen (1990 p.10) reminds us:

“A person cannot reflect on lived experience while living through the experience ... Thus, phenomenological reflection is not introspective but retrospective.”

Phenomenological reflection emphasises noesis:
‘… the conscious examination and description of one’s experience of seeing the flower which involves the bringing together of sensory data, previous experience and evaluation of similar phenomena, memory, social evaluations of such a flower, all of which allows the individual to identify a range of possible meanings for the experience.’ (from Moustakas, 1994, ‘Phenomenological Research Methods’, quoted in Hunter 2004 p.74)

Intuitive inquiry (Anderson 2000 p.9; Braud 1998b) as a phenomenological methodology, honours tacit experience and the capability of humans to know and understand more than words can tell; a holistic knowing not easily broken down into constituent parts or sources and not contained by linear rationalism. It acknowledges that information gleaned can be more than the sum of the parts and is inherent in the relational sensitivities of the researcher. Anderson and Braud’s ‘intuitive’ work shares and builds on the constructivist epistemology and contributions of earlier researchers such as Mair (1989 p.264), Moustakas (1990 p.12) and Sacks (1986), who pay such close attention to reflection on their subjective and transpersonal experiences.

**Heuristic research**

In Heuristic research, the researcher is prompted to research a topic from their own experiences, as I have done. In that tradition I have compared my particular experiences of transitions out of hierarchy to those of others, in alternate and iterative cycles.

I also drew on the six clusters (or lenses) through which Heuristic methodologies describe and analyse experiences: motivation, knowing, power, individuality, space (or spaciousness), and meaning or myth making.

These six phases of Heuristic research were integral to my research process:

“... the initial engagement, immersion into the topic and question, incubation, illumination, explication, and culmination of the research in a creative synthesis.” (Moustakas 1990 p.27)
I combined the largely interior nature of the Heuristic research process with the six more analytic steps of Hermeneutic Phenomenology (adapted from Van Manen 1990 p.30 and 31):

- turning to a phenomenon which seriously interested me
- investigating experiences as they are lived rather than conceptualised
- reflecting on essential themes
- describing phenomenon
- maintaining a detached yet responsible relationship with the research and interviewees
- considering parts and wholes as being intrinsically interrelated.

My ...

“chain of conditions and factors that characterised the study were: (1) a crisis ... (2) a search of self ... (3) an expanding awareness ... (4) a steeping of myself ... (5) an intuitive, factual grasping of the patterns ... (6) further clarification ... (7) creation of a manuscript ...” (Moustakas 1990 p.97)

Since the researcher is included in the Heuristic model, both as observer and ‘participant’ researcher and analyser, I am part of the research. My role was therefore, principally as a researcher and analyser, writer and conceptualiser, but also as a person with related experiences, a perspective of my own as an individual, and a relatedness with the interviewees (Brew 2001b p.8; Moustakas 1990 p.12, 14 and 26).

**Hermeneutics**

“Intuitive inquiry seeks to provide an approach to research that systematically incorporates both objective and subjective knowledge through a step-by-step interpretive process - cycles of interpretation that shape the ongoing inquiry. The traditional term for this interpretive approach is hermeneutics.” (Anderson 2000 p.2)

Hermeneutics and Intuitive Inquiry also acknowledge the present and prior experience of the researcher; their world view and relationship with the topic, and their relationship with the subjects, both personally and theoretically (Anderson 2000; Heidegger 1962; Hunter 2004; Laverty 2003).

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For clear and concise discussion on Hermeneutics see (Hunter 2004) and (Laverty 2003)
“At the outset of the research endeavor [sic], the intuitive researcher initially identifies her or his values and assumptions through active and connected engagement with the experience studied and then uses these values and assumptions as hermeneutical lenses to explore and analyze similar experiences in others. This is called the hermeneutical circle.” (Anderson 2000 p.2)

My prior experience was an advantage as it enabled greater understanding through comparative experiences. However, my empathy needed to be tempered by consciously ‘stepping back’ to make space for the uniqueness of the individuals, and to give primary focus and authenticity to them, their understandings and their experiences (bracketing), as a conscious decision and focus (Van Manen 1990 p.47). The practice and process of ‘bracketing’ allowed an appropriate level of disengagement; and enabled both my objective and subjective input.

That distancing was also part of the research process itself. Immersion in the interviewing process was a very holistic experience. Translating spoken word into text enabled and calls for distancing and a ‘fresh’, if limited and incomplete, view. The content of the interviews was then correlated and referenced to academic, and other, texts.

At the same time as bracketing, the researcher draws on his/her own experiences to enable rich understanding and accuracy. It is a double-edged sword which the qualitative researcher must be adept at wielding.

This process fits very well with the Heuristic process, summarised as “immersion, incubation and illumination.” (Moustakas 1990 p.99)

**Narratology**

Narratology derives from the work of Ferdinand de Saussure, Roman Jacobson and the French anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss,

“... who concluded that myths found in various cultures can be interpreted in terms of their repetitive structures.” (Pradl 1984 p.1)
It confirms that not only is story historically relevant and so shapes our social psyche, but that it also helps us to anticipate and possibly shape our future (ibid 1984 p.1). Through telling the stories of experiences, the teller and the hearer reconnect with their own realities and reinterpret them on various levels, within the context of the telling and the hearing.

As a researcher it was well for me to remember that one set of events do not always elicit the same story. At different times, for different audiences and for different reasons of telling, the stories emerging from the same set of events transmuted into a cluster of stories which approached the meaning of the events from different angles.

Yet each telling was entirely true in its attempt to tell the truth from the perspective of the teller. Thus, the men’s stories, in whole or part, were retold with variations in each interview. Each time, another perspective or layer of meaning was revealed. It also became clear that, as the men told their experiences, their understanding of them, and their view of their roles in those experiences, underwent transformation and they, themselves, were changed. As we dialogued, I, too, gradually gained more understanding of these men and their experiences, and my relationship to their experiences. Our relationships then matured and deepened.

“... to reach an understanding in a dialogue is ... being transformed into a communion in which we do not remain what we were.” (Polkinghorne 1983 p.375)

**The Researcher’s Role - Myself in This**

“Into every act of knowing there enters a passionate contribution of the person knowing what is known and ... this coefficient is no mere imperfection but a vital component of this knowledge.” (Polanyi, 1962, as cited in Moustakas 1990 p.94)

My interest in the topic of my research had arisen out of my personal experience of moving in and out of hierarchies, and a concern for those leaving them without the necessary skills to adapt to the now-volatile work environment after years of loyal and dependant service (Leser 2000). This was deepened by my study of Semco. Semler, as majority shareholder of Semco, fostered and encouraged the
transitions out of its autocratic, hierarchical structures, with the outcome of greatly benefiting its workers and Semco’s profit margin alike (Semler 2000). The structural and work forms that emerged were the result of Semler’s ethics of respect for workers as adults, his willingness to share power, and his thirst for adventure within both business and commerce. Such reorganisation and reformation is not just happening at Semco, but in many organisations and for many individuals.

Although it would have been an interesting project to study specific people in Semco as it changed, the distance (Brazil), my lack of their language and its lack of accessibility, made this too difficult. And it was not just Semco I was interested in, but two aspects of the change that took place there:

• transition from a hierarchical power-over structure to self-managing (and often entrepreneurial) units
• a paradigm which included self deconstruction, ongoing redefinition and revitalisation of the business and its people as part of the company’s ‘normal’ business cycle. In that study I related that cycle to the Phoenix myth, and have continued to use that metaphor throughout this research.

Like much of the published literature on transitions and change, my research of Semco’s organisational transition was primarily from organisational and management perspectives. In the present study I wanted to look at the topic from another side; to understand how individuals experienced such a change, and how they managed their transition from a hierarchical organisation and ‘power-over’ control models to ones where greater self-reliance, responsibility and self-direction were the norm. Not only that, but how was it for individuals who were acting autonomously, not being supported by their organisation in that change process, but changing out of their own volition.

It is an ingrained tendency of mine to look for ways to make a positive from a negative; to look for inspiration from people who have found ways to live their ethics, who recreate a better life out of difficulty, and to learn from both success and failure. I am deeply curious as to how humans ‘work’ (internally) and ‘live’ (externally) and the relationship between those processes. I prefer to work deeply and personally, and from theoretical conceptualisation to practicality.
My research topic and design reflects these preferences. It is also my preference to work with individuals and small groups, which influenced the scale and scope of the study. This latter preference is probably inevitable given my 20 years of teaching, and almost as many years again as a holistic counsellor. In both these roles, and as a researcher in this study, I sought to discover and reveal significant meaning (Brew 2001b p.73).

My research had begun even before I had decided to do 1:1 interviews. I thought and talked through my ideas and interests with friends, my University compatriots, and anyone else who was interested, taking in their diverse ideas and views.

Once the topic (men moving out of hierarchy) was identified, it was natural for me to ‘attune my radar’ (set up selective perception sensitivities within myself: conscious filters and alerts) and so become aware of stories, people and information relevant to it (Moustakas 1990 p.41). Castenada calls it “unbending intent” (cited in Brew 2001b p.61).

This method is often not acknowledged, although it is described by Moustakas (1990 p.95 and p.11) in his study of loneliness. However, any young woman will tell you that they see green cars more often, if that is what her boyfriend drives. Any bike-mad youth is attuned to their favourite motorbike engine sound; any gastronome is alert to their favourite smells; any acoustic person is alert to sounds that interest them, be it birds or bands; any parent is tuned to the voices of their own children in a crowd.

This facility no doubt springs from our early days as a species, when it was critical to be attuned to aspects of the environment that were to our advantage or a danger to us. We largely take this capacity for selection and response to stimuli for granted, yet it is a core methodology (information selection, analysis and assessment) as it filters out, and factors in, relevant and related information.

Consequently, I often heard of men leaving hierarchy, especially through my counselling practise on the North Coast; and in the ‘New Futures in Small Business’ (NFS) course (Treasury 2002) and the Future of Work groups (Theobald et al. 1998), in Canberra.
What became clear was that some men handled that transition, whether it was by necessity or choice, ‘successfully’, whereas others didn’t. This study is focussed on defining the parameters of successful transitions. For this study I define ‘successful’ to mean that the men:

- were able to re-establish themselves in new work or meaningful and productive occupations, and
- expressed a sense of being better off after the transition than before, whether professionally or personally. In the process they all re-evaluated and even re-designed their lives, while several re-evaluated their relationships, their maleness, sense of manhood and sense of Self.

This is not the case for all those leaving hierarchies; some of those who are ‘unsuccessful’ fall into mires of depression and ennui, and labour there; some to remain, others to slowly re-emerge, some scarred and deeply changed for the ‘worse’ because of their experience (Biddulph 2000; Clare 2000 p.24; Ford 1985 p.204; Handy 2001; Leser 2000 p.18-22).

It was men who had eventually benefited from their transitions, whom I sought out. Many spoke of a change from their ‘dependency’ role in hierarchies to greater self-reliance and self-definition, finding richness in the process and a deeper appreciation of whom they were and what they valued.

This was also an observation from my research of Semco in 1997 (Mackenzie 1998). A spectrum of success and failure, involvement and abandonment also emerged in that study. Some workers at Semco wanted the authoritarian structure to remain, which they regarded as providing security and freedom from responsibility; others loved being able to be a ‘whole person’ at work as well as outside of it. Some valued the increased opportunities to be creative and cooperative; others hated this and left, or were asked to leave.

**Personal Reflections**

“Following the ontology of the researcher’s experience of the phenomenon studied, however, requires unique personal insight into one’s own relationship to the phenomenon studied.” (Anderson 2000 p.2)
In self-reflective mode I also kept a sporadic diary of my experiences with various organisations - such as the strict hierarchy of the ACT Government’s ‘New Futures in Small Business’ course, which I completed early in 2000, and the contrasting experience of working for a year, one day a week, as a volunteer at Community Aid Abroad. I also reflected on my experience of organising (with the help of a dedicated group of other volunteers), the 2001 Spirituality Leadership and Management (SLaM) conference; several years of working in the commonwealth Public Service; being part of a successful community action group and serving on an ACT Government Community Consultative Committee. Each situation demonstrated a different relationship to authority and volition (for instance, there was a high correlation between security and adequate resources in the hierarchies; and between commitment and resourcefulness in the community and voluntary projects/groups).

During the last residential of my Masters (1997) there was a workshop on local action for global change, led by Judy Pinn. Part of that process required us to refer to different parts of society and note our responses in order to find where our passions lay. While participating, I was extraordinarily surprised to find myself deeply affected by the issue of retrenchments in workplaces. A passion of fury and compassion swelled up in me. It railed at the unfairness of training whole societies and, in particular, men (from the generations when the man was seen as the breadwinner and the power figure in the household), into a dependency and sense of security in their workplace, and then to ‘discard’ them, without enough skills to re-establish or reinvent themselves, in an increasingly volatile work arena.

This observation was later echoed by ROC, one of the men interviewed, as he watched the effects on the people in his Regional Office during its dissolution. All its positions were abolished, including his own. Some positions were then readvertised.

“Well they applied for these jobs, I would imagine, because they had to. It was the only thing they knew how to do. They had no other career path. It was their jobs being re-advertised under a different guise.” (ROC1/Q39/P10)

Coupled with a cultural climate that despised the unemployed as ‘bludgers’ refusing to work rather than unable to find it, and a preference for young go-getters in the emerging growth employment
industries of IT and financial markets, there was much stacked against the dependant, retrenched worker.

At first it seemed a long way from my primary interests in philosophy, spirituality and the power of metaphor to create effective and positive change in people and organisations. However, having been seduced back into the organisational world by the Semler book, *Maverick* (1994), and my Semco studies following that, I was aware that somehow these polarities were seeking to coexist and synthesise. On deeper reflection I found there was a common theme: the men and I shared motivations – to live an integrated life, to taking self-responsibility, to be at peace with oneself, and to be in positive relationships with the world and one’s community. The study was also about issues of integrity, care, empowerment and trust; abandonment, dependency, adventure; discovery and creation – reflecting the Phoenix sequence.

Some people have a sense of those needs from early in their life; others become aware of them as a recurring refrain within themselves; others have it forced on them by circumstances, including the results of choices they have previously made. This is just as Shakespeare defined it in relation to greatness - some born to it, some taught it, and some forced into it. The journey of the interviewed men, too, reflected these experiences.

In my teaching work - in creativity, art and communication studies in high schools, tertiary bodies, work groups and universities, plus my private practice in change management, principally with individuals and small groups - I primarily worked with the first two scenarios.

Part of my private practice was in the area of relationship counselling. Invariably it was the women who had attempted to address relationship glitches, who tried again and again to initiate change fundamental to the ongoing possibilities of their togetherness. Invariably it was the man who was taken aback when the wife moved out, or announced in a counselling session that the marriage was over. It was only then that he was willing to work on the relationship, or even saw it as needing attention. This shocked me. However, when I looked around and read and listened, it became apparent that this was a common event, not only in the spheres of relationship, but also of work and health (Diamond n.d.).

Yet, in the research, I was hearing men who did not fit this pattern. Several of them had carried niggling doubts about the purpose of their lives and the incongruence of their values and their work for years, but did not know where to begin to effect change, in themselves or their place in the world. As a person attuned to the well-being, or otherwise, of others and myself, I saw wholesale distress occurring around me during the massive layoffs and economic rationalism (Clare 2000; Leser 2000) of the time.
Presently, hierarchies are both huge and many are disintegrating. Their dominance is being challenged by the repercussions of technological advances that have altered the power dynamics underpinning them (Friel 2002). As accessibility to information increases, whether it is work-focussed or an awareness of comparative conditions in other organisations, it alters the dynamic which rests on ‘information as power’ and increases the capacity of people to move and trade their skills in a wider market, at whatever level. However, a human element is also contributing, through retrenchments and retirements - mainly in middle and lower levels. There is a silent seeping away of those dissatisfied or drained by the conventions of the structure and the present political and business values of economic materialism (Breakspear & Hamilton 2004; Gray 2000; Hamilton 2003; Hamilton & Mail 2003; Ministries 2003; Pond 1999; Saltzman 1991; Tan 2000). A strong pattern has emerged in the last 20 years, of work and career progression based on trading of skills; of career progress through job-change, organisation-hopping and networking. This trend has alternately been called ‘portfolio careers’ (Handy 2001), nomad (Dunphy & Stace 1995), or zig-zag careers (Tarrant 2002). Concurrent with this has been a rise in outsourcing, downsizing and a diminishing employment pool (Commonwealth of Australia 2000; Statistics 1997).

Unemployment, in the 1980s and the 1990s, of the traditionally employed, and the volatile nature of work and work-ways, has created radical change in Australia. The old expectations of a job for life no longer holds sway (Bridges 1995a; Clare 2000; Dunphy & Stace 1995; Handy 1995a; 2001 p.63; Leser 2000).

The consequences of outsourcing have been widespread and have opened a Pandora’s Box of possibilities for those able to capitalise on them. Many others do not yet have the skills or the inclination to benefit from such changes.

When I began this research I was working as a freelance consultant, part-time Tertiary Education educator and holistic counsellor. I had, some eight years before, left a Head of Department position in the NSW Education Department. I had worked for them for nearly 20 years. From being a consultant, I moved to being a full-time student.
for two years. At the end of 2000, I moved back into hierarchy, this time to the Commonwealth Public Service, first as a contractor for several months, and into permanent positions since. This was to be a refresher course on hierarchies and a testing of my theories in situ. I am also aware now, however, of the correlation between this process and the Hero pattern of going into an organisation or situation, benefiting, contributing, then leaving (Handy 2001 pp.164-165).

The positive form of that pattern is that the ‘visitor’ leaves behind benefit that remains (in the metaphor of the Phoenix, leaves a spark in the ashes to rise in a new form) and takes their learning on with them to benefit others or other organisations. The negative form of the pattern is one of self-serving interest: to gather benefit above the interest of those around them and leave loss on their departure.

In summary then, and in the context of this thesis: I went from one hierarchical system to a combination of freelance and hierarchy, to full-time autonomous work, and then back into hierarchy. In other words, I have done the journey I am researching both ways - in and out, out and in again, and I guess I will journey across the divide at least once, if not more, before I die.

I have done it as a woman, and as a woman brought up, by nature and circumstance, to be fairly independent. By nature, too, I have my own inner script that I am following. I, too, am one of the Baby Boomer generation, as are all the men interviewed. However, although I have done the journey out of hierarchy, I do not know what it is like for a man to do it.

For the first six months of the research I racked my brains as to how I was going to approach the subject. It was no longer enough to investigate the past and hypothesise about the future, as in my Master's Research. I had to go beyond that and explore new territory and reveal new facts and add new insights.

Some six months into the study it became clear that my method was going to be based on listening to some of those men who had chosen to leave a hierarchy; to hear and record their stories and see if I could discern any patterns or commonalities that may have aided their recreation and revalidation. As such, I was placing myself firmly in feminist traditions, as “women cultivate their capacities for listening while encouraging men to speak” (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger & Tarule 1997 p.45) yet I was, perhaps paradoxically, researching male environments (Brew 2001b; Ford 1985; Hamilton 2006; Shepherd 1993).
Minimising Distortions

A danger in any research is to seek validation of one’s own ideas, and in the research itself, to influence the outcome to provide that validation.

“The researcher’s initial structure and accompanying values become the preliminary lenses of interpretation, requisite for engaging with the texts of others and interpreting their understanding of the topic. Those preliminary lenses will invariably be changed, refined, and amplified as the researcher moves through the iterative cycles of interpretation. The researcher must be extremely clear about her or his preliminary lenses, so that all conscious and unconscious preconceptions are brought to light.” (Moustakas 1990 p.9)

Contextual reference to original material, in this case from the taped and transcribed interviews, guarded against this by correlation between the interviews, by subsequent interviewee’s review of the transcripts and notes, and by our discussions of these (Reason & Bradbury 2001 p.9). Comments by the interviewees, and any changes to the text made by them, were included in subsequent analysis. In some instances cyclic iterations of this process occurred several times. This process was limited to the review of transcripts, notes and several conversations. Two of the interviewees had a joint meeting together so as to meet another man who was doing their same journey, and to discuss their transition experiences together.

On looking back, I recognise that I took the following seven steps to minimise bias:

- acknowledged my own experiences and perspectives as a researcher
- consciously set aside my personal world views (by decision)
- opened to, and accepted, the interviewees’ worlds and experiences and their words in interviews as valid, and recorded these
- used meta-thinking - observed and experienced my responses and thoughts as well as theirs
- identified patterns and proclivities as part of the interview process, in review of the material from the interviews and in sources relevant to the topic
reintegrated the subjects’ and the researcher’s experiences in discussion, analysis and conclusions, analysing the information and experience to uncover new understandings and well-grounded interpretation

had the interviewees review the transcripts and text derived from them and gave them the opportunity for further input

reviewed and refined the interview texts and my understandings.

These iterative and cyclic phases were repeated until coherent and cogent meaning was derived, became tacit (integrated), and was documented (Polanyi 1969 p.160). The steps refer to, but do not emulate, the four types of consciousness described by Jantsch and Waddington (1976 p.41): virtual, functional, conscious and super-conscious.

Researching Process

One of the dilemmas I felt as I did this research was to define what it was I was actually doing - the core of the task - and what the ‘new’ or unique angle and addition to world knowledge was to be. Thoughts came in spirals. I identified my goal, then doubted myself and shifted focus. At times I felt I was in a wasteland with no landmarks, and experienced a sense of barrenness. At those times I knew I had lost sight of the trail. In hindsight my own research journey reflected the six stages identified in this study, some in iterative cycles: Restlessness, Wood-gathering, Tipping Point, Ashes, Heliopolis and Return.

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<tr>
<th>Phoenix</th>
<th>Stages</th>
<th>My Experiences</th>
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<tr>
<td>Impending</td>
<td>Restlessness</td>
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<td>Wood -</td>
<td>Preparation/</td>
<td>Searching for ways to engage with the topic and issues</td>
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<td>gathering</td>
<td>Explorations</td>
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<td>Fire</td>
<td>Tipping Point</td>
<td>Tipping point - core conversation with DW</td>
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<td>Ashes</td>
<td>Rest/Revitalisation</td>
<td>Immersion, searching for subjects - developing strategies; boxing - both volunteer and hierarchical work</td>
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<td>Heliopolis</td>
<td>Clarity</td>
<td>Interviews</td>
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<td>Writing and discernment; selection; editing</td>
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<td>Return</td>
<td>Consolidation</td>
<td>Thesis finalised (submitted)</td>
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Table 5: My process as researcher (Mackenzie© 2007)
Early in the process, I had a dream that has remained with me. It has felt like an expression of my research process, at times as a comfort and at other times exasperating:

I had a dream about being shown around a farmhouse that someone had just moved into. It was huge and complex and every room had things in it - some stacked in an ordered way and some piled up like storage items. I soon lost my sense of direction. After much walking and being shown around we came to a central room 'hidden' from the regular passageways of the house - this was the pantry or storehouse, where the essence of the way of life of the country is often seen. It carried that same sense, yet it had things in it that were outside the tradition - curious. When I left the house I found it difficult to remember where the entrance was and needed to almost go completely around the house to find my way there again, although it was well ordered and clearly the entrance when I got there. This is sometimes what my research feels like at this stage - many bits of info and knowing from many aspects, but not yet drawn into coherence.

When I got ‘lost’ or sidetracked, I would look for the trail again by going back to where I was sure I had been on a clear trail. I would also proceed by trust, reading what jumped out at me rather than only what I felt ‘should be reading’ or doing, following my ‘radar’ tuned to the topic. A wonderful feeling of excitement and interest told me when I was back on the trail. Eventually I would pull back, jettisoning the irrelevant and incorporating the useful.

At some stages I had difficulty remembering the core or giving it priority. The bonus was, and is, a rich tapestry of knowledge, experience and unlikely connections. The downside was the magnitude of the process, information and strands needing to be sifted, culled, or woven together.

It was a cyclic process. One or several of the extensions from one cycle became the next focus or core for the next cycle of interest and action, similar to the seven-phase heuristic cycle described by Moustakas (1990 p.97 and 118), learning and action research cycles (Dick 1993 p.11; Kolb 1984; Reason & Bradbury 2001; Zuber-Skerritt 1992). As my research progressed threads were drawn in, holes identified and patched.

“The indwelling process is conscious and deliberate, yet it is not lineal or logical. It follows clues wherever they appear; one dwells inside them and expands their meanings and associations until a fundamental insight is achieved.” (Moustakas 1990 p.24)
Finally, once I digested my explorations, I contracted, returning to the core, dropping off possibilities and developments and sifting relevancies in a reaffirmation of my initial interest in the topic, and to consolidate it. In the level of contraction I have maintained scope for engagement on several levels.

The content of the interviews themselves raised many critical questions, for instance:

‘… I’m just wondering whether or not, when I look at the changes that men who do leave the hierarchical system … are [they] actually reverting to type, not breaking away at all?’ (SM in DW2/Q46/P12)

This thought sent me to exploring self-determination, individuation and self-realisation, as well as reviewing my old counselling records. The idea that hierarchies may not be ‘native’ to men, or at least some men, simmered in me for much of the period of the candidature, and resurfaced when I analysed ROC’s journey (Ch.8). It then crystallised as I wrote up my findings.

I immersed myself in hierarchies and community work (in two NGOs – organising and chairing an international transpersonal management conference for one; doing regular part-time office work for the other; also as a member of a Government Community Consultative Committee and community action group). These experiences meant working with volunteers who had common interests, a diversity of skills, and were unpaid. The last role was one which required close interaction between a community non-paid action group and the (ACT) government hierarchy.

By doing these things I was able to maintain an ongoing awareness of the (radical) differences between hierarchical and non-hierarchical work environments, but I was also ‘boxing’ my life, emulating (unconsciously, at the time), Stage Two of the pattern of the transition sequence I had come to identify.

For the last six years I have worked full-time in the Commonwealth Public Service. There I have experienced first-hand the dynamics that existed at various levels across four Divisions and in six teams. In two Divisions I reported directly to the Division Head, the rest to various Team Leaders - from collegiate to autocratic; from being extremely rigid, linear left-brain to being creative and flexible. All were men.28

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28 I declined to apply for a team leader position. Having had that experience already, formally leading two Art Departments and informally several un-mastered departments and being a Consultant for the Education Department for several years, I had no wish to be further embroiled in the upper echelons of hierarchical systems. Then too, as my internal allegiances were not to the organisation itself, and never would be, ethically I
Experiencing a diversity of work environments and power structures, from laissez faire to hard-line autocratic, has been a great advantage, some experiences being inspiring and interesting, others being neither easy nor pleasant.

‘Like a specially designed telescope, the lenses of the researcher’s experiences, motivations, and inspirations permit the intuitive researcher to see more subtly into the phenomenon being studied and to relate to it in a deeply connected way … [and this] gives the researcher a unique and precious perspective.” (Anderson 2000 p.5)

I did this in order to:

“… participate in the enterprise they are studying in order to undergo experiences similar to those of other participants, placing themselves in a better position to understand the experiences of the other participants.“ (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger & Tarule 1997 p.226)

That experience has provided me with reminders of the nature and dynamics of hierarchies, their power differentials, norming influences and the abstract isolation from daily living of its high-rise buildings, air-conditioning and smooth, static surfaces.

My experiences back in a hierarchy also reminded me of the strong ties of hierarchy: steady income, predictability, clear status, accumulation of benefits, achievement of tasks, and a sense of orderly participation (Hamilton 2006), its ‘golden handcuffs’. It also reminded me why I originally left, some 13 years before: the narrow focus on computer material and mental knowledge; the predominance of linear thinking and processes; managers by allocation rather than respect or choice; collaborative work models only used if they supported political, managerial and organisational values; boredom; absence of the transpersonal; absence of nature, movement and mottled light; absence of colour, texture; and an absence of values which enabled the inclusion of an authentic and whole Self (Shepherd 1993 p.99).

However, it has been fascinating, to carry the information, viewpoints and experiences of the men in this study (DW, MS, ROC, PS, IH and JL), to work with

did not want to try, yet I feel hypocritical there regardless of the effort and quality of work I give, since my heart is elsewhere. I feel as PS did, part of me is not there – I am only a shell, distracted, yet endlessly busy.
me. Through their words I observed, re-interpreted, and analysed my own experiences and circumstances. Through my own experiences I better understood theirs (Moustakas 1990 p.26).

Those experiences also enabled me to analyse feedback and reframe experiences quickly and accurately within the interviews. If I had not had those experiences myself, no amount of deep listening would have drawn out or encapsulated the knowledge or experience these men shared with me.

I wanted to use methods that reflected the topic I was researching; moving from external volition to internal volition.

Therefore, we moved back and forth between hierarchical and more democratic power structures in the interviews. I raised the initial questions and topics to be addressed; at other times the interviewees proposed directions and shared additional information. Throughout the interviews, power structures shifted, as the process oscillated between my role as a researcher (‘expert’), through my use of analysis and pre-existing knowledge, and their articulation of their transitions, as the ‘experts’ in their own fields of knowing; their own lives.

At times I needed to reinforce and affirm my position of neutrality:

‘... and I think that it’s probably a good place to clarify that. Because I think as I said from the beginning I am interested in what is the context of your decision making and value system. I am not here to make a judgement or say it’s right or wrong. I’m coming from the premise that it is right for you. Regardless of what it is.’ (SMac in IH1/Q101/P36)

Our processes reflected a cyclic oscillation between the positivist approach common to competition and hierarchies of ‘other’ and ‘self’; to constructivist qualitative subjectivity and objectivity; and finally to a multi-valent exploration of the topic (Anderson 2000; Denzin & Lincoln 2005; Stern 1985 p.43 and 86).

I have combined these interests with transpersonal and contemplative practices, teaching, learning, and personal development work with clients. These experiences have enabled me to be alert to underlying and pervasive patterns, beliefs and points of significance, which arose in the interviews.

As part of the researching process, my inner ‘radar’ was set to topics of relevance, resonances and ‘matching’. It was like trawling, gathering a wide range of items and ideas, then sifting and testing the catch. Gold-prospecting at first and, as the ‘colour’ showed, following the seam.

After intense and ongoing immersion and exploration, like the Samurai sword analogy described by DW (DW3/Q7/pp16-20 and DW3/Q85-87/pp21-22), there were periods of reflection and withdrawal.

“Incubation invites the creative process to do its work while the researcher rests, relaxes, and otherwise removes her or his focus from the research inquiry. The researcher retreats from the intense, concentrated focus on the question.”

(Moustakas 1990 p.28)

‘So I find that if I leave something for a couple of days to cogitate around in my brain, it then pops up with the patterns and priorities’ (SMac in IH3/Q35/P13).

Who we are and how we exist as humans means we exist in a matrix of interacting and changing realities. Therefore, I also considered the same topic from diverse perspectives: mythological, yes, but also sociological, biological, through media, gender studies, economics and politics. Intermittently throughout, and as part of the revisions of the drafts, I consciously sought out people, books, articles and the media, which presented other views, whether tangential or oppositional. In that way my assumptions and my hypothesis was continually tested and refined.

**Anima and Animus as Research**

In researching the men’s transition journeys, and analysing the patterns, significances and the ensuing personal transformations that emerged within those journeys (Brew 2001a; 2001b p.25; Shepherd 1993 p. 153), I took four roles. These roles,
as derived from Jung and described by Gareth S. Hill (1992 p.21, Fig 14).

represent active and passive gender personas of our psyche. The roles (and how they have featured in my research) are:

- **dynamic feminine** (in joy and play, wondering, stretching and exploring ideas, discovery, immersion, humour)
- **static feminine** (as questioner, listener, observer, creator, destroyer and nurturer, ‘understands’; immersion)
- **dynamic masculine** (who planned, searched out interviewees, organised interviews, ‘captured’ the men’s stories on tape; analysed and questioned)
- **static masculine** (who analysed transcripts, made agreements, assessed and selected information, organised thoughts, met ethics and submission guidelines, contextualised).

The primary ‘voices’ I used in discussion, and in quoting the men are those of the relational ‘static and dynamic feminine’. For analysis and identification, I move to the more positional, ‘dynamic and static masculine’ language, the traditional language of research. Overall I sought to integrate the two perspectives, as Bachelard (1990a p. xxi) describes:

> “… strange synthesis of the mighty images of nest and pyre, hermaphrodite bird – reconciler, in the great and final dream, of animus and anima.”

I travelled with the research, trying to understand some of the deeper patterns of consciousness that the interviewees described. Writing-up required me to ‘stop’ and shift my focus from exploring and finding, to analysing and documenting, recognising that “writing requires its own space” (Van Manen 1990 p.103). This took a conscious decision on my part to say, ‘Enough! Put it all together. Don’t just flourish, bring it to fruit’. Ironically, it was during the writing-up process that many ideas fell into place; ideas that I had been searching for crystallised. Would they have come earlier if I had started writing-up earlier? I do not know.

Someone asked me if I thought my findings would change if I had interviewed more men. On consideration my answer is, in regard to the basic thread-path of the process, ‘probably not significantly’. I have had many auxiliary conversations at parties, over meals, on trains, at University Residentials, during business meetings and the

29 These are much like Charles Handy’s (1995b) ‘Gods of Management’ – Athena, Dionysus Apollo, and Zeus - in their character and roles, Neville’s (1995; 200 5) work on personal and organisational psyches, and Moore and Gillette’s (1990) ‘King, Warrior, Magician, Lover: Rediscovering the Archetypes of the Mature Masculine.’
like where my research has been a topic of conversation, and where men have talked about their own experiences. The similarities to the sequence identified in the present study have been overwhelming.

What would be different, I surmise, would be the rich detail of individuality, the variations on the impetus that began the process and what the ‘tipping point’ of the change would be for the individuals involved.

What would also be different would be the men’s background, and so also their skills and attitudes to their changes.

**Sequence**

The stage of the research in which we read works is significant, since they may influence the findings, confirm or question them. Most reading for this research was done after the interviews had been conducted and analysed. This allowed me to hear the interviewee’s experiences without conscious comparisons and preconceived reference points, which might have distracted me from listening deeply, and being totally present and open-minded (Cooper & Sawaf 1996 p.73).

As I began writing up the research I again reviewed the interview tapes and transcripts, re-listening and reassessing their content and meaning. On the whole this meant simply validating large sections; in other areas it enabled me to gain a deeper understanding of the complexity and profundity of the men’s experiences. For other parts the influence of my prejudices and desires needed review and, finally, some portions revealed themselves as strong threads to entwine with the wisdom and research of others.

The iterative process continued, with researching, reviewing literature, contemplation and conversation. From my initial, simple, linear intent - to map ‘a successful journey out of hierarchy’ developed various levels of interpretation, understanding and linkages to other areas of human development. Some of these were to Transformative Learning (Boyd & Myers 1998; Cranton 2000; Grabov 1997; Imel 1998; Mezirow 1991; 1995; Nelson 1995), Jungian psychology (Hill 1992; Johnson 1991; Jung 1967; Pearson 1991), men’s studies (Dench 1998; Farrell & Rosenberg 1981; Farrell 1986; Dave Hill 1999; Hill 1992; Kaufman 1987; McGill 1980; Osherson 1980; Pearson 1991; Solomon & Levy 1982; White 1954), transpersonal studies (Braud & Anderson 1998; Jung 1967; Psychology Serials; Rowan 1993; White
1998), and mid-life experiences (Berardo 1982; Clarke 2004; Farrell & Rosenberg 1981; Ginn 1994; McGill 1980; O’Connor 1996; Osherson 1980; Sheehy 1977; Steiner 1974; Tamir 1982) and roles of myth.

**Therapeutic Elements**

This research was not intended to sit in therapeutic traditions. However, during in-depth conversations there was always the likelihood of a therapeutic or personally transformative element (Boyd & Myers 1998; Grabov 1997; Moustakas 1990 p.103) and this was the case in this study. In the safe environment created, some old wounds and mysteries were brought to the surface for several of the men. Some issues were at least partially resolved, simply by exposing them to the light of day; at other times the effects of events were re-activated in remembering them, some to be resolved; others to remain problematic to them.

‘... he relates an incident with such intensity - and yet it happened when he was early 20s - that has coloured his whole life. And each of the men have [sic] described some incident that has coloured their life; that within itself is not big. Like losing a pencil case didn’t ruin the world or save the world ... You know it’s like something that mattered to them; that within that incident there were values, there were things that they cared about that were revealed by the pain that was caused from that incident. And therefore they are significant ... they [the individuals] are still trying to decipher that incident.’ (SMac in IH1/Q70/P27)

At other times, once an incident was talked about, some remarkable events occurred. For instance, one man (PS) had been deeply hurt when his colleagues literally turned their backs on him when he left the priesthood. During the period of the interviews PS (the ex-priest) came across a history of his particular Missionary Chapter. He discovered that one volume, which described the mission on the island where he had been stationed, had been blocked from publication. He tracked down the author and found out that the very men who had turned their backs on him, had themselves left the priesthood a few years later. This entirely changed his feelings about the incident, for the better (PS1/Q14-15/P8 and PS2/Q14/P7).
In the world of teaching that I experienced, men were the ones in positions of power, having created both the structures and the curricula I worked within. At staff meetings, and around the Executive table in later years, it was the male voice that was most acknowledged, not just in person but also in relation to masculinist-approved and mainstream subjects: maths, technical subjects, sciences and English. The men understood the politics of power couched in inclusion and exclusion, manipulating structures and figures, domination by loudness and assertion, the power in numbers (numeric and collegiate) and resorting to authoritarian references. My hair shirt swelled and itched.

In my last school there were two female Executives, myself and another. The dynamics were very interesting. We were both heads of particularly female and ‘lesser’ regarded subjects - Home Science and Art. Whereas I sought to relate on an ‘equal’, non-gendered basis (which I now understand as relating on men’s terms of mind and authority structures) and was well respected and valued in those areas, I feel it did not serve my department or subject well. The other Executive played the ‘traditional woman’ role to the hilt - and did so consciously. Full makeup, petite and blond, married to one of the Manual Arts teachers; she balanced the Executive role with a persistent supplicant presence, and the occasional petulant temper. Beneath the doll-like exterior there was a keen mind and a strong personality, well disguised, and determined to remain so. The persona worked for her and her department, much better than my quasi-male logic, hard work and passion worked for me.

These experiences not only taught me about traditional maleness and traditional femaleness (my mother was a strong, intelligent and dominant woman, so hardly a traditional or appreciated model; my father a gentle, warm, interior man), they also reinforced the dissonance between myself and that paradigm. I fitted neither (the role of the autocrat or the supplicant), although I had links to both. My only options were to find where my way belonged, or to create a place for myself as I am.

Such experiences have led to a continued keen sensitivity and interest in the gendered psyche and social mores around these.

In the context of the Phoenix myth, I taught for nearly 20 adult years. The last five were spent preparing my pyre; preparing and readying myself to leave, to destroy that persona and that security. When I did so there were no regrets, although there was a deep sadness that my passing was so invisible, and my years of passionate contribution so unacknowledged and possibly pointless. The very processes of the organisation ensured that. I took long service leave as a platform for transition. When I cut the final thread, six months later and a
thousand kilometres from my students and colleagues, I was sent a piece of paper to fill out, and with that I disappeared from the Education Department, and it from my world.

For the next eight years I freelanced, exploring new work, new ways in the world, and new audiences for my values and areas of interest. I taught at TAFE, in Community Adult Education and University, was a professional and personal development consultant, presented workshops, was a holistic practitioner and led meditation groups.

During that time I went back to University to further explore mysticism and inner change, this time in an academic environment. Following the theme The Mystic to the Marketplace, an interest in men changing out of power-over structures arose.

In writing up this thesis and reflecting on my life in the context of the Phoenix, I could recognise my own Phoenix walk (Mackenzie 2001). Leaving a 20 year-long teaching career (1980) was the fire, a ‘self-de(con)struction’. I began to freelance, reforming myself. The worm was stirring in the ashes, redefining itself, beginning its growth into a new form (freelancing and working at various jobs, both hierarchical and self-initiated; and enrolling in a Master’s degree). The Canberra period has been a time of review, crystallising of self and preparing to take the ashes of my former self, in an egg of myrrh, to the alters of Heliopolis (PhD submission?), thence to return, ready to take my place in the wider world again.
Ch. 6: Interviews: Method

‘… is there a role for women to act as … a sounding board from which men glean what they want to do and then move out from there?’ (SMac in MS3/Q115/P33)

Stories and Conversation

“We come forth from the conversational ‘soup’ of our times and place. We grow in conversation and absorb many unspecified meanings. We live into being the many patterns of convention that, in being absorbed, become who we blinkingly take ourselves to be. We are patterned cross-currents of argument and assertion, expostulations and platitudes. Almost everything in this culturally primordial soup is analogical and has to be teased out in threads, as wool from the tangled skein. We have to separate out the yarn that we will tell ourselves and others. Mostly we remain tangled within the threads of the story lines spun by others before and around us.” (Mair 1989 p.275)
Stories, whether experienced or allegorical, have power beyond the confines of the individual. In late February 2006, I went to a folk Festival in Cobargo in south east NSW.

Fundamental to the Folk tradition is the telling of stories, often in song, about real folk and real situations.

One songwriter and performer (Jim Lay) told us of just this realisation, that he did not have to ‘make up’ songs, but had to simply tell the stories of his life and those around him and put these to music. The added benefit was that these songs shone in authenticity, and in their individuality reflected the universality of drama, pathos and humanity. His work as a Remote Area Fire Fighter, with yearly stints in the far north on Aboriginal settlements, as well as his ‘ordinary’ life on the South Coast, more than supplied enough inspiration for songs of mateship, purpose and fulfilment, danger and heroism, care and practicality. Similarly, comedians at this event derived humour and idiosyncratic views from the simplest stories of life. They left us refreshed, viewing those events forever differently! Yet another group performed an original epic built around the story of Yarri, an aboriginal honoured for saving many white people in the devastating Gundagai flood of 1852. Life and stories added richness to each other.

The power of individual experience, and the meaning-making arising out of that process, has steadily become a valid and rich seam for researchers to mine. Out of such research may come better understandings of the human condition, possibilities for social policy and practicalities, therapy, social history, management, health, ecology and wellbeing (Anderson 2000; Braud & Anderson 1998; Chase 2005; Menon 2000; Moustakas 1990; Pradl 1984; Van Manen 1990; White 1998).

It has been natural for my research method to lean towards people telling me stories of their own experiences (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger & Tarule 1997 p.45; Chase 2005; Ginn 1994). While observing and listening, I analyse and meta-think, looking for rapport and commonality, difference and understanding, layering new information into the complex matrix already embedded, and checking old information for validity in the light of new information.
Close, deep listening enabled me to derive telling information which, when reflected back, often added further clarity. This was particularly powerful as it was coupled with the willingness of both parties to self-reflect, and to notice and assess patterns. It was never a one-way process:

“The hermeneutic interview tends to turn the interviewees into participants or collaborators of the research project.” (Van Manen 1990 p.63)

So it was, in the middle of a conversation that was just like that, with a man who had recently come out of a hierarchy and set about redefining himself, that I came to the notion of using 1:1 interviews as a way of investigating the issues of:

• why people (in this case, men) leave hierarchies, and
• what were the characteristics of that process?

This later developed into also identifying

• stages in the men’s work and self transitions
• aspects of their personal transformations
• transition correlations to two mythic archetypes
• speculation on links to broader life processes.

I interviewed six men about their change processes as they moved out of hierarchical, power-over structures; some to leave forever, to recreate themselves and their lives in different ways; others to return, but with a different perspective on themselves and their relationships to hierarchical, command-and-control paradigms. All interviews were in-depth and iterative.

Like Goodman (1979 p. x),

“I believed if I could get inside the dynamic of change and understand what went on inside people and between people when they confronted something new, I would be able to carve out some guidelines that would help me during some future crisis … the way to find out how people change is to talk with some of them.”

From the commonalities of experience and self-reflection by the subjects, I hoped I would be able to map a ‘successful’ transition process and define its key internal changes.
I had no idea what the pattern would be for the men, although I had my own experiences to draw on. Having experienced the process of leaving hierarchies myself, I was aware I would, on some level, be comparing the men’s experiences with mine, yet also holding them as quite distinct.

Since I was exploring only men’s experiences, I needed to doubly suspend my ideas and beliefs to do this: firstly as a woman, imbued with all that gender and female upbringing entailed for me; and second, to put aside beliefs, experiences and social opinions gleaned and embedded as a woman raised and living in Australian (middle-class) society. I was not, after all, comparing men’s and women’s experiences in this study. All the decisions, choices and values that had sustained me were mine. I had to be aware that, in all likelihood, they may not be the same as those of the men.

**Significant Social Sector**

The men who became interviewees were white Anglo-Saxon males between 40 and 59 years. They had been employed for significant periods in traditional male work roles in traditionally organised hierarchies. The group provided an artificial reflection of the broad Australian society; they reflect our 19th century social heritage and a present social norm, especially in regard to leaders in government and business (Turner 2006). For example, most of the 226 senators and members of the 41st Australian parliament are middle-aged, white, educated men:

“In Australia, as in other Western liberal democracies, politics traditionally has been the domain of white, middle-aged men.” (Commonwealth of Australia 2006 24 Feb 2006 p. 1)

For any man to move out of hierarchy and its power-over control paradigms, is, therefore, to go against a deeply embedded cultural and, some argue, biological, grain (Clare 2000 p.25; Clark 2004; Moir & Jessel 1991 p.179; Stewart 1991 p.94; Turner 2006). The significance of this study is as a contribution to the evolving body of knowledge of this phenomenon.
Two Groups

In depth one-to-one interviews were conducted with two distinct sets of three men each, from two widely dissimilar geographic and cultural areas.

Three men came from the North Coast of New South Wales (Australia), with each man interviewed either four or five times. Another three men were each interviewed three times, this time in Canberra, in the Australian Capital Territory. All interviews ran for approximately an hour and a half to two hours and were conducted in a setting of the subject’s choice. A meeting was also held between two of the subjects (and for part of the time, myself) to discuss commonalities in their transition processes, the changes effected in them by the processes, and my analysis of the research information at that (early) stage.

All interviews were taped and transcribed, then analysed and interpreted, both individually and collectively. Interpretation and analysis occurred both within and outside the actual interview, the former being reflected back to the participant in the interview as part of the interview process. Participants were sent the transcripts to read and we discussed my draft notes, early analysis and commentary. In a couple of cases this enabled some longitudinal input.

“Typically, the data take the form of interviews from participants who meet specific criteria (or alternate texts that meet specific criteria). First, the researcher identifies the target population (or target texts) and creates procedures for recruiting a sample of participants (or texts) from that defined population (or textural material or corpus). Second, the researcher defines selection criteria that will retain participants who (or texts which) will speak directly and articulately to the research from a clear understanding of the topic. Third, utilizing the hermeneutical lenses developed above, the researcher analyzes [sic] the new texts as a means for modifying, redefining, reorganizing, and expanding his or her understanding of the research topic.” (Anderson 2000 p.9)

Selection of Interviewees

Each group of men were quite independent of each other; the trio from the North Coast and the Canberran trio never interacting. As two independently selected groups from two quite different Australian subcultures, yet connected by them being of similar age, ethnicity and education, I was able to:
• compare interviews from both groups in regard to their differences and similarities
• compare their backgrounds
• use triangulation with published and informal material, and
• explore thin slices of society in-depth.

I wanted to talk with men about their experiences while they were changing out of hierarchies. My intent within the interviews was deeply explorative: to discover how their transitions began and why; how they progressed, and what difference it made to them as individuals. Enabling mutuality was important to me, both as a person and researcher. I was, therefore, looking for men who wanted to tell their story and were willing to tell it to me, as a person and a woman; men who had successfully managed a transition from dependency in hierarchies to a greater self-reliance and self-definition; who were finding richness in the process, and a deeper appreciation of who they felt they were.

The men on the North Coast came to me referred by my network of friends and their contacts. All three were husbands or partners (briefly met at times prior to the study) of women I knew or knew of. This gave me the advantage of starting with some trust between us, and the likely support of their wives to help them explore their changes. None of the wives/partners of these men, or the men in Canberra, were interviewed, nor were they part of discussions with me, although, from comments by the interviewees, each of the men talked to their partners about their interviews.

The three later interviewees, from Canberra, were, at the time, all ‘strangers’ to me, being referred by other strangers, new acquaintances, or themselves. As was to be expected, these later interviewees required more time to develop trust and willingness to ‘open up’ than did those with the men from the North Coast.

All had volunteered because they felt the project was relevant to themselves. Their motivations varied, but almost all expressed a profound benefit from doing the interviews. Their comments and reasons for this are further explored in Value (Ch.6).
Number of Interviews and Subjects

I began the in-depth interviews with the three men on the North Coast (DW, MS and ROC); and later interviewed the other three men in Canberra (PS, IH and JL). The interviewees were an ex-corporate engineer, an ex Regional Manager of education; an ex-boat-business owner; an ex-Head of a University department; an ex-priest and an ex-military man.

Though the men in the research groups had been chosen because they had reformed their work and moved out of the hierarchies they had been in, it emerged that they also more or less represented a beginning, middle and end of the latter stages of their collective transition processes. This was not designed, but became clear within the interviews themselves, and was an extraordinary stroke of luck. All had passed the ‘tipping point’ and were either in the clarification or consolidation stages.

Through interviewing the men on the North Coast, I developed the outline of the process. The three men there were admirably suited to the task, being acutely conscious they had undergone massive changes in the last 3 to 10 years, and able to review those changes in varying degrees of articulation and self reflection. They were also willing and keen to understand what had happened to them, and to better understand their own changes in that transition. The interviews were to play a part in that, although, again, this had not been planned as part of the research. However, I had hoped that, in understanding their transitions, insights about their changing relationships to hierarchical authority would become clearer for the men. The added dimension of their personal transformations became a core part of my study.

‘When I think about this change and this transition I tend to think career first of all but that was actually just a secondary part of it. It was a personal growth thing that has really been the controlling thread to this whole thing ...’ (Joint: MS/Q7/P4)
**North Coast and Canberra**

It is important to note that the initial interviews occurred in a geographic area traditionally known as a place of redefinition, renewal and 'initiation'. The area is a popular tourist, backpacker, alternative lifestyle, New Age, transitional haven embedded in a traditional farming area. Its population expresses a vital and colourful mix of traditional and non-traditional lifestyles, of rich and poor beside each other, of a surprisingly high quotient of educated and articulate people; all within a relatively small area. This was a vibrant mix and a very creative one. The role of hierarchical, command-and control paradigms was constantly questioned by the very values of the community.

A large portion of that community had a culture of self-reflection and self searching, and a focus on creative individuality and authenticity. Both the positive (creative events, such as the Lantern festival) and not so positive outcomes (such as heavy drug use, and many broken or short-term relationships) of these elements were very visible. Many remarkable women were involved in social action and education. There also seemed to be a dearth of strong and integrated men, in all likelihood because many of them were exploring the ‘foreign territories’ of complex emotions and their ‘femininity’. An influential part of the community were the ‘gay’ sector (homosexuals and lesbians), who tended to contribute a colourful, dramatic and creative element. By their very visibility, influence and involvement in the community, they challenged both heterosexual and social norms.

Consequently, gender stereotypes were often in question and under discussion, as were the notions of what constituted ‘success’, what our future as a planet and society might be, and questions of personal and public spiritual beliefs. It was a vibrant melting pot. At its best it was alive, creative, interesting and inspiring; at its worst it was decadent, indulgent, histrionic, didactic, judgemental, self-obsessed and narrow-minded. It was truly a place of extremes made vital by the presence of so many of the gradations of life between the two. The ‘moderate middle’ comprised a very small part of it all.
Not long after those first three interviews, I moved to Canberra, in the Australian Capital Territory. This is the ‘home of hierarchy’ in Australia and is a stark contrast to the North Coast’s fluid culture. Canberra remains largely hierarchical in its social, work and organisational structures, even today, although it, too, is making its own transition from its primary reliance on hierarchically entrenched (government) organisations to private sector business (Gentle 2000 p.4). Here I hoped I could further test my theories with men still close to hierarchical allegiances and experiences.

Canberra was built in the early 20th century as the Capital of Australia; as a Public Service town; and as the seat of the Australian Government. It was founded as a centre for law-making, bureaucracy and government practicalities. On the surface it is a quiet and spacious city, living in its head and its offices, a goodly proportion of the population seemingly preoccupied with acceptability, status and security. Its main streets are wide and often appear empty. Despite appearances, it has a rich cultural and creative underbelly, often in discrete geographic pockets, and through public spectacles and festivals.

Paradoxically, the plan of the city is overwhelmingly organic. Wide avenues sweep in curves, dotted with roundabouts. Streets arc, twist and double back on one another in a most cellular fashion. There are ‘pods’ richly tapestried with interior curves. It is within these hidden ‘pods’ that much of the life of Canberra exists. Woe betides a novice traveller who ventures off the main thoroughfares without a map.

When I first came to Canberra I was struck by a sense that the roads were like veins and arteries (‘arterial roads’ is a common term for key roads in Australian cities), but that the metaphor was extended further here. The suburban ‘pods’ were like lungs, convoluted and complex internally, most easily seen as intricate looping double lines on suburban maps. The central lake seemed to soften the nature of the place, and remind me of the fluidity of Nature in contrast to the regulated character of the city’s Governmental role.

Work clothes here are, for the most part, blacks, blues, greys, plain in pattern and texture; internal organisational spaces are generally inorganic: static. Surfaces
are, for the most part, plain and textureless, the buildings largely divorced from nature by height, security shields, artificial light and air-conditioning. Yet there are quirks here: a ‘talking wall’, public art events (one, ironically, wallpapering plane trees in patterned paper!); a large, tilted glass cube which varies in colour in response to touch; a sheep on a throne, and a colourful carousel in its central Civic Walk.

Every city has its centre of good eateries, entertainment, colourful characters, and community action. In Canberra they need to be searched out. Most friendships come from joining groups, by referrals and through public group activities. There are many community events staged for spectators, much theatre and music, and many good eating places. Nevertheless Canberran life is predominantly private, close-knit and unseen by the casual observer or city visitor.

In contrast to the North Coast, most people of Canberra reflect a preference for the ‘moderate middle’, with a narrow taper to both ends of the spectrum, essentially the opposite of North Coast culture.

Just as the formal Embassies of our governmental liaisons quietly exist here with little fuss, so do the poor, the homeless and the drug dealers. The existence of the latter two groups is real but hidden, as one might gloss over a badly behaved child in the presence of some dignitary, or ignore ‘the elephant in the lounge room’.

Canberra is like a black cocktail dress with clean lines and an elaborate brooch; the North Coast like a flowing, colourful, theatrical gown anchored with good design and an inherent appreciation of the dynamics of creativity and practicality.

The second group of three men were also educated and articulate. They occupied or had occupied positions of relative power in the city and their organisations. However, whether because of nature, socialisation, less time, or less familiarity with me, they shared fewer deep self-reflections than were evident in the interviews with men from the North Coast, except for one man (PS). Their descriptions were more anchored in procedure and explanation rather than in meaning-making and personal responses. This was particularly apparent when
articulating their internal transition processes, perceptions of manhood and success, and their notions of self.

One man was originally from the army, one from the priesthood, and one from a tertiary education institution. All were initially strangers to me, as I was to them. The same level of trust and openness that I had encountered with the North Coast men was not present, although I came to recognise that this fitted the social norm of both Canberra and the topic well. PS, however, quite quickly returned to the in-depth considerations of life that was his norm in the priesthood, and which had continued to inform his secular life.

**Records**

All interviews were taped and transcribed. I also took notes as the interviews proceeded. This was particularly useful when misadventure with technology occurred and portions of a couple of interviews did not record. It also enabled immediate review and ready access to information before the (costly) transcriptions were completed.

**Analysis Process**

As the study proceeded it became clear that as well as moving out of hierarchy, the men underwent personal transformations of varying degrees. I therefore drew on such concepts as iterative and transformative learning, action research concepts and Kolb’s (1984) four-part experiential learning cycle - concrete experience, reflection, abstract conceptualisation, active experimentation – to develop understanding of that process.

“Each … interview, including the review session immediately following them, constitutes an action research cycle. The review sessions interpret the data emerging from the interviews. During the review sessions you also plan the questions which will give you a better understanding of the situation. At the same time, the questions used, the process and the sampling are checked. They can then be modified at the next round.” (Dick 2002)
During each interview I made notes on links and significances. I reviewed each interview afterwards, and again before meeting the interviewee for the next one, remembering both the experience of it (somatic response, atmosphere, level of disclosure and trust) and the content. I also listened to the tape(s) again, to imaginatively re-enter and recreate the 'space' of the interview before, to maintain a continuum between them (Anderson 2000). Thus, in subsequent interviews I was able to recreate the sense of continuity of each set of interviews, and of the full six sets, as a whole, than if I was beginning from a ‘cold start’ each time.

Each time I listened to the tapes I tried to do so from a different perspective: listening to myself as the interviewer; listening to the content; listening to its tones and the structure; and listening to the men’s processes and changes.30

While going over the interviews and notes in this way, fresh insights would arise. These enabled me to prepare for the next interview/conversation by noticing consistencies, dissonances and missing information, whether biographic or experiential.

When the transcripts arrived, I read them through while at the same time re-listening to the tapes. This enabled me to note the tone and pauses within the interviews, and the prevailing atmosphere of the moment, both critical to the meaning and relationship within the conversations. Correlations between the texts and my notes of the interviews/conversations were also made.

The checked transcripts were then sent to the interviewees for comment and possible changes. Responses from the interviewees were then incorporated, either in the text or as additional notes. Following text corrections, and as each interview was summarised and analysed, its core information was coded under various headings. This process enabled quick topic searches.

30 I used this same technique when editing and reviewing the thesis itself.
Some of the theme headings were:

- key themes
- key values
- key phrases and imagery
- key events
- key influences
- key people
- maleness
- transition processes
- relationships to hierarchy
- methodology
- men’s self-images
- the men’s personal motivations.

In practice, the actual headings varied somewhat for each person, reflecting the individual nature of the interviews and interviewees.

Some portions, such as the story of the making a Samurai sword (DW3/Q63-77/pp16-20 and DW3/Q85-87/pp21-22), have been rewritten as stories or vignettes for the thesis. In the case of the Samurai sword story, I felt that descriptive writing was more appropriate, to clearly convey its deep meaning for DW, than the reportage style of its delivery. 31

As well as examining the text of each interview, I also reviewed the entire sequence of interviews for each man, and the holistic experience of all the interviews for each individual, and collectively. Overlayed onto that was a composite element: to take into account the ‘textural feel’ of the interaction with each man – the holistic perception of the situations portrayed, and the men within them, plus my role in eliciting that information, and their role of sharing.

The interviews were oral, then transcribed to print. Deep listening, my visual and somatic memory, our individual responses and my experience of the embedded and complex dynamics inherent in each dialogue, contributed to the richness and depth of meaning gained from the interviews.

31 The process is as told to me by DW. The information embedded in his account was obviously significant for him and selected by him. However I do not claim total accuracy of the process or the tradition. The sword had special significance to him, figuring also in his Rovers’ initiation ceremony- (DW2/Q47-71/pp13-17 and DW3/Q63-79/pp16-20)
Using this information I have written a detailed account of each man’s life in my words (Appendix A), followed by a section (“In Their Own Voice” Appendix B), where their comments are used to illustrate the themes of each man’s sharing. These sections were written to enable the reader to gain a deeper understanding of the men as individuals. In Appendix C, each man’s transition is discussed, once again using quotations from their interviews. (Shorter overviews of each man’s life appear in Ch.7, as a prelude to my analysis of their transitions in Ch.8 and Ch.9).

I found that, to varying degrees, between interviews, each man reflected on his previous interviews and what issues and ideas had arisen out of them. Their revised awareness was then reflected in the next interview. Sometimes they had also discussed the interview with others, such as their partners.

The men’s discussion with others appeared to contribute to one of the primary changes noted in each man over the course of the study; that is, their ability to articulate and reframe meaning and significance within their experiences. As a result, most of the men developed an increased understanding of what they had experienced, their role and responses in those transitions, and a renewed, but different, concept of themselves. The clearest differences were manifest in the changes in their metaphors, their definitions of success, their changed parameters to decision-making and their revised frameworks for assessing and valuing themselves and their work.

The language the men used to describe their lives, and the circumstances and experiences of their transitions and transformations, were necessarily determined by and through their historical and personal contexts – particularly their education, personalities, work environment, status in society and culture.

‘The language changed radically from being externally related and measurement related: judgement, quite finite measurements of success of failure, and absolute ‘yes’ and ‘no’s’, to very much more graded language of understanding the subtleties of life and the interactions of the way you made decisions and what your value systems were, and that move from the external to internal vocabulary, too. References to yourself, rather than references to
outside. And to your feelings a lot more ... so in other words your language became self referential rather than external.’ (from the joint meeting between two of the interviewees: Joint: SM/Q60/P28)

For instance, metaphors of competition and imagery of war were common in describing the early stages of their transitions,

‘You have to have something to conquer. It’s either conquering yourself or you’re conquering that land or your conquering that journey ... what we’re talking about is very battle type language, war like language, and that’s what I set out in, that’s the mode I set out in. But what I’m finding now is with this sense (that) I can connect with an energetic field around, then that battle isn’t so much a conquering. It’s a moving inner direction of that leading me, rather than having to conquer.’ (DW5/Q107and 109/P27)

... while in later stages more individual and inclusive metaphors appeared:

‘SMac: What does “with” people mean now? That sounds like that word has changed meaning.
DW: Yes, with people before, was that I was a leader, I was the person who had influence, I wouldn’t get involved personally with [sic]. But now there’s not so much a sense of a leader; it’s more a sense of involvement and it’s a sense of intimacy with people. There’s a sense of being able to be transformative in the some way’ (DW4/Q46/P17).

**Touching the ‘Edges’**

At one time, when one of the interviewees commented on a response I made (a rueful smile), it shocked me. Rarely did any of the men do that, and it was an interesting experience to have the torch shone on me for a moment, rather than them. I realised that, prior to that moment, and perhaps naively, I had regarded my role to be essentially ‘invisible’, detached, yet analytical and empathetically responsive.

More often, the men came up against their assumptions and the edges of their comfort zones. For instance, both MS and DW found some of the conversations challenging as we reached the edges of their conceptual landmarks.

‘It’s like that dream I had the other night. Oh I’ve got to take an exam in this course tomorrow and I’ve forgotten to go to it all semester.’ (MS3/Q91/P26)

At such times the men expressed a desire to know, yet did not necessarily know how to proceed, or even if they were ready to do so. It was as if they were:
‘... trying to formulate the kind of move towards an unknown which you’re still explaining or trying to explain in your old language or in your known language.’ (SM in MS3/Q59/P19)

At other times, the matter was deferred:

DW: What have I left behind? … I’ll change the subject because it’s too hard to think about at the moment.’ (DW2/Q85/P20)

Through a pause, divergence, humour or directly addressing the discomfort, we moved on from these moments.

‘Even with what we’re talking about now, just a series of, the interviews that you have set up: there was a fear in me of going into a part of me that I mightn’t really like. So I had to kind of feel that.’ (DW1/Q148/P34)

Several such incidents enabled both the men and myself to discuss and consider much deeper layers of their experience, sharing and insights.

**Conversational Speech as Text**

Conversational speech often looks appalling when written (as in the quotation above), and can be difficult to read. Yet when spoken it has a complete sense, with pauses, pitch, speed, intonations and prior statements supporting the sense of it. When it becomes literal text, many of those nuances and tacit or non-verbal accoutrements disappear, since so much is contextual. The ‘grammar’ that tends to be used is very loose; sentences are loose; stops and starts show meaning and language under construction; body gestures add inflections and responses; meaning is not just ‘contained’ in the words, but is part of a fabric of many elements. References to previous conversations were often coded or communicated in shorthand. As a result of these factors, all of which were relevant to this study, full meaning was sometimes not contained in a sentence but was a composite of audible, visible and tacit knowledge inherent in the conversation and dialogue itself, and in its historical existence.

‘Grammatising’ the written text was a major task in itself and was part of my process of attributing meaning and seeking to record or reveal their truths. On
the whole I have left the text of the interviews with minimal punctuation, only editing (post review by the interviewer) to clarify meaning.

The actual meaning was sometimes discerned in sighs, pauses and inflections, or left hanging in the air, anchored in previous statements. Pauses, bracketing meaning and commas are a case in point. There are no visible commas in spoken text, yet the placement of them can be critical.

Filler words, such as ‘you see’, ‘er’, ‘umm’, were and are a common characteristic of dialogue. They gave the speaker (and sometimes myself) time to think; at other times they indicated that the speaker was checking for my response, or the sounds were expressions of their empathy or reserve. They sometimes indicated further thought was going on, such as a revision, or that a change in direction was about to happen. Sometimes it was evident that what was being said was still in ‘draft’ form and needed revisiting or rearticulating. These processes in text form can be quite confusing for the reader, and in many cases have been edited out for the sake of clarity, but in other cases left in to convey contextual atmosphere, to illustrate mental processes.

There is so much more mobility of thought in dialogue than in script text! Freed from the constraints of encapsulating an idea in a linear sentence, spoken language is often broken, changes direction swiftly, and may even double back on itself. Often, ‘billabongs’ occurred: discrete bodies of thought springing from dialogue, inserted as an aside, then returned to later ... or maybe not! Sometimes they indicated the interviewee was approaching the topic from a different direction; or had made a shift of level of communication, such as from literal to conceptual. Some thoughts were clearly partial and some more complete. Sometimes partial thought structures were used as steps to greater clarity - evident in the text as it moved to an increasingly traditional and coherent language construction. Such an example is demonstrated in the quotation below, where DW appears to gradually conceptualise pattern, meaning and purpose in relation to him killing fish and animals:
'But one of the things that was with that that he used to talk to fish all the time, so I took up that. So in a sense I guess there was a [pause] after that, when I remember how I always used to talk to what I was [pause] it was an entity that I had to talk to. It was like as if that was part of it[pause] even now I still do it. But it was actually years before I consciously started to make a ritual out of that. If I killed something then I needed to fulfil a ritual with that killing.'

( DW1/Q74/P18)

Overall, I struggled with the issue of selection!!! What to put in; how much to put in to capture the ‘truth’ of representation; what to leave out. The actualities are so subtle, especially in written speech. My aim was to select information and comment that appeared to directly represent the men’s views, their experiences and the issue at hand as coherently and clearly as possible, without distorting the meanings.

**Portraying ‘Truth’**

As a researcher, I wrestled with trying to truly reflect the interviewee’s ‘truth’ 
(Shepherd 1993; Van Manen 1990). Even though it may be a passing thing mediated by memory and understanding, one’s own truth at any one moment is a truth worthy of respect and authority. From it we create the next moment, and it is therefore the ground of our future.

It was my work as a researcher to respect that, yet to also indicate that all my representations are inevitably incomplete, conditional and transitory.

Reliance on my range of skills and knowledges, developed as an educator, an Intuitive, consultant and counsellor, were all employed in selecting relevant and illustrative text. Meaning-making and analysis was based on multi-layered communication tools and skills employed by the men and myself, not just the textural evidence. Principal to these were (my and their) perceptions of patterns, key (and repeated) words and phrases, congruencies and incongruencies.

Selection of the text that most truly reflected meaning in a logical or textural form sometimes required me to edit or leave out passages that may have related to the topic, but that I judged were secondary or incomprehensible as written text.
It is important to acknowledge that by my very role as interviewer, by the particular questions asked, the points I (and they) chose to respond to, the understanding, reserve and empathy I, and they, brought to the dialogue, had already mediated the content and modes of expression.

As is evident here, and throughout the process, that my role as a woman interviewing men was significant. My gender (female interviewing males) and gender relationship with the men (crone, to men of approximately my own age), influenced both the selection of information and the way it was delivered, and received.

However, I think that this gender issue was more significant for me than them, as I was constantly thinking about it, on an epistemological level. They, it seemed, were more interested in old fashioned manners, considerations and courtesies. For instance, DW mentioned that he edited his language when relating his experiences on the docks:

> “And what I’m finding is my sensor to you is that I can’t use the language of that time because I might be too, it might be upsetting for you. Because if I was to use some of the language that I used to use then ... it’s not very nice language.” (DW1/Q135/P30)

Add the interviewees’ processes of internally editing memories and speech; their decisions regarding the appropriate relationship with me as interviewer; defining their level of trust and intimacy (level of truth and truth-fullness); their capacity and willingness to self-reflect and their capacity for articulation, and it becomes clear that sharing experience is a very indirect and complex task. It does not necessarily mean it is an inaccurate science or is ‘untrue’. What does become evident is that communication and expression are multi-layered events made up of many tacit and learned skills reflecting multi-layered, multiple and pluralistic truths (Lisher cited in Brew 2001b p.112).

Following is a table describing some levels of engagement I, and to varying degrees, the men, used in the interviews:
Table 6: Interviewing and facilitation techniques and skills used in this research (Mackenzie© 2007)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels</th>
<th>Modes</th>
<th>Senses</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intuitive (Meta-knowing)</td>
<td>Perceptual</td>
<td>Intellect, Auditory, Kinaesthetic, Somatic Visual, Olfactory, Intuitive</td>
<td>Understanding and knowing in a holistic way, including knowing information not directly or rationally available; tacit knowing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meta-thinking and meta-cognition</td>
<td>Mental</td>
<td>Intellect, Auditory, Kinaesthetic, Visual, Olfactory</td>
<td>Perceiving patterns and links in information, relationships and events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rapport and empathy</td>
<td>Emotional</td>
<td>Kinaesthetic, Somatic</td>
<td>Sense of relationship or commonality, usually shared and mutual. An awareness of emotional atmosphere and relationship; harmonious or challenging, intimate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deep listening and understanding</td>
<td>Multiple</td>
<td>Auditory, Kinaesthetic, Visual, Olfactory</td>
<td>Deep listening: an awareness of subtexts provided by many elements including body language, emotions and emotional contexts; the importance of such things as tone, pace, volume, pitch and silence. An awareness of the influence of these factors on modulating and influencing meaning, and adding complexity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation</td>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>Visual</td>
<td>Collection of visual data, including body movements and facial expressions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening - simple</td>
<td>Perceptual</td>
<td>Auditory</td>
<td>Hearing sound, paying attention; following meaning of sounds/language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being wholly present</td>
<td>Senses</td>
<td>Holistic</td>
<td>A heightened sense of attention and awareness; several levels of thinking and understanding happening concurrently; pattern-sensitive; aware of inconsistencies; sensing emotional variations; calm; visually aware including body language and responses; holding ‘field’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meta levels</td>
<td>Feelings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being non-judgemental</td>
<td>Somatic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mind</td>
<td>Tacit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intuitive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The Interviewees’ Roles:**

As a researcher, I focussed on what I should and could be best doing to listen to, document, analyse, learn from and communicate the men’s experiences. Yet the men’s involvement and way(s) of being involved were also critical. Without their sincere and, at times, courageous involvement, I would not have been able to discern the subtleties, patterns and processes of their transitions, nor would I have been able to have made these visible to others.
All the men:

- gave generously of themselves and their time
- told me their stories – of their lives and experiences of transitions, from several levels of engagement
- put themselves in the context of the research by asking me about my interests in the topic and my intent for the research
- discussed their views of themselves and their worlds with me
- reviewed themselves, their lives and the ways they had lived them
- remembered and selected relevant information, significant instances and influential people
- responded thoughtfully to the reflections I presented to them – and considered, evaluated agreed or disagreed with them, enabling me to become clearer in what each was trying to convey
- re-lived many of their significant and, at times, unresolved experiences, including uncertainties, aspirations and discoveries.

Because of these actions, I felt honoured, privileged and responsible as a researcher.

Their concept of being of help was extended to myself as a researcher, and to other men in similar situations to themselves. They wanted other men to benefit by their experiences, as they felt benefited by the insights into their own experiences during the research process, and from the experiences of the other men in the study. For DW, this concern was later expressed by him developing proposals and plans to mentor young and ‘uninitiated’ men into ‘manhood’.
**Interview Process**

“To start each interview you ask a very open ended question, and then keep your informant talking. The content of a convergent interview therefore comes almost entirely from the informant.

Each interview starts this way. All informants are given the chance at first to contribute their perceptions unshaped by more detailed questions. In most interviews, but especially the later ones, you add more specific questions. This occurs towards the end of the interview. The specific questions become more precise from interview to interview.

The process is structured. There are some definable stages to each interview. You interpret the information as you proceed - you don’t save it up for analysis at the end of the program. The series of interviews is structured in such a way that information is interpreted from interview to interview … The process is driven by the informants and the data they provide. If sampling is reasonably good, you can obtain a good understanding from surprisingly few people.” (Dick 2002 p.3)

My interview questions began as simple ones such as:

- ‘What was your motivation for doing these interviews?’ (DW1/Q3/P1),
- ‘What was the impetus for your change?’ and
- ‘Do you recognise any critical points in your change process, and if so, what were they?’

Other, subsequent questions dug deeper:

- ‘What difference has it made in your a) work life; b) private life; c) self?’
- ‘Where is this change leading you?’

However, in reality I found that most questions arose at the time, growing out of the dialogue, and others were reflections back to the interviewee for their comment, as much as they were direct questions. From their reflections back, further information arose, often without the actual need for further questioning at all.

“... good questions in qualitative interviews should be open-ended, neutral, sensitive, and clear to the interviewee ...” (Britten 1995 p.252)

In hindsight, I recognised that six types of questions were asked, as outlined by Britten (1995 p.252):
As the interviews progressed, in a cyclic and iterative fashion, promptings, reflections and references to previous answers elicited deeper and more detailed information and responses. As Dick observed, “Overlaps and disagreements form the basis for analysis” (Dick 1989 p.19), and for revisiting a topic or response. I also found that unresolved and significant experiences provided the richest possibilities for review, revision and reframing of meaning.

**Trust, Rapport and Compassion**

One of the deep issues, and perhaps the most important variable influencing the level and quality of information available in any interview process, is trust. The men I interviewed from the North Coast town knew me or knew of me as being trustworthy and discrete. These men also knew that I was not a militant ‘feminist’, although I was a woman who believed in the need for better ways of relating between the sexes, both in the workplace and in interpersonal relations.

Confidentiality was critical for trust and openness, especially in cases where I knew people who were related to or associated with the men, as is usually the case in a small town or city.

I found an individualised rapport and relationship with each man was beneficial to develop trust. Trust enabled the interviewees to talk freely on deep issues and personal reflections. This in itself was an integral part of the methodology, and of gathering information and shaping the process. The atmosphere of the interviews needed to be one of acceptance with intimacy created by immersion in the present with them in their validated world. As Rosemarie Anderson (2000 p.1) has put it:

“To know others, we must love them first and look at the world from their perspective.”
What is this ‘love’? It is not the love of attraction, although there is an element of this in the willingness of the interviewer to be open without a fear of being foolish. The kind of love needed is a deep interest and openness to knowing their reality, without judgement (that is the hard part!). This has been called ‘deep listening’ or ‘compassionate listening’. As van Manen (1990 p.6) explains,

“*We can only understand something or someone for whom we care.*”

Gender relations and associations are much more traditional and prescribed in Canberra than in the North Coast culture. In Canberra I was an unknown, and a single female. The men I interviewed there all had their spouses present in the house or we met in a public place. Although this has given me the advantage of gaining a deeper perspective on their gender relations, it has also shown a level of reserve which sometimes slowed discussion, as I patiently waited and worked to allow trust to develop. I felt that certain topics were hedged off and edited out, possibly because of that reserve or, possibly, because of the proximity of their partner.

The three Canberrans described their transition processes predominantly in terms of events and actions taken by themselves or others, and more rarely mentioning their feelings about and responses to those events. Despite indications that there was much more to tell, the main approach for two of them was to assert feelings of control and assurance, definiteness and certainty (JL and IH). Such an approach (what I call a ‘reportage’ approach) effectively distanced me, creating a ‘shield’ of impersonality until greater trust could develop.

All six described themselves as misfits, misfitting or ‘in but not of’ their organisations. PS and JL described themselves as playing the organisational ‘game’, as did ROC and MS. MS, IH and PS felt they were not suited to that game: of being competitive, assertive and goal orientated, with power gained by association and favour as much as by talent and capability. Yet each had

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32 Suzie Mackenzie · (Mackenzie 1999 p.12) (namesake, not researcher), explores this paradox in her article ‘Interviewing: Danse Macabre’, where she distinguishes between attraction and intimacy within the interview space.
obviously been successful in that game, gaining positions of respect, responsibility, and significant authority. JL and ROC, on the other hand, had both felt competent and successful in it.

With their lives split, and themselves divided, inner personal tension became a trigger and a driver for the men’s changes towards resolving that ill-ease.

**Deep Listening**

Deep listening - also called ‘compassionate listening’ (Braud & Anderson 1998) or ‘open listening’ – ideally requires a still mind, free of comparisons with one’s own experiences, free of judgements and any form of impatience. Without such compassionate listening, the intrusions of self-editing and mental distractions would have dulled my receptors. With focussed intent and compassion, there was a fuller possibility of sensing relevant data and nuances of meaning.

“Compassionate listening invites our research participants to speak to us freely and honestly about the depth and value of their experiences. It takes skill to analyze [sic] data; yet, compassion allows us to see the full value and meaningfulness of the data as it shapes itself before us.” (Anderson 2000 p.3)

This is not the easiest of tasks, especially if an interviewee has a particular dogma or life view that does not sit comfortably with one’s own. Relying on sheer intent is not sufficient under such circumstances. In such situations, commitment to an inherent absence of judgement enables clarity, openness and mutual regard.

One of my interviewees held a strong religious viewpoint which heavily coloured and prescribed his view of both events and the world. During the process of the interviews it was clear he was struggling to decode his experiences of change so that they could fit his framework of doctrinal beliefs. He also seemed keen to influence me toward validating and accepting his beliefs and his interpretations of his experiences, then (paradoxically) saying that he would never expect me to understand, thereby maintaining exclusive ownership of the knowledge.

‘Now I don’t expect you or others who might be reading or hearing this to understand that, because they wouldn’t be at that point.’ (IH1/Q95/P35)
Such an evangelical stance doubly demanded clarity in my role as an interviewer, as distinct from a judge, colleague or potential convert. It was clear that his belief system, and the social constructs around him, were very significant to him and gave him strong support. It was on the basis of my respect for the value that his belief had for him, that I was able to bring the openness and deep listening to the interviews that was required, although I admit that, at times, it took great concentration, commitment and focus.

The difference of this interviewee from the others made him particularly invaluable. If, despite this rigid framework, his change pattern fitted with the others, the proposition of the universal nature of the stages and their derived meanings would be strengthened. As he was previously a stranger to me, and came from the Canberra social matrix, his input was even more telling and valuable if it supported my emergent conceptions. This it did in remarkable ways, as, for instance, in his remarkable temple dream, described in detail in Ch.9.

**Unfolding and Discovery**

Each interview had its own atmosphere and 'culture', yet, as mentioned before, most of the interviewees exhibited roughly the same pattern for telling their experiences. The process began with a broad and superficial sweep of their lives, focused on events and chronology. During this they indirectly and apparently unconsciously reflected enduring values and methods of decision making, plus information on significant events, people and experiences. Whereas the interviewees seemed to focus on the sequential nature of the information, I was watching for patterns, links, key events, significances and values in their accounts.

In later interviews there was a greater focus on underlying layers, such as personal responses and meaning criteria, both by the interviewees and myself. Later still, we reviewed and discussed how these abstract principles were evident and active in their decision making, their concepts of themselves and their actions in the world.
I have used the same pattern in writing the thesis: giving an overview, then revisiting what I assessed as significant topics, on progressively deeper and more detailed levels.

The fact that all the men were given a virtual free hand as to how they wanted to approach the topic, and that all began roughly the same way, may reflect a (masculine) gender preference of engagement. My perception was that the men were initially establishing boundaries; laying out the ‘turf’, defining inclusions and exclusions. Topics within those boundaries then became open for negotiation. We later doubled back into topics discussed at earlier stages. Sometimes that was to review the significance of a detail or add to it; sometimes to delve more deeply; at times to link together situations or concepts, or to test links. Gentle probing, reflection and a lot of patience were needed, sometimes I returned to a particular question or issue several times. This was especially the case with the man who was still working in a hierarchical organisation (ROC).

One man (JL) varied this pattern slightly. Rather than beginning with his biography, he moved directly to the topic. In effect he initially defined a smaller field of exploration than the others, though, as the interviews progressed, he expanded that ‘field’. He then, too, moved into the same pattern of cyclic exploration as the others.

By degrees, and through returning to significant life markers (events which affirmed a core element of themselves) deeper levels of disclosure were reached, for example: reading Castaneda’s books for DW; gaining entry to Duntroon for JL, after being first rejected; the experience for the young PS going to administer the last rites for a dead baby; ROC’s bushwalking story; being delegated authority by respected superiors for IH and meeting a role model, for MS. Two of the men from the North Coast (DW and MS), and one from Canberra (PS), moved more quickly to describing feeling states than the other three (JL, IH and ROC). The conceptual maps developed of their transition ‘journeys’ correlated with this: JL, IH and ROC described their journeys in relation to external markers, while DW, PS and MS described their journey by references to changes within themselves.
All of the interviewing was an interactive process and, as such, not open to pre-
prescription. The process of the interviews themselves reflected the men’s 
processes of change out of hierarchical structure. The interviewing process 
started with me providing a clear description of the ‘task’ and asking some 
general predetermined questions to open the topic for discussion. As we moved 
into the interview, I began reflecting back my observations, based on my 
perceptions of the patterns, logic (for instance, matching and mismatching 
comments, values, events and processes). As the interviews evolved, they, too, 
entered into shaping the discussion. The interview was, however, still largely 
being guided by me as the interviewer, with me initiating most of the questions 
and guiding the general direction.

In the beginning, most interviewees asked what it was I wanted (reference to 
external authority). As time went, on each would volunteer what they wanted to 
talk about, including some topics that I had not anticipated or noticed (self-
referential). Finally there was a free interchange (dynamic interplay). This last 
stage was partly achieved through discussing what patterns I had noticed in the 
other men’s journeys. I was careful to only do this after each man had described 
his own ‘pattern’, so as not to pre-determine an answer. It became part of the 
iterative process: each man would then re-examine their own journey with fresh 
perspectives and new questions.

I noticed a change during the process in me, as interviewer. At the beginning I 
was questioning gently and using a lot of open-field listening, during which I 
gathered the general context of the person’s life and snippets of relevant 
information. Then I moved to intense listening as I focused on the emerging 
underlying issues, reflecting back to the interviewees some of the values and 
links that emerged, for checking the validity of my analysis and understanding. 
In this way, I, and they, became more confident that we were communicating 
effectively.
“When we listen to someone’s story ... it builds trust and leads people to saying more about their ideas and passions. Without conversation there is no trust, there is no change; and without change, everything is done according to existing regulations.” (Stewart cited in Theobald et al. 1998 p.22)

In the later stages there was more speculative discussion and my questions focused on clarification of a consistent (or inconsistent) framework of values and actions as they became more apparent. The last interview with the man who was furthest 'out' from hierarchical modes of operating (DW) finished on quite a challenging note for him. I had asked some questions which he could not instantly answer, and so he took them as questions to ponder for himself at a later time. This acceptance of uncertainty showed itself as an essential prerequisite and characteristic of success in each of the transitions studied.33

Managing and accepting uncertainty later emerged as a key aptitude for each of the men in their transition.

In Braud’s context there is enormous 'life' and vitality in doing the interviews. He correlates that vitality to validity (Braud 1998a p.219). I definitely felt internally focused, highly alert and 'alive' both during and after each of the interviews. Coming upon moments or memories of significance for the men further amplified my level of hyper-awareness.

In writing this, and in the interviews themselves, I could literally feel (sомatically) a pattern rising in me from ‘the depths’, with that feeling then becoming a focused and articulated idea. I cannot imagine the interviews being able to be preplanned, nor repeatable, as in a rigid, positivist paradigm, without losing a lot of the directness of relationship and the possibility of significant responses. The various elements, including the following, are too individualistic for repetition: myself, the interviewee and the effects of their experiences; the

33 See also Ginn’s (1994) nine staged career cycle, O’Connor (and others) re uncertainty ((Dunphy & Stace 1995 p.3; Handy 2001 p.75; O’Connor & Wolfe 1991 12, pp.323-340; O’Connor 1996).
atmosphere and setting; and whatever was happening to both the participants and myself in our wider lives at the time.

On this last point, between the interviews, the men would discuss their experiences with their partners. This accelerated the deepening of our discussions and brought to light other dimensions not recognized by them on their own:

‘I guess what I had realised about that since our last meeting was sort of how early I am in this process.’ (MS2/Q1/P1)

This did not appear to happen so often with ROC, possibly because he maintained a general practice of dividing of his life into boxes, was more guarded, and maintained the conversations on practical and event-based levels longer than the others did, reflecting his personal preference to deal with events rather than delve into esoteric or philosophic meanings:

‘I’m a bit cynical about all that counselling and stuff. I’m a behaviourist in a sort of way. I like the tangible things in life. I like to be able to see, observe and measure and off you go and do something. I probably would deny it, but I am not very esoteric or spiritual, though I probably am in another way, but I don’t see it. So I hold a lot of stock in the ability to intellectualise about things and discuss it out and that sort of stuff, but if it gets too waffly, I tend to turn off a little bit.’ (ROC3/Q78/P12)

**North Coast Triad**

The men from the North Coast came from the more traditional sector of the culture there – educated and familiar with hierarchies and traditional social structures such as schools, universities and business.

Two were deeply self-reflective and consciously engaged in philosophically based self development. The third (ROC) obviously reflected on life and his interaction with it by means of more practical responses to ideals, rather than 360-degree or multi-level reflections.
One of the men has since moved to Canberra (MS), and another (DW) has fitted out a boat and gone sailing around the Australian coast with his partner, stopping to work as they need or choose to.

The two men who expressed self-reflective natures, also expressed a strong desire to live life by their own values and on their own terms, and a willingness to stand ‘outside’ the tide of ‘tribal’ or normative behaviour. The other man, ROC, was inherently and functionally more self-referential although, paradoxically, he was the one of this three who was still in hierarchical work.34

**Canberra Triad**

My interviewees in Canberra were main-stream, conservative, middle-aged men (ex-priest, ex-military, ex-university lecturer).

To my surprise, their transitions were sparked by broadly the same triggers as those interviewed on the North Coast: of wanting more authenticity and congruency between their inner and outer lives, and to have this element in their work lives.

An additional driver for them was to have more control over their lives. This was predictable as all three were most recently fully part of hierarchical organisations and their command-and-control power paradigms than the North Coast triad. A need for control evolved as an early expression of mis-alignment with hierarchical control systems and as an indication of the first stage of transition, i.e. ‘ill-ease’.

By comparison, however, they described their paths to greater autonomy and integrity primarily in terms of achieving the mechanisms that would allow that change, rather than any processes they went through internally before they acted, or before events pushed them to change. There also seemed to be less change between their pre-transition selves and their post-transition selves than for those

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34 See later description of bushwalk described by ROC, as a description of, and metaphor, for more insight into this paradox.
interviewed on the North Coast. They may have carried their differences internally, as Canberra itself tends to.

It should be noted that two of the Canberrans had three interviews each and, due to circumstances, one only had two. Two interviewees on the North Coast had four interviews, and the other one, five. There was both more inclination and opportunity for the North Coast interviewees to explore their experiences more deeply, and their additional interviews were a result of their interests in that.

Two of the interviewees on the North Coast (DW and MS) met and had a joint discussion, after both expressing an interest in meeting the other men being interviewed. I was present for part of this joint interview, which was taped. Information from that interview also forms part of this research. MS and DW then continued their discussion alone. ROC declined the offer to meet the other men in the North Coast study. None of the Canberrans expressed interest in meeting the other men being interviewed, but they did express an interest in knowing my findings derived from my interviews with them (see JL2/Q116-125/pp33-34).

Paradoxically, varying degrees of comfort and interest in personal relationship seemed to reflect a similar level and degree of autonomy – the men most autonomous, and with the highest degree of trust and familiarity with me, were also the most comfortable with deep sharing.

**Interview Closure**

Individual interviews most often continued until the tape ran out, which in itself reflected a desire and interest to continue.

There were two occasions when mechanistic failures of tape recordings resulted in lost information. As I was taking notes at the same time, the essence and key points of what was covered was nevertheless recorded, but not verbatim. As transcripts were sent back to the interviewees, with comments, an opportunity was provided for missing information to be re-inserted.
Most interviews ran for one and a half to two hours. To ensure, I thought, ‘leeway time’, I decided to take 90-minute tapes to all interviews, and I usually had spares with me. However, as the pattern of an hour and a half preference emerged, I made sure I always had extra tapes with me. Mechanical problems occasionally occurred. When this happened, we relied on notes to record our discussion.

Although three interviews were planned as the basic number needed, natural flow and closure became the actual decider. To describe that moment of closure is hard. It was as if the ‘field of sympathetic resonance’ (Anderson 2000 p.10) quietly let go its hold on us, and we became aware of our separateness as individuals once more, followed by a pause, an acknowledgement (often subtle) of our shared willingness to let go of that ‘field’. We would then bring the interview to a close.

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**My Role**

As a researcher, I aimed to

“… develop ways of helping people to tell and live their stories, understand their experiences, risk new undertakings, or the re-examination of old ground.” (Mair 1989 p.280)

My first role was to set the questions and the environment of the interviews, including initiating the opening and closing the interview:

“At a theoretical level, the researcher’s capacity for reflective listening initiates a field of sympathetic resonance that facilitates each participant’s capacity to listen to the depths of their own experience.” (Anderson 2000 p.10)

I would also reflect back what the person said, often reframing it, for confirmation or clarification.

‘SM: So that’s a very heavy emphasis of fitting someone else’s criteria, isn’t it? JL: Yes, kicking goals.’ (JL1/Q17/P4)

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35 This was interesting as in both my counselling and personal development work, one and a half hours had emerged as a natural period of a participant’s engagement on a focussed, personal, interactive topic.
This usually occurred when I recognised that a pattern or a coherent cluster of information or ideas was emerging:

‘SM: Just going back over that for a minute: you were an acceptable person in terms of the structure of the hierarchy; you fitted their needs and they were very supportive of you at that time. You mentioned getting scholarships and support and things like that. So, even though you had all the credentials to fit into this system, and this system suited you, and they liked what you were doing - it suited them - you still chose to leave and go to the Seychelles?
ROC: Yes, and they were quite happy for me to do that as well, which is interesting isn’t it? ‘(ROC1/Q10/P3)

‘SMac: … I’m hearing that there’s a continuity through this … of you having a sense of something inside yourself to which the outside world resonated or didn’t, and you valued the outside world according to whether that resonated with you ... that was your measure?
DW: ‘Yes it was.’ (DW2/Q42/P11)

Achieving a dynamic balance between listening, reflecting, enquiring, querying and challenging, was central to my role.

‘SMac: So, are you willing to give up the reference point and write your own reference? Own criteria?
DW: ‘That’s very scary. (Gasp)’ (DW5/Q44-45/P14)

As the interviews progressed, we came to considerations of the future, in particular in relation to DW’s interviews. As the trust and information base grew, I asked the men to project or define their future, and to tell me about their anticipated actions or intentions after the interviews.

‘But where I’m going from now is more and more of a sense of having to spend time with my monk to go into that area of discomfort. And this is where it might be opening a box is to do that I’ve got to leave the comfort of where I am and that may mean the comfort of a relationship ... And that’s setting up a huge tension in me at the moment.’ (DW5/Q60/P18)

I analysed information within the interview period and reflected back my conclusions, again for clarification and to check if my understanding was correct. This analysis was designed to encourage the person to discuss the topic at greater depth, and to move into discussing other aspects of the topic or of providing further information. This seemed to be best achieved through gentle enquiry and low tone of voice, especially in regard to topics of a deeply personal or
problematic nature, such as changing self-concepts or remembering emotionally charged events.

‘SMac:… it’s [this inner self/voice] asking you to leave behind models of hierarchy because they have not served. So I guess I’m asking you how far you’re going to take it?

DW: (Deep sigh) Well, the first word that came into my mind then, in my process is, ‘all the way.’ (DW5/Q81/P23)

Sometimes the interviewee gained an insight that had been hidden from them, possibly because of their close proximity to their own lives. Some insights came from the process of the interview; some from the interchanges between us; some from my observations or reflections; some from their further self-reflection and some from their discussions with others outside the interviews:

‘It was like a light came on when you said that.’ (MS4/Q54/pp17-18)

‘I’d just like to add to that, too, that it’s helped that when you’ve sort of added some direction to it and showed the threads to a lot of these things, it really has helped clarify it in my mind how things have happened and what has progressed and where I am at and what I’m actually thinking about. A lot of it was just so nebulous to me that I couldn’t really put it together. It was all just floating out there. And seeing my life put together like that and how it has changed and how things have worked together has congealed those thoughts.’ (Joint: MS/Q61-62/P29)

For me also, analysis within the interview prompted more reflection and deeper understanding, on which I then built further exchanges:

“From the interpretative stance, the researcher’s point of view and the evaluation of explanatory accounts [of others] are not seen as being separated in this way, but as in a constant dialogue.” (Anderson 2000 p.2)

There came a critical point in most interviews when it was no longer what I did to elicit information that mattered. The men, themselves, began to analyse and interpret their experiences. That was when I felt that I had tapped into the core of the process and topic:

“… the most important feature of synthesizing data is the intuitive breakthroughs, those illuminating moments when the data begin to reveal and shape themselves before you. Patterns seem to shape and reveal themselves with each fresh set of information.” (Anderson 2000 p.10)
An even deeper stage of rapport and engagement arose in the interviews. This happened when synchronicities of image or thought occurred between us. For example, in an interview with IH, as he was talking about hierarchy, an image of a machine arose in my mind. When I referred to that image as a metaphor to explore an experience he had recounted, IH responded with his own related experience and image:

IH: ‘… I don’t believe it’s by design, it’s sort of an inevitable consequence of the fact that the organisation has developed. It just seems to happen almost against the wishes of many of the members of the organisation.
SMac: So that if this [the organisation] was a machine that was designed ...
what I am getting the view of here is that the machine was made, and we’ll call it this hierarchy thing, this organisation, whatever you want to call it, that develops a life of its own and that it’s own life destroys the makers of it, or is in the process of destroying the makers of it?
IH: It’s interesting that you should use those very words because as you are speaking I am thinking, believe it or not, although I’m a mathematical, scientific, factual-type person, I am thinking of a poem that I learned when I was back at school.’ (IH2/Q33-34/P16)

He then went on to quote the entire poem, ‘The Naked Machine’ by Untermeyer (1925) (whose full text is quoted in Appendix A). The poem ends like this:

‘... It bears a deeper malice; lives to earn
Its master’s bread and laughs to see this great
Lord of the earth, who rules but cannot learn,
Become a slave of what his slaves create.’

In reference to the poem, IH felt that an organisation gained a life of its own, which then controlled those within it, as Faust (Stern 1985 p.283) described:

‘Die Geister, die ich rief, die werd ich nicht mehr los, “the spirits I invoked, I can’t banish anymore.”

Such synchronicities increased the trust and rapport between the men and I; their own synchronicities served to increase their own levels of assurance.
Value to the Interviewees

During the interviews and in discussions with the men prior and post the interviews, I was surprised to hear most of them speak of the value that they had gained for themselves in the research process. This had been a hope of mine, but it is hard to guarantee the outcome of such things. I had hoped that, in providing the men with a reflective space, focussed time, and a willing and interested listener who would reflect back information, connections and analysis, then further, useful personal insights would emerge.

This perspective was part of my interest in using a mutually beneficial, non-exploitive research method that added value to the participants, including myself. Their reasons were varied, reflecting their values:

‘I guess in some ways I haven’t really looked at any in-depth at any of these periods of my life so even walking back through this has given me lots more; it’s opening up areas of me that I haven’t thought of.’ (DW1/Q127/P29)

‘I felt that I was giving, but there was also a permission to go into that area and also that I wouldn’t be judged by you. And that was very, it was very easy then to let that, to take the time to formulate what I was really feeling and to try and put it into more exact words. I have found that’s been very beneficial for me too.’ (Joint: DW/Q61-62/P29)

‘I find it confronting because it really makes me face a lot of myself and a lot of this old belief system that I haven’t gotten past yet and still cling to. I’m sort of embarrassed by it at the same time, but it’s so beneficial to me to do this that I’m willing to take this risk and just be as vulnerable as I can.’ (MS3/Q90/P36)

‘You know like what I was saying that the right thing comes along at the right time. And that’s what this is ... like I say I think I get much more out of this than you do, so I really appreciate it.’ (MS3/Q110/P31)

‘It’s provided a bit of a tool, actually, is what it’s done I think. It feels that way to me anyway.’ (Joint: MS/Q63/P30)

‘I suppose I am finding the analysis of my own life difficult. I have never analysed it this way or seen the common threads in it, and that has been interesting intellectually to me.’ (PS3/Q92/P35)
‘So this is all new to me. This is actually setting it down and looking at it and peering at it and turning it over … It is challenging, there is no doubt. A bit scary, but not a lot. Interesting … I am beginning to see some patterns that I didn’t know existed.’ (PS3/Q101-102/P38)

‘Yes, I am sure talking to you has made me articulate things I wouldn’t articulate otherwise.’ (ROC3/Q80/P13)

Although I was quite overwhelmed by the men’s responses, they were similar to the experience of several other researchers (Ford 1985; Formaini 1991; Hamilton 2006).

As mentioned previously, two of the men from the first triad decided they would like to meet. This was one of the highlights of the research process, for me and for them.

‘There was this tangible joy between these two men because it kept going around on the fact that they had met somebody else who had done the same journey and who could understand where they were coming from and could talk about it … It was a very solitary experience that they had had in terms of men, and in terms of sharing the journey with men. They had shared it with their wives or lovers or whatever but not so much with men and therefore not with themselves [my bolding]. They hadn’t talked about it, they hadn’t recognised what they had done.’ (SM in ROC3/Q80/P13)

Ps, in the second triad, expressed a similar delight:

‘It’s fun, because you think you are the only one doing something and you are ploughing ahead. You know what you have got to do or what you want to do and you keep moving ahead, and you find resistance or obstacles and think “Oh shit, I am doing the wrong thing, maybe. But never mind, I don’t care, I am going to move ahead anyway.” And then, when you find that other people … have been seriously thinking about similar things themselves, but haven’t said anything, then they also follow in your footsteps, it casts a whole different light on the whole thing.’ (PS2/Q16/P8)

Several of the men were interested in having access to my notes so that they could see how I regarded them. It seemed to be a reflection of the very paradigm I was researching - the relationship between inner and outer values and inner and outer authority. DW expressed it this way:

DW: ‘What I am looking at is what you have written down there. What you’re talking about: the keys.
SMac: Remember they are my keys. If you listen to this you might hear other things.'
DW: That’s a point too. But I guess the other thing that I see about your keys is that you’re looking at me from the outside whereas I’m still from the inside.

SMac: Is that a presumption that the outside is more true or better than your inside?

DW: Yes, it is. And that I think is this idea of authority: the right is out there, but I am always wrong so in a sense there is that ... I have felt over a few years it’s been the idea of that original sin. Christian-wise, you are born a sinner and you’ve got to kind of find redemption with God ... You’re looking from that side into me; [it] is that authority [that] can say if I’m right or wrong.’ (DW1/Q130-132/P30)

Whereas for me:

SMac: ‘... I’m hearing that you’re authority comes from the fact that you have experienced it and I have not. I am the outsider, not just outside.

DW: Yes.

SMac: And also because of my gender that I’m doubly outside, because you experienced it and you are male. And I am outside and a female.

DW: … I understand what you’re saying with that about that sense of being totally outside of where I am.

SMac: I don’t feel totally outside, but very aware that there are spaces between us.

DW: That’s right.’ (DW1/Q133-135/P30-31)

**Practicalities**

It took me a lot longer than I had anticipated to analyse the first interviews, mainly because they were the first. As such, they were describing the ground for the first time, just as the men described their territory for me the first time by describing their chronological lives. They then circled back, to go over certain points – ones that were either important, or missed, or re-defined in the context of the study.

I followed their transit, although my circling and revisiting was in most cases more specific.
Summary of Interview Process

The pace, tone, depth and ease of the interviews varied with each interview and with each man, depending on such aspects as his ease with me and the significance of topics that were raised. However, it was possible to discern a general outline of my role, and the process, as appears below:

- Setting the topic
- Deep listening, for patterns and significances
- Compassionate/open listening
- Reflecting information – verbally and in diagrams
- Summarising
- Connecting information, for example comparing different honour codes between dockworkers and Scouts, discussing DW’s capacity to change and the influence of his experiences of absence of control, such as the effects of his asthma
- Extrapolating ideas to examples, e.g. coming to manhood and becoming a ‘fine man’; Samurai sword example
- Guiding, staying on track
- Diverging, discussing associated topics of interest
- Expanding the idea of the Phoenix, its cycle and how it related to wider topics
- Lapsing into general conversation - it was as if it gave us both rest and thinking time - then we would revert. For example, diverging to talk about jails and men’s needs, and then reverting to talk about cycles
- Returning to topics of relevance
- Giving female insights/point of view. For example how girls discuss relationships
- Sharing similar experiences as a way of establishing or confirming empathy, and checking I’d understood him
- Presenting another viewpoint
- Questioning regarding his future.

Each interview went deeper than the last. DW spoke of the Chinese custom of ‘five cups of tea’ as a metaphor for his interview experience process. The first cup represents formal positioning, as the tea just colours the water. The second cup

* An expanded version of this, with quotations from interviews with DW, is provided in Appendix D.
represents feeling one’s way and testing trust as the tea colours. The third cup represents moving into meaty conversation as the tea settles and becomes strong, which may include a touch of bitterness and challenge. The fourth cup represents an occasion to discuss and share deep issues together in shared trust as the bitterness dissolves in the diluted liquid, while the fifth cup represents the occasion when the deepest sharing may occur, in silences and simple sharing, as the last of the colour disappears (DW in conversation).

Overall, the men found value in the process through their increasing confidence and ability to:

- articulate their experiences and perceive meaningful patterns
- review their lives and transitions in a supported environment
- recognise that they were not alone in their experiences
- conceive the process of transition as a meaningful and structured whole.

This ‘whole’ was a framework within which their individuality remained, had value, and added to the depth of understanding that the research had revealed for them.

In turn, the men’s increasing clarity and willingness to review and reassess their experiences contributed perceptions that, layered together, enabled me to perceive recurring patterns and processes, as well as their degrees of significance for them. These patterns and processes formed the basis for the consolidated pattern of six stages articulated in Ch.8 Ch.9 and Ch.12.
Ch. 7: Meeting the Men

‘All stories of change and transformation – personal and collective – are myths in the making. If you look at your own life through a mythic lens, you will find stories as profound as the most oft-told parables and fairy tales. You will find in your own mundane story-line Dante’s Inferno, Homers’ Odyssey, the Greek myth of Persephone, the Sumerian tale of Innana, the Arthurian Grail legends, or Eastern myths like the story of Krishna and Arjuna in the Bhagavad Gita, or the Hindu god and goddesses in the Upanishads. What links these stories to each other, and to yours and mine, is that they are all stories of people who are, as William James coined it, “ Twice-born.” Twice-born people, unlike the innocent “once-born”, descend into Dante’s dark woods, learning the ways of descent, discovering hidden parts of themselves – - (sic) ugly parts, truthful parts, powerful parts — (sic) and do not ascend from the woods until the hard lessons have been learned, until the golden treasure has been found, until the wise and mature self has been born.’ (E. Lesser 2002 p.1)

In this chapter, I present a short history of each man’s life and an overview of their transitions. It is here that I follow the dictum of Ralph Waldo Emerson, as quoted to me by my eccentric and vital friend BKH: “I hate quotations. Tell me what you know.” More detailed overviews are in Appendix A, while a section on the men, describing their lives through themes and direct quotations, appears under the heading ‘In their Own Voice” in Appendix B. In Appendix C, each man’s transition experience, again in his own words, is documented. These sections aim
to create “exemplary portraits that are vivid, comprehensive, and accurate” (Moustakas 1990 p.54) and to convey a sense of the real ‘flesh-and blood’ people that the interviewees were and are.

Recreating Selves - Transformations

All except one of the interviewees were Baby Boomers, born between 1946 and 1965, the same period in which I, too, was born. All except one were Australians by birth; all were of Anglo-Saxon heritage; all were educated beyond High School level, and all were in work or retraining at the time of the interviews. Each of the interviewees had moved between, or out of, several hierarchies in their life. Each had also experienced periods of (relative) freedom from hierarchical structures. All men retained their positive connections with society and moved between hierarchies and non-hierarchies as needed.

They represent a still-strong median sector in Australian society.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initials</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>From</th>
<th>To</th>
<th>Approx age at transition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DW</td>
<td>North Coast</td>
<td>Owner of boat building and boat fit-out company</td>
<td>Counsellor</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS</td>
<td>North Coast</td>
<td>Corporate engineer</td>
<td>Naturopath</td>
<td>Late 40s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROC</td>
<td>North Coast</td>
<td>Regional Manager in a State Education Department</td>
<td>Teacher - special school</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PS</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>A: Priest</td>
<td>Public Servant</td>
<td>Late 20s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B: Public Servant</td>
<td>Immigration Agent</td>
<td>Late 50’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IH</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>University Lecturer/ Head of Department</td>
<td>Consulting Engineer</td>
<td>Early 50s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JL</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>Military officer, Army</td>
<td>IT business owner, in partnership</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7: From where to where and when: interviewees’ work to work transitions (Mackenzie 2007)
Short Overviews of each of the Men’s Lives

(Note: In the following overviews, the words in brackets represent the key phases of the Phoenix myth; these align with the interviewees’ transition stages.)

**DW:**

DW’s childhood was spent in a large, seaside, Australian city. He suffered from severe asthma as a child and so, except for a valued and regimented year in the mountains nearby, experienced broken school attendance and spent much of his time resting and struggling for breath. He learned resilience and self-reliance as a result of his inability to rely on certainties of health and will. Following the tradition of his father and grandfather, he developed a love of boats and the bush, and these interests had remained with him. He experienced several house and school moves in his childhood. When he left school, he began an apprenticeship on the city’s wharves as a fitter and turner. While there he was also actively involved with the Scouts and Rovers37, rising up several ranks in those organisations, and being ‘knighted’ in Rovers.

After his apprenticeship DW freelanced on the wharves, becoming a ‘Leading Hand’. From there he moved ‘up’ and became an estimator for a large joinery firm:

‘I was there for two years and then I got a job in the office as an estimator. And that was my idea that I was going up ... That’s always seen as an ‘up’, yes. That’s progress up the ladder, yes, definitely.’ (DW3/Q88-89/P22)

This was followed by a job as a travelling sales representative. After this DW established his own business which, for him, meant being ‘top of the tree’ and having his own say. He was well aware that these changes in work were a means

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37 Scouts is a world-wide youth organisation originally founded for boys by Sir Baden Powell for cultivating community service and practical skills. It has several sections, with the Rovers being a land-based section for older Scouts, based on a quasi-mediaeval system.
to climb up the hierarchical structure, to move from being subordinate to being a leader or boss, and were connected to his sense of manhood and success.

His transition, as researched here, came about as a result of his discomfort with his life (impending demise) and the eventual collapse (‘fire’ and deconstruction) of his boat building and boat fit-out business. Soon after its collapse he began working in another joinery (ashes), his marriage broke down, he began yoga classes and explored various other self-development activities (worm). He eventually gave up his joinery and boat-building work to go to university to train as a Counsellor (re-emerging). After building and selling a house with his new partner (J2), and living in a tent while they fitted out a boat, they then went to sea (Heliopolis journey), sailing parts of the Australian coast and making landfall for work and family. He is presently training building apprentices (new Phoenix) in another Australian coastal city.

**MS:**

To escape from a rigid and conservative farming family in a cold, wide North American landscape, MS went to university, choosing to study engineering, which he knew would assure him of work. On completion of his university studies, he was conscripted into the military for two years, there meeting a man who closely represented the kind of person he wanted to become. This man became, and continues to be, his most significant friend. After the Army, where he worked in sanitation, MS drifted back to University, this time to complete a Masters’ degree and to teach. He remained restless and felt a strong lack of purpose in his life (impending demise).

‘I kept saying to whoever I would talk to about it, if I knew what I wanted to do I’d be out of here right now. But I never seemed to be able to figure out what I really wanted to do.’ (MS1/Q29/P11)
He soon married, and moved cities to work in a large USA consulting engineering corporation. When his wife was transferred to Hawaii, he resigned and moved with her. When that marriage ended he began to lead a split life (‘boxes’), pursuing both self-development courses while at the same time spending a lot of time partying. He was always aware he was an outsider in Hawaii, and after a time he returned to the mainland. There he remarried, but again divorced (gathering wood). Still not feeling settled, he left the USA, met his present wife and moved to Australia (tipping point). Rather than remain in engineering, he went to university to become a naturopath (ashes and re-emerging), returning to his childhood interest in ‘things medical’. After graduating as a Naturopath, he again moved, and is currently working freelance as a Naturopath, yoga teacher, and occasional contractor for large government hierarchies (new Phoenix) in Canberra.

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**ROC:**

ROC had a happy, active, adventurous and free-roaming childhood in an Australian coastal city. It was in university that he came to look beyond his own small world and realised there were a myriad of things he could do; in fact he ‘realised that there were possibilities to do anything really’ (ROC3:Q15/P3). He loved exploring and new experiences.

> It was 1978, so, twenty-two. So I went from one extreme to another. I thought it was wonderful living out there and being a cow cocky and working sheep and ploughing farms and doing fences and going into town once a week to the sale and getting drunk at the bar … I was a jackaroo between Forbes and Cudogen in the middle of nowhere. Drove back from Forbes and got on a plane in Sydney and flew to Bombay and went to India for a while.’ (ROC2/Q15/P3)

On his return he trained as a teacher and subsequently taught children with special needs. A couple of years later he and his wife, who was also a teacher, left Australia to teach in the Seychelles.
When ROC was later offered work back in Australia, in his field of ‘special needs’ teaching, the particular offer was interesting enough to accept and they returned. Following a quick and successful rise in a state Education Department, he became a Regional Manager in charge of the education of students with disabilities, an emerging field with few teachers trained in it at that time. He remained in that position until the Regional Office where he worked, and all its positions, including his job, was dissolved (fire). He then chose to return to a small, local school for students with special needs (clarity, Heliopolis) refusing all encouragements to go for higher positions in favour of following his passion (new Phoenix) for educating these particular young people.

While dealing with the fact that his own position was being abolished (impending demise), he was also made responsible for managing the exit of many of the staff, all of whom had also been his colleagues (boxes, gathering wood). Once he finally left, ROC suffered a mysterious and debilitating illness, which he came to understand as his body catching up with him after the stresses of his Regional Manager position (ashes). Eventually he had his spleen removed and began his recovery from the stresses of his former work (re-emergence).

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**PS:**

PS was the son of a store manager in a small, Australian country town. As part of a practising Catholic family in a strong Catholic community, he went to the local religious school. He knew quite early in his life that he wanted to go into the Catholic Church as a missionary:

‘It probably all started with a little pamphlet I found somewhere ... I remember exactly, and there’s a boy about ten sitting in front of a fire with a map of the world, a globe, spinning the globe. It was me ... (PS2/Q36/P15)

In his second year of High School, he transferred to a local seminary school to train for the priesthood. By special dispensation he became a priest at age 22 and
a half, 18 months before the minimum age of 24 years, then went to the Philippines as a missionary.

Doubts about his calling (impending demise) drove him to leave his missionary work and return to Australia after three years. Not long after, and following a critical insight which came to him during a conversation with the Head of the Mother House (tipping point), he left the priesthood altogether. He then moved to Canberra, where he married, and worked as a Commonwealth Public Servant for 20 years. During that time he had several overseas postings, representing Australia in several countries and associating with Australian and overseas high-level politicians. In the countries of his postings he took the initiative to prepare reports on anticipated developments. Several of these proved accurate and far-seeing. However, concerned about the effects of his work and his absences on his family’s stability, he began to refuse postings which he considered detrimental to them. As time went on, he became restless and dissatisfied (gathering wood) and, after almost two decades, PS left the Commonwealth Public Service (PS) (tipping point) to start an international project freight forwarding company for an overseas investor. After only a year, when the business was not successful, he returned to the Commonwealth Public Service as a contractor. Following much thought (Heliopolis, clarity), he came to realise what he wanted to do and began retraining. Combining his overseas experience, his (several) languages, his care for the needy, and his policy, Government and Public Service experience, he became a freelance Migration Agent, very quickly finding work with refugees and prospective immigrants (new Phoenix).

**IH:**

An intense individual and (likely) Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) sufferer, IH was a dreamer as a child, keen on flying and building things.
‘… I enjoyed my growing up. And I used to dream flying all the time and I used to fly model aeroplanes and built balsa wood planes. But I also used to build billycarts and huts and fantasise about flying and things, and jump off garage roofs with umbrellas.’ (IH1/Q5/P3)

He was raised by parents whose love and support he found very encouraging. They raised him in a non-mainstream Christian faith, which served to further develop his sense of difference. He left their faith in his late teens but, as an adult, he returned to another form of Christianity and became an active member of a Pentecostal Church group.

As a young man, he was persuaded to go into engineering for its good employment prospects, rather than into aeronautics, which he loved. This was a decision he later regretted, but also, later, redressed when he gained his private pilot’s licence and began a long flying career. After achieving an engineering Diploma, which he converted to a Degree, he married and worked for 10 years in various engineering positions within a large Commonwealth Government department. He then went to work for 18 years in a tertiary institution, first as a lecturer and later as Head of an Engineering Department. In the latter part of his time there he became restless, and felt beleaguered and persecuted (impending demise). He resisted leaving, and his ill-ease increased (gathering wood). He was diagnosed with severe clinical depression, eventually leaving on forced redundancy (fire). However, after a few weeks of labouring for a local church school (ashes) and a review and assessment of his skills (clarity of Heliopolis), he began his own business as a consultant structural engineer, trading into profit within two years (new Phoenix). At the time of his last interview he was working as a Consultant Engineer and remained an active and fervent Pentecostal Christian.
JL was the son of a loved and respected military man of distinguished service who inculcated in him strong ethics and behaviours of honour and ‘care for one’s men’. JL set his sights on going to Duntroon, an élite military academy, at an early age, but was rejected the first time he applied for being ‘too keen’. The next year, after doing some research and also learning the psychological and IQ tests that the psychologists used, he went back, this time succeeding in his quest.

‘... I learnt the IQ system and I actually learnt their whole selection procedure, which was actually documented, if you use the initiative to find it. With no help I just went and found it through university libraries and things, so I knew what they were doing.’ (JL1/Q40-41/P8)

He thrived in the military, quickly learning its ways and capitalising on all he was taught in regard to its systems, presentation standards, task-focus, group cohesion and leadership. He married and developed many friendships.

After 20 years his mentors, a necessary element for advancement, had either left or died and, without their support he saw little future in the military (restless). He began looking around for alternatives (gathering wood) and accepted a position as second in command of a large construction company, and left the military. In his new work he learned some hard lessons about business. A clash of ethics (fire) prompted him to leave there, review his options (ashes) and reassess his capabilities (Heliopolis). He then, in partnership, created what has become a very successful IT systems business (reformed Phoenix), capitalising on the growing move of governments to outsourcing, and his unique skills in managing disparate groups of people to do complex tasks.
Part 2: Transition

‘… that’s one of the highly underrated endeavours of human thought: moving into a new knowing … unless you’ve known something, you can’t deal with it. Unless you’ve had an experience of something, you can’t understand what it is … here we’re constantly moving into new uncharted territory. And how does a human do that? How do you know the unknown? How do you move into the unknown? … ‘knowing something’ is at least backed up with repeated experience or an interlocking experience. But how do you move into something that is not there? How do you, first of all, even sense that it’s there or believe that there is something unknown there? And then, once you do that, how do you actually bring that into the known? It’s a fascinating area.’ (SM in MS3/Q60-61/P19)

This section documents the men’s transition and transformation processes, and represents Stage 3, the ‘tipping point’, from which there is no going back.
The transitions of the interviewees, although bearing strong hallmarks of individuality, also bore strong similarities. In this chapter I will be discussing both these aspects. I will also identify the characteristics and processes of the journeys themselves, and the six stages that I have recognised in them.

As the transitions experienced were as much psychological as practical, internal as well as external changes are addressed. The discussion of each stage is treated descriptively (characteristics, emotional states, actions taken) and in relation to its perceived (developmental) purpose as an impetus for moving to a next stage.
My initial identification of the men’s stages of transition was quite complex:

Figure 2: Initial plotting of six men’s journeys out of hierarchy (Mackenzie© 2000)
**Transition Journey Stages**

These findings were later simplified and organised into six stages, with two stages each having two sub-phases.\(^\text{38}\) The men progressed through these sequentially and/or iteratively. The identified stages are listed below and then presented in table form:

- Restlessness or inner impetus towards an unknown and unclear goal; sense of impending change
- Exploration and preparation, characterised by split lives - ‘boxes’ - and shifting priorities
- A ‘tipping point’, where the friction between the men’s inner, diverging directions resulted in a clarifying insight or crisis, and resolved in favour of their new direction(s) and reflecting a critical change in the men’s relationships with external authority
- Rest and revitalisation: a reflective time followed by development and nurturing of their emerging directions, priorities, skills and sense of Self
- Clarification of what remained consistent with their newly emergent directions and self concepts, and what was no longer relevant. Gradual removal or reduction of irrelevant aspects
- Consolidation of changes: revitalisation and renewal; identification with newly emergent Self, concepts, activities and direction(s).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Main characteristic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Restlessness</td>
<td>Unsettled internally and/or externally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Exploration and Preparation</td>
<td>Phase 2a: recognition of sense of ill-ease and lack of ‘fit’, increasing tension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Phase 2b: random exploration, seeking clarity and direction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Tipping Point</td>
<td>A critical moment upon which their transitions pivot; a clarifying insight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>accompanied by commitment to follow a new direction(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Rest and Revitalisation</td>
<td>Phase 4a: rest and reflection; grieving; review and managing consequences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Phase 4b: re-orientating to emergent and preferred direction(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Clarity</td>
<td>Resolution; identification and letting go of outmoded aspects of Self and/or life;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>clarifying what is of abiding relevance and what newly relevant elements there are</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Consolidation</td>
<td>Acting to confirm and develop newly emergent Self and lifeworld</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8: Stages of transitions in table format (Mackenzie© 2007)

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\(^{38}\) Note: Stages two and four both exhibit two sub-phases which, except that the experience of them is cyclic and oscillating, and possibly repeated, could be independent stages.
Initially I had conceived the Phoenix myth only as a metaphor of the core concept of the men regenerating themselves. However, as I analysed the men’s stages in their transitions, I noticed that they appeared to reflect its key phases as well, not just its core theme. I have therefore analysed the myth more closely, clarified its key phases and tested the parallels to the men’s processes. They fitted remarkably closely. The following table describes these parallels.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Men’s stages</th>
<th>Phases of Phoenix myth</th>
<th>Identified stages</th>
<th>Transition process as identified in this research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stage 1</td>
<td>Impending’ sense of imminent demise</td>
<td>Restlessness</td>
<td>Ill-ease - a sense of being cut off from Self (an internal discomfort, mainly felt as restlessness, ill-ease, impending change, or as simmering frustration), even though outwardly appearing successful and stable. Reviewing and reassessing life directions and values. Tentative explorations of new directions in effort to resolve tensions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 2</td>
<td>Wood - gathering</td>
<td>2a: Exploration</td>
<td>2a: Staying in present way of life and/or work, even trying to consolidate or reinforce it, yet seeking new directions - internally and/or externally. Experimenting with options and interests. Confusion, uncertainty, speculation, tensions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Split life: ‘boxes’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2b: Preparation and deconstruction</td>
<td>2b: Learning new ways in relation to own emerging sense of self or direction - discovering and exploring new directions and activities; life in separate components or ‘boxes’ in an attempt to manage strong internal and, possibly, external dissonance and ill-ease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 3</td>
<td>Combustion</td>
<td>Tipping point - insight, crisis or pivotal event, external or internal</td>
<td>Tipping - an event, insight or realisation which shifts primary focus and commitment to the integration of newly explored or reactivated interests and direction(s) - no going back. Reorientation to emerging Self/directions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 4</td>
<td>Ashes and ‘worn’</td>
<td>4a: Rest, resolve, reassess; uncertainty</td>
<td>4a: Settling the past; review and reconstruction, grieving and resolution. Path(s) to new work or way of being still unclear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4b: Cultivation</td>
<td>4b: Tentative cultivation of identified ‘Self’, new directions, interests and world-view(s); focussed exploration of opportunities and directions that have emerged from previous explorations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 5</td>
<td>Trip to Heliopolis with ashes of old self</td>
<td>Clarification and action</td>
<td>Clarity; letting go irrelevant aspects of way of life and self; clarification of new direction to self and others; conscious dedication (refocus) to a new locus of control; distilling emerging new direction(s), e.g. new work, new relationships. Laying ‘old self’ to rest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 6</td>
<td>New Phoenix</td>
<td>Consolidation, regeneration, reintegration, renewal</td>
<td>Reformation, reintegration or reconstitution of self, life, work, direction, values and newly defined lifeworld through acting on decisions based on new belief frameworks evolving from ‘tipping point’ insight. Consolidation, resolution, celebration.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9: Change process out of hierarchy showing parallels with key phases of the Phoenix myth (table format) (Mackenzie© 2007)
**Purpose of Stages**

Experiences gained in each stage, by their nature, enabled and prompted each man to progress onto the next stages. The time frame of moving to the next stage or phase, and the length of time spent in each one, was highly individualistic, as were the details of the process of transition itself. The role of tension was critical. As internal and external pressures and tensions increased, there was a rising imperative to resolve that tension. That resolution came to be measured against an internal sense of comfort and clarity.

As identified by Bridges (1995b p:4; 1996b; Delin & Tranos 2003), part of the process of any transition involves letting go of outmoded ways to enable focus on a new situation. Experiences gained in each stage (and sub-stages within two of the stages) facilitated the men in letting go their previous states, and opened possibilities for their next stage in moving out of command-and-control paradigms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Personal Experience</th>
<th>Purpose of Stage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Restlessness</td>
<td>Restlessness</td>
<td>To unsettle, loosen hold on sense of certainty and attachment to present circumstances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Exploration and Preparation</td>
<td>Tension and uncertainty</td>
<td>To destabilise and to encourage exploration; to increase tension; to reawaken unmet goals/dreams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Tipping Point</td>
<td>Insight - Tipping Point</td>
<td>To ensure commitment to change. Pivotal to process; no turning back.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Rest and Revitalisation</td>
<td>Rest and revitalisation</td>
<td>Rest from striving; for focus on emerging future(s); enables further exploration and reflection, for grieving and resolutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Clarification</td>
<td>Emerging confidence and clarity</td>
<td>To clarify emerging directions and enable identification of non-relevant aspects. For development of values and form(s) of emerging life. To enable letting go of irrelevant aspects of their lifeworld. To confirm commitment by actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Consolidation</td>
<td>Grounded action.</td>
<td>Consolidation of emergent values in outward forms and actions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10: Experience and identified purpose of stages of transition (Mackenzie© 2007)

The restlessness and internal discomfort experienced during the first stage encouraged excursions into other possibilities and options. These were primarily random and unfocussed. The combined frustrations of internal restlessness and
external lack of direction in these initial explorations culminated in a critical insight, or event:

“... a contemplative insight, a personal illumination gained by putting things together and seeing them in their relational wholeness.” (Boyd & Myers 1998 p.274)

This insight or event precipitated a new clarity of direction, encouraging self-reflection and life-world (re-)assessment. From that awareness a primary emerging direction became clearer, which enabled more focused exploration(s). It also increased clarity about what was no longer of value or relevance, and what was becoming relevant and of value to them. From that growing clarity, decisions could be made which, when externally expressed, consolidated their new direction(s) and lifeworld.

In the following pages a brief overview of each stage is presented. Parallels to the key phases of the Phoenix myth and the stages of transition, as experienced by the men in my study are made, and their symbolic meanings discussed. The titles of the key phases of the Phoenix myth appear in brackets after the title given to each of the men’s transition stages.

In the chapter following this conceptual overview, a discussion and analysis of each stage, from the collective viewpoint of the six men interviewed, is documented.

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Plotting the Stages

“... allowing ourselves to feel the pain of our inner conflicts begins a process that generally will resolve them into a new unity.” (Pearson 1991 p.51)

It was from the feeling domain that the men in this research gained their impetus. Therefore, in the following descriptions my word choice is intended to reflect that level of impetus as well as the men’s perceptual and decision-making frameworks. In this way I seek to avoid implying that the men had control or were controlling their processes, especially in the stages up to the ‘tipping point’ (my term for the moment and event when there was a decisive insight and shift of direction).
However, once the tipping point occurred (an event which appears to be beyond conscious control), proactive responses by all the interviewees increased.

**Transitions and Transformations**

While I began this study to research men’s transitions out of hierarchy through the experiences of individual men, it became clear that their transition was the opportunity and, for some, an imperative, to undergo personal transformation as well. Consequently the analysis of the men’s transitions also takes into account several elements of these changes.

*Transitions* occur in many fields of experience, e.g. work, education, ageing, locality, health and resource acquisition or loss. *Transformations* primarily occur in personal realms. We can

“... conceptualise transformation as an event requiring an evolving integration between two unique journeys, an inner journey into Self as well as an outer journey into the existential world.” (Boyd & Myers 1998 p.280)

The men in this study ‘transformed’ during their processes of transition as they came to terms with their changing Self-concepts and values systems. Consequently, it is tempting to place their experiences within the context of Transformative Learning and the work of such writers as Mezirow (1995), Grabov (1997), Boyd and Myers (1998) and Cranton (2000), in the education field.

However, Mezirow defines the transformative learning process as beginning after a ‘disorientating dilemma’ (1995 p.50). Within this study, no ‘disorientating dilemma’ began the interviewee’s transitions (and the subsequent personal transformations of the men). The generative impetus in this study was indicated and felt as an internal personal ill-ease and discomfort. As this discomfort increased, the dissonance between their internal world and sense of Self, and their experiences in the external world, also increased. A critical insight, which I have called the ‘tipping point’ (a term intended to remove any negative or problematic associations) does not appear to equate with Mezirow’s ‘disorientating dilemma’. It may, however, equate with the
‘boxes’ period of stage two, when an internal dilemma had become conscious but as yet, no rational or focussed action to resolve it is apparent.

In defining the start of the transformative process as being instigated by a ‘disorientating dilemma’, Mezirow shares his perceptions with several other researchers of transition processes (see table in Carroll 1990 p.40) and Table 4, p.128 of this document. My study challenges the dominance of that idea, proposing instead that an internal dilemma of the psyche is the primary generative force. The resolution of that dilemma occurs when it is crystallised, often by an external event or internal, clarifying insight (Nelson 1995), resulting in a pivotal change (‘tipping point’).

Mezirow’s reliance on rationality also sets his work apart from this study, which is more in accord with the writings of Boyd and Myers (1998), Grabov (1997), Cranton (2000) and Nelson (1995). These writers recognise the core value and influence of the imaginative world - such as dreams, metaphor and imagery - on processes of transitions unfolding, as do I.

However, although it does not appear that the men’s generative impulse equals Mezirow’s ‘disorientating dilemma’, the stages in my study do include those activities defined by him (1995 p.50). His stages are described and defined within a learning, education framework and reflect a proactive learner, reliant on rationality and apparently in control of their transition process(es). This could not be assumed in my study and was patently untrue for most of the interviewees, as it was for the men in a similar study by Nelson (Nelson 1995). Hence, this is not the framework in which the experiences of the men in my study can be situated.

However, Mezirow’s ten processes, or stages, are similar to those I have identified. For Mezirow (1995 p.50), the learner:

• experiences a ‘disorientating dilemma’
• self-reflects and self-assesses
• makes a critical review of their life assumptions
• recognises that others have experienced similar transformations to their own
• begins to explore new life-roles or behaviours
• develops a plan of action for furthering their change
• acquires knowledge and skills for implementing their plan
• tries out new ways of acting and being to support their plan
• develops greater competence and self-confidence in their new roles by conscious practise, and
• proceeds to reintegrate into life on the basis of their new perspectives and frames of reference.

The teacher/learner framework reflects the hierarchical power paradigm the men in my study were moving away from: an expert (dominant) and a learner (subordinate), not only in power differentials, but also in the validity differentials ascribed to their experiences. That is, if a teacher decides (or colludes?) with a learner in the idea that s/he ‘needs’ transforming and changing; and the learner submits or agrees, and defers, then the teacher’s position remains overtly or covertly designated to be of greater or higher value. If, on the other hand a teacher takes a mentoring role, those positions are not so circumscribed. Whether an individual can progress through such a process without a teacher is not discussed, but, unless we would assert that all transformations are accompanied and mentored by a teacher, it must be the case that this is possible.


Though this study was begun in relation to men transitioning work roles, it became clear their processes had wider implications. Therefore the following descriptions of the men’s identified stages are not limited to the men’s work contexts. Since the stages and experiences described here reflect much of the work of the authors listed above, the sequence may, in fact, be fundamental to (all?) processes of personal transformations. This is considered further in Ch.12.
**Stage 1: Restlessness (Sense of Impending Demise)**

A phase of nebulous but insistent inner discomfort; a sense of being cut-off from ‘Self’; impending sense of change

In hindsight, the men interviewed identified the impetus which precipitated their transition as a sense of internal personal discomfort (Cooper & Sawaf 1996 p.141), which was described in several ways: as a sense of unrest, ill-ease, frustration with limitations, doubt, restlessness or ‘yearning’; a sense of knowing or feeling that there was ‘more’ for them to do or achieve.

Stage One, the restless stage, is summed up by the following observation:

“Something is not right. We feel ... disconnected from ourselves ... we find ourselves unhappy with our lives. Answers that previously worked for us no longer serve.” (Pearson 1991 p.50)

All reported a feeling of being split or divided in themselves, even in the early stages. Such dividedness not only prepared the men for change but also alerted them to an inner ‘ecology of the Self’, a substrate of their conscious reality and experiences. It drew their attention to their individual sense of an inner, influential resilient Self and to their own inner measures of self and well-being, even though, at that time, they may not have been ready, or able, to act on those awarenesses.

“My knowledge of the divided life comes first from personal experience. A “still, small voice” speaks the truth about me, my work, or the world. I hear it and yet act as if I did not.” (Palmer 2005 p.1)

In the later stages of the transition process, this divided sense of self came to be experienced more consciously, again increasing tensions in the men. Such division of the self (which I have labelled ‘boxing’) was a common device in Stage Two and, for some of the men, became even more consciously employed there.
Stage 2. Exploration and Preparation (Gathering Wood).

A stage characterised by the exploration of new or once-dormant interests; increasing tensions; maintenance of ‘old’ ways; life sectioned into ‘boxes’

Out of the sense of something ‘not fitting’, and of that (unknown) element not being integrated or accommodated in their present lives, the men began looking for what that ‘something else’ may be – at first a vague goal. The search was characterised by tentativeness and experimentation.

It was as if the men set up a ‘radar’ that resonated with their unsettledness, and brought their attention to new interests and/or opportunities. As a result of experimenting in a range of interest areas, whether it was exploring new work options, new knowledge, new or old interests, other relationships, experiences or places, tensions continued to increase within them.

At this time little apparent change was visible outwardly as the men maintained their existing lives even while, simultaneously, a strong internal impetus for change was occurring. This is supported by Vaughan’s comment (cited in Burgess 1999b p.12) that:

“At major times of change people become conservative.”

This part of the process demonstrated a complex feedback loop in which the men effectively sifted options and experiences and, at the same time, felt they were closer to identifying the impetus that was driving them. Like single-cell organisms they had proceeded by:

“testing the immediate environment in numerous short steps in all directions before making a big step in one selected direction.” (Jantsch & Waddington 1976 p.41)

For some, this impetus was a desire for a greater or clearer connection to an inner sense of self (DW and MS) and a desire for an integral sense of belonging. For another (ROC), it was a desire for a greater level of service and compassion; for
another (IH), it was a sense of autonomy to do a task according to his own standards. Another man (PS) answered an inner drive to work to alleviate injustice, growing out of his feelings of compassion for exploited and powerless peoples. The last (JL) wanted to test his capabilities outside the fairly ‘protected’ and well-known military environment in which he had nevertheless been quite successful. He wanted a greater sense of autonomy, and to find out if he could transfer the skills he had developed in the military environment to be successful in more self-directed work.

**Boxes**

As mentioned, while their sense of unease and unsettledness continued, strategies to manage their increasing levels of uncertainty, unsettled emotions and lack of clarity resulted in most of the men consciously dividing their life into ‘boxes’ - separate compartments - if they were not already divided. The strategy also seemed to be intended to ‘tourniquet-off’ their ill-ease until, or in the (vain) hope that it could be quietened. This strategy was universally unsuccessful for these men. In fact, ‘boxing’ appeared to accentuate what was not given value in their external lives, yet was, nevertheless, of internal value for them (for instance purpose in work, integrity, a particular sense of manhood).

“... two fundamental impulses, one insisting that the status quo be maintained at all costs, the other calling for an need to the present order of things.” (Boyd & Myers 1998 p.276)

‘Boxing’ was not a new strategy to the men and was in use by all of them prior to and independent of the transitions documented here. They are not alone in this, as Palmer (2005 p.2) reminds us:

“The media are filled with stories of people whose dividedness is now infamous. They worked at such places as Enron ... WorldCom, [National Australia Bank in Australia] and the Roman Catholic Church.”

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39 “The divided life comes in many and varied forms. To cite just a few examples, it is the life we lead when:
- We refuse to invest ourselves in our work, diminishing its quality and distancing ourselves from those it is meant to serve
- We make our living at jobs that violate our basic values, even when survival does not absolutely demand it
- We remain in settings or relationships that steadily kill off our spirit
- We harbour secrets to achieve personal gain at the expense of other people
- We hide our beliefs from those who disagree with us to avoid conflict, challenge, and change
- We conceal our true identities for fear of being criticized, shunned, or attacked.” (Palmer 2005 p.1)

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However, a divided life does not come without cost:

“I pay a steep price when I live a divided life, feeling fraudulent, anxious about being found out, and depressed by the fact that I am denying my own selfhood. The people around me pay a price as well, for now they walk on ground made unstable by my dividedness. How can I affirm another’s integrity when I defy my own? A fault line runs down the middle of my life, and whenever it cracks open—divorcing my words and actions from the truth I hold within—things around me get shaky and start to fall apart.” (Palmer 2005 p.1)

This is exactly what happened in this study.

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**Stage 3. Tipping Point (Combustion)**

Personal emphasis shifts decisively to focus on new option(s) and direction(s), and on their integration

The tipping point was a critical time, in which it became clear to each of the men that there was ‘no going back’; that the only way open to them was the way forward, whether that way was clear or not. It was a moment of clarity and of sudden reframing of their view of both their world and their priorities,

“... a sudden, dramatic shift in perception, belief or understanding that alters one’s frame of reference or world view.” (Moustakas 1990 p.99)

It was not always as dramatic as described by Moustakas; sometimes it was quiet, yet always effective. As a result of the ‘tipping point’ occurring, a significant change in direction became imperative.

Such a resolution implies that an internal, abiding Reality is active in such moments. This element, defined by Jung as ‘the Self’ (1959 p.448; 1995 p.418) also appears to carry a sense of validity and reliability such that it elicits a trust to act on its impetus in confidence. Yet another implication is that it is inherently orientated towards our well-being.

The ‘tipping point’ experience polarised each of the men, giving them a clarity of direction and renewed sense of energy and internal resolution. Following this
critical event or insight, the men gave priority to their changing interests and newly emerging sense of self (Pearson 1991 p.210).

For some it gave clarity to what that ‘emerging self’ represented and what its value was to them. For instance, for PS, when his fellow priests turned their backs to him when he announced he was leaving his missionary work in the Philippines and returning to Australia, possibly to leave the priesthood entirely. The event clarified his hatred of hypocrisy and brought into sharp relief his core belief of ‘goodwill to all.’

For MS, it was meeting a man in the army who epitomised what type of person he, himself, longed to be, and for PS taking back the validity of his own reality.

For most it was a moment which precipitated the decision to leave an unsustainable situation. For DW, it was the moment that he sat on his bed with a gun, planning to end his life, and heard a voice telling him to shut down his business. The effect of this was that he immediately felt great relief and his inner conflict felt resolved. He proceeded to do as this voice directed and closed his business.

For IH, it was when he heard academic charges were to be laid against him, galvanising him to leave his university position and so maintain what he felt was his deservedly good name.

For JL it was losing his mentors, and thus a supportive cohort of superiors, to death and retirement.

For ROC, it was the untenable situation of having to commute unacceptably long distances to maintain his level in the hierarchy.

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**Stage 4. Rest and Revitalisation (Ashes and Worm/Chrysalis)**

A ‘neutral zone’, a time of resolution, rest and withdrawal followed by developing and nurturing their refocussed self and newly emerging direction(s).
The men experienced this stage of their transformation and transition as a series of reorientations; of re-visioning themselves and their future(s), following on from their tentative explorations into interests that had developed or resurfaced during Stages 1 to 3.

However, there were also repercussions from the past to deal with, including recovering from stress-related diseases (ROC and IH), emotional responses (DW), relationship readjustments (DW, IH and PS), organisational readjustments (all six men) and physical dislocations (DW, and MS). Menon (2000 p. 5) regards these as predictable and necessary ingredients of transition. Strong elements of grieving, internal resolution and surrender were evident during this stage.

**Stage 5. Clarity and Commitment (Heliopolis)**

*A period of clear discernment and letting go of outmoded aspects of work and self.*

During this period the men were able to refine their choices. In reviewing their lives to date, and especially when being aware of the differences between their ‘old’ and ‘new’ directions and sense of Self, the men became much clearer about those new directions and their changing personal parameters. In this way they were able to discern what was most relevant and what was no longer appropriate for them in moving forward. It also enabled them to let go, or begin to let go, what was considered irrelevant.

These ‘lettings go’ appeared to be the resolutions of their previous internal surrender, reorientation and grieving processes from Stage 4.
Stage 6. Consolidation (Return)

An emergent Self and direction is consolidated in relation to self and others. Definitive changes in external forms of life and work occur.

As each man became clear about his new direction(s), the external expression of those new priorities and parameters for operating in the world and within themselves, was consolidated. Work and, for some, relationships, friendships and localities changed during their transition processes. As these old interdependencies faded, new ones developed, based on the men’s emergent perceptions of themselves and their evolving lives.

The consolidation period was one of decisive and external actions, again arising from the previous stage. It defined the men’s newly emerging persona and lifeworld to the external world. There were both challenging and affirming elements in that process.

For three of the men (JL, PS and IH), this meant going into some form of consultancy and outsourcing work to hierarchies. The other triad (DW, MS and ROC) also returned to work for hierarchies in various degrees, but with changed power dynamics. Both MS and DW worked as freelancers, while ROC returned to a small school under his own terms and renewed his focus on teaching and developing children with special needs.

After Transition

Each man had his own measure for the success of his transition: for JL and IH it was a satisfaction of achievement in business; for MS and DW it was a measure against an inner sense of congruence; for PS and ROC it was a sense of purpose and satisfaction in helping people less capable than themselves. For all the men, ‘success’ came to be measured against an internal criterion of satisfaction with their life.
direction. Their work became more closely an extension of their own values, rather than from a measure outside themselves, as was the case before their transitions. One key indicator for them was a changed sense of relationship with external and personal authority:

‘I suppose I see, as I said before, my current position as a launching pad for being free, freer than I have been from this sort of close hierarchy, although there is this monstrous registration and regulation and authority process that I will have to submit myself to. So I have to submit myself to scrutiny, public scrutiny as well as private scrutiny by the registration authority.’ (PS2/Q103/P34)

‘I wouldn’t choose chaos. I like structure. But there is a lot of personal freedom to this. I’m now choosing to study what I really want, and I’m choosing to live in a place where I really want to be, with people who have ideas that I relate to.’ (MS2/Q74/P20)

Their perceptions of themselves and their futures were positive:

‘All the different ways of looking at life and activities and life in general are great, and I seem to be going from life’s experiences steadily upwards. I mean I feel as though I have been going like that, up steps. I don’t know where the steps are leading, but they are still going and I am enjoying the journey, every bit of it.’ (PS2/Q26/P13)

‘I’m at the transition rock. Like, you are on one shore and there is a rock in the middle, and there is the shore on this side. So I’ve made that step onto this rock … A little unsteady yet … so now I’m trying to get myself balanced and centred so that I can make that final leap, that final step. That’s a good analogy.’ (MS4/Q22/P8)

‘Where is my spirituality heading now and what is left and what has changed, I suppose is what I am trying to say. The essence of the Christian message is still important. One of the big lessons I learnt in the seminary is sociology and capitalism and labour, the value of dignity of work.’ (PS3/Q86/P33)

‘But now that I am out of it I feel that I am totally in control. I like to feel that I am in control in a sense of having the responsibility to perform and to do something … I am so excited about these changes that have happened to me.’ (IH3/Q72 and 98/P24 and 31)

ROC, who relied so heavily on events to describe his changes, moved on to express his processes as a metaphor:

‘I was fortunate in that when I changed my career it wasn’t that brave, really, because I had another job to go to. I went to another tent, if you like. A very different tent but within the same paddock. I didn’t actually go to a different tent altogether on the side of a hill. In fact go to a lean-to, or up a tree or something. Or no tent at all. No boundaries.’ (ROC2/Q64/P13)
Wanted: a Path and a Guide

Bridges (1996b p.118), talks of “the great emptiness of the neutral zone” as the period of ennui experienced by Tolstoy during a life change Tolstoy described it like this:

“I felt that something had broken within me on which my life had always rested, that I had nothing left to hold on to, and that morally my life had stopped.” (Tolstoy in Bridges 1996b p.118)

Bridges (Bridges 1996b p.119) spoke of the benefit a ‘map’ would have provided Tolstoy:

“… he [Tolstoy] clearly could have used some help – someone who could appreciate his suffering and his confusion, some way of making sense out of it, some route to follow through it. He could have endured his situation better … he could have felt a little less alone if he had realised how common his experience was. And he could have faced the future more confidently if he had had some tools with which to clear a pathway for himself through the wilderness.”

Similarly, the men in my study felt that they had made their transition alone, through uncharted territory, and that some kind of map or guidelines would have been a great help. MS expressed it this way:

‘It seems to me that it’s taken a long time, just because I really didn’t know, there was no set path, there was no information that I was aware of, how to move along that direction, a different direction. And so it was a sort of making-it-up-as-you-go-along, getting from whatever people you can as you go along, bit’s of this and bits of that, and if you’re lucky finding somebody who is on a similar path or has been farther down the path than you have been and you can glean a little bit from them.’ (MS4/Q6/P3)

A core aim of my research is to contribute to such a map.

All the men indicated a resistance to

“... stay[ing] with the sense of disorientation and powerlessness and open[ing] to a deep knowing of what you need to see that you have not been seeing.” (Pearson 1991 p.42)

Yet each man in the study, DW, MS and IH in particular, demonstrated an understanding of the necessity for doing just that, by engaging in deep self-reflection and life reviews, and by venturing into the uncharted waters of uncertainty. All of the men in the study passed through that ‘great emptiness’, each
in their own way and for differing lengths of time, as the maps of their journeys show (*Men's Journeys* Ch.10).

Driven by inner discomfort or external goal, they all ‘arrived’ at a place of renewed, if partial, certainty. Their tipping point experience ensured that they would not or could not go back to doing the work they had been doing or, for some, holding the values they had held, or living life as they had previously lived it.
Ch. 9: Collective Experiences: Travelling in Tandem

What follows in this chapter is a more detailed discussion of the men’s experiences of the identified transition stages through their collective perspectives. (The men’s individual transition experiences, in their own words, are documented in Appendix C).

Stage 1: Restlessness (Sense of Impending Demise)

A phase of nebulous but insistent inner discomfort; a sense of being cut-off from ‘Self’; impending sense of change

For all the men, regardless of external events and, at times, in spite of them, a sense of restlessness began their conscious move to change. Such a sense of ill-ease was reported by DW, MS and PS as having continued over many years, principally as an inner distress.

‘The doubts didn’t start until I was in philosophy which was in Sydney in 1959. So I was then what, 18 or 19, that’s when I started to have doubts … I left then in ... I worked it out ... I left the [islands] at the end of 1967.’ (PS1/Q11/P7)
It was relevant for only a relatively short time for the others (ROC, JL, IH). The ill-ease MS, ROC, IH and JL felt was principally ascribed to impending or anticipated changes in their work environments:

‘I guess I was aware that things weren’t very good. I didn’t like the way we were. I didn’t like the way I was. I didn’t like the way I felt and I wanted to, some need, some desire to make it better, to improve it.’ (MS3/Q5/P2)

‘I had a contract for two years ... No one said to me, “At the end of two years we will give you another two years and you will go on forever.” Most people said, “Once you get in they will renew your contract and you just kind of move around.” I just didn’t kind of accept that as being a fact.’ (ROC3/Q13/P3)

‘... it was obvious that they decided they had to get rid of me.’ (IH1/Q118/P43)

‘For instance, what happened to me was, my champions were either killed or retired ...’ (JL1/Q139/P26)

PS recounts staying in the priesthood because of his reliance on, and his belief in, its (external) authority, so much so that he allowed it to override his own ongoing sense of ill-ease and doubt:

‘... well I’d had my doubts and as far as I was concerned I just wanted ‘out’ completely, and they said ”No, no just hang around and talk to God and settle down. Things will work themselves out” ... and so on. I was told that I should tell my parents that the tropical sun had got to me and I had a tropical illness ... in the jargon it is known as whether you have a vocation or not, and that was the question: did I have a vocation or didn’t I have a vocation? One assumes that one has one. One is told that one has. You are told, “Yes, you have got a vocation” and you tend to accept that without a lot of analysis.’ (PS1/Q10-11/P7)

This characteristic, of placing personal interpretations of reality, and even validation of the truth of their own reality, in the hands of external authority figures or institutions was a clear marker of the men’s reliance on hierarchy as a driver and measure of their lives:

‘... at that time it was easy to blame outside influences because I was going down this idea of, this social line that you climb the ladder and you were a good family man and you were a pillar of society doing all the community things, but inside me, myself there was a part of me that was dying, more and more a part of me was dying because I wasn’t there, only living. My whole of my time was doing something I really didn’t want to do.’ (DW4/Q3/P2)
The stages identified for the men’s transitions may also apply to work environments. For instance, ROC, who spoke little about his personal changes, but a lot about how his work environment changed and how others were affected, described it in this way:

‘So it was almost as if we knew we had to change something. We knew the organisation couldn’t stay stagnant forever. It had served a function and done the job, but things had to change. We have to change it so we will change it. But we didn’t really understand how this change process really worked’ (ROC1/Q41/P10).

Stage 2. Exploration and Preparation (Gathering Wood)

A stage characterised by the exploration of new or once-dormant interests; increasing tensions; maintenance of ‘old’ ways; life sectioned into ‘boxes’.

Phase 2a: Exploration

Stage Two was a phase of disorientation and confusion, experienced as a vague unease, not yet crystallised or with any clear direction:

‘… this process of growth, when you don’t have anybody to pattern yourself after, then you don’t know which direction to go or where to look. It takes you a long time because you’re kind of just fumbling around, you’re stumbling this way and maybe find something that works or nothing, and fumble this way a little bit and maybe find something else that works a little bit.’ (MS4/Q6/P3)

Internally,

‘You know what it is you don’t want. You know that that is not what I want. It must be there somewhere.’ (PS3/Q104/P39)

In this phase the men described a period of growing tension within themselves as the distance between their inner desires and outer demands widened.

‘I was just trying to survive in what I decided to do and, in a sense, at that time, it was easy to blame outside influences … this social line that you climb the ladder,'
and you were a good family man, and you were a pillar of society doing all the community things, but inside me, myself; there was a part of me that was dying. More and more, a part of me was dying because I wasn’t there, only living. [The] whole of my time was doing something I really didn’t want to do. So that was gathering and gathering, and as time went on that voice that was kind of saying “Hey I don’t want to be here, I’ll do this for a while”, started to gather into a “Hey, listen to me. I don’t want to be here”, to the point where it was getting quite loud. So, at that point, about two to three years before I moved, about 40, was when that voice was beginning to be very loud.’ (DW4/Q3/P2)

Out of this inner dichotomy, compartmentalisation (‘boxes’) became a device the men used to maintain ‘normality’.

‘I was doing some of those risky things. But I was still holding on to that part of me in the traditional, professional world.’ (MS2/Q25/P7)

‘When you went home you then become the non-department person … but you should be able to go home and turn off and say, “Well that was at the office”, or “That is what I did there. Now I am back”. I am very good at doing that, of not actually bringing my work home with me in terms of emotionally … I think there were only two sides to how I dealt with issues; that was my personal life and my work life.’ (ROC1/Q80-81/p.20)

‘… so I’d made that decision that I really was not the right person to be a Christian leader in that environment. I was worried about my heightened sexuality ... gradually, over that 18 month period, I felt the church itself had lost the plot in terms of the powerful simplicity of the gospel and message of love for one another ... ‘I was trying my best to stay … have a normal relationship with God. I was still saying mass, I was still preaching.’ (PS1/Q41/P14)

‘I’d say in the last eight years I had none of that. Had no integrity or self esteem or support or encouragement or motivation, apart from what I was generating because of the students ... I continued to try and work at that level despite what was happening at the administrative and organisational levels.’ (IH3/Q98/P31)

‘… when I was at the water front, working on it, there was a way of acting and a way of being, but when I was with Rovers and Scouts and doing that there was another way of being. It was easy for me to work within those two cultures, I found … I think that was a beginning of my boxes, for want of a better way to put it …’ (DW2/Q104 and 107/P24)

DW expressed the boxed nature of his early life as playing ‘roles’. This correlated to similar comments by ROC, PS and JL in relation to their split roles and ‘playing the game’:

‘So it was like as if each of these was a different role that I played … None of them that I could stay in, none of them that I felt totally at home in, none of them that I
could really progress in. Like there was still something else there that I was searching for, something that was what I wanted.’ (DW2/Q107 and 108/P24)

‘SMac: ... when you talk about your role in the church, that there is [sic] two roles, one is the church role, so your public positional role, and one is your personal life where you play golf, cards, told dirty jokes, and they sound fairly distinct. You are a priest one minute and then you are playing cards, next telling dirty jokes. You wouldn’t tell those dirty jokes from the pulpit for instance?
PS: No, that’s right’ (PS1/Q17/P9)

ROC also saw this as a mode relevant to managing within his work:

‘My guiding principle I had was I tried to make sure everyone knew what game we were playing and what the rules were up front and what the parameters were. They weren’t necessarily my parameters, but they were the ones that it was my job to implement. So, if they disagreed, they knew they weren’t disagreeing with me, just the system. I might agree with them in private, but I have to say what the system said’ (ROCl/Q76/P18).

However, as DW expressed it, and as discussed already a divided life did not come without cost. One of the results of being ‘split’ in themselves was a loss of engagement and identification with the rituals and paraphernalia of their hierarchy. There was a certain sadness in that. For PS:

‘But you see the holy water and all that stuff didn’t mean anything to me. It was just the form, it was just the ritual of the liturgy’ (PS1/Q75/P26).

To look for resolution from the organisation(s) in which they felt unsettled, and to try to force themselves to comply with their old ways, was common to several of the men, especially IH, PS, DW and MS. It did not help.

‘... well I’d had my doubts and as far as I was concerned I just wanted out completely, and they said “No, no just hang around and talk to God and settle down. Things will work themselves out” .... and so on. I was told that I should tell my parents that tropical sun had got to me and I had a tropical illness.’
(PSI/Q11/P7)

**Stage 2b: Preparation**

The word ‘preparation’ implies some measure of control and engagement. However, I use this term as a metaphor, in a similar way to ground being cleared in readiness for planting. Sometimes that ‘preparation’ was a feeling of inevitable failure or collapse, as it was for DW:
‘November, I was just beside myself. I didn’t know … this sense of failing; the whole thing was failing and it’s all my fault …’ (DW4/Q4/p.4)

... and as felt by MS:

‘… my extra-self-critical me can say that I was a failure; that I was not able to meet the demands and keep up with my peers as I progressed up the career path. But when I look back on that I can see that I didn’t have the same interest and drive and desire to accomplish the same things that I felt like I was being judged on.’ (MS2/Q5/P2)

Sometimes it was experienced as groping in the dark:

‘I guess I knew enough that there was a self there that wasn’t fitting in with the criteria that I was trying to live by. And even though I didn’t know exactly what new criteria I should be applying to myself I just started fumbling and flailing around trying to find something. And that’s when I started doing some of the searching things. Trying this and doing counselling.’ (MS2/Q63/P1)

…or stress and oppression:

‘… the first 10 years of that experience were absolutely wonderful. I worked for an amazing man who is now deceased … I could not imagine a better work environment nor could I imagine better support from my superiors than I had from that man. However, the last eight years of that experience were quite ... they quickly developed to be quite the opposite when he retired and there was a change in leadership, and things went bad and there was all sorts of oppression - physical, financial, spiritual - and I came under what I would describe as spiritual attack ... by the middle of [the year] I had become so oppressed and felt so victimised that I had been medically diagnosed as suffering from severe anxiety and depression.’ (IH3/Q104/P38)

For ROC and JL this preparation stage was more proactive:

‘Well it is all choice isn’t it? I could have opted, after the restructure in the office and the job that I had was abolished, and moved somewhere else, to move somewhere else. Or I could have taken another position in the new structure. But it was an opportune time in which to say, “Well it’s now time to make a change. I don’t want to be doing this when I am sixty years of age.”’ (ROC1/Q83/pp20-21)

‘I’ll tell you how I got there … I did the traditional thing, I applied … and when I applied for that job ... I proceeded to ... tell them about their organisation, what was weak with it, where it was going, where it wasn’t going. And the Chairman of the Committee said to me, “You know more about the [company] than I do”. I said, “Well, you just have to do your homework.”’ (JL1/Q167/P33)

PS also made a proactive decision:
'I made the decision initially because I no longer wanted to be a hypocrite. I remember at the time that was the way I felt. I no longer wanted to get up in the pulpit and tell people to say the rosary and bless their holy pictures and everything else that the faith, the doctrine, embraced … all kinds of things. And I felt a lessening of my faith, and that was when I decided.' (PS1/Q36/P14)

As the disengagement with outmoded aspects of their lives became evident, the men felt engagement with their new interests as reinvigorating and affirmative. Joy and enjoyment was a recurring measure of ‘doing the right thing’, such as when DW closed his business:

‘And as soon as I left in the afternoon it was like as if I was walking two foot above the ground. It was such a relief…’ (DW4/Q5/P4)

and for PS, in the Islands:

‘ ... and it was a lay organisation ... It was started by some lay people, had no clergy in it. The church didn’t like it very much but it was there and they were people trying to live the essence of the Christian message, and it sort of just grew like topsy around the world. And at the time it was in, I was in the Philippines and I went to some of the meetings and I loved it. It really grew on me. That reality was there, and what I was doing was so different, and I was feeling those contrasts as well.’ (PS3/Q85-86/P32)

However, as for all the men, a decision based on rational action, such as conscious decision, did not bring about clarity and could not bring about a tipping, or turning, point. This aspect is important to note. It suggests that, for a ‘tipping point’ to occur, more than the rational mind needs to be involved: what seems to be required is a congruence or ‘lining up’ of several parts of the Self, which then all respond or resonate to something at the same time, on those levels. A resulting moment of clarity, insight, or epiphany (Nelson 1995) then occurs, and instigates a paradigm shift, and a commitment to that shift.

**Stage 2 at Work: Exploration and Preparation (Gathering Wood)**

The men’s pattern of being split was also described organisationally, by ROC:

‘It [the organisation] became, in a funny sort of way, more conservative while having the appearance of being progressive.’ (ROC1/Q44/P11)

Even the culture was split:
'I think we talked that previous time about the public service sector taking on management strategies and philosophies that they saw, that were existing in the private sector, as good ideas to take on. But they actually had taken them on within the old culture, and the culture hadn’t changed.’ (ROC2/Q31/P7)

**Stage 3. Tipping Point (Combustion)**

Personal emphasis shifts decisively to focus on new option(s) and direction(s), and on their integration

The ‘tipping point’ was that moment when the men knew there was ‘no turning back’; that they had embarked on a new direction and a life-path they must, or felt committed to, follow. DW’s experience most graphically described this moment and its capacity to provide focus and re-direction.

> ‘So the gun was on the bed and I had the bullets and I was with the gun and a voice very loudly said “This is not the way to do it. Close the business now and get out of it.” It was so loud, so clear, so direct. I said “That’s it.” So I put the gun away and I went to J1 and I said “I’m closing the business down tomorrow” …’ (DW4/Q4/P4)

Not all such moments were so dramatic. For MS, that pivotal point came in the army and lay simmering for many years before it made its impact more fully felt:

> ‘All I know is that there was a time there [in the army] that I recognised that just trying to adapt myself to please everybody around me just wasn’t going to work and it wasn’t satisfying me. So I guess I recognised that my self wanted more, wanted more happiness … Even though I can see that that was a real pivotal point, it wasn’t like it just swung 180 degrees at that point - that just started it. Now it feels like it’s switching more and more and more to that way.’ (MS2/Q28,30/pp7 and 8)

A cynical and uncaring remark by one of ROC’s superiors made him realise his ethics and those of the organisation were vastly different and he, once again, reorientated to his own values as the deciders of his actions:

> ‘... we had a meeting of all the management people about how we were managing closing down the office and moving people off to better things, or not better things. Basically his opening line at the meeting was, “And how are we keeping the little punters quiet?” It was basically cannon-fodder and, “If I get a little pressure, well, then we will have to look at a proper redundancy package or some re-training for people.”’ (ROC1/Q20/P5)
A similar experience for PS confirmed his decision to leave the priesthood:

‘I was in the Mother House ... and the head of the organisation there was having a chat with me, and he said, “You know [PS],” he said, “I know you have raised these doubts with me before, and you don’t think that you are suited for this, but,” he said, “if I were in your position”, he said, “I wouldn’t make such a major decision unless I was very close to the Holy Ghost”. And I looked at him, and something snapped. I said, “Tomorrow I am going to Myers [department store] and I am buying a tie.” That was it. That was it. And I did. I went to Myers and I bought myself a tie. To me that was symbolic. A break. A great release.’ (PS1/Q32-33/pp11-12)

For IH, it was the threat of sanctions against him, and a subsequent offer of redundancy:

‘So, to cut a long story short, I was told that if I left by the following Wednesday, which was three days away, the charges would be dropped. Well the best thing I could do was get out of the place. But miraculously, with some prayer within those three days, I was offered a package ... And so I chose to leave.’ (IH1/Q119-120/P44)

A characteristic of this ‘tipping point’ stage was the great sense of clarity and certainty that followed on from it:

‘When I finally left there was no sense of loss whatsoever ... I felt totally free’ (IH3/Q53/P9).

‘And as soon as I left in the afternoon it was like as if I was walking two foot above the ground. It was such a relief …’ (DW4/Q5/P4)

That certainty was an impetus which carried the men through the next stage (which was equally, or more challenging in its uncertainties as Stage Two), when a new, emerging sense of self and work emerged.

Their clarity was coupled with immediate decisive action (a symbolic gesture of letting go for PS and JL, and of moving forward for JL) that ensured there was no going back.

‘The break was a big change in my life. I threw away the priesthood, the robes, the vestments, the chalice ... The collar, yes, definitely the collar. Got the tie.’ (PS3/Q36-37/P11)

‘The first thing I did when I finished in the Army was throw my mess kit in the dustbin.’ (JL2/Q49/P13)
‘... the President of the [company] rang me up the next day and he said, “I’ve got a job for you, I want you to be my number two in [CCC]”. I said “Yep, three months notice and I’ll be there.” So we negotiated a salary package and I joined him. So that’s how I did it.’ (JL1/Q167/P33)

For DW, it was closing his business; for the priest, PS, it was buying a tie, followed not long after by a phone call to a friend:

‘I went to Myers and I bought myself a tie. To me that was symbolic. A break. And I knew an ex-seminarian in Canberra and I rang him up and I said, ”Are there any jobs in Canberra?” and he said ”Yes. Come and stay with us.” So I went and stayed with him and his family for a week and he got me an interview in the Public Service and that was the next stage.’ (PS1/Q32/P12)

It was at this point that made the critical change on which the men’s successes in this study have rested:

SM: ‘... so tell me if you think it’s true or not, is that, in that moment you moved to believing your own truth and giving your own truth more validity than the Church?
PS: Oh yes.’ (PS1/Q35/P13)

When PS later left the Public Service to try a business venture, his decision and then acting on that decision, was just as quick, though, again, it had been a long time coming. After high office and overseas postings he had become disillusioned:

“Is that all it is? Okay if that’s all there is, move on.” So when I was offered an opportunity to start a business here in Australia I said ‘Yes, give me 24 hours to think about it,’ and boom I said ‘Yes’. I was ready.’ (PS2/Q75-76/pp26-27)

PS and JL both demonstrated a ‘false start’, which may also be understood as an incremental move or cyclic refocussing. The way forward for the latest iteration of PS, came to him without fanfare:

‘... I [am] still tying to figure out how it all came to me. Sometime half way through the year, probably under a hot shower one morning, I probably thought “This is no good long term. What skills do I really have? How can I put them together, how can I amalgamate?”... I could use my people skills, use my knowledge of refugees and I could help refugees where I wanted. [I] could be more flexible with my working hours, in charge of what I am doing, be in control, and I wouldn’t have to have a huge outlay like buying an existing business.’ (PS3/Q12/P4)

Like JL’s second ‘jump’ to his own business, PS’ idea became firm and future ground for him. From that point, PS became very focussed and he began retraining
to become a freelance Migration Officer, completed the qualifications and, not long after the interviews were completed, gaining accreditation. He has been successfully working in that field for several years now.

Bridges (1996b p.11) speaks of a period of ‘letting go’ of the ‘old’ at the start of the transition process. In my study it was in the post-‘tipping point’ stage that most of the men’s conscious letting go was begun, both internally and externally, and it continued sporadically throughout their processes.

‘I had had a dream where it was, and the best way I could explain it was like heavy, heavy ships chains draped all over me just fell off. I felt light, I felt that I could float ... I had this sense of being really free and at the same time being totally relaxed. And I just sat there and had my cup of tea. And so it was like one more step in the process of release ... this dream left me standing in the middle of a desert area. Now I know what a desert area is like. I have flown over Lake Eyre. And as far as I could see it was just dead flat, there weren’t even dunes. It was just dead flat all around. And I couldn’t see anything on a horizon. I just felt released, like chains had fallen off and there I was waiting for direction. I mean which way would I go? There was [sic] no landmarks, there was nothing on any horizon all around me. It was just dead flat and smooth for as far as you could see. And so I felt that, you know, direction would come. And it was sort of not long after that all of this release came from the university.’ (IH3/Q15/pp6-7)

IH’s dream aligns with Bridges’ idea of preparation for change, not as a volition of control, but as giving in, being in the ashes, as:

“… surrender – the person must give in to the emptiness and stop struggling to escape it.” (1996b p.119)

Stage 4. Rest and Revitalisation (Ashes and Worm/Chrysalis)

A ‘neutral zone’, a time of resolution, rest and withdrawal followed by developing and nurturing their refocussed self and newly emerging direction(s).

Stage 4, like Stage 2, has two phases in it; one related to the past and one to the emerging future:

- one is a retreat, a ‘neutral’ or ‘floating’ stage; an anonymity of the self; a time of self-reflection and assessment (‘sitting in the ashes’)

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• the other is a movement towards or in a ‘new’, emerging direction (‘emerging worm’ or chrysalis).

These phases co-existed, with the men freely oscillating between the two. The overall experience of this stage for the men was their reorientation and emerging re-identification. Characteristics of this stage were a period of reflection and reassessment, diminishing uncertainty, reorientation, and dealing with the repercussions of their ‘tipping point’ decision. These feelings were then followed by a sense of ‘unfolding’ (expansiveness and relaxation) or being in ‘neutral’.

From the men’s stories, a more detailed version of the ‘neutral zone’, which Bridges uses to describe the whole of the central process of transition between old and new certainties is described. Bridges’ (1995b p.37) description of this part of the transition process correlates well to the post-tipping-point stage, and the ‘ashes’ period of the Phoenix myth:

“The neutral zone isn’t just meaningless waiting and confusion – it is a time when a necessary reorientation and redefinition is taking place ... It is the winter during which the spring’s new growth is taking shape under the earth.”

For DW, the first phase of Stage 4 began after closing his boat-building business (DW4/Q4/P4). He enjoyed a period away from dealing with the crises that brought him to his tipping point by going to work at a boat-building firm in a nearby town:

‘In a sense [W-town] was great because it took me right away from everyone that I knew ... it was easy to keep up a relationship because they didn’t know my history. So I never talked about the business …’ (DW4/Q5/P4)

For IH, the ‘ashes’, or leftovers of his previous work were large quantities of paper:

‘I could take you down to the bedroom and show you the remains of some three tonnes of books and papers and notes and lecture material that I brought back from the university.’ (IH3/Q39/P14)

Regardless of plans to step from one certainty to another (particularly by ROC and JL), each of the men experienced a time of reckoning (for instance, ROC’s illnesses), and a hiatus, whether short (IH) or long (DW, MS). Not all ‘ashes’ periods were restful.
For IH, it was a period of rebalancing himself through the simplicity of physical labour as he helped out at a nearby church school, digging ditches for them:

‘I’d go and do a bit of work, pick and shovel, digging drains or whatever. Getting some blisters and keeping on going. It was pretty tiring physically. I wasn’t in really good condition, having done years of sedentary work. But I found it very refreshing because it was just such a blessed relief from the nonsense, the intellectual garbage and the politicking that just went on for so many years at that place.’ (IH3/Q54/P19)

He was then able to reorientate himself:

‘... and I thought, well what am I going to do with my time? Well, within days, within a week of me leaving the place, I had heard from a local Christian school ... I heard from them and they wanted some jobs done and, “Would I be interested?” I said, “Oh yes, why not?” ’ (IH3/Q53/P9)

ROC’s previous peers and superiors presumed his period back in the school was a pause before he took up other, more challenging, work:

‘Two years [since being back in a school]. Basically, colleagues of mine, in the previous existence I had, have spoken to me and said, “Why haven’t you moved on now? You have had two years; you have had time to relax. Why aren’t you applying for a job here or there?” ’ (ROC3/Q87/P13)

However, ROC’s experience of the period after leaving his Regional Manager’s position, which coincided with him turning 40, was not a relaxing one at all. During that period he was very ill with a mysterious malaise, eventually having to have his gall bladder removed.

Of the six men, ROC’s journey seemed somehow different. It was as if, by returning from the Seychelles and taking up executive positions, he was actually going over old ground, or doing a diversion, rather than moving forward. If this was the case, did he revert to a ‘truer’ part of his nature, as evidenced by his improved well-being and health in his school position? Was his nature not ground in hierarchy at all?

ROC speaks of adventure in simple cultures in his early years; in strong contrast to the formalised hierarchical power structures of being a Regional Manager. From this piece of information and the sum total of the interviews with him, it appeared that
ROC was reverting to type in going back to work with special-needs children. However, as I do not know where his life has led him since, I cannot say for sure.

There were clearly several possible interpretations of ROC’s process: was the move he made to return to the schoolroom, after his job and office were abolished, his period in the ashes, the ‘neutral zone’ Bridges (1996b p. 112) speaks of, or was it a destination? Was it a reversion to his own work preferences (special-needs children)?

Regardless of his future, it seemed to be that ROC’s move back to teach in a school was a rest and reorientation (‘ashes’) period. It was during that time that his health first collapsed and then gradually improved, demanding he rest, reflect and rejuvenate. He came to understand and interpret the period as his body’s ‘catch-up’, and as him working the stress of his Regional Manager’s position out of his body, a recognised correlation (Bridges 1996b p.23-24).

He described his responses on the physical level through body and event changes:

‘The reason I don’t think I coped so well was that things happened. Physically things happened. I had my gall bladder out … I changed work … I had this virus for six months, which was unknown, and I ended up being quite ill. All that kind of stuff. It might have been that. It actually might have been, physically, my body telling me [that] there had been a change in my life. The work I was doing: for quite a number of years I was in quite a stressful job. So, maybe, in hindsight, I actually did cope quite well with turning 40, but what happened is, I changed this job and I did something different, and my body kind of caught up with me. What had happened for the last six or eight years: I had been too busy to be sick. I was too busy to actually listen to what my gall bladder was saying to me.’ (ROC3/Q3-4/pp.1-2)

As in Stage 2, keeping a segmented life was common. For DW, PS and MS it became less and less tolerable to be so internally divided:

‘…there is a huge amount of emotional energy goes into keeping that separate; more than overcoming the fear … There’s a terrific amount of energy in fear, and then the other side … the inside is in total anger and frustration about where you are, that you can’t do anything about it. There is a sense of a loss of … that internal integrity or loss of self esteem or loss of your own confidence. So all those things are tied up in that keeping things in ‘boxes.’’ (DW3/Q25-27/P7)
For PS, in his second move out of hierarchy, Stage 4 involved incremental reorientation and reformation. When the opportunity came, prompted by disillusionment, PS jumped at the chance to ‘escape’ from the Public Service:

‘I had been looking for a way out mentally, and it just came …’ (PS2/Q77/P27).

‘I started an international project freight forwarding company for an overseas investor … And at the end of nine months … we really weren’t getting the turnover in cash flow … So I … had a baptism of fire in an industry I didn’t know very much about … I arranged to have that company’s business put in the hands of some experienced people … [then] moved back to the Department.’ (PS3/Q13/P5-6)

PS returned to the Public Service as a contractor. His experience had taken him another step further away from the hierarchical paradigm:

‘I am working on contract, not because I love contracting or the Public Service, but it is going to provide me with a financial base to launch my business and help pay the bills in the meantime. So it is safe, it is easy, and it’s going to provide me with a financial base, so why not? Again I am using it as a safe base from which to launch myself.’ (PS2/Q82-83/pp28-29)

It was similar for JL. He moved from the military to be second in charge of a large construction company, but he did not find that it was the platform, for his new life, that he thought it was going to be:

‘I left in 1987 and I went into [CCC] - as the Commercial Manager of a construction company … in the boom times. Commercial Manager was really the second in charge of $150 million-turnover company … It was like war. I was beautifully trained for it. Helter skelter, things going all over the place … Jobs to be done. Unions, death threats to people, brown paper bags, incompetent managers, liars, court cases …’ (JL1/Q162-163/P32)

Moving forward:

Out of the period of withdrawal and rest, a renewal stirred - the chrysalis ‘worm’ of the myth, moved in the ashes of the Phoenix fire. A newly emerging sense of Self, and a new direction, was revealing itself. This stage was characterised by an increasing clarity of direction, greater vitality, focus and enthusiasm, reflected in more proactive responses.

Stage Four serves as a means to gain clearer focus. Each iteration in their transition prompted the men to move their focus away from external towards internal
signposts. Using an image that many of us are familiar with, PS described it this way:

‘So it’s like climbing the ladder at the side of a building and getting to the top of the ladder and saying “That was great but the ladder is against the wrong building”…’

(PS2/Q75/pp26-27)

ROC gave a clear description of a chrysalis stage from an earlier transition, between University and working as a teacher:

‘It was 1978, so [I was] 22 [years old]. So I went from one extreme to another. I thought it was wonderful living out there, and being a cow cocky, and working sheep, and ploughing farms, and doing fences, and going into town once a week to the sale and getting drunk at the bar. So it was interesting, wasn’t it, that was happening. Then, when I finished being a jackaroo - I had a year off from uni - when I finished that I then drove back from Forbes. I was a jackaroo between Forbes and Cudgen in the middle of nowhere. Drove back from Forbes and got on a plane in Sydney and flew to Bombay and went to India for a while.’ (ROC2/Q15/P3)

For DW that new direction was a sign, literally:

‘… every time I got out of the car to get petrol at [W-town] there was a sign on the side advertising yoga classes, and there was a part of me saying “Well when are you going to start? Like, you know you’re going to have to start. When are you going to start? Like, make it sooner or later, but you’re going to have to start”. So there was something really deep in me saying about this idea of spirituality, and moving in a spiritual way … There was an inner journey that was coming up that I had kind of been putting aside … There was a sense that that was the way I needed to go, but it was submerged underneath all the societal things.’

(DW2/Q74/P18)

He became aware of capabilities he felt he could develop in himself:

‘I got out of the building industry, or ‘the tools’, because I just felt that I was capable of more than that; that I was capable of moving to places within the workforce that I could make a difference [in]. And that was originally started off as being in the idea of counselling. Being able to kind of heal the people that have been dumped.’ (DW5/Q87/P24)

For MS it was a renewed interest in medical subjects that led him forward:

‘… when I started actually working on my career is when I started making some real steps in that direction [medicine]. I was taking Uni courses at night in the life sciences, to get the background I needed, that I knew I needed to get into these fields.’ (MS3/Q10/P3)

That external change required internal changes of him, as well:
‘I think though, more than that, more than just the practical scientific academic requirements to get there, I think I had more of a need to develop myself and to grow enough to be able to have the maturity and the skill and the insight I guess … to be a true professional in the field … I felt like I wasn’t a person … I had to help myself first.’ (MS3/Q11-12/pp3-4)

For PS, in his first major transition out of hierarchy, having been cloistered for much of his life, until he left the Priesthood,

‘... I had been in that hot house up until the age of whatever it was, 26. I came out and I didn’t know how to write a cheque. I’d never had a bank account. So I went into a bank with fear and trembling. I had never had money of my own. So all of the changes meant money, relations with women, accommodation, transport. I never had my own car. I never had my own clothing. I was developing new attitudes. Again I was at the bottom of the heap … this loss of power, and I was no longer on call 24 hours a day.’ (PS1/Q48/P17)

Stage 4 at Work (Ashes and Worm/Chrysalis)

For the people in ROC’s office, the ‘ashes’ period was devastating:

‘I mean your life plan is no longer sort of intact, if all of a sudden you don’t have a job and you live in a small country town. All you can do is do a task which is so specific to a particular organisation, but is of no relevance to any one else whatsoever.’ (ROC1/Q20/p. 6)

Stage 5. Clarity and Commitment (Heliopolis)

A period of clear discernment and letting go of outmoded aspects of work and self.

Stage 5, like Stages 2 and 4, also has two phases:

• clarification of goals and subsequent development of an emerging life direction, and
• letting go.

Stage Five is a period of clarification when the men, in their journeys of transition, sought or gained clarification by a review of their life. For instance, for ROC came to understand that his poor health after leaving his position as a Regional Manager, was stress, and indicative of his body’s need to catch-up’ in dealing with it.
The men became aware that,

“By selling time to the corporation one was implicitly accepting their definition of success.” (Handy 2001 p.14)

For instance,

‘Did I tell you that once my Assistant Director-General told me that I needed to get more mongrel in my attitude? ... I wasn’t hard enough. I didn’t go in hard enough. I was too nice to people. I didn’t kind of get nasty with people. My reaction to that was, “Well I don’t want to play the game if that is the case.”’ (ROC2/Q26-27/P5)

IH observed that:

‘... people who seem to succeed in the work environment are often, in my perception anyway, you know the tough sort of walk-over-everybody type of people.’ (IH1/Q3/P2)

That behaviour, in his experience, was well regarded and rewarded within hierarchies. He, like ROC, did not want to adopt these characteristics.

The men also came to differentiate between what their internal drivers once were and what they had become. They re-evaluated their values, and definitions of such things as normality, ‘success’, ‘honour’, what ‘being a man’ meant to them. They came to "redefine what winning means" (Handy 2001 p.150).

A changing concept of normality was particularly pertinent for MS:

‘SMac: ... you used the word ‘normal’, and yet the more you describe this former life as being one where stress is the value and distrust is an asset, and being one’s true self or having integrity is a risk … I’m wondering about the use of that word ‘normal’.
MS: It’s all around you. People don’t know but it’s there. And they were part of it. Looking back on it, that’s where I got lost, too. So caught up in the lifestyle that I totally lost view of what else there was and where I was going. It’s only when things deteriorated somehow that I became aware of it.’ (MS2/Q61/P16)

.... and for ROC:

‘I very rarely saw kids or teachers. I saw staff when there was a major issue to be resolved. So I would go in and review a situation, review staff and make reports and make recommendations about what should occur ... Whereas the job I do now: obviously I still have an executive position in the school, and I do some stuff, but it is basically dealing with kids, dealing with people; just that kind of day-to-day interaction with staff, students and parents. Interestingly enough it still demands
decisions to be made. It might seem pretty trivial compared to what I did before, but it is just as important, if not more important. So, whether John has his wallet and has his $2:00 to buy his drink down the street today is as important as whether I actually made sure I allocated the $20,000 I was given to allocate for a certain programme. The importances are just the same, at least to John. John has been looking forward all week to spending his $2:00 ... That’s important because I didn’t need to have the kudos or the status of being able to throw around thousands of dollars. To me it is just as important to throw around $2:00 for John, really.’ (ROC3/Q72-75/pp11-12)

For DW, the desire for clarity was expressed in the following way:

‘There is a sense with me that I need to go out and be uncomfortable. I’m not so much saying physically uncomfortable, but internally uncomfortable, to kind of hammer out what I’m trying to do …’ (DW5/Q63/P19)

For both DW and IH there were clear links to a wider sense of self in a transpersonal framework:

‘He speaks to us through his handiwork and the Bible actually tells us that. I can remember going camping on my own, I’d just go out in the bush with my old Toyota and off the beaten track, off the gravel road, and at times just through the bracken, and just pull up miles from any road and just set up tent and just take in the sounds and the creation. I can remember one night lying in the tent looking up at the starts for hours in the bush with all the sounds around me, and it never frightened me all the noise of being alone in the bush, there was nothing there to be frightened of. But just looking at it all and looking at the stars and thinking and thinking and realising that there had to be a creator of all of this. You know no matter how I tried to approach it intellectually there had to be a creator. I can remember that experience.’ (IH3/Q51/P18)

‘Because the more I’ve done through this Degree … the more I have a sense that the archetypes … that were created at that time are still in circulation, that they’re still operable in people … those older archetypes have not in essence changed particularly …’ (DW4/Q37/P15)

Stage 5 was a time when the men let go of parts of their lives they now understood as no longer relevant. It was also a period when the men resolved some issues related to their personal journeys.

For IH, Stage 5 culminated in a dream that happened to him between the time he had left the university and before he started his business. It was a dream with remarkable parallels to the Heliopolis phase of the Phoenix myth. In that phase the new Phoenix flies to the City of the Sun and lays the ashes of the old Phoenix,
shaped in an egg with myrrh, on the altar of the Sun god. It then receives the blessing of the clarity of Apollo and returns to earth and its new life, with its ashes left behind: IH felt that this, and his other dream, was a carrier of spiritual messages and guidance:

‘One day I was in church; let me tell you it’s a Pentecostal church ... But one particular morning we went into a time of prayer, worship ... And during this time I had a vision of actually walking into a temple, where I actually went into the place of worship ... the Holiest of Holies is behind the curtain … Well I actually had an experience in there, in this worship time, of actually going through that. And I literally, I laid down, I just threw down all the garbage from my life on the alter of sacrifice. So I sacrificed my life, and I went to the laver [washing place] and I knew that that was symbolic of clean hands and a pure heart. You know, washed in the laver and moved on ... and then I went boldly through the curtain into the holiest of holies and there was the altar. And I was in that holiest of holy places ... And then I realised ... it was the cloud of the presence of God’s spirit. And so I then had an experience of being drawn into that ... It was literally being in the presence of the power of God. For me, it was a very, very real experience.’ (IH3/Q73 and 74/P24-26)

As IH was a devout Pentecostal Christian, such parallels to the mythical pattern of the Phoenix remind us of Jung’s concept of underlying, patterns and ‘personalities’ existing in the psyche, regardless of individual experience and belief.

For this sense, Jung devised the term ‘archetypes’, prompted by insights arising from the association he made between a small manikin he carved in his childhood and some ancient stones he discovered in his adulthood (de Laszlo 1959 p.xvii; Hill 1992; Jung 1967; 1968; 1964):

“The manikin was a little cloaked god of the ancient world ... Along with this recollection there came to me, for the first time, the conviction that there are archaic psychic components which have entered the individual psyche without any direct line of tradition.” (Jung 1995 p.37-38)

IH’s dream reflects such archetypal elements.

For PS, a series of critical incidents, over several years, eventually provided closure. Like IH’s dream, PS’ experiences of Stage 5 have startling parallels to the mythical trip of the Phoenix to Heliopolis, especially this event:

‘What I did two years ago; I went back to that island and I decided to face it. The missionaries had all disappeared by then, but I went back to that church. It’s a big
cathedral like place, a huge place that was being built when I was there, back to the area where I’d walked the corridors and said mass, and created new forms of worship, and done some things that I was really proud of. And it was a stinking hot day, typical July, two degrees-above-the-equator-day. And I looked up at the room where all this rejection had occurred, and I had a friend ... and I said, “Look you take my photo”... So he obliged ... So that has taken the edge off that deep feeling of ostracism ... I have come to accept the fact that nobody is perfect and that these guys were less than perfect and they were just ignorant.’ (PS1/Q20 and 22/pp9-10)

‘I found out when I was there two years ago that one of the guys, the guy who really got to me, was still alive, and he was in a parish in the city. And he wasn’t all that far away, down ... I wanted to go there and hit him. Just turn up and just hit him in the jaw and walk away ... yes, it hurt for a long, long time.’ (PS1/Q24-25/P10)

Even after having gone back to seek closure on his feelings of hurt and betrayal from his fellow priests, it became apparent that PS still carried unresolved angers. Then, between interviews one and two, PS discovered books had been written on the missions of his order over the period of his priesthood. From the author, he found that most, or all, of those who had turned their backs on him when he went to say ‘goodbye’ on leaving the Mission house, had themselves left in the following 10 years. Remembering, talking about the event, finding the books, talking to their author, finding that the others had also left, all lightened what had been a terrible burden of pain for over 25 years.

‘I expected them to at least treat me as they were told to treat anybody else, which is the core of the gospel message, which was “Love one another as I have loved you.” ‘ (PS1/Q30/P11)

‘I saw that guy about four weeks ago who did this to me and I have been feeling angry with him for years, and the poor old bugger is past it. He hardly knows what day of the week it is. I said “Hello B. How are you?” And he said “Who are you?” So you can harbour lots of hurts and let them fester really. Or you can ... do something about it and get rid of it, but don’t let it fester whatever it is. Do something about it, grab it by the balls and shake it to death or boot it out the window, or something.’ (PS2/Q56/P21)

He came to feel somewhat vindicated in leaving.

‘But then the guys who were smirking and so superior when I left, these guys also had left within the following 10 years. They had also left. I had started a trend.’ (PS2/Q14/P7)
While letting go of the past for PS was quite dramatic, MS explained his moving-on phase far more simply:

‘I purposely nurtured those things, growing those things, and allowing the other parts to wither.’ (MS2/Q35/P10)

Though further research is obviously needed, from indicators in the long-term, cyclic period of resolution that PS experienced, it would seem that, although the stages appear to be discrete on paper, their elements operate in a far more complex way. I venture to suggest that unresolved issues from previous stages cannot be dismissed or let go unanswered. As in the experience of PS, it would appear that their demands will resurface until fully addressed and resolved.

**Stage 6. Consolidation (Return)**

An emergent self and direction is consolidated in relation to Self and others. Definitive changes in external forms of life or work occur.

In the consolidation phase the men developed a sense of certainty and confidence. Their sense of being on firm ground returned, along with a renewed sense of Self identity. However, consolidation continued as a process, rather than as a point of arrival.

Consolidation within new forms of work was quick for the three men who saw themselves primarily in relation to the outer world (ROC, JL and IH):

‘Having something interesting, having something that is worthwhile and having something that I can feel good about having done … Well, it gets back to the issue about humanity and caring and people. So I guess I feel that the job I do helps people, so I feel good about that.’ (ROC3/Q50/P8)

For IH it was quite practical:

‘That was about the time I started to think, you know I really need to do something for the rest of my days and it would be a waste not to use my engineering knowledge. I am very confident. I am well versed. I am up with it all, I have been teaching it. So I really should just start a business. So I started making enquiries and people have said to me, “Oh you’re very brave starting your own business”. Well I can’t see the bravery in it, quite frankly. All I had to do was go and pay $100 and register a business name. And work has just come.’ (IH3/Q83/P28)
Three of the men (DW, MS and PS), delayed their consolidation phase by retraining. In particular, for MS:

‘I’m talking about the University training right now. I mean it’s very representative of a transition, because I feel like I’m kind of halfway through that now, too. Again this is tied back with the old system again, but once I get that credential, I have a feeling that I will feel different about it. At least, I’m hoping I will.’ (MS4/Q15/P5)

It does not seem accidental that those men who took longer in the interim stages (MS, DW and PS) were also the men who had most deeply reviewed their sense of Self and life during their process. This was reflected in their awareness that their experiences were not made up of just practicalities, but also deeper layers, including changing values and self-concepts.

‘… where the money part of it to me is now so minor. It’s still important because we have to survive in this world, live in this world, but as far as using that as a measurement for my progress or my success, it’s become an extremely minor part of it … The things I value more now are … happiness, beauty, caring, love, relationships, feeling of communicating. Not that those things are taking new values, but on a list of priorities, they just shifted.’ (MS2/Q34/P9)

‘It’s a sense of me; a sense that I have as much place on this Earth as a tree, or another person, or the universe; a sense that I am That.’ (DW4/Q23/P11)

‘I wandered years and years to find ‘This is my block of land, this my boat or this is my … then I was sitting in meditation in a room somewhere and I opened my eyes and here is this, you know the picture of the world from outer space, that beautiful one that is on the poster often. Kind of thought, “Yes, that’s where I am.” ’ (DW2/Q88/P21)

Reaching the consolidation phase did not mean an inevitable rosy ending.

Sometimes it was simply an acceptance of being ‘outside’:

‘That’s kind of like that idea of “Well, if nothing is going to fit here, well I’ve got to get used to being on the outside so let’s do something about getting some skills at doing that.” ’ (Joint: DW/Q12/P7)

Or, as DW and MS reflected:

‘I have this idea that there’s something in me [that] hasn’t changed at all. There’s that soul aspect of it that hasn’t changed for as long as I can remember … There is a part of me that is untouched by what happens. It’s like it’s … the term that came up for me – ‘satguru’ - something that is deep inside you that just doesn’t change …’ (DW2/Q23 and 25/P7)
Such a point of view is in stark contrast to the 1978 assertion by Cohn (1978) that we are shaped by external social norms, a concept which could be used to validate paternalistic, command and control, hierarchical structures. Believing an external factor (person, organisation, belief, for instance) is needed to shape society and its individuals, gives validation to the existence of these structures and to directive social norms, such as despotic or manipulative governments. Experiences such as those of DW, of an unchanged and resilient Self, question and challenge such a hypothesis, and the paradigms it is built on.
"A man’s work s nothing but the long journey to recover the two or three great and simple images that first gained access to his heart" (Camus, quoted in Leunig 2005 p.29).

This section, which represents Stages 4, 5 and 6, reflects on, reviews and reaffirms the men’s changes and the findings of the study.

It is essential to explore the ‘drivers’ and the ‘leaders’ in any transition scenario - in a more commonplace, metaphoric language, to ask: ‘which is the tail, and which the dog?’ A tail cannot lead, nor a head follow and confusion of these roles courts disaster. Socialisation may result in such confusion, as the experiences of the men interviewed showed when they allowed command and control paradigms to overrule the needs and knowledge of their integral Selves.
Ch. 10: Journeys and Maps Reviewed – Leaving

Hierarchy

“In the process he discovered one of the important transitions that is likely to take place in a person’s work-life: the transition from being motivated by the chance to demonstrate competence to being motivated by the chance to find meaning” (Bridges 1996b p.76).

Transition Toolbox

A sense of unchanging, resilient Self was evident in all the men in a variety of ways, especially in its continuity of presence, nature and influence.

The men’s second most common characteristic was of a sense of self-sufficiency, whether forced on them by illness, by circumstances, character or upbringing:

‘I don’t remember being tied during childhood. I don’t remember being harassed. I remember playing in the street whenever I wanted to, I remember doing what I wanted to do ... It is at university that I think I realised that there were possibilities to do anything really.’ (ROC3/Q15/P3)

‘... I enjoyed my growing up. And I used to dream [about] flying all the time, and I used to fly model aeroplanes and built balsa wood planes. But I also used to build billycarts and huts and fantasise about flying and things, and jump off garage roofs with umbrellas.’ (IH1/Q5/P3)
‘It didn’t worry me that I was unusual or didn’t fit in with the mob. That I was
different … As far as I was concerned I was special.’ (IH1/Q68-69/P26)

‘I think quite early [I] had a sense of my own resourcefulness …’ (DW1/Q6/pp2-3).

‘… when I was a child and had a lot of time on my own … there’s a sense of
contentment in that aloneness.’ (DW2/Q108/P25)

‘I don’t feel like I’m a real social being. I have kind of a hard time just making
small talk. I enjoy it when I interact with people at a deeper level, a meaningful
level.’ (MS1/Q32/P13)

‘We also had a big talk about missionaries dying for the faith in China and all that
sort of stuff, which really fired me up. And I decided that … I wanted to join a
missionary organisation at the age of 12 … So third year high school I entered the
seminary … in 1964 I was ordained a priest … and was sent to the Philippines as a
missionary … Oh, by the way, you are not supposed to be ordained until you are
24. I was 22-and-a-half …’ (PS1/Q3/pp3-4)

‘Being an only child I didn’t have a lot of [friends] - so I had to - maybe this is a
factor, I certainly had to, I had to go out and make friends and cope externally
because I wasn’t going to get a lot of - I didn’t have kids to play with at home.’
(JL2/Q84/P23)

The men described this inner referencing in various ways, as a ‘success drive’, ‘inner
were also mentioned as significant drivers:

‘Just generally, the desire to see equity and fairness. The desire to see people
accepted for what they are. To be a happy planet. We live a very selfish life,
extremely selfish, but I am always moved by stories of people who don’t have what I
have. I was just driving home and I was talking to H. [son] about magpies and
stuff and I thought I was so lucky to be living where I could talk about magpies,
whereas other people in other parts of the globe are talking about not being able to
get any water, any food.’ (ROC3/Q50/P8)

‘Not wanting to compete with the masses, the hordes that went to university or
that played football or cricket, but rather to compete against myself and to be
effective at what I did and to relate well to people.’ (IH1/Q52/P22)

‘I have to just use my own council to judge.’ (MS4/Q27/P10)

Out of their early self sufficiency, whether conscious or not, the men began a long
tradition of referencing to themselves, even though they became well socialised into
hierarchical and external authority structures such as religion, school and work. Yet
all had reservations about leaving hierarchies altogether:
‘Wouldn’t that be brave? No boundaries. That would be interesting to talk to somebody who was one day a merchant banker in Sydney and the next day was doing something completely different. It would be interesting to see that in terms of what did they take with them to enable that to happen?’ (ROC2/Q64/P13)

The men in this study were selected for having left work in hierarchy and successfully going on to, or creating, new work with various degrees of reduced reliance on hierarchical paradigms. One person (DW), described the journey in terms of being ‘in a tribe and out of a tribe’. Another one (ROC), talked about being ‘in a tent and out of a tent.’

The transition processes identified in this study, were largely successful. But transition and change are not always successful:

‘Sometimes it doesn’t work at all, no … Other people hit the holes and they stay there, and that’s the drugs, the domestic violence, the suicide, the depression, the lethargy, the whinger. They haven’t found a way out of the hole; they haven’t known what to do about it … the hierarchy … might have given them a self-image, a status or something and when they left that they didn’t have anything else to build on.’ (SMac in JL2/Q127/pp.35-36)


For most of their lives, the men in this study were ambivalent in their relationships to hierarchies: and wary, but also had an interest in being part of them. Those of the men who felt they remained ‘in it but not of it’ (PS, ROC, JL), spoke of the hierarchy and organisation as a ‘game’ to be played, but with the necessity to retain an inner independence as well. ROC expressed it clearly:

‘Well, before, I made sure that I had other options and I understood how it all worked, and I understood the game and I understood the process. So I was happy to get in there, be part of it, bat away and play the game and whatever, but I always made sure I wasn’t wedded to the whole thing …’ (ROC3/Q55/P9)

However, there were rewards to be gained by remaining in the game, particularly in regard to positional power:
‘See, another thing that is very seductive is the power. People would come and kiss my hand. They would come and kiss my clothes when I walked into a room, I mean, this for a 22-and-a-half year old!! ... You were God to them. And it was a very seductive power.’ (PS1/Q46-47/P16)

‘I suppose the power ... I mean I would sit down with the President of Switzerland at dinner or speak to the [Australian] Foreign Minister about something ... when I became Ambassador, the position is called ‘Chargé d’affaires’. As Chargé d’affaires you lead a different life. It’s fairly up the hierarchy.’ (PS2/Q75/P26)

‘You do get more power because you’re getting more responsibility, so you have more control over more people and more money in the company or whatever. So you have more power. That definitely was a driving force for a lot of people. Probably more so than money.’ (MS2/Q60/P16)

If not at the start of their transition, certainly at the end, all the men interviewed did not consider work or hierarchy as a constant, or to be relied upon:

‘So, whilst doing the job I was doing, I at no stage thought it would be the only job I would ever do for the rest of my life …’ (ROC3/Q8/P2)

Having a ‘fallback position’ was a strong factor in their successful exits:

‘I am a person who didn’t demand that the job was his life. I think I divorced the job from who I was outside the job that I did, even though I spent most of my waking hours doing it … I wasn’t career-ladder obsessed. I made a very conscious decision early on that a career could be up, sideways or even down, as was appropriate … I had enough training and I had trained myself in a variety of ways that I had other options available to me … So I had a security net around myself, I guess, in that regard. I also had the knowledge that I could actually get a job doing something else if I really wanted to do it.’ (ROC3/Q8/P2)

‘But some of those people had no choices to make at all because they actually hadn’t at any time personally thought about anything else. Nor had the system … supported them in developing themselves beyond what they were doing. If they were to get professional development it would actually be about how to use that computer better or how to do that form better. It was never about, “Have you thought about a career apart from what you are doing?” That very same system then said, “Well, we no longer require you. Off you go.”’ (ROC1/Q18/P5)

A level of disenchantment was an asset in loosening the men’s allegiances to hierarchy:

‘I remember thinking when I was teaching that, obviously, decisions were made, somewhere in the corridors of power, that were made based on meaningful discussion and planned strategies ... So I would look upon these people that I heard of, or saw from afar, with awe ... this wasn’t the case at all. People were making
decisions in corridors, on the run, with no informed base, on a whole range of issues: power issues; or who held the most sway; who was the most articulate in putting forward their argument; which university they went to; what was the current fad that was in at that particular time; who was in politically. All those issues. Then I also realised all these people that I might have been in awe of, I was no longer in awe of them at all. They were just human beings playing this game.’

(... most people find faults with systems, especially as they mature and come to know the systems well and then they start to rebel against the systems, I have perceived.’ (IH1/Q27/P10)

The interviewees’ capability to move their reference points of success, belonging and purpose away from being anchored in hierarchical structures, was a critical skill in their successful transition out of dependence on hierarchy:

‘In a way he [ex-Manager] sees that I have actually taken this very soft option. I should be out there playing the game with him. That was a waste of skills that I had. “Why aren’t I out there kind of being involved?” It is funny, because I see it as the opposite; I see it as the brave option that he can never do.’ (ROC2/Q60/P13)

‘I mean, I long to be liked by people but I like them to like me for what I am, not for what position I held.’ (ROC1/Q25/P7).

‘I was having a dinner with some friends and one of the persons was a local professional and very much tied into that old system of having the most toys and the best toys and the whole thing, and I found myself being very intimidated by that, and also very kind of impatient with it as well ... It certainly made that paradigm a lot clearer to me.’ (MS4/Q27/P10)

A capacity to tolerate and learn from uncertainty, and to define one’s own criteria of worth, was also critically important:

‘I’m not so sure what my new paradigm, what shape that is going to take. But the values are much more inner-peace related.’ (MS4/Q27/P10)

Another core factor supporting the men’s capacity to move out of hierarchy was their allegiance to their personal, internal values. For instance, as PS described:

‘... I was exposed to the various externalia [sic] of religion - the rosary beads, the cross, the pictures, the vestments - all the externals that make up the Catholic religion. All of the externals. The candle sticks, the incense, everything. There were a lot of externals. And the more I was exposed to that, the more I withdrew mentally from it and decided that the most important thing that Christ ever did wasn’t confession and all the other sacraments. The most important thing was
actually learning to love your neighbour, as the essence of the Christian message.’

(PS3/Q85/pp31-32)

‘Difference’

The men required tolerance, courage, and an acceptance of difference to leave hierarchies and place themselves outside its norm.

‘… we accept difference as long as it is acceptable difference. In fact we kind of celebrate it a little bit. We like it in our movie stars or heroes of some description, but you can’t cross the thin line like, between an idiot and a genius. Oscar Wilde was accepted to a degree, but he crossed the boundary a bit too much, and was ostracised.’ (ROC4/Q14/P3)

‘I knew I was [different]. I knew I was more interested in study, in academic things, that I was a more sensitive person than the average boy. That I was interested in things that were not so cool, in today’s language, that I was not interested in some of the things that were cool, particularly competitive sports. And I was quite aware of that but it didn’t bother me at all.’ (IH1/Q68-69/P26)

‘The people that I would really admire, I guess, is someone who has taken a different journey spiritually or emotionally. So physically what you are doing, how you look, what you are doing is irrelevant. It is what you have decided in yourself that is important, and made that big leap.’ (ROC2/Q64/p.14)

Reclaiming a Self

As I moved into this research I became aware that I had, at first, regarded hierarchy as a starting point from which the men moved ‘away’.

To begin with, my questions had been:

- what was the nature of the capacity that enabled the men’s successful transitions out of hierarchical structures?
- what prompted the men to make that change?
- what was their process (transition journey) out of hierarchy?
- what internal changes resulted from their transition processes?
- could that transition be influenced, managed and learned, or taught?
As the men’s stories of their journeys unfolded, my perspective changed. It became clear that there was an a-priori sense of Self that they, in a sense, ‘lent’ to the hierarchy, and later reclaimed.

That Self appeared to originate from having a sense of ‘difference’, for instance, as an outsider, an adventurer, a loner or in feeling ‘special’, often as a child.

From this basis, a world-view of separateness moderated the men’s degree of allegiance and relationship to power-over structures, whether religion, work organisations or relationships, which did not accord with their inner a-priori sense of Self.

While that ‘original Self’ was accommodated sufficiently to not cause too high a degree of inner dissonance the men seemed content to remain, and even enjoy at least some of the aspects of being in a hierarchical structure. Being actively or passively part of hierarchies depended on the organisations’ degrees of acceptance of the men, their levels of rewards, the capacity and willingness of the hierarchy to accommodate the men’s original self, and its alignment to their values:

‘It’s only when things deteriorated somehow that I became aware of it. By deteriorated I mean, somehow I was not meeting the goals and expectations of those around me, by not accomplishing all the things that everybody else was, and it was assumed that you would, too.’ (MS2/Q61/P16)

Somewhere these six men were able to retain or regain a sense of their ‘original self’ and reassert their allegiance to it. The stories of their journeys (Appendices A, B and C) explained, in part, why this was so.

**Impetus for Transition**

As significant as the stages are, the impetus that set off each sequence is also important, and in itself may be part of a larger sequence of personal development that is incremental, iterative, and possibly holographic.

For instance, it was clear from my study that the men’s transitions were not ‘begun’ by an external event.
Table 11: Internal and external impetus for the men’s transitions (Mackenzie© 2007)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inter'vee</th>
<th>Internal - Feeling or Sense</th>
<th>External - Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DW</td>
<td>Desire to be out of role set by social expectations; to get self ‘out’</td>
<td>Collapse of business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS</td>
<td>Felt part of self ‘dying’</td>
<td>Recurrent frustrations, coming to ‘breaking point’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROC</td>
<td>Sensed organisational change coming</td>
<td>Office and position abolished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PS A</td>
<td>Sense of ill-ease with self as ‘hypocrite’</td>
<td>Not being taken seriously when expressed doubt, one too many times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PS B</td>
<td>Lack of sense of valued purpose</td>
<td>Offered business opportunity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IH</td>
<td>Frustration with managers and materialistic systems in education</td>
<td>Accusations and subsequent redundancy offer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JL</td>
<td>Awareness of mentor cohort dissolving</td>
<td>Mentors and group dispersed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Whether the transitions were sparked by internal dissonance or a sense of ‘something lacking’, an external imposition or a self generated action, it did not seem to matter. Change was apparently inevitable for the men in the study. An increasingly imperative, inner impetus was the pivotal driver point for all of them.

‘Starting’ and ‘Ending’

Life events do not begin and end neatly, much less so changes of the self; so it should be noted that the ‘neatness’ of the concept of a beginning and an ‘end’ used here was a convention originally adopted for ease of discussion.

My assumption, in using that ‘place-to-place’ model, was that ‘certainty’ was the ground from which the men would leave and to which they would return. At first this was an unthinking assumption. However, once analysed, the concept remained appropriate, at least in the external domain, and for the ‘slice-of-life’ perspective that is the nature of research. As a researcher we ‘step into’ a phenomenon and then go again, to live our own lives and let the research study participants live theirs (and so, in the mythic sense, retaining and supporting the Heroic tradition which utilises this pattern of relationship). What happens before and after the research period is therefore, by definition, nebulous and remains another person’s private experience. Even if we do longitudinal studies, at some point a researcher will no longer have contact, receive information, nor enter into dialogue with those being
researched, unless we are researching some lifelong companion or group: as yet a very unusual event.

The ‘place-to-place’ research model continues to reflect a masculinist, heroic perspective and framework through:

- certainty being its ‘starting’ position
- reflecting the main story-line of the hero myth, of leaving, then returning with rewards (e.g. wisdom, power and knowledge)
- maintaining an achievement and goal orientation.

However, in terms of experience, perception and subjective identification, the deceptively simple image of a clean start and end was inadequate for accurately describing the experiences of my interviewees. For instance, DW defined the beginning of the transition twice, from two events, the first being the moment there was a clear end to his business:

‘Really, the start of the change was the collapse of the business …’ (DW3/Q102/P25)

But he also perceived his transition beginning when he found a path out of his ‘vale of shadows’.

‘To me that was the beginning really of that transition … The night that I walked into yoga and I did yoga.’ (DW4/Q9/P7)

As such, DW described his transition as caused and begun at two points, by two external events. Yet he had begun changing in himself some time before and, in so doing, had already begun loosening his connection to his business, way of life, and his wife:

‘... I got to a point in April, I just kind of divorced myself from the whole lot ... I'd go into work and I would get the fellows started and then I'd go down to [the beach] and park the car and walk along the beach ... and I'd just stare at the ocean until about 1.00pm and then get back in the car and go back to the business to see what had happened during the day. And every second phone call was people looking for money and I’d be telling lies ... And that was just killing me inside. I was just dying. And then I got really angry about the whole lot. I had thoughts about killing the kids and killing J1 and killing myself.’ (DW4/Q3 -Q4/P3)

It became clear that the events DW referred to as beginning his transition were more like landmarks in his process, rather than its starting points.
For this study, the beginning and end-points of the men’s journeys are defined as their withdrawal and return to the external work world. In that process, they, inwardly as well as outwardly, changed (Hamilton 2006 p.201 and pp.66-67). Understanding the men’s personal transformations as well as their work transitions, was critical to understanding their processes.

**The Changing Men**

Each of the transitions in this study was unique, with each man’s transition being informed by his previous experiences of change, his beliefs (social, personal and transpersonal), his character and personality, plus his values, experiences and circumstances.

‘... people create something out of their own nature.’ (SM in DW5/Q23/P8)

Some of the men were very flexible in changing their world views, life directions and their work; others held to strict frameworks of being in the world, changing little, at least at the beginning, except for their occupations.

Two of the men (JL and ROC) knew where they were going when they left the hierarchy they were in at the start of their transition as studied here, although only one of these had initiated the move (JL). Four of the men had defined destinations: a new job (JL and ROC) and new career (PS and IH). However, one of each of those pairs only identified their new work and destination after their transition began (IH and ROC); another two had identified goals before moving out (PS and JL). The last two (DW and MS) had an interim destination planned (retraining at University), with no particular work positions identified post that re-training.

Four of the men (MS, DW, IH and PS) described their work transition as part of a larger, conscious, personal transition toward greater congruence of inner values and outer actions. These were described as open-ended journeys, requiring trust and being a trusting explorer. Of these four, three (MS, DW and PS), without using the word directly, showed indications of being committed to a path of individuation, locating a source and reference of satisfaction within themselves, and committing to further develop this. The remaining man (IH), who remained most closely affiliated
with the power paradigms of hierarchies, contextualised his transition and post-
transition success in a religious framework of obedience and persecution, purpose
and reward. The other two (JL and ROC) also sought greater congruence between
their inner and outer domains by moving to work which more closely represented
their identified values.

All six men hoped or intended that their new work would enable them to take more
control over their lives. The paradox of the three who were most closely aligned to a
path of individuation (DW, MS and PS) was that they wanted more control over
their lives while also following an amorphous unfolding yet purposeful Self that
had no tangible or foreseeable destination. Their transitions centred on their desire
to have the freedom to more closely follow that inner volition, while still responding
constructively to the many practicalities of their lives and relationships.

The other three (ROC, JL and IH) were strongly values-based in their decisions, but
they did not directly identify these as expressions of an inner or ‘unchanging Self’.
Instead, they identified their decisions as originating from their values.

Regardless of whether their decisions were generated in accordance with their
inner, resilient Self, or a strong, internal values base, the journey each man took was,
as Bridges (1996b p.76) suggested:

“... the transition from being motivated by the chance to demonstrate competence
to being motivated by the chance to find meaning.”

Such a change was not only pivotal, but it framed the men’s journeys in a wider
transpersonal and developmental context (Cranton 1996; Grabov 1997; Hillman 1983a; 1983b;
1996; Mezirow 1991; Nelson 1995). As such, some of these transpersonal and developmental
frameworks are discussed in Ch.11.

**Journeys as Metaphor**

I have used the metaphor of a journey between two peaks to describe
and illustrate the transitions and experiences of the men interviewed.
The peaks each represent certainty. In this metaphor, the first peak is
called The Present. The second, swathed in mist, reveals itself as we
journey towards it, The Future. The land between is rugged, pitted with
shadows, marked by signposts couched in the symbolic and poetic language of inner perceptions and longings. In this study it is called the ‘Vale of Shadows’. There are ledges to rest on in this landscape, and to use as staging posts; there are narrow paths winding without light; there are marshes and deserts of ennui and disorientation. For some there are monsters on the path; for others there are mages. Shafts of light penetrate the depths of the shadows and reflect off the peaks and ledges. Like all good stories each journey has its share of both uncertainties and surprises.

For some the way is clear, led by a strong inner vision; for some there is a partial map in the mind and heart that knows which direction to go, but not the lay of the land. For some it is sheer faith and determination which brings them to that further peak.

The ways across are as varied as the travellers.

Three Strategies for Transition

As a means to more clearly describe the journey of each man I devised a map/diagram for each of them. Each map/diagram has the two ‘peaks of certainty’ and a ‘vale of shadows’, as described above.

The diagrams of these individual Men’s Journeys (fig. 3) show that the men used three main strategies to move between their old and new work:

- Catapult – careful preparation, and then a definitive, radical leap
- Ledges – a succession of significant leaps, interspersed with periods of consolidation
- Steps – incremental small steps in a continuing direction, but with many variables.

The strategies adopted by the men appeared to relate to each one’s capacity or willingness to manage and tolerate uncertainty, confusion and disorientation. A lesser capacity or willingness to manage uncertainty indicated a higher reliance on rational domains and an intent for a more controlled transition; a higher capacity or willingness for managing or experiencing uncertainty and disorientation, enabled deep engagement with the process of transition itself and with their own self-transformations, and a less focussed plan of transition.
Table 3: Diagrams of individual journeys and strategies (Mackenzie © 2007)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Journey</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MS</td>
<td>Multiple oscillations, advances and retreats to avoid discomfort, heeding inner pain. Personal changes paramount. Created new career of freelance and contract work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROC</td>
<td>Unique in group. It seems to me that ROC back-tracked to Regional Manager position, then returned to his preferred work – ‘children at risk’ classroom teaching.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PS</td>
<td>Small significant leaps (ledges); incremental change while steadily accumulating skills. One ‘false start’, then created own consultancy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IH</td>
<td>Resisted, but forced to leave. Short period of review, then began own consultancy. Redundancy payout gave means and impetus for leaving old work, and supported new venture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JL</td>
<td>Conscious, planned goal, preparation and intent. Fell short. Refinement of goal to include shared values. Creation of successful outsource business.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3: Diagrams of individual journeys and strategies (Mackenzie © 2007)


**Making the Crossing**

In this research, two of the men, JL and IH, catapulted across; one (JL) by his own volition (solid research, clear goals and accurate self-knowledge); the other (IH) leapt in response to the pressure of others (forced redundancy providing both the motivation and resources to make his change).

Three of the men (DW, MS and PS) chose an incremental route, following the contours of the land, experiencing the multiplicity of shadows and shifts of light inherent in that journey. One of these (PS) negotiated his way across the Vale of Shadows by rocky ledges, some wide, some narrow, till he reached a sure footing and a short climb to a grand view. He did this by incremental gathering of skills – languages, degrees, experiences – to which he added a coherent framework, the role of Migration Agent. This profession reflected his values of being an advocate of the poor and dispossessed (returning to the role he played when he was a priest!). The other two (DW and MS) walked step-by-step, journeying down to inner domains, and then up again, resulting in rich experiences forged in doubt, uncertainty, distress, surrender and acute inner listening. Both were still climbing at the end of the interviews, led by an inner certainty, but with no specific external goals, continuing to engage with the outside world in an ongoing evolving lifestyle.

One of the men, (ROC) appeared to be already anchored on the second peak. By letting go of the pull that took him on a diversion into executive hierarchy, he returned to the classroom, where he had started, teaching special-needs children.

All had the help of others; ‘mage’, human, or divine intervention, friend and foe, who shepherded, led or propelled them along. For several of the men it was, symbolically,

“... a stranger who shows up and gives him some instrument, a sword or a sheath of light.” *(Moyers in Kohn 1998 p.14)*

For others, it was an ideal mentor or heroic figure – real or fictional. None of the six lost their way to wander in shadows of angst and self indulgent despair, waiting for rescue, though most, if not all, spent some significant time in the ‘Vale of Shadows’,
as I have named it. There, certainty was a stranger, their sense of what was fixed in their lives was eroded and shaken; their sense of themselves was tested and, for most, deeply altered.

One of the other two men (JL), leapt, as if from ‘peak to peak’, with little mention of uncertainty, although he did acknowledge that:

‘There's been a few highs and lows.’ (JL2/Q124/p.35)

It was as if he was driven by a spring that was loaded through thorough preparation, clear intent and the support of valued people. Its momentum almost took him to the work he could identify himself with, but not quite. He had not included, as part of the guiding principal of that first shot, that the new work was to operate on values akin to his own. He felt that the company he had moved to, from the military, though giving him a high position and solid opportunities, did not operate ethically. After a time he left. Then, in partnership, he started an IT outsourcing business. In some way, like the false start for Dodge Morgan (Palus, Nasby & Easton 1990), this experience supplied the added impetus needed for JL to successfully work in ways that more closely reflected his own values.

Although I have focussed on experiential and conceptual levels in researching the men’s journeys, it is important to remember that physical manifestations may well mirror or express internal states. ROC, too, after a period of reflection, had a similar insight:

‘What had happened for the last six or eight years: I had been too busy to be sick. I was too busy to actually listen to what my gall bladder was saying to me.’

(ROC3/Q4/P.2)

**Work to Work: The Same But Different**

Though changing work was the reference point of the length of each man’s transition, it is not to be presumed that work had the same meaning or relationship for each of them, or the same significance; nor were their reasons to change at the same level of complexity or completeness as each other.
Each man had been energetically involved with their profession at their starting points, but was not identified with it; that is they did not identify themselves by, or through, their work. They could dissociate from that position, split their lives and put their passions elsewhere as they chose. The ‘whole man’ was not there (boxes).

‘... mentally I have already left. I sit down at work and I look at the computer and I think “What am I doing here. What am I doing here?” I can’t focus very well on what I am doing, I am constantly distracted, enjoying the distraction, and then go and have a cup of tea and come back and think “Right, I am going to get stuck into this.” Finding it hard to focus on those boring things I am doing at work. Mentally I have already left.’ (PS3/Q11/P4)

The source of the men’s enthusiasm, passion and dedication for their new professions sprang from internal and individual qualities and characteristics. The skill sets they had acquired in the profession they left were brought to serve the inner momentum towards their new direction and new work. External factors, such as the type of task and work structure, were there to serve, support or act in partnership with their internal drivers, rather than as independent factors.

Their work destinations had quite different significances for each of the men, though all of them identified that their new work was now a closer expression of themselves, or it was described as integral to them. It represented their core values more closely, but also represented their increased priority to demonstrate those values, compared to the values they had expressed in the work they had left.

Though each man moved from a paid form of work to another paid form of work, the two reflected different roles. In the organisations left behind it was as if the men were the ‘tail’, principally answering to the demands of that external force. In their new profession and structure they were the ‘dog’, primarily making decisions for themselves.
One of the questions I considered in this research was whether transition processes could be ‘managed’; could they be anticipated and could steps be taken, or attitudes cultivated, that would maximize the benefit of the process? I now hypothesize that this is so, to a significant degree.

**Personal Preferences - Responses and Options**

In the process of interviewing the men, it became increasingly clear that each man approached their changes in their own way, and each preferred a particular approach. One of these, the shifting dynamic between proactive and reactive responses was integral to their processes, as was the role of surrender and passive introspection, especially in the post-tipping-point stage.

The following table presents a range of possible subjective and proactive responses emerging from the study, which may be useful in that regard. The information in the subjective column may not necessarily be conscious. Those in the proactive columns reflect possible scenarios for proactive management of personal and work transitions.

This is not an ‘either/or’ table for processes of deconstruction and reinvention. It is proposed that the content of the subjective column (or variations of it), may be inevitable (though it may not be conscious or recognized) while the responses in the proactive column (or variations of them), remain a matter of choice.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Subjective experience of transition processes</th>
<th>Proactive management possibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stasis</td>
<td>Security in self/stasis</td>
<td>Success and capability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 1 Ill-ease</td>
<td>Sense of ill-ease</td>
<td>Recognition of need or desire to change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 2 A: Increase in tension/Boxes</td>
<td>A: Confusion; reflection on values and unsatisfied desires; split life (‘boxes’)</td>
<td>Review goals of previous life; develop self interests; explore inner world; be open to new directions and insights; tentative explorations of these</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B: Preparation</td>
<td>B: Depression, grief and sense of loss; withdrawing attachment; letting go (may be ‘forced’); confusion; impetus to seek resolution in difference</td>
<td>Preparation of self and circumstance for ‘death’ of old life, and for development of emerging new life and direction(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 3 Tipping Point</td>
<td>Critical insight or event; sense of clarification; no turning back; embedded commitment to change</td>
<td>Recognition of core issues, values, and inevitability of change; acknowledge messages and importance of critical insight(s) or event(s); no turning back</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 4 Rest &amp; revitalisation</td>
<td>A: Surrender; awareness of uncertainty and conflicting elements. Questioning and reviewing life decisions, upheaval; repercussions to be resolved; malaise; grief</td>
<td>Questioning and testing decisions; dealing with repercussions of past dissonances; active grieving; relinquishing redundant elements; inconsistencies highlighted for re-evaluation; realigning priorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B: Affirming Self and value of its place as a personal guide; discomfort in incongruent and inconsistent aspects of self and life;</td>
<td>Significant actions to affirm values and confirm commitment to new direction; notice and resolve inconsistencies. Tentative conscious active steps to move to new self while in old circumstances;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 5 Clarification</td>
<td>clarity of emergent values and redundant elements. Acceptance of loss of old ways and ‘old’ self</td>
<td>Confirmation of commitment to new Self or way; clear distinctions made. Sloughing off non-relevant or non-supportive elements; active grieving; relinquishing redundant elements and inconsistencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 6 Consolidation</td>
<td>Accept consequences of the changes in Self and emerging goals. Increasing clarity and certainty</td>
<td>Confirm or substantiate new move to new life and/or Self; accept and deal with consequences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New, more congruent relationship between inner and outer Self; actions increasingly reflect that congruence.</td>
<td>Identify and be identified with new direction and Self in new role in world; act in accord with own peace of mind and purpose.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12: Proposed proactive and subjective responses to transition out of hierarchy and to personal or work regeneration (Mackenzie© 2007)
Layers of Engagement

Not every one makes a transition or understands it on a conceptual, transformative and emotional level. Some men change jobs or careers on a purely practical level, with little apparent change in themselves. Both these preferences were demonstrated in my study. To represent this observation, I have described and analysed the men’s transitions on several layers, including the archetypal tradition, as articulated by Jung and others (Dalmau 1991; Jung 1967; 1964; 1995; Pearson 1991; 1989), but mainly concentrating on emotional and conceptual layers.

Each of the men, in their transition journey, chose to utilise certain aspects of themselves, and to minimise the use of others. I have called these ‘layers of engagement’ and have described them in the following table, including their correspondences to the key phases of the Phoenix myth.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Stage 1</th>
<th>Stage 2</th>
<th>Stage 3</th>
<th>Stage 4</th>
<th>Stage 5</th>
<th>Stage 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phoenix</td>
<td>Impending change</td>
<td>Gathering wood</td>
<td>Combustion</td>
<td>Ashes and caterpillar/worm</td>
<td>Heliopolis</td>
<td>Return</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symbolic</td>
<td>Sense of impending change; preparation and readiness for deconstruction</td>
<td>Collection of fine scented wood - increasing intensity and dissonance</td>
<td>Self-immolation - making a stand; crisis; tipping point; no going back; critical insight</td>
<td>Separation of old and new; identifying values for the future</td>
<td>Discard remains of the dead with respect; dedication to future, daily</td>
<td>Reform and re-emerge; rebirth, revitalised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transpersonal or psychic domain</td>
<td>Identifying 'emptiness' hunger or; wanting 'more'; dislocation from 'Self' or spirit or source of Faith/God</td>
<td>Seeking identification and connection to inner Self or source of Faith</td>
<td>Connection to core Self or origin of Faith; awareness of clarity of purpose; insight</td>
<td>Outmoded and irrelevant aspects falling away</td>
<td>Confirmation and (re)dedication to new level of integrity and sense of Self or relationship to origin of Faith</td>
<td>Sense of sureness in inner Self; beliefs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional</td>
<td>Sense of ill-ease; restlessness; frustration; mood swings</td>
<td>New sense of self in the world; uncertainty increasing desire for certainty and clarity; tentative exploration</td>
<td>Crisis or readiness to change felt; no more tolerance for tension; 'tipping point'</td>
<td>Confusion and uncertainty; withdrawn or calm amidst chaos; selection and discrimination; rising sense of adventure and purpose</td>
<td>Identification with inner sense of purpose; increasing self-assurance</td>
<td>Calmness; sense of inner congruence; courage in change; enthusiasm, (re-)newed sense of self-identity in the world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental</td>
<td>Restlessness and craving newness; identifying flaws and lack</td>
<td>New knowledge, opportunities explored; new directions; learning new skills</td>
<td>Significant decisions made; shift of motivation; core knowledge gained or discerned; insights</td>
<td>Choices and decisions made re options on progress forward; prioritisation of learning; mental review and re-assessment</td>
<td>Confirmation of decision; actions cement decisions; dealing with legalities and practicalities; clarification of goals; use of new knowledge</td>
<td>Confirm new direction, decision or knowledge; focus; redefinition of self; new life built on revised knowledge and understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>Restlessness; tensions; irrational behaviours</td>
<td>New experiences explored; life in separate 'boxes'</td>
<td>Decisive action taken; intense physical experience may be felt at moment of insight or tipping point.</td>
<td>Chaos or dislocated circumstances or events: shift of emphasis where effort is put; focussed energy and actions.</td>
<td>Re prioritisation - actions; move forward into new form(s) and leave behind irrelevant forms</td>
<td>New forms, e.g. work; actions followed through and routines settled.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 13: Layers of engagement in the transition process, including comparisons with the Phoenix myth and the six stages of transition (Mackenzie© 2007)
Although each man was different in nature, upbringing and circumstance, their lives all demonstrated a similar pattern. I summarised this for the ex-military man (JL), the last of the interviewees, in his final interview, which was also the last of all the interviews:

SMac: So, some of the threads ... [1] Number one: the person has their own identity, they don’t identify with the structure, they don’t identify with the firm they belong to, the company they belong to, the military, or whatever it is. They have always got a sense of themselves somewhere in the air.
JL: Yes, a core identity.
SMac: A core identity. [2] The second strand is: that core identity seems to appear or become a conscious activating thing around primary school, say [aged] 7 to 10, based on [personal interests] … at that stage you actually have a say in your life, you’ve developed interests which other people support … So, if you like: collecting frogs, then your parents are tolerant about you collecting frogs, or they talk to people about you collecting frogs, so you have an identity at this intersection between life [outside] and you [internal interests].
JL: Yes, a reinforcement.
SMac: … that seems to be a really significant thing. [3] That early on in life, and as long as possible, the person does not have a fixed territory … whether it be people or a place or an entity, self-entity or whatever; that there is constant disruption in some way; that they’re not allowed to get into a complacent thing and say ‘this is the way the world is.’
JL: Yes.
SMac: [4] That there’s a value system, and that that value system is almost ingrained in some way.
JL: Inculcated.
SMac: … [5] admiration of somebody outside of themselves. That’s like an anchor right here that says “okay, this person’s like this and I admire them, I’ll use them as my measure.”
JL: Yes.
SMac: It’s a bit hard to tell which is the chicken or the egg. Those are the primary things.
JL: That is very applicable to me …
SMac: [6] If a person goes into a long-term institutionalised life, a hierarchical life, which is an institutionalised life ... that people see it as something free that they can walk in and out of …
JL: Yes.
SMac: … [7] people who go into that for a long period of time can do that … but it looks like everyone has to come to a point where they actually say “who am I?”, which is a deep philosophical question. But they may not address it as a deep philosophical question. They may address it as the fact that they haven’t been camping since they were seven and they want to go back to it.
In summary, each man interviewed had:

- their own sense of identity
- their early individuality recognised and valued by people identified by them as significant
- no fixed ‘territory’ or ‘kingdom’ in their early years, in a core psychological area, such as health or belonging
- a strong, internalised value system
- an icon, mentor, ideal or someone they looked up to
- a sense of choice, that they felt able to leave hierarchy
- a developed tendency for philosophic questioning and
- reverted to interests from a period of early, valued individuality.

**Primary Preconditions for Successful Transitions**

From my analysis of the interviews it became clear that all six men shared the following five core preconditions for successfully leaving hierarchy:

- a fixed sense of Self but a non-static idea of self-in-the-world. As such, there was an underlying acceptance that change was inevitable, usual, and was a secondary layer of experience (i.e. about changing the self in the world rather than changing or modifying the Self)

- a capacity for reflection, of themselves, their world and their place in it
• **an internal impetus to change** and a desire for an increasingly congruent lifestyle. This characteristic was an excellent predictor of their successful transition from a command-and-control work and world-view.

• **being ‘their own man’ and so not identifying with hierarchy.** This was a requirement for JL in the military, but he had already demonstrated his commitment to his own goals in his persistence and clever manoeuvring to get to Duntroon. He survived the ritual bastardisation, designed to make a man take a stand or break. DW and MS, in their respective solitudes, had built interior lives and visions of a future they would patiently pursue, although not always directly (Leunig 1998 p.29). DW held his own sense of Self on the wild wharves of Sydney, avoiding a life of crime. ROC was an explorer, travelling far from path and home, then returning, passionate about experiencing life in all its diversity. IH was a bit of a loner, and felt he was an outsider, though he was made to feel special by his parents. He now draws sustenance his strong belief system. It was not until he left the priesthood that PS understood that he was not a corporate man. His years in the Public Service held the perennial tensions of being ‘in it, but not of it’. MS never felt comfortable with the materialistic pressures that made people sources of profit, and friendships as entrees to more business. His sense of being a misfit marked him as a stranger in that world

• **a conscious commitment to a strong ethical core or belief,** arrived at by challenge as much as by nurture. DW, for instance, divided his life into boxes to fit into the widely disparate worlds of the wharves and his Scouting group, the Rovers. Through the contrast between those two cultures, he clarified his own values. MS and PS, too, travelled the paths of negative learning, maintaining split lives until health and frustration forced them to take a stand. ROC, JL and IH had clear frameworks, formed from an early age, having little tolerance for deviation outside those broad boundaries. Honour, integrity and elements of service were values common to all the men

• **a capacity to manage uncertainty and confusion,** recognising it as a transitory condition, and as new ground out of which new meanings would emerge.

> “Shifting our patterns of thought and action to be able to deal with uncertainty and continuous choice is one of the primary challenges of the twenty-first century.” (Theobald et al. 1998 p.15)

This last point may be the critical precondition to successfully making any transition, but especially when moving out of hierarchical structures and its attendant challenges and uncertainties. Each of the men developed strategies to manage uncertainty in their lives: quickly learning the rules of any situation and
what was valued in a person there (JL); staying out of trouble, and nurturing one’s own inner and solitary world (DW); remaining in external authority structures until new structures were in place (PS); developing self-confidence and a belief in life being full of opportunities (ROC); attachment to others who exhibited a clearer sense of direction (MS); and being part of a strong, collective, values-based group whose views validated his own views for him (IH).

Secondary Preconditions for Successful Transitions

Several proposed (secondary) preconditions for leaving hierarchy had their sources in the men’s childhood and adolescence. These created a bedrock of skills in self-sufficiency, self-belief and self-motivation from which they managed and moulded their later experiences:

- **multiple disruptions, ill-health or, conversely, isolation in early life.** For DW, it was his asthma and a year away from his family, having been sent to a family friend in the nearby Blue Mountains for his health. For MS it was the cold, and a persistent low-grade bronchial condition, loneliness, and the Spartan expression of affection in his childhood home in North Dakota; for ROC, it was the freedom to explore and wander as a child. For PS, it was a single-minded focus that distinguished him from his peers and took him from his home and family at an early age to train for the priesthood. For IH, it was his high level of energy, his parents’ non-mainstream religious beliefs and his wholehearted immersion in his building activities. For JL it was learning to be popular and create friends in compensation for being an only child and managing social dislocations resulting from following his father’s military postings.

- **influential (male) role models.** These did not need to be real men. DW had both his grandfather and heroes from his adventure books. MS met his most influential role model while conscripted in the army; PS drew inspiration from the iconography and God of the Catholic Church, and absorbed the quiet steadiness of his father; IH revered his God and honoured the wisdom and love of his parents, who gave him a vision of what an honourable and worthwhile man was. JL’s military father was loved by many and was a rock of influence for him. All role models and their associated values inculcated positive interests and attitudes in the men.

- **all had their own interests,** or developed them, although, for some, these were dormant, but were kept alive, sometimes for decades, before they were developed. IH had wanted to be a pilot in his youth, but could not because
of his family’s financial circumstances. Arriving in a new city, before he took up his first job as an engineer, he enrolled for flying lessons and gained his private pilot’s licence. MS had an interest in things medical. In mid-life he began studies in medical and health issues, eventually training in Naturopathy, and later in yoga. PS had music, nurtured through seminary life by the kindness of a senior cleric; languages, and immersing himself in other cultures. DW pottered around with boats, the Australian bush and guns, becoming a fine shot, a master boat builder and at home in nature. ROC loved to travel, on his home territory and to other countries. JL had a passion for finding out how groups and organisations operated, and of finding his way in them.

- **all worked hard**, putting effort and time into their interests, and succeeding in their careers. DW became a fine craftsman and boat-builder, eventually owning and running his own business and later studying at University to become a counsellor; MS became a successful corporate engineering consultant; PS was ordained as a priest before the minimum age, by special dispensation and, in later years, after leaving the priesthood, represented Australia overseas as a diplomat. ROC had rapidly moved up in the teaching profession and was a Regional Manager by the age of 40; JL, having distinguished himself in cadets, followed his father’s footsteps into the military, learned its systems well and after leaving there, ran his own successful IT firm. IH became a lecturer at a large university, then opened his own consulting engineering business, making a profit in under two years.

- **experiences of delayed gratification**, whether from illness, constrained financial circumstances, failure or delay. Coupled with such experiences, and possibly arising from them, came a capacity to manage uncertainty, inertia, confusion and disorientation.

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**Transitions: In Summary - Identifying the Trail**

In this study, the period of the transition was defined as ‘beginning’ from a point when each man was secure in their career within a hierarchical structure. Each then passed through the upheavals of transition to new work and to a point where they once again identified themselves as being ‘somewhere’. Having arrived at this ‘destination’, each was then able to look back and see his old position as separate from his present one.

It is important to state here that such a passage is not considered inevitable. Each man could quite as easily have withdrawn from the work world altogether or returned to hierarchical submission. However, for this study, the men were chosen
with the parameter that they had worked in hierarchy for at least 10 years, made a transition out of hierarchy and remained in, or returned to, the paid work world. The reason for this was that I wanted my findings to be relevant to those about to embark on a transition, those in transition, or those supporting and mentoring others through transition(s). Though, for this study, ‘work’ was ‘paid work’, the findings need not be limited to this scenario as the core measure of ‘arrival’ for the men was finding occupations that were more purposeful and integrated, and more closely aligned with their own (often, childhood) interests.

Analysis of the common traits of the interviewees’ transitions has been used to develop and illustrate a possible template of transition and movement out of hierarchy and to describe this as a set of stages. In parallel to the analysed interviews, I have explored the Phoenix myth as a possible metaphoric and practical template of successful passage out of hierarchy, as well as a guide for moving through transitions. A strong similarity between the identified transition stages and the key phases of the phoenix myth became clear during the study, and remained so.

While analysing the transitions in this study, I focussed on the interplay between the internal and external parameters of the men’s lives. This revealed a significant shift in their relationships to external authority, demonstrated by a significant increase in priority accorded internal motivations and values. These internal parameters then contributed strongly to reshaping the men’s external lives. For two of the men (DW and MS), their intended (eventual) goal was to have total congruence between their internal and external worlds on all levels. The other men (PS, JL, IH, and ROC), focussed on, and were anchored in the material and emotional levels of their experiences; that is, they wanted to feel more enjoyment and satisfaction in their work and to have more control over both their work and their personal lives. All sought to have greater congruence between their values and their work lives.

The transition processes of each of the men showed strong similarities with each other, and had clear parallels to the pattern of the Phoenix myth (its pivotal events,
its phases and its symbols). Their differences were principally revealed in how the men approached their transition processes, and in the personal depths at which they self-reflect. Each transition appeared, at first, to be prompted by external circumstance(s) and/or the men’s response to them, rather than originating in their internal decisions alone. However, all of these circumstances occurred in the context of a pre-existing internal sense of ill-ease. This took several forms: frustration; a sense or dream of something better; or a resonance with a person, idea or event that symbolised a high value to them.

External impetuses for their changes were such things as job loss, job offers too bad to accept; situations too hard to bear; futures too bland to imagine.

The specific transitions recounted here document the six men and their seven transitions, moving from a recognisably command-and-control hierarchical structure of work, where external forces predominantly defined their tasks and, to a large extent, their sense of themselves. They moved to, or towards, work that the men themselves were forming, or had formed out of their own inclinations and skills, inspired by their own values and inner impetus. They demonstrated a shift from an emphasis on external to internal drivers and sources of authority. For several of the men, this was forced; for the others, it was expressed as an inner necessity.

Several of the men made radical personal changes; some quite small changes. All made radical work changes.

This research focuses mainly on the changes demonstrated and experienced in two areas:

- work and
- sense of self - including sense of self in the world and sense of transpersonal Self.

All the men had worked in a hierarchy for over 10 years, and were, or had been, successful in their fields. Except for one of them, they were all part of the Baby
Boomer generation, their ages ranging from early 40s to late 50s. They were all white, middle-class, educated men; five Australians and one American, now resident in Australia. All were employed or were completing tertiary (re)training. All were in long-term (heterosexual) relationships.

This background is significant as it gives a view into the men’s world views, their framework of experiences, how they defined themselves and their relationships with life and work. These are critical influences in how people make their changes (as would be expected).

One man went from being a multi-skilled boat fitter and builder to a Counselling degree (DW); another was a priest who became a Public Servant and now freelances as a Migration Consultant (PS); another moved from lecturing in a University to running his own successful consulting engineering business (IH). One man left the military and he, too, began his own successful business, this time in IT (JL). Another, a USA corporate engineer, retrained as a Naturopath and in yoga, and changed countries (MS). The remaining man (ROC) moved down the ladder of his hierarchy to a position where the ratio between his interests and the demands of the organisation were more to his liking: from being a Regional Manager in a State Education Department to a small, local school, teaching children with special needs.
Despite their individuality and unique lives, there were clear commonalities between the men’s experiences and the stages of their transition processes, and these also paralleled the stages of the Phoenix myth in the following ways:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transition stages identified in my research</th>
<th>Parallel phases in the Phoenix myth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stage 1. Restlessness</td>
<td>Sense of impending ‘death’/change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 2. Exploration and preparation</td>
<td>Wood-gathering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 3. Tipping Point</td>
<td>Fire/Combustion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 4. Rest and revitalisation</td>
<td>Ash and worm; chrysalis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 5. Clarification</td>
<td>Journey to Heliopolis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 6. Consolidation</td>
<td>Renewal and return to earth, revitalised</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 14: Transition stages paralleled to Phoenix myth (Mackenzie© 2007)

Comparisons with several other transition studies (Biddulph 2002; Boyer 2004; Carroll 1990 p.40; Delin & Tranos 2003; Menon 2000; Nelson 1995; Nicholson & West 1988; O’Connor 1996; Sheehy 1999; Sorenson 2005; Spector-Mersel 2006; Tan 2000), especially Bridges (1995b; 1996b; Delin & Tranos 2003), Kubler Ross’s stages of dying (Bridges 1995a) and the work of Mezirow (Cranton 2000; Mezirow 1991; 1995), and Boyd and Myers (Boyd & Myers 1998) in the field of transformative learning, reveal similarities in personal transformations and transitions, in several contexts.
There may well now be enough research on the topics of transition and transformation to suggest fundamental processes may be embedded in all human transitions.

The likely core elements of such transitions are:

- internal ill-ease
- self-reflection and review
- perceptual reorientation
- relinquishment of outmoded life elements
- redirected activities
- reframing of experiences
- active confirmation of reframed lifeworld.

These elements were clearly described in the stages and processes documented in this study.

In summary, the core of all transitions or transformations, may well be that people

“... must engage in critical reflection on their experiences, which in turn leads to a perspective transformation.” (Mezirow 1991 p.167)

**Movements to Internal Volition**

A proposed process showing progress from external volition to internal volition and echoing the men’s transition out of hierarchy, and their shifting relationships to authority, is represented in the following diagram:
Figure 4: Movement from hierarchical, command-and-control, external volition to internal ‘Self’-referential volition (Mackenzie© 2007)
Ch. 11: Transformations

“You can probably buy Lourdes water in London, but part of its appeal is the transformation that occurs when you make the journey yourself ... Stories can only be told by being told, and journeys can only be made by being travelled.” (Finlay 2002 p.35)

Though not the planned focus of this research, several aspects of the interviews pointed to considerations of individual, social, psychological and transpersonal developments. The following section contains some preliminary thoughts on these, arising from this present study and my prior experiences in personal development and transpersonal fields. It discusses several topics which came up in the research, and which provide a range of possible answers to the question: “Where to?”

‘Where to?’ Revisited

Although I have defined the men’s transition processes (internal and external), and proposed preconditions for successful change in my study, other questions arose whose answers were not so clear-cut.
The most nagging question was: “Where are these men going ‘to’?” It has not been until recently, after careful re-analysis and reflection on the information and thoughts considered during the process of writing up that I felt I could attempt a reply to that question.

At first I did not think an answer was needed. Was I avoiding the issue? Probably. However, with the persistence of the voice, there was no avoiding it.

My ‘answer’, developed through the process of doing this research is a framework, a map of territory within which the Mountains of Certainty and the Vale of Shadows are both featured. The men’s journey covers the territory on the metaphoric map between the Mountains of Certainty and the Vale of Shadows. The Mountain of Certainty is so named in recognition of the nature of stasis as being static and ‘known’, with the ‘place’ between, the Vale of Shadows, being largely unknown and, experientially, largely internal. The experience of crossing the terrain between is “a time of lostness and emptiness” (Bridges 1996b p.17). On that map, in small print in the right-hand bottom corner, are the words: “First mapped by Jung, developed by Gareth S. Hill, modified by Mackenzie”. In the centre on the top, emblazoned in a suitably ornate scroll, the words “Journey of the Self” is written. Some of the map is quite detailed; some areas are still quite empty.

The larger outline of the map and much of the infilling has been provided by Jung (1969), Gareth S. Hill (1992), Hillman and others. They speak of archetypes, stages of life and paths of consciousness (Hillman 1983a; 1996; 1999; Moore & Hillman 1994).

Gareth S. Hill (1992 Fig. 17 p.26) draws his part of the map as a figure eight: each end as a ‘trial’, by fire or water, symbolising externality and internality. Four periods - unity, differentiation, integration and individuation – are correlated to static and dynamic aspects of masculinity and femininity.

It is within this map that my research is depicted, and where the parts of the map I am working on, fit. My map presupposes that we have an innate resilient Self and a drive to act externally and internally in congruence with that; that there is an inevitable path we tread towards individuation; that the characteristics and timing of that path are unique to each person; that the path, although it has a sweeping centrality to it, also allows for diversions and cyclic reiterations along the way. The way ROC described his bushwalking style is in this same pattern:

“When I was walking Kakadu this lady couldn’t walk behind me because I kept changing my path. People would walk on the one path whereas I would like to...
bounce around and just go a different path. Initially that really annoyed her … but after a while she said I had a kind of a pattern, a figure eight pattern, that she figured out I was doing. I didn’t know I was doing it. She said you actually had this pattern where it looked chaotic but it wasn’t. She said you were never straying far from the path, obviously staying on the path to feel that I was having a sense of adventure.’ (ROC3/Q18/P4)

**Self-Determination**

“... the time has come for the individual to begin his true adult education, to discover who he is and what life is about. What is the secret of the “I” with which he has been on such intimate terms all these years yet which remains a stranger? ... What lurks behind the world’s façade, animating it, ordering it – to what end?” (Huston Smith cited in Bridges 1996b p.45)

I read of the journey of self determination in our school aims and objectives long ago when I was a high school teacher and School Executive, yet the practice within the education system tended to quell precisely what it stated it valued.

This same paradox exists in hierarchical, command-and-control work situations, where we are encouraged to be innovative and have self-initiative, but only within the narrow bounds of the organisation’s actual (covert) goals and culture. The concept and practice of societies or workplaces being made up of self-determining individuals in an interdependent and mutually profitable/beneficial relationship is still rare.

To move decisively out of hierarchy and towards self-determination, many of our present social norms would need to change (Clark 2004 p.12), and as Stern (1985 p.278) reminds us,

“You cannot topple a hierarchical picture of the world in one sphere without causing upheaval in another.”

It is difficult to imagine how individuals and organisations could be enabled to make transitions to self-determination, yet retain social structures dedicated to both individualism and authoritarian control.

**Allegiances**

Societies are built on allegiances, many unspoken, deep and assumed: allegiances such as a belief in ‘family’ as a base unit of society (as a base for ‘belonging’ and as a bridge out of individuality to community); or the need for order, represented
in authority structures; or, in the Western world, an pervasive and underpinning social script based on the Hero myth.

Retirees, job-shifters; crises managers and anyone else who chooses or needs to recreate themselves, takes a journey that requires them to change these basic assumptions and allegiances, which they may have held (consciously or unconsciously) all their lives. Once these were to ‘God’, ‘society’, the ‘family’, ‘the firm’, and allegiances to social norms and expectations. The age of the individual has prompted us to move to a more self-centred and, for some, a more self-generated way of life.

The men in this study challenge the dominance of one of the core allegiances of the Western world (Campbell 1993): the Hero myth as a primary, and almost exclusive, role model for men, and as an impetus for their choices and actions in the world, whether conscious or not. And linked to that ideology, that command-and control models may not deserve the dominance they have so long held.

It may be there are other stories than the Hero myth as a map for the sustainability of our social psyche, our relationship with ourselves, our ways of being in work and in our personal worlds. The Phoenix pattern could contribute such a template, on a social and personal level, which would maintain ongoing cyclic regeneration and renewal.

**The Hero Myth and Society**

*The Hero myth* (Segal 2000) has existed in many variations and in many cultures. It is particularly directed towards men (Noble 1994), hence the masculine form in the title, and is arguably aligned with masculine biology rooted in our early humanoid survival roles and task differentiation. In the times of hunt and gather, men were needed to see far and true; possess good physical strength and control; act decisively and rationally, including under duress; be willing to place themselves in dangerous situations and (preferably) survive and sire healthy progeny to sustain the race. The title and respect accorded a hero may even have
been subliminal compensation for the risks such men undertook for the sake of the group.

The ‘best’ man or men were the most capable ones. They brought bountiful food to the tribe, repulsed enemies and kept the women, elderly, and children safe. They were leaders in valued fields of endeavour, possessed goods to reflect their honoured role and status, led well and represented a good relationship with the various powers believed to shape their world.

The ‘best’ men became regarded as ‘heroes’: men who stood out from others by their greater expertise, physical courage and capacity to prevail. They were rewarded with honours and privileges, including dispensations (Sinclair 2000 p.11). Being associated with, and accepted by, heroes who often became leaders, ensured favour, respect, food and protection. Warranting the displeasure of a hero or leader resulted in some degree of exclusion from belonging, safety, nurture and sustenance.

“... it is difficult and dangerous to question authorities. Men lose jobs, promotions, status and friends for doing so. Men lose freedoms, rights, even their lives for questioning authority.” (Meade 1993 p.414)

Western societies are no longer overtly tribal. We are not ruled principally by our body’s biology. We no longer send men to fight mammoths. Yet some things remain the same. Our leaders now bring home metaphoric mammoths in the guise of political coups and company mergers, stock market ‘killings’ and territorial ‘wars’; our heroes still win against high odds by surviving crises and catastrophes, be it being buried in a mine for weeks, recovering from market downturns, political turnovers, or the dangers of Mount Everest.

Affiliation with the Hero myth means being able to conquer or prevail, as he [sic] is always associated with success, regardless of the trials or the means of getting there.

“Of ultimate importance is not whether the hero is ideally masculine or feminine but whether he is ideally successful.” (Peek 2003 p.2)
Images and tales of failure are rare in the records of conquerors and rulers yet are common in the chronicles of the defeated. In Australia we are familiar with this practice of transforming or reframing failures into heroic form, as in our celebration of the ANZAC tradition.

Exclusion and denial of inconvenient facets or facts are tools to ensure appearing heroic. A subtle demonstration of this was the early exclusion from circulation of the graphic image of a man falling from one of the World Trade Centre buildings during the American September 11th disaster, where the

“collective decision was that it had no place among the heroic images that eventually came to represent 9/11 ...” (Singer 2006 electronic source)

No wonder the pattern of the Hero is so strong in our mythology, especially among men. Yet the Hero myth, by its very nature, is a myth of exclusion. Only those who succeed and are seen to succeed can be a hero; those who do not fulfil these conditions are excluded, existing in the shadow-land of ‘the helper’, or in the bleak lands of the outsider.

**Internal Journeying as a Heroic Task**

Historically, neither the Hero or Phoenix myth have an innate value to them; neither is ‘good’ nor ‘bad’; instead, they depict particular life frameworks, patterns and purposes. In the mythic tradition, the value and application of a myth’s themes and ‘lessons’ is a matter of both individual and social understanding and relevance.

Many aspects of the Phoenix myth and the Hero myth are reminiscent of each other: a dislocation, a loss of identity, a period of wandering in a no-man’s land or in uncertainty, and a triumphant return to the world. The Phoenix myth, in contrast, though it shares many of the same processes as the Hero myth, does not seek a treasure originating outside itself. It outlines a mythological pattern for finding treasure within oneself.
The Phoenix pattern may well be understood as a Hero’s journey to inner worlds and back (Pearson 1991 p.1), rather than as heroic journey in the external world in pursuit of external gains. That is, on a personal level, the Phoenix myth may represent the Heroic myth of finding and integrating our deeper selves as the result of an internal process (journey) toward individuation.

“The heroic quest is about saying yes to yourself and, in so doing, becoming more fully alive and more effective in the world. For the hero’s journey is first about taking a journey to find the treasure of your true self, and then about returning home to give your gift to transform the kingdom – and in the process, your own life.” (Pearson 1991 p.1)

**Mid-life Crises**

The first and most obvious psychological framework within which I placed the transitions of the six men was in relation to men’s mid-life crisis, a change synonymous with middle age and decreasing testosterone. It is a period in most men’s lives when they have achieved some stability, security and status, coupled with responsibilities of home, family care and education.

As part of individual identity development, at around the age of 10 years, boys develop gangs and hobbies, exploring the worlds of individual interests, capabilities and the power of a ‘gang’ or group (Hamilton 2006 pp.66-7). In adolescence they explore, often fuelled by an intensity driven by their hormones, their individual identity and place in the wider world, yet still cushioned from the full responsibilities of adulthood (Bridges 1996b p.29).

Adult years are generally marked by striving for immortality through achievement and glory, measured in recognition, reward and capability to provide safety and succour for their own – following the path of the Hero myth (Segal 1998; 2000).

The mid-life crisis, with its urge toward deeper relational concerns (Bergman 1991 pp.10-11; Gareth S.Hill 1992; O’Connor & Wolfe 1991; O’Connor 1996), follows the downturn of the tide of testosterone, an awareness of mortality and a reflection of satisfaction (or not) for what they may have achieved and gained.

The traditional mid-life crisis occurs in middle age and is preceded by a similar experience in adolescence. In this earlier ‘crisis’ the spur is not agenic deterioration and lessening testosterone, but rather an increase of it; spurring men on to more clearly define their place in the world (Begal & Myers 1998 p.265, 266)
In the time of mid-life crisis, men tend to experience a desire to be reinvigorated, while at the same time feel drawn to greater self-reflection and assessment (Bridges 1996b pp.117-119; O’Connor 1996; Sheehy 1977; Sorenson 2005; Zohar & Marshall 2001).

For many men, mid-life is experienced as a time when they become aware of a hunger for greater relatedness or social connection:

“... communion motives often become increasingly active in men after they reach mid-life (very roughly after 40 years of age).” (Palus, Nasby & Easton 1990 p.507)

This communion may be desired with an external ‘other’ and/or as a connection to a deeper sense of Self, an aspect variously called ‘inner self’, ‘Self’, ‘inner voice’, ‘inner hunger’, ‘core identity’ (Willeford 1994; Zohar & Marshall 2001, p.157). Such a re-motivation may well be the shift that moves our primary social psychology from its reference to the Hero myth to exploring the internal challenges of the Phoenix (or similar) myth. It may be, with the wave of Baby Boomers already moving into the traditional time period of the mid-life review period,

“Because the bulk of the population is currently dealing with this phase of life, we may be approaching the critical mass for a ... paradigm shift.” (Barrentine 1993 p.81)

(An intriguing thought!)

**A Resilient Self**

Midlife Crisis shifts the focus of the male psyche from directed action in the world, to a more reflective and reassessing mode:

“… a great overturning, or “midlife crisis,” sweeps in when the dynamic feminine awakens the ego to a crisis of meaning and authenticity in its life. This traditionally takes the form of a disintegration of orientation and values, and the ego takes up the quest for a deeper relation to the total personality ... That is, the static-masculine ego orientation dies. It is replaced by a balanced consciousness more reflective of the totality of the Self … It begins to be manifested as a new...”

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41 In times gone by, when men only lived to 40 or 50, or even 30, I wonder when did it occur, or did it? Was it still in the mid years, or is it a response connected to physiology and occurs at roughly the same age regardless of the life span?
In this way, Gareth S. Hill links the process of individuation to the mid-life crisis. Questions may be raised as to whether this is so. In the present research, the stories of the men suggest that individuation may be a continual process that may be accelerated by the mid-life crisis period, but is not conditional upon it.

The experiences of the men in this study, could not, however, be explained as resulting from mid-life crisis. For one thing, not all their transitions happened at mid-life; their changes were not all tied to biological determinants; some transitions (IH and ROC) were imposed; and some did not involve the men seeking any particular internal resonance with feminine aspects of themselves or their world (ROC and IH).

All of the men indicated that they were well aware of a sense of uniqueness of Self in their youth (around the age of 10) and were trying to develop that or, at least, reclaim it, in their transitions.

The men’s descriptions of that continuing resilient Self correlated closely to that described in the Bhagavad Gita, 2:24 as quoted in Campbell (1993 p.238):

“This Self cannot be cut nor burnt nor wetted nor withered. Eternal, all-pervading, unchanging, immovable, the Self is the same forever.”

Their relationships with that constant Self (referred to by such names as ‘core identity’, ‘the centre’ and ‘inner voice’), was a conscious and significant theme for five of the men (DW, MS, PS, JL and IH) and was a powerful driver for their transition and transformation decisions.

Three of those five men (DW, MS, PS) reported a growing inner relationship with their constant Self. As this became stronger, they were drawn to deeper inner exploration and self-reflection. All the men were drawn to develop a greater congruence between their values, their work and their personal lives.

Both my research and associated reading raised many questions about this. One of the influential stories for me, that hinted at the inevitability of individuation,
or at least a movement towards it, was the story of Dodge Morgan (Palus, Nasby & Easton 1990).

**Dodge Morgan**

Dodge was a man of high agency, driven and successful in business and dedicated to achieving his dreams, one of which was to sail around the globe single-handed, a promise he made to himself in his twenties (Fleming 2005). In his early fifties he set off, succeeding in his endeavour and almost cutting the record in half – a classic hero-adventurer. The voyage came about as the result of the promise he made to himself several decades before, careful and meticulous planning, well resourced and well-designed gear and craft, sound personal support, preparation and skill, and long-term commitment. Such a journey can certainly be regarded as ‘heroic’ in its alignment with Hero mythology.

Yet, as a component of his whole life, it may be regarded differently. His life stages are remarkably similar to the stages of change described by the men in this research (Palus, Nasby & Easton 1990 pp.502, 508, 518-521). Dodge was strongly individual, a prankster and rebel. He was happy in his own company from an early age; had strong male icons in his youth, and learned “athletic, competitive, headstrong, and hell-raising” ways of manhood (Palus, Nasby & Easton 1990 p.510). From an early age (12 years) he was given paid work sailing and tinkering with boats. Later he went to university, and was in the military for five years as a pilot. Making his way between approval and censure, he become a powerful executive in the corporate world, but rarely worked for others. All the while he was striving for power and achievement: “a prototypical autonomous personality” (Wiggins 1997 electronic source).

Then came a twin ‘deconstruction’, one in his personal life, with a divorce and later remarriage; and the other in abdicating his successful executive position to begin a fledging and, in time, very successful business. In a move from solitary endeavour to large groups and back again, he circled around himself.
Selling his business, he began his dream journey of sailing around the globe. Using all the skills and drive of his earlier years, plus the experience he had gained over his more mature years, he met and overcame many challenges.

Yet the solo journey cracked that very certainty and sense of capability that had sustained him till then, and in key ways. Despite all his preparation, he had a false start. This shook his confidence and brought his fear of failure to the fore. He had three episodes of distress, all marked by calm weather. Each of these periods was marked by him being powerless and unable to move forward or to bring about change. In having to submit to the vagaries and rhythms of Nature he had to accept not being in a controlling position. These and other experiences led him to review and reassess his life and to develop a sense of longing for communion in companionship. In this process the journey, the boat, and the adventure itself became his friend:

“The goal has for so long beckoned me that we had become friends. And now suddenly my friend is gone.” (Morgan, 1989 as quoted in Palus, Nasby & Easton 1990 p.518)

... he said on his return. A void was left to be filled, an internal relational void that he recognised:

“I’m not sure how well I know myself now ... I want to come back knowing myself, if I can, in a deeper way than I do now ... I want to plan the next stage of my life”, he wrote as he neared the end of his journey.” (Palus, Nasby & Easton 1990 p.520)

The patterns identified in my research are there in Dodge Morgan’s journey:

“This is no simple trip, but rather the journey of personal transformation that becomes possible after an individual has done the world’s business for long enough.” (Bridges 1996b p.47)

His transition to Self was unfolding in a predictable way, driven by a belief in his capacity to deconstruct and reconstruct his life, his place in the world, and his view of himself – a recognisable Phoenix journey.

“The Self is an expression of wholeness, the end point of the individuation process.” (Pearson 1991 p.49)
In this reflection on himself he begins to demonstrate some of the characteristics of Maslow’s descriptors of self-actualisation (Maslow in Goleman & Heller 1986; Kiel 1999 p.299-305; Maslow 1954; 1966).

It was not recorded what Morgan’s new intentions were, or whether he did move to greater relational living. However, my follow-up searches gave some insight to his later years:

- 1997 saw the publication of a study on Morgan’s personality, in particular exploring ‘agency’ and ‘communion’ (Wiggins 1997 electronic source)
- In 1998 Morgan bought an island off Harpswell, Maine, where “75% of my time is solitude” (Gold 2005 electronic source)
- In 2005 he was working on an “anecdotal look at solitude” (Gold 2005 electronic source) and a study of the psychological effects of loneliness (Beem 2001 electronic source). In an interview with Morgan in 2005 he was asked what was most important in his life:

> “I have come to the conclusion that the very best we can do in life is to focus on the small circles of people we love and respect and be as generous and honest and as demanding of those people as we can.” (Gold 2005 electronic source).

The paradox of increased solitude and increased regard and desire for communion echoes DW’s ‘monk’ definition in his second interview:

> ‘A monk is a person who lives on their own, who has their life as their centre, that [sic] has a total connection for what’s around outside them. So there’s not a sense of disconnection or hermitage from society or from the world around the person but their own sense is solitary ... and have ... relationships with the world, an awareness of the world. So that in actual fact you live within the world but you’re within a sense of your own aloneness.’ (DW2/Q116/P26)

**Individuation/Self-Actualisation/Autonomy**

> “… individuation is a person’s becoming, being as fully herself [sic] as she can be at each stage of development, as whole and indivisible as possible, distinct from others and from collective psychology.” (Hill 1992 p.169)

Jung proposed that individuation is a built-in, inevitable journey (Jung in de Laszlo 1959 p.260). It may well be that striving for self-differentiation is always present, and that it shifts its reference point from the external world to inner values upon some (individualised) impetus.
“I use the term individuation’ to denote the process by which a person becomes a psychological ‘individual’, that is, a separate, indivisible unity or ‘whole’ (Jung in Read, et al, 1968 Vol 9 p.275).”

Its development appears to begin in the activity of self-reflection, followed by an awareness of Self (whole, enduring, resilient and inevitable), discernment, choice for Self, and gradual identification with self by the removal of inconsistencies and limitations of the psyche. Critical for proactive development towards individuation appears to be,

“Discernment [as] an orientation which enables a person to explore within the melange of the rational and the extrarational in order to locate and anchor those forces which are leading towards greater integration of the Self.” (Boyd & Myers 1998)

Growth toward individuation may well be recognised as a progression of values, as proposed and represented below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Desires</th>
<th>Values</th>
<th>Self (Inner Voice)</th>
<th>Individuation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Figure 5: Proposed progressions to Individuation (Mackenzie© 2007)

Each of the men interviewed expressed a desire or sense of inner necessity to bring into their lives a fuller congruence between their inner and outer selves. This may be as an internal urge to individuation (Campbell 1993; 1995; 1998; Franz & White 1985; Jung 1969; Overbeck & Park 2001; von Franz 1964; Willeford 1994).

“... we will see that the force of life’s two great developmental shifts fans out over the whole lifetime, with the first one involving an end to old dependencies and the establishment of the person as a separate social entity, and the second one involving movement beyond that separateness to something more complex, to a deeper sense of interrelatedness.” (Bridges 1996b pp.31-2)

Two of the men (DW and MS) expressed a desire for inner and outer congruence of self, driven by a persistent inner hunger or prompting. Another interviewee (IH) expressed this as a drive to align himself more closely with his God’s wishes. The other three men (ROC, PS and JL) spoke of being able to do what they were passionate about. DW and MS saw their transitions as a journey to identify and live by the promptings of an inner ‘true’ Self (Cooper & Sawaf 1996 p.142). For PS and
JL, it was a matter of bringing their skills and passions together. For IH, JL and PS having greater control over their lives was a significant driver.

All found staying in hierarchies was an impediment to their goal as it restricted their individual freedoms and creativity to a degree they were no longer comfortable with. Nor did hierarchies, as they had experienced them, accommodate their personal and transpersonal needs for purpose and passion.

The men’s transitions were as much about moving from command-and-control frameworks to communion and service frameworks, and about changing their relationships with external authority structures, as it was about them changing work.

**An Inner Voice**

Independent of, but not necessarily exclusive of, a mid-life crisis is a predisposition to self-reflection and reassessment of one’s ‘lifeworld’ (Habermas in Lichte 1994 p.186). In my experience as a holistic practitioner and, through studies of people changing their lives and their livelihood, the most common and powerful impetus has been the promptings of what was described as an ‘inner voice’ (Maslow 1986 p.301). This is closely linked or identical with a growing sense of an ‘inner Self’ which, by sheer persistence, demands to be heard, followed and satisfied. In the tradition of Huxley (1970), Hillman (Hillman 1996; 1999; Hillman & Meade 1997; Moore & Hillman 1994) and Wilber (1998), other researchers, such as Willeford (1994 p.4), have described this as:

“... the self that knows what is good for itself”.

My past clients and the men interviewed in the present study, often described first feeling its presence as a hunger, an emptiness aching to be filled, an undefined yearning, or a nagging sense that there was ‘more’ to life. The feeling could not be satisfied by materialism or achievements of power in the world. Both DW and MS often spoke of this as a significant experience in their transitions.
How can this inner voice be heard and understood? What are the 'rules' for dialogue and cohabitation with it? How does it change our relation with our work and our place in the world? What does it have to do with leadership and management? What changes does it bring? What are the benefits of listening to and being led by this inner voice, and can these benefits improve our worldly life as well as our personal one?

**A 'Calling'**

The phrase ‘a man’s calling’ was once quite common, and was used in both secular and spiritual contexts. It may have some connection to the experience of an Inner Voice, which may well be the impetus that drives the sense of ‘Calling’; it may be the same thing.

A spiritual calling usually resulted in a person’s entry into a spiritual order of some kind; in a secular context, a calling was regarded as a man’s inner drive and the source of his momentum and choices within the world. In either case a calling was expected to be expressed through (usually) his occupation: whether banker, or sport’s coach, engineer or carer, counsellor or mountain climber, and whether paid or voluntary. It was the call of the hero to great achievements; the man of integrity to a peaceful conscience and, in men of action, to great exploits. It could reveal itself in concrete forms in such things as service or achievement; or in a drive for abstract qualities such as authenticity and honour. It was a phrase reserved for a positive expression of inner momentum (Cooper & Sawaf 1996 p.138 and 139). As such, Hitler was not dignified with being defined as ‘having a calling’, nor Pol Pot, nor the Scases, Bonds or those behind the ENRON collapse. Drive and focus are not enough to qualify.

A ‘calling’ arises from promptings within an individual and differs according to what that drive is used to achieve (Bolles 1997 p.224).

Some followers of this inner drive stand out: sportsmen and leaders, beacons of morality or inspiration. Others quietly mould their life within smaller, less visible
contexts. An inner calling and impetus has been given various names by the men in my study: an inner sense; an inner connection; a voice heard within; a passion; a ‘hunger’ of the spirit; restlessness; a simmering frustration; even (in mild form) an interest.

The expression of a ‘calling’ appears to be, essentially, dependent on the individual themselves; its expression mediated by their world and their values, his courage and capability to mould his external world to his inner ‘calling’ rather than fit the world around him.

Career drive, greed, aspirations to glory and dominance are considered ‘lower order’ variations of having a ‘calling’. They are, however, only close approximations, as are obsessions, ‘causes’ and targeted malevolence (Schaef & Fassel 1990).

Those revered or admired for following ‘inner promptings’ are common as founders of religious groups (Christ, Mohammed, Buddha). They are sometimes deified as saints and heroes of a transpersonal ilk (Mandela, Dalai Llama) or honoured as very mortal men (and women) of ‘calling’ (for instance, in Australia, the late Fred Hollows and Steve Irwin, and the very much alive Tim Costello).

A ‘calling’ may well be a stage toward individuation, or identical with it. It may be that these men’s journey in this study were callings toward individuation - in themselves, within the modern world of work. Individuation may be the eventual ‘destination’, even if not the goal or intent, of those leaving the command-and-control power paradigm inherent in hierarchical structures.

Such a journey may not be direct, nor approached in a spiritual or philosophical way. It may be the response to an internal drive to become more wholly oneself. That journey however, may require a remodelling of the self, as in the analogy of the Phoenix myth: from a whole to a deconstructed self, to (re-)identification with an immortal re-generative self, and eventually, reconstruction of a ‘new’ worldly form to suit it.
Many myths both old and modern tell of another inner impetus, a relentless taskmaster ungrounded in the transpersonal ‘good’: the ‘devil’ who offers and never delivers; who eats away at a man’s ‘innards’ till he becomes a shell rather than a beacon (as in the classic story of “Dorian Gray”; Darth Vader in the “Star Wars” chronicles, Voldemort in the chronicles of Harry Potter, and Hyde in the story of “Jekyll and Hyde”). In much classic literature, bitterness and self-serving action are depicted as being able to extend one’s life but undermine its regeneration (Saarinon in “Lord of the Rings’); rewards do not satisfy, and an inner hunger increases (parodied by the Count, on the Australian children’s program “Sesame Street”; Scrooge in Disney’s Donald Duck stories); boons are granted and then withdrawn, or make the receiver pay dearly to hold onto them (Gollum in “Lord of the Rings”; the Little Dancer in “The Red Shoes”). These are expressions of the shadow side of the Phoenix myth: the vampire energy, which takes a life and gives a half-life in return.
Ch. 12: Conclusions and Review

“By the bold and running use of metaphor, the poet [researcher] will amplify and give us not the thing itself, but a reverberation and reflection which, taken into his [sic] mind, the thing has made; close enough to the original to illustrate it, remote enough to heighten, enlarge, and make splendid” (Woolf cited in Van Manen 1990 p.49).

Many things changed in Australia during this research. When I started, unemployment had not long reached into the enclaves of middle-management in business, especially in the Public Service. Outsourcing was expanding and ‘portfolio careers’ had begun to evolve; Baby Boomers, a statistically significant sector of the population in Australia, were just beginning to retire from the paid workforce.

Computers still used ‘floppy discs’ and music was recorded on plastic tapes (as were the interviews in this study). Computers and the Internet were still relatively clumsy; laptops were rare.

Now ‘memory sticks’, ‘Blackberries’ and MP3 players are the norm; tapes are passé and tape players hard to get; laptops form part of most business travellers’ luggage.
Then, people worked from their desks and communicated by phone. Nowadays many people work freelance, freed from a fixed location. Email has largely replaced letters (both private and business). Globalisation means diurnal rhythms have been subsumed into a 24-hour ‘on’ position for business, media and politics.

As workforce structures become more fluid and many social forces become more fundamentalist, the issue of hierarchies, their place and their purpose, becomes an increasingly important question. An increase in outsourcing has reflected a shift to economic measures and productivity as ‘the bottom line’. There has been an ongoing move to make government more like business. Outsourcing has increased worker mobility while undermining loyalty and continuity of corporate knowledge.

The relevance of men moving out of hierarchy and command-and-control power paradigms is subsequently also becoming even more pressing and topical.

I began my study of ‘Men Coming out of Hierarchies’ to discover if I could identify a ‘map’ of a ‘successful’ movement out of hierarchy. The results of my research indicate this is indeed possible.

My research has identified a transition process (journey) of six stages, several skills that were useful (and may be necessary), proposed primary and secondary preconditions, and several likely parameters for success.

My study also affirmed that transitions out of hierarchy are not purely practical manoeuvres, but entail personal transformations, sparked by self-reflection.
It is increasingly important to change our societal expectations that being ousted from, or out of, the 'hierarchical tribe' is 'death' or 'failure'. A map, like that identified in this study, which documents 'successful' transitions out of hierarchical work, especially self initiated moves to do this, may ease the attendant confusion, challenge to self-esteem, identity, and feelings of chaos and panic which may accompany such a change.

Increasingly, the move to leave hierarchies is forced, whether through change of workplace structure or practices (local or general), social and technological changes, retirement or short-term contract positions. By creating a likely 'map' of the territory and identifying some of the skills needed, I have hopes that some of the difficulties of the terrain may be better understood and avoided.

The research, as presented here, is an analysis of the men’s accounts of their transition experiences, and our (theirs and my) analysis of the paths they travelled and the transformations they made, in literal, practical and mythopoetic ways. Diagrammatic representations of the interviewees' journeys illustrate various options of engagement that the interviewees adopted within their transition processes.

**Myths as Maps and Metaphor**

Additional to the interviews and mediated sources, I have used metaphor to explore and gain multi-layered understandings of the men’s processes. Myths, by their encoded, multi-level meanings, enable many people to comprehend deep meaning simply, and to use their symbols as guides and voices for themselves.

The six stages of the men’s transitions have been compared to the main phases defined in the classic myth of the Phoenix. The similarities remained consistent and became further strengthened as I researched more deeply into the myth, its history, and its symbolism.

The theme of the Phoenix arose out of my Masters research which described the process of the conscious deconstruction and
reconstruction of the Semco Company in Brazil. At first I was using the myth as a general description of the transitions described here. However, as the research unfolded, it became apparent that the relevance of the Phoenix, as a metaphor, extended beyond its overall theme of conscious regeneration and serial immortality. It became evident that there were parallels between the men’s stages of change within their transitions and the key phases of the Phoenix myth: its awareness of its impending demise; gathering scented wood for its own funeral pyre; (self-)immolation; time in its own ashes; its flight to Heliopolis for clarity; its return, having been revitalised and regenerated.

Therefore, dual terms have been used to describe the men’s stages. These indicate both the link to the Phoenix myth phases, and the process, purpose and activity of each stage of the transition process, as identified in this study.

The Hero and Phoenix myths, as useful and informative frameworks, and as conceptual frameworks of volition and regeneration, were consolidated by their repeated relevance and applicability to events and processes in the men’s stories.

The Phoenix myth provided a conceptual path for vital, recurring regeneration. The Hero myth provided a conceptual description of worldly agency.

As a blueprint of handling deep change the Phoenix myth is powerful and descriptive. As a blueprint for an inner journey of individuation and the passage of the mid-life crisis, it may prove invaluable.

**Transpersonal Elements**

Contextually, the issues in the transitions could not be located entirely within the work environment. During their transitions the participants changed within themselves. These changes modulated their world-views and internal drivers, and led the research into areas of transpersonal and personal development. In essence, as the men reflected on their experiences, they began to re-conceptualise and reframe themselves and their world-view. From that reframing experience they were then able to consciously reframe both their concepts and expectations of the future, and themselves in it (Mezirow 1991 p.167).

Placing the transitions in this study within a broader framework of personal transformations may encourage ongoing levels of engagement by other
researchers with the findings, particularly in relation to life stages, (such as the mid-life crisis); life themes (such as heeding a ‘calling’); as movement towards Individuation; as transitions from external striving (Hero myth) to internal re-cognition and regeneration (Phoenix myth); as career transitions and changes; as meaning-making, and in regard to the roles and dominance of hierarchies.

**More Priests**

It was not only in Dodge Morgan’s life that I found patterns similar to those presented in this study. In discussions with many men during the period of the research, I have been struck by the similarities of their stories to those of the men interviewed.

One of the men interviewed in my study had been a priest, and his journey, as documented here, included his transition out of the heavily hierarchical institution of the Roman Catholic priesthood. After I had almost completed writing up my research, I found a study with remarkable correlations to the findings of my research.

The PhD study, by Alexander Nelson *(1995)* was built on the experience of six men who had left the priesthood to marry. Nelson’s research focussed on the role of imagination in transformative learning and autobiography. Yet, even though he had not intended or focussed on identifying the stages of the priests’ journeys, similarities to the journeys of the men in my study were clearly described there.

- All the men experienced long periods of internal discomfort prior to making any critical changes
- After a period, their discomfort escalated to critical levels of internal distress, characterised by the men splitting their lives into separate parts, equivalent to the ‘boxing’ strategy identified in my study
- Following a clarifying moment of insight (equivalent to my ‘tipping point’), the men’s feelings of distress were resolved
- After that clarifying moment, the men in Nelson’s study experienced a period of relief, grieving and self-reflection
• They then began re-orientating their lives, based on the realisations arising from their critical moment of insight

• Gradually the men divested themselves of their priestly life and organisation, and began to tentatively develop a new life outside its constraints

• In time they consolidated their new position of being an individual outside the priesthood (and all eventually married).

Discovering another study which documented similarities to the transition processes of the men in my study, was very encouraging to me. Being totally independent research to mine, it acts as further triangulation of my findings, and goes toward both validating my findings and developing a growing body of work on transitions for cross analysis.

**Transition Journey Characteristics**

Each of the men in this study was guided by a clear inner impetus. Its influence was expressed through preferences for certain values and through dissatisfactions in regard to their work, followed by increasingly focussed actions to resolve their internal ill-ease and dissonance, internally and externally.

In summary: the transitions in this study were characterised by:

• a process that was discernible and generally predictable, whereby the person disengaged from his present work by degrees, following a period or experience of high dissonance with his self values or self-concepts, then engaged with a new paradigm or sense of self by degrees, in an overlapping and fluctuating oscillation (chaordic, not a linear progression)

• identification, reassessment and re-creation of their work and life-world. This also involved changes in both self and self perception

• emergence of new ways of being, including use of new metaphors, new definitions of core work concepts (such as what ‘success’ meant), new skills, and new behaviours

• development of new or adapted (internal and external) power paradigms and significantly changed relationships to external authority
• factors such as work, family and friends remaining if they were adaptable and relevant to the person’s changing sense of self; these elements faded or became less and less relevant if they did not accommodate those changes.

**Transition Journey Processes**

A common *process* of transition and change was marked by:

• an inner restlessness (nebulous frustration, 'urge', 'inner voice', a 'hunger' that persisted), and the men’s responses to that

• the men becoming more aware of their personal values, which were then given greater priority and more active and central roles in their decision-making

• tentative steps early in the transition process. These steps were either incremental, divergent or a combination of these, and led the men away from their previous work, hierarchical power dynamics, their previous sense of self and their previous ways of being in the world

• priority being given to an emerging sense of core Self, and developing a greater identification with that Self

• changing work and life-world, precipitated by a critical insight or event (*'tipping point'*)

• priority being gradually and increasingly given to new and developing self-referential directions and interests

• aspects of self and life that no longer ‘fitted’ being further clarified and delineated; ongoing reassessment and repositioning of themselves and their decisions in relation to these

• consolidation and re-construction of an emergent life around these changed priorities, perceptions, skills and interests.

**Proposed Primary and Secondary Preconditions for Successful Transitions**

Primary and Secondary preconditions for successful transition out of hierarchy, as identified in this study, are summarised as follows:

• a fixed sense of Self but a non-static idea of self-in-the-world

• a capacity for self-reflection
• being ‘their own man’; not identifying Self with hierarchy
• a conscious commitment to a strong ethical core or belief system
• a capacity and willingness to experience and deal with uncertainty and confusion
• maintaining a sense of hierarchy as a ‘game’ or equivalent
• disenchantment with hierarchy
• a desire for an increasingly congruent lifestyle
• valued allegiances outside the dominant hierarchy
• adaptability
• a capacity to move reference points of belonging, satisfaction and values away from hierarchical frameworks to those that were more self-referential.

Having

• influential (male) role models (abstract or real).
• multiple disruptions, ill-health or, conversely, isolation in early life.
• own interests
• commitment to work hard (enthusiasm or dedication, passion)
• experiences of delayed gratification.

The six identified transition stages, in the study, were:

• Restlessness
• Exploration and Preparation
• ‘Tipping Point’
• Rest and Revitalisation
• Clarification
• Consolidation

These, though essentially sequential, were also cyclic and iterative.
Transition Skills

To manage the complexities needed to deal with the inner worlds of self, and to navigate the ‘nowhere’ places - a Vale of Shadows between Peaks of Certainty - the men needed specific skills.

The skills which the interviewed men found supported them in the challenges they met in moving through their transitions were:

- a capacity to tolerate and respond proactively to uncertainty
- reliance on a personal vision of life and Self
- willingness to take risks and explore options
- courage to act on their own understandings of what resonated as significant to themselves despite the unpredictability of the outcomes of doing so
- capacity to tolerate and respond proactively to heightened tensions resulting from internal and external dissonances
- the ability to make choices which led to increased personal congruence
- commitment to greater congruence between Self, values and work
- ability (willingness) to reframe and shift references for meaning-making from external to internal frameworks.

Future Focus

There may be many applications for the knowledge gained through this study, not limited to males, or transitions in work.

This research may be best used to support those many Baby Boomers still in the workforce, but who are moving into retirement over the next two decades (from 2007 until approximately 2031) (ABS 1999; Commonwealth of Australia 2000; Statistics 2005) as they adjust to autonomy. The results could also be used by health workers, social workers, psychologists, organisational HR units, management, in fact any area...
which facilitates or manages transitions from (highly) structured environments to autonomous or self-generated activity. Some of these may be:

- repatriation from institutions (for instance prisons, refugee camps, detention centres, military or war service, cults, schools and boarding schools) and autocratically structured work environments
- orientation of people coming from highly structured cultures to the more ‘laid back’ Australian environment
- adolescents leaving home; people coming out of controlling or abusive personal relationships; post-divorce adjustment
- those coming out of long illnesses, hospitalisation or structured care
- care of widows, widowers or orphaned children emerging from heavily structured or dependant relationships
- particularly for men going through any transformations in which they must deal with changing self-concepts in life, work and personal identity.

Information and seminar material built on the research, especially based on the stages of transition and predictable personal effects, could be used by workplaces to institute programs to enable management of retrenchment or redundancies.

Those who may benefit the most, it is hoped, will be those most dependant on hierarchical, external modes of reference for self identification and self-esteem: the 'lifer', who was trained from an early age to fit and perform in command-and-control systems.

---

**Changing Allegiances**

In a society of increasing education, consciousness and individualism, it is now inevitable that allegiances to hierarchical structures must diminish. Yet it appears hierarchy is an effective tool of social organisation for competitive, task driven personnel comfortable with power differentials as a means towards financial security and a sense of cultural belonging. Therefore I cannot agree with Bookchin (2005a p.102) that “it [hierarchy] cannot remain a social fact.”
As a hierarchical structure is so socially (and possibly biologically) ingrained (Clark 2004; Moir & Jessel 1991; Steinem 1983) any deviation from loyalty to hierarchy provokes profound tensions to be resolved. These tensions run deep in the (masculine) psyche (Hamilton 2006 p.191; Sinclair 2000; 2001). Managing these tensions, and capitalising on the changes inherent in transitions and transformations, seems to require deep reflective skills and commitment to inner congruence and self-reliance. Further studies of autonomous individuals (not only male), who have moved out of hierarchy, would be useful to better understand this phenomenon.

By identifying the men’s transition stages, and their roles in facilitating the men’s personal transformations and transitions, this study may enable increasingly proactive and positive interrelationships between psychological forces and external changes for men (and women?) in transition out of command and control, hierarchical paradigms.

---

**Moving On - Conclusions**

So did these men completely leave hierarchy as a mode of operating in the world and in work?

No, of course not.

What their journeys came to show was, essentially, an internal shift away from external drivers, changing relationships to external authority structures away from command-and control paradigms, and resultant relocations and redefinitions of work and concepts of Self, especially in instances of transitions from dependant to self-directed work.

Most of the men interviewed demonstrated a marked change in themselves, whether by consolidating their sense of Self and way in the world through
reframing their self-concepts and world-views, or by deconstructing, then reconstructing, an identity closer to their coherent sense of their being.

“This repeated childhood experience of developing mastery and the differentiation of its own will is the base from which flows all later authentic, goal-directed drives to individualism. Such drives emanate from within, fuelled by the energizing relation of the ego to whatever there is at the center [sic] of the Self. They are expressed in a deep inner necessity to seek new frontiers of discovery, thought, and action in the service of enhancing individual initiative and a sense of identity.” (Hill 1992 p.38)

These movements appear to be toward more self-referential loci, and may be moving the individual towards greater individuation and self-actualisation. (Hill 1992; Hillman 1983a; 1996; Jung 1967; 1964; Maslow 1966; 1986; 1998; Segal 1998; von Franz 1964)

---

**Egg of Ash**

Egg of ash, bound by myrrh:
Death, cradled in the form of life,
Remembers, falls to powder,
Submits,
And is gone.

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Appendices A to D are to be found in separate bindings.

Appendix A - Detailed Overview of Each Man’s life
Appendix B - In Their Own Voice
Appendix C - Each Man’s Journey - In His Own Words
Appendix D - Example of Interview Process, with Quotations

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Men Leaving Hierarchy:
on the
Path of the Phoenix

Appendices

S. Mackenzie
Doctor of Philosophy
(Social Ecology)

A thesis submitted to the
University of Western Sydney
Hawkesbury
July 2007
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**READING THE APPENDICES: ‘On the Path of the Phoenix’**

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**Choices of Engagement**

The body of the thesis primarily looks at the context, processes and the results of my study. This section focuses on the interviewees, to give them life and depth:

“... intuitive inquiry invites research participants to speak from their own unique and personal perspectives born of their own experience. Accordingly, in communicating results, researchers are urged to quote, often extensively, the actual words of participants to retain and portray the fullness of the participants’ unique voices and phenomenon studied.” (Anderson 2000 p.10)

Once again, there are choices in how to engage with the information presented. Each section stands on its own and can be read as such, or the Appendices can be read in the sequences related to each man, as cycling immersions into the men’s worlds.

*Note: There is some repetition in these records as some aspects of the men’s lives and experiences are revisited from different angles and at various depths, as they were in the interviews. This is part of the process of immersion in the men’s worlds.*

---

**The Men:**

Close descriptions are given of the men and their lives, through my words (Appendix A), and through theirs (Appendix B).

**The Men’s Transitions**

Appendix C gives insights into each man’s transition experiences, mainly through their own words and discusses commonalities of character and processes.

**An Interview Outline**

In Appendix D an overview of an interview process is given, using DW’s interviews, and quotations from these.
Appendix A - Detailed Overview of Each Man’s Life

DW’s Life Story

The Story of the Samurai Sword.

In reverence, the young man took the sword in his hands, feeling the balance and beauty; the delicacy and strength; the majesty of the tradition it flowed from, and its potent future. He felt, too, the weight of the responsibilities that came with it: fair conduct, truth and honour, loyalty and vigilance against ill deeds, facing both victory and death.

He had trained long, had learned traditional skills and courtesies, mastered mind and emotions, become fit and lean, clear-minded. He had learned the arts of poetry and movement, battle and strategy, history and mythology. Then he had put aside his training and went about an ordinary life until all that he had learned had seeped into him and was made one in him. He must fit the sword as it must fit him. There were to be no impurities.

As with all such swords, the process, even before its creation and before being presented to its owner, was long and intricate. It was begun by calling for blessings and the presence of powers that would reside in the sword itself.

Blessings and mindfulness were to imbue the process. Strength, timing and a deep understanding of the metal and the task it would be put to were needed.

From rude ore to tempered steel it had come. It bore strength but not brittleness, a fine and true cutting edge, perfect balance, delicate carving and ornamentation, symbols of strength, and the bindings of the code it represented. Quietly and secretly, the history of the sword lay encased in its handle, at the core and centre of each stroke, each purposeful act.

To come to this the sword had undergone much, as did the man who had the right to carry it, who was deemed an esteemed man to receive it.

Its metal had been heated to fire hot, beaten and folded, beaten and folded many times over, laminated to many fine layers, and left to cool for several moons as all the stresses eased themselves, and the metal was fully rested.

Many times over the cycle was repeated. On the judgement of the master, the sword was then heated to white hot, and doused in oil. It became pure but brittle.
Rituals were performed, and the blade heated once more for tempering, to take out the brittleness and to build in resilience and flexibility to match its strength. Only a master could know how to do this final act which gave it ‘life’.

Once tempered and supple the sword was finely polished; its edge made; its history secreted in the handle; fine decorations unified the whole; blessings were called upon it, and the ritual of handing over released it from its maker to its bearer.


This story meant much to DW. It spoke to him of manhood and the forgings he felt a man must go through, must undergo, to become a man. It plied together poetry and tradition, ritual and discipline, strength and suppleness together. It spoke of mind and heart and body and myth. It spoke of care and honour and knowing. Above all it carried a sense of belonging, a tradition spanning millennium past and future. It also echoed with him from his own crafts – as a wood and metal craftsman, boat-builder, counsellor of men and youths. He knew the elements and processes that made the sword and the man, and had worked with them himself.

**Childhood**

DW had begun life as an asthmatic, and endured the rigours of the limitations it set him. In his early years it set him apart, forcing him to an internal world, to resilience and fortitude. It brought long periods of solitude filled with books, model boats and his own thoughts. He was aware that all his plans could change at any moment if his asthma flared up. The unknown factor, the waywardness of his body’s responses, always had the last word.

He was resourceful and inventive, finding things to do, and though his body restricted and at times failed him, he always had his love of bush and sea to sustain him. The dual themes of belonging and being a misfit became strong. His illness gave him special exclusions from tasks and responsibilities, but also excluded him from many activities and adventures with others. Offshoots of those experiences were his reliance on his
capacity to think visually, a deep capacity for listening and a sensitivity to group
dynamics.

His upbringing was interrupted by a year in the mountains away from his family, where
the effects of the asthma diminished and he was able to run and do robust physical
activity for the first time. He could be part of school and activities at last, and spent
much time in the bush, being a hunter. This year also brought discipline and a
responsibility for household and yard tasks, creating in him a deep sense of duty of care
for others.

*Bush and Sea*

Through the men in his life - especially his grandfather - he developed a love of the bush
and the sea, of hunting and fishing and ‘mucking about’ that has remained deeply
embedded in him. Through these men DW also developed a strong respect for mentors
and mateship and drew a real strength from them (DW1/Q14-19/P5-6). His love of naval
adventure stories embedded notions in him of honour, daring, and the value of
recognition from superiors.

His gender upbringing was polarised, with men taking the active, outdoor, assertive
roles, and women the interior, more domestic roles. This set an early dynamic of
dislocation and ‘boxed’ realities for DW that remained pivotal in him for many years, and
was reflected in partitioned living from an nearly age. ‘Belonging’, as a counterpoint,
was a significant and recurring theme that influenced many of his decisions and his self
concept, as it did his quest for approval. Safety was also a significant issue: being safe
and, later, creating safety for others and, with it, trust.

*Questions of Manhood*

Intricately interwoven with his themes of belonging and approval were questions of
manhood and being a man. His separate but equally powerful interior and exterior lives
precluded him from fully identifying with either, and so he swung between the two.
While in the masculinist world working on the city’s docks, from age 15, DW
maintained the sensitivities of his interior worlds: keen powers of observation and
aesthetics, sensitivity to relationship and power dynamics, and his own heart-loves of the sea and the bush, while still ‘fitting in’ to the exterior world of the harsh hierarchy of the masculine world he found himself in. Though desirable and seductive to him, the rough, he also felt the male world was a dangerous place. Fear was commonplace for him - of physical attack, social exclusion and intimidation. He teetered on the edge of a life involved with crime, but chose the values of his suburban life instead – Scouts, Rovers and youth groups.

He considered women as the articulate ones; with men as the strong silent types who acted in the world and had the final say.

He expressed his greatest fears as those around relationships with women. In his formative years intimacy in the interior world of women was experienced through being cared for with his asthma. In his youthful years women were seen as physically desirable, but not to be touched; distant, or devalued as belongings and chattels. The gender roles continued to be polarised in his first marriage: men at work sharing action; women in domestic spheres.

'I had come up through an apprenticeship and a tradesmanship - that was the way the world worked. The world worked with the men and the women having their places and hierarchies and all that kind of thing.' (DW2/Q21/P7)

He experienced several kinds of male mateship and clanning: with his grandfather, uncle and father; with school-friends; with his Scout and Rover fraternities; in his wharfie apprenticeship world; with his hunting pals and later, in male-dominated business and work worlds. These experiences gave him a strong sense of mateship, companionship and mutual reliance among men.

**Career**

From his mid-teens he trained as an apprentice Fitter and Turner on the wharves, completed his apprenticeship, then moved to another organisation to become foreman.

This represented a pattern later verbalised, as ‘when you’ve learned it all, you leave’ (DW2/Q98/P23). To leave was regarded as a passage out of boyhood and the way to move
up in hierarchies, to gain status and respect. Moving ‘up’ in hierarchy was considered a way of increasing success.

His experience of institutionalised hierarchies and his place in them was varied. In the Rovers (an extension of the Scouting movement begun by Sir Baden Powell), he experienced a model derived from courtly kingdoms of mediaeval chivalric times, a ‘formal, benevolent hierarchy’ (notes DW2/Q22/6/98 and DW2/Q48-71/pp13-17). There were strict levels of rank with attached privileges and responsibility. It was a ‘safe’ hierarchy, experienced as moulding and protective, though physically challenging. Rituals marked his progression through the levels as ranks were bestowed. Initiation rituals included time alone reflecting on his place in the world, in Rovers (action and service) and in relation to ‘God’. He was ‘knighted’ with a sword, a symbol of significance that came up again in his interviews in the telling of the making of a Samurai sword. (DW5/Q43-57/pp13-17)

Two Worlds (Boxes)
Parallel to the Rovers’ world were the years in the ‘unsafe’ hierarchy of the docks, where position and safety were decided by complex power dynamics based on skill in your work or craft, fear, complicity, belonging and exclusion, secrecy and loyalty, physical prowess and aggression. Esteem was accorded to men of skill and consolidated by participating in the world of heavy, regular drinking and keeping their norms (e.g. coarse language). It was a clan defined in a ‘them and us’ world. His survival came by learning the rules of the game, in sidestepping conflict and in having the protection of older males.

He maintained his parallel worlds by keeping each of them securely boxed and separate. He learnt to play the roles needed to belong in each world. If those worlds met, he became anxious, and in his discomfort he tried to separate them as quickly as possible.

Domestic Arenas
Domestic hierarchies were variable and more subtle. His mother’s role was domestic and he was able to defy her without punishment from his father. On the docks, women
were chattels and domestic violence was almost the norm, yet times of tenderness in strife were common. Chivalry prevailed in the Rovers; testosterone prevailed in teenage gender friendships; almost separate gender domains were the norm in his youth and early marriage. His values and ideas of gender were that girls ‘group and natter’; men ‘clan and do something’. He pleased women for company; men to gain honour. His experiences of equality were scarce and precious, and mainly with men.
Three Promises
Obligation and the power of a promise came to be strong forces. As an adult he made three promises to himself:

- to marry and have children
- to go to sea, and
- to study religion and spirituality. *(DW2/Q114/P26)*

Inner Worlds
His inner, philosophic and spiritual world was made up of his own experiences of awe in the bush and at sea; his relations with animals as a hunter; with stories of honour and service. Then, in his teenage years he began reading ‘mage’ literature (magic, wisdom and spirituality mixed). This affected him deeply and resonated with something within him. It was the start of a long thread of psycho-spiritual encounters that became the tipping point of his change out of hierarchy and drew him away from a fully secular life.

Early on DW identified the role of an ‘inner voice’ within himself. The voice expressed itself in deep knowings, persistent longings and even, at critical junctures, as a direct perception of being spoken to out loud, internally. He came to understand this aspect of himself as his connection with his ‘soul’ - the unchanging nature of himself in connection with a Divine that was numinous, loving, and which pervaded life.

He did not follow this in any religious or church framework, but rather as an inner personal experience and companion. Christianity, though part of his upbringing, seemed now somehow empty to him. The numinous qualities of ‘mage’ literature satisfied an inner need. A later interest in initiations, especially in Aboriginal cultures, linked his sense of manhood to his spirituality. It also drew him to consider it a responsibility of older men to help young men, and drew him to train in counselling and mentoring roles.

There was a strong link for DW between his transition, as described in this study, and the (ongoing) sense of his own initiation and changing role of himself as a man in the world and among men.
Out of Hierarchies - Reverting to Type

In reflecting on his life, DW came to recognise his journey out of hierarchy as ‘reverting to type’ rather than breaking away from hierarchy. His early years of solitude, dislocated realities and illness determined that he did not form a clear place or identity in hierarchical games or relationships – sickness blurred the boundaries and permissions, and overrode earned status. It also made him privy to the worlds of words, emotion, dependencies and solitude. “There’s always been a monk in me,” (notes, DW2/Q22/6/98), he said. For DW there was strong frustration in not knowing how to put all his experiences together, to be whole within himself, and to live coherently in the world.

Then, too his sense of being a man had also undergone radical transitions in his life: from early gendered divisions at home and at work that bore all the hallmarks of clichéd stereotypical male and female roles, to later being a self-reflective, responsible mentor, and in an integrated and less polarised relationship than he had previously experienced. He went from early solitary times in the bush and on his sick-bed to heavy drinking, hunting and coarse talking on the docks; to being a Scout and Rovers leader with codes of good behaviour, service to others and to a Higher Cause. At work: he went from a lowly apprentice, a freelance man of skill, a foreman and then to owning his own business.

New Directions

Prior to the collapse of that business DW withdrew to being a solitary depressive, caught between the demands of the external world and an inner yearning. His inner voice intervened and he closed the business down. Following that experience he made a simple, yet radical change: to go to a yoga class. This began his active movement into conscious spiritual and personal self-reflection and review. Out of this emerged an interest in mentoring and University training as a Counsellor. Responsibility and care of others became a primary drive and his behaviours changed radically. Women were no longer vassals; manhood and belonging was not dependent on drinking with the
fellows; honour was internal, with external honours seen as a bonus. Integrity and sense of honour became paramount values.

**Stories and Metaphor**

During the interviews DW showed that story and metaphor, whether linguistic or narrative, were important ways of understanding reality and were guides to living his life. Some, like the story of the Samurai sword, acted as guides and mentors for him. Another, the story of the five cups of tea (notes, post Interview 5, 15/9/98), was a simile for the way he saw our interviews progressing. The Hero myth was deeply embedded in his psyche through stories of the navy and the sea, giving him a sense of adventure, and the values of honour and of doing one’s craft well. He conceived the hero role as to ‘go out, on his own, beyond the group, beyond its approval and safety’ (notes Int.1 DW 22/6/98), but it was also evident in him through wanting to be recognised by significant males and people in authority. In his adult years he more fully participated in that myth; he liked the power of leadership and wanted to get to the top (of the pyramid), to be the best in his field. This aspiration changed as his inner journey progressed.

His primary linguistic metaphor re the role of men was ‘to draw through’; ‘drawing through’, ‘pull you through’, ‘bring you through’, ‘talk you through.’ (DW1/Q67/P16; DW1/Q68/P16; DW1/Q69/P17). This became a deep motivation for him as he matured and gained a reflective view of the world. The way he talked about the process of bringing ‘through’ brought up analogies of birthing - the birth canal, and the birthing process.

In relation to his growing interest in initiation, what makes a man a man, and what makes a man feel a man in himself, the concept of birthing took on a meaning of birthing into manhood from boyhood, at whatever age and in whatever way. This was further explored through a personal development method called Re-birthing (a breath-control technique designed to access and clear emotional distress). He also used birthing as a

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1 DW spoke of the Chinese character for friendship as ‘five cups of tea’. The first cup represented talking about superficial things; the second was for settling in, ‘getting the taste’. The third cup was stronger and called forth issues; the fourth was for going over the nitty-gritty and for teasing out topics. The last was the cup of real friendship, where the drinkers had harmonised and settled in, to then finally taper off and go their individual ways. There was a sense of coming to a natural completion. This was the pattern of our interviews. We ended them on a mutual sense of natural completion.
description of guiding men through troubled times (legal witness for his employer) or uncertain terrain (puberty), pain (hard physical work), fear (of failure), peril (uncaring action). As such it was a powerful and influential concept for him that carried over from his hierarchical immersion and remained with him in his later personal journeys and transformations.

**Ethics**

His personal ethics centred on honour, achieving high skill levels in his crafts and not wanting others to be hurt. ‘To do better for society’ also remained a strong quest for him despite both internal and external reformation of his own life. His change from ‘following’ and ‘fitting in’, to taking his life in his own hands, occurred in conjunction with an internal sense of being dissatisfied, and harbouring unresolved and persistent yearnings for ‘something else’. It was facilitated by collapsing work and relationship worlds and, in part, by an ongoing and engaging Inner Voice. For him this Inner Voice was strongly connected with alleviating his inner dissatisfactions and defining his life purpose and his ‘soul’, which he described as unchanging and immutable. It gave it great validity, though he did not obey it automatically or immediately. One of its characteristics was its quiet persistence and resonance with his personal desire for wholeness. It facilitated decisions and changes that often moved him on to a new course of action and different ways of living and of being.

His transformation through his transition showed itself in several ways. For many years he had rated work above all else; later, family and relationships took that place. He sought to live as a self undivided by ‘boxes,’ and to be a person of integrity, congruent in himself and in the world *(notes Int.2 DW 22/6/98)*. He taught himself to be more articulate, more interactive and more fully present in relationships. He followed his dream and went to sea.

Some parts of himself he considers as having remained the same. He labels those parts as his ‘soul’, untouched by what happens externally, supporting his care of others and his goals of honour and credibility. He spoke of feeling the presence of his his soul, and
access to it as being clouded by busyness; and it being more accessible to him when he was on his own.

**Futures Unfolding**

He came to see himself as a mentor and guide: a man who “pulls through” young men. To this end he spent some time as a Counsellor on a support phone line for men and, since these research interviews, he has started mentoring and teaching young builders, combining the two major threads of his life to make a third as his future.

**Mentioned in Despatches**

My experience of DW was as a strong, quiet and sensitive man, gentle, practical and capable with his hands; a deep philosophic and poetic thinker. His presence had a solid credibility about it. He portrayed a sense of determination and dedication to his ideals while wrestling with fundamental issues in himself about living an authentic and honest life. He also showed a strong sense of responsibility for others (sometimes quite misguided) and a reluctance to have others see him fail. Both these emotions were used to defer action after making internal decisions, or resulted in delayed change (e.g. as in ending his first marriage and business). Referring to his credibility and honesty, a judge commended DW for his role as a ‘reliable witness’ (DW1/Q144/P33) in a legal case for one of his employers. This meant much to him, he feeling it was equivalent to being ‘mentioned in despatches’, as in his early navy, adventure reading.

**Phoenix connection**

DW’s work on wooden boats gave him an acceptance of decay, and the need for vigilance in maintaining strength and soundness in what you work with, be it people or things. His awareness of a sense of his ‘soul’ as an abiding part of himself enduring through all change, and a willingness to follow an inner necessity linked to transpersonal values and presence, maintained him through radical and pressing worldly circumstances, from illness, to marriage, to his business’ collapse, and to standing apart from his historical and social conventions.
DW felt that an early attachment to territory and hierarchies was a strong limiting factor for men, including himself. He felt that one way of freeing men from power-over structures was to deny ownership and territory, authority and dominance in their early and formative years. In many ways this was his own experience through the dislocations occurring as a result of his asthma; moving to a mountain location for his health and his schooling; occupying worlds with radically differing values, and having transpersonal/spiritual beliefs not commonly shared by those around him.

**Authority**

For most of his life DW regarded authority as being principally located outside himself – being particularly embedded in Christian hierarchy, male culture, law and institutions of authority. Approval (being mentioned in despatches, as a man of skill, as a reliable witness, drinking with his workmates) meant inclusion. Rejection meant isolation, derision, or exclusion (from men, marriage, business, sport, company of girls, being a man). Competition and conquering were integral to his perceptions of the ‘way it works’, whether it was conquering his own fears, his physical limitations, his career goals or women; or competing to be the best at his craft - the best man the best leader, the best witness - earning a sure place in his hierarchical world. Rituals of belonging were significant and powerful bonding mechanisms (Rovers, Scouts, drinking with dockyard workmates, hunting). His transition and transformation processes, as he related in the interviews, drew him away from those hierarchies.

His language and metaphors, especially in reference to his early years, mainly reflected battle and war analogies (DW5/Q106/P27). As he moved away from hierarchies, his language also changed, reflecting an inner impetus: ‘... *a moving inner direction leading me...* rather than having to conquer.’ (DW5/Q109/P27)

**Update**

In early Sept 2006, I met up with DW’s partner again, during a visit by her to Canberra. She gave me a brief overview of what they had done since the interviews. After the last of our interviews DW had fitted out a 40’+ boat and had set off sailing - ‘*somewhere, wherever*’. In the years since, they had made landfall in several places on the coast of
Australia, staying for a time to work, and then to move on again. Much of that sailing had been together, but for one trip DW sailed the boat down a length of coast on his own, where storm and the vagaries of the elements tested his resilience and sense of confidence in himself. In his last interview he had expressed a longing for some solitude and a period of ‘monkhood’ - solitude to connect to the inner man in singular relationship with himself, his material and spiritual worlds. He got his wish, but it was not the peaceful, inward, quiet and uninterrupted journey he had envisaged that his monk’s time would be!

Ironically, his partner’s son has recently been ordained as a Buddhist monk and one of their calls to land was to attend this step-son’s ordination ceremony. In that ceremony DW had the opportunity to witness an external expression of the monkhood which he had felt in himself, as an inner calling as part of his own earlier transition. He continues to guide and mentor young men.

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**MS’s Life Story**

MS came from a farm in the wide, cold, empty spaces of North Dakota. His memories of childhood were of loneliness, cold and Spartan living. His father was a dour man of few words and fewer expressions of affection; his mother unquestioning of her Protestant Christian religion and strongly involved with it. He had two brothers and a sister. Both women were only referred to through their roles as caretakers: his mother as caretaker of his father, and his sister as caretaker of his mother once his father died. His two brothers were only mentioned early on, as ‘escaping’ from the farm.

What MS saw on television and his occasional visits to his happy and extroverted cousins made him aware that his family’s way was not the only way to live. He felt suffocated and isolated. The influence of negative experiences as an impetus for action was set early in his life and made him aware that he wanted to be more than a ‘dirt farmer’. As soon as he could he, too, ‘escaped’.
During his adolescence MS had begun to wonder about issues such as ‘what consciousness is’, ‘Who am I?’ and issues of ‘soul’. Later on he regarded the ‘soul’ as occupying a specific spot in his body, between his eyes.

MS’s life was punctuated by long periods of drifting, or ‘going with the flow’, or by following others’ expectations, peppered by periodic radical and critical self-initiated moves. He began to carry ‘a tremendous capacity for self-doubt’ (MS1/Q33/P13). His ‘tremendous self-doubt’ continued to be his major experience of an inner, self-reflective life. However, as a young man with no real goals of his own, he did the ‘generally expected’ thing of focussing on education and a career. These processes became a pattern for many years for him. However, he also came to know what he did not want to do; and gradually moved to knowing what he did want to be doing. His process for doing this was to listen more to his own impetus (inner drive).

His first radical move was profound: to leave the family farm and its farming tradition. He went on to break further with the traditions of his family by enrolling at University, the first of his family to do this. There he reverted to passivity and drifted into Engineering on the strength of good marks and good job prospects, despite not really knowing what Engineering was. At that time, his fledgling medical interests, sparked in part by his own low-grade recurrent respiratory illnesses, were culled from his plans. Once out of University, MS was conscripted to the army. It was there that he met a man who became a lifelong friend and mentor, and whom MS regarded as having what he wanted: a ‘core’ to his being, and an integrity to his life. They were still close friends at the time of the interviews, some 30 years later. After his conscription period was over, MS drifted back to University, this time doing a Masters’ degree and teaching there for a year.
By this time MS was almost 30 and had not yet found a purposeful direction of his own. Having not started in his first engineering job till he was nearly 30, he felt he was a decade behind his contemporaries; a feeling he still carried at the time of this study.

Following a woman, he moved cities and began work in a large (American) consulting engineering firm. He continued to successfully work for similar firms for the next decade, spending part of that time in Hawaii. His marriage collapsed before his return to the United States mainland, where he continued to work for large consulting firms and, again, married.

**New Directions/ Old Interests**

By this time, however, he had done some reassessing of his life and had toned down being part of the party life that flourished in Hawaii as it had begun to impact on his recurring and persistent upper respiratory problems that he had had since childhood.

For several years MS led a double life. He climbed the ladder in a high-pressure corporate world, while at the same time he sought a greater sense of wholeness outside of it. He sensed a widening gap between his preferences and values and those of the corporate environment he was still successful in. He began a series of three-year agreements with himself – each with the aim of greater self-coherence. One of these was to work towards studying medicine or a related field (reviving his childhood interests). He began to take classes in various interest areas associated with medical topics, and in wellbeing, including Yoga. He joined a men’s group and studied life sciences at University.

**Off to OZ**

With the failure of his second marriage, MS left his Engineering work and profession, met his present wife, came to Australia and studied Naturopathy at an Australian University. His wife had previously been a high level IT expert in a world-wide computer company, and left her career to become a yoga teacher about the same time as he was finishing his Naturopathy degree. She then went on to manage the Australian arm of a world-wide yoga organisation and run a local yoga centre. MS, too, became a
yoga instructor. (Note: They would be an interesting couple to study for any differences that may be attributable to gender in transition processes out of hierarchy if, indeed, there are any.)

**Turn Right!**
MS drifted for some years, allowing himself to be carried by chance and circumstance, following other people’s interests, expectations and lives. At the same time he internally ruminated, made up his mind on a direction for himself and quietly pursued it. When the dissonance was no longer manageable, MS would change direction radically, yet remained in the life he had already created. Two examples of this were that he made plans to go to University, yet did not tell his family until his father found he had paid his entry fee, and even then not knowing what University entailed or what he wanted to do there. He did a similar thing in Hawaii and then on the US mainland, when he lived a dual life partying while at the same time building on his medical interests, and again later, when he left both Engineering and his homeland to move to Australia and began to study Naturopathy. Each move seemed to provide fuel for a greater change the next time. His primary drivers (his dissatisfactions and feeling that he did not fit) slowly changed, and he began to follow interests which positively attracted him. Such a process was a good illustration of taking action because of perceived problems (negative motivation), to taking action in purposeful and proactive ways to reinforce and discover benefits (positive motivation).

**Deep Journeying**
MS’ journey was principally one of moving his personal reference point from a rationalist to a holistic viewpoint of life; from one of being led to one who decided for himself; from feeling inadequate and a misfit, to feeling a man of honour and worth in his own right. At the time of this study he still felt that journey was ongoing. Since the interviews he and his wife have moved to Canberra. He is working part-time as a Naturopath, part-time in the Public Service in a health related area, and has competed his training as a yoga instructor. He still does not feel he has found his ‘niche‘.
Throughout his journey, which initially led MS from hierarchy to hierarchy in strong command-and-control models similar to his early home environment, and then to reframing his life through retraining in a profession that is primarily freelance, he not only discovered what motivated him but began to consciously pursue and cultivate these interests, and continues to do so.

MS describes himself as having been raised with a structured, fundamentalist, Christian, religious view of life. However, he came to see it as built on paradoxes: that we all have a soul and we are all loved, but there are outsiders of that ‘all’; that he would not be loved by that all-loving God if he sinned. He has now moved his beliefs to a concept of life built on ‘oneness’ where there is an interconnectedness, which he can choose or not choose to be part of. He feels that he has a link with that connectedness which he calls his Higher Self. He ‘knows’ that he can’t be disconnected from either that Higher Self or that ‘oneness’. ‘That’s a long way from being a fundamentalist Christian’ (MS3/Q30/pp9-10), he noted.

Such perceptions arose in a development phase of the interviews (Stage 1) He was still in a paradoxical position where he had a sense of interconnectedness, yet still felt the need to ‘fit’ and ‘fit in’ (MS3/Q49/P15).

An analogy that he used for this contradiction in his life was of one rock in a road (path of life) that hadn’t been integrated into the smooth (future) way (surface) and had to be dug out and dealt with or integrated in some way so that the road could be made smooth. Conflicting values from his ‘old’ way and ‘new’ way were both operating at the time of the interviews and exerted strong, conflicting pressures on him.

MS was one of the men in the study who felt an inner sense as a driver towards greater congruence within himself, and between himself and his created world. This inner driver was not comfortable in competitive or materialistically focussed hierarchies.

**Experience of Hierarchies**

MS’s experiences of hierarchical work were in American high-powered corporate consultancy firms in the USA and in Hawaii. That experience bore the hallmarks
commonly depicted in clichés: long hours were expected and seen as an expression of dedication; dress code was important; competition was a constant element and brought strong pressures to bear on him; profit was more important than customers; there were assumptions of high quality, ever-increasing outputs at all times. Money, status and material positions identified his value and he was judged by these measures in that structure. He felt pressured to be ‘ruthless and cold’ (MS1/Q23/P10) and to cultivate people so as to benefit business. In Hawaii the hierarchies were more parochial and racist, ‘dominated by ethnic Japanese’ (MS1/Q17/P8). Again he felt an outsider.

Honour was always a strong motivating factor for MS, but its meaning changed over the years, from being a concept of behaviour recognised in steadfastness and ‘enduring’; to later having more affinity with the concept of integrity and congruence within himself. In the interviews MS came back again and again to descriptions and experiences of an inner journey of self-discovery he was on; to his process to discover a ‘path’ and a purpose to lead him on that path, which in turn would help him with the decisions he needed to make to follow it more fully. His transitions out of hierarchies were expressions of that desire: for greater personal congruence and its expression in the world.

**ROC’s Life Story**

ROC was the third man interviewed. I had not met him before the research began, though I had known his wife briefly some twenty years before when she had been on ‘Prac’ (practice teaching, similar to work experience) for several weeks at a school I was teaching in. I had met her again, just before starting the research, a thousand kilometres from our first encounter. She had suggested that her husband do the interviews, as she recognised his journey in my thesis topic. He had agreed.
The information ROC gave in his interviews was primarily about his work, its changes, and his transition processes on a pragmatic level. There was little chronological information and that came in cyclic bursts, to be sequenced later. We were also hampered by very temperamental taping, which happened more in his interviews than in any of the others, and by interruptions (mainly by his children) as he chose to have the interviews happen at his home after school had finished.

To add to the fractured nature of the interviews, we had constant taping problems, to the extent that his last interview was barely started when the tape stopped for no apparent reason. Tape problems necessitated some doubling back, repetition and revisiting. In keeping with his history to date, rather than going over old ground, ROC seemed keen to forge on. Consequently I have relied on my note-taking to a heavier degree with ROC than with the other interviews, so as not to stretch his patience and lose his focus again.

**Childhood**

I can tell you this much about him: ROC came from the Western Suburbs of a large coastal Australian city, ‘struggle town’ as he called it. He had a happy childhood: active and free. His family was very traditional for the times and there were clearly defined gender roles within the home:

‘Mum cooked, she didn’t work. Dad worked, came home, sat up. Mum made the coffee.’

(ROC2/Q80/P17)

Though his father was articulate and clever, there were few books in the house. ROC felt that when his father talked, it was to define that he was boss, rather than to discuss things.

**Adventure Time**

At University ROC realised there was a wealth of opportunities in life and many adventures to choose from. He met his future wife there. They loved to travel and any spare money was spent on air tickets to some faraway place.
Radical changes were simply adventures to him. For instance, ROC took a year off after he finished University and before he began a permanent teaching position. He spent six months as a jackeroo (farmhand) on a huge rural property beyond Forbes, with few people, little vegetation and a lot of space around him. When that ended he drove the long distance across the wide empty landscape and to fly directly to Bombay, with its myriad of people, colours, smells, congestion and social differences. He was to make similar dramatic decisions later in his life.

The ‘Year of the Disabled’ in 1981 raised the profile of special needs children and, not long after, ROC won a scholarship to train as a teacher of these children. There were expectations that he and his classmates would become influential change agents within the State Education Department on this issue.

However, in 1984, not long after he started teaching, ROC and his wife resigned, and moved to the Seychelles to teach. They treasured the relaxed, small village lifestyle they found there.

**Come Back, We Need You**

A few years later, while still in the Seychelles, ROC was offered a position back in Australia as a teacher to a ‘particularly sensitive area on a sensitive issue’. He accepted this position and, once again going between two radically different cultures over a short period of time, came back to Australia.

Within five years he had had as many promotions, moving up to become a State Regional Manager in charge of others teaching the children with special needs whom he had been trained to teach.

ROC saw his quick rise in his profession as largely attributable to the fact that he was in the right place at the right time, with skills that were needed. However, it was clear from the interviews that he had other qualities which facilitated his rise as well: an astute understanding of hierarchy and how his organisation worked; a willingness and ability to play the ‘game’, as he called it, and an evident capability to fulfil the tasks set him.
Changes
While he was a Regional Manager he put on weight, worked seven-day weeks, flew a great deal and rarely saw his own children for any significant time, let alone students in classrooms. He learned to become a ‘political animal’ and to work for two different governments, writing briefing papers to fit.

Under the Premier of the time, a radical change was introduced as to how the State Government worked. The Premier introduced a quasi-business model of organisation, hoping to gain greater efficiencies and increased productivity in Government. Under this change all Education Department Managers had to apply for their own positions and were put on short-term contracts rather than on tenure, as before. Part of ROC’s job was to now answer for productivity levels and progressive efficiencies, mainly in cost-cutting. ROC was given a two-year contract under this regime.

Opposing Pressures
According to ROC, the majority of Managers, like himself, were reinstated, with people from the old culture put back into the new structure. He felt there were bound to be problems. A restrictive accountability structure, more suited to manufacturing and its finite outputs, was overlaid onto education, causing concern and unpredicted results. Rather than the progressive development and responsiveness to change that was hoped for, a culture of fear and insecurity developed. As more accountability was introduced, more conservatism and less innovation developed, so as to reduce risk.

The tensions created by values becoming more restrictive - high levels of scrutiny; stringent performance agreements; insecure futures based on short-term contracts; demands to account for performance assessments at any moment - all contributed to a paradoxical environment. New ideas, such as Learning Communities, saw lip-service and rose and fell in favour as their advocates did. There was little shared vision.

Management fragmented under a high level of fear. Fear itself became used as a management tool. However, the rewards were many and seductive. ROC described it as

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2 Nick Greiner
a self-congratulatory culture: well paid; of being ‘in the club’; known, powerful, influential and on ‘a male ego-trip’, as he put it, inspiring awe and fear on their school visits. Nearly all the Managers were men. They saw the brilliant and the problematic; rarely the ordinary or the capable teachers when they visited a school. They could make or break people’s lives, and often did. ROC, however, felt there was little actual effect on class-room teachers or classroom teaching, despite the radical organisational changes in structures and values.

He had few genuine friendships at work during that time, these mainly being those made at courses, where there was time for discussion and thoughtfulness. He did, however, have many friends outside work and felt that was a very effective contributor to his capacity to move on and to manage his transition out of his Regional Manager’s position.

**Time to Go**

With a change of Government, the organisation changed once more. The Regional office, with over 90 positions attached to it, was disbanded and the organisation centralised. Not only was ROC’s own position abolished, but part of his task became managing the abolition of other staff positions. In the process, he was offered a similar position to the one he had, but it was a thousand miles away. ROC declined, choosing instead to return to a local classroom to teach the kind of children he had been trained to teach some ten years before - those with special needs, and those deemed ‘at risk’.

During the abolition of the office, it became clear that some of the displaced Managers had heavily relied on their positions for personal value, identity and status. One Manager accepted a position a four-hour drive from his home rather than take a job at a lower level, but closer.

Some staff went into shock. Several, in their 50’s, had been raised to think of the firm as a ‘family’ and the Department as ‘friend’, giving solid superannuation, progressions up the hierarchical ladder, and a good career path. One, saying to ROC ‘it was supposed to be
forever’, was ‘dumped’. He was two years off retirement, unprepared psychologically or pragmatically for another career, or for retirement.

He was not the only one to go like that. In a small country town there were not many work alternatives when a large Government department closed down, especially when people had a specialist skill that only fitted that one environment.

**Back There, and Loving It**

ROC, at 40 years old, was ‘top of the pile’, and ‘gone’ the same year. His experience and corporate knowledge was folded away with little recognition or regret. Two years later he was still happily teaching special-needs children and resisting invitations and pressure from senior managers to apply for higher positions.

ROC felt the organisational structures acted as distancing and destabilising agents: contracts were used as a device to shatter loyalty; the focus on productivity was an indication of the value of money over care for their charges. He had read the political climate some time before and so was not ill-prepared to go: his social sphere and values were based outside the organisation; his family were supportive and close; he had options and a job to go to. He organised himself to go back to a local classroom. He thought it was simple.

**‘Catching Up’**

Yet for some six months after leaving his managerial position ROC was dogged by a mystery virus, had his gall bladder removed, and lost weight to an alarming degree. It was not until some time later, when he re-assessed his experiences, that he came to understand his responses as his body ‘catching up with him’ for the stress he had put it under for several years as a Regional Manager.

ROC had experienced a dramatic change of lifestyle and work when, by choice, he and his wife left Australia to teach in the Seychelles. In contrast, his move from a Regional Manager position was not of his choice, but was imposed. His resilience, previous experiences and positive attitude were critical to his successful adjustment in both situations.
ROC attributed some of his resilience to perceiving change as an opportunity to develop and experience more of life. Another telling factor was a conscious decision early in his adult life that ‘career’ did not mean an ever-upward road, but could go up, down or sideways, depending on what interested him. In other words, he was not measuring his success by standard hierarchical parameters.

**A Game to Play**

ROC’s day to day relationship to hierarchy was pragmatic. He saw it as a ‘game’ to be played, and was at pains to tell how he explained to members of the public, usually parents, that ‘it was not personal’ when he was not able to deliver what they wanted, such as funding.

He described the culture in detail: the posturing; covert and overt signals of belonging or exclusion, including ever-changing terminology; keeping up with trends, real or manufactured; managerial whims in the exercise of sanctions and permissions; and strict, unspoken dress codes.

ROC used a metaphor of being ‘in or out of a tent’ to represent relationships to the organisation, and felt it was, overall, better to be ‘in’ than ‘out’.

When asked what he had found difficult in his transition, he said he felt it was ‘turning 40’. Independent of his transition back to a school, and his looming birthday, his job loss, health problems and awareness of ageing all happened in that same year. He felt he had ‘covered all bases’ (or so he at first thought), through looking after his emotional resilience, but realised he had forgotten to factor in his physical well-being. He had, for instance, described himself as switching off from work at home, yet also spoke of working at times till he went to sleep over his papers!

**On and Off the Path**

ROC approached the research interviews in quite a different way than the previous two interviewees - in fact all the other interviewees. At the start he tended to lead and leap about from topic to topic. He also spoke very fast, almost staccato, often interrupting, talking over me or changing tack mid-word and mid-sentence. As he chose to be
interviewed in his house, and just after the children came home from school, we were often interrupted, and hence his concentration was also diverted. Such interruptions and disjunctions served to delay or deflect possibilities of deeper reflection, and created an erratic swing from engagement to disengagement.

His explorative and restless nature revealed itself in a story he recounted of a walk through Kakadu. The woman behind him, hoping to follow someone and thus be led, was dismayed to find ROC was a wanderer who moved off the path at will. After some time, however, she came to see a pattern - an elliptical loop of predictable sequence. He explored and returned; never far off the trail but weaving around it nonetheless. ROC felt this was a ‘pretty accurate’ description of how he approached life and work. With confidence in the leader to know where they were going and how to get there (which he had), and to be well prepared and give good guidance, ROC felt free to explore and stretch those boundaries, though not so far as to lose sight of the trail or those on it.

In some ways I was like the woman on the path, aware of the cyclic pattern of his attention, yet waiting for him to come back to the path and resume walking together.

His pattern of loose but fundamental allegiance to a path, as in his bushwalking anecdote, was evident in several areas of his life and in the interviews. Variations on the theme came up several times. As an offshoot of his Kakadu story, he raised the topic of people being different. He talked about the matter as one of degree. He cited how artists and others could bend the rules, but to go ‘too far’, as he felt Oscar Wilde had, for instance, meant exclusion. To lose track of or lose contact with the acceptability defined by the path, was defined as problematic, at best, dangerous at worst.

**Other People**

ROC’s approach was much more impersonal than the other men’s approaches. He spoke of his life as an impersonal thing, giving lots of examples of what other people were doing rather than what he was doing. He used lots of organisational language. Nor did he speak freely or deeply about himself and his inner changes; nor showed a willingness (or was it ability?) to delve deeply.
However, as we continued the interviews he became more articulate and self referential. He commented that this was a novel experience; that he had no need for such articulation generally and was unused to it. He later identified having to speak about his transition as one of the benefits of the process.

**Values**

ROC’s values centred around care for people, especially those on the fringes of society, or mentally and physically disadvantaged, and for equity and fairness. He felt what he was doing in the classroom helped people and he felt good about that.

He also had faith that good would come of life if he contributed. At the time of the interviews he had become aware that he now gave little thought to consequences, unlike in the high-accountability environment of the Regional Office and in his position there as a Regional Manager.

He expressed an interest in intellectual discussion and a preference for pragmatics and measurables. Though he declared little patience for ‘waffle’ or very esoteric discussions, yet later in the interviews he began to ponder out loud about how people came to opinions, expressing quite abstract ideas in doing so.

ROC retained his sense of adventure, adapting it to each new situation and circumstance; shifting roles as part of the adventure. In that proactive position he remained ‘in hierarchy, but not of it’.

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**PS’s Life Story**

PS was an ex-priest, ex-Chargé d’affaires, Public Servant and, at the time of the interviews, was retraining to develop his own business as a Migration officer. The main transition we focussed on in the interviews was his transition from the priesthood into private life.
**Several Transitions**

However, because this major transition from a very autocratic and masculinist hierarchy occurred so early in his life, a longitudinal view of his successive excursions out of hierarchy, including his exit from the Commonwealth Public Service, and culminating in his freelance work, first as an AMWAY representative and then as a Migration Agent, became possible. Being trained in reflective thinking in the Priesthood, he was able to articulate many of those experiences clearly, though at the start of the interviews, he stated that analysis and reflection on his own life was difficult for him.

I was able to explore his life’s constants, including dominant and recurring patterns; to define stages and changes and relate these to his personal philosophic frameworks over several incremental transitions out of hierarchy.

**Becoming a Priest**

PS was raised in a country-town Catholic family, where his father ran a store. He had an indulgent mother and a firm, quiet father. In his father’s store, as the son of the manager, he was privileged and allowed much leeway, including being able to raid the biscuit-tin at will.

He went to a local Catholic school, strictly run by brown-habited nuns, and attended mass every day. He was also one of a dozen or so altar boys who, from the age of eight or nine, would travel with the priest as he did his rounds to say mass in other towns in the area. PS was also very involved in the wider Catholic community.

For his High School years PS moved to the city and, in early high school, inspired by the stories and the glory of missionaries ‘dying for the faith’ and thus gaining sure entry to heaven, he decided to become a missionary himself. As a result, he asked to go to a seminary for his last years of high school and to train as a priest and missionary with an order founded in Ireland for missionary work in Asia.

His training meant spending nine years in seminary life before becoming a priest. This included a ‘spiritual year’ of training, four years of theological and academic training and two years of Philosophy. In the process he moved to two different states, played a
lot of sport and kept up with his music interests. The priesthood was orderly, safe, secure, nurturing, restrictive and its rituals repetitious. It was an entirely male culture.

As part of his training, PS took a 30-day silent retreat and, even after his ordination, included a six-day retreat each year. Each day had time set aside for reflection and assessment, within the context of assessing his place in the spiritual code of his Church.

A special dispensation was given PS to be ordained before the minimum age of 24. Consequently, just short of his 23rd birthday he became a revered representative of a 2000 year-old religion and it’s God. He was the first from his home town to be ordained. He was immediately sent off to the Philippines to work as a missionary and priest to the local communities, spending some three years there.

His vows of celibacy, obedience and poverty meant he did not participate in some of the core experiences of his ‘flock’: personal relationships, free will and management of money. These parameters later became problems for him, but at 22 years old, he was unaware of the wider implications of his decisions.

**A Missionary**

His time in the Philippines was spent caring for the local people and maintaining their faith. He learnt their language, which gave him entrée to their lives. Their lives were very different from the simple, predictable securities and comforts of seminary life. Being a nominally Catholic country already, he had little missionary work to do.

He well remembers the first death he was called to: walking at night, barefoot in the rain, to the top of a mountain to give the last rites to a baby, and comfort its family. PS felt that he ‘saw it all’ in the Philippines: the sick, dying, troubled and distressed, and those caught up in violence. He also gave marriage counselling (‘very hard’), created a new feast day for workers (blessing their tools of trade, including policemen’s guns) and became involved in a movement within the Catholic Church which was striving to return to Christianity’s simpler roots.

His life became partitioned. On the one hand he had his priestly duties and roles and was on call 24 hours a day; on the other he led a worldly, if celibate, recreational life. He
preached, officiated and fitted the priestly role, yet he was also doubting his calling. He began exploring wider theological views, such as those raised by the Dead Sea Scrolls.

**Doubts**

He had begun doubting his ‘vocation’ while doing Philosophy, even before his investiture as a priest. However, he was reassured by others within the Church that this hesitancy was normal, and so he had gone on to complete his training. However, his doubts increased in the Philippines when he felt the church had moved away from the simplicity of its core teachings on love and care for one another. His sexuality, too, was becoming stronger, so that he wondered if he could maintain a celibate life. The Church rituals had become form, rather than being richly symbolic and sustaining. He was restless.

Many discussions later, Church officials had him do a battery of psychological tests and very quickly decided to send him back to Australia, to the Mother House there. When he went to tell his Brother priests that he was returning to Australia and was thinking of leaving the priesthood, a personally painful and significant event occurred. He had lived and worked beside these men, shared their roles and their work in the community, and shared their faith. Rather than wish him well and send him on his way with Christian warmth and ‘God-speed’, as he expected, they literally turned their backs to him. He was totally shocked. He had expected warmth and Christian charity. He experienced first-hand the displeasure and ostracism meted out for those leaving the ‘tribe’.

What he did not realise was that his parents, sister and brother-in-law, in their communities back in Australia, were also being ostracised, as if his doubt was contagious and wrongful.

Years later he went back to that room in the Philippines where his fellow priests had spurned him, to try to allay his feelings about the incident, but his irreverent gesture and cynical photo were hollow revenge. Then, remarkably, during the period of the interviews, after discussing the event, PS came across information on a series of books about the missionaries he had been a priest for, including their history. He hunted down
the books, and then the author. The volume covering the time and area he served in had not been approved by the Church to be printed as it was not considered suitable to be published. With some further research PS discovered that those same men who had spurned him for leaving the priesthood, themselves all left the priesthood within ten years. With that information, he felt some resolution of that incident.

Such synchronicities and adjacent events were not uncommon in the interview process. For instance, an article on JL’s business, and a book on bastardisation that was relevant to the interviews and to JL’s own experiences, were published at the same time as we were doing his interviews.

Back in Australia PS immersed himself in fund-raising work for missionaries for a while, but his doubts continued. After one critical discussion when, once again, he was advised to wait and pray, PS snapped. The next day he bought himself a tie, replacing the collar of his priesthood as symbolic of him leaving.

Even as a priest, PS saw himself as a bit of a loner and always felt somewhat separate from the Church hierarchy, being there for the glory he had hoped to achieve as a martyr and saint. He had no fear of death, having seen so much of it in the Philippines, but he was not to achieve either martyrdom or sainthood there, after all.

**A Public Service Man**

With the help of friends PS moved to Canberra and went into the Commonwealth Public Service (‘the Public Service’) and began the long task of learning to handle money and the practicalities of living a secular life.

‘So all of the changes meant money, relations with women, accommodation, transport. I never had my own car. I never had my own clothing. I was developing new attitudes. Again I was at the bottom of the heap … this loss of power, and I was no longer on call 24 hours a day.’ (PS1/Q48/P17)

Some time after this he met and married his wife and between them they had two children. His children were raised them in a framework of ethical care for others, not as Catholics or Christians. He laughed to tell the story of his son asking if an Anglican was a Christian.
While in the Public Service, PS returned to University studies, completing a South-East Asian Studies degree, majoring in regional languages and history. His time in the Public Service, and later working for the UN (United Nations), gave him experiences in very different hierarchies and in very different roles within them. He worked on policy and politics, and was sent on several overseas postings, eventually representing Australia. There he mixed with high-level overseas and local political leaders, and specialised in preparing reports on anticipated developments in the countries of his postings, many of which came true.

PS went into the hierarchy of the Commonwealth Public Service with a clear and conscious intent not to be consumed by it. He maintained a separateness that he feels was sensed by those in charge. For instance, he refused postings detrimental to his family and changed to work which required less travel. He felt his managers instinctively knew he would not be a ‘yes-man’, as he put it, and he also felt that this characteristic hampered his progression up the organisational ladder further.

His movement out of hierarchies was characterised by ‘incremental weaning’. His first major transition as an adult was in leaving a strictly structured and single-sex organisation straight-laced by vows of obedience and dogma, then moving to the secular, more diverse culture of the Commonwealth Public Service. After 20 years there, he went out into business, but returned as a contractor after only a year when the venture was not successful. He felt it was a baptism of fire to a way of life and work he realised he was not yet ready for.

PS didn’t mind doing long hours, hard work or difficult projects and, while still a contractor for the Public Service, began training as a direct-distributor of a party-plan product and as a Migration officer. Finally he left the Public Service completely and, in 2007, still works as a Migration Officer. In that role, though he is free from hierarchy in many ways, he must still adhere to its rules, laws and legislative requirements relevant to his work.
Values
PS’s life appeared to be ruled by compassion and a strong sense of responsibility for the less fortunate. He continues to act as an intermediary between ordinary and disempowered people and dominant powers; not so different from his role in the priesthood.

He explained that his reason for leaving the priesthood was that he no longer wanted to be a hypocrite. People bowed and kissed his hand as a priest; his word had the power of the Church and God; he was an intermediary between the mortal and the Divine; he could bless and withhold blessing, yet within himself he carried doubt and secular desires.

He admired balanced, ‘whole’ people living the core values of his early years, to “love one another as I have loved you”, which he felt was a universal code, not just limited to the Christian faith. At the time of the interviews he no longer held a church-based faith. Broad interests kept him actively involved in his wider community.

Going Global
One of PS’s most vivid childhood memories was of an image on a pamphlet, of a small boy in front of a fire, spinning a globe. He imagined that boy to be himself but never imagined the idea would unfold as it did in his life: travelling and being part of several global organisations and networks: the Roman Catholic Church, the United Nations, a global direct-market product organisation, and caring for refugees. The image had even included his love of fire!

PS’s latest move out of hierarchy was built on five years of contract work to the Commonwealth Government, when he specialised in refugee issues. He then combined his linguistic expertise and cultural experiences of various parts of the world, especially South-East Asia, and began his new work as a Migration agent, very quickly building a solid clientele and reputation.
**New Directions**

His desire for the ability to make his own decisions and choices has been a significant thread in PS’s personal development process. As part of that, PS explored the concept of creating his own reality, the power of choice and agreement, and the effects of meditation and self-reflection. These helped him to clarify his new direction(s), sense of purpose and understanding of himself.

And his summary of his life?

‘All the different ways of looking at life and activities and life in general are great, and I seem to be going from life’s experiences steadily upwards. I mean I feel as though I have been going like that, up steps. I don’t know where the steps are leading but they are still going and I am enjoying the journey, every bit of it.’ (PS2/Q26/P13)

Though outward structural forms of work have changed for him, becoming less and less hierarchical, PS has maintained his commitment of service to those in need, as an advocate to those organisations of power and influence in their lives.
“Thus we are all story tellers, narrating the story of our own lives and finding in our religion, whatever its over-arching symbols, the cosmos-making themes that give final purpose to our existence” (Greeley 2000 p.11).

As a child, as IH tells it, he was different, and felt so - very individual, with a likely touch of ADD contributing to his liveliness and singular focus. He grew up in a coastal Australian city and lived a suburban childhood. He was not sporty, though, at one stage, he was the fastest runner in his primary school. He was serious and naïve, sensitive, non-competitive, passionately interested in building and in flying, willing to do extra schooling to keep up his grades, and a bit of a dreamer.

Throughout childhood he had to deal with late-maturing bladder control and the repercussions of this, even into high school. Even in adulthood, its recurring symptoms would strike under stress.

**Separate and Different**

Two events were significant to him in his school years. One was his parents’ move from a low-income to a medium income suburb; the other was being sent to a private school for his last year of high school. He felt both these were strong dislocations, though he assured me he had been consulted and had agreed to move, feeling that his parents knew best for him. His year at the private school was lonely and studious.

He also felt that his parents, believers in a non-mainstream Christianity, gave him a strong life foundation, for which he expressed a lot of gratitude. IH felt they had taught him to be non-prejudiced and unafraid, to respect authority and to be socially responsible. They supported him in his studies and in preparation for a career, encouraging him in his endeavours and in a unique way of seeing the world. His father worked in economics while his mother stayed at home, as was usual in that era.
IH was an active and energetic child, building billy-carts, model planes, mock helicopters and small structures like cubby houses, often absorbed in his own world. As he grew up he felt he bore the brunt of those ‘differences’ and also various persecutions. Persecution became a recurring theme of his narrative, and was influential for him. It appears to have been a catalyst of change, and was also a process through which he cemented the concept of his ‘difference’, increased by his visible allegiance to his non-mainstream Christianity and his view of himself as being in a category somewhat outside the mainstream of society.

He perceived that, from being top of his class in his Engineering degree, being sent to wander the sewers of a city was a means to humble him. He also described later ‘persecutions’, which he felt to be tests of his values of commitment, dedication, thoroughness and care of his charges.

The complex mix of strong, non-mainstream beliefs and a definite, studious personality, ensured a sense of separateness for him, especially when backed by his long hours dedicated to do well with his studies.

Other strong themes for IH were those of gratitude; of being ‘special’; of holding a lasting value in his own sensitivity and aptitudes; the guidance and direction he received from his parents (whose focus was to raise him as ‘a good person’); and the powerful respect he gave to certain elders.

His experiences made him sensitive to the play of politics and power. At an early age, the theft of a pencil tin, a gift from an uncle, stolen, smashed and abandoned, caused him hurt and was still remembered.

His childhood dream, to become a pilot, was ostensibly impossible because of his parents’ lean financial situation and his poor eyesight but, many years later, with his first permanent posting in a new city, even before going to his new accommodation, he booked in for flying lessons. By the time of the interviews IH was an accomplished and happy private pilot. His sense of doing a task as well as it could be done was epitomised
in his flying. The planning and execution of a safe and productive flight gave him great satisfaction.

**Careers**

While studying at Diploma level to be a mechanical engineer, the course was articulated to Degree status. IH was selected to be part of that first cohort and, by dint of studious effort and dedication to his study, he topped the course. He then gained a two-year Cadetship, with guaranteed vacation work and, once qualified, had rotating employment in various fields of civil engineering for the next ten years. With experience in sanitation, mechanical and structural engineering, he had developed a breadth of understanding of his field.

**Illness and the Under-World**

A second significant episode occurred for IH during his engineering training. A sudden onset of Hepatitis sent him into hospital for some time. He was in the Infectious Diseases ward and, while there, several people around him died. Young and old, nice and not so, they came and went.

In later years he was again to confront mortality and a glimpse into worlds far from his own when he was to walk the sewers of a city and find the detritus of a populous, including bodies of abandoned babies, dead animals, and the filth of a metropolis surging around his feet.

Though these experiences were described very matter-of-factly, they appeared to have made a lasting impression on IH, increasing both his sense of gratitude at his own good fortune and his separateness from those dark and desperate worlds.

**Community**

As he grew older, particularly after he moved to his first posting in a new city, IH became quite sociable and active in group activities. It was at this time that he met his future wife and together they began to attend a Baptist church. For 18 years they were within that mainstream Christian community, including being part of building a new
church for their congregation. Later they moved to a Christian group who held beliefs of a more experiential and ‘spiritual’ perception of reality, a Pentecostal group. It validated his deep experiential responses to life and his passionate commitments to his faith. His belief system and this group served as strong support during his painful transition out of hierarchical work, and continued to be a strong part of his life.

After ten years with a government department he began work as a lecturer at a tertiary institute. He worked there for the next 18 years, more or less concurrent with his time in the Baptist community. Curiously, as his engineering course had moved from Diploma to Degree status, so the tertiary institution he came to teach at was also upgraded and became a university. Part of his time there was under a very satisfying mentorship. However, he found the later years, once his mentor left, and with increasing demands for greater outputs and productivity, and a greater emphasis on money as a measure, both disturbing and onerous. IH moved out of the University environment as part of his transition out of hierarchy.

**Authority Figures**

His relations with adults and those in authority until his mid-adult life seemed to be punctuated with descriptions of them as mentors, carriers of wisdom or of meting out kindness to him. IH seemed keen to make good impressions on those in authority, and desired to receive help and guidance in return. He was well aware that, in his childhood, authority figures were most often authoritarian. Any notice given someone lower on the social or power scale was precious. Consequently, when IH had hepatitis and was visited by his lecturer from RMIT, it was a very significant event for him. He drew enormous support from that incident and a feeling of gratitude in being so specially treated.

**Stages in Life**

His life seemed to have been divided into clear stages: first as an explorer; then as a student; then as a social being; then as a responsible pillar of the community with a work
and church focus, and later as a highly principled engineering consultant and church member. All the stages were characterised by singular dedication and studiousness. He acknowledged that for a long time his wife and children did not receive a great deal of his time and attention as he devoted himself to his work and his church, but felt he was redressing that balance since moving into business for himself.

**Forced Out**

IH’s experience of his transition out of a hierarchical work structure was described as one of stress, persecution and depression. He depicted the move as one motivated by others and only accepted by himself under duress. His was a forced redundancy after a long period of depression and Comcare support. IH felt there was a focussed intent to be rid of him despite his sense of conscientiousness and dedication to his students and his perception that he had contributed good value to his department.

Consequently, IH reflects a reluctant version of the path of the Phoenix: smouldering in pain for some time before bursting into dramatic movement through the sudden flare of threatened sanctions.

He felt others gathered the wood of his burning: changing administration and personnel; ever-increasing demands; loss of support; health issues; deteriorating relationships with key individuals at work, and an ever-widening gap between his workplace and his organisational values; depression and stress. He felt all were piled on him.

The fire of the Phoenix path forces reconstruction of one’s life by destroying the resistant and intractable. Fire brooks no avoidance. Yet it enables new growth in nature, and new opportunities in man-made environments. The spark that ignites it may come from any quarter (*Bachelard* 1990).

The spark that lit the bonfire of transformation and transition for IH was the impending charges of an academic nature that would have further crippled his career. A redundancy package finally launched him into the flames of no return. Three tonnes of ‘ashes’ later, in the form of records and general paperwork, he was gone; the paperwork of decades shifted to his home.
Within days he was busily digging trenches for a local school and thinking about his future. Within months he had started a new business and within two years was drawing a profit as a consulting structural engineer.
Metaphors, Symbols and Dreams
The following poem was quoted by IH to describe the forces of malevolence and resilience he felt were within hierarchy.

**The Patient Machine** *(Untermeyer 1925)*

“What nudity as beautiful as this
Obedient monster purring at its toil,
These naked iron muscles dripping oil,
And the sure-fingered rods that never miss?

This long and shining flank of metal, is
Magic that greasy labour cannot spoil;
While this vast engine that could rent the soil
Conceals it’s fury with a gentle hiss.

Does not vent it’s loathing, it does not turn
Upon it’s makers with destroying hate.
It bears a deeper malice; lives to earn
Its master’s bread and laughs to see this great
Lord of the earth, who rules but cannot learn,
Become a slave of what his slaves create.”

Curiously, though IH was and is a fervent Pentecostal Christian, his transition stages presented some amazing correlations to the Phoenix myth. Several of these were described as coming through ‘dreams’ or ‘visions’, i.e. as inner imagery.

One dream correlated to the period of the Phoenix pause in the ashes, that period of waiting, grieving and regrouping, as a caterpillar, or ‘worm’ as it was called in the ancient Greek version of the myth *(de Selincourt 1997 p.17; Lee 1998)*. IH dreamt of being in a desert. Heavy chains fell from him and he felt light and free. Flat featureless land stretched endlessly to far horizons with no sense of any path and no signposts suggesting direction. Yet IH felt direction would come to him, and it did.
The second dream took him to the Holy of Holies of a temple where he laid his past concerns and troubles on an altar and found himself drawn into the ‘presence of God’, to awake refreshed and invigorated and on his way forward.

IH’s second dream experiences correlated remarkably closely to the phase in the Phoenix myth when the new creature makes a trip to the temple of the Sun God at Heliopolis to leave its old ashes on the altar there, symbolising the necessity of leaving ‘dead wood’ and ‘dead self’ behind. It affirms that there is no turning back. The irrelevant must go; the Living Self must move forward. IH felt the experience was a powerful invitation for him to see himself differently, clearly, and to move on. To him, the experience also indicated, and contained within it, approval and support from his God.

IH is a man passionate about his religious beliefs and ascribes events and experience as direct interventions of his God, especially those he perceives as positive or miraculous. I was surprised that his imagery showed such close correlations to the Phoenix myth (especially when his Christian framework was so strong). His experiences appear to support Jung’s idea of social, psychological and mythological archetypes (Jung 1967; Jung 1964; Jung 1995; Segal 1998). I wondered if mythic imagery or patterns are more powerful than religious, cultural or social beliefs; and more deeply rooted than cultural training.

**Authority Frameworks**

I came to understand IH’s view of reality was in itself a means and a motivation for leaving non-supportive hierarchical work environments. However, his changes and his view of himself were still firmly embedded in a transpersonal hierarchy of submission to his God’s will and the beliefs of his church. He had measures that he regarded as valid assessments of the will of his God (such as perceived miracles and events) and of that God’s approval and guidance.

It was not for me to question or define the validity of these assessments or perceptions and have viewed them as being obviously important factors and influencers in his life, and valid for him. Attached to his beliefs were strong perceptions of himself in the
world. Principally, that was a relationship to persecution as defined in Matthew 5:10 of the Christian Bible (version and edition not specified), as quoted by IH: “blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

Within that context IH’s experience in leaving the university gathered a crusader’s fervour and flavour, and lent him stamina for the period, as did the support from his family and church community. Despite his assertions, he conveyed a sense of unjust hurt at his persecutions, kept records of that hurt and process, and described these as ‘protection’ during his interviews.

**Paradoxes**
His personality was riddled with complexities and contradictions. IH was at pains to say he was not competitive with others, yet prided himself on giving better service than others, and winning out over huge odds. His transition was characterised by anguish and perseverance. He, like several of the others, seemed not to be a ‘native’ of hierarchy.

A significant question evolved: “Are any men ‘native’ to hierarchy, or just well socialised?”

A loner, not fitting in with the ‘mob’ at schools, studious to the point of delaying relationships with girls till he qualified and, from early on, clearly headed for a career in constructing, IH seems more to have only sought to fit the hierarchical environment to gain resources, recognition, respect and satisfaction. When several of these factors diminished and were fast disappearing, motivation and reasons to stay within its framework also diminished.

**Changing Direction**
Interviews with IH were characterised by his single-minded focus (for instance, detailed chronology and description); then he would dramatically change direction and level of discussion, for instance, moving from chronological discussions to sharing significant and personal spiritual experiences. At the same time he held himself separate by asserting that he would never expect me to understand his experiences; yet several times sought my opinions and judgment on his life and perceptions.
His life also seems to reflect the same patterning: having a long-held love and desire to fly, yet suddenly changing to mechanical engineering after being told there were few jobs in aeronautical engineering; persisting in a difficult work environment and then suddenly being gone in a matter of days; going out with a young woman for a time, then quite suddenly changing his mind to marry her cousin, to name a few examples.

His story and perceptions are also a mass of contradictions, resolved by partitioning, such as enjoying everything about school yet feeling persecuted there; asserting he was free of all hurt yet retaining the ‘protection’ of detailed records; eschewing competition yet proud of his professionalism in comparison to the (asserted) sloppy brevity of others.

His transition began with ill-ease, as the others had done; grew into looking at other options and other focus areas; came to a head with the critical disconnection between his dedication to his job and students and the lack of regard for his work by the authorities. From there he quickly moved through the ashes and caterpillar stages, dreaming his Heliopolis journey on the way, to emerge renewed as a consultant construction engineer.

At the time of the interviews IH was continuing to manage a freelance consulting engineering business and be an active member of his church community.

IH’s sense of himself remained steadfast throughout his transition. He saw himself as dedicated and conscientious; providing excellent work and good results. However, his sense of himself in relation to his work changed markedly. From feeling bound and constrained in his work at the University, he talked of feeling ‘free and light’ within his new way of working, in consultancy. He regarded the measure of control and direction he could exert on his business as a great asset that was contributing to his sense of freedom and wellbeing.

I wondered: is a sense of freedom simply that of not yet reaching the constraints of one’s limits; wearing clothes we have not yet grown into, or yet grown out of?
JL’s Life Story

JL, the son of a military man, was, at the age of 16, refused entry to Duntroon because he was ‘too eager’. Undaunted, he did his homework, found out the expectations of the examiners and the format of the practical and psychological tests, re-sat his entry, passed and was admitted, aged 18. In the meantime he had not wasted his time, spending a year at university, honing his analytical and social skills.

Lessons From Childhood

An only child, JL felt that he had to very quickly learn to be liked and to influence people so as to have friends. He also learnt early the value of networks and mentors, plus a healthy lack of respect for authority based on rank and level, unless deserved by of integrity and capability.

His father, an ex-military man, was well-loved and respected by his men, even after many years of retirement from the military. He was also greatly admired by JL and remained an enduring source of inspiration to him. He had inculcated in his son strong values of integrity, honour, forthrightness, honesty and care for one’s men, values carried by JL through his Duntroon and Service years and into the business world he later created after leaving the military.

Three other men earned his deep respect and were role models for him. All had qualities he respected and emulated: forthrightness; being good at their job; having a healthy disregard for systemic authority; being an unlikely man for the job but very successful at it. One of the men he admired strongly reflected the larrikin in JL, the two others leaders were a mix of compassion and toughness. All were excellent at their jobs.
Duntroon

In Duntroon he experienced attempts to break his spirit and make him cross his moral boundaries (bastardisation), as did many others. He gave a practical example of being forced to run up hills and walk down till exhausted. However, JL was so thrilled to be there that he tells of bearing it all with a grin, and later taking the learning to heart: that one should never do such things to one’s own men.

Needless to say, JL told several stories of pranks against those who gave them pain, such as turning the tables on an adjutant who was looking to catch late risers. I’ll leave him to tell that story in his own words:

‘Now the adjutant would hide in the broom closet and come out at 10 past 6 and catch all the senior cadets that were still sleeping. But then someone would lock the cupboard - great joke. “Oh, what are you doing in the broom closet?” This was about half past 6, everybody’s up, been alerted, and then they’d let him out.’ (JL1/Q117/P22)

It was a cloistered system: no leave for the first three months and then only earned by memorising the traditions and history of Duntroon. The ‘leave’ was not really leave as such at all - it was being left in the bush for some days by himself.

Friendships were virtually only possible within the organisation because of frequent moves and defined cultural expectations. Though JL spoke of egalitarianism, it only seemed to exist within a narrow range of rank. Officers and enlisted men were clearly differentiated by system and protocols, such as officers needing to be immaculately presented at all times, whether on duty or not, as an example to others. His job truly was a 24-hour one.

His group, and most groups going through Duntroon at that time, were ‘high calibre’, intelligent, white, Anglo-Saxon males, mainly from private schools and mainly Protestants. He rarely spoke of women, except as wives. Women in the forces were a rare commodity in his time.
Career Training
As part of overall training, JL was posted to various sections of the military, to develop a range of skills and to encourage his individual capabilities to emerge. He spoke of how success attracted attention and resulted in more opportunities for success, even though many others may have been equally capable. The result was that some men were fast-tracked up the hierarchy, through the backing of mentors, while others were passed over for recognition.

The role of mentors in creating a successful career was seen as critical; the more powerful the mentors, the better. However, as time went on, JL’s mentors were either killed or retired. He recognised what a loss that was if his ambitions were to be realised, and began looking outside the military environment for work.

This was a huge step for him as JL was familiar with, and had been enmeshed in the military for some 40 years, first as the son of a military man and then through his own service period. His father and his father’s experiences had long provided a strong, clear framework for JL, to which he added his own experiences and his own personality.

Success Rules
In the military there were clear boundaries of what was acceptable and what was not. JL described it as an ‘unforgiving’ system for those who brought ill-repute to the organisation or did not meet its expectations. The goal was success at whatever was attempted: to get a good system, a good leader, and a successful outcome; anything that happened in between the start of a project and its outcome had to create success.

Even before he went into the military JL had the same pattern of goal achievement as seen in his process to get into Dunroon. That was: to define the success possibilities and work within those. Whenever there was something outside his circle of capability, he would send out negotiating scouts; figure out how something worked, and then developed a way around the problem, usually through being well informed and by effective delegation. He had learned early to gather capable people around him to do what he could not.
Analytic and systems thinking were prized in the military. These skills were supported by clearly defined structures and processes, designed to encourage individual thinking within a part of the sequence and their delegated powers. Like patches of a jigsaw being put together, those larger patches were then combined into one large and coherent picture. Each person or team did the task allocated to them, with an overseer (usually an officer) directing. JL saw such structures as being liberating, as those responsible knew the parameters but had freedom to work within them.

One of these processes was called the ‘Appreciation model’, which JL later translated to his (IT) business, with significant success.

Though the military was a discrete hierarchy in itself, it was further embedded in a political framework, with certain high positions decided by politicians, either directly or indirectly. As well as this, each rank operated within different frameworks and as different cultures. Politically, JL was very aware of the differing parameters of higher and lower ranks, plus the influence and power of politicians over the military.

Occasionally, through necessity to act quickly, or some other crisis, unpredictable appointments were made. He cited what he felt was an example of this in relation to the appointment of Peter Cosgrove as Commander of the Timor Force and reflected how successful that had been. JL looked up to Cosgrove as both an excellent leader and role model.

**Person on Parade**

JL came across as an enthusiastic, task-focussed, well-presented, efficient and capable man, very politically and socially ‘savvy’. Despite obvious capabilities, both in the army and in business (see Canberra Times article, Heagney 1999, p.21), JL was at pains not to praise himself, nor criticise others; yet both these aspects were to recur throughout the interviews. He repeatedly downplayed his intelligence; putting his successes down to luck, training, especially in the military, and to the changing needs of the world, describing his intelligence as a sort that suits the world today (IT and networking intelligence) rather than of value in itself.
He valued persistence and the drive to succeed, and spoke of a need to engage with the world to get satisfaction out of life. He saw himself as having the ability to see the big picture but also to be able to articulate the details, have appropriately skilled people around him and to delegate. Ethics were a repeated element of the conversation, centring on honesty, courage, forthrightness and delivery on his word.

JL acknowledged the insidious influence of bastardisation. He recounted that, at times, he had set people up to show them their foibles or foolishness, using the skills of bastardisation he had seen and experienced at Duntroon. Yet, during the interviews the word ‘nurturing’ appeared several times. Elaborating on one of the many paradoxes which were evident in his story, he explained his value and sense of responsibility in ‘nurturing’ his men (and later his staff in his business) to develop their skills and capabilities. Though he expressed an intolerance for ‘emotional cripples’, it was evident it was all a matter of degree as he also demonstrated he was alert and concerned if people were stressed or upset. This was especially clear when he described how he maintained his business setup and staff relationships.

In the military he learned the art of hierarchical survival and expertise; organisational and systems skills; identification of reliable and skilled people; delegating; networking; teamwork; the value of mentors; success orientation; task focus; leadership skills and personal presentation of a high order.

He considered his role as caring for others, putting himself in a position of responsibility for others; being willing to act as a role model for those people and within acting as a role model, and constantly reflecting on and improving himself. He also considered it his task to take responsibility for those people, but at the same time not put them down, and also not carry their burdens for them. In return for his care and goodwill, others were expected to give back good service, and this was seen as fair exchange. All this was regarded by him as a contract: a fundamental, unwritten, unstated contract.

To gain that good service and support from the military hierarchy itself he needed to be seen as a successful ‘doer’ and achiever. However, he was at pains to communicate that
as leader of a team or in a position of leadership, the ability of the team most often rested on the skills of its members rather than the leader, whether that was himself or another. His role as leader was to be clear, to set expectations within the ‘do-able’ range, and encourage success.

Playing the Game
He felt his cohort of fellow cadets were chosen for their intellect and leadership skills and were ‘the most-unmilitary lot’ (JL1/Q117/P21). He often spoke of ‘playing the role’ or ‘playing the game’ (JL2/Q109/P29) and felt that he, too, held himself somewhat separate from the system, identifying a ‘Self’ that was also separate and held safely apart.

This was part of a strategy devised in the military, a paradox (and ‘boxing’), where each person had to fit the system and contribute actively to its success, but were also expected to be ‘their own man’.

The first thing JL did was when he finally left the military, after twenty years, was to chuck his mess gear in the bin, throwing the trappings away as symbolic of becoming himself once more.

As He Came, So He Left
He planned his exit from the military as he had planned and executed his entry, doing his homework; preparing well; learning almost or more about the organisations he was applying to than those who worked in them; predicting and supplying what the corporations wanted. He soon had an offer he accepted, becoming a manager in a multi-million dollar, local construction business.

In preparation for the interview which resulted in the work that took him out of the military, JL did his research well. He was able to offer some sound, practical and business insight to the company. However, he was not aware, at that stage, of their questionable operating processes and ethics. He came to experience these as quite unacceptable and, in time, he left, going on to create a successful IT outsourcing business, increased some 450% in its first two and a half years of operations (Heagney 1999).
Successes have followed, built on and attributed to many of his skills learned in the military: focus, persistence, systems, and delegation; gathering suitably skilled and focussed team members; networks; excellent personal and professional presentation. Added to these were those values inculcated in his early years, principally from his father: honesty, integrity, forthrightness; valuing and maintaining long-term relationships; and looking at how he could contribute.

In that, JL represents an example of successful recreation of himself and his work. Part of that success has been the easy translation of military processes to his business model. Most of the interviews were centred on military experiences or examples, and even his business was often compared with that. It was clear his military experience were an enduring and valuable reference and resource for him, though he had left some 12 years earlier.

**Organising Business**

It is interesting to compare JL’s business organisation with his military framework. The business was founded as a partnership and drew together independent consultants as needed to fit the task on hand, plus a core of full-time people. Each worked in their own field of expertise or on their own problem, or with sub-teams. They worked in their own localities, coming together every six months or so for ‘familiarisation briefings’. JL regularly contacted the managers; he (and his partner?) coordinated the work.

In form, JL’s business and the military structure had some key similarities. The military was (is?) a ‘virtual’ business, existing by network allegiances rather than locality. Its practices - of delegated responsibility, setting high standards, success orientation; task focus; high quality ‘dress’ presentation; efficiency; flexibility in designated areas of control within a larger structure; and requiring strong discipline and coordination – were similar to his business standards and practices.

What was different was the need of his teams to manage themselves, be once or twice removed from the source of work and direction, and be highly self-motivated
JL felt the skills of the military translated well into the business world. As a manager and creator of business structures, he has moved from form and task-based based control to ‘virtual’ control and, in that, maintaining a delicate balance of personal care and impersonal collaboration.

JL’s interviews were characterised by animation, storytelling, humour, truncated sentences and colloquialisms. There was a clear focus on process, description and people, especially as role models, inspirations or people under his direction, yet little on colleagues.

His series of interviews was cut short, so that only two of the three interviews that were planned, happened. We had flagged to talk further about his internal experience of transition in that interview, so having only two interviews was unfortunate.

**Paradoxes**

As with several of the other men, there were many paradoxes and dissonances in JL’s account of his life, experiences and values:

- despite experiences of bastardisation and the ruthless expulsion of those who did not meet expectations, he also spoke of the nurturing qualities of the hierarchy. He himself retained a strong value in ‘nurturing’ others, especially those he was responsible for (below him), and often used that term;
- he often spoke of egalitarianism within the military, and in Duntroon specifically, yet it was obvious it was for an elite group only, who were distinct from enlisted men in almost every respect. In reality he seemed caught between heroes and lesser men, looking up or down, rarely sideways;
- JL was at pains to make no criticism, in keeping with his father’s advice on his graduation, not to ever criticise his men. However, as part of the paradoxes of this complex character, an ambivalent perspective showed through: ‘... but that wasn’t a great criticism.’ (JL1/Q111/P20); yet admiration for his father, (JL1/Q29/P6) and Cosgrove (JL1/Q65/P12); elitism, ‘... I’m talking about an elite group’ (JL1/Q92/P17); and disdain ‘...whips and drones.’ (JL1/Q16/P4); presentation as position, ‘Being unshaven doesn’t mean that you lack hygiene, but to soldiers, they didn’t come from that background’ (JL1/Q88/P16); negative comments on junior officer who wasn’t shaven (JL1/Q88/P16); negative terms for some men, ’10 of those were back-squatters ... It didn’t mean they were inferior’ (JL1/Q111/P20); and recognition of status by having choice, ‘...it’s building the self-esteem of people that normally wouldn’t be so formally asked.’ (JL1/Q121/P22)
• the role of change (in his own and in life generally), yet he had a strong need for task focus, informed goal setting and directed action

• fitting the system was both a skill and a necessity, yet his cohort and himself were described as independent of it and each was required to be ‘his own man’

• the system was described as intolerant of failure but also as nurturing, especially of chosen or potential leaders; JL, too, was a nurturer of those he was responsible for

• in his business JL saw it as a luxury to work with people you like (JL2/Q14/P5), but emphasised the need to like and respect the people you work with (JL2/Q29/P8)

• he maintained he had a focus on creating and sustaining long-term relationships but experienced many geographical moves in his time in the military and, hence, short-term friendships. As it was extremely hard to make or maintain friendships outside the military, most friendships were within the military grounded in the knowledge that he would come across old friends again as the system turned (JL2/Q56/P14) (Were long-term relationships therefore cyclic relationships, or was the maintenance of goodwill there to enable picking up in the future where the previous contact had left off?)

• both compassion and toughness were admired as part of a concept of ‘completeness’ in a person. The paradox here was resolved by ‘appropriate use’, knowing when to be tough and when to be compassionate.

Overall, these paradoxes appeared to be managed by compartmentalisation: by status, applicability; changing frameworks (from small to big picture, or changing circumstances); selective conditions (nurturing of favoured elements and harshness of ill-favoured elements, what fits the system rather than having a value in itself); compartmentalising the unknown (with ‘chance’ as a fall-back position).

**Living Life**

JL’s framework for living was short and to the point:

• do something worthwhile
• be rewarded
• have fun
• give generously – it comes around
• choose to have a good day – don’t wait for one.
Themes
Key themes in his interviews were:

- chance
- the natural unfairness of life that must be accepted and taken into account
- beginning a relationship (work or social) by looking at what he could give to the situation or person
- having a perspective of creating long-term relationships in both business and networks
- honesty, moral courage, compassion and forthrightness as values in both business and the military.

In all, JL managed an easy relationship between order and disorder, control and chaos within a larger framework of organisation, although the elements of disorder were controlled to a large degree. What values and changes would occur if the degree of disorder increased, was not able to be explored in the time that we had.

Did JL, Himself, Change?
JL feels he has changed little. So he thinks the answer is “no”, yet the level of personal direction and responsibility demonstrated by his staff indicate a loosening of the command-and-control model inherent in the military. Is this a variation on the Appreciation model or a stepping stone towards greater self volition? Whatever it is, there is a distinct difference in his work (and life?) approach.

There was one clear difference. As he described it:

- he had gone from being a boy who just wanted to belong to others’ games; to a man making the game.

The metaphor of ‘Which is the tail and which the dog?’, a theme that was evident in several other of the men’s stories, once more came into play.
As a participant in this research JL provides an excellent foil for several of the other participants. Of the elements of change that have arisen in the discussions, his values and his ways of relating and operating in the world have remained largely the same, as have his concept of himself as a person and a man. He would have us believe only his work and its locality has changed.

Yet, have they?

Hierarchies are built on inequalities and power-over structures. It is clear in his transition from a military environment to a virtual and freelance grouping of consultants, that JL has moved to a very adapted model of hierarchy which gives a far greater range of choice in relating within the work environment, and with those in that environment. He is an excellent model to further explore the question of power dynamics in outsourcing, to explore whether freelancing and outsourcing are a benefit or a detriment for those who are freelancing; and to define under what conditions benefit exists for both parties.
Appendix B - In Their Own Voice

“You can probably buy Lourdes water in London, but part of its appeal is the transformation that occurs when you make the journey yourself ... Stories can only be told by being told, and journeys can only be made by being travelled.” (Finlay 2002 p.35)

It is within the context of our own lives that change occurs. The fears, loneliness, excesses and inspirations we have experienced colour our capabilities and motivations. Rather than bluntly state these, through their own words the complexity of the men’s drivers were revealed.

Change is ubiquitous. Like a river, we are in constant change yet so much appears the same. Like a river, one cannot step into the same process twice; one cannot categorically say “this is where it starts; this is where it stops”. As such, stasis itself may be an illusion.

However we can describe many aspects of the river - its flow, its origin, its course and the terrain it runs through. We can describe its direction and predict the destination of its flow. One river can tell us about many rivers.

From this premise there is value in documenting and understanding transition out of hierarchy through several men’s experiences.

In Chapter 7 (Meet the Men) I have used quotes sparingly, responding to Ralph Waldo Emerson’s wish (from private correspondence with BKH, 2005): “I hate quotations. Tell me what you know …”, as I documented my understanding of the men and their lives.

In this chapter the men speak for themselves:

“... intuitive inquiry invites research participants to speak from their own unique and personal perspectives born of their own experience. Accordingly, in communicating results, researchers are urged to quote, often extensively, the actual words of
participants to retain and portray the fullness of the participants’ unique voices and phenomenon studied.” (Anderson 2000 p.10)

Here, each man’s life experiences are grouped under headings particular to them. A very detailed coverage of DW’s life is given as he was the first interviewee, the one who had the most interviews, and possibly the one who was most articulately and most consciously self-reflective.

Detailed descriptions of the men’s individual transitions and transformation experiences are to be found in Appendix C.

DW Speaks for Himself

Security
DW began his life as an asthmatic. Its influence laid the groundwork of his relationship to uncertainty and power - both internal and external.

‘... I’ve never really had a sense of security. I think asthma as a child set that up a very active ... because I never had a sense of security in my own abilities because as soon as I started to get an ability it was knocked out from under me.’ (DW3/Q39/P10)

Looking back, asthma and its early uncertainties gave DW resilience in certain areas, especially the capacity to handle uncertainty, to be inventive, to motivate himself and to create self-generated interests and activities such as reading, pottering around boats and exploring the bush. It also made him self reflective; to manage the frustration of physical limitations and uncertainties; to become critically aware of belonging and not belonging, and to be prepared to work with factors outside his control.

‘SMac: … [you’re saying that] as an asthmatic you didn’t have a sense of security, didn’t have a kingdom, you couldn’t draw lines and keep them … And yet that has given you the capacity to handle insecurity.
DW: Yes I think so.’ (DW3/Q42-43/P11)

For one brief year he was free of the constraints of his asthma:

‘So at 12 my parents thought … that being out of Sydney and being in the mountains because it’s away from the smog or low lands and up in the mountains … from the day I arrived there until the day I left I didn’t have asthma ... So that was the best year of my childhood.’ (DW1/Q14/pp4-5)
It gave him a glimpse into ‘normality’ and challenged his identification with his illness:

‘It really gave me a sense that I’m not going to be a handicapped person all my life and indeed if I’m going to get out of asthma then I’m not going to let the grass grow underneath my feet. I’ll get out and do something … Yes there was a very much a touching of power with that.’ (DW1/Q27-28/P8)

Early on he was alternating between building boats and putting his focus into staying alive:

‘… when I was off school I was usually pottering around making boats or laying flat on my back trying to breathe. But it also had a sense that I, I think quite early, had a sense of my own resourcefulness. (DW1/Q6/pp2-3)

‘… I can’t say that I was ever really bored because I always found something to do, I always created something.’ (DW1/Q9/P3)

Illness, changing schools, fractured attendance, being at a distance from the schools he attended and the children who went there, often contributed to interrupted friendships.

‘… by the time I got to 12 I was starting to have a real sense of the limitation of it and I use to get frustrated then more than anything at not being able to do things with the neighbourhood kids and so forth.’ (DW1/Q10/pp3-4)

He was forced to explore aloneness and loneliness

‘I was left quite a bit on my own … being an only child as well there was no siblings to kind of rely on getting that [prompt or lead to do things] There were a few children around the neighbourhood who were very friendly. Of course when they were at school, I was at home.’ (DW1/Q10/P3)

Aloneness

Illness, changing schools, fractured attendance, being at a distance from the schools he attended and the children who went there, often contributed to interrupted friendships.

He became adept at loneliness and was later to use loneliness and withdrawal (be it actual or through becoming withdrawn into himself and shutting others out) as a tool for managing difficult circumstances and, later in life, as a personal growth tool.

‘… I was a child and had a lot of time on my own … [sic] there’s a sense of contentment in that aloneness.’ (DW2/Q108/P25)

‘… aloneness is about a bit of a self test in a way but it’s also about that connecting with something that’s not tangible.’ (DW5/Q9/P2)

‘Why I want to go into the monk space is … to engender who I am and to explore who I am. And there’s still a very big hesitancy with me about that … I’m putting it aside because it’s too scary to look at it … there was a real pulling that I wanted to do that,'
there was a real pulling but I couldn’t ... it was like there was still work for me to do before I can get to there. That’s the only way I could really explain it.’ (DW2/Q111-113/P25)

To DW, a definition of a monk was:

‘A monk is a person who lives on their own, who has their life as their centre that has a total connection for what’s around outside them. So there’s not a sense of disconnection or hermitage from society or from the world around the person but their own sense is solitary and it’s not a sense of connection to another, “a” person, as a partnership. But solitary and have the relationships with the world, an awareness of the world. So that in actual fact you live within the world but you’re within a sense of your own aloneness.’ (DW2/Q116/P26)

Role models

His Grandfather was a strong role model and a significant influence on him. Other significant influences were the sea, boats and the bush.

‘And a great influence on my childhood and also right through my life was my grandfather ... he instilled a love of the sea and also a love of the bush ... he spent time at sea and he was also a fisherman and on a couple of coastal steamers and also quite a bit of time in the bush. He also worked on ships being built around T[own].’ (DW1/Q4/P2)

‘My grandfather was quite adept on biology but he had quite a reputation for being able to identify a lot of species of trees around the area, so he’d often have people coming to the house with some leaves or a few twigs and ask him what they were … of course he never had any real formal schooling other than when he was up to 12.’ (DW1/Q6/pp2-3)

DW was later to become a fine boat-builder, having his own business building and fitting out boats. He, too, had developed a love of the bush:

‘... in that time in the bush I think was when I fell in love with the bush too. I used to spend a lot of time on my own in the bush and began to track animals, look at animals, the plants and that.’ (DW1/Q30/P8)

He also became a hunter, as a schoolboy and young man:

‘... getting home I’d throw my bag in and pick up my spear and machete and knife and whatever and disappear down the bush until it got too dark.’ (DW1/Q35/P13)

‘... by the time I got to 19 I was fairly well established in that I had some very good mates and we went away shooting. Indeed from 18 on I started to be a hunter. I always was in the bush and always took weapons with me ... I was involved with the Sydney Small Bore Shooting Club which was target practice using guns and I was able to
increase my accuracy and use of guns and got quite a bit of discipline on how you actually handle and use guns.’ (DW2/Q10/P3)

Access to guns became significant later on in his story.

**Stories**

Stories and storytelling, whether as metaphors, as yarn-swapping or as inspiration, were highly significant means of change and understanding for him.

‘Some of my best memories of my grandfather are sitting around the old wood fire in the kitchen and he’d just talk stories of the sea and the bush.’ (DW1/Q15/P5)

His experience of being a key witness in his boss’s court case (DW1/Q144/P33), increased his awareness of the need to tell some stories without embellishment.

‘And I was saying that one of the things that I was thinking about during the week was about embellishment, about telling the stories … the challenge for me would be to tell the stories as they were rather than having embellishment in them as well.’ (DW1/Intro/P1)

**Cycles of Life**

From his interest in the bush and listening to his Grandfather, DW became observant of plants, animals, seasons and of life’s cycles:

‘In effect I guess I’ve been very conscious of the cycles, and my own cycles which I studied for a while when I was doing yoga, cycles of the seasons. Indeed I watch seasons here with different cycle changes in the trees and the colours and things and the cycles in business. To me … part of my life is watching and getting quite a lot of pleasure out of the recognition of the cycles as they come up.’ (DW3/Q1/P1)

‘I think working with ships and boats also, where there is a very quick deterioration of them, they’re high maintenance machines in that sense. So you have to accept that they deteriorate and you have to accept that at different times they have to be repaired and brought back to a good standard.’ (DW3/Q3/pp1-2)

**Books**

His young world was filled with books. It was not an interest shared by his family.

‘Throughout my childhood I had asthma … it was nothing unusual for me to have two weeks of school and then have a couple of weeks off school. So I was fairly incapacitated in that way so a lot of my time was spent in bed and reading although it was interesting; because of my parents’ background, they never had books in the house. I
used to go to the library on Saturday morning with them when they went shopping and from about eight onwards I’d get books and bring them home.’ (DW1/Q3/P2)

It was not until years later that he realised just how influential that early reading was and how deeply he had adopted ideas from it, especially around honour, capability and what a man’s role in the world was:

‘It started when I was about 14 reading these books and I used to read the books at camp and on the train and the bus home from work. And they were really good adventure stories about the Australian Navy. But there was also a sense of authority that came in with that too in the idea, again, of being good at what you’re doing … In the Navy one of the best honours to get was you were mentioned in the dispatches. Like, there was a battle or something happened, and the report that went back to the head office of the navy - if you were mentioned in there at being good at what you were doing, that was the epitome of honour.’ (DW1/Q142-143/pp32-33)

Years later, when witnessing for his employer in a law case, he was commended by the judge.

‘… at the end of it the arbitrators summing up of it said, in part, that I was an exceptional witness; that I was able to be there; for not colouring my story to suit the people I was working for; that I was totally reliable; and the oft times that the evidence was in conflict, he took my evidence as being the correct one. And to me that was … like being mentioned in the despatches, and had a really profound effect on me as far as my own self esteem was concerned, because after my business crashed, that idea of total failure was very much where I was, and to actually have somebody in authority say that I was exceptional - it did wonders for my self esteem.’ (DW1/Q144/P33)

His capabilities were also acknowledged by an accountant at a joinery where he later worked:

‘And it was quite pleasing to have the accountant come out and said “You know, since you’ve been doing these jobs,” he said “we’ve been making some money out of them.” I didn’t even consider I was making money. I was considering whether they were getting done properly and efficiently.’ (DW3/Q108/P27)

... and again he realised the value for him of an authoritative male commending him.

**Fear**

Through being in the bush he learned about fear, managing and using fear in the natural world:
‘I don’t hold much fear about the bush or at sea. There is very much a respect for that, an understanding of it. And I understand it and know that quite well. So, rightly, if you’re out at sea or you’re in the bush and there’s things that happen you are motivated by fear and that’s fine, but there’s no sense that that fear would stop me from doing something. It would very much a case of ‘feel the fear and do it any way’, although you might modify the way you do it because of practical circumstances.’ (DW1/Q148/P34)

What fears he did come to realise had a powerful influence on him were in relationships with people, both men and women.

‘What I have found fear with all my life is my relationship with men and women … the fear that I feel has stopped me dead often from doing what I wanted to do. So it’s not the fear of natural things or of being out there or getting hurt or doing those things it’s the fear of … the interaction with people that has been a constant bedfellow if you like for me.’ (DW1/Q148/P34)

His fear around relationship was tied up with his sense of competency and his desire to be seen as competent.

‘… in my earlier years very much the idea of fear of relationship or a fear of not being seen as being competent. So to do things to cover up any weakness, using bravado, using defensiveness, using busyness to seem competent …’ (DW1/Q149/pp34-35)

‘I feel very insecure about my own knowledge of relationship.’ (DW5/Q70/P20)

‘… the fear of being found … The fear of her reaction, the fear of doing something that wasn’t socially correct … And it was a fear that created that box, not my actions. It was actually a fear of what other people would think about my actions.’ (DW3/Q22/P6)

Some of his fears became the grounding for compassion:

‘… fear of hurting somebody was so strong it’s coloured my whole life right through. And it’s that idea that I don’t want to hurt people because I know what it’s like to be hurt … I don’t want to put onto other people that kind of sense of pain that I’ve experienced.’ (DW2/Q46/P13)

**Sense of Self**

Out of his experiences DW came to think of himself in a particular way, derived from early years of illness:

‘… for as long as I can remember, I’ve had a sense of [being] an introverted type of character.’ (DW1/Q3/P1)

... from an inner impetus,
‘… I never really had a sense of contentedness with where I was. There was always some drive involved with me that pushed me on pushed me pushed me on.’
(DW2/Q86/P20)

... from how he was seen by others and self,

‘… one of my ex-bosses said that “I find it astounding that no matter who walks in the door, you treat them all the same.” And he said, “It astounds me just how you can do that.” I said well I don’t have any problems doing that. To me, that’s people.’
(DW2/Q44/P12)

‘… a district commissioner and she was very good … she gave little gifts to everyone, more in the line of saying something about the person - what she felt was the person’s contribution to the Scouts for that year. And she gave me a wine glass because she said “When you are around the wine glass is always full and overflowing with ideas”. It was like as if it was easy for me to explore options. If something wasn’t working, then it was easy for me just to find a solution.’ (DW2/Q81/P20)

... and capability for change.

‘I said that I was at university. He said he could never do that, could never make the change. So I was surprised by that because to me, I just made a decision to do it and when I made a decision then that was what I needed to do and that would become a purpose.’ (DW2/Q71/P17)

‘I think that’s been a bit of my character all my life too. Once it’s finished it’s finished.’
(DW2/Q92/P22)

Note: though sounding very sure here, there were many previous times when DW was not so clear-cut in changing, e.g. when shutting down the business and leaving his marriage. Maybe the certainty was in going forward, rather than in letting go?

**Alcohol**
 Alcohol consumption played a big part in his life. As a young man, DW reported:

‘… we’d throw all our gear in and we’d get down to Young at 2:00 in the morning. We’d have a bottle of rum or some kind of alcoholic beverage, light a fire and then we’d be up again just before dawn and out into the paddocks hunting until 10:00 am and then come back and crash for a couple of hours and then out in the afternoon. Saturday night was usually a fairly alcohol induced sleep and the same on Sunday and it was a fast trip back to Sydney and we usually got back about 10:30-11:00. So, for about 18 months, that was about every second or third weekend.’ (DW2/Q11/P3)

... and on the wharves.
‘An alcoholic culture at the pub and the hotels and the motels and the clubs and so forth. So you have to kind of temper that and keep in mind this was always part of my earlier years … It affected me, it was very much part of my life, and I used and abused it … I could easily have three or four or half-a-dozen beers and half a bottle of wine and then have two or three ports afterwards and then drive the family home. And do it quite easily.’ (DW3/Q97, 93 and 91/pp23 and 24)

Alcohol became a ‘crutch’ when things were difficult:

‘I used it [alcohol] a lot when my business was going down, as a way of escape.’
(DW3/Q88/P22)

‘I was drinking hard. I was still diving at that time, I stopped just before I went into doing Scouts with S [son], just as I started to move into getting the business as well.’
(DW4/Intro/P1)

... but there were limits. It was clear an underlying respect for work overtook his attachments to alcohol mateship:

‘… when I was on the waterfront and also in the building trade, if you came to work hung over that was great; you were hung over. If you came to work drunk then you were out the door. That wasn’t tolerated at all because it was too dangerous … But you never came to work drunk. That was a total ‘no, no’. A total disrespect I think for the men around you and the boss.’ (DW3/Q90/P23)

**Becoming a Man**

Being ‘male’ and being ‘a man’ came to mean two different things:

‘… it was just my own development wanting this more outdoor male activity.’
(DW2/Q12/P4)

‘I was just so much full of wonder, like to just get out in the bush, it was just a sense of wanting to see and poke and push and also stretch my limits. Like I stretched things to the limit all the time with rock climbing, the fastest I could drive the car, there was really a sense of wanting to test just how far things will go before they break. How far I can go before I can’t handle them … So there was no sense of me being DW or me being a person or a boy, it was just this kind of soaking up and just wanting to test and push and to feel and just learn. But it wasn’t in an academic sense.’ (DW2/Q16-17/pp5-6)

‘And I had to fend off … like there was a couple of homosexual advances that I can remember. I didn’t have much idea of what that was all about but I got the sense … It was interesting that homosexuality on the water front was, like if you were homosexual you got a hard time and yet homosexual sexuality was talked about a lot as in a camp situation. Like it was that idea that when men get together the femininity comes out in a strange way of ‘campness’ about dressing up or acting out a woman or something like that.’ (DW1/Q117/P27)
The stories of his Grandfather, father and uncle, and his Navy stories gave him a heightened desire to be a ‘man among men’, to belong and be seen as a man as capable as the rest, indeed to be better if possible.

In fact, the issue of manhood and becoming a man was an abiding interest to DW, reflected in a strong interest, in his adult life, in Indigenous initiation ceremonies and how and where young men are initiated in the white culture.

‘There’s a sense with me that it’s very important for men to consciously have that initiation process or that experience.’ (DW4/Q20/P11)

His experience of initiation was five-fold: learning through the stories of his elder males in childhood, and being with them in bush and sea; solitude, hunting and exploration in the bush; his experiences in the Scout movement at the Rover level, with its quasi-mediieval knighthoods and codes of chivalry; and his experiences of self-development through yoga, re-birthing and relationship workshops.

‘From about 10 on Dad used to go out with my uncle, his brother, and they used to go hunting, they used to go rabbiting which was using ferrets. So I used to accompany them on the odd occasion like in between bouts of asthma. You know like Dad would point out the different things to do to get rabbits and how to kill them when you’ve got them and those type of things. There was none of a sense that it was a continuation of preparation or for food it was always just that hunting aspect. When I think of it now that probably had a bearing on some of the ways that I used to do my hunting later in life.’ (DW1/Q46/P11)

Initiation on the esoteric level, fuelled by ‘mage’ literature, grew from a deep sense of an inner perennial self, and a desire to live in integrity.

‘And when I was about eighteen-and-a-half … my senior scout leader, who was a great man, went off to Canada, but he gave me a book, ‘The Third Eye’ by Lobsang Rampa and I just lapped it up. It just gave me a total difference of life, a total way of looking at life differently that had some really deep inner meaning that I hadn’t really understood and I still don’t know … I can’t put any finger on what it was but … it opened up an area within me.’ (DW2/Q33 and Q35/P9)

‘It’s message of spirituality and magic resonated with me and that still resonates with me.’ (DW2/Q40/P11)

He experienced bastardisation on the wharves, in his initiation into heavy drinking and gender power games as expressions of loyalty and belonging with the group:
‘The best men were the best tradesmen. Like if you were a good tradesman, it doesn’t matter what your personality was, you were the top. So the fellow who could do a good job in a good time he was revered by the others. It doesn’t matter if he beat the hell out of his wife or you know you couldn’t get near him in the morning for two hours otherwise he’d bite your head off or you couldn’t work with him because you know he’d make your life hell.’ (DW1/Q120/P28)

It is interesting to note that the value of being good at your job to be a man was common to both the wharves and in Rovers.

Initiation, as a ritual of coming to manhood, was significant for realising his own identity as a man.

‘It’s a sense of me: a sense that I have as much place on this earth as a tree or another person or the universe; a sense that ‘I am That’. That’s it … when I was with men before that happened, that experience, I felt like a little boy, I felt very unconscious of it, my self esteem was low and they were always right and I was always wrong.’ (DW4/Q23/P11)

**Relationships**

‘… there was never a sense that I was without female company when I was a child.’ (DW1/Q57/P14)

As a teenager:

‘P., who was the fellow I met in Scouts who I ended up spending quite a bit of time with, there was a real equality there. There was a sense this was a male partner if you like. We had similar interests; we knew each other; we relied on each other to quite an extent … Like if we went hunting, then we relied on each other skills, so there was a very much a reliance on someone else, probably for me for the first time that sense of obligation … We were not only in Scouts together; we played tennis; went to a tennis club together; we also hunted outside the times of other larger groups. Like it was nothing for us to go away hunting, just the two of us, or just go down to his place and hang out with him. So for about three years, until he got very interested in a woman and started to move in that direction, we were virtually inseparable when we were outside that Scouting fraternity.’ (DW2/Q15/pp4-5)

Puberty was a time of conflicting feelings:

‘I was coming into puberty so there was a lot of conflicting feelings. Suddenly there was this attraction to parts of girls that wasn’t there before … That sense that they were taboo. So I think that had very much a bearing on the way that I saw women for quite a long time.’ (DW1/Q55-56/P14)
‘Definitely there was that (fear of relationship) That was really a taboo thing in a lot of ways because of the way the structure of the Scouts was. Like it was taboo to be seen in some circumstances, and sex was taboo; masturbation was taboo. All that was kind of … so for me, there was a setting up of this ‘them and us’ or ‘them and me’ … Just a social interaction where you know you got together in very strict Christian guidelines but no sex before marriage; that children had to be considered; and you were a good person and you worked hard and you got the money in … You went to the pictures, yes, and you didn’t do any fooling around.’ (DW2/Q7-9/P2)

With men:

‘There was very much that male contact and male understanding and in a sense we didn’t talk about feelings as I would talk about them now. There was still a sense of understanding another person, you know you really got to understand another person, what they liked and didn’t like. So it wasn’t an overt knowledge if you like it was more a covert knowledge and you watched and you understood what was happening with a person.’ (DW2/Q5/P2)

In marriage:

‘… we were married four years before we had children. I loved that freedom of life. It was free and easy and J1, we could always go and get a sense somebody was there beside me all the time. And as soon as the children came along that dynamic changed totally and I wasn’t really ready for it. I didn’t understand it. I think it took me 14 years to really understand that I had children and they were my kids.’ (DW3/Q100/P25)

Fathering:

‘I did what I needed to do out of duty rather than actually out of a sense that I wanted to do it.’ (DW4/Intro/P1)

Gender roles:

‘The other factor involved in that was that there was a sense that I had to provide for the family. That I was a good provider as well and the idea that J1 didn’t work and I worked to provide for the family was very strong, in J1 particularly, and had an spin off in me as well.’ (DW3/Q100/P25)

‘J1’s idea of a family was her looking after the family and the house with two or three children and doing all the family thing and I’d be out earning money for the whole lot and we’d do things at weekend and holidays.’ (DW3/Q100/P25)

‘… she went with the girls more doing ballet and dancing which then developed into horses where I kind of went with S [son] doing the scouting thing ….’ (DW4/Q1/P1)

**Competition**

Rovers covered the period from late teenage-hood to his early twenties.
'So in that sense the competition was instilled into me [in Rovers] that you had to be good, you had to do the right things, and that meant competition, it was competition with other men, with society and with yourself. And I think that’s where I started to sense … the competition within myself.' (DW2/Q64//P16)

‘… particularly in Rovers, there wasn’t a sense of competition to get on top be getting over somebody or squashing them; it was the sense of the competition to get better at what you’re doing and get better at the way society lives or the way that the Scouts operate. So the competition was very strong but it was in that, what I could see as a positive sense.’ (DW2/Q64//P16)

**Authenticity**

Authenticity and a sense of honour had been key dreams for DW since boyhood, found in the Navy adventure books he read, in the ‘mage’ literature, and in icons of adults and manhood.

‘… one of his [Dad’s] favourite stories is that he was up in New Guinea at a place called Shaggy Ridge, which is up near Lai, and they were on patrol, and they said come back into our forward camp, which was just before enemy lines, and the only people of religion there were the Salvos … So he always had a lot of time for the Salvos, but not very much time for other religions.’ (DW1/Q54/pp13-14)

He came to want that as an integral part of his own life:

‘… I didn’t want that [integrity between inner and outer lives] as a one off item I wanted that as a day-to-day living.’ (DW3/Q19/P5)

Through metaphor he came to express that changing role, in the story of the Samurai sword and in archetypal images:

‘Because the more I’ve done through this Degree, I’ve looked at the way people act and a bit of psychology and so forth, the more I have a sense that the archetypes if you like that were created at that time are still in circulation, that they’re still operable in people … those older archetypes have not in essence changed particularly when you look at Jungian work. There is a very similar type of pattern in there what he talks about and what I can see and what I’m reading about on Aboriginal traditional cultures.’ (DW4/Q37/P15)

‘I guess I’m beginning to see it like the four archetypes, they talk about man: King, Warrior, Jester and Lover’ (Moore & Gillette 1990). (DW4/Q41/P16)

‘the King ... now is making more decisions in me.’ (DW4/Q42/P17)

... and in stories from experience, such as from his time in the Rovers:
‘… created by Baden Powell. And so you learnt how to be a Rover, how to be involved with community work, how to be in the system of Rovers, how to be involved in the overall scouting system and starting to put back that idea of service if you like.’ (DW2/Q49/P13)

The Rovers, the next stage ‘up’ from Scouts in that hierarchical organisation, had a strong influence on him. Modelled on a Mediaeval system of knights, chivalry and service, each person had a sense of place in the hierarchy, from squire to knight. A focus on philosophical aspects was reflected in the role of service, mentors and leaders. In the Rover initiation process DW had to spend time alone in the bush and chapel. The process included worldly and spiritual aspects; vows and obligations; action and reflection. A sword was used in the ‘investment ceremony’ as it was for knights. The sword imagery was linked to his story of the Samurai sword by the physical object itself, but also by the honour associated with it and the process of forming resilience and quality by trial and submission in both the sword and the man. (DW2/Q47-71/pp13-17)

‘So you were tapped on each shoulder and you had to repeat the vows … about being a good Rover and being promised to do service for society and honour people. Very Christian orientated and very values-based vows.’ (DW2/Q54/P14)

**Authority**

DW initially held the idea of authority as external, hierarchical, power-over, and as designated power, and felt uneasy with it:

‘It was more the school master or the policeman or somebody in authority. And I’ve had a lot of problems with authority. It’s only lately that I’ve been able to start looking at my sense of that big brother type of authority.’ (DW1/Q88/P21)

Authority, both in his outer worlds:

‘… shooting kangaroos without that kind of licence was still a fear of authority that if you were caught they would come down hard and take our guns off us.’ (DW2/Q11/P3)

‘I guess also on the water front too looking at it authority was them and us. Like authority, the boss it was very much a ‘them and us’ …’ (DW1/Q113/P26)

… and inner worlds:

‘… the right is out there and I am always wrong so in a sense there is that … I have felt over a few years it’s been the idea of that original sin. Christian wise you are born a
sinner and you’ve got to kind of find redemption with God … authority can say if I’m right or wrong.’ (DW1/Q132/pp29-30)

... was tied to issues of belonging and exclusion:

‘… this idea of belonging I think we touched on last time as well, and that’s a recurring theme through my life too.’ (DW2/Q55/P15)

whether in the strong service culture of the Rovers …

‘… this idea of belonging … that’s a recurring theme through my life too. So that is important because when I think of it now that there wasn’t a sense of belonging to Rovers, I was involved in it but it was not like in some fellows got into it and had a total sense of being totally involved in it. I never had that sense.’ (DW2/Q55/P15)

... or the strong clan culture of the wharves:

‘… talked the same way, being involved. So there was a sense that I belonged there, very much a sense of belonging.’ (DW1/Q97-98/P23); ‘

‘I was only there for about three months and they said, “Well if you work for us, you drink with us.” ’ (DW1/Q105/P25)

‘Like the idea of loyalty in those men is fairly ... and the ethics of mateship is very strong and there’s some very, very strict rules in there.’ (DW1/Q111/P26)

Intimacy between men was felt by activity and clanning:

‘The commonality against the boss I guess forged that idea that you were together … And there is a sense of safety in that. There is also a sense of being in something that matters.’ (DW1/Q114/pp26-27)

‘My experience was that the intimacy that I got with my mates was doing things together.’ (DW1/Q91/P21)

In time, belonging came to mean something quite different for DW, with the sense of exclusion absent:

‘… It was more a sense of belonging to the universe …’ (DW2/Q60-61/P16)

‘I wandered years and years to find: this is my block of land, this my boat or this is my ... and then I was sitting in meditation in a room somewhere and I opened my eyes and here is this, you know the picture of the world from outer space, that beautiful one that is on the poster often. Kind of thought, ‘Yes, that’s where I am.’ (DW2/Q88/P21)

‘... sense of unchanging deep centre ... it’s not afraid, it doesn’t have any sense of any judgement, it’s just there and you can move with that, and every time you take notice of it there then something is easy … I’m recognising that that’s there, and the more I find I revert back to it, the more sense of belonging even happens.’ (DW5/Q9/P2)
On reflecting on the behaviour of other young men he started work with, he spoke of another sense of authority, which seemed to have a correlation to what he later came to know as his Inner Voice:

‘… when they both went to work they both went wild, totally wild because they had no sense of how to cope with their own freedom. Whereas I was always in my own free space. What for me was coming back to the inner discipline space.’ (DW1/Q88/P21)

Hierarchies

DW’s experience of hierarchy covered familiar forms: home, school, Scouts and Rovers, working on the wharves as an apprentice, working in several boatbuilding companies at various levels, and owning his own business. It also pervaded and structured his spiritual world:

‘Being in the Rovers and that initiation into Rovers had an effect on me but it was … probably on different levels. But the main process it was about was that you come into Rovers as a squire where you had to learn what was necessary to be a Rover.’ (DW2/Q48/P13)

‘I got some very, very strict ideas of what reality was within myself and it took me along time to break down those to see something else … Because I had come up through an apprenticeship and a tradesmanship; that was the way the world worked. The world worked with the men and the women having their places and hierarchies and all that kind of thing … that was the way the world worked. And my religious upbringing, that was the way the world worked, it was that kind of hierarchical thing of priests and everybody coming down and to me I was always down there.

SMac: So work and religion and work and philosophy mirrored each other? Both have a hierarchy; both have authority, both have a masculinity?

DW: That’s right. So that was the order of the world … So the idea of having something that was feminine, something that was non-hierarchical, was very mercurial if you like and just flowed and ebbed, it took me a long time to break down those inner barriers because of those set ups.’ (DW2/Q21-23/pp6-7)

Movement up within hierarchy was inextricably linked to worth as a leader, an adult a man and manhood. To move up in the hierarchy recognised a value within that system, but was also linked with going from being a boy to a man.

‘… if you stay on with a firm after you’ve done your apprenticeship you’re always the boy, you’d never become the journeyman or the tradesman because everybody still treats you as an apprentice.’ (DW2/Q94/P22)
‘In the minds of other men you always be psychologically the apprentice so you have to move into a new hierarchy as an adult, as a certified labelled man, and then you can climb that hierarchy …
SMac: It’s difficult to have the one hierarchy right through your life.
DW: That’s right, yes.’ (DW2/Q98-99/P23)

‘I was there for two years and then I got a job in the office as an estimator. And that was my idea that I was going up … That’s always seen as an ‘up’ yes. That’s progress up the ladder, yes, definitely.’ (DW3/Q88-89/P22)

‘… because that hierarchical system that going up has always been my sense and in a sense that is reflected in a spiritual aspect too that there is a building going up to a higher level, that you are always going to a higher level hence your idea of climbing a mountain, which was an analogy I often use.’ (DW2/Q66/P17)

‘But what I’m also thinking there is (pause) in each circumstance there still needs to be someone that has a higher developed sense of capability. And what I’m saying to that is like in groups that are going to do something there has to be a leader, there has to be somebody who facilitates what’s going on. And that can change depending on what task it is or what’s happening … And in that sense if everyone has an understanding in themselves that there is a part that can lead and there will be times when it’s drawn on to lead, that’s fine. Other times when you need to be the subject person, the underlying doer if you like or the follower.’ (DW5/Q33/P11)

However, his view on man and worth and place in hierarchy was challenged when he met a man content on his own level and in his own measure of himself:

‘I know I was better than him and in actual fact he had just come to his own conclusion of what he wanted to do and there was no sense of any better or worse than that.’ (DW2/Q86/P21)

**Being Male, Work and Career**

In the beginning, DW’s work aspirations were frustrated by his health:

‘… because of this idea of sea and my grandfather I really wanted to join the Navy but I was conscious that I would never get in there because of my health problems.’ (DW1/Q143/pp32-33)

… but like several of the interviewees, he returned to his early interests at a later time, moving into boatbuilding and sailing:

‘… the boat has always been a vehicle to do that, it’s never been an obsession for the boat itself, it’s always been the vehicle for me to try and find a sense of something that’s deep inside me and to work with and understand that and be able to, comfortably.’ (DW5/Q76/P22)
At school DW followed the directions of his teachers and his father:

‘Virtually from when I started high school you were asked whether you’d like to do languages or whether you’d like to do manual arts and that was virtually the only choice you got. So I chose the manual arts mainly because of Dad saying “Don’t be like me. Go and get a trade. Get a trade.”’ (DW1/Q50/P12)

After leaving school early, he gained an apprenticeship on the wharves. He was suddenly launched into a world of men and culture characterised by intensity, brutality and extremes of loyalty and antagonism.

‘They [men on the wharves] were domestically violent people. They had no problems about striking their wives or talking about, “She got a bit out of hand so I struck her down”. Kids. There was quite a lot of violence in that sense. There was a lot of violence on the waterfront … You know not get involved with it for my own self preservation.’ (DW1/Q103/P24)

He quickly learned to stay out of trouble …

‘I was really good at side stepping what they wanted, you know if they wanted me to do something outlandish I’d developed a good sidestep that would keep me out of it. Occasionally I got pulled. But also when I got a few beers in me broke down that natural caution so I was just as wild as what they were.’ (DW1/Q108/P25)
Power

Power was principally of two kinds for DW: that of leadership and conquest. Conquest played a part through his hunting, and in his experiences on the wharves:

‘... that’s where it’s a bit dysfunctional is that a lot of men tend to feel a conquest of women, there’s a power in that, they are able to get their power and they are able to have sex with a woman so it’s a sense of conquest.’ (DW3/Q31/P9)

‘... certainly when I was younger then men that I dealt with around the waterfront it was very much the idea of conquest, very much the idea of power over: “She’s my wife, my possession, I’ll do what I want with her, they’re my kids, I’ll give them a backhander because ...” or “I’ve got the shits. Well, they’ll know about it.” So that was very much that sense of ownership.’ (DW3/32/P9)

‘Even the way that they talked about those women was quite, it was disgusting I guess in that sense when I look back on it now, but in those days it was just something I was coming into so it was the way that the world was.’ (DW1/Q101/P24)

‘And yet there was a sense within me that there was something missing from that, there was something wrong.’ (DW1/Q104/P25)

He felt his own power as a leader in Scouts:

‘When senior Scouts were there you had to go and you had to lead the walk so you had to do the organisation and you had to do all that. So that was the first time that I had to actually be the overt leader and I found quite a liking to it. There was a sense of the power that was there that I guess I hadn’t really had much to do with and it can become very heady that power. But what it was tempered with was the fact that I made a lot of mistakes so I fought with my own sense of competency. And that sense of my own competency is still a battle that I have now.’ (DW2/Q15/P5)

... and in work, freelancing on the wharves, post his apprenticeship:

‘... I went in there not as an apprentice but as a tradesman so I got treated with that respect and that kind of idea but there was also the responsibility in a sense of competency in there too ... And that was the transition I wanted. Like that was a natural transition.’ (DW2/Q102/P23)

‘Shop fitting, shop fronts. I did all that kind of work. Desks, fitting out jobs, kitchen cupboards. I was Leading Hand for 12 months. I was in charge of the kitchen section for four months. So I did all those type of work. It just seemed to be a natural leader with that. I’d start to do the work and suddenly everyone was asking me these questions of what needed to be done and I was ‘you do this’ and ‘you do that’ and so the job would go on.’ (DW3/Q108/P27)
Certainty and Security

‘... there are a lot of men that get this idea that this is the way life should be, this is the way it’s got to be, this is the way I’m going to live it and come what may I’m not going to change. So anything outside of that is scary and it’s threatening to what they want to do.’ (DW3/Q39/P10)

‘Because a lot of men need that consistency throughout. They need that sense of security.’ (DW3/Q38/P10)

‘Boxes’

DW, from quite an early age, became used to his life being in ‘boxes’.

‘... when I was at the water front working on it there was a way of acting and a way of being but when I was with Rovers and Scouts and doing that there was another way of being. It was easy for me to work within those two cultures I found ... I think that was a beginning of my boxes for want of a better way to put it ... So it was like as if each of these was a different role that I played ... None of them that I could stay in, none of them that I felt totally at home in, none of them that I could really progress in. Like there was still something else there that I was searching for, something that was what I wanted.’ (DW2/Q104, 107 and 108/P24)

As he grew up he began to consciously do this,

‘SMac: Going back to your apprenticeship and your Scouting. They sound like very different worlds. If you put those together it sounds like you’re operating on almost different honour codes. Scouting when you were there it was the service, duty, honour. And then your apprenticeship time it was very tough, get the best out of what you could get, and be good at what you are doing because that gained you kudos. Very personally. Status,’

DW: ‘That’s right. That’s true.’ (DW3/Q23/P6)

‘... when I went to Pennant Hills I was kind of going from one world to another world, in a sense I think that stopped me from getting totally involved in the world around Balmain and all of that.’ (DW1/Q105/P25)

... and during the transition researched in my study, from his early frustrations until quite late in the process, he partitioned off sections of his life.

An Inner Voice

DW had spoken of an inner sense that he gave credibility to. He usually felt that inner sense as restlessness, frustration or a sense of being off-track. At times it was experienced as a persistent, low murmuring but at other times it became a distinctly
audible inner voice to him. The role of DW’s inner voice was a core element in his transition process. It acted as a pebble in his shoe, emphasising his ill-ease. Then it became a persistent reminder, at first quiet and then growing more insistent. It played a key role as the catalyst in changing DW’s suicide intentions and in him closing his business and, subsequently, moving into self-development areas.

**Initiation**

During his transition and transformation, DW’s interest in men’s initiation, his own and others, grew.

‘Indeed the Indigenous initiation process does exactly that. Those young men are not given any security at all. Like they are pushed out, they have got to prove themselves, they have got to be in a position of being able to live in the bush, they’ve got to fit within what is told to them. They have got to learn to know their obligations. So in that transition up to the time they are initiated as a warrior in their 20’s there’s no sense of security at all because you’re not allowed to marry you’re not allowed to do any of those things at all. You’re just left out in limbo.’ (DW3/Q44/P11)

‘It is because of that energy and there is nothing larger that he can see that can contain that, whereas in Indigenous people or even in a functional relationship where the father is there then there is that time when the son gets knocked down, it’s called ‘wounding your son’. It’s the idea that you have to earn being a man so that he understands the pain he’s inflicting. I did that with my son.’ (DW3/Q47/P12)

‘And I said ‘Get the f....n’ thing on the truck, get it on, get it on, get it on,’ and I just got more and more, the intensity in my voice, I wasn’t angry at him there was something in me saying he had to do this. And he struggled on with it and he got on the truck with it and he put it down and I said ‘Great. That’s what we wanted. Good on you.’ and I grabbed him by the side and gave him a shake and on we went … after that he helped me get everything on the truck because he had a sense that he was wounded. He had to do it.’ (DW3/Q54/P14)

‘… there was a show on TV, you know this wounding of the young man, getting him to understand the pain of what he does, his actions, There was a show that was so poignant, about this fellow who was the hero in the story. It was a French story, I think, I might have been watching SBS, but he was walking down the road and this young man was standing in the doorway and he was abusing his mother, like he was calling her all the names under sun and absolutely going off his head and hurting her and she was reacting. So the guy just walked up to him and touched him on the shoulder and when he looked back he just went ‘bang’ on the nose and kept walking … this man went down … crashed to the ground, and the guy just kept walking.’ (DW3/Q52/pp13-14)
He realised he himself had had many initiations: having asthma; on the wharves, in Rovers; hunting with his father, uncle and grandfather.

‘SMac: … so initiations don’t have to be formal. They can happen in the daily life: as simple as shifting wood in a driveway? But there are critical moments where a boy knows that he is a man?
DW: Yes.’ (DW1/Q58/P15)

A further initiation occurred, dragging him out of ritual initiation into an experiential one:

‘R. caught me on the shoulders and he said into my eyes, a man loves through the heart only. And then he let go of me and he beat his chest and roared out like a Tarzan and I just took it up and we jumped up and danced, we just danced and danced and danced. And it was like as if suddenly I knew where I was. I had become a man. Now I knew what it was like about emotion and being involved with people … since that time it was a total change for me. I came away from that weekend totally transformed in a sense that I then felt that I could go and talk to men.’ (DW4/Q16-17/pp9-10)

It was a very significant event for him:

‘… having that experience at 45 when there was a lot of my past that I could look back on and also that I was in a very big transitionary period where everything was happening around me.’ (DW4/Q18/P10)

‘But I think what it does do when it happens the centre is met. Because I’ve talked to a number of men afterwards who have had initiative experiences in their late 30’s and 40’s and invariably there has been a total transition, total movement inside, total sense of direction change …’ (DW4/Q20/P11)

**The Role of Men**

His concept of manliness began to crystallise and become more operative in his life. He described an image that impressed him deeply:

‘… an Aboriginal man’s face, old elder’s face of that gracefulness and humility and male strength. Very powerful.’ (DW5/Q11/P4)

Throughout the interviews DW made many comments about the role of men, and this came to mirror what he saw as his role as a man. His primary linguistic metaphor re the role of men was ‘to draw through’; ‘drawing through’; pulling through, draw you through ... ‘ (DW1/Q67/P16; DW1/Q68/P16; DW1/Q69/P17) and to give permission; to say its fine, to say it’s normal.
It came out when he talked of being a witness in a court case:

‘I stayed with Yorks and got them through a bad period … In actual fact my testimony won them the decision … I was there for them, to get them through and be there for them.’ (DW4/Q31 and 33/P14)

... caring

‘But the act in caring I see the male side is where they take … and actually go with, or you’re with that person and you actually learn from them and they push you along. If you’re scared then they’ll pull you through it.’ (DW1/Q23/P7)

... puberty and maleness

‘… older men who could understand what was happening with younger people, with boys in my sense. There is more of a sense you could draw them through … somebody there to say “Hey this is, you know what you’re going through is fine just watch this or this.”’ (DW1/Q67/P16)

... pain

‘… it’s very necessary for young men to go through, to actually find what pain is about.’ (DW1/Q68/P16)

‘For a young man there is a time they have to go through where there is an injury … Mythology talks of the wounding of the son and it’s usually in the thighb, it’s like a spear in the thighb, so the son then respects the father … it’s still in a male culture that it is done so that that wounding gives the respect to the older person gives a sense of understanding what pain is, particularly if you can inflict it with your own sensitivity, or with this energy (testosterone) that gets out of hand.’ (DW3/Q47 and Q50 /P12 and 13)

... fear

‘There is a fear barrier that you push people through. You can do it, leaders do it all over the place.’ (DW1/Q57/P15)

... teaching

‘That’s right. I think that is a very important point … it is very much and when I look back at my time with Scouts I was a teacher doing scuba diving … that’s true it is a sense of pulling through. Yes.’ (DW1/Q59/P17)

... normalising

‘I had a corporate man (on Men’sLine) who is going through exactly what we’re talking about. So I was able to take him through, he was thinking himself totally abnormal; totally outside of what was happening. So I had to help normalise with him.’ (DW3/Q104/P26)
Much of MS’s story centred on his spiritual journey. But, like the others, he began his interviews with some chronology:

‘And just give you some background about where I came from. Well, I’m 49 now and I was born on a farm in rural North Dakota in the US and this was right after World War II, the baby boomers. And at that time was very prosperous I think worldwide at least in the victorious countries. So I recall my life as a child was not one of want. We didn’t have a lot. Somehow I knew from a very early age that I did not want to stay on the farm. And that was a sort of a sacrilege, although it wasn’t too severe since I was the third of three boys and it was assumed that the eldest was going to take over the farm.’ (MS1/Q2/P1)

The family was not close knit.

‘Well, by that time my sister was already out of the house because we lived so far from the nearest high school that she boarded in town. She went to high school and she worked at the farm in summers. My older brother he was usually somewhere else. My brother that was closer to me - don’t know why - always had something to do.’ (MS1/Q73/P22)

His Mother was only mentioned in relation to his father, or her religion:

‘My parents didn’t show any affection, didn’t seem like they had a very happy life at all.’ (MS1/Q3/P3)

‘... my mother is so involved with it [Protestant Christianity], and is so totally, so unquestioning about it. It’s just so black and white to her. And having to deal with her all these years that way. We’ve had a lot of interesting discussions. Neither one of us has been swayed much.’ (MS1/Q83/P24)

MS drew an picture of the gender roles being sharply divided. His father was a taciturn man:

‘I guess another aspect of wanting to leave there also had to do with my father who was a very old style traditional type of father who never hardly said anything other than to give instructions on what work to do around the farm. He showed no affection. He was gone out of the house a lot of the time. He was off working during the day and in town a lot and when he was home it was television time … It just wasn’t his nature to be very communicative. He was just a very taciturn type of person. He wasn’t violent or mean or anything he was just very inaccessible. And I guess that rift sort of grew between us
too as I made it more and more clear that I was not going to stay on the farm.’
(MS1/Q3/P2)

That reticence was part of the family tradition of austerity and reserve:

‘That was the family style. Nobody would talk much. Which is really kind of bizarre when you end up spending so much time during the winter not being able to go outside and being shut up, cooped up in a place with all these people. It was very strange.’
(MS1/Q6/P4)

‘About a year before I went off to University my father had a heart attack, he had a severe heart attack. And it was kind of, in retrospect I look back on it, when I look back on it I wasn’t even aware of it. It was like the family was in such denial that it happened that I wasn’t even aware that he had had a heart attack or how serious it was.’
(MS1/Q9/P5)

MS, too, adopted some of the family traditions of reserve:

‘Well I think another personal characteristic is that I’ve hidden myself from people. I’ve never allowed people to really come within reach. It must be a fear of that involvement. Again just my sense that I’ve gotten that from my parents. That people are something to be feared. Don’t trust. Don’t trust people. It was kind of the way they approached life.’ (MS2/Q13/P4)

He later came to a different perspective:

‘I still have this wariness of people that I meet ... But I think that it’s diminishing ... I realise that that does happen and I can back off. It’s slowly happening.’ (MS2/Q56/P15)

‘It makes a difference to me. It makes a difference not just to me ... When I am open and trusting to people I get that in return. When I am wary and putting them off that’s what I get in return. So I guess I’m judiciously trying to move over to being more open ... Yes because I don’t feel like I want to be open to everybody. There are people out there I would rather not associate with. I think there are probably people out there who would take advantage of you if you allowed yourself to be there.’ (MS2/Q57-58/pp15-16)

**Dirt farmers**

‘... we were just dirt farmers and that was the feeling I got about it from my mother more I think than from my father. It inspired aspirations to go beyond that and be something more than that ... I guess I was aware that things weren’t very good. I didn’t like the way we were. I didn’t like the way I was. I didn’t like the way I felt and I wanted to, some need, some desire to make it better, to improve it.’ (MS3/Q5/P2)

‘I definitely got the inference from my family that what we were and what we were doing was very low value.’ (MS3/Q4/P2)
‘So basically what I remember about being on the farm is not very happy times; it was unpleasant being there.’ (MS1/Q3/P3)

There was a lot of pressure on MS to stay when both elder brothers left:

‘... all of a sudden I felt this weight on my shoulders that now the burden was on me to take over the farm and I knew that I didn’t want to do it. So I had this kind of foreboding feeling during my high school years. So those were very difficult and tense times with my father.’ (MS1/Q4/P3)

MS knew he did not want to stay:

‘I’m not sure where that idea came from, that I didn’t want to stay on the farm. It might have been because of television and just living in such a remote isolated area and just being very lonely ... And seeing life on television, it seemed so glorious. All these things happening in the cities and all these other kids around. It seemed such a fun place to be so I just knew that I wanted to get away from there. And I was never fond of cold weather either, so I knew I’d go somewhere warm.’ (MS1/Q3/P2)

... and he didn’t:

‘Once I got out of high school my life has been a progression of getting farther and farther away.’ (MS1/Q84/P24)

‘When I reached my last year of high school, when I knew I was going on to University I just did it. I sent in the applications and put a deposit fee. I distinctly remember when my bank statement came back he looked at it. He opened it up before I did, and saw that I had written out a cheque for University. That was the most irate I have ever seen him. And he didn’t speak to me for about a year. That first year I was at University he did not speak to me. I phoned quite frequently.’ (MS1/Q4/P3)

‘When I finally made the final break away from the farm was when I was just about graduating from University. Up until that point during the summers, I went back to do the farming with my Dad because he was there by himself.’ (MS1/Q6/P4)

‘But finally I became aware that I had to do something else and I had to get some experience in the field I was training to do so I chose not to go home. One summer I got a job in the [engineering] field.’ (MS1/Q6/P4)

‘I told them I wasn’t going home, I found out later that he decided he was going to farm for one last year and then retire … But he never got to that because after the school year was out, two weeks later, he had a fatal heart attack and died.’ (MS1/Q10/P5)

Years later he was re-establishing relationships:

‘Although I’ve gotten a lot closer with my mother in the last 10-15 years. I guess I made concerted efforts to establish relationships with everybody in my family. Some of that was successful too. I have a fairly good relationship with my older brother. I don’t have
any relationship at all with my other brother ... And my sister; I’ve always had a pretty
good relationship with her although it’s never been a very deep one because ever since I
have known her she has had children and I’ve never been able to have a conversation
with her in that sense because there was always children disturbing the conversation.’
(MS1/Q84-85/P24)

Own Health

‘...my health has been an issue for me most of my life ... It just seems like I’ve had a lot
of low grade but long term illnesses. Respiratory things particularly.’ (MS1/Q21-22/P9)

Career

‘I kind of feel like my life is, like I have been very slow getting going on my life path.’
(MS1/Q25/P10)

‘When I went to University I had no idea of what I wanted to do. I just knew I didn’t
want to be on the farm ... When I got to University I didn’t even know what an
engineer was. In fact when I enrolled in the program I didn’t even know what an
engineer was. But I didn’t enrol in that program right away. I started doing just some
basic things to find out what I wanted to do. And when I was able to do the
mathematics and physics everybody just said, “Oh, you’ll do engineering.” There was a
lot of demand for it and you were guaranteed a good job. So I went along with the
crowd, I guess because I didn’t know what else there was.’ (MS1/Q9/P4)

‘I got drafted into the army. This was right at the end of the Vietnam War. I chose to
allow myself to be drafted because, No. 1, they weren’t sending people over to Vietnam,
they had stopped, stopped that process.’ (MS1/Q11/P5)

‘And I got this notice saying sign on the dotted line here. We’ll make you an officer.
And I stayed in the army another year. And from being in basic training that was a
pretty interesting option.’ (MS1/Q11/P5)

‘So I ended up ... rather than doing engineering work I swept the mess hall. I worked in
health benefits ... and I actually liked it. I thought it was one of the most enjoyable
periods in my life actually. I was there with a bunch of other people my age who were
there for the same reasons that I was. We didn’t really have many responsibilities. There
was a lot of time to enjoy life.’ (MS1/Q12-13/P6)

‘And when I got there [Washington DC] I had to get a job so I looked in the ads and
there were lots of jobs. I decided to go with a consulting firm because I thought it would
be the most diverse type of work I could get.’ (MS1/Q15/P7)

Even at 30 years of age:

‘... when I did my first real engineering job I was almost 30. So I was almost a decade
behind all of my contemporaries. So my whole life seems to be a decade behind.’
(MS1/Q26/P11)
‘I didn’t really have a feel for what working was like because all I’d ever done up to that point really was working on the farm and then working in the army, which wasn’t like working at all. So I really had no idea what to actually do or what holding down a job was like, and what being in business was like.’ (MS1/Q15/P7)

‘... when I got there [Hawaii] I had another job in another consulting firm doing the same kind of thing. That marriage fell apart shortly afterwards and I stayed on working for that company for six years, more and more realising that I wasn’t happy doing that work and I wasn’t sure why. I just knew inside of me that this was not ... I wasn’t suited for it.’ (MS1/Q17/P8)

‘My upbringing was not suited for the business world at all because even having to deal with telephones. We didn’t have a telephone when I grew up. So having to use a telephone ... to this day I don’t feel all that comfortable talking on the telephone.’ (MS1/Q32/P12)

Success and failure became ambivalent realities:

‘It felt like a real struggle to me but I have done pretty well for myself. It was a coping mechanism in compensation for that low self esteem, is to try to present myself as more in control, more self assured.’ (MS1/Q37/P14)

‘I felt like I was a failure. Something about my whole career felt like I was a successful failure.’ (MS1/Q39/P14)

‘I didn’t like the business aspect. It just felt so artificial to me to ... they trained us, we actually had training in how to get jobs, how to win jobs. And the way to win jobs was to make friends with people. So we’d purposely target somebody in some community or civic job or something and target somebody to make friends with them so that you could get in on their good side to get them to give your company a job. And I just couldn’t stomach that at all.’ (MS1/Q30/P12)

‘I felt like I was often a misfit. Even though I was fairly successful at fitting.’ (MS2/Q50/P14)

Influences

‘You reminded me, this whole thing has reminded me of the Sixties basically. That was when I was in Uni. There was something, I still have a real soft part in me for the Sixties and those ideals. I really do. I’m kind of saddened by how it was used and abused by some people and twisted and made ugly but ultimately there was that, I’m sure that that was a huge changing force in my life back when that was happening at that time. Even though I wasn’t really participating in it, I was aware that it was going on. I guess I was participating in it to a certain degree just by being exposed to that at University. And not understanding it but just feeling somewhere inside of me that that was a positive thing. And also feeling like that there was something there that I wanted.’ (MS2/Q80/P22)
**Searching**

A significant part of MS’s life was his transpersonal quest and desire for a strong sense of wellbeing. A lot of MS’s time and attention was also focussed on his inner worlds of doubt and looking for a sense of belonging:

‘... part of the frustration that I encountered when I was still back in that business world was that most of the people around me either had no interest in exploring that or had no idea how to and just felt really totally inept at it, which I did too for a long time.’  
(MS4/Q5/P2)

‘In fact it [tremendous capacity of self doubt] seems to be a family trait as well. My siblings exhibit that, my mother is quite an example of that too I believe. I guess my father must have been too. That was very subtle because I didn’t get much information from him at all. I retrospect I can see that he was, that was part of what he was.’  
(MS1/Q33/P13)

‘I guess the underlying thing about this is that I never had a very … it felt like I never had a very strong sense of my own self, and a real trusting of my own counsel of what I could and shouldn’t do. That’s a very honest self assessment.’  
(MS2/Q7/P3)

He felt hamstrung by masculinist conventions in his search for that ‘inner meaning’:

‘I think men are not supposed to doubt.’  
(MS3/Q112/P32)

His restlessness was fuelled by an inner, persistent impetus:

‘I felt like I was lacking in something and I wanted more. I wanted to be more. I wanted to realise myself ... I wanted to feel confident and be confident. I wanted to feel good about who I was. But I had no idea how to do it.’  
(MS1/Q40-41/pp14-15)

**Beliefs and Spiritual Path**

‘...when I was even in high school I think I started thinking ’What is consciousness?’  
‘Who am I,’ really is what it comes down to. And I guess tied in with the religious upbringing of having a soul. This whole thing has had me searching. This is another path that I was on and there is the Self path but there was also this path of trying to discover what it means to be a sentient being. To be conscious. And ‘What is the real me?’  
There is this me that I identify with and between my eyes in my skull somewhere. But I just know that it is more than that. That’s just the location that I give it for ease of discussion, I guess.’  
(MS3/Q22/pp7-8)

‘I try to pay attention to my dreams because I do get some very distinct and useful information.’  
(MS3/Q92/P26)

At the time of the interviews:
'Well I think it comes down to my present state of belief of who we are and what we are as humans. And my belief system now is that we are just a physical very coarse form of energy and that truly we are something beyond this that is part of one whole thing. And that’s why that part of me that is aware of this connection with everything also knows the right path to be on.' (MS3/Q24/P8)

‘What is this thing that Knows? It’s the True Me, whatever that is. This is part of what I’m struggling with in trying to come up with my identity and find out who I really am.’ (MS3/Q22/P7)

‘It’s that higher part of me that is beyond my ego. That is beyond all of the confusing masking emotional things that blur things and get in the way. So it’s some kind of spiritual level of myself that has some purpose.’ (MS3/Q28/P9)

**Fear**

‘I guess there was always a fear there. I can hear my Mothers voice saying, “You don’t want to end up out in the street.” There was that fear of being desolate.’ (MS2/Q10/P3)

His family’s religious beliefs contributed to his doubts and fears:

‘... the religion was a Protestant one ... It was there but it wasn’t really a very continuous kind of thing. We always had to go to church on Sundays and it would come up when we were naughty to control us, don’t do that or you’ll go to Hell, which was the way it was used. It’s a very scary thing to do to a child. To say that if you don’t behave or do something wrong or say something wrong you are going to Hell for eternity ... It was a big tool for controlling us ... I think it wasn’t until I really got into the army that I totally rejected that. It had been deeply ingrained as a child.’ (MS1/Q77, 78 and 81/P23)

‘That was the Christian thing … that was my understanding about the Christian ethic anyway was that if you didn’t follow this narrow little path that you were damned forever no matter how far off the path you were or anything or what you were doing. If you weren’t on that narrow path you were a lost soul.’ (MS2/Q71/P20)

‘If you only have a bit of information that is very dogmatic and very structured and very restricted it’s hard to see outside of that, it is hard to move outside of that. Especially when a lot of that is based on fear of what else is out there and instilling a guilt of thinking and considering about outside things.’ (MS2/Q70/P19)

**Friend and Hero**

MS’s searching for ‘something’ that he valued came to be through person and what they represented:

‘... in the army I happened to room together with a guy who was a social worker ... In fact he was my idol ... and so I asked him, basically, I want to know some things. What
can I do? Tell me some things to read. So he gave me a couple of names of psychology
books to read and I started doing that and I didn’t find it very useful ... I didn’t know
what else to do except to extract as much from him as I could. I wanted to study him to
find out how to live; how to be a person. Because he seemed like the kind of person I
wanted to be. He had a strong moral/ethical core ... That guy that I roomed with by the
way is still probably my closest friend.’ (MS1/Q41 and 43/P15)

‘...for some reason there was just a real connection between us. It always puzzled me
because I’ve always considered him so much superior to me. I guess I could never quite
understand why he would want to be friends with me.’ (MS1/Q44/P16)

Several years later, in a men’s group, the issue of integrity and an ethical core, arose
again:

‘... he really confronted me about his convictions and it felt like, it scared me because it
felt like he didn’t like me. I guess I really worked hard at having people like me. And
when somebody didn’t like me I wasn’t, I wasn’t very comfortable. And in addition to
the fact that what he said felt very true at the time ... and I was leaving the group
because ... I knew at that point that I wasn’t following my true self and I was having
such a hard time in the group feeling like I was not being honest.’ (MS1/Q67/P20)

Hierarchy

MS’s experiences in hierarchy, following his time in the army, were of a different set of
values. Stress, power and control over others were integral values he experienced:

‘Well one aspect of that that I relate to is the more that you were doing and the more
stressed out you were the higher status level you were. That was part of the corporate
world and you were rewarded for that. And your reward for that was ... the power
aspect of it. You do get more power because you’re getting more responsibility so you
have more control over more people and more money in the company or whatever. So
you have more power. That definitely was a driving force for a lot of people. Probably
more so than money.’ (MS2/Q60/P16)

... as were appearances:

‘The old system is this appearance and appearance is what the main criteria is. If you
appear to be this then you are judged a success. If you appear to be confident,
comfortable in social situations, then you are more highly regarded. But all that is an
exterior criteria ...’ (MS4/Q16/P6)

... and economically driven status differentials:

‘I remember going through my professional career, judging where I was at by how my
raises were proceeding. And also the level of responsibility. I could see that I was
progressing by achieving certain titles at work which meant that I was reaching higher
levels. Acquiring material things was another measure which I’ve gotten caught up in at times but it’s never been that big of a driving force for me. Prestige I think is probably another factor which ties in with the money and position. I guess my ideas of what was it to be a success. It’s so economically driven.’ (MS2/Q5/P2)

He expressed discomfort in that framework:

‘It didn’t feel like my personality was suited for the type of ... the business - ruthless and cold. That corporate type of mentality was changing. When I first started working for them, I guess because the economic times were better. There wasn’t as much pressure. There was plenty of money for projects, usually plenty of money and not enough time to do things. But as the economic situation changed, getting more competitive, and money became more scarce for projects, managers with more and more demands for getting work done, it just became a lot more stressful. There was a lot more expectation that you would put in more hours, put in whatever was required into getting things done. I did quite a bit of that in Hawaii too. But I was willing to do it. It was kind of an exciting thing to do at the time. I was trying to get myself satisfied.’ (MS1/Q23/P10)

‘I guess having to be so analytical and so linear all the time ...’ (MS1/Q89/P25)

Like DW, MS made deal and promises to himself as a way of forcing development

‘When I went to San Francisco I made a deal with myself that it was going to be a three year experiment to see if the change in venue would make that much of a difference to the job and whether I really felt like I could adjust to it.’ (MS1/Q23/P10)

Men

‘Well, you know, I think that there is, especially with men, I think have so little means of expressing this kind of thing. When men get together they tend not to talk about these kind of things. This has been my experience. I guess that’s why I don’t have very many men friends because most of the men I meet aren’t willing to talk about this kind of thing. I don’t know if they don’t want to think about it or they haven’t thought about it or whatever it is but there are not very many openings/opportunities for us to share these kind of things and relate our experiences and compare where we’re at and help each other.’ (MS3/Q111/P32)

‘I think that as a society, as a race, that it’s essential that men have some kind of mechanism or some kind of arena to be able to do this kind of thing [reflective life review].’ (MS3/Q112/P32)

After working in several large organisations on mainland USA and in Hawaii, MS met and married an Australian and moved there:
‘I’ve added some complexity to it now by coming to a different country, different culture, and fitting in with a different clan, a different community. I guess there are a lot of reasons not to feel like I’m fitting in. But just in the short time I’ve been here I feel like a bit more comfortable. I just feel just in being out in the community I feel more like this is where I belong ... I like the open space. Maybe that’s because that’s where I grew up. I grew up in the country. I was so intent on getting away and getting to a city ... And now I’ve come around again. I still like the city, but here more.’ (MS2/Q52-53/P14)

He continued on his transpersonal, spiritual path:

‘I feel like things are still advancing and evolving. But I guess maybe I’m not aware of what the next step is going to be because I’ve been so concentrated on doing this other part that my growth; my spiritual growth path is kind of unclear to me right now. I’m not sure what that is going to be but I’m fairly confident that the right thing is going to happen when I’m available for it again.’ (MS3/Q37/P12)

His new work, as a Naturopath and Yoga teacher has taken him outside the parameters of the competitive corporations. His measure points are being strongly questioned.

‘I don’t have the confidence any more. When I used to be able to go out usually the first thing somebody would ask you is what do you and I’d be able to tell them I’m a civil engineer and I do this and that. A certain amount of respect and credibility comes with that ... And therefore I felt confident that I could express myself and have conversations about things and feel like I could hold up my own in a conversation. But I don’t feel that way any more. I feel really like people might be judging me harshly for having given that up, for sort of coping out and doing something so different, something that isn’t necessarily going to come with a respect label on it.’ (MS4/Q8-9/pp3-4)

However, MS maintains a deep trust and faith in his inner impetus, that it is taking him towards wholeness:

‘It’s like the Universe knows that this is the path and I’m on the right path but I guess my rationalist mind is still holding me back and trying to trick me, the critic is trying to diminish the decision, the knowing that this is the right path.’ (MS3/Q21/P7)

**ROC Speaks for Himself**

ROC summed up his childhood quickly, then jumped to his University years, and then to his time as a Regional Manager in a State Education Department:
‘I came from the Western Suburbs, struggle town, work ethic, work hard. Definite gender divisions in the home. Mum cooked; she didn’t work. Dad worked, came home, sat up, Mum made the coffee. Really kind of a classical Australian ‘50s and ‘60s family. Did it tough. Dad had two jobs. All that kind of stuff. Two brothers. There was nothing in the house that promoted any kind of expansion of thought processes or who you were. There was very little literature in the house. I don’t remember having a book read to me. My father is a very clever man and he would articulate things. He would discuss things at length, but really he didn’t discuss them with us for us to learn, it was more a discussion for us to know that he was boss. So nothing in my immediate environment said to me that when I’m going to leave school, I’m going to be ‘out there’ ... I remember I had a happy childhood. I remember it very clearly. But at the same time I don’t have any memory of my childhood as a watershed. It was a happy time, it was there and you did it.’ (ROC2/Q80/P17)

ROC began to refer to his thought processes as he spoke of his University days

‘University was really the time when all of a sudden it was like my consciousness was awake. That was it ... It was the exposure. It was exposure to a whole range of things and the ability to have time to contemplate that exposure, for what you were on about.’ (ROC2/Q81-82/P17)

Adventure became a common theme:

‘I am sure travelling is something to do with it, but then why did I travel? Why did I decide to go? My first trip overseas was in ‘78. Why did I decide to go from Forbes as a jackeroo, to Bombay? What put that in my head?’ (ROC2/Q96/P19)

... as did diversity of experience. Aged 22, at university:

‘On the one hand I was thinking about coming to live on a commune up here doing whatever, and I was also doing a tree surgery course. On the other hand I went and jackerooed for six months and lived on a sheep station.’ (ROC2/Q14/P3)

‘It was 1978 so twenty-two. So I went from one extreme to another. I thought it was wonderful living out there and being a cow cocky and working sheep and ploughing farms and doing fences and going into town once a week to the sale and getting drunk at the bar. So it was interesting wasn’t it, that was happening. Then when I finished being a jackeroo (I had a year off from Uni) ... I then drove back from Forbes. I was a jackeroo between Forbes and Cudogen in the middle of nowhere. Drove back from Forbes and got on a plane in Sydney and flew to Bombay and went to India for a while.’ (ROC2/Q15/P3)

‘I find it all interesting. I find watching rugby interesting and I find listening to a sitar player interesting. And I find no problem with that and I’m not going to say because tomorrow I may turn vegetarian I’m not going to do this other stuff I was doing before. I’ll still do it.’ (ROC2/Q92/P18)
Coupled with adventure ROC had a desire to be actively engaged with living:

‘I was talking to somebody about regrets over things you didn’t do. If you are on your deathbed would you have regrets about what you didn’t do? This person said, “Well you shouldn’t have regrets. You should just say that was it, and that is life.” But I think I will have regrets because there was so much more to do that I didn’t do. I don’t think it is bad to have regrets ... So that sums it up a bit- it’s that desire to experience things.’

(ROC2/Q89/P18)

‘I am not a person who likes to strut my stuff; I don’t have that kind of confidence. I am confident in myself, I generally have a go at most things and I have learnt that if I persevere I can do them quite well. I don’t generally do things very well to start with. I need practise at doing them and once I practise I generally get quite good at it. I am good with my hands in that way.’

(ROC3/Q3/P1)

Love of change was a continuing element for ROC:

‘I actually thrive on change. I like change. I don’t like to stay the same. If someone walks into my office and says, “Let’s do something different,” I would more than likely say, “What a good idea” ’

(ROC2/Q44/P9)

For all his sense of adventure and love of diversity, ROC returned to the subject of being ‘normal’ and ‘not normal’. These topics had particular significance as his work was with young people ‘at risk’, deemed so because they were ‘not normal’, generally being ‘intellectually challenged’. However, for ROC, normalcy was a broader issue, connected to his sense of caring, adventure, achievement, special-ness, being extraordinary or not, and belonging:

‘SM: Well what I am seeing there is that your conservative part seems to have made the effort to fit in to the normality we were talking about, but then you also yearn for the freedom to do what you want.
ROC: That’s a good point. That’s true. I can actually go down and watch a local rugby game, using rugby as an example of a conservative trait, and talk to some people but the next day go off to the Bellingen music festival and talk to people there as well.’

(ROC2/Q80/P18)

This next series of interchanges (from ROC3/Q18-34/pp4-6) illustrates ROC’s primary way of being in the world. He discusses a real situation – a walk in Kakadu - but comes to recognise it as an analogy of the way he is in the world. It also reflects how I work, and in this case the lady in the story is using the same analogous story-making to make meaning that I use. It also shows my persistence in getting to a core idea; and in this case an enormous reluctance by ROC to be seen as different or special.
‘... I have had a great interest in many things. I read a diverse number of magazines and books and I skip all over the shop. I probably do it with you [He did]. When I was walking Kakadu this lady couldn’t walk behind me because I kept changing my path. People would walk on the one path whereas I would like to bounce around and just go on a different path. Initially that really annoyed her, following where I was walking behind me, but after a while she said I had a kind of a pattern, a figure eight pattern, that she figured out I was doing. I didn’t know I was doing it. She said, “You actually had this pattern where it looked chaotic but it wasn’t.” She said, “You were never straying far from the path”... obviously straying from the path to feel that I was having a sense of adventure.
SMac: That is a very astute observation.
ROC: I was actually close to the path to make sure I was in touch with where the rest of the group was going.
SMac: Very interesting.
ROC: Which is a good analogy. Whereas another young guy who walked with us, he never walked the same path at all. In fact quite often we didn’t see him. He always came back.
SMac: He caught up with you at dinner time.
ROC: No, he’d come back every few minutes. We’d see him off there.
SMac: He had a bigger circle.
ROC: Yes he had a huge circle. But most people stayed on this path. That was the path we were walking.
SMac: That is a lovely analogy to what I am seeing, that in terms of hierarchies, most people walk on that path. Then there are people like yourself who wander off but keep some contact. Others have got an even bigger circle and others who leave altogether.
ROC: And others who won’t get to the end of the trip because they have found this hill over here is actually what they were looking for. Others for whom the walking is enough. They don’t require the finish really; they just require the walk. But most people are driven to actually get to the finish. The problem then is when you get to the finish, what is there then? You’re finished.
SMac: You have got to have another beginning? ...
ROC: Well, I think the trick is not to have a finish.
SMac: For you. I mean there are other people like that woman who want to have a recognisable achievement, a finish.
ROC: Well, I think she was apprehensive about the whole walk and I think she was looking to follow. That was why she found it difficult with me because she couldn’t follow, she couldn’t follow me. She found it easier to follow someone walking on a straight path.
SMac: That’s very telling too, isn’t it.
ROC: It is. It is also telling in terms of the leader of the group finding it very frustrating with someone who kept going off the path as well.
SMac: Did he or she ever say anything?
ROC: In this case she didn’t, because ahead they were so focused on the end that they didn’t know. That is an analogy back to an organisation – is the demands of leadership to follow the path.

SMac: What if he did what you did? What would happen then?

ROC: I dunno. Well the point is there should be some realisation that you can actually leave the path but you will still complete the journey, still get there. In fact by leaving the path you will bring more to the trip because you will experience other things. The other people on the trip didn’t. You will see different rocks and different trees and different shrubs. The whole will be better because you will have given more to the whole picture.

SMac: That is a value you have, but others obviously don’t have that value, because they don’t do it.

ROC: That is true. Then you ask the question, what if the leader was all over the shop and not following that path as well? Well I would have loved that. I would have been off there and not necessarily following. That is what I found, that is the kind of leadership style I enjoy.

SMac: Having someone lead you in a similar way, that chaotic way, or the figure eight way or the divergent way?

ROC: Someone actually where we have a common goal. We were both walking for a day and we knew where we had to get but how we got there; we had a rough idea but we could change tack at any time because it was deemed okay. Whereas other people wouldn’t cope, would need to know, as happened, and say, “Show me the map. Show me where we are going. Show me exactly the route we are going to take. How long is it between that point and that point?” If you deviated they wanted to know why we had deviated.

SMac: So we are talking about a couple of things here. A capacity for diversity, and I will use that expression, a capacity for diversity, a capacity for change, a capacity for the unknown. I think they are very important skills so I want to come back to those in a minute. When you were talking it reminded me of an analogy called the fruit bowl analogy where you have a basic structure within which the elements of it can be arranged in any way at all. Now for you, obviously, that is something that would fit you; you would be like the fruit bowl. Begin here, roughly camp together at night, but we can move the pears and apples around and that’s okay. Whereas it sounds like the woman was saying that she wanted to know whether she’d put the apple in the right place, or whether or not the pear is going to be next to the apple or the orange ...

ROC: Whereas some people don’t want the fruit bowl at all. I don’t think that is very radical at all that walking off the path because I never left the path really.

SMac: But that I think is the whole point. You are making whole lots of theoretical judgments and it is almost as if you are saying your reality is the logical, the right. Not as so much right in ‘right or wrong’ but the best way because it brings in interesting stuff and you are adding to it. There are a lot of people who don’t think that way. So you are quite unique. Not necessarily one in the world, but of a type; you are not the run of the mill. It’s obvious you are not the kind of the mass.
ROC: Well no one is, I guess.
SMac: No. But in terms of grouping you are not the same as that woman. Less need for ...
... If we were looking at a gradient, you know a line along which you were grouped, then she would be closer to strict knowledge, order, certainty than you would be.
ROC: But at the same time I guess, and we are talking about the walking but it also applies to what I was going through. There were some givens that I knew existed. I didn’t need to call on them but I knew they were there. With the walking I knew the person who was leading us was very skilled, I had confidence in them. So I didn’t actually need to question what they did, I was happy that they did and I knew that it was probably right. If it was wrong we would get out of it. I had confidence in them. That led to a certain security. It meant that I could actually take some risks but it wouldn’t actually be a huge risk; I wouldn’t actually blow the whole thing. I mean we actually walked fifty kilometres into the Arnhem Land plateau. We were in absolute wilderness, a place where very few people go. If we had actually hurt ourselves in some way, that was it. We had no contact with the outside world and we were a long way away. As we were walking out our leader said that a lot of people don’t cope with that. A lot of people get 2km in there and they actually freak out because they’ve lost contact. I guess I didn’t freak out because I had confidence in the leadership. I had confidence in the preparation for the trip. I had confidence that I had done what I had done and it was okay. I also relied a bit on luck. There was a possibility that I could have been bitten by a snake. Well, that was the way it was going to be.
SMac: So that is a high acceptance of risk.
ROC: I mean I wouldn’t have got on the plane and gone to Darwin if I was really worried about that. It was almost that I had to go to Darwin. I had no choice in this matter because I had to do this thing.
So in terms of my work environment it is very similar, I guess, in terms of the way I cope with change. To go back a step in terms of my work: I work happier when I have leadership I have confidence in and all that stuff. I didn’t have to read my change literature to know why the issue of leadership is so important. But I also had confidence that the boundaries I had set up, the path I was travelling, I could go off and away from it with some confidence. I talked to you before about the fact that I had enough training; I had diversity in what I could do. They were the kind of things that let me leave the path because I knew that if I didn’t come back to the path there were always other things available for me. I guess my walking analogy is very apt to that issue. And the issue of what makes it so.’ (ROC3/Q18-34/pp4-6)

**Hierarchy – Playing the Game**

ROC had a lot to say about hierarchies, especially their power, posturing and performance paradigms, and their gendered nature:

‘... all this wheeling and dealing happens. People actually get off on wheeling and dealing. It is almost as if the wheeling and dealing is all. You don’t really care what the end result is, as long as you win the end result ...’ (ROC2/Q25/P5)
‘ROC: I guess it is a male-type of power too ... 
SM: It is man’s territory, a man’s play thing. 
ROC: Well, male rules if you like. You can play in it as long as you play by our rules. 
SM: So it is quite an ownership of the structure and the game, and the culture. 
ROC: Yes.’ (ROC1/Q29,31-32/P8)

‘I am not sure, but I think it is interesting that power and the masculinity of power, you know the games boys play.’ (ROC2/Q22/P4)

‘I notice that in many positions of management it is almost like fighting cocks. You go in the morning and people strut their stuff. The first thing they strut their stuff with is your appearance, you know, certain tie. That is the first kind of power role play that you do in the morning when you arrive at the office. It is kind of, “I’m here. Nice suit, nice tie, crisp white shirt.” From then all these games occur, I guess, if I can call them games, under the guise of work. Deals are made.’ (ROC2/Q25/P5)

The issue of belonging was addressed in metaphor form:

‘The tent he is in is the best tent. It is the tent where it all happens. Everyone else’s tent is a load of bull shit. His tent is actually the best tent. It is the biggest. It has the best chairs. It has the most ventilation. It will withstand the storm better. In fact other people want to come and live in his tent, so that is how good his tent is. So bums on seats is a really good indicator of how important you are.’ (ROC2/Q63/P13)

... and in regard to loss of rewards:

‘It is also that issue about a sense of belonging. By staying in you continue to receive the pats on the back that you don’t get otherwise, or that you perceive that you mightn’t get.’ (ROC2/Q38/P6)

Work friendships were rare for ROC:

‘The only people I have formed particular friendships with at work are people who I have studied with at the same time. Or we have gone back to work together. The study was the thing that brought us together. That is interesting. As I am kind of freewheeling I am thinking that those friendships are based on the intellectual thing. When you are studying and you need to talk about stuff and you are sharing you tend to intellectualise and you tend to talk about emotions and feelings, whereas at work you don’t do that. It is more: this is ‘a’, leads to ‘b’, leads to ‘c’, goodbye, see you tomorrow.’ (ROC3/Q38/P6)

Like DW, ROC described the effect of moving off ‘the factory floor’ as a critical and divisive one.

‘Part of the job was that you had to toe the party line, so to speak, whatever that party was at that stage. It is real ‘us and them’. Was I talking before about once you leave the
actual shop floor or factory floor and you go into an executive, or even junior management, position you have left it behind, you become one of them.' (ROC1/Q28/P8)

‘It is to do with the whole system being politicised. The more senior position you got in to the more and more you were doing a political function. As such that doesn’t fulfil the needs of the people out there who actually have to work at the coal face, so to speak.’ (ROC1/Q27/P8)

ROC saw performance and status as both important and interconnected:

‘You put a suit and tie and it is a uniform and you feel good. You are out there and you have got a brief case and you are catching a plane having very important meetings about very important things and it all becomes self-perpetuating. The horrible realisation is that when you leave it all and you go back out to the coal face, or anywhere else, you realise how little importance it made to anybody. It really is a bit of a game.’ (ROC1/Q26/P7)

‘It was interesting because I used to get, when I walked into a school after many years in this management position, Regional Manager, I would notice that people would actually hold me in the same awe. So it was the same kind of institutionalised myth-making that you have, if that is the way to put it; the hierarchy promotes this aura. The fact that you turn up in a suit and tie again was part of that issue. You often held a brief case or you had a blue book with a pen. You were doing something important, you looked very important. You were always ushered into the boss’s office and you never got to talk to anyone else just the boss; it was subtle little power plays that happened.’ (ROC2/Q28/P6)

‘I remember one principal that I used to visit: he would recognise your status by the fact of what kind of coffee you were drinking. He had a little cupboard in his office and you would either get no offer of a coffee, or you would get instant coffee, or he would put the brewed coffee on ... I knew this because I had visited him in various guises at various levels and had been offered, or not offered, different brands of coffee within my time with him. He saw nothing wrong with that, he knew that was the case.’ (ROC2/Q29/P6)

‘Getting back to the first thing you do when you go to work in the morning is you instruct your betters in terms of a certain tie, is that you look very nice. You see people who start off with a bit of a pony tail or an earring or whatever. As they kind of get along you see the ponytail disappears, the earring disappears. So they kind of make this metamorphosis and their body shape changes and they become colourless. The people who don’t and who survive are kind of the odd people out.’ (ROC2/Q69/P15)

... as was gaining approval:

‘Your ability to work harder and work more was seen as an important factor in terms of your status. The less you bucked the system, the less you complained about it as well ... Well it is kind of, you will get on if you do the right thing.’ (ROC2/Q48/P10)
ROC painted a picture of the organisation as having little boxes and rooms that were labelled, ‘Boss Man’, ‘Second Boss Man’ and ‘which coffee are you going to get?’ There were codes keeping a framework of the whole structure or game together. But within that framework there were constant variables that were happening. People changing positions, decision-making, multiple variables, language changing all the time. Underpinning all that was some ethic of power or status.

ROC described the capacity of hierarchy to manage differences but also to maintain itself. What was stronger than the differences within it was:

‘The hierarchy, the structure. Ultimately it comes down to who is in the more powerful position, who is more senior to whom ... So while this conflict was happening, in the end the conflict was resolved by someone basically saying, “I am in a more senior position than you are and I am making a decision as to whether it gets the nod or not.” ’ (ROC1/Q67/P16)

‘I often used to ask myself, and I would talk it over with my colleagues, about the fact that it was almost like a huge organic thing that actually moved basically on its own matter, with its own energy, and really didn’t need anything. I would always roll on regardless of what the different parts would do sometimes. Quite often my joke was that outside a particular office the world could actually have been exposed and destroyed, but that office would continue for a week before it knew what had happened.’ (ROC2/Q31/P6)

**Non-hierarchy**

‘I was always uncomfortable with the status issue anyway, I must admit, in terms of the hierarchy of it and the seniority. I used to work very hard. That is why I am attracted to learning communities’ literature. I work very hard at debunking the myth of the boss and the worker or anything. I would delegate quite readily, not to get rid of the work but to give someone else the chance to do that, or have a say. Delegate the power. But it is a power issue I think.’ (ROC2/Q19/P4)

**Values**

Values were significant elements for ROC in his life and decision-making. He shared the view with MS, that:

‘Very few people do, I think, articulate them [values] do they? Very few men articulate them, that’s for sure.’ (ROC3/Q79/P12)

However, it was evident that he had spent some time over his years in self-reflection:
‘I mean I long to be liked by people but I like them to like me for what I am, not for what position I held.’ (ROC1/Q25/P7)

‘Also I have come to the realisation that I am a very much people-orientated person. I can get very cynical about some people but I have an underlying faith in people. Things will happen and it will work itself out ... But is also a faith that things will work out if you put in. It is like a bit of a Buddhist thing isn’t it? If you put it in you get it back. It’s Karma. If you are an absolute arsehole you end up being an arsehole. Life will give you an arsehole back in response.’ (ROC3/Q34-35/P6)

‘Just generally the desire to see equity and fairness. The desire to see people accepted for what they are. To be a happy planet. We live a very selfish life, extremely selfish, but I am always moved by stories of people who don’t have what I have. I was just driving home and I was talking to H[son] about magpies and stuff and I thought I was so lucky to be living where I could talk about magpies whereas other people in other parts of the globe are talking about not being able to get any water, any food.’ (ROC3/Q5o/P8)

‘Having something interesting, having something that is worthwhile and having something that I can feel good about having done. So I wouldn’t be a car salesman, I wouldn’t sell real estate, I wouldn’t be a politician. I could run a pub, because I could run a pub well. I could run a pub so that at the end of the day I didn’t sell any alcohol but at the end of the day I would feel that I had succeeded even though the pub would close down. I could run a pub. I guess I could be a politician. No, I wouldn’t be a politician. Well, it gets back to the issue about humanity and caring and people. So I guess I feel that the job I do helps people, so I feel good about that.’ (ROC3/Q5o/P8)

**Difference**

ROC demonstrated a care for those on the edge of society, and on the edge or out of the range of ‘normalcy’: setting a value on the fringe dwellers, the people who were not in a ‘safe’ social stream; children who were not the norm, who needed an extra bit of help to join in; caring for people who were put in a house through the housing commission by letting his property to them.

Yet he also spoke of the dangers of going beyond normalcy:

‘... without having to define what society is, there is this group of people who live together on this bit of earth that we have in this part of the planet who have intentionally, or unintentionally, decided that there is a certain set of normalcy that we like. It needn’t be the vast majority, could be a false majority, I don’t know. Could be the perception of a few newspaper editors and magazine editors, I don’t know. That’s it. We like most what we like. But someone who is different we don’t like; it is challenging. As a result people who try to break that boundary that we as a group of people have decided actually is ‘normal’, is stable, the way we should all be, are outsiders.’ (ROC2/Q75/P16)
‘... we accept difference as long as it is acceptable difference. In fact we kind of celebrate it a little bit. We like it in our movie stars or heroes of some description but you can’t cross the thin line like, between an idiot and a genius. Oscar Wilde was accepted to a degree but he crossed the boundary a bit too much and was ostracised.’ (ROC4/Q14/P3)

‘I don’t think it is actually taught in schools because schools aren’t there to teach difference and acceptance. They are there to actually to produce normalcy, normalisation.’ (ROC4/Q17/P4)

**Chance**

In the balance between adventure and staying in the ‘normal’ band ROC felt chance had a valuable and large part to play:

‘I definitely think that chance is invaluable in terms of just opening you up to ideas and acceptance ... Perhaps that is why C[wife] and I travelled so much after uni too. Every spare dollar we had we would jump on a plane ...’ (ROC2/Q18/P3)

**The Big Leap**

‘The people that I would really admire, I guess, is someone who has taken a different journey spiritually or emotionally. So physically what you are doing, how you look, what you are doing is irrelevant. It is what you have decided in yourself that is important, and made that big leap.’ (ROC2/Q64/P14)

**PS Speaks for Himself**

**Preparation**

Before the first interview PS went through old photos and records of his life, as preparation. Being mindful of the topic of the research, he was already alert to thinking about the influences hierarchies had had on him. As a result, his memories were focussed on hierarchies, and peppered with references to them.

He spoke of his life with humour and practicality, about feelings and passions and play, as well as about serious self-reflection.

‘First of all thought having looked at your letter I had a look and saw that you had the re-orientation processes that men have and go through, and then you said focussing on your career change, exploring the reasons, value changes and personal process. So I
thought well that’s a lot just in that. So I thought I might as well at least make some notes.’ (PS1/Q2/P1)

This he did, but as we moved past the historical stage, they were only referred to occasionally.

PS had developed and maintained a global perspective throughout his life to date, and his careers reflected that: as a priest in a global church, as a Public Servant dealing with foreign relations, as an AMWAY representative, and as a Migration Agent.

‘Let me see, seven years abroad, seven with the Foreign Service, and then how many years abroad ... nearly ten years abroad. Visited about 21 countries, 25, I think. Not lived in many but visited quite a few. So I hope I still have got a broad outlook ... I am still focussed on what is happening in the rest of the world. I have never had a great interest in domestic politics. I have interacted with it and keep abreast of it broadly, but no, my interest is in what is happening elsewhere and how we interact with it.’ (PS2/Q38/pp15-16)

His origins were far more domestic.

**Chronologically...**

‘I grew up in a small country town in South Australia ... on the railway line where you have to change gauge, which means that people swore every time they got out and went across the platform to change trains. Anyway it was a very small country town where ... that was its reason for existence.

My father was a store keeper. He became manager of the first cooperative society in that little place during the war. And I was born there in 1941, I think probably the year after he became manager, the first year. And then we then moved to B. when I was young ... I went to school in B. and then we moved to R. from B.’ (PS1/Q2/pp1-2)

**Homelife**

‘I did have an indulgent mother. I was the youngest of two. My mother could see no wrong. Was I indulged? In material ways. But with love, a great deal of love from my Mum, and my Dad to a certain extent, although he was very stiff, very quiet, calm, deal with any panic, is the type of person, is probably my father. Nothing would surprise him. He was the manager of a store. I was the manager’s son, walked into the store, can I have some biscuits and I was out the back and go and raid the biscuit tin. I could be indulged and I could be bold. Is that where I learnt how to get away with it? Maybe I did. Maybe I learnt it when I worked at my father’s store.’ (PS2/Q112/P37)

Schooling was strict and, like most things in his life at the time, and for many years to come, bound up with the Catholic Church:
‘I ... grew up in a country area with strong Catholic traditions in which I took part ... in a fairly strict Catholic primary school run by brown Josephite nuns. When I say strict it meant the cane for misbehaviour. I got that occasionally. So it was pretty strict upbringing; primary school in a Catholic environment.

My parents were Catholics and I used to go to mass. At one stage ... not every day of my life, but we used to go to mass every day. Some part of my life in my early youth anyway. And so I was an alter boy. So I mean I grew up in the Catholic hierarchy from being an alter boy and accompanying the priest when he said mass in various towns and so on. So I was not just the only one but a group of ten or 12 boys ... starting about eight or nine years old.’ (PS1/Q2-3/P2)

He left home to go to college, and while there he made a critical decision.

‘I went to a college in Adelaide ... which was run by Christian Brothers, the same Christian Brothers that have now become more infamous of late. But there was nothing like that ever happened to me or that I know of happened to anybody else during the years. I was only there for two years. But straight across the road from the college was a minor seminary meaning a place where young men started to become priests, and it was just across the road. So I could sit there on the footy oval and look across and see these black figures going up and down in their gear. And I used to wonder what on earth they would be doing, and I used to sometimes go out of mass at college and go down and just sort of sit there and wonder what they’d be doing. And I suppose that was the beginning of me wanting to become a priest.’ (PS1/Q3/P2)

With the combination of being culturally entrenched, proximity, and having a strong touch of idealism, PS was soon on his way to being a priest.

‘We also had a big talk about missionaries dying for the faith in China and all that sort of stuff, which really fired me up. And I decided that, yes, I would, too, be a missionary and I wanted to join a missionary organisation at the age of 12.’ (PS1/Q3/P3)

‘... when I was 12, you know, and you are thinking very simplistically about religion: the martyr suffered and sacrificed and then they had a bad time and then they died and became heroes and they became saints and that was the easiest way to get to heaven. And so I thought, that’s good; I will be a martyr. In fact I will be a martyr and I’ll go to China. I will be killed for the faith and I will go to heaven. And that was the logic of a 12 year old. So I went straight in, sucked right in.’ (PS3/Q48-49/pp18-19)

He began a tradition of fast, critical decisions, interspersed with wholehearted immersion.

‘At the end of that year my father said “well what do you want to do,” and I said “Look, I want to go across to the minor seminary and continue my studies over there.” I had just finished first year high school. And he said, “Do you really want that?” and he said, “Well, look let’s go and have a look at the place.” So we went over and had a look
and were shown around, given the big tour, and got outside the gate and he stopped the care at the side of the road and he said, "Well you’ve got to make up your mind. Either you are going to continue at Ross Trevor or you are not or are you going to go to the minor seminary?" So I had to make the big decision. And I said "Okay, I will stay another year at [College]." So I stayed two years at [College] and by then I was really biting the bullet and really wanted to go. So at the end of the second year I went across. So I finished second year high school and went across and did my intermediate and leaving with the minor seminary ... I wanted to try it out.’ (PS1/Q3/P3)

His desire to be a missionary remained with him and he soon moved to another seminary, in yet another city. He immersed himself in his career and the years flew. His training was rigorous on several levels, and shaped him deeply in his impressionable years:

‘At the end of the second year there, I had just turned 16 in December, and I had told the Bishop ... who was paying for my tuition there, that I’d rather, thank you very much, join the missionary society of priests called St Columban ... So, at the end of my second year of minor seminary, instead of going on there and becoming a priest in South Australia I went to ... Victoria to do ... their first year is called a spiritual year. Not much academically but more of the history of spirituality and so on. We did a 30-day retreat, which means no talking. They took away our watches and our concept of time. That was a fairly strong immersion course in the spirituality of the Catholic church. Plus there was a lot of hard work. I was 16, I’d bought a suit in the summer and by August I had split it up the backside. I had grown six inches and put on a lot of weight and a lot of hard work and a lot of football and sport and what have you. So then was deep into the hierarchy at that stage.’ (PS1/Q3/pp3-4)

**Cloisters and Comrades**

Within the cloistered environment he had a full life, and was encouraged in a range of activities: from spiritual reflection, to sport, spending time in Nature, continuing his interests in music and developing various hobbies. There was a lot of camaraderie. He loved the variety and was involved in many activities:

‘And I was just visualising all those parts of my life where, I started off when I was 17 on a 30-day retreat and then each year we did a six day retreat and then every day we would do what is known as a ‘particular examine’. And a ‘particular examine’, a strange term, was meant to review what you wanted to do today and what happened yesterday, like a review point for ten minutes per day. And it was locked into the thing for the day, it was before dinner, can’t remember probably before dinner. ‘Particular examine’. A strange concept. ... There was an annual six day retreat and during the
year there was also other shorter retreats of two and three days scattered through the year. Plus a lot of time to switch off and go bush walking, surfing, bike riding, and during the afternoon there was a time for sport, and if it wasn’t sport it would be football, cricket and tennis and basketball, running and athletics. There was a pool, we had a billiard table, we had a lathe, we had music. I was the bike captain one year and I was the photographer another year. College photographer getting all the snaps and develop them and print them. And so I learnt photography within my first year, learned how to pull a bike apart the second. I built a telescope with another guy. He was a Sydney engineering graduate so I was just the flunkey and the labourer. But that was fun just watching it all happen. And I did the mirror. That was hard work, but it was fun. I learnt lots of different skills.’ (PS2/Q3/pp2-3)

‘I kept up my music. They allowed me to keep up my music as a big favour. So I was the only violinist in the place. And they allowed a non-Catholic teacher, a non-catholic teacher to come in and teach me ... He was a nice guy, a nice guy, and he gave me a love of Bach which is still with me to this day. We played duets together. He just led me through the musical repertoire. Great fun. And I didn’t do any exams. It was just for fun. So I really appreciate that.’ (PS2/Q4/P3)

‘I think every ten days or fortnight we’d have a day off and we’d just go bush, put on our packs and the kitchen would make sandwiches and away we’d go. We’d go fishing.’ (PS2/Q18/P8)

He was also taught and encouraged to exercise his mind:

‘Then two years philosophy in Sydney, four years theology in Sydney. This is all full-time. So I suppose all in all I had about nine years of seminary life. Which is like boarding school. And at the end of that time in 1964 I was ordained a priest in Sydney and was sent to the Philippines as a missionary ...’ (PS1/Q3/P4)

He and his co-seminarians were also not averse to adventure and pranks:

‘One day ... without telling the authorities, we went down and we hired a 40-foot cabin cruiser down at Bobbin Head, and off we went to Palm Beach. All these seminarians dangling off it. Oh we all dobbed in, I don’t know how much it was, $10.00 a pop or something. We had enough money to hire it for a half day, probably a half day. There was only allowed 25 on it and so we arranged in advance for the other party to be around the first promontory and put the other 15 on around the corner.’ (PS2/Q18/P9)

(Throughout the interviews PS used the phrase ‘that was fun’. Sometimes the phrase meant fun and pleasure; sometimes it meant succeeding at a challenge.)

**A Common Life**

‘... and it was almost the case of first in best dressed when you got down to the locker room, whatever fitted, okay, that’s mine. I’ll have that. It was common. It was that
attitude of “okay, this is my footy jumper, boots … we shared things, we shared clothing, we shared experiences, we shared study and sport and everything, so there was a very good bond …’ (PS2/Q22/P10)

Yet for all this camaraderie and living such a communal life, PS felt that,

‘… I suppose I have always been a loner and I have never had any close male friends, or even female friends for that matter.’ (PS3/Q36/P11)

**Exclusions and Limitations**

But there were strict limits and exclusions in some areas of living:

‘Anyway one night they took us out to a concert, some small opera, Sydney Opera Company or something, were putting on Hamlet or something. Something innocuous. We were allowed to see things innocuous. We were allowed to watch TV twice a year. Once for the rugby grand final and once for the Aussie rules grand final. And we had the radio about once every eight days, and we were allowed to smoke once every eight days.’ (PS2/Q18/P8)

Women were especially taboo:

‘But the growing years and ordinary interaction with women was never there, I never had the grounding, never had the ease of co-ed school or anything like that very much. In primary school it was mixed, but college it wasn’t. It was an all-boys school. The seminary of course there were nuns hanging around out in the kitchens. That was the only skirt that was there.’ (PS3/Q31/P10)

‘I took a vow of celibacy when I went in and was faithful to it.’ (PS1/Q44/P15)

**Young for a Priest**

Almost offhandedly, he remarked:

‘… oh, by the way, you are not supposed to be ordained until you are 24. I was 22-and-a-half, and they sought a dispensation from Rome because of my age and I got an 18 month dispensation and was allowed to be ordained 18 months early.’ (PS1/Q3/P4)

‘So I was the first boy from R[town] ever to be ordained a priest in the Catholic church. So a big thing.’ (PS3/Q51/P19)

Soon after, he was sent to the Philippines, but his missionary plans were quickly put to rest:

‘Now the Philippines is nominally a Catholic country, so there weren’t too many heathens to convert. In fact there weren’t any …’ (PS1/Q3/P4)
It was there that he discovered a skill he was to use later in his life as part of a new profession:

‘I learnt the language, spoke the Philippine language full-time. It was great fun learning language. Out in a provincial backwater but still a very lively place. It was very heavily populated. And after I helped out in a few parishes, after I’d learnt the language, I learnt to say mass in the Philippine dialect and learnt to preach in the Philippine dialect, and hear confessions in the dialect, marry people, baptise them, bury them, attend to them when they were dying and when they were dead. All that stuff.’ (PS1/Q3/P4)

Very quickly PS had to deal with many sad and gruesome events. Several stayed with him, like these:

‘The first person I saw that was dead was a little baby, when I walked up a mountain and across a river in bare feet. Pretty wet by the time I got there. It was at night, carrying a lantern, and the wailing you could hear at the top of a hill in this house ... when I reached there this was just this little baby lying on the table swaddled in clothes, candles at each end. There was no other light there were just these candles, and people wailing. That was a bit of a shocking sight for me ...’ (PS1/Q4/P5)

‘... The worst I saw was a man who was dying of malaria in a jail. And the second worst was a guy who had been carved up by a butchers boy who had taken a dislike to a political figure in the town and had hacked him about the body with a large cleaver ... there a woman who had taken rat poison.’ (PS1/Q4/P5)

Like IH, in his walks through the sewers, PS came to see sights far distant from his sheltered childhood. At 22 and a half years,

‘... there were two of us to look after 35,000 Catholics ...’ (PS1/Q4/P5)

‘... I did pre-marriage counselling and stuff like that ... I went through the motions and did the best I could. It was very hard and those sort of realities that you come across, trying to give people marriage guidance when you have never been married yourself was pretty difficult.’ (PS1/Q6-7/pp5-6)

But his humour, his social conscience and alignment with the poor and ordinary folk were strong:

‘... I did some new things myself. I created a new feast day locally, of St Joseph the worker ... so I said ‘Right. We are going to dignify the meaning of work.’ And so I announced about three weeks beforehand that I was going to have a major celebration of dignity of work ... And I had 600 people roll up at 6.30 am on a Monday morning and these were people who had no shoes. These were the workers who worked in the sugar cane field slashing cane, totally illiterate, to doctors with their stethoscopes. And I had
tables everywhere and people put on their implements of work, kids brought their pencils and rulers ... We had bloody stuff everywhere. And of course the only thing to do with it is to bless it, so there was holy water everywhere on everything and everything went very smoothly and it was a very great success. And I was getting unvested, all the gear off, in the vestry and there was a knock on the door ... and it was a policeman and he pulled out a gun and he just pulled it out of his holster and went like that, and I thought, ‘I’m dead. This is my last moment on this earth.’ He said “Father I was late, can you bless this for me?” And I felt like shatting my pants.’ (PS1/Q74/P26)

A Priest’s Life

‘... it was all like one, it’s all one’s life. I mean that was my life up until then. I didn’t have any other ... I mean I played golf but I mean that was just for relaxation it wasn’t ... I didn’t have a different life. I was always on call 24 hours a day and my life was the people around me - the kids, going to schools and having bible classes, and going to the sick and the dying and burying and marrying and baptising.’ (PS1/Q43/P15)

Betrayal

When PS finally decided to leave the Philippines and return to Australia and, in all probability, leave the priesthood, he went to say his goodbyes to his colleagues. What happened shocked and deeply hurt him:

‘... it has taken me years to get over it. I had worked in these guys’ parishes, on call 24 hours a day ... And when I came back and went to say my farewells. We were gathered in the mother house on the island, [where] ... every Sunday night after the masses and baptisms and funerals and marriages were over they used to gather and play cards and have a drink of whisky and tell dirty jokes ... I went over to the group of guys I had been working with ... and they all together turned their backs on me. And I stood there and they just ignored me. And I was in a state of shock. I didn’t know what to do. I was absolutely stunned. Here I worked my bloody arse off for these buggers and 1) they were not showing any form of Christian leadership; 2) it wasn’t even Christian what they were doing. It was just total ignorance and rejection. The worst form of rejection that I could have received.’ (PS1/Q14-15/P8)

‘... one of them was quite a very spiritual guy and that really threw me. The ones that were truly spiritual shook my hand, and I have no problems with them, those who are sort of genuine, you know like fully rounded people. But it still shocked me.’
(PS1/Q18/P9)

‘I expected them to at least treat me as they were told to treat anybody else, which is the core of the gospel message, which was love one another as I have loved you.’
(PS1/Q30/P11)

‘I found out, when I was there two years ago, that one of the guys, the guy who really got to me was still alive and he was in a parish in the city. And he wasn’t all that far
away down I wanted to go there and hit him. Just turn up and just hit him in the jaw and walk away ... yes, it hurt for a long, long time.’ (PS1/Q24-25/P10)

However, years later PS found out that,

‘... the guys who were smirking and so superior when I left, these guys also had left within the following ten years. They had also left. I had started a trend.’ (PS2/Q14/P7)

**Starting Again**

‘I had grown up in a seminary which is like a place for seeds really ... in a hot house. And I had been in that hot house up until the age of whatever it was, 26. I came out and I didn’t know how to write a cheque. I’d never had a bank account. So I went into a bank with fear and trembling. I had never had money of my own.’ (PS1/Q48/P17)

‘And I was really just thrown off the deep end by my own will.’ (PS3/Q30/P10)

**Hierarchies and Going Global**

‘It probably all started with a little pamphlet I found somewhere. A little pamphlet, I remember exactly, and there’s a boy about ten sitting in front of a fire with a map of the world, a globe, spinning the globe ... It was me ...’ (PS2/Q36/P15)

After leaving the priesthood PS went into the Commonwealth Public Service, another large hierarchy, the second of four he had been part of when I interviewed him (Catholic Church, the Australian Commonwealth Public Service, AMWAY - a global direct sales company - and the United Nations).

‘That’s another phase of the other hierarchy and that’s working with the UN, High Commission for Refugees for two years, full-time.’ (PS1/Q67/P23)

PS came to spend nearly thirty years in big hierarchical organisations and came to know them well, his vision shaped by both his collegiate and betrayal experiences.

‘And then I came to know about everything outside the church including the value of having a degree in the public service and all those sorts of things. And then who we knew in relation to promotions ... brown nosing, which I never took to. And as a result I suppose I never really wanted, this is a change, I never really wanted to be part of the establishment any more. And I deliberately kept myself mentally away from being part of the establishment.’ (PS1/Q45/P16)

‘And I think people perceived that. I do my job to the best of my ability and I do a damn good job but I was not going to be joining the right clubs. I was not going to join the Masonic club. I was not going to wine and dine my bosses at home and all that sort of stuff. I had no desire to become a member of the Commonwealth club. I mean all of that
stuff that goes with pursuing a fast career up the inside lane of the Public Service had no interest to me whatsoever.’ (PS1/Q46/P16)

‘... you become street wise just through experience and watching others make mistakes or not make them or miss opportunities or what have you. I think through experience and knowledge, because I was a bit older than some of my colleagues at the same level of course. Learning to plan things in advance, plan things in your favour, do things that would put you in a position that ... do reports that you know are going to be seen and wanted to be looked at when you are overseas.’ (PS3/Q58/P22)

‘That’s a whole essay in itself, the protection side of the hierarchy and the whole tribe protects you. Well in theory it does anyway.’ (PS3/Q60/P22)

‘... I mean you couldn’t say what you wanted to say.’ (PS3/Q79/P29)

‘And I am usually pretty careful. I have learnt to be extremely careful watching your back. So from a bureaucratic point of view I understand bureaucracies better than most people, far better.’ (PS2/Q109/P36)

‘Yes. I feel freedom coming on and I don’t have to play those games any more in a big hierarchy.’ (PS3/Q66/P24)

‘... he realised that I hadn’t asked him to be a referee for that job and yet I got it on my own. And that’s where it hurt him, I think, because I never asked him to be a referee.

SMac: So there are doubles rules there?
PS: Yes.
SMac: Value me a lot but I won’t value you.
PS: That’s right. And that’s the problem with hierarchy.’ (PS2/Q66-68/pp23-24)

He had learnt the game well:

‘I suppose that’s the big thing, and learnt through my time in the Public Service about how to cope with the world and how to interact with it to my own benefit, and to survive. I am a survivor. Opportunist. Survivor.’ (PS3/Q91/P35)

PS began to refuse postings and look for a way out, eventually taking an offer to go into business. However, the business did not go well, and he returned to contracting to the Public Service after only a year, from there retraining to become a Migration Agent and, again, leaving.

As ROC also experienced and recounted, not everyone can leave as easily as PS felt he could. Some people were bound too closely to hierarchy to be able to break away:

‘So he can’t keep away, the poor bugger. And he is just, he has got little kids and he’s a real workaholic, the poor bugger. So yes, it is a form of protection, it’s a family, it’s a way of life.’ (PS3/Q61/P23)
Four Times Around

PS left large hierarchies four times before our interviews.

‘I have worked in that hierarchy for a long time. I know how the system works. So I am comfortable ... I have broken away, in a way, like I did with Amway and like I did before when I started my company. So the three times, so the third time I am breaking away from the hierarchy. Well I suppose the first time was when I left the priesthood and left the Philippines ... The second time was when I took all my long service leave in 1987 for nine months on half pay and started my own company. Total baptism of fire in private industry.’ (PS2/Q41-42/P17)

As when he left the priesthood, he was leaving a position of relative power:

‘I mean I was up the middle rank. I got to in the diplomatic service I got to the number two. I went to Australian Embassies twice, once in A[foreign country] and once in S[foreign country], and I got to the top and was acting Ambassador and got to sit with the President of S. discuss things, and Bob Hawke [ex-Australian Prime Minister] and discuss things, and you are at a totally different level than when you were in Australia sitting around as a shiny bum here. So you did have power.’ (PS1/Q78/pp27-28)

‘So you did have power, but when I got to the top looking over the ... it’s like climbing the ladder and getting to the top of the building and finding out that the ladder is against the wrong building. And I thought almost as if, ‘Is that all there is?’ and I had no desire then. I lost the desire to become an Ambassador. I mean being an Ambassador was something, but it was never ... it was just normally expected that that would eventually happen rather than me having a great desire.’ (PS1/Q78/P28)

‘Did all kinds of things in embassy life, nuclear work, legal work, information work, political work, culture work, I have done the lot. I have been very broad. I have developed very broad laterally. And in the last five years I became a specialist in refugee issues, and I have really enjoyed that, something to get my teeth into because it was dealing more with people again rather than just policy. So I have come back towards dealing with people.’ (PS1/Q78/P28)

Business and Customer Service

‘The other day I was thinking about all this and I thought how much I actually learnt the business skills my father had, just watching him in the shop. He was a manager of the firm but if there was no one to serve he would leave his office and go out and serve on the counters. Oh, and the customers loved it; the manager coming to serve. He was just that sort of guy, he would just pitch in all the time, which was great. So unwittingly, I sort of picked up a few of those sort of customer skills from my father.’ (PS3/Q42/P14)
Heroes and Ethics

‘I tend to look up to people, I enjoy and admire people for the way they live their lives. It’s usually not, you know, people like JH [a public figure]. It’s people who are whole persons, balanced. I suppose I admire those who live with a core value which I still prize and that is ‘love one another as I have loved you’. And that doesn’t have to be a love for Christianity. In fact it’s more important, it’s a more universal value for the world really, than any religion. (PS2/Q118/pp38-39)

Ethics, built up from family, church and his innate interest in and care of people, were powerful elements in his life, especially those based on honesty and compassion.

‘I made the decision [to leave the priesthood] initially because I no longer wanted to be a hypocrite. I remember at the time that was the way I felt. I no longer wanted to get up in the pulpit and tell people to say the rosary and bless their holy pictures and everything else that the faith, the doctrine, embraced. ... And I felt a lessening of my faith, and that was when I decided ...’ (PS1/Q36/P14)

‘In fact K [son] asked me yesterday whether an Anglican was a Christian. Now he’s 24. That’s how much religion they have had in this house ... But they hopefully have got some value system: honesty, truth, honouring one’s promises, those sorts of things. The fact we are all human, dignity of man, don’t put anybody down, everyone is of value; there is meaning in the universe.’ (PS1/Q85/P30)

PS continued an interest in learning. When he joined the Public Service he felt,

‘... what I should do is to broaden my understanding of the area closest to Australia in a degree. So I set out, without any real guidance, I did a South-East Asian Studies degree. I did a major in Indonesian/Malay. I did a major in linguistics, and a major in South-East Asian civilisation and history, and a unit of Sanskrit. And that was my degree.’ (PS2/Q74/P25)

His fifth (and last?) time of leaving hierarchy was to become a Migration Officer.

‘Well it’s to become a Migration Agent. And it’s totally independent and I can make my own decisions and have mentors and study groups, possible partnerships, and be completely free to do my own thing.’ (PS2/Q46-47/P18)

Self-reflection

PS continued giving time to self-reflection and self-questioning, as taught him in the priesthood but with a different focus.

‘And I feel far more comfortable with my body, my mind, and the way it interacts, and breathing, and things that of course the seminary never taught anything like that. They
said, okay kneel there and meditate for half-an-hour. It wasn’t a good position.’

(PS2/Q22/P10-11)

‘I don’t fear death. I suppose I have seen so many people when they were dying. Death doesn’t hold any magic for me.’ (PS3/Q47/P18)

‘So you can harbour lots of hurts and let them fester really. Or you can do ... something about it and get rid of it, but don’t let it fester whatever it is. Do something about it, grab it by the balls and shake it to death or boot it out the window, or something.’

(PS2/Q56/P21)

He took a proactive view on life:

‘All the different ways of looking at life and activities and life in general are great, and I seem to be going from life’s experiences steadily upwards. I mean I feel as though I have been going like that, up steps. I don’t know where the steps are leading but they are still going and I am enjoying the journey, every bit of it.’ (PS2/Q26/P13)

‘... the more you think about it, and the more you goal set, and the more you plan, the easier things just fall into place.’ (PS2/Q26/P12)

‘I have only learnt the skills of saying, if you don’t want something or you do want something the choice is yours, the choice is one’s own. ...This is not a choiceless society. If you want to do something that is your choice. And so it comes back to responsibility for all these decisions, and life just seems to be a progress of decisions taken or not taken, if you look at it from that angle.’ (PS2/Q59/P21)

IH Speaks for Himself

Childhood

IH’s recollections of his early childhood were very happy. He had an active imagination, was encouraged in his interests and felt loved and supported by his parents:

‘I enjoyed every aspect of it. I enjoyed saluting the flag and marching around the quadrangle and having a break for a bottle of milk at play time and playing, pushing dinky cars down the gutter behind the toilets, and all of those things. Except sport. I was never sporting.’ (IH1/Q13/P6)

Though IH did not like competitive sport, he liked being a fast runner:

‘... at one point I was the fasted runner in the school ... Which gave me a bit of personal satisfaction I guess to know that I was good at something. Because I wasn’t brilliant at my studies even though I liked them.’ (IH1/Q14/P6)
'I used to like to compete against myself but not against other people.' (IH1/Q13/P6)

He was always encouraged to try:

‘I was always encouraged and told that I could do things and taught not to be prejudiced and not to be afraid of things.’ (IH1/Q23/P9)

‘I had a good upbringing, my parents being very good people and not giving me any prejudices … I guess the way my parents perceived my growing up was that they wanted me to be a good person.’ (IH1/Q7/P4 and IH1/Q6/P3)

‘Well I had a great deal of confidence in my abilities, you know, probably totally unreal sort of perception of what I could achieve, even then. I mean, I can remember that occasionally we might go down to Port M. and just look at the ships, you know these big ships, these big liners, tied up at the wharf and huge ropes coming down. And I’d pull on the rope. And I imagined that I was actually moving the ship, you know, I felt that I was really strong and I was a powerful person.’ (IH1/Q21/P7)

He loved to build things, encouraged by his mother and a vivid imagination:

‘In fact the building aspect, you know, becoming interested in building, may have been my mother’s influence rather than my father’s … And I think that probably what started that was my Mum used to spend time on the floor with me helping me build with building bricks, the equivalent of Lego in those days. And even helping me in the shed to build a little wooden railway station to stand by the sides of things and so on.’ (IH1/Q22/P8)

‘… I enjoyed my growing up … I used to dream flying all the time and I used to fly model aeroplanes and build balsa wood planes. But I also used to build billycarts and huts and fantasise about flying and things, and jump off garage roofs with umbrellas.’ (IH1/Q5/P3)

‘One really vivid memory I have of the many billycarts that I had … I found an old fish box once when we were at the beach and I dragged it for what seemed like miles back over the dunes to the car. My parents tried to get me to leave it behind and I insisted on taking it. And I eventually converted it. I put it onto an old pram wheel base and put a brake lever on each side and a beam across the middle and some artificial headphones and a broom stick with a fence paling on the top as a propeller with a string running back over a pulley around a wheel and a table behind me. And I could twist this broom stick between my legs and spin this propeller and launch myself down the street with this fence paling hurtling around above my head. And plunged down Box Street Hill at some rate of knots. And it’s a miracle I didn’t chop somebody’s head off as they came out their front gate.’ (IH1/Q5/P3)

IH presented an image of himself as a solitary, active and intense child immersed in his own interests and daydreams, somewhat set apart from other children by his parents’
non-mainstream Christian beliefs, his likely ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder), late-
maturing coordination problems and his daydreaming:

‘And so on sports days I used to find myself on the outer, you know on the edge of the
cricket field and maybe sitting down and not concentrating and when the ball came my
way I might not have even noticed it. I’d get a bit of a rhubarbing you know for not
being on the ball.’ (IH1/Q13/P6)

‘I seemed to have very poor bladder control, and that may have had some effect on my
feelings and my development during my primary school years. I was a perpetual bed
wetter until very late as a child. I don’t remember the exact time but I suspect it was
early teens … all the way through primary school.’ (IH1/Q61 and Q66/P25 and P26)

He maintained a stance of separateness from ‘the masses’ into adulthood:

‘… not wanting to compete with the masses, the hordes that went to University or that
played football or cricket, but rather to compete against myself and to be effective at
what I did and to relate well to people.’ (IH1/Q52/P22)

Parents

His father worked long hours while his mother stayed at home:

‘… Mum was very involved because she was around and Dad was doing the long hours
of work.’ (IH1/Q22/P8)

IH attributed his confidence to her:

‘I have only learnt in recent years that Mum was terrified of thunder storms but she
used to sit out on the front steps with me during a thunder storm and say, “Aww,
listen to the Man Upstairs shuffling his furniture” and “Aww, wasn’t that a great
flash”, you know “Isn’t that a good one?”. And so she concealed her fear and so I never
became afraid of those sorts of things. That’s typical.’ (IH1/Q23/P9)

His father:

‘… my father was born with one hand. He has a stump on his arm, and that has never
been debilitating for him. He can hold a fork and he can tie his shoelaces, you know hold
a fork in his arm, in the bend in his arm. But when he went to school all he wanted to do
was work on the land. He wanted to be a farmer. Now that didn’t come from his father
either because his father was a gold miner, which was really interesting. So, came from
gold mining to wanting to be a farmer which his teachers told him he couldn’t do, which
is false; he could have done it easily. And it probably would have been the most
satisfying thing. To then being drafted into the army and he actually saw some active
service overseas. He was good enough for the army with one arm but not good enough
to be a farmer. But then he came back and he educated himself at night school as a clerk
and an auditor. So he was an auditor all his working life. But when he retired he managed to continue his hobby of working with plants and grafting and sort of mini farming. And he kept bees and all those sorts of things.’ (IH1/Q22/P8)

‘… my Dad he never showed any emotion, even today doesn’t show much emotion …’ (IH1/Q60/P24)

IH felt it keenly that his father was not able to follow his early desires. He himself followed the same pattern. He was not able to become a pilot in his youth because of poor eyesight and his parents straitened financial circumstances.

‘I knew it wasn’t viable because my parents didn’t have the funds to train me and there were very few scholarships and my health and eyesight weren’t 150 per cent. You had to be really out of the box to get the one [flying] scholarship that was going at the time … ’ (IH1/Q5/P3)

‘… although I know and knew that all I ever wanted to do was to fly, and in particular to fly helicopters, I wasn’t really able to do that.’ (IH1/Q4/P2)

Yet when he had the chance to select a career, he chose engineering above aeronautics, because he was advised here were better job prospects.

Like his father, he returned to his early childhood interest in his adulthood, becoming a pilot after finishing his career training:

‘… drove to [city] where I was to go and book into my prearranged accommodation … But I recall going straight to the airport and booking in to learn to fly. And I’d always planned that if I couldn’t do flying as a career, I would do it as a hobby. And so I booked in to learn to fly. My first class was the next weekend that was coming. And then I went and booked into … [the] Hostel where I settled down for two years and did my flying as a hobby. Got my private pilot’s licence and I’ve done some very interesting trips.’ (IH1/Q42/P19)

Another interest denied IH as a child, was music. With his usual tenacity he returned to it as an adult:

‘Some years ago while I was at Uni and doing the Masters study and so on I was doing piano as well. First time I had ever had any music lessons. But I have proved to myself over two years that I don’t have a talent for it. At least I have explored it.’ (IH3/Q101/P33)
Schooling
IH was neither a capable or diligent student in his primary and early high school years. However,

‘...made a decision to really be diligent at career path things was ... about the middle of third form ... from there on I worked long and hard at my schooling ... from that point on it was pretty well all hard grind, hard schooling ... that’s when the late nights started ... a pattern that from then flowed for pretty well the rest of my life.’ (IH1/Q32/P12)

He went to three high schools, changing the first time when they moved house, which took them to live near orchards in a suburb of higher social status (IH1/Q30/pp.11-13). That second school had elements of social unrest which concerned his parents, and so he agreed to go to a (religious) private school for his last year:

‘The change of school for just the final year of high school meant that the final year of high school was so hard. Because I hadn’t come to terms with the religiosity at the school. I had to come to terms with the increased authoritarianism, of the lack of social freedoms, the different teaching approaches, and plus the very fact that I suddenly started to have to commute on a bus and all of those sorts of things. That was a big change for me. And so I struggled that year and although I probably did a little better than I would have done if I’d stayed at the other school academically, it was a difficult time socially for me. And although I made some friends they were not ... I didn’t feel really close to them.’ (IH1/Q34/P14)

On Being Male
IH spoke little about gender roles other than those of his parents who fitted the stereotypical roles of the time: of wife as homemaker and husband as breadwinner. These two comments, however, showed he was sensitive to others’ views of him as a male and what he thought a male was like:

‘I was at that stage up the back of the room because it was, you know, that was the thing to do, guys were beyond being too interested up the front. If you sat up the back you looked cool. So I was right up the back.’ (IH1/Q4/P2)

‘... somebody who had been my best mate at one stage suddenly got into an argument with me and picked a fight and I flattened him and gave him a blood nose. And I didn’t have any problems after that.’ (IH1/Q4/P2)

For the sake of studies he deferred socialising, deliberately suppressing feelings through teenage years ‘with great difficulty.’ (IH1/Q78/P29)
It wasn’t until he had finished his studies and moved cities that he began actively socialising:

‘I then felt the freedom to start to develop that and fell into sort of relationships with people in the corridors in the hostel and some were young and some were old and you know other couples who were already going together and we did a lot of socialising … I used do car rallies and bike riding and what have you.’ (IH1/Q79/P29)

After a couple of years he met and married his wife.

‘I seemed to accept that I could relate to [wife] better than I could to her cousin. I could live with [wife], I could socialise with her cousin … And we just grew together and we grew in love with one another I guess, although that wasn’t there for either of us in the beginning.’ (IH1/Q80/pp29-30)

Traditional gendered roles then became important:

‘… once you marry and have a family and kids you realise that you need to provide.’ (IH1/Q29/P11)

Those roles were one of the things that tied IH to hierarchy:

‘I guess in any area I had gone into, I would have also realised that you have to work your way up in the system as best you could to best meet the needs of your family and your own commitments.’ (IH1/Q29/P11)

**Authority Figures, Mentors and Role Models**

Deference to external authority was a repeated theme:

‘Your teachers were authoritarian figures and you obeyed them. It wasn’t proper for them to laugh at you or laugh with you. They had to maintain that aloofness as the teacher.’ (IH1/Q15/pp6-7)

‘Although I would be the first to say that I am under the authority of God, his authority is supreme. So it’s not a … I don’t think it’s a big-noted or a self-centred desire to be in charge; it’s a sense in which I like to do a good job.’ (IH3/Q98/P31)

He made very little mention of others except in unequal relationships – parents, teachers (primary, high, private school, RMIT and doctor neighbour) and mentors. They were all described as wise, powerful and supportive. He seemed to value them if they valued him. He felt gratitude for their interest, and pride in ‘making an impression’ and being noticed, whether for humour (primary school), determination, good results and care in hospital (RMIT), or awards (gaining a two-year Cadetship instead of for one year).
Consequently mentors were significant to him. As a water engineer:

‘I worked under a very dry gentleman who didn’t have much of a sense of humour. And yet I enjoyed working with him and I learnt a lot. And he took me places and showed me things and explained things.’ (IH1/Q52/P22)

While at RMIT, IH contracted hepatitis and was visited by the head of the department, who left him with course books to study:

‘… I was touched to think that somebody would bother to come in, somebody that I didn’t even know. And not only that but to bring books that other people had to buy and he gave them and left them for me.’ (IH1/Q42/P18)

When he first went to work at the University, he worked ...

‘... with the pervious Founding Head. He was a very congenial cooperative supportive person ... the best of my working days were at that time.’ (IH3/Q98/P31)

He mentioned one colleague of significance to him, whom he had also had a role in employing:

‘Yes, there is one in particular. A colleague whose name is G. Well I was on the interview panel who selected him. It would have been ten years before I left, just about. And so I worked with him for the last ten years and he was a very supportive easy going and ... how else would you describe him ... a colleague. A confidante. Somebody you could really ... I mean I had no hesitation confiding in him whatsoever.’ (IH3/Q59/P21)

**Significant Experiences**

IH had several experiences which were significant in shaping his views and making him aware of his own values. His hepatitis experience, for instance, left him with vivid memories:

‘I went into hospital and there were other people, young men of a similar age to me, who died around me. There was a young baby who nearly died. And I was a month in hospital ... A young traffic light engineer who died, for example, leaving a young wife and children behind ... that sort of affected me somewhat.’ (IH1/Q41-42/pp17-18)

Experiences of mortality again affected him some years later:

‘… when I was wading through the sewers there is always grit in the bottom but there was always occasionally something solid and it was either an old decaying animal or possibly even a child. Because that happened. And here was I quite a naive young chap, just out of school, I experiencing this reality of life.’ (IH1/Q55/P23)
He felt his strong self-concepts and values framework enabled him to deal with such experiences:

‘And I handled it very well ... Well, I think I realised that there were people with different value systems and that there were people from all walks of life and not everybody had the privilege of growing up with the guidance and direction or having the gift of sensitivity and concern for others that I had ...’ (IH1/Q56/P23)

**Self Concepts**

‘And I have been a soft hearted caring sort of a person ...’ (IH1/Q3/P1)

‘I also found it very hurtful when anybody did anything to me that would be ... that affected anything that had value to me ... I had an old biscuit tin, a rectangular biscuit tin with a picture of a painting on it, that I think I got from a favourite uncle and I used it as a pencil tin. And on one occasion it went missing and I knew it had been stolen. And that really upset me. I couldn’t have cared less about the pencils but I didn’t want to lose that tin. And it was some time later, I think a couple of weeks, that the tin was recovered in amongst the vegetation. I think it was found there. The pencils and contents were never found but the tin was found. It was all smashed up. And that hurt me. Things like that. That’s an example. I was a sensitive person ... my perception was that other kids couldn’t have cared less about a stupid old pencil tin. But it meant something to me. I had a sentimental attachment to that tin because it came from a favourite uncle.’ (IH1/Q69-70/P26-27)

‘… I have always been sensitive to people and wanted to relate to people.’ (IH1/Q40/P15)

‘I have always thought of myself as a very practical person.’ (IH1/Q52/P22)

Overall he regarded himself as more analytic, rather than ‘artistic’ in temperament.

‘I find it much easier to relate to my son than my daughter. She has an artistic temperament and is moody and messy and I have trouble with that because I am always very organised. Everything is in nice little stacks.’ (IH3/Q101/P32)

**Beliefs/Spirituality**

IH was raised in an non-mainstream Christian group, which he later came to call a ‘sect’.

As an adult he went to a more mainstream Christian church:

‘… we got some, what I would now describe as, very sound biblical Baptist teaching.’ (IH1/Q84/P33)

He then moved to a small [denominational] fellowship, hoping to start a new church.

‘... a small group of Christians meeting in a home ...’ (IH1/Q85/P31)
‘... we were involved in Bible study groups or fellowship groups you might like to call them. We were heavily involved in prayer. We did many other things. We were on prayer chains. We applied our faith to our life over those years, and still do.’

(IH1/Q90/P33)

The group became constituted as a church, bought land and built a church building, with IH as its structural engineer.

‘The building went ahead, we moved into the building and there we spent 18 years ...’

(IH1/Q85/P31)

When he and his wife left that congregation, they then became active members of a Pentecostal Christian church group and moved to what they felt was a more spiritual focus:

‘... in the last few years, probably the last five or so, since we decided to move on from the ... church, for various reasons, we have grown a lot more in some other spiritual areas apart from Bible knowledge or Bible study ... what I would call gifts of the spirit ... In particular I am talking about being able to commune with the spirit of God on a spiritual level.’

(IH1/Q94/P34-35)

His faith continued to be a strong pillar in his life:

‘And I would have to say that that faith has been the thing that has first of all held me together in some very difficult circumstances on a couple of occasions but particularly in the last few years before the change that I have gone through in my work. And it’s also been the thing that has enabled me to be free of all of the encumbrances that were developing around me and were oppressing me.’

(IH1/Q90/P33)

‘I can remember going camping on my own [as a young man]. I’d just go out in the bush with my old Toyota and off the beaten track, off the gravel road, and at times just through the bracken, and just pull up miles from any road and just set up tent and just take in the sounds and the creation. I can remember one night lying in the tent looking up at the stars for hours in the bush with all the sounds around me, and it never frightened me all the noise of being alone in the bush. There was nothing there to be frightened of. But just looking at it all and looking at the stars and thinking and thinking and realising that there had to be a Creator of all of this. You know, no matter how I tried to approach it intellectually, there had to be a Creator. I can remember that experience.’

(IH3/Q51/P18)

‘And to me miracles, miraculous events, are now an everyday part of my life and the lives of people I move in the circles of, in my involvement in church and in my Christian walk.’

(IH1/Q105/P40)
Work and Career
As a young man, IH was persuaded to go into engineering for job prospects, rather than aeronautics, something he later regretted. After gaining an engineering Diploma, he converted it to a Degree and worked for 10 years in various engineering positions within a government department.

‘I liked the sound of the name of the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) And on enrolment day I simply turned up to try and enrol in something at the RMIT. Now I had no idea what it was exactly, I just knew it needed to be something in the engineering area ... I said, ‘What’s aeronautical engineering like?’ And the lady said something like, “Well, there aren’t many jobs.” So I said, ‘Oh well, I suppose I’d better enrol in civil engineering.’ So it’s as simple as that.’ (IH1/Q41/pp16-17)

It was not a glamorous job,

‘But it didn’t worry me at all being involved in what could have ended up being or could have been perceived to be quite a dead end area to start out in, sewerage and stormwater maintenance.’ (IH1/Q32/P22)

... but he had a variety of opportunities within it, including leadership:

‘And then he went on leave and I was temporarily put in charge of the section. So that was a sense of responsibility that after just, I recall, a year or two of graduation, here I was, technically, in charge of the entire sewerage system and sewerage treatment processing for the [area]. A rather dubious honour.’ (IH1/Q52/P22)

After eight years on rotation in the Public Service, and wanting promotion and development, he ‘became a little dissatisfied there.’ (IH1/Q44/P20)

‘... eight years with the [Government] Department ... 10 years counting the two years cadetship at the beginning. Then ... I was able to go [as a lecturer] to the university, which was then the [city] College, it wasn’t a university, where I then worked for 18 years. It became a university in that time.’ (IH3/Q104/P38)

However, he felt a certain type of character gained success more easily in hierarchical organisations; a character type which he was not comfortable in becoming:

‘... people who seem to succeed in the work environment are often, in my perception anyway, you know the tough sort of walk-over-everybody type of people.’ (IH1/Q3/P2)
Persecution

Persecution and a sense of being persecuted played a significant role in his life, from bullying at primary school to mockery at High school and work:

‘I suffered persecution even at school because of my swat-type nature.’ (IH1/Q4/P2)

‘Oh well, I was under some, you know, badgering from people because I was a sensitive sort of a bloke and not one of the rough tough mob. So I used to come under a bit of pressure from people.’ (IH1/Q12/P5)

‘And then I went to high school and that was pretty tough because there was a lot more bullying started to come in then.’ (IH1/Q7/P4)

‘And I perceive that it may even have been a deliberate attempt to humble me by the organisation because they realised that I’d done okay in my course. I was put straight from that, having qualified now as a structural engineer, into sewerage and stormwater maintenance. And for a period of time much of my work involved me donning waders and walking through sewer mains at 3.00 a.m.’ (IH1/Q51/P22)

This sense of persecution was a definitive factor in his transition process out of the University he worked at for 18 years:

‘... shortly after having made a commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ in baptism I took up a position as a lecturer at what was later to become the University of [place] where I laboured long and hard (with an emphasis on hard) for some 18 years, eventually suffering great persecution for my stands against injustice and corruption. For God had clearly directed me to “keep justice and do righteousness” in my place of employment. And I refer to the Bible … in which it stated ”blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake for theirs is the kingdom of heaven ... Matthew 5:10.” (IH1/Q104/P38)

Before he left IH felt increasing pressure and oppression there:

‘There was no negotiation, it was just constant expectation. You will do this and you will do that.’ (IH3/Q91/P30)

‘And there was, like, I would describe as the sense of a conspiracy around the situation whereby despite my commitment to the place and to the students ...’ (IH1/Q118/P43)

He told me that this, at times, was physically demonstrated:

‘There were times when I was taken by the scruff of the neck in the staircase and physically threatened ... I mean that was frequent. Because I stood for justice, correctness, honesty, and righteousness in the work place. And people knew that I stood for that and it was like there was oppression.’ (IH3/Q65/P23)

His levels of anxiety increased:
‘I reached a point in my life through my work where I was trapped, oppressed, and medically diagnosed as having anxiety and depression with only at best a 40 per cent chance of surviving.’ (IH1/Q98/P36)

IH eventually received a redundancy package and left:

‘Well the most significant things are what happened just all in that short space of time, a very short space of time. The key things were, the crux that came in my health and stress, and I sensed that that was tied up with the organisation or certain individuals suddenly deciding it was time they got rid of me. Then all of the psychological stuff and the prayer counselling and those couple of experiences that I’d had in church circles that I related to you, and the fact that within basically a few days or a week or two I had left the university … At a maximum it would have been maybe three months when the critical things happened.’ (IH3/Q28/P11)

‘I didn’t have much control over it. It was sort of forced upon me.’ (IH3/Q63/P22)

He felt relieved and changed once out of his university situation:

‘I see it as a blessing from God. I really do.’ (IH3/Q86/P28)

‘I think I’m much easier to live with, although perhaps I’m still not always the easiest person to live with. But I have been able to spend some time with my kids.’ (IH3/Q101/P32)

He felt he was ‘in heaven’ in his own business, even after some two years, and said he felt no sense of pressure. In keeping with his long years of habit he would still stay up all night working on something but he felt there was commitment in that rather than a sense of pressure (IH3/Q85-87/P28)

‘I am freer to be able to do what I want when I want … We’re looking to the end of the year and have got a holiday planned. At least we can think about those things whereas before we couldn’t. I have also been involved in some outreach activities with our church and I am involved in two children’s program in the church. I have an inclination to sort of work with kids.’ (IH3/Q101/pp32-33)

**Common Phrases**

Other than ‘persecution’, two common phrases recurred in IH’s recollections. One was ‘grounding’:

‘... even at that early stage I recognised that education was important and if I wanted to be successful later on it was good to get a good grounding and a good understanding.’ (IH1/Q13/P6)

He put his lack of music ability down to lack of ‘grounding’ in early childhood.
The other one was the word ‘opportunity’, indicating choice as well as possibilities:

‘The opportunity was made available to me ...’ (IH1/Q32/P11)

‘I was offered the opportunity of repeating third grade.’ (IH1/Q8/P4)

‘But in the final year of the diploma I was offered the opportunity to go into a small group of people to go on and be in the first cohort of degree graduates ... I topped the course. It was very, very tough.’ (IH1/Q42/P18-19)

‘And it really was a crossroad because there were opportunities ...’ (IH1/Q47/P21)

**Paper**

IH relied heavily on the power in the authority of records and the written word. (IH3/Q23-24/pp9-10)

He showed me documentation covering:

- diaries and records of his student days
- diaries and reports from his Cadetship days
- records of every job application he had ever done
- detailed records of his experiences in his last hierarchical job at the University
- key papers relating to his employment at the university
- and a folder that ‘contains all of the controversial documentation and all the dirty rubbish that was going on backwards and forwards one way and the other.’ (IH3/Q24/P10)
- several diagnostic tools including self analysis questionnaires, Myers Briggs assessments, and:

  ‘... a full set of drawings for [name] Hospital which I supervised the construction of. I was the construction engineer in charge of construction.’ (IH3/Q42/P16)

He also documented his process of leaving the University:

‘And I have tried to document it. Because at the time I was trying to protect myself because most of it was so unbelievable that unless it was documented nobody ever would give it any credibility. So in case I needed to prove it, I kept records.’ (IH3/Q97/pp30-31)

**Satisfaction**

IH had a very strong desire to do well at whatever he was responsible for, and set high standards for himself:

‘It hurts me if I can’t do the job well.’ (IH3/Q89/P29)
In his new business, as a consulting engineer, he derived great satisfaction from doing a good job for his clients:

‘The satisfaction of knowing that the job has been done almost as well as it’s possible to do. It will never be perfect but it can come close ... by the time they have gotten my report they are blown out of the water. Because instead of having a two or three page thrown together typed thing with grammatical inconsistencies and so on, they get my report which might be a 20 page report with photographs, with documentation, with copies of all the correspondence beautifully presented, bound together with a very professional looking account. And they get a receipt straight after. It's all just done so promptly.’ (IH3/Q89/P29)

As a man, it was flying, his childhood dream, that gave him his greatest satisfaction:

‘I would plan a trip and do all the checks and depart. Take off. And execute the flight. And then do the landing and then clean it all up you know and ... finish it all. And file the flight plan in my records and it’s all over and done with. It’s clean cut. Had a starting time and a finishing time and I have done the job well and I have reviewed it afterwards. Was there anything I could have done better? But there is nothing that has ever given me more satisfaction in a day to day experience/nature than to have executed a well planned successful flight. And to finish it off with a greaser of a landing and everybody is happy and I feel that I have kept them safe and we have got to the destination. There’s nothing more satisfying than that.’ (IH3/Q98/P31)

This vignette demonstrated characteristics that IH held dear: being efficient, capable, organised, and protective, in charge and in control, and successful. He felt his post-University career was more closely aligned with these characteristics and gave him opportunities to demonstrate them more easily.

**JL Speaks for Himself**

As an only child:

‘I think I probably learnt how to become popular in a group pretty early on as a survival skill otherwise I didn’t have anyone else to play with. So yes, I know how to become popular or liked - I’m not bad at that, by and large ... I’m not really worried about what people say about me now, I think that sometimes that can reflect on them rather than on me and I can just push on.’ (JL2/Q91 and 93/P25)
He began his involvement with the military while still at school, showing clear capability:

‘I’m the only guy in the whole history of the school that won - we were in school cadets for four years - that won the top cadet prize every year for four years, it’s never been done in the history of the school ...’ (JL2/Q101/P27)

However he was not always a compliant pupil:

‘Yes, so I used to get a few whacks around the bum from him and off to the Headmaster or Vice Principal until I got too old and he just couldn’t do it. In the mid ‘60s it was starting to be a bit frowned upon ... then they were trying the old mind games with me and I just wouldn’t be in that.’ (JL2/Q107/P28)

But it was at school that his dedication and determination to achieve his goals became clear, and these characteristics remained a strong part of his life:

‘The thing is, again, I studied like Christ for the subjects I needed to get into Duntroon, I was lucky I had a goal, and I got honours. They didn’t believe this. This kid who was - I think I went to the student counsellor and did an IQ test and they said you can be a bus driver or something. I said I’ve got news for you and you’re off the beam there. If I didn’t have that motivation in school - I just made it happen.’ (JL2/Q107/P28)

JL’s perception of life and the military was strongly influenced by his father:

‘… Then I was very strongly influenced again by the military, by the hierarchy, because of my father ... My father was a distinguished soldier, he was Second AIF and was actually in the horse-drawn artillery prior to that in the CMF, Citizens Military Forces, and it was in a unit pretty well throughout his whole war years and a very proud unit and very much the egalitarian approach. Officers were certainly a world apart. He was an officer, but he was loved by his troops for what he was and what he did. That’s affected me and a number of my contemporaries.’ (JL1/Q28-29/P6)

‘The day I graduated my father sat down with me and said, Son, I never want you ever to criticise your soldiers.’ (JL1/Q91/P17)

First time round, JL was refused entry to Duntroon, despite his grades, because he was ‘too keen’. It strongly affected him.

‘... I was very strongly influenced, I think I mentioned to you last time, by being rejected from Duntroon. But it also affected me in that I don’t have a fantastic - I might sound differently, but I basically don’t have a fantastic view of my own abilities.’ (JL2/Q94-95/P25)

The second time he left nothing to chance:
‘I went twice. I studied the process, I went to university for a year, I was at Monash University for a year. A couple of things. I failed what’s called - this is a medical thing, the Colour Safe - Defective Colour Safe. So I went and studied the test and went along again, a different doctor, and I passed, because I knew the test.’ (JL1/Q37/P7)

‘... this is a 16-year-old ... And also I learnt the IQ system and I actually learnt their whole selection procedure, which was actually documented, if you use the initiative to find it. With no help I just went and found it through university libraries and things so I knew what they were doing ... it shows the determination in me; that’s stayed with me.’ (JL1/Q40-41/P8)

‘I’d done my homework ... I sat down with people who had gone through the procedure ... Because I wasn’t going to lose. I’d had enough of this crap about being told that maybe I didn’t have the intellect or I was a bit obsessive, so I went and fixed it’. (JL1/Q48-50/P9)

His family were not pressuring him, nor expecting him to emulate his father, though this was not the case for others:

‘... [some] people I started in the Army with, they had a background, a military background somewhere. Sometimes that was disastrous for people because of the pressure of it, whereas I didn’t have a pressure really, because there was an acceptance that if the military wasn’t for me, that’s not the end of the world.’ (JL1/Q29/P6)

Once accepted and resident in Duntroon, JL was quickly socialised:

‘First year you couldn’t go on leave for the first three months. You had to pass a memory test of all the traditions and history of Duntroon. You didn’t go on leave, so some people who had good photographic memories left a month earlier than you did, but you didn’t get on leave until Easter and then that was a closed leave anyway They sent you down to the Brindabella’s or something with a tent and you were left by yourself.’ (JL1/Q105/P19)

He soon came to realise being in the military was to become:

‘A calling, not just a job at all.’ (JL1/Q91/P17)

‘Yes, it’s like the priesthood.’ (JL1/Q137/P26)

It was a cloistered fraternity very like a priesthood, as much by the shared culture as by the members being moved to different locations (postings), necessitating them to leave support networks, friends and family outside the group. The military became all those things for them:

‘... you are not superior to any of your contemporaries, you are looking after your classmates, that’s why the Duntroon classes are a very close group, like brothers. You
know their families, you know them, you know what makes them tick, their strengths 
and weaknesses, you’re forgiving. I was an only child, these guys - I’ve got 40-odd 
brothers ...’ (JL1/Q106/P19)

‘But the military ones, I’ve either known - I knew about 800 people in Duntroon over 
four years, and you pass through different rotations with the same people so you build a 
group of friends which might be quite senior to you, might be quite junior that become - 
after two years with them you might move on and you mightn’t see them for another 
five years and then you’ve got another posting with them.’ (JL2/Q56/P14)

Fitting expectations, such as appearances, was important:

‘There’s a responsibility in it too ... in the old days you would not walk down the street 
on a Saturday unshaven. Just in case you bumped into somebody, a soldier or 
something and see you’re unshaven. Not acceptable behaviour ... Yes [it’s a 24 hour 
job]; it was a dedication.’ (JL1/Q85-86/P15)

‘The trappings are an enabling mechanism - they’re passive reminders that evolved, that 
there’s a position here.’ (JL1/Q84/PP15-16)

‘... you’d bump into the odd junior officer that wasn’t shaven and that had an effect on 
you, that he didn’t actually aspire to some of the standards.’ (JL1/Q88/P16)

Having a life or friends outside the military was:

‘Very hard, except for your old school friends and people you met on postings, but when 
you move every 18 months on average, complete changes, it’s very hard to pick up 
civilian friends.’ (JL2/Q55/P14)

JL was self depreciating about himself and put a view forward of himself as a man 
almost capable by proxy, though this was patently untrue from his successes.

‘... there was a statement in my report - I did a Command and General Staff Quality, a 
year’s course and there were 80 students, and on my report it said that Major JL is the 
broadest and complete officer on the course.’ (JL1/Q60/P11)

Even in his partner he considers himself lucky rather than adept in his choice:

‘I wasn’t that smart, I was just lucky ... I’ve been lucky because I’ve got a life partner 
that’s actually compensated for my foibles.’ (JL2/ Q97 and 99/P26)

In the military he learnt:

• delegation and networking:

‘I’m pretty good at working through others. I’m not a high IQ person or anything, I 
know that ... and we talked about different skills - I’ve been lucky that the world has 
changed a bit and I seem to have the intelligence for that. But I’m not a shooting,
fishing, jumping, junior woodchuck very practical sort of person with my hands or anything. I often have a saying, “that’s what Sergeants are for ...” ’ (JL2/Q95/P25)

- policy, analysis and organisational skills:
  ‘You see, the Staff Corps that I talked about, it means Staff work. Staff Work is writing concept papers, articulating plans, policies, articulating instructions, sometimes highly complex, and they’re things that aren’t measured - they’re enabling activities for sub-activities for the overall activity … Some of those things are a bit hard to measure, but your results are manifested in the overall result.’ (JL2/Q38/P10)

- about ‘justice’:
  ‘What did I get from the first couple of years in my life in the Army? I discovered there’s no such thing as justice. That is you can’t expect, somewhat naively, to think that you’re going to be seen for your best intentions or your efforts; that you’re going to be duly rewarded. It doesn’t happen like that, life’s not like that … You hear teenagers say, that’s not fair. I don’t care, I’m sorry, that’s what it’s like.’ (JL2/Q41/pp10-11)

- and leadership and teams:
  ‘Different styles. Coercive, directive, inclusive, all the shades. And of course that came from a study and reflection on different leaders. You’re given an education in the different styles and perhaps for your own judgement and personality where you fit in.’ (JL2/Q12/P4)

  ‘So that’s another attitude that you get of being in the military, you’ve got to work in with teams and less educated people and you start to discover that you’ve been inculcated with the view that when you’re in a team you have a role as a leader, but those members aren’t necessarily inferior or - you’re not superior because of that, you just have a particular skill or talents, or set of talents, but they may be superb in other things, things that you could never do yourself.’ (JL2/Q8/P3)

  ‘Unforgivable if you didn’t go and seek advice ... So it wasn’t a notion that you just did everything yourself, far from it. You were in a multi-disciplined team that you orchestrated because you’d been nominated to be the leader or manager of it.’ (JL1/Q12/P3)

He soon learned having authority was different from having rank:

  ‘Yes [You take a role rather than a position above the others. Just a role in the jigsaw]. When an officer, in this hierarchy, starts to use their rank they’re starting to fail. You are using your own personal skills and competency to influence people, not your rank ... When people pull rank on you, you know they haven’t got either an argument or the strength of character.’ (JL1/Q82-83/P15)

  ‘It’s from the heart. It’s the person that they’re abiding to, not the authority.’ (JL1/Q125/P23)
‘I was a learner. Sure, accepted if I made the right decisions, corrected if I didn’t in some way ... they’d dob you in as soon as look at you, something fierce. If they thought you were an idiot they weren’t going to put up with it. They’d go and tell the RSM or Regimental Sergeant Major, this bloke’s a squeezer. Okay, he’d go through the officer system and you’d be watched.’ (JL1/Q125/P24)

He described military life in several ways:

• brutal and unfair:

‘The [military] system is one of the most brutal corporate systems you could imagine … it inculcates a certain attitude within … The ethos about looking after your soldiers and the intellectual side, but the system is like - is highly political, like any organisation, and it’s not necessarily fair. It’s a brutal system. It will arbitrarily say, “You’re not going anywhere”, push you aside.’ (JL1/Q95, 97, 98/P17)

‘Duntroon in particular, was a stark example of injustice, rough justice. You could see it around you all of the time. Bastardisation was rough. It picked on some people that shouldn’t have been and it singled out others that - it actually missed some people that should have copped a lot, but they were smart.’ (JL2/Q43/P11)

• risk averse:

‘… when people’s lives are concerned we’re risk adverse about people being killed or national objectives being lost.’ (JL1/Q5/P2)

‘Deviation from a standard is not acceptable because you’ll kill people.’ (JL1/Q65/P12)

• success-focused:

‘I don’t give a stuff how you do it, as long as it’s moral and someone’s not going to get killed and it’s not going to have flak for the organisation. Go to it. Fill your boots.’ (JL1/Q119/P22)

‘You know that authority is going to say one thing but if it’s not achievable you get branded. And you know your soldiers are your people and doing the same to you, so you dispense the art of the achievable, not some stupid on-high thing that will never be achieved.’ (JL1/Q117/P22)

• based on luck and the value of mentors:

‘… this person that’s gone to very senior levels, if they’re intelligent they know that some of these people - and you bump into them, they’re a General and this guy is a Lieutenant Colonel, same class, you know pretty well that it’s just the luck of the draw if you’ve got any brains ... this person hasn’t been [as] successful for a particular clash, personality clash, whatever. Didn’t have a benefactor or a sponsor.’ (JL2/Q58/P15)

‘As you get more senior you need sponsors you need champions. For instance, what happened to me was my champions were either killed or retired, and others had their champions, through good health or chance, [who] were very successful, so they took
their cohort or their sphere of people they knew. It’s not an unreasonable thing. If you are given the task to select for a certain position, command or something, if you’ve got a group of 18 on your list and you know one, two or three of them, if you know that one can do it of your three, you’ll select them. It’s not saying that the other 17 or so are poor, it just means you’re playing with certainties. So it’s not necessarily a fair system. But for the system it works.’ (JL1/Q139/P26)

‘Quite frankly it’s like a corporation or business, that’s the focus. You can’t be fair to everyone - it’s just a game of chance ... Roll of the dice.’ (JL1/Q140-141/P27)

• and politics

‘... but you’ve got to play the politicians too. You’ve got to understand because they’re selected by the politicians. When they get to above a Major General ... would have been vetted by Department of Foreign Affairs and by the senior Defence hierarchy.’ (JL1/Q146-147/P29)

A key feature was the value of tasks:

‘The system is training task-oriented people, action people, not - although there’s an acceptance - in order to be able to know what actions are to be taken, there’s an intellectual process. There’s the policy or combat development side ... ’ (JL1/Q155/P30)

‘... almost an ethos of “Don’t bother me with the impediments about how something’s to be done. Get on with it and here are your parameters.” ’ (JL1/Q2/P1)

Failure brought swift results:

‘But, not forgiving if the results are not good, not forgiving at all. So, a poorly run, disorganised, wasting people’s time, including soldiers time - very unforgiving.’ (JL1/Q7/P2)

‘I’d say about three or four of them graduated. They didn’t last for whatever reason. Some of them were really lovely people. It didn’t mean they were inferior, they just didn’t make it ... they went - once the decision was made, they didn’t come back and talk to you about it, they were gone. They disappeared ... gone. You never saw [them go].’ (JL1/Q111 and 113/pp20-21)

‘... if you didn’t do too well then you started to get jobs according to your abilities, or perceptions of your abilities. So you could always tell from your postings how you were being regarded by the system ... you could go into a unit, a fighting unit, an active unit and there would be different jobs in that Battalion and you would know who were the whips and who were the drones, by those jobs, pretty well, and it started early.’ (JL1/Q16/P4)

‘The famous thing was to be invited to a morning tea with a Battalion second in command and you knew you’d cocked it up. It would be a huge joke. Everybody would know that sonny-boy’s been invited to a morning tea and it would be - there’d be - you’d come along and sit down with the Battalion second in command and it would be
silver service and you’d be told, “We don’t do things like that. You should have considered other things.”’ (JL1/Q12/P3)

It was clear the survival of the system prevailed over people, yet at the same time those in it were seen as ‘it’:

‘... dedication to the group that the system gives you ...’ (JL1/Q123/P23)

Then there was bastardisation to contend with. I asked what it meant:

‘It’s a systematic wearing down of your moral courage to a point whether either you bail out or you say ‘Get stuffed. I do believe in what I believe in.’ (JL2/Q109/P29)

‘Yes, but that was a game. You had to make the game - in that bastardisation you had to have the nous - you knew the rules, you knew they were completely slanted against you, on purpose, because you weren’t to do that to your soldiers. There was some reverse logic and funny logic to it, and I don’t agree with it in sum, with hindsight, but I’m glad I went through it personally.’ (JL2/Q109/P29)

‘So you are being ... strong enough to cope with the hurly burly bit it’s not your charter to go out and create hurly burly for other people, life will do that anyway.’ (JL2/Q47/P12)

He wrote to his father:

‘.. the things I told him [his father] about Duntroon - I remember in that first Easter I wrote a 10-page letter about what was going on to get it out from inside. He wrote me back a one line paragraph, among other things. “This is not in the traditions of the Australian Imperial Forces. Son, don’t ever think this is the right way to do things”. And he was right. Bastardisation was not the right way to do things. I’m glad I did it, because it strengthened me. I would not like to see my son go through it, I don’t think it’s productive ...’ (JL1/Q144/P27)

JL’s response to bastardisation must have raised some eyebrows:

‘I wanted to join Duntroon, I didn’t even want to join the Army. Duntroon was the thing. So after all this turmoil to get there, I’m standing being bastardised, but boy, was I happy. Everyone around me is miserable, but I made it. I didn’t care what happened to me. Mind you I’d done my homework. I knew what they were trying to do anyway, because I’d had a little bit of time. You got the picture before, so I was happy. They couldn’t do anything to me, because - and I was getting in the shit because I was smiling.’ (JL2/Q108/pp28-29)

Status and position in the hierarchy was a visible and significant thing:

‘So I know if I walked in to the Defence Academy and I looked down the board of the positions I could tell you who were the flyers and - the whips and the drones, I can tell

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you, bang. I’ve never met them, but I can tell you which ones, by and large, are not going well and which ones are.’ (JL2/Q58/P15)

There was a long ‘apprenticeship’ to identify individual capabilities:

‘And this happens from day one. Even if you’re put into a unit and you’ve got a two-year posting, they will probably, over two years, cycle you through two different sorts of job for your own personal development, that’s part of it. Then you’ll go on a posting - you’ll go to something different, like a training job, or an administrative job, and then you’ll go from that to policy development, personnel, and then they say, this guy is good at personnel things, right after about eight - three postings out of Duntroon they’ll start to say well you’ve got certain talents.’ (JL1/Q158/P31)

Heroes

Having heroes was part of the culture:

‘You had your heroes as the senior cadets, that’s your only reference point, the senior cadets. You’re in a cloistered environment.’ (JL1/Q79/P104-19)

However, there was more to it than emulating others:

‘That was part of the deal. You weren’t expected to just ape people, you were expected to be your own person.’ (JL2/Q13/P4)

There were several people significant to JL. His father was one. He gave a couple of examples of the regard his father was held in. This is one:

‘I’ll give you an example, last year my 86-year-old father sitting down the South Coast with an 82-year-old ... He [the 82 year-old] was a Corporal and my father was a young Captain, that was the first night of action they ever saw, so ... they were bombarding Damor in Southern Lebanon, and against the French. It was highly successful and the artillery was the main dominant thing and the French surrendered ... A not insignificant foe; the French Foreign Legion don’t surrender very often, but it was done very well. Now, when we were saying goodbye to this fellow, and he had his wife with him, the 82-year-old, and my 86-year-old father, he turned to me and said, “you look after him; he looked after us” … I’d seen that right through my life, even when I was a boy, because these people ... men don’t really - Australian men in the 1960s - 50s and 60s, they didn’t say those sorts of things lightly.’ (JL1/Q123/P23)

Two other men earned his deep admiration:

‘... two of the major influences on me were officers, one of them is now dead, he’s actually quite well known, he was an Olympic Pentathlon team member, Rome Olympics, his name is TH ... He was an Army officer. He was a softly-spoken, quite a short man who had - really had the characteristics that I admired … He was very good
at dealing [with] and encouraging average people and the weak as well. And a very broad view of life and people. A prolific letter-writer. A man who would read something in the paper about drug taking or something and would write either to somebody somewhere about doing something, or letters to the editor or to the victim or something. Took the trouble to write to those people, handwritten thing, and he did that all his life. He led the last bayonet charge in Australian military history, 1,000 parachute jumps, helicopter, fixed winged pilot, left the military as a Brigadier, started his own little airline ... Over 600 people attended his funeral, both sides of the Duntroon Chapel. By little old people, little old ladies with a stick, going up, that he’d touched them in some way. Was a man who expected people to make mistakes and used to nurture them through their mistakes. Not terribly tolerant of people making the same mistake twice, but encouraged people to have a go. In fact sins of commission were okay, but sins of omission, that is sitting on your bum and doing nothing, in leaders, absolute intolerance. Absolute disdain. People who would not have a go ... a young officer volunteered for the parachute course and got into the door of the plane and refused to jump: gone. “You volunteered, you do it. No ifs or buts. You made the decision to do it when you said ‘yes’, not when the reality faced you, Son. Get out. Go. Not interested, move out of my unit. Lack of moral courage.” Very interesting guy, but loved. A brave but compassionate man.’ (JL2/Q80/P20-21)

‘The other fellow was, actually they were great friends, a guy, GM, who was what’s called ‘up through the ranks’. That is, he was a soldier who was commissioned virtually in the field as being a natural leader and the system, on occasions, does this. Again, a charismatic leader who was completely anti-military in terms of his demeanour. He’d come unshaven. Soldiers get charged for being unshaven. He’d – sort of like a rat through a picket fence, he’d have a go at shaving, but it wasn’t – he wouldn’t do a very good job and he’d have the buttons all done up the wrong way. He was commonly - there’s a term – ‘a bag of shit’, he looked like that. Unkempt hair, no comb or anything like that and if you’d been in the field for a few weeks and had camouflage cream on, well in the next few days you’d have washed it all off. So he’d be at a cocktail party with camouflage cream. That was GM. They all used to joke about GM, but he didn’t care about that sort of stuff, it wasn’t important to him. But the senior people loved him because he’d – “G., how’s it going?” “Not very well, and you’re not helping.” “Oh, G.” “Because you’re letting the game down, see you later.” “What have I done?” GM is about three ranks junior to that person but he didn’t care. Again, charming with women or to the people that he felt that he should be nice to, but it wasn’t the hierarchy. He ended up being a Brigadier, which is something for a person through the ranks, there aren’t many that do that. Universally loved as being a person that lived what he preached.’ (JL2/Q80/P21-22)

A third man demonstrated what JL called ‘completeness’, as he too had demonstrated in his Command and General Staff Quality year:
‘Peter Cosgrove, who is from the same tradition, who is actually mixing politics with military and is doing a brilliant job, because he’s got that completeness as well. He’s a compassionate person, and genuinely focuses on the political/human side, but to his commanders in the field he’s very tough. That is he demands a standard … because that’s appropriate to their circumstances …’ (JL1/Q65/P11)

**Friends and Colleagues**

He described his peers:

‘… my class was the most un-military lot you could ever meet. They weren’t selected for thinking-in-squares type people. They were selected for their leadership and their intellect. Sometimes you’d wonder. These guys weren’t necessarily - they liked the military, but they weren’t going to toe the line. That wasn’t expected. They would play the role, but the brain’s ticking over… my skill here is to get past this guy, do what he says, quietly, but of no importance in the big picture.’ (JL1/Q117/P21)

‘These people were of high calibre, people being, by and large, almost from the hierarchy I was in at that stage, male protestant, the odd Catholic work ethic, white. Principally a preponderance of private school, in those days; probably still is.’ (JL1/Q17-18/P4)

‘… it wasn’t a snobbery thing, but at times it appeared to be … but no, there was a great pride that you could be a tram conductors son, and now daughter, and be successful. In fact I’ll give you an example. General Peter Cosgrove, who is the Commander of the Timor Force, is the son of a Regimental Sergeant Major. In other words, his father was in the ranks, and that was quite acceptable … the whole idea was that don’t you think yourself better because you had a private education or something.’ (JL1/Q18-19/pp4-5)

‘… some young men went to Duntroon because their father expected them to go and they were very successful, the father’s, and they bore the burden of the success of their fathers, or brothers preceding them … If you’ve got an overlay of expectation from your family or your background, then that’s very, very difficult and you don’t normally survive.’ (JL1/Q29-30/P6)

**How did he fit?**

‘So, I’ve been doing that and influencing people, leading people and learning by it all my life. I was a rogue in primary school and then I slotted in to the private school thing where you, right or wrong, you had to be able to run, and cope and do it. I just slotted into it like a duck to water.’ (JL2/Q101/P27)

**Wood, Fire, Ash Worm and Bird: Leaving the Military**

When he left the military, after just over 20 years:

‘I was a relatively junior officer, I was only a Lieutenant Colonel at the age of 37 and I left at the age of 38 and I’m now 51, but my background was in what’s called the Staff
Corps ... [we] were identified broadly, I don’t want to overstate this, but as having the potential to go into the leadership of the executive side of the military.’ (JL1/Q1/P1)

‘Ah yes, the dress up gear. For instance, and this happens to a number of us, when we leave we chuck the trappings away. I took my mess kit and chucked it in the bin the day I left, because that didn’t turn me on.’ (JL1/Q84/pp15-16)

‘I would like to say that I did have some great formative experiences with military people.’ (JL2/Q53/P14)

‘That’s one thing that I did get, and by and large, save one or two, my group from Duntroon has very powerful [connections].’ (JL2/Q53/pp13-14)

He took with him:

- sound organisational and operational skills
  ‘I left the military in 1987 and my background in the military was on the command side, that is the executive side of the Army, so that was the decision-making and operational planning side of it.’ (JL1/Q1/P1)

- a value for team work
  ‘So that’s another attitude that you get of being in the military, you’ve got to work in with teams and less educated people and you start to discover that you’ve been inculcated with the view that when you’re in a team you have a role as a leader, but those members aren’t necessarily inferior or - you’re not superior because of that, you just have a particular skill or talents, or set of talents, but they may be superb in other things, things that you could never do yourself.’ (JL2/Q8/P3)

- excellent personal presentation skills
  ‘I can remember being in quite hard planning sessions and coming home at 11 o’clock at night and having to spit, polish and iron things for another hour before I went to bed. The worst thing you could do was get up and try and do it. So yeah, you had to do all this and this is ridiculous, this is just window dressing, but it was expected of you. That’s gone, but mind you I make sure that I present myself well for business meetings and all that sort of thing. You’ve got to present an image ... this is very much in the civilian world. If you present yourself as a yobbo, that’s what people think you are.’ (JL2/Q62-63/P16)

When he left the military he found work in the traditional way by answering advertisements and linking up with his networks. Once again he showed his pattern of strategic planning and of ‘doing his homework’ to achieve his goals:

‘I’ll tell you how I got there ... I did the traditional thing, I applied ... and when I applied for that job, a bit like this Duntroon example when I got in, I did a number on those organisations ... I proceeded to, in a sneaky way, tell them about their organisation,
what was weak with it, where it was going, where it wasn’t going. And the Chairman of
the Committee said to me, “You know more about the [company] than I do”. I said,
“Well, you just have to do your homework.” (JL1/Q167/P33)

‘Winning work ... If you don’t do the homework they’re not going to give it to you. You
don’t have an inalienable right to everyone being nice to you or help you. You’ve got to
help yourself. To give more than you take. Again this is the ethos that the military -
you’re a giver, not a taker.’ (JL1/Q167/P33)

This reference to concepts and skills learnt in the military became a common feature of
his discussions.

His first experience of the corporate world was a baptism of fire:

‘I left in 1987 and I went into [ABC] - as the Commercial Manager of a construction
company ... in the boom times. Commercial Manager was really the second in charge of
$150 million turnover company ... It was like war. I was beautifully trained for it.
Helter skelter things going all over the place ... Jobs to be done. Unions, death threats to
people, brown paper bags, incompetent managers, liars, court cases ...’ (JL1/Q162-163/P32)

He quickly learned the ropes, and his resulting favoured status was defined early,

‘I was an anointed one. I got invited, within six weeks, to be on the yacht with the
Chairman, and this was unheard of in [ABC]. I got the tie, the yacht with the
figurehead and all this sort of thing.’ (JL1/Q168/pp33-34)

... to the chagrin of another Manager:

‘... a crash/tackle type leadership ... brilliant, but a bastard. He saw me with this tie
when we were at some function, - it was a tie. Pulled it out of the rack and put it on –
[he] rang the Chairman of the Board personally and said “How dare you”, because he
had a bit of credence. “How dare you give that tie. I’m the only one - I didn’t get it as
quickly as him.” ’ (JL1/Q168/P34)

However, JL soon discovered:

‘They lied. They’re all liars. They didn’t step up to their responsibilities and they lied to
people ... They used me and it took me a little while to discover ... Different set of rules
... They conned me, yes. For a while, then the penny dropped ... then I made a quick
assessment: the enemy wasn’t just on the other side of the table; it was sitting next to
me. So I just adapted to that.’ (JL1/Q169-170, and Q172-173 and Q176/pp34-35)

‘... the leaders of businesses are usually pretty decent individuals. It’s the ones trying to
get to the top that are the problem.’ (JL2/Q74/P19)
His ethics of honesty, forthrightness, resilience and care of others, fuelled by his father’s example, did not match that business. He soon identified his enduring need to work ethically and moved on:

‘... the ethics that were inculcated - they were probably inculcated into me before I joined the Army actually, but they were reinforced. They are ethics that are quite powerful in business. Because it’s not that common to have people tell the truth. I don’t mean in an aggressive way, but telling the truth is quite powerful in business.’

(JL2/Q3/P1)

‘So to get back to your notion of morals and on ethics, I find that the military concept, where you tell the truth and you look someone in the eye and you’re consistent there, you tell what you honestly believe, even sometimes to your own detriment, that is very successful in civilian life, because you find that some people think that you’re showing a lot of courage, or you’re very strong ... And it’s the stuff of decent business relationships, because you’re in for the long-term, not for the short-term gain ... When you’re in an institution or organisation that you think you’re going to be in for life, then that’s a natural value position to take.’

(JL2/Q4-6/P2)

**His Way: a Man of Paradoxes and ‘Boxes’**

‘I always say there’s three things in life, this is part of the things in your job. Do something worthwhile, okay, make some money out of it, get rewarded, not just money, but get reward ... The third thing is, have some fun.’

(JL2/Q72/P18)

‘I often say this, 80 per cent of any solution is keeping on keeping on, pushing on, and we were certainly taught that. That sometimes you might be wrong, but you actually get a result, but by wavering you won’t.’

(JL1/Q22/P5)

**Drivers**

Achievement was a primary driver:

‘... but there’s a really strong fundamental internal driver beneath that isn’t there?

JL: Yes, there’s a success drive.’

(JL2/Q87/P24)

‘... a bit intolerant of people that can’t produce results ... Make it work, get it to work.’

(JL2/Q34 and 36/P9)

‘Internally driven, but that internal driving says you’ve got to go external, you’ve got to actually engage the outside world there, otherwise you’re not going to get satisfaction out of life.’

(JL2/Q89/P24)

Yet, he also asserted:

‘... the self-good of your ability to achieve in a sympathetic way and in a responsible way.’

(JL1/Q22/P5)
Relationships

‘I have a view that you’ve got to put more into a relationship than you take out. That you’ve got to be willing to help people unconditionally ... I don’t think it necessarily came from the military, but I guess it’s a conservative view, that you just help people when you can. You’re not rushing around making a big deal of it, but if you can help someone and be open about it, it’s amazing how life helps you.’ (JL2/Q7/P3)

‘I’m not really worried what people think. I used to, and I’m sure you picked up, to be liked is an important thing.’ (JL2/Q89/P24)

‘A lot of my friends and Christine’s friends are one-offs. I really do enjoy individuals.’ (JL2/Q102/P27)

‘SMac: ... So you’re an enabler and a nurturer.
JL: Yes.’ (JL1/Q58/P10)

‘SMac: ... The unity and the nurturing and then you’ve got this ‘them versus us’. So these are almost like cells aren’t they?
JL: Yes, they’re different areas of thought because - but it equips you well for working in a complex organisation.’ (JL1/Q117/P22)

Business

In the mid-nineties JL and a partner began their own IT outsourcing business.

‘Yes [delegated an outrider]. That’s what I do now. I’ve got all these really intelligent people, I could never do what they did, except that they seem to take nurturing from being given some guidance about the big picture.’ (JL1/Q56/P10)

‘I’m very much into the outsourcing, market-testing role, but I have to have a long-term relationship with the organisations that are doing that, and the people who are involved. A trustworthiness, that you can be seen to be actually not just an economic rationalist. If you’ve got the good of the organisation at heart and are sympathetic to the human side of people. You can’t always achieve that, but by jeez you should try.’ (JL2/Q67/P17)

‘... not taking the trouble to bring people along with you is quite dumb.’ (JL2/Q68/P18)

‘People are stupid in business, they don’t realise that rivals can be friends.’ (JL2/Q3/P1)

‘Yes, keep people informed in very important. High emphasis on this knowledge is power thing, or the concept is get that information out as quickly as you can. Don’t hold back, because competent people can go off and do things rather than twiddle their thumbs.’ (JL1/Q79/P15)

‘I judge my day by how many phone calls I don’t get. With 32 projects, if I try to be the centre of 32 projects, no way José. It gets pretty stressful. Exception, tell me by exception ... I do my ringing around about half past five of an evening and how are you
going, so that’s part of the deal. Taking an interest, but I don’t want to hear about chicken shit; I’m not interested.’ (JL2/Q23/P7)

‘I make a judgement, by and large - make a judgement of whether I need to involve myself. I’ll hear it from them. When I ring up at 5:30 in the afternoon and go “How’s it going?” I can pick up if their tired, just by the voice; whether they’re pissed off.’ (JL2/Q26/P7)

Different ‘Smarts’

‘I was beaten black and blue as a kid at primary school with the strap - I copped it something fierce. I wouldn’t sit still and I was always stirring up people, basically because I wasn’t really good at school, so it was a coping mechanism. You used to create pandemonium to get things on an even keel so you didn’t have to do the sums or whatever.’ (JL2/Q102/P27)

‘I know how to manipulate people so they go completely illogical, and then I’ll tell them. I’ll show them that they’re at a ridiculous point because I pushed them to the limit. You can do that and it’s not a nice part of my character. I can do that to people and I learnt it and I don’t think that’s a good thing in individuals.. What I was doing, because that’s how the bastardisation did it, if people were arguing - it might have been in the back of a truck, arguing over something, the group would bring people, or individuals, one on one, into a situation that was absolutely ludicrous and then you’d step back and say, so you believe this, this, this and this, and they just said vehemently that that was the case, and then you step back and you might invite people - do you know what this guy just said? Bang, bang, bang, bang, bang. Like that. It shatters that person because they realise that they’re completely off the planet. They might be saying Hitler was a good guy or something else.’ (JL2/Q113/P30)

‘...there are certain sort of IQ tests that I always fail ... My son is the same. But now with the computing I’m and my son and daughter are very attuned to computing. A different sort of intelligence required, concepts and all that sort of thing. Never looked back. My son, who was a plodder at school, is now getting top of courses in computing.’ (JL1/Q51/P9)

‘If you want a job done that’s complex, then I’m the sort of person that can do that job, but I won’t do it by myself, leading it, but with a strong emphasis on … nurturing and encouraging that team … that’s my skill, to look broadly at things and then be particular about what we want to achieve, have the capacity to see the big picture as well as articulate that into detail …’ (JL1/Q61-62/P11)

‘You choose whether you’re going to have a reasonable day and you choose to look at a situation ... I admire the capacity to choose ... my wife’s sister... was in a car accident and internally has quite a number of problems, but she’d never tell you.’ (JL2/Q80/P20-21)

‘... people are sometimes unlucky and you’re going to be unlucky, so deal with it, get on and pick yourself up.’ (JL2/Q93/P25)
Has He Changed?

‘I’ve learnt a lot and I’m probably quite similar to what I was when I was a kid. I don’t think I’m that different. The background. Private school, all boys, okay a year at university which was great fun, then back into a boys private school situation. I virtually lived not so much the old boy’s network, but using networks and all that sort of thing. I’ve lived that and what I’ve tried to do is be amenable to change, but I’ve found that [the military] skill sets are quite good for coping with change ... So I haven’t changed that much really.’ (JL2/Q100/P26)

‘I don’t quite march around, I’m not into parade or military music or the trappings of it, but I do value the - what I regard as the important things and they’re treating human beings as they should be and behaving as best I can ... I think they’re the important things, friendships and relationships with people and they enrich your life.’ (JL2/Q53/P13)

In Business

JL had transferred many of his military experiences to his own (IT) business and added his own touch of ‘nurturing’:

‘The real world in business is that if you go to a business meeting, you’re properly dressed, you present yourself in a certain way, you behave - you behave in a way that sends a signal, it’s not just dress, it’s how you front on time, or take the trouble if you’re going to be late, the etiquette of that, the etiquette of answering your mail and telephone calls even if you don’t want to answer them you do, following up on phone calls is pretty bloody important in business.’ (JL2/Q65/P16)

‘... we’re into this long term relationship – one in business - that is making sure that you do the right thing by people and you produce results ... So you’ve got to have results oriented people. That’s why we have a number of military people, not because they’re comfortable to me, far from it, some of them aren’t, but they are task oriented and that’s pretty important in management consultancy. It’s not all just wandering around being erudite.’ (JL2/Q32/P9)

‘I gave someone $20,000 extra in their pay for the next 12 months the other day at this table, and the other person who was there said, “ I don’t like that person,” and I said, “Well, that’s too bad. Is this person valuable to our business?” You’ve got to learn, you don’t like everybody you deal with ... That’s not a luxury that you have in business.’ (JL2/Q14/P5)

‘... encourage them to say that they’ve stuffed up, because that’s fine. You don’t learn unless you stuff things up. But let’s pick up from there and push on. What are the lessons learned and let’s go.’ (JL2/Q27/pp7-8)

‘... I often say I’ve had these emotional cripples, I really have had it. We have a number of them because these people are race horses rather than draught horses. That is they’re
separated physically, they’re doing a whole lot of things on the fly, independently but within a structure and okay, they’re going to get emotional and tired. It’s a Maserati rather than the bloody Volksy so you’ve got to expect that they’re going to be a little tired and emotional at times.’ (JL2/Q28/P8)

‘That’s why we bring them in a minimum of two days every six months as a group so they can shout at each other, because sending emails, you can’t see the body language, and that’s a little challenge that we have.’ (JL2/Q28/P8)

‘So my job is not making money, that’s a side product, it’s actually dealing with people. It’s actually leading and keeping that group cohesive and I don’t mean by smoothing the waters all the time. Encouraging barneys, “You go and sort that out with Mary or Bill and come back and tell me the result. I do not want to hear this problem again. It’s the making of the two of you. Go away and sort it out.” ‘ (JL2/Q21/P6)

**And the Baton is Passed - Pragmatism**

‘... you know that this kid has got the goods to be a very senior person and they are watched and nurtured just as much as the person who has got to acquire those skills along the way as well ... So I’m doing that in business. I’ve got people who are leaders coming along in our business, who I call the second tier, the young Turks ...’

(JL2/Q15/P5)

‘That’s part of my role [developing people]. And succession planning, and we’ve got a number of candidates to take over our business. Now that’s not all just altruistic … because I own a private company. I want to move on and change direction in four years time. I want some people capable of taking over that company and demonstrably so, so I can sell it or pass it on to them. Unless they’re there I haven’t got a snowball in hell’s chance of disposing of the company. So it’s a business thing as well.’ (JL2/Q16-17ppP5-6)
Appendix C - Each Man’s Journey - in his own words

What follows is an account in the men’s own words of their transitions to different work and for some, different selves. Some contextual quotes are included to illustrate the aspects the men drew on. Through them it is also possible to see what threads of themselves were broken, what new threads were woven in and what original threads remained.

It includes no references to academic readings or research, for several reasons. Firstly, at the time I did not have a construct of what the men’s transitions or the stages of their transitions were to look like. Therefore the interviews were a ‘localised event’ rather than being correlated to existing knowledge. How and where their experiences ‘fitted’ in transition literature and knowledge became clearer once further reading and research was done.

Second, as an interviewer, it was important to be totally present and to attentively listen to each man, not have part of my attention comparing others’ experiences or searching an internal library.

Third, at that time I did not have sufficient knowledge to reference or compare their experience with others effectively. This was because I chose to do the interviews and their analysis prior to having anything more than a (qualitative) research direction. I was concerned that if I had thoroughly researched transitions before doing the interviews I may have prejudiced the processes and my perceptions of them.
The men talked to me about their changes in several ways: by explaining, through story and metaphor, and by describing what they had experienced. The men varied in their capacity to articulate those changes. They also varied in the level of self-reflection with which they approached their lives and the events in them, and in the philosophical contexts they saw themselves within their transitions.

DW and MS most closely aligned their lives to a transpersonal context; PS and ROC to a service context; IH placed himself in a religious and professional context and JL in a context of professionalism and success traditions. All saw their lives underpinned by values of significance.

A short context is given for each one, and then a description of their transitions in relation to the stages I have identified as common to them all. Let’s begin with the story of DW.

**DW in Transition**

DW’s transition covered a period from him owning and working in his own boatbuilding business to going to university and becoming a counsellor. A significant personal change for him during that process was moving from external expectations and impetus, in particular from hierarchical structures and values, to responding to an inner driver variously called an ‘Inner Self’, ‘Higher Self’ or ‘centre’.

At the end of the interviews DW felt he was still part of an (ongoing) transition process. He looked back and summed up his journey in a metaphor:

‘... I think that really describes it, as a refinement process. I think it is a bit like the child in the supermarket with mother … standing there and I run off and I go and touch the things on the shelves and look around … and something falls over and it scares me so I run back to Mum’s skirt and hide behind it for a little while and gather some more

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3 An academic context is given to the issues and topics arising from their interviews throughout the thesis: maleness, transitions, hierarchies, power, self-identity. Analysis of the men’s interviews and journeys can be found in Chapter 7, ‘Drawing the Maps’. 

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strength and then run around again, and something will happen and I will come back again.’ (DW5/Q44/P14)

Embedded in this metaphor are elements that repeatedly surfaced in DW’s account of moving out of hierarchy:

- power differentials
- safety within the dominant power paradigm
- exploration and return, and
- a parent-child scenario.

Interestingly, the dominant power in the allegory is figured as female and personally welcoming, while in organisational literature hierarchies are often characterised as ‘masculine’ and disinterested.

DW defined the impetus which led, called and later drove him to change in terms of an inner call to a sense of ‘Self’:

‘I think that desire to be one’s Self is very strong. You know it’s all the paraphernalia of religion, of stripping away original thought and all the rest of it that comes up. But in a sense it’s like I’m looking to go home. There’s a sense I want to go home and that going home is not to a place outside of self and that sense of centre is an attraction, is like home.’ (DW5/Q48/P15)

The ‘Self’ he was referring to was a:

‘... sense of unchanging deep centre ... It’s not afraid, it doesn’t have any sense of any judgement, it’s just there and you can move with that, and every time you take notice of it there then something is easy ... I’m recognising that that’s there, and the more I find I revert back to it the more sense of belonging ... happens.’ (DW5/Q9/P2)

The Way the World Worked

As an apprentice DW was anchored in hierarchy:

‘DW: The world worked with the men and the women having their places and hierarchies and all that kind of thing ... that was the way the world worked. And my religious upbringing, that was the way the world worked. It was that kind of hierarchical thing, of priests and everybody coming down and to me I was always down there.
 SMac: So work and religion and work and philosophy mirrored each other? Both have a hierarchy; both have authority, both have a masculinity?
DW: That’s right. So that was the order of the world … So the idea of having something that was feminine, something that was non-hierarchical was very mercurial if you like and just flowed and ebbed. It took me a long time to break down those inner barriers because of those set ups.’ (DW2/Q21-23/pp6-7)

Here DW speaks of hierarchy not just as organisation but as a social and personal construct, a human condition. Part of DW’s transition was changing his relationships to ‘the feminine’ and moving beyond gender stereotypes and task differentiation into more abstract and individual notions.

His ‘break from those inner barriers’ was long and complex. Of the six men interviewed, he and MS spoke of their inner personal journeys of Self the most, and JL the least. A personal spirituality was important to DW but it, too, was hierarchical in form and meaning:

‘… because that hierarchical system, that going up, has always been my sense and in a sense that is reflected in a spiritual aspect too, that there is a building going up to a higher level, that you are always going to a higher level. Hence your idea of climbing a mountain, which was an analogy I often use.’ (DW2/Q66/P17)

DW experienced both safe and unsafe hierarchies, the first in Rovers:

‘That’s what I felt that throughout Scouts, throughout this time particularly in Rovers, there wasn’t a sense of competition to get on top by getting over somebody or squashing them; it was the sense of the competition to get better at what you’re doing and get better at the way society lives or the way that the Scouts operate.’ (DW2/Q64/P16)

‘So in that sense the competition was instilled into me (in Rovers) that you had to be good, you had to do the right things, and that meant competition. It was competition with other men, with society and with yourself. And I think that’s where I started to sense … the competition within myself.’ (DW2/Q64/P16)

… and the second on the wharves, where he did his apprenticeship:

‘They [men on the wharves] were domestically violent people. They had no problems about striking their wives or talking about, “She got a bit out of hand so I struck her down.” Kids. There was quite a lot of violence in that sense. There was a lot of violence on the waterfront. I grew up in that sense of being able to side step around it as well. You know, not get involved with it for my own self preservation.’ (DW1/Q103/P24)

As such, authority, as the power with ‘right’ was seen as external to himself:

‘And that I think is this idea of authority: the right is ‘out there’ but I am always wrong so in a sense there is that … I have felt over a few years it’s been the idea of that original
Christian wise you are born a sinner and you’ve got to kind of find redemption with God.’ (DW1/Q132/pp29-30)

In developing a capacity to move between cultures (in this case clearly defined hierarchies) without ‘belonging’ to any, he was developing skills that would help him to move away from hierarchical structures.

‘… when I was at the water front working on it there was a way of acting and a way of being but when I was with Rovers and Scouts and doing that there was another way of being. It was easy for me to work within those two cultures I found. I think that was a beginning of my ‘boxes’ for want of a better way to put it … So it was like as if each of these was a different role that I played … None of them that I could stay in, none of them that I felt totally at home in, none of them that I could really progress in. Like there was still something else there that I was searching for, something that was what I wanted.’ (DW2/Q104, 107 and 108/P24)

He had become very adaptable at fitting in:

‘SM: ...in looking at your life I saw a lot of fairly quick swings from, for instance, the unsafe hierarchy of your apprenticeship to the safe hierarchy of the Rovers. And that was within a period of three years, which is very quick ...
DW: Because that ability … like you’ve just got to adapt, was something I said off-handily which you picked up. To me it’s almost a second nature that if it’s not working, I’ll adapt to something else.’ (DW2/Q71/P17)

For DW there was a structure outside himself to fit into. That structure acted as a guide and as a measure of himself; a framework already existing, clear in its expression and validated by society. That structure was a hierarchical construct overlaid on gender, work and spirituality.

Within that hierarchical construct DW was expected to perform roles or at least comply with its goals. He added his own versions of these, ones which fitted the system but resonated with something in him. Common ground, or at least a bridge between himself and that external world, was the world of adventure literature:

‘It started when I was about 14 reading these books and I used to read the books at camp and on the train and the bus home from work. And they were really good adventure stories about the Australian Navy. But there was also a sense of authority that came in with that too in the idea, again, of being good at what you’re doing. And one thing that struck me so, I was only talking to J2 [partner] the other day about it, was that this idea that you were good at your job was so ingrained even from then, the idea [that] in the
Both internal experiences and external drivers were familiar to him. The influence of this
was long lasting:

‘… when I was off school I was usually pottering around making boats or laying flat on
my back trying to breath. But it also had a sense that I, I think quite early, had a sense
of my own resourcefulness in that sense.’ (DW1/Q6/pp2-3)

‘In effect I guess I have been very conscious of the cycles, and my own cycles which I
studied for a while when I was doing yoga, cycles of the seasons. Indeed I watch seasons
here with different cycle changes in the trees and colours and things and the cycles in
business … part of my life is watching and getting quite a lot of pleasure out of the
recognition of the cycles as they come up …’ (DW3/Q1/P1)

‘I think working with ships and boats also where there is a very quick deterioration of
them, they’re high maintenance machines in that sense. So you have to accept that they
deteriorate and you have to accept that at different times they have to be repaired and
brought back to a good standard.’ (DW3/Q3/pp1-2)

Gradually an identity was created out of his love of the bush, adventure stories, honour,
mateship, an inner life developed during his illness with asthma as a child: a sense of the
cycles of life, pride in his craft, and his responses to ‘mage’ literature.

His inner life became very influential in his transition, resonating with an inner sense:

‘… And when I was about eighteen-and-a-half it was my senior scout leader, who was a
great man, went off to Canada but he gave me a book, ‘The Third Eye’ by Lobsang
Rampa and I just lapped it up. It just gave me … a total way of looking at life
differently that had some really deep inner meaning that I hadn’t really understood and
I still don’t know … I can’t put any finger on what it was but … it opened up an area
within me.’ (DW2/Q33 and Q35/P9)

DW grew into manhood, became a respected ‘journeyman’ (skilled craftsman) and in
time ran his own boatbuilding business. During those years he fitted the roles and
expectations of the cultures and hierarchies around him:

As a craftsman:

‘I had a quite a reasonable skill level, I developed that fairly quickly so I got a respect in
that way.’ (DW/Q121/P28)

‘… when I was on the waterfront and also in the building trade if you came to work
hung over that was great; you were hung over. If you came to work drunk then you
were out the door. That wasn’t tolerated at all because it was too dangerous … But you
never came to work drunk. That was a total ‘no, no’. A total disrespect I think for the
men around you and the boss.’ (DW3/Q90/P23)

… as the breadwinner for the family:

‘The other factor involved in that was that there was a sense that I had to provide for the
family. That I was a good provider as well and the idea that J1 didn’t work and I worked
to provide for the family was very strong, in J1 particularly, and had spin off in me as
well.’ (DW3/Q100/P25)

… and as a man in business valuing integrity, being ‘mentioned in despatches’ as in the
Navy adventures which were such an influence on him as a youth:

‘… when I was working for [company] down at [town] they got into problems and I
ended up spending seven days in the witness box … at the end of it the arbitrators
summing up of it said in part that I was an exceptional witness, that I was able to be
there for not colouring my story to suit the people I was working for, that I was totally
reliable, and the oft times that the evidence was in conflict he took my evidence as being
the correct one.’ (DW1/Q144/P33)

But his heart was not necessarily in it:

‘And of course not wanting children and not wanting responsibility, a sense that I’ve
got to do this out of a sense of duty rather than love.’ (DW3/Q102/pp25-26)

It is common for men to think that the crisis is the beginning (Diamond, n.d. #871), although
the start of the problem may have been much earlier. In this case DW thought:

‘Really the start of the change was the collapse of the business. So that was in 1986/87
…’ (DW3/Q102/P25)

For DW it was clear that he regarded the beginning of the transition as the point from
which he received a direction, or felt like he knew his way out, and did not see or he
negated, or did not value the ‘first half’ of the process that brought him out of his old
world. However, it was clear an internal change had begun well before that. The
collapse of the business was an external indicator and turning point, but not the origin
or cause of him making his transition. His internal ill-ease was evident long before the
collapse of his business, in the clash between his solitary, reflective nature and the
external demands of fitting command-and-control hierarchical systems.
‘I never really had a sense of contentedness with where I was. There was always some drive involved with me that pushed me on, pushed me, pushed me on.’ (DW2/Q86/P20)

**Stage 1: Restlessness ((Sense of Impending Demise))**

What began DW’s transition was a growing sense of restlessness and dissatisfaction with his life. This grew over several years from around age 40:

‘… It was only that there was a total inner movement within me and it was that sense of within me. The satisfaction was there, not externally.’ (DW1/Q144/P33)

It was intensified by problems in his business and frustration in his marriage. However, he did not know what to do to deal with ‘the part of me that was dying’ (DW4/Q3/P2).

His inner volition came to be very important:

‘I was just trying to survive in what I decided to do and in a sense at that time it was easy to blame outside influences because I was going down this idea of, this social line that you climb the ladder and you were a good family man and you were a pillar of society doing all the community things, but inside me, myself there was a part of me that was dying, more and more a part of me was dying because I wasn’t there, only living. My whole of my time was doing something I really didn’t want to do. So that was gathering and gathering and as time went on that voice that was kind of saying, “Hey, I don’t want to be here. I’ll do this for a while …” [it] started to gather into a, “Hey, listen to me. I don’t want to be here”, to the point where it was getting quite loud. So at that point, about two to three years before I moved, about 40, was when that voice was beginning to be very loud.’ (DW4/Q3/P2)

... eclipsing the influence of his Christian upbringing and further refining his core values:

‘... [I] went totally away from Christian religion. I didn’t want to know anything about it. The more I went into it and the more I saw holes in it and I really rejected it totally. But of course all the learning over the years of being involved in it, those moral aspects, stay ingrained.’ (DW2/Q37/P10)
Stage 2. Exploration and Preparation (Gathering Wood; Increasing Friction)

He had bought a business, borrowed too much so that he could take on a big contract which turned out to be too large for the company. Interest rates went up; they were not paid an instalment by the big client and then the main client went bankrupt. DW tried to trade out but that too didn’t work. The business collapsed and he eventually closed it. These events saw an increase in DW’s anxiety, ill-ease with his life-path, and with his roles in society. His response was withdrawal and anger:

‘… I got to a point in April I just kind of divorced myself from the whole lot … I’d go into work and I would get the fellows started and then I’d go down to [the sea] and park the car and walk along the beach. And I found these rocks and I’d actually ask permission for me to sit there and I’d just stare at the ocean until about 1:00pm and then get back in the car and go back to the business to see what had happened during the day. And every second phone call was people looking for money and I’d be telling lies … And that was just killing me inside. I was just dying. And then I got really angry about the whole lot. I had thoughts about killing the kids and killing J1 and killing myself. I went totally silent. I was carrying a lot myself, I didn’t want to worry the family with it so instead of expressing it out I just wouldn’t talk about what was going on …’ (DW4/Q3-Q4/P3)

(I compared this to the conversation in an earlier interview with DW about men pretending to go to work rather than admit had been fired – DW virtually did the same! It changes the perspective on the conversation except I don’t think he connected the two and I missed it at the time, as well.)

The imminent collapse of his boatbuilding business intensified that discomfort. As in his time on the warves and in Rovers, DW once again compartmentalised his life:

‘At that time I was disappearing a lot too. J1 and I weren’t connecting. I’d just go down to the bush or I’d go for a drive. I actually increased … my involvement with Scouts … there was also an increasing desire which was gathering pace, to be out of everything.’ (DW4/Q5/P4)

‘So our relationship in a sense diverged because … So she spent that time trying to run the family, going to work whenever she was asked, and doing books for the company as well … I was working six days a week with the business and when I wasn’t there I was with Scouts. So it was fairly minimal time together.’ (DW4/Q1/P1)
'I was wanting to get out of the relationship about 10 months before that. I just didn’t feel at all loving to J1, I felt there was something missing from our relationship. And of course not wanting children and not wanting responsibility, a sense that I’ve got to do this out of a sense of duty rather than love. All those had a factor on that.’
(DW3/Q102/pp25-26)

‘I’d made a pact with myself if you like that I would leave them when R [daughter] was 18 because I just didn’t want to cope … there was a sense of duty in me but it wasn’t enough.’ (DW4/Q2/P2)

Over several months his tension increased further,

‘... I went totally silent, I was carrying a lot myself, I didn’t want to worry the family with it so instead of expressing it out I just wouldn’t talk about what was going on … November I was just beside myself I didn’t know … this sense of failing, the whole thing was failing and it’s all my fault …’ (DW4/Q4/P4)

... as did his concerns about failing (external judgement and expectations):

‘November, I was just beside myself. I didn’t know … this sense of failing, the whole thing was failing and it’s all my fault …’ (DW4/Q4/P4)
Eventually the tension became too much for him to contain. A critical event radically changed his focus:

‘And I came home one night and I had three or four beers and I think it was on the 11th. I got the gun out of the cupboard and put it on the bed beside me and thought, ‘This is it. I don’t want to be around any more. I just want to get out of this.’ (DW4/Q4/P4)

But it did not end as he intended. Although he had been aware of this inner self as voice before, as he sat on the bed ready to kill himself, for the first time it spoke to him directly, as if it was another person:

‘So the gun was on the bed and I had the bullets and I was with the gun and a voice very loudly said, “This is not the way to do it. Close the business now and get out of it.” It was so loud, so clear, so direct. I said “That’s it.” So I put the gun away and I went to J1 and I said I’m closing the business down tomorrow …’ (DW4/Q4/P4)

He followed the direction of his Inner Voice and closed the business.

Common to the experiences of the others at this point, he felt a sense of release and new life. His anxiety lifted:

‘And as soon as I left in the afternoon it was like as if I was walking two foot above the ground. It was such a relief …’ (DW4/Q5/P4)

He interpreted his sense of lightness and relief as validation that he had made the ‘right’ decision. After this point, a shift of focus developed, at first to answer to that inner sense as a rudder, and later, as a guide.

‘… [the] voice of integrity, the King … now is making more decisions in me to be in line with my integrity.’ (DW4/Q42/P17)
Stage 4. Rest and Revitalisation (Ashes and Worm)

For a period of time, DW had to deal with the repercussions of closing his business. One of these was its liquidation. With his fear of failure and his desire to be ‘mentioned in despatches’ as having done the right thing, DW was very relieved to hear the liquidator say:

“You’ve done the right thing. Don’t think that you’re a failure or anything. Closing a business down is actually good management; if it’s not working you can’t save it”. He said “If you’d let it go on and the creditors closed it down, that would have taken you to bankruptcy; that would have really been bad,” he said “but you’ve made a decision that’s a business decision,” and he said “You’ve done the right thing.” ’

After closing his business DW worked in a nearby town for three years. The ‘boxes’ continued:

‘In a sense W[town] was great because it took me right away from everyone that I knew … it was easy to keep up a relationship because they didn’t know my history. So I never talked about the business …’

At times he would stop for petrol on his way there or back, and one day and it was at one of these times that he came across the impetus for the next phase of his transition:

‘… every time I got out of the car to get petrol at [town] there was a sign on the side advertising yoga classes and there was a part of me saying, “Well, when are you going to start? Like you know you’re going to have to start. When are you going to start? Like, make it sooner or later but you’re going to have to start”. So there was something really deep in me saying about this idea of spirituality and moving in a spiritual way … There was an inner journey that was coming up that I had kind of been putting aside … There was a sense that that was the way I needed to go but it was submerged underneath all the societal things.’

His revitalisation began.

‘R [yoga instructor] said, “We’re only going to do awareness tonight … lets walk around the room aware of what you’re doing, what’s your body is doing, where you’re walking.” So, total awareness. And I got in the car it was like I just sat there for 20 minutes before I could drive the car home I was so spaced out and so in a totally different space.’
At first DW saw this event as the start of his transition out of hierarchy:

‘To me that was the beginning really of that transition … The night that I walked into yoga ...’ (DW4/Q9/P7)

He began going to yoga and moving into self-development trainings. His marriage became more strained as his processes of transformation and transition continued. His wife (J1), encouraged the sectioning of his life as she strongly disapproved of his new interests:

‘So I started … it was a total different experience. It was relaxed. I felt that I was getting somewhere. J1 was totally scathing of my time … she couldn’t understand it. I suggested she come too and she thought it was all bunkum and, “You know, you should be out working and making money for the family” …’ (DW4/Q7/P6)

There were increasing tensions, within him and around him as he explored new directions directly impacting on his sense of self and self in the world.

‘… externally you could make strategies and plans and visualise things on the outside that you know are going to work. No problem. But when you go back inside yourself … And you think “Shit, how am I going to do this? What’s the goal posts that take you through?” I still really don’t know. I think I’m still kind of reaching out …’ (Joint: DW/Q22/P13)

A shift in his priorities began to show, with interior demands clashing with outside ones rather than other way around: Tensions were increasing again.

‘… my staid (sigh) Christian upbringing was very, very tested [by re-birthing] (laugh) and it was like I didn’t tell my parents about any of this and indeed J1 didn’t … and that increased the idea of the boxes quite considerably …’ (DW4/Q8/P6)

DW’s time in the ashes of himself, and toward his re-creation, took some time and came about through several modes of discovery and self-reflection:

‘I did yoga and started doing re-birthing … and re-birthing really opened me up totally to a new experience …’ (DW4/Q8/P6)

‘I went to a relationship weekend, Relationships, Spirituality and Sexuality weekend … There’s still parts of it now that comes up; just how much value that’s had for me.’ (DW4/Q11/P7)

‘But before that I did meditation for 12 months and there was a woman attended that … I went home and I wrote a three-page poem. I’ve never written poetry in my life before … and I thought, this is the type of relationship I want, where there is no sense of...’
sexuality impinging on it, that we could talk and it was just sort of beautiful. It was absolute heaven to be in a relationship with somebody.’ (DW4/Q12 and Q15/pp8-9)

He began to understand the toll of compartmentalising his life:

‘And that’s the fear that makes the boxes - it’s not something that’s different in parts of your life; it’s a fear of one part of your life against the other.’ (DW3/Q20/P6)

‘… there is a huge amount of emotional energy goes into keeping that separate; more than overcoming the fear … There’s a terrific amount of energy in fear and then the other side of the inside is in total anger and frustration about where you are, that you can’t do anything about it. There is a sense of a loss, of very much of that internal integrity or loss of self esteem, or loss of your own confidence. So all those things are tied up in that keeping things in boxes.’ (DW3/Q25-27/P7)

After the collapse of his business and taking up yoga, re-birthing and meditation, and while he worked for another boat-builder, DW decided to go to university to become a Counsellor. This move contributed to his redefinition of self in relation to others:

Looking back, he gave a philosophic reason for his change, centred on service and the value of purpose:

‘I got out of the building industry or ‘the tools’ because I just felt that I was capable of more than that. That I was capable of moving to places within the workforce that I could make a difference. And that was originally started off as being in the idea of counselling, being able to kind of heal the people that have been dumped.’ (DW5/Q87/P24)

Stage 5. Clarity and Commitment (Heliopolis)
During the clarification stage, the men reviewed their transitions and were able to identify differences between their old ways of being and their emerging ways. There were many changes evident for DW, and some clearly resilient elements.

He began a counselling degree and later went to work on a men’s help-line. Not long after these interviews DW graduated. At University DW found a philosophic framework which he felt effectively described the forces acting within him:

‘Because the more I’ve done through this Degree, I’ve looked at the way people act and a bit of psychology and so forth, the more I have a sense that the archetypes if you like that were created at that time are still in circulation, that they’re still operable in people …
those older archetypes have not in essence changed, particularly when you look at Jungian work.’ (DW4/Q37/P15)

‘I guess I’m beginning to see it like the four archetypes, they talk about [as] Man: King, Warrior, Jester and Lover.’ (DW4/Q41/P16)
**DW’s Changes**

DW went on to complete his degree and become a counsellor. His marriage had collapsed by this time and, in time, he began a new (long-term) relationship with someone more closely aligned with his new ‘path’ (J2).

In review DW used metaphors to discuss his transition: of being in or out of a group, in transition between groups, belonging and not belonging, and the role of being alone and solitary. He came to use other, Jungian, metaphors for describing aspects of himself and his ways of approaching his world. In that metaphor:

‘… [the] voice of integrity, the King … now is making more decisions in me to be in line with my integrity. Still a lot of fear there. Fear of authority, fear of hurting people. I think that’s part and parcel of everybody’s life.’ (DW4/Q42/P17)

Some things changed for DW; some did not. He moved decisively away from the Christian religion …

‘I didn’t want to know anything about it … I really rejected it totally.’ (DW2/Q37/P10)

DW came to recognise changes in his own metaphors:

‘You have to have something to conquer. It’s either conquering yourself or you’re conquering that land or your conquering that journey … what we’re talking about is very battle-type language, war-like language, and that’s what I set out in, that’s the mode I set out in. But what I’m finding now is with this sense [that] I can connect with an energetic field around, then that battle isn’t so much a conquering. It’s a moving inner direction of that, leading me, rather than having to conquer.’ (DW5/Q107 and 109/P27)

His priorities changed:

‘… in those earlier years, yes, I would put work and my position ahead of family and friends. There is a saying in the Navy that the captain loves his ship more than family … [theses are] values that were engendered in me in those early years that really don’t work for me any more but they still come up.’ (DW1/Q145/pp33-34)

‘When I started yoga I wanted a quality of life and what I found was the alcohol was not giving me the quality of physical ability, if you like.’ (DW3/Q94/P23)

The integration of his life developed:

‘SMac: … [as] an observation as an outsider; [from your comments] I’m seeing that as you got older your sense of a blueprint of your life, your sense of this under current is
coming to the surface and becoming stronger and is pervading your actions your
thoughts, your values, your choices more and more; that it is no longer boxed.

DW: No longer boxed. Exactly right. In a sense J2 has been very instrumental in
breaking those open.’ (DW2/Q118/pp26-27)

His relationships to people changed:

‘SMac: What does “with” people mean now? That sounds like that word has changed
meaning.
DW: Yes, “with people” before was that I was a leader. I was the person who had
influence. I wouldn’t get involved personally … But now there’s not so much a sense of
a leader, it’s more a sense of involvement and it’s a sense of intimacy with people.
There’s a sense of being able to be transformative in the same way.’ (DW4/Q46/P17)

Identity as a Man

From his early solitary years with asthma to his apprenticeship years on the docks of
Sydney to the chivalric world of Rovers and the adult worlds of law, business and pride
in his craft, he experienced many facets of manhood. He had also experienced several
modes of ‘initiation’, from his benign knighting in Rovers, to hunting trips with his
mates and the rough living of the wharves.

Yet DW had wrestled with his feelings about belonging with men.

On the wharves belonging was reinforced constantly:

‘I was only there for about three months and they said “Well if you work for us you
drink with us … Like [sic] the idea of loyalty in those men is fairly … and the ethics of
mateship is very strong and there’s some very, very strict rules in there.’ (DW1/Q105/P25
and DW1/Q111/P26)

In Rovers, belonging, value and the sense of manhood were more ritualised:

‘… there was [sic] different tests or processes you had to go through to a point where
your peers and your Rover leader felt that you were at a point when you could be
invested as a Rover. So at that point you become the initiate. So the process of initiation
was exactly the same as the old medieval knights being invested by the King of the
realm. So the first thing that you did was you spent a day and a night on your own as a
vigil in the bush. You had to just go and see what was happening within yourself and
just reflect whether you wanted to be a Rover and where your life was going which I
didn’t. I just kind of wandered around in the bush and didn’t do anything spectacular
or go into any depth within myself … And then you had to do some time in the chapel
and reflect on where you wanted to go in your life and about your religious side of
where you were … and then you went through prayers and a process of initiation to the
end where there is a sword kept in the scouting movement at [suburb] … Each Rover
that’s been a Rover in NSW has actually been invested with this sword. So it has quite a lot of iconic meaning if you like … there was [sic] vows about being a good Rover and being promised to do service for society and honour people. Very Christian orientated and very value based vows. So when you did that you were touched on each shoulder and you were asked to rise and you became a vested Rover.’ (DW2/Q49-50/P14)

However, he had never felt validated or valid as a man until, at a personal development workshop, he gained the clarity and awareness he had been seeking:

‘... I went through a process … what I’d call an initiation. Like I felt initiated afterwards. And that’s when I sensed that I could then say “I’m here now and I’m ready to go.” It was like I moved from that sense of being inferior, I’m not worthy, I’m not even worthy to be alive, into something that “Hey, here I am. I’m a man. I’m here. I belong here.” So that to me was a real shift. And that’s five years ago now but it’s still ongoing. Like it’s been grounded more and more that I’m operating in that position rather than a sense of “You don’t belong here.” ’ (Joint: DW/Q55/P25)

DW felt initiation in some effective form is integral to men changing:

‘But I think what it does do when it happens, the centre is met. Because I’ve talked to a number of men afterwards who have had initiative experiences in their late 30’s and 40’s and invariably there has been a total transition, total movement inside, total sense of direction change … There’s a sense with me that it’s very important for men to consciously have that initiation process or that experience.’ (DW4/Q20/P11)

The value DW placed on initiation and a sense of manhood was connected to his capacity to take his place in the world, free of positional inferiority in relation to other men:

‘It’s a sense of me. A sense that I have as much place on this earth as a tree or another person or the universe. A sense that I am that. That’s it … when I was with men before that happened, that experience, I felt like a little boy, I felt very unconscious of it, my self esteem was low and they were always right and I was always wrong.’ (DW4/Q23/P11)

DW came to learn that hierarchy itself could not ‘initiate’ him into manhood or Selfhood. This contrasted with his earlier position:

‘… to actually have somebody in authority say that I was exceptional, it did wonders for my self esteem.’ (DW1/Q144/P33)

DW later used the imagery of the process of making a Samurai sword as an analogy of the making of a man, combining values of craftsmanship, tradition, endurance under pressure, testing of character and peer esteem.
“... learning to carry both the fires and the waters of the soul is the process that tempers men ...” (Meade 1993 p.347).

His imagery continued to reflect both his present and past external competitive environment. The theme of being tested was part of his concept of how his transition should progress:

“There is a sense with me that I need to go out and be uncomfortable, I’m not so much saying physically uncomfortable but internally uncomfortable, to kind of hammer out what I’m trying to do ... If I can give you an analogy, a soldier doesn’t know what he’s like in battle until he has gone into battle. He has got to have that kind of … if a person goes into a battle and gets killed, it’s nothing, but if they go into a battle and find that they’ve come out of it totally scared and a coward, they know what their capabilities are.’ (DW5/Q63-65/P19)

He was aware of his internal dichotomy and was seeking to resolve it through awareness and reliance on his ‘inner Self’:

‘… the connection I make with that [inner sense] is that it’s allowing me to operate humanely rather than that sense of the powerful, the sense of the shooter if you like, the destroyer and the controller that has been there all the time. But with an appreciation of underlying forces then you can circumvent that ...’ (DW5/Q16/pp5-6)

He described his changed relationship with fear:

‘There is fear there still. But it’s … being pushed back and back and back and I’m getting more and more able to handle it.’ (Joint: DW/Q58/P27)

Going Home

Originally DW expressed his journey as a sense of ‘going home’, but it was not a ‘place’ after all:

‘I wandered years and years to find this is my block of land, this is my boat or this is my ... and then I was sitting in meditation in a room somewhere and I opened my eyes and here is this, you know the picture of the world from outer space, that beautiful one that is on the poster often. Kind of thought, “Yes, that’s where I am.” ’ (DW2/Q88/P21)

DW developed a reliance on, and confidence in, his inner Self, and began to let go the hierarchy of (both Eastern and Western) spirituality he had earlier mentioned:

‘I’ve lost that compulsion of wanting enlightenment, sit in yoga position, do all the things that you needed to get enlightened. That’s lost. And that’s okay ...’ (DW5/Q83/P23)
Language

His sense of language and its role changed: whereas before he used such phrases as: ‘denying self by silence’ and ‘Don’t let it out - it can be used against you’, and felt speaking out was dangerous, he came to a perspective where he felt:

‘Command of words makes it deepen, have subtleties.’ (notes post Int.1, DW 22/6/98)

‘Even speaking about that [unchanging centre], it’s made it clearer for me because [before] it was only something I was thinking about.’ (DW5/Q9/P)

... and had an increased capacity and appreciation of the use of language:

‘DW: That’s an interesting point but at the moment I seem to be learning a language, the language of being able to communicate as a facilitator as a teacher in a sense, whereas prior to this I did some time in those organisations but I felt very hamstrung because I didn’t really have a good grasp of it. Back to when I was at the waterfront I had a very good grasp of the language and could use it very easily. And it was a total re-learning when I moved from being a joiner into the office, being an estimator. That that language was totally inappropriate, that I couldn’t use that language at all. There was a learning, sorry there wasn’t so much a learning of the language but it was reducing the colouring of the language so that you were using just the necessary words and there was a discipline had to come into that too because particularly if I get excited now there’s all sorts of words slip back into my vocabulary.’ (DW1/Q137/P31)

His began to conceive of himself as having significant power to influence his own life:

‘… there is a gathering sense that I do have a lot of power … I’ve got to learn the times when it is necessary and the times when it’s not necessary. And making those choices is now my responsibility and that’s scary. I’m not sure how to do that. Maybe you never do. I don’t know.’ (Joint: DW/Q65/P31)

DW Unchanged

Apart from the aspects described above, and the collapse of his marriage, DW maintained a sense of an ‘unchanging Self’ beneath his changes:

SMac: ‘That there’s something underneath the accretions of hierarchy or non-hierarchy that’s you?
DW: That’s right. And that reversion back either to a hierarchical inner world or an equality inner world, your own sense of operating from equality with people or as a hierarchical model.’ (DW2/Q77/P19)

‘I have this idea that there’s something in me hasn’t changed at all. There’s that soul aspect of it that hasn’t changed for as long as I can remember … There is a part of me that is untouched by what happens. It’s like it’s … the term that came up for me –
‘satguru’ - something that is deep inside you that just doesn’t change. That if you want to access to it, always the answer is there …’ (DW2/Q23-24/P7)

He also felt he had developed a long-held confidence in his capacity to know what was needed at any time:

‘And even at that age [19] I had a sense that you only need the knowledge that you need for now. And that’s still with me.’ (DW2/Q41/P11)

‘I relied on that inner voice or inner feeling that seemed to be there all the time whenever you wanted it.’ (DW2/Q25/P7)

His sense of where he fitted in relation to society also remained the same:

‘SMac: ... From my interviews with you, you are an ‘other’? 
DW: I am.’ (DW5/Q36/P12)

He was aware there were others changing, like him:

‘I think there are more men doing that internal work at this age, particularly with losses put on them by redundancies.’ (DW3/Q104/P26)

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**Stage 6. Consolidation (Return)**

At the end of the interviews DW certainly did not feel he had ‘arrived’ anywhere. He felt his transition was continuing, as recounted through a recurring dream he had:

‘… a recurring fantasy that’s happened for years and years. The one that I found myself in last week was that I’m a survivor from either a plane crash or a ship wreck … But that in itself is only the journey to the isolation that makes that inner journey so unavoidable. Like you know that you’ve got to survive physically and you know that can use prior knowledge and the knowledge you have to do it. But that inner journey is unavoidable in those circumstances …’ (DW5/Q113-114/P28)

‘… there’s two final outcomes from the fantasy. Either I get to a point where I’m old and I can’t do anything more and I die. And in a sense that’s fine. The other one is a get rescued and I go back to society. And going back into society, a whole new world, I stop myself going into because it’s a sense that I am recognised as the hero type. When I look at that and the hero sense of it comes up, “Oh hang on. This is not what I want”. It’s like I just want to fade back into society again and be nondescript.’ (DW5/Q122/P30)

DW essentially did this after the interviews: going sailing, trying various jobs; being ‘unimportant’ and unseen for who he is for a few years, looking for a/his new work life.
He has since begun mentoring building trainees - blending his building and counselling training and his desire to be a mentor for young men.

‘SMac: But where are you in your journey moving from having to fit someone else’s criteria because that’s the first thing we began with: the movement out of fitting someone else’s criteria and you just replaced the hierarchy with the Aboriginal ethic … But it’s still, “Where’s DW?”
DW: ‘Exploring that.’ (DW5/Q43/P13)

He retained, and was influenced by, an inner drive:

SMac: ‘Is it [inner drive] strong enough to move you from the ties of the tribe?
DW: I don’t know. I really don’t know … there’s always something that pulls me back away from it for some reason.’ (DW5/Q48-49/P15)

... and continued re-developing his life.

‘... I think that really describes it, as a refinement process. I think it is a bit like the child in the supermarket with mother … standing there and I run off and I go and touch the things on the shelves and look around … and something falls over and it scares me so I run back to Mum’s skirt and hide behind it for a little while and gather some more strength and then a run around again and something will happen and I will come back again. And I think it is that sense of refining that the group and society is really the only reference point at the moment - … I have to go outside that.’ (DW5/Q44/P14)

Fear still plays a role:

‘And that’s the fear that makes the boxes - it’s not something that’s different in parts of your life; it’s a fear of one part of your life against the other.’ (DW3/Q20/P6)

... in relations with an external and himself:

‘Still a lot of fear there. Fear of authority; fear of hurting people. I think that’s part and parcel of everybody’s life.’ (DW4/Q42/P17)

‘… Even with what we’re talking about now just a series of, the interviews that you have set up, there was a fear in me of going into a part of me that I mightn’t really like. So I had to kind of feel that. It’s getting easier these days anyway because of what I’m doing.’ (DW1/Q148/P34)

... and in his growth ...

‘SMac: … are you willing to give up the reference points and write your own reference? Own criteria?’
DW: ‘That’s very scary (Gasp)’ (DW5/Q44-45/P14)
‘... why I want to do more Indigenous work and look at this myself is because I’m not sure yet which is the right way or ... there’s so much that is unclear to me at the moment it just needs to be worked on before I can do something with that.’

(DW4/Q36/P15)

He remained ambivalent about control issues. One minute he focused on collaboration ...

‘... what I’m coming to is the sense that in our society we’re getting back to a collaborative society rather than a hierarchal led society. Businesses are going with the idea of collaborative individuals being able to work together in a village type aspect or small group aspect and each one has its place as part of a whole. And that’s very much like traditional Aboriginal, or Indigenous, I’d say Indigenous more than Aboriginal sense. So what I’m feeling is going back and looking at the Aboriginal way of doing things, Indigenous way of doing things, is that they’re giving up a history of what they did that worked for 40,000 years possibly. Their society used that quite successfully for that time. And that can be moved into modelling some of the new ways of working in that collaborative environment.’ (DW5/Q22/pp7-8)

... the next he returned to the language of battle that was so strong in the beginning of the interviews. He still had a blueprint of dominance as a process but now changed it to be focussed on his Inner Self:

‘You have to have something to conquer. It’s either conquering yourself or you’re conquering that land or your conquering that journey ... what we’re talking about is very battle type language, war like language, and that’s what I set out in, that’s the mode I set out in. But what I’m finding now is with this sense [that] I can connect with an energetic field around, then that battle isn’t so much a conquering. It’s a moving inner direction of that leading me, rather than having to conquer.’ (DW5/Q107and 109/P27)

He was aware of his development of an observer self:

‘... probably started more in the time that I started doing yoga.’ (DW2/Q73/P18)

A critical point was his acceptance of being ‘other’:

‘What I’m saying with that is that I’m finding there’s a comfortable discomfort with being outside the group. There’s something out there that’s allowing me to look into the group and it is almost a sense I don’t want to go back into the group.’ (DW5/Q40/P13)

‘That’s kind of like that idea of “Well if nothing is going to fit here, well, I’ve got to get used to being on the outside. So let’s do something about getting some skills at doing that.”’ (Joint: DW/Q12/P7)
In the joint interview with MS, DW reviewed his transition so far, speaking of it as a metaphor of increasing independence, yet attachment to security, very much like JL’s bushwalking analogy:

‘I’d go into work and I was like a child in a supermarket. I’d go away and look at the shelves and come back, get scared about being away and come back to mother, which was the world of business and the world of things like that. So there is a sense that in that area of my inner growth of what I tend to call my ‘higher self’ … is that I’m incompetent there … And it’s a sense of now I’ve got to go and get competent there. Like I am competent at Uni, I am competent at looking after people, I’m competent at being in a relationship. But this is not, I’m not competent there. I just haven’t had enough experience in it.’ (Joint: DW/Q8/P5)

A significant change for DW was his altered perception and relationship to external authority:

‘It’s like as if for me the shift from authority has come out … the authority from outside, of a life-long sense of ‘somebody-is-going-to-jump-on-you-or-say-that-you’re-wrong-or-come-and-arrest-you’, sense of outside authority, to recognising that that’s just not right … the authority is within me.’ (Joint: DW/Q38/P20)

‘It was my own busyness of mind that clouded that and this idea of study and academic work also tends to cloud that because of this reason, the idea of reason you have to work it out and it’s got to be logical in a sense. And I’m good at that. I have no problem with this kind of work as it’s totally logical. But at that age to me that ‘satguru’ or that part of me was just part of me and everything ….’ (DW2/Q28/P8)

DW expressed a need for solitude as his ‘next stage’:

‘… all my life my aloneness has been within myself and around people … Now there is a sense in me that there is a next stage, if you like, that I need to experience: my aloneness away from people, to experience that sense of who I am.’ (DW4/Q47/P18)

‘But where I’m going from now is more and more of a sense of having to spend time with my monk; to go into that area of discomfort. And this is where it might be opening a box is, to do that I’ve got to leave the comfort of where I am and that may mean the comfort of a relationship … And that’s setting up a huge tension in me at the moment.’ (DW5/Q60/P18)

That future was obviously challenging for him:

‘SMac: Because it’s [this inner self/voice] asking you to leave behind models of hierarchy because they have not served? So I guess I’m asking you how far you’re going to take it?’
DW: ‘(Deep sigh) Well, the first word that came into my mind then, in my process is, “all the way”’ *(DW5/Q81/P23)*

And from the joint discussion with MS:

‘It’s like I’m afraid of it, I don’t feel competent there, and yet there’s a drawing to it. There’s something there that’s pulling me there and it’s like I’ve got to cross the river and that’s what I’ve got to do. Whether I’m fit or not, I’ve got to cross the river.’ *(Joint: DW/Q9/P6)*

Looking at himself and his changes were also scary:

‘DW: What have I left behind? … I’ll change the subject because it’s too hard to think about at the moment.’ *(DW2/Q85/P20)*

He developed new reference points other than those of hierarchy:

‘DW: And I think it is that sense of refining that the group and society is really the only reference point at the moment … I have to go outside that. SMac: … are you willing to give up the reference points and write your own reference? Own criteria? DW: That’s very scary (Gasp).’ *(DW5/Q44-45/P14)*

‘But the reason for moving into going into Uni was to … develop part of me that I felt wasn’t working and that was to be able to develop … I started off, it was like developing my intellect but what I see it now has done is develop my capacity to think critically. It’s opened up that sense of being able to connect the different parts, to be able to make a sense of the whole. And I feel that’s happened.’ *(DW5/Q60/P18)*

In summary, DW, through his career and work transition, made deep, personal and ongoing transformations. His career transitions became a vehicle for, rather than a driver, of that transformation. Once more the analogy of defining which is the dog and which the tail, became a central theme.

‘There’s also a hierarchical system in there, but it’s that relationship with myself that has always, yes it has always been part of me.’ *(DW2/Q44/P12)*

At the end of the interviews DW still evidently felt he was in transition, still wrestling with some residues and inconsistencies. Whether they were to remain, be redirected, reframed or deleted was not yet clear:

‘SMac: That model we were talking about before of the person going out on their own and then returning with the knowledge is the one you’re still holding?’

DW: ‘Yes.’ *(DW5/Q115/P29)*
'SMac: So you’re still aware that you’re in a transition period. How would you define that? What’s the larger thing that you are transitioning in?’

DW: ‘The way I relate to people. The way that I relate to people ... in a sense learning to be with people.’ (DW4/Q44/P17)

His capacity to sit with uncomfortableness was now conscious:

‘SMac: ... early on in the story. That you either buried something or you denied it or something like that whereas now you’re willing to sense it and feel it and I hear a desire to resolve it in some way or desire to accommodate it by cutting yourself off and going away. But there is actually a relationship to that discomfort that is quite positive now. It’s not so feared.’

DW: ‘Yes it’s like I’ve gone away from the idea of escaping to do that … saying I don’t like where I am when in actual fact I do like where I am.’ (DW5/Q85-86/P24)

Three Promises

DW had mentioned that at one stage in his life he had made three promises to himself:

‘DW: The first one was that I would marry and have children, the second one that I would go to sea, and the third one was when I got older I would study religion which I see more now as spiritual aspects ... yet I totally had forgotten all about that until I was doing re-birthing. And yet here I’ve been married and have children, I’m aspiring to go to sea, I’ve done time at sea anyway, and there is also a sense or spirituality. So I guess when I made that promise it was like a linear aspect but what I’m seeing is that it’s not linear it’s a parallel.’ (DW2/Q114/P26)

Postscript: DW finished his degree, fitted out a boat and with his partner (J2) set sail up the coast of Australia. Over the last five years they have made landfall for work and family, then sailed on. Presently he is working with young apprentice builders in a northern Australian coastal city.

MS in Transition

The transition explored with MS was from being a corporate consulting engineer on mainland USA and Hawaii to becoming a free-lance Naturopath in Australia. Like DW, he was very aware of his inner changes and his changing concept of self in relationship to the world. Also like DW, MS moved away from hierarchical structures and
paradigms, guided by an inner volition which he called ‘a feeling’, his ‘intuition’, a
‘missing core’, his ‘True Me’.

MS was raised in a reserved, fundamentalist Protestant farming household in a remote
part of North America. Early on MS knew he wanted to get away from the farm, from
both the occupation of farmer and the place itself:

‘Once I got out of high school my life has been a progression of getting farther and
farther away.’ (MS1/Q84/P24)

He was to become the first of the family to go to university. Post University training, MS
was conscripted to the Army and remained there an extra year to become an officer. He
then returned to university and completed a Masters’ degree. After a period of teaching,
he became a corporate consulting engineer, first on the mainland of the USA and then in
Hawaii. He later moved to Australia, married an Australian and retrained as a
Naturopath and Yoga teacher.

Stage 1: Restlessness ((Sense of Impending Demise))
In his early years MS reported an ongoing awareness of ‘not fitting’, yet he persisted in
trying to ‘fit’. As a means of getting away from discomfort and distress, he had lived
much of his life in reactive response to these feelings, rather than in proactive movement
towards more positive personal goals. He therefore primarily represented a ‘negative
learning’ path of transition. That is, moving away from discomfort rather than towards
satisfaction. Yet he was conscious from an early age that his discomfit indicated the
existence of another way of life and being. This was evident in regard to:

… leaving the farm:

‘I kept saying to whoever I would talk to about it, if I knew what I wanted to do I’d be
out of here right now. But I never seemed to be able to figure out what I really wanted to
do.’ (MS1/Q29/P11)

‘Somehow I knew from a very early age that I did not want to stay on the farm.’
(MSI/Q2/P1)
‘… we were just dirt farmers and that was the feeling I got about it from my mother, more I think than from my father. It inspired aspirations to go beyond that and be something more than that. I guess I was aware that things weren’t very good. I didn’t like the way we were. I didn’t like the way I was. I didn’t like the way I felt and I wanted to, some need, some desire to make it better, to improve it.’ (MS3/Q5/P2)

… army service,

‘But I also had this feeling, like I still didn’t have a direction. Didn’t know what I was going to do. But I knew I didn’t want to stay in the army.’ (MS1/Q13/P6)

… university,

‘I stayed around and was an instructor. And I knew I didn’t want to do that.’ (MS1/Q15/P7)

… work,

‘I knew right away that I just wasn’t suited for it [consulting business]. I didn’t feel good about it. I just didn’t see that I could ... I didn’t have a feel for it.’ (MS1/Q14/P7)

‘I seemed to be doing all right. I was getting raises. My supervisors really liked my work. I got along with them well. But something inside me just … I just felt like I wasn’t finding it satisfying.’ (MS1/Q17/P8)

… or relationships,

‘… if I had trusted my intuition then I would never have gotten into that relationship [second marriage] or stayed in it … I feel like a coward for doing that. I feel like if I had trusted myself and had the courage I would not have gone through with that.’ (MS1/Q54-55/pp17-18)

‘That was like the first time I was married too. On the way to the wedding I just knew that it was the wrong thing … I feel like such a coward because I didn’t have the strength to say “Stop. This is not right. Sorry if you’re hurt or upset somebody but I’ve got to follow the true path …” I was afraid of being a failure. Not being able to make it work.’ (MS1/Q56-58/P18)

His discomfort with his life was coupled with indecision and a lack of clear direction:

‘So when I got out of the army I felt pretty lost and I didn’t know what to do. I travelled around the country for a few months. I ended up back at [farm] because I had nowhere else to go.’ (MS1/Q9/P5)

‘And I went over to the University to see what the possibilities were and ended up signing to do a Masters degree. So that decided my next two years.’ (MS1/Q13/P7)
‘It was assumed I was going to get a job. As it worked out I didn’t make the initiative to secure a job somewhere and they needed an instructor at the Uni so I stayed around and was an instructor.’ (MS1/Q15/P7)

‘This is the stupidest thing I could possibly be doing, staying here in this cold weather that I hate … So I ended up going to [USA city] because of a girl that I met at University.’ (MS1/Q15/P7)

‘So even though I didn’t feel all that comfortable with it I stuck it out for several years. It seems like I made that decision; a lot of my decisions have come from not making a decision.’ (MS1/Q15/P8)

‘… in order to get into the medical field you need to be really good in the chemistry area and since I had more of an aptitude in the mathematics area I sort of slid into that as just a path of least resistance …’ (MS3/Q8/P3)

For the most part he made decisions based on fear of failure; not wanting to hurt others, and feeling he needed to persist until he found that nebulous thing that would satisfy his inner emptiness:

‘Again I just felt inside of me that I was not doing what I should be doing. But it’s so much easier to just keep flowing with the path of least resistance.’ (MS1/Q30/P12)

He used or created substitutes:

‘I felt like, because of that missing core that if I felt that, if I could have her, that would fill up that hole.’ (MS1/Q60/P19)

Other people’s perceived opinions were powerful factors in his decision-making:

‘… I’d been so governed by how I perceived other people to perceive me that I used that as my guide to direct which path I should take.’ (MS2/Q6/P2)

For many years he remained in competitive, status-driven work, yet remained dissatisfied. His values were repeatedly challenged:

‘I didn’t like the business aspect. It just felt so artificial to me to … they trained us. We actually had training in how to get jobs, how to win jobs. And the way to win jobs was to make friends with people. So we’d purposely target somebody in some community or civic job or something and target somebody to make friends with them so that you could get in on their good side to get them to give your company a job. And I just couldn’t stomach that at all.’ (MS1/Q30/P12)

‘Honour and how that fits in with my family structure … I had an idea of honour which came mainly from the religious upbringing, religious training. That was their idea of honour as well, my parents. But I thought it such a conflict because if that was honour
why do we feel so negative about ourselves? And the two just didn’t match, that you respect other people and we’re all equal and yet ...’ (MS3/Q17/P5)

Consequently he felt internally split in ‘boxes’ for many years, and, like the others in this study, his life was consciously in ‘boxes’ during this stage:

‘Kind of like walking around with a protective shield around you ... I went through some periods of drug abuse just because that allowed me to feel like I was being more spontaneous …’ (MS2/Q15-17/P5)

‘... I was doing some of those risky things. But I was still holding on to that part of me in the traditional professional world.’ (MS2/Q25/P7)

Despite all this indecision, an inner ‘something’ that was relentlessly present, led or drove him on:

‘SMac: ... when you talk, you come back again and again to acknowledging that you looked at yourself and you looked at your life and you were aware of something that told you this is not how it should be. So you had, somewhere, a blueprint that you recognised as what it should be, even if you’d forgotten, you just knew somehow there was a trail?
MS: Yes, you’re right.’ (MS1/Q40/P14)

His awareness of transpersonal issues began early. Like DW, his Christian upbringing had had a strong influence on him:

‘... when I was even in high school I think I started thinking, “What is consciousness? Who am I?” really is what it comes down to, and I guess tied in with the religious upbringing of having a soul. This whole thing has had me searching. This is another path that I was on, and there is the self path, but there was also this path of trying to discover what it means to be a sentient being. To be conscious. And what is the real me.’ (MS3/Q22/P7)

… as did his self-doubt:

‘One thing I recognise about myself is that I’ve always had this tremendous capacity of self doubt ... I just know that I can have so much self doubt that I can be immobilised.’ (MS1/Q33 and 36/P13)

Stage 2. Exploration and Preparation (Gathering Wood; Increasing Friction)

In this stage MS demonstrated the pattern, common to all of the men interviewed, of oscillating between maintaining his present life, introducing new elements that reflected
his more personal interests, repressing his inner unsettledness, and creating or using substitutes for a congruent life.

He seemed to have cycled through this stage several times as his discomfort increased:

‘The experiment in [coastal USA city] went on for four years. Again, just a lack of knowing what else I wanted to do. And also because I had gotten involved in another relationship. Just before, I guess that fourth year, I re-married, and made the decision that this wasn’t working, I’m very unhappy doing this … the whole thing just reached a point again where I said I’ve got to do something different. And I think that if I had not been in that marriage or that relationship I would have done something different. But at that point that didn’t seem like an option to me. I felt like I had commitments now. I had to get money. So I made another pact with myself to take another job and get out of the city. I’d had enough of people in the city and traffic. Get another job somewhere farther out in the country and I’ll do another three year experiment. And if that doesn’t work I’ve got to do something else.’ (MS1/Q29/pp11-12)

When he worked in Hawaii, MS felt even more like an outsider, both inside and outside himself.

‘… business type community in Hawaii because it’s very parochial, it’s rather racist, that dominated by ethnic Japanese, so feel an outsider, especially if you are an outsider working for a mainland company. You are not part of that professional group.’ (MS1/Q17/P8)

This only increased his sense of disconnection and reinforced the split nature of his life. He also realised he was tied to the hierarchy, so that it would service commitments he had made, and because of fear:

‘When I first started I could have easily just stayed there because it was easy, it was secure, there was no fear. And as the economic rationalism took over that became less and less, to the point where there was no security, and there was constant fear and it felt more and more like you were selling your soul to keep your job. To keep that little bit that you had. And for me I didn’t have the responsibilities, the commitments. Well, I did at times, which is what kept me in that role. I had a mortgage and a wife. It’s restricting. And there is so much fear and insecurity. You just play the role. Don’t be yourself.’ (MS2/Q83/pp23-24)

Externally, things were changing too:

‘It didn’t feel like my personality was suited for the type of … the business - ruthless and cold. That corporate type of mentality was changing. When I first started working for them, I guess, because the economic times were better. There wasn’t as much pressure. There was plenty of money for projects, usually plenty of money and not
enough time to do things. But as the economic situation changed, getting more competitive, and money became more scarce for projects, managers with more and more demands for getting work done, it just became a lot more stressful. There was a lot more expectation that you would put in more hours, put in whatever was required into getting things done. I did quite a bit of that in Hawaii too. But I was willing to do it. It was kind of an exciting thing to do at the time. I was trying to get myself satisfied.’

The tensions and dissonance between his values and his actions increased.

Hawaii:

‘Professionally I could see that I wasn’t getting anywhere. The happy family office atmosphere disappeared. I wasn’t happy there and my lifestyle had gotten out of hand there too. I knew it was dangerous to my health to stay.’ (MS1/Q18/P9)

‘It was just a huge party atmosphere that got more and more dangerous for me.’ (MS1/Q20/P9)

There came a time when the tension between his inner drivers and his external demands urged him to act and to move toward his goals rather than away from his ill-ease and discomforts. He then moved into the preparatory phase of Stage 2:

‘I guess I knew enough that there was a self there that wasn’t fitting in with the criteria that I was trying to live by. And even though I didn’t know exactly what new criteria I should be applying to myself I just started fumbling and flailing around trying to find something. And that’s when I started doing some of the searching things. Trying this and doing counselling … Where even though I knew that I was trying to live with the wrong criteria I didn’t know what criteria was right for me, so I would adopt others and I would try something else … I don’t know if I’ve really changed from that all that much. I think I’ve gradually slowly become more self assured about my own code.’ (MS2/Q63-64/pp17-18)

He began giving greater attention to his personal, emotional and transpersonal interests:

‘At the time when we left Hawaii to move to [coastal USA city] I was so dissatisfied with my life at that point that I just reverted to, I was ready to just start over again. So when I hit [city] I decided that I was going to get my life and do the things I really wanted to do. Although I was still in my career. I stayed with the same company, I just moved to [city]. But outside of the career path, the work time, I was spending my time doing the things that I really wanted to do.’ (MS2/Q31/P8)

‘… I found myself a counsellor. Before that, in Hawaii, I went to a counsellor there.’ (MS2/Q61/P19)

‘When I went from [city] to [city] was when I started nourishing that part of me [spirituality] and I did some training in Raja yoga.’ (MS1/Q87/P25)
'And the drugs worked for a while but by the time I got into my professional life they weren’t. I was having more adverse reactions than positive reactions from it. So my usage went way down.’ (MS2/Q23/P6)

**Stage 3. Tipping Point (Combustion)**

When asked how he came to make the step of moving away from his old career and toward another, he replied:

‘Not very easily … little bits at a time. I just knew that the life that I had been living was not enough. And I knew that I had to change myself to get more.’ (MS2/Q26/P7)

It seemed as if the spark [of knowing what he wanted] smouldered for many years for MS, but had originally come to him while he was in the army:

‘The way I began [to learn how to realise myself] was in the army and I happened to room together with a guy who was a social worker … In fact he was my idol …. And so I asked him, basically. “I want to know some things. What can I do? Tell me some things to read.” So he gave me a couple of names of psychology books to read and I started doing that and I didn’t find it very useful … I didn’t know what else to do except to extract as much from him as I could. I wanted to study him to find out how to live, how to be a person, because he seemed like the kind of person I wanted to be. He had a strong moral/ethical core … That guy that I roomed with, by the way, is still probably my closest friend.’ (MS1/Q41 and 43/P15)

‘SMac: ‘Core’, that’s the first time you’ve used that word. A lot of the time you talk about being ‘empty’ as if your ‘core’ was vacant. So you recognised in him someone who had a core and that was what you wanted? So you found out finally what it was that you wanted? It wasn’t in a job it was in a feeling?

MS: That’s right.’ (MS1/Q42/P15)

Once he had recognised in another person what he felt was missing in himself, MS realised his transition out of the competitive, hierarchical world had become inevitable:

‘All I know is that there was a time there [the army] that I recognised that just trying to adapt myself to please everybody around me just wasn’t going to work and it wasn’t satisfying me. So I guess I recognised that my self wanted more, wanted more happiness … Even though I can see that that was a real pivotal point, it wasn’t like it just swung 180 degrees at that point - that just started it. Now it feels like it’s switching more and more and more to that way.’ (MS2/Q28,30/pp7 and 8)
Stage 4. Rest and Revitalisation (Ashes and Worm)

As a young man, MS had been attracted to medicine as a profession. He doubts there was any real interest originally, or even an altruistic one. Rather,

‘I think it’s more that I was somehow aware of medicine and the prestige that goes with it. The respect. I definitely got the inference from my family that what we were and what we were doing was very low value.’ (MS3/Q4/P2)

However, his interest in things medical resurfaced during the later part of Stage 2, the preparation phase:

‘… when I started actually working on my career is when I started making some real steps in that direction [medicine]. I was taking Uni courses at night in the life sciences to get the background I needed, that I knew I needed to get into these fields.’ (MS3/Q10/P3)

He came to understand that he also needed to develop himself:

‘I think though more than that, more than just the practical scientific academic requirements to get there, I think I had more of a need to develop myself and to grow enough to be able to have the maturity and the skill and the insight, I guess, to really, to be a true professional in the field … I felt like I wasn’t a person. So first I needed to become a person I guess before I could move on to becoming professional enough that you are helping other people. I had to help myself first.’ (MS3/Q11-12/pp3-4)

‘I forced myself to do things that I was afraid to do. Forced myself to be social. Forced myself to go on outings and take classes. And also I was searching for more too. I was searching for anything that I could find. Different kinds of people. I would try and do that. Taking classes that sounded interesting, that I thought might help me grow or develop.’ (MS2/Q24/P6)

His sense of transition was originally focussed on changing careers:

‘I guess I sort of equated leaving my previous career as the total transition but now I realise I’m still beginning this transition and that was just the milestone mark of making that decision … I guess I’d been feeling a bit impatient … I mean going through this whole process of starting a new career.’ (MS2/Q1-2/P1)

MS did not stay in the USA.

‘I’ve added some complexity to it now by coming to a different country, a different culture, and fitting in with a different clan, a different community. I guess there are a lot of reasons not to feel like I’m fitting in. But just in the short time I’ve been here I feel
like a bit more comfortable. I just feel, just in being out in the community, I feel more
like this is where I belong … I like the open space. Maybe that’s because that’s where I
grew up I grew up in the country. I was so intent on getting away and getting to a city
… And now I’ve come around again. I still like the city, but here more.’ (MS2/Q52-53/P14)

The additional stepping stones in his transition (moving to another country and
retraining at University), added some tensions, but, in the context of his emerging self,
and despite personal discomfort, he felt that those tensions were manageable. He was
moving away from hierarchical reliance by incremental stages.

‘Being in the University system is sort of, it’s quite a connection with the old system
and the old way of thinking and everything. I guess that’s partly why I feel a little
agitated by it right now because I resent the fact that it’s taking so much of my time and
energy where I feel like there’s these other paths, other parts of myself that need some
attention, are crying for some work. But yes … knowing the way my past path has
gone, I don’t expect it to be a straight smooth line from here on.’ (MS4/Q25/P9)

‘I feel like I’ve compromised myself again. I’ve got this feeling that because now I’m
having to abide by their [University] rules of what it is to succeed and how I should be
and what I should be accomplishing in a linear way. And I feel like I’m tolerating that
at this time … I feel like it’s temporary and I also feel like what I’m acquiring from it,
having to follow this rigid path, is allowing me to acquire something that’s not only
going to be beneficial to myself but it’s going to be beneficial to others. And that really
feels like that is important to me.’ (MS2/Q36-37/P10)

His ability to be uncomfortable and tolerate uncertainty was beginning to serve him well
in his new goal.

‘I feel like I have swapped an allegiance. And that’s kind of interesting because I still
have some friends and ties and connections through that former allegiance although I
have severed all but a few. And I don’t really know what my new plan is going to be like
or who they are. That really gives me a feel for being in-between in the transitional
process. But that’s also a good way to put it because I realise now that the people that I
am associating with here and the people in my program do have a different set of values
of what is a success.’ (MS2/Q11/P4)

**Stage 5. Clarity and Commitment (Heliopolis)**

In reviewing his transition to date, MS was very articulate and aware of the differences
between the measures and values of his former career and his new perspective:
When MS looked back on his time in the corporate work he reflected his shift from referencing to the hierarchy, to referencing to himself. Many terms changed their meanings for him (for instance, ‘normal’, ‘success’, ‘honour’) as did some of his key values and his source of authority:

SMac: ‘You said before, you used the word ‘normal’, and yet the more you describe this former life as being one where stress is the value and distrust is an asset and being one’s true self or having integrity is a risk … I’m wondering about the use of that word ‘normal’.

MS: It’s all around you. People don’t know but it’s there. And they were part of it. Looking back on it, that’s where I got lost too, so caught up in the lifestyle that I totally lost view of what else there was and where I was going. It’s only when things deteriorated somehow that I became aware of it. By deteriorated I mean somehow I was not meeting the goals and expectations of those around me by not accomplishing all the things that everybody else was and it was assumed that you would too.’ (MS2/Q61/P16)

He discussed several of these changes:

‘Money was a major one. I remember going through my professional career, judging where I was at by how my raises were proceeding. And also the level of responsibility. I could see that I was progressing by achieving certain titles at work which meant that I was reaching higher levels. Acquiring material things was another measure which I’ve gotten caught up in at times but it’s never been that big of a driving force for me. Prestige I think is probably another factor which ties in with the money and position. I guess my ideas of what was it to be a success. It’s so economically driven.’ (MS2/Q5/P2)

‘… I still find myself judging my progress and where I’m at, evaluating how things are progressing by that former set of values and that former idea of what success is and how life is supposed to proceed. And I still keep having recurring bouts of near panic, Oh God I’m just about to turn 50 and I feel like I’m playing around at University. But then I have to remind myself that was that former set of values and I’m not judging my life in the same way any more.’ (MS2/Q4/P1-2)

‘Well as you were running through all that I saw the connection between my old view of honour and where I’m sort of at with honour now. This is all part of the evolution too; it’s all part of the evolution of the self and the discovery of self where ... The old way was derived from the fundamentalist Christian upbringing which to me was so full of hypocrisy. I was aware that I wasn’t honouring myself and I tried to fit in with what I thought was honour and the honourable thing was to stay on that path of having that career and having a family and doing what a person is supposed to do even though it doesn’t feel right. I guess that’s what I thought honour was and that kept holding me; that was part of what kept holding me on the career path I was on. But I think also as my idea of Self has evolved and my identity has evolved my concept of honour now is more of being true to yourself and accepting yourself. I think that it’s kind of tied
in with the religious belief system, where now my belief system is that we are all basically one ... I’m struggling to think about this concept of honour but I think it fits in now with my belief that we are all part of the same oneness and there is a certain respect that goes with that. There is a respect of all things, all people, including ourselves. Whereas that old belief system, that old fundamentalist system was, it seemed to me it was like it was do not respect yourself because you are ultimately primarily a bad, evil person.’ (MS3/Q49-51/pp16-17)

‘There are common threads throughout the whole thing where, it seems like I’ve always looked outward for approval and I really haven’t trusted my own intuition of what is right for myself. Consequently I have ended up doing a lot of things that I really didn’t want to do actually. Even though I recognised it and I even voiced my opposition to it I still kept following that same path … Maybe I just didn’t have the courage to take that big of a risk and not follow the crowd. Not do what was expected of me.’ (MS2/Q8-9/P3)

‘The things I value more now are things that are happiness, beauty, caring, love, relationships, feeling of communicating. Not that those things are taking new values but on a list of priorities they just shifted.’ (MS2/Q34/P9)

His man way of changing was deceptively simple:

‘I purposely nurtured those things, growing those things, and allowing the other parts to wither.’ (MS2/Q35/P10)

MS had been part of several hierarchies, including that of his parents’ religious ‘clan’.

‘Well I guess I went from my home clan to my University clan to my army clan and back to a University clan … and then from there was as a professional clan.’ (MS2/Q22/P6)

Though MS was moving to a different career and power structure, he stressed,

‘… it’s not like I’m a free spirit and that I’m not still trying to fit in and meet certain expectations. It’s just that they’re different ones.’ (MS2/Q33/P9)

I found this an important point. These men were not different men after they changed work and/or themselves; they were men who had shifted their priorities to follow new goals in new ways.

MS’ continuing transition was internally driven:

‘… there is a certain confidence there that I am kind of compelled along by it, and in fact I experience quite a bit of frustration with the path that I’m on because my path is directing me on this career yet my path is also directing me on this self discovery and both of them are quite urgent to me at this time …’ (MS3/Q30/P10)

What was it that drove him?
‘What is this thing that knows? It’s the True Me, whatever that is. This is part of what I’m struggling with in trying to come up with my identity and find out who I really am.’ (MS3/Q22/P7)

It was not always comfortable or clear for him:

‘It makes it sound like there’s a real conflict going on. And I think there is. And I think that’s what I’m feeling now. I’m feeling that critical part, that old way so strongly now, but the other part of me is fighting it. It’s trying to remind me and bring me back out of that again. It’s gotten out of balance. But it’s still there. I recognised that that’s still there and I made a deal with myself, okay I know that but I’m not going to do anything about it for another three weeks.’ (MS4/Q37/P13)

‘Somehow I don’t feel comfortable with the idea of having to choose one or the other. I feel like really trying to eliminate that part [judgement that is splitting everything apart and weighing one thing up against another] because it just doesn’t seem to work for me. It just seems to give it more strength or whatever. So somehow I need to incorporate that in a reasonable way. I just need to convince that part of me that the other path is okay and I am okay with that path and that it doesn’t have to be as vigilant in it’s protection of me or whatever it’s doing.’ (MS4/Q39-40/P14)
Stage 6. Consolidation (Return)

SMac: ‘What does that feel like to be with people who are more compatible with your values?
MS: It’s much easier. It’s also a bit more reassuring. I don’t feel like quite the odd one. And I don’t feel like I have to hide that part of myself so much.’ (MS2/Q12/P4)

MS was aware of physiological changes as well as systems and values changes and anticipated what it would be like for him in the consolidation phase:

‘I’m not feeling that confident about where I’m at and what I’m doing. I’ve noticed it in my voice. My voice is just not as clear, it’s not as firm, I stumble with my words a lot more and my speech is much more disjointed … but now that makes sense because that fits in with the pattern of what’s going on with this change and until I really find my new voice or get closer to my new person and were I’m going that it fits with what’s happening.’ (MS4/Q10/P4)

SMac: ‘What would be the parameters of self esteem in the new way for you? How would you know you were okay?
MS: Well, there is a part of me that wants to say that I would get that recognition from outside again. There is a part of me that still clings to that. But I think the real part of me recognises that that is going to have to come from inside. When I feel like what I’m doing is suited to myself and I’m making a contribution, having a benefit to other people, helping people perhaps. That would make me feel good about myself. Therefore that would be a measurement and a guide of, okay I guess I must be on, what I would call my new path of success. So it’s going to have to come from something inside. It’s going to have to be my, my inner guide will have to be comfortable with that.’ (MS4/Q13/P5)

His consolidation stage and career shift was directly tied to his sense of well-being and purpose:

‘I wouldn’t choose chaos. I like structure. But there is a lot of personal freedom to this. I’m now choosing to study what I really want and I’m choosing to live in a place where I really want to be with people who have ideas that I relate to.’ (MS2/Q74/P20)

‘That’s what life seems to me to be is a learning stage of rediscovering who you really are.’ (MS3/Q74/P23)

Summary of shift

‘The difference is that this path is much more personal and much more interior, where the old system was almost exclusively determined and valued and judged by what I had
learned, what I had been taught, what I perceived, what people told me was expected. And I therefore judged myself in that manner. And now it’s much more the felt, trusting thing. Trust. We’ve come back to that again. And that is part of a big leap … having that self trust, that you are a real person [that], your Real Self, will know the right thing to do; will lead, sort of guide me along the way. So it’s a much scarier path because the old system had all these very clear guide posts and a very clear time lining of how you were supposed to progress and where you were supposed to go and unless you are really tied into the money acquisition hierarchy of things it’s hard to know, where am I, how am I doing.’ (MS4/Q27/P10)

At the time of the interviews MS had not quite completed his university degree. His perspective of where he was on his larger path, ‘of rediscovering who you really are.’ (MS3/Q74/P23) was one of uncertainty.

‘I’m at the transition rock. Like you are on one shore and there is a rock in the middle and there is the shore on this side. So I’ve made that step onto this rock. I’ve got my balance there a bit. A little unsteady yet but … so now I’m trying to get myself balanced and centred so that I can make that final leap, that final step. That’s a good analogy.’ (MS4/Q22/P8)

He was aware he had come to a point of no turning back and that he had moved beyond that to cultivating a new sense of self that was still emerging, new ways of being seen in the world, and new work in a new land with a new wife.

‘I feel like I’m taking a lot more responsibility. Whereas I used to just allow my career, my profession, my plan at that time, to determine how I should be, what I should value. And doing that for a while, realising that that wasn’t satisfying myself and fulfilling myself I guess I decided to realise that I had to take some control and responsibility. If I want to direct my life the way I want I’m going to have to be responsible for it. I also have to be responsible for where I’ve come from and what I’ve done and how I’ve been.’ (MS2/Q43/P12)

In terms of career change MS was willing to trust:

‘What is going to happen when I am done with the academic part of this and I actually go out into the work environment again … I really think that I am going to be able to say this is the way it is supposed to unfold and it will be okay and I will just roll with it and move on. I have no doubt about that.’ (MS3/Q44/P14)

... and his sense of being split was on the way to cohesion again:

‘Because even though I have been so focused on this other part of me I’m also aware that the spiritual part of me and the development part there hasn’t been stationary. It hasn’t stopped. That was what I was trying to say to you before. Even though it’s slowed down
while I was speeding along in this other direction, I’m speeding back now and soon will be on a similar path.’ (MS3/Q94/P27)

Reflection on process

‘… this process of growth when you don’t have anybody to pattern yourself after then you don’t know which direction to go or where to look it takes you a long time because you’re kind of just fumbling around, you’re stumbling this way and maybe find something that works or nothing, and fumble this way a little bit and maybe find something else that works a little bit. It seems to me that it’s taken a long time just because I really didn’t know, there was no set path, there was no information that I was aware of how to move along that direction [my italics], a different direction. And so it was a sort of making it up as you go along, getting from whatever people you can as you go along, bits of this and bits of that, and if you’re lucky finding somebody who is on a similar path or has been farther down the path than you have been and you can glean a little bit from them. I guess that’s why that friend, why he became such a mentor and an idol for me and has stayed that way throughout.’ (MS4/Q6-7/P3)

‘In retrospect now and even at the time I think I was aware of the fact and I resented that the job was consuming so much of me that I wasn’t getting that fulfilment that I really wanted for myself. The job was progressing but it wasn’t giving me fulfilment.’ (MS1/Q43/P15)

‘… my extra-self-critical me can say that I was a failure; that I was not able to meet the demands and keep up with my peers as I progressed up the career path. But when I look back on that I can see that I didn’t have the same interest and drive and desire to accomplish the same things that I felt like I was being judged on.’ (MS2/Q5/P2)

Update: Since the interviews MS has completed his degree and his training to be a Yoga teacher. He and his wife have moved to another city where he works freelance as a Naturopath, Yoga teacher, and as a contractor to organisations in medical and health fields.

ROC in Transition

ROC’s transition was that of a move back to an Australian Education department from a period of teaching in the Seychelles, first as a consultant and then as Regional Manager. With a change in government policy towards centralisation, the regional office he
worked in was disbanded. In the process he decided to return to a school and his love of teaching ‘at risk’ students rather than relocate and continue his career ‘upwards’ in the education hierarchy.
As such, ROC’s sojourn as a Regional Manager could be understood as a diversion:

‘Interestingly enough I guess I explored the career path outside of school, which was the whole thing- I found it more interesting- which led to a senior management position but as a result I’ve now come back to the classroom at this stage, I guess.’ (ROC1/Q23/P3)

His account is very valuable as it presents his own transition, as one of opportunity and (almost) by consent, and the experiences of those in the office who also lost their positions, and for whom it was considered an unwelcome and ill-prepared-for change. Why was the effect of the same situation so different for ROC and the others affected by it? Through ROC’s account some answers are proposed.

ROC began life in a coastal Australian city, and remembers having a carefree and adventurous childhood:

‘I remember I had a happy childhood. I remember it very clearly.’ (ROC/Q81/P17)

He extended his love of adventure to travel, both outback Australia with its vast empty spaces, and India with its massive over-crowding.

‘My first trip overseas was in ’78. Why did I decide to go from Forbes as a jackaroo to Bombay? What put that in my head?.’ (ROC/Q96/P19)

He trained as a teacher of children with special needs, becoming one of a small band of teachers in that discipline. He taught for a few years, enjoying it. Adventure and exploration showed up again in his life-script when he and his wife moved to the Seychelles.

‘... both Cherie and I had resigned in 1987 and we’d sold up everything we owned to travel, which we did, and we toured in the Seychelles for a couple of years.’ (ROC1/Q9/P3)

Though enjoying teaching and living in the Seychelles, when asked to return to Australia by a state Education Department, they did so. Within a few years ROC went from being a classroom teacher, to consultant and then to being a Regional Manager.

‘What had happened ... I guess. I started off being taken out of the classroom because I was seen and deemed as having some skills that other staff could utilise, so I was a consultant. So I would travel around helping practitioners practise better I guess. That led into a small management position in a small area where I was no longer a consultant, I was managing a whole organisation.’ (ROC1/Q14/P4)
Within a few more years his position, and the Regional Office itself, was gone and he was once again back in a school.

‘Yes, but that was okay because I was dealing with that. I saw it as an opportunity rather than as anything else.’ (ROC1/Q20/P5)

That he was ‘dealing with it’ was not necessarily the case, as we shall see.

He described the disintegration of the Office from an organisational view and from the perspective of several of those whose positions were also abolished, more so than his own experiences, as if the two were disconnected, ‘boxed’ or parallel, rather than interconnected. As such, his descriptions were very much that of a spectator or reporter.

However, to gain insight into ROC’s transition, let’s hear what he says about the office dismantling. He tells us it came about because of ...

‘Public accountability. Also the fact that [the Premier] … had totally changed the management system and introduced the senior executive service, who were basically paid more on contract, and the belief was that it would then draw into the organisation from outside, or anywhere, skilled people who would take over management positions and get the organisation into the twenty-first century where it belonged. You know away from this old model … using the business model.’ (ROC1/Q34-35/P9)

Curiously, as more rules gave greater ‘clarity’ to their roles, the culture and those in it became more conservative. People became less secure and more unsettled:

‘I give you the example of a retirement dinner of a senior bureaucrat in the [state] government: he had said that more and more scrutiny had led to a more and more conservative bureaucracy. Prior to that the bureaucrats who were always there, even though ministers came and went, felt both professionally and personally able to debate things, to argue the toss. Their jobs weren’t going to be on the line plus they had developed expertise in their own areas so they were able to argue. But with more and more public accountability what has occurred is that people are more reluctant to do that because they are on contracts. Also the fact that if they make a mistake or things go wrong they are held up to scrutiny … they tend to toe the party line or they tend to retreat to the rule book more.’ (ROC1/Q35/P9)

Coupled with funding changes, ROC saw the culture destabilise:

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**Stage 1: Restlessness (Sense of Impending Demise)**

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Coupled with funding changes, ROC saw the culture destabilise:
‘… they had taken on some of the management strategies that they were observing in private enterprise and keying those into the public sector ... At the same time there was pressure in terms of monetary pressure, in terms of funding and so on. Budgetary cutbacks.’ (ROC1/Q52-53/P12)

### Stage 2. Exploration and Preparation (Gathering Wood; Increasing Friction)

‘Boxing’ set in:

‘It became, in a funny sort of way, more conservative while having the appearance of being progressive.’ (ROC1/Q44/P11)

‘My guiding principle I had was I tried to make sure everyone knew what game we were playing and what the rules were up front and what the parameters were. They weren’t necessarily my parameters but they were the ones that it was my job to implement. So if they disagreed, they knew they weren’t disagreeing with me, just the system. I might agree with them in private, but I have to say what the system said.’ (ROC1/Q76/P18)

He felt he was able to divide his life with ease, but it was evident that there were times the partitions between work and home were not so clearly defined:

‘When you went home you then become the non-department person ... But you should be able to go home and turn off and say, “Well that was at the office, or that is what I did there. Now I am back.” I am very good at doing that, of not actually bringing my work home with me in terms of emotionally. There were times when I would actually be working at night here at home and I would fall asleep with papers in my hand. So that was bringing it home. But once I was asleep, or once something else happened, I’d leave it. So I don’t think there were two sides to me in that regard. I think there were only two sides to how I dealt with issues, that was my personal life and my work life.’ (ROC1/Q80-81/P20)

Fear became a major motivator:

‘People lived in fear, fear for their jobs, and fear was used in a funny sort of way ... In the senior executive their initial fear was that they were called down at any stage and asked to be made accountable to their performance agreement. Like the night before they could be told, “You are flying to [the city] tomorrow and the D-G is going to run through these performance indicators.” ’ (ROC1/Q45 and 47/P11)

‘Well there was only fear and coercion if you wanted what was the carrot, being dangled in front of you.’ (ROC2/Q30/P10)
‘Well there are different levels of that fear. One can have a broad kind of macro level, the fear of not having a job. But what is that fear? Are you the job or is the job you? If you don’t have the job what is there to be fear? For some people it is that fear of loss of face, status. The perception that you have in some way failed. That you aren’t the person that you were. Then you go down through the fear actually within your job, the people that you work with, that you are less able than your peers. That you can’t haggle as well as those. That your patch doesn’t get the level of resources as someone else because you didn’t do as good a job. There are all those different things. Ongoing. I don’t know if fear is the word. Its an ongoing adrenalin rush isn’t it. You are constantly on edge. Some people really get off on that stuff. They must.’ (ROC2/Q56/P12)

In preparation for the change:

‘People were offered re-training packages and be re-trained in whatever they wanted to be re-trained in, but it was all a bit late. I mean your life plan is no longer sort of intact if all of a sudden you don’t have a job and you live in a small country town. All you can do is do a task which is so specific to a particular organisation but is of no relevance to any one else whatsoever.’ (ROC1/Q20/pp5-6)

Stage 3. Tipping Point (Combustion)

ROC’s description of the dismantling of the office reflected the concerns which prompted this research:

‘… when the office I was in was totally restructured and the [main] office was closed down completely, all these people, ninety staff, were scattered to the four winds. Some of them were very senior positions and some of them were older men. One particular chap who had … in the 50’s left school and obviously could have done a number of things but chose the public service because it was a sought after position. You had to sit exams just to get into it. It had a career path, it had security; it had after work security in terms of superannuation and so on. So it seemed a very prestigious thing to do, in some ways. He was three years, or two years, off retirement and all of a sudden he is told there is a restructure and he was no longer required. He was devastated because it was supposed to be forever [my bolding].’ (ROC1/Q15/4P)

‘… There was another case where a chap in a more senior position was ruthlessly … given the flick. He was no longer required. He was getting past it. Once upon a time he would have been maintained in some way within the system. He would have been given ‘duties’ … He was given the flick and said to me that he was just totally devastated because he had always imagined the department to be his friend. What made it worse, one of his so-called friends was the one that actually had to come and tell him he was no longer required.’ (ROC1/Q16-17/5P)
ROC was shocked at senior management approach:

‘...we had a meeting of all the management people about how we were managing closing down the office and moving people off to better things, or not better things. Basically, his opening line at the meeting was, “And how are we keeping the little punters quiet?” It was basically cannon-fodder and, “If I get a little pressure well then we will have to look at a proper redundancy package or some re-training for people.”’ (ROC1/Q20/P5)

ROC’s perspective did not reflect an attachment to the rules of advancement in hierarchy:

‘When I found I had this job perhaps that is why is has been easy to make a change as it has happened. I wasn’t focused on that this was the only job … I was focused on the fact that I was going to take this career path because I wanted to be the Regional Manager for Special Education because that was where I was heading. When I got there, I finally achieved it. When I decided that the job was no longer there I didn’t fall apart at the seams because I would go back to India, I would go back and jackeroo, or do something else.’ (ROC2/Q18/P3)

Stage 4. Rest and Revitalisation (Ashes and Worm)
Stage 4 was a time of displacement, disorientation and grieving for many of the people in the office:

‘Had an impact on everybody from those men I described before who had all sorts of problems because the culture that they grew up in and were part of and they had developed didn’t exist any more and all of a sudden they were out. They couldn’t understand that. To the people who were ‘the little punters’, who were ‘the cogs in the wheel downstairs in the office, punching the machines’.’ (ROC1/Q20/P6)

‘So when the restructure happened and the whole thing was just thrown up and those positions weren’t there any more, I, and a number of other people, had a number of choices because we had a number of other skills so we could make some choices. But some of those people had no choices to make at all because they actually hadn’t at any time personally thought about anything else. Nor had the system - for want of a better word - supported them in developing themselves beyond what they were doing. If they were to get professional development it would actually be about how to use that computer better or how to do that form better. It was never about, “Have you thought about a career apart from what you are doing?” That very same system then said, “Well we no longer require you. Off you go.”’ (ROC1/Q18/P5)

For ROC ...
He had to make choices and changes:

‘Well, it is all choice isn’t it? I could have opted, after the restructure in the office and the job that I had was abolished and moved somewhere else, to move somewhere else. Or I could have taken another position in the new structure. But it was an opportune time in which to say, “Well, it’s now time to make a change. I don’t want to be doing this when I am sixty years of age.” ’ (ROC1/Q83/pp20-21)

‘So this particular guy would ring up and we would work a lot of projects together and really I didn’t get into the status thing and I saw him as a peer and we worked together and I wouldn’t worry about it. But he would actually defer to me when it was required, for various reasons. Anyway as soon as I told him that I was giving it away he would ring for a little while, but he doesn’t ring any more. In a way he sees that I have actually taken this very soft option. I should be out there playing the game with him. That was a waste of skills that I had. Why aren’t I out there kind of being involved? It is funny because I see it as the opposite, I see it as the brave option that he can never do.’ (ROC2/Q60/P13)

‘Well I said before asking the Dorothy Dix question “Is it the easy option to give it all away?” . But I think it is very difficult to say to yourself, “I’m not going to do this any more. I am going to do something completely different.” ’ (ROC2/Q61/P13)

ROC’s colleagues also regarded his choice of going back to the classroom as temporary, as an ‘ashes’ period from which he would ‘return’:

“Two years [since being back in a school]. Basically, colleagues of mine in the previous existence I had have spoken to me and said, “Why haven’t you moved on now? You have had two years, you have had time to relax, why aren’t you applying for a job here or there?” ’ (ROC3/Q87/P13)

However, with his love of adventure and exploration it may be unlikely ROC will be there forever:

“The thing that I kind of fear most is that when I am 60 I will still be like I am at 40.’ (ROC2/Q69/P15)

In summary and in reflection, ROC mused:

“I was fortunate in that when I changed my career it wasn’t that brave really because I had another job to go to. I went to another tent, if you like. A very different tent but within the same paddock. I didn’t actually go to a different tent altogether on the side of
a hill. In fact go to a lean-to, or up a tree or something. Or no tent at all. No boundaries. Wouldn’t that be brave? No boundaries. That would be interesting to talk to somebody who was one day a merchant banker in Sydney and the next day was doing something completely different. It would be interesting to see that in terms of what did they take with them to enable that to happen? Let’s talk about materially, how are they surviving? One day they were drinking Chardonnay and having some nice pate and the next day the kind of Pitt Street cowboy, the Pitt Street hippie. That is interesting...The people that I would really admire, I guess, is someone who has taken a different journey spiritually or emotionally. So physically what you are doing, how you look, what you are doing is irrelevant. It is what you have decided in yourself that is important, and made that big leap.’ (ROC2/Q64/pp13-14)

Stage 5. Clarity and Commitment (Heliopolis)

ROC spoke of alternative ways the organisation could have approached the change:

‘Well it [the organisation] actually should have been active before the change happened. It should have presumed that at any stage any of its employees weren’t going to be there tomorrow and they weren’t actually going to be in that organisation tomorrow. It should have provided them with opportunities for career development outside the actual area they were in and emotional, physical and spiritual development as was required by that person. There should have been a gymnasium, showers, time for people to meditate, whatever turns people on, there should have been that facility there. There should have been child care so people didn’t have the hassle about before and after work care for their children. Those folk would have been much more at peace and ease with the issue of having to change.’ (ROC3/Q60/P9)

‘Career counselling. There was always the offer to go and talk to a counsellor. It was a reactive measure rather than a pro-active measure. So you could actually summarise that by saying that the organisation should have said to itself, “In our ethos, in our role statement, one of the major statements we will have is that we accept change is inevitable. As a result of that we should therefore be doing all these things for people in our organisation.” So when change occurs, either individually or en masse as happened in this case, other avenues will be available. It didn’t do that at all. It said, “We provide a service; we employ these people; change is not really important to us unless we deem it to be happening. We will professionally develop them.” And then when change happened we went, ‘Holy Shit, what do we do?’’ (ROC3/Q63/P10)

... and those in it:

‘So when the restructure happened and the whole thing was just thrown up and those positions weren’t there any more I, and a number of other people, had a number of choices because we had a number of other skills so we could make some choices. But
some of those people had no choices to make at all because they actually hadn’t at any
time personally thought about anything else. Nor had the system - for want of a better
word - supported them in developing themselves beyond what they were doing. If they
were to get professional development it would actually be about how to use that
computer better or how to do that form better. It was never about, “Have you thought
about a career apart from what you are doing?” That very same system then said, “Well
we no longer require you. Off you go.”’ (ROC1/Q18/P5)

It was a time of review and reassessment for himself as well as others:

‘I think it is a cultural thing because I didn’t necessarily want to play that game. Now
why was that the case? I don’t know. Did I tell you that once my Assistant Director-
General told me that I needed to get more mongrel in my attitude? ... I wasn’t hard
enough. I didn’t go in hard enough. I was too nice to people. I didn’t kind of get nasty
with people. My reaction to that was, “Well I don’t want to play the game if that is the
case.”’ (ROC2/Q26-27/P5)

He went on to review the effect of his career change on himself:

‘I feel that the change in my career, for want of a better word, that I dealt with quite
well. In fact I relished it as an opportunity to try something different anyway. Maybe I
am being a bit hard on myself. Maybe I did cope with being forty but I just thought I
would do better than I did. I don’t know. Maybe it was this business about mid-life
crisis. Everyone talks about people having a mid-life crisis and forty was this kind of
magical number that no one copes with. Perhaps it was a self-induced thing perhaps.’
(ROC3/Q3/P1)

‘The other thing I learnt more and more, particularly in the last ten years, is basically
just do it and don’t kind of worry about the consequences so much. I find I am doing it
more and more actually. Did I tell you I used to be very conscious about what people
thought? I have come to realise that is not really important in terms of work. It is very
important in my personal life and in terms of the people I am friends with and my
family.’ (ROC3/Q35/P6)

‘One thing I was good at my job, I was a nice person working with people so I could
accommodate everyone’s needs and would do that quite willinglly.’ (ROC2/Q59/P13)

Stage 6. Consolidation (Return)

ROC felt the Education Department had approached its own transition to a business
model of operation in a simplistic manner:
'We have to change it so we will change it. But we didn’t really understand how this change process really worked. So what we will do is, basically, change the jobs, pay them more money and that’s it, that’s all we have to do.’ (ROC1/Q41/P10)

He felt those in the organisation approached the new paradigm in an equally simplistic way:

‘It was their jobs being re-advertised under a different guise. They applied for them but they brought with them the same culture [as before] so there was no thought to how to change the culture as well.’ (ROC1/Q39/P10)

ROC’s pattern of attention and interest was an interplay between a goal and many diversions in eliptices about that main path, as told in his Kakadu bushwalking story.

It was only in review that he reflected on his personal changes and motivations.

‘If that restructure hadn’t occurred and the office hadn’t actually had to be closed - in hindsight perhaps I would still be there - perhaps I wouldn’t have made a change. But whilst you are in it I can see that it can be very seductive to people because it is power. I mean you manage people’s lives.’ (ROC1/Q23/ P7)

‘I feel that the change in my career, for want of a better word, that I dealt with quite well. In fact I relished it as an opportunity to try something different anyway.’ (ROC3/Q3/P1)

At first he thought he had been unaffected in any disruptive way, but on reflection he saw that turning 40, changing jobs and health problems after he left his Manager’s position, as all connected:

‘Well then I was thinking what things haven’t I coped very well with. Interestingly enough I don’t think I coped very well with turning forty. I thought I was going to. I was confident I was ... I think in hindsight, because I am now forty-two, the last two years personally perhaps haven’t been that successful in terms of coping with that change ... Now it was about the same time that I changed jobs as well. But in a funny sort of way I don’t think the changing of my job had anything to do with it ... The reason I don’t think I coped so well was that things happened. Physically things happened. I had my gall bladder out … I changed work, that whole issue happened, had my gall bladder out. I had this virus for six months which was unknown and I ended up being quite ill. All that kind of stuff. It might have been that. I actually might have been physically, my body telling me there had been a change in my life. The work I was doing … for quite a number of years I was in quite a stressful job. So maybe in hindsight I actually did cope quite well with changing forty but what happened is I changed this job and I did something different and my body kind of caught up with me. What had
happened for the last six or eight years, I had been too busy to be sick. I was too busy to actually listen to what my gall bladder was saying to me.’ (ROC3/Q3-4/P1)

When discussing why he thought he was so resilient, and successful in his transition, ROC replied:

‘... I am a person who didn’t demand that the job was his life. I think I divorced the job from who I was outside the job that I did, even though I spent most of my waking hours doing it. I still worked hard when I wasn’t doing it doing other stuff. I wasn’t career-ladder obsessed. I made a very conscious decision early on that a career could be up, sideways or even down, as was appropriate. Even people that I supervised we would discuss that issue and I would pass on what I thought was important, that a career doesn’t mean that you always have to go into a higher position on the corporate ladder. So that was important.’ (ROC3/Q8/P2)

‘Also I guess the other thing that I thought about I had enough training and I had trained myself in a variety of ways that I had other options available to me. So whilst doing the job I was doing I at no stage thought it would be the only job I would ever do for the rest of my life so therefore if anything happened I wasn’t desperate because I wasn’t trained for any other position or any other task. So I had a security net around myself, I guess, in that regard. I also had the knowledge that I could actually get a job doing something else if I really wanted to do it.’ (ROC3/Q8/P2)

‘But I had a warning very early on when I started down this path that it wasn’t a secure environment and so I accepted that. People who I worked with didn’t accept that. People who are still doing this particular job still don’t accept it, they kind of feel that they are owed a life time of support. But I accepted it very early on that I was owed nothing by anybody and that at any stage I was dispensable.

SM: What was the warning early on?

ROC: I had a contract for two years ... No one said to me, “At the end of two years we will give you another two years and you will go on forever.” Most people said, “Once you get in they will renew your contract and you just kind of move around.” I just didn’t kind of accept that as being a fact.’ (ROC3/Q11-13/P3)

‘Well, before I made sure that I had other options and I understood how it all worked and I understood the game and I understood the process. So I was happy to get in there, be part of it, bat away and play the game and whatever but I always made sure I wasn’t wedded to the whole thing ... Although I didn’t take on this other ethos, this other culture that people took on, I did just as good a job as they did, in fact I think I did a better job.’ (ROC3/Q55/P9)

Others were not clear on how to respond to ROC’s change in hierarchical position and power level:
‘It’s funny because you meet people now and they don’t quite know how to react to you because you are perceived as this person who is a bit heavy and really you are just this regular person. I still meet people and they will look at me strangely. I still go to meetings for different things and there are people there who I would have supervised and now they are in other positions and basically in terms of the system I am now their junior, if you like. It doesn’t worry me but they get very uncomfortable with it, or they can’t leave it they will still defer to me and things like that. I say to them, “Don’t worry about it. I’m not interested in it any more.” Recently my Superintendent, the head honcho, rang me up and ask why wasn’t I applying for jobs. I said, “I don’t have a need to. I have got other more important things to do.”’ (ROC1/Q26/P7)

‘Well the previous job was a management job so there was conflict resolution, there was a lot of paperwork, decision-making, a lot of planning; financial planning, strategic planning. Responding to issues, you know bang, bang, bang, decision, decision, decision. Very fast pace, very typical of any management position ... I very rarely saw kids or teachers. I saw staff when there was a major issue to be resolved so I would go in and review a situation, review staff and make reports and make recommendations about what should occur ... Or I would actually pull out people who were very good at what they did and use their skills to do something else. So I saw either the good or the bad and nothing in between. Whereas the job I do now obviously I still have an executive position in the school and I do some stuff, but it is basically dealing with kids, dealing with people, just that kind of day-to-day interaction with staff, students and parents. Interestingly enough it still demands decisions to be made. It might seem pretty trivial compared to what I did before, but it is just as important if not more important. So whether John has his wallet and has his $2.00 to buy his drink down the street today is as important as whether I actually made sure I allocated the $20,000 I was given to allocate for a certain programme. The importances are just the same, at least to John. John has been looking forward all week to spending his $2 ... That’s important because I didn’t need to have the kudos or the status of being able to throw around thousands of dollars. To me it is just as important to throw around $2 for John, really.’ (ROC3/Q72-75/pp11-12)

‘I sometimes look back and it is as if it didn’t occur; those six or eight years that I did that. It was something that I did and it was nice but I am not hanging my hat on that.’ (ROC3/Q76/P12)

And his purpose and future?

‘Having something interesting, having something that is worthwhile and having something that I can feel good about having done ... Well, it gets back to the issue about humanity and caring and people. So I guess I feel that the job I do helps people, so I feel good about that.’ (ROC3/Q75/P8)

‘It’s funny how every day you think about the previous day. The previous day has gone and what you thought the previous day has gone as well and that’s no longer relevant. So how when I was thirty-five years of age and forty years of age at that time was so
satisfying was so correct, but now it is so irrelevant. It is the ability to say every day tomorrow is a different day and I need to look at it differently. Not want to hang on to yesterday. I don’t do it radically. I am not actually changing my spots every day. I’m not very different every day, really …’ (ROC2/Q98/P20)

‘The bottom line is was it all worth it, is it all worth it? Of what worth is it to you as a person?’ (ROC3/Q85/P13)

‘I would hope that when I am sixty to be totally different to what I am at forty. And at eighty totally different to what I am at sixty. I am obviously very different now than I was when I was twenty, when I was thirty.’ (ROC2/Q70/P15)
**PS in Transition - A and B**

PS made two exits from two major hierarchical institutions: the Commonwealth Public Service, as a symbol of secular care and organisation and, before that, his exit from the Catholic priesthood and Church, with its themes of spiritual and pastoral care.


(PS2/Q45/P18)

**Transition A - from the Catholic Church and Priesthood.**

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**Stage 1: Restlessness (Sense of Impending Demise)**

Despite his long-term vision of becoming a priest, doubts had begun to arise for PS even before his ordination.

‘The doubts didn’t start until I was in philosophy, which I was in Sydney in 1959. So I was then what, 18 or 19, that’s when I started to have doubts ... I left the Philippines at the end of 1967.’ (PS1/Q11/P7)

His efforts to maintain his exterior life while his interior life was collapsing, was a clear indicator of Stage 1, increasing to Stage 2. So, too, was his acceptance of others deciding his reality for him:

‘... in the jargon it is known as whether you have a vocation or not, and that was the question: did I have a vocation or didn’t I have a vocation? One assumes that one has one. One is told that one has. You are told, “Yes, you have got a vocation,’ and you tend to accept that without a lot of analysis.’ (PS1/Q10/P7)

‘And during the seminary life the professors, what they call the Spiritual Director who directs your spiritual life, who you could consult, he was like a spiritual consultant ...Three times during those six years I went and said, “Look, I don’t think I am in the right place. I don’t think I am really cut out for this.” And each time in different ways, by three different people, I was told “Probably out of your mind; this is temptation of the devil; you really belong here; this is fine for you so just don’t worry about it.”’

(PS1/Q3/P4)
Stage 2. Exploration and Preparation (Gathering Wood; Increasing Friction)

Like most of the priests in Nelson’s study (Nelson 1995) of priests leaving the priesthood to marry, Stage 2 for PS was protracted and unsettled.

‘But gradually, about half way through that three-and-a-half year period, I started to have quite strong doubts about whether I was really cut out for it, not from the point of view of could I stand it, I was fit and healthy and I was fine …’ (PS1/Q4/P5)

In this time, inner longings crept to the surface:

‘Yes, I found, I suppose, a combination of things, one is that I did want to have a family, somewhere, sometime (sigh), and that just sort of crept up on me.’ (PS1/Q44/P15)

He made repeated attempts to solve his unease within the Church structures:

‘Well, I’d had my doubts and as far as I was concerned I just wanted out completely, and they said “No, no just hang around and talk to God and settle down. Things will work themselves out”…and so on. I was told that I should tell my parents that tropical sun had got to me and I had a tropical illness.’ (PS1/Q11/P7)

‘I was in the Philippines and I went along to the spiritual leader, so I’d made that decision that I really was not the right person to be a Christian leader in that environment. I was worried about my heightened sexuality and I felt the church … gradually over that 18 month period, I felt the church itself had lost the plot in terms of the powerful simplicity of the gospel and message of love for one another.’ (PS1/Q36/P14)

Despite his inner tension and attempts to resolve them, PS was still far from the ‘tipping point’ that would give him peace and clarity, bearing out my observation that rationality alone could not and did resolve any of the men’s inner tensions.

‘... eventually I walked up to the head shebang and said “look, I have been thinking about this very seriously, I’m not cut out for this sort of work. I no longer want to be a Christian leader or a Catholic leader, and I just want to tell you that I’m going home, although I’m not quite sure, I really need to sit down quietly and think about it”… He was very good. He said, “Fine. Why don’t you go up to Manila and have a break to the mother house … and go and see a Jesuit psychologist that we know and he’ll put you through a series of tests and that might help us and you decide where it is you need to be heading.” So he was very good, he was spot on in that situation. So I went up there and

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4 To look for resolution from the organisation in which they felt unsettled, and to try to force themselves to comply with their old ways, was common to several of the men, especially IH, PS, DW and MS. It did not help.
I thought, ‘Well, this has got to be absolutely frank.’ There were 500 questions and I wrote the truth on every single one. And they didn’t show me the graph afterwards but I think on sexual drive it was very high ... I was at the mother house the day that the guy came up in his little Lambretta ... So in he went. And I went in afterwards to see the boss and he was white as a sheet ... and he said, ”Peter can you get on a plane tonight to go home to Australia?” ... But he obviously thought that I was about to do something which would be to the society’s detriment. So off I went.’ (PS1/Q8/P7)

**Boxes**

Internal tensions ran high as PS was trying to live his external life ‘normally’ at the same time. His life had become consciously and problematically split:

‘I was trying my best to stay … have a normal relationship with God. I was still saying mass, I was still preaching.’ (PS1/Q41/P14)

‘... I left the Philippines at the end of 1967 and came back to Australia, worked in ... Adelaide and Melbourne doing talks from the pulpit to get money for the missions. I mean here I was fresh out of the missions and they wanted money to support [them], so I was actually raking in a fair bit of money for them going around the place while I was having all these ... well, I had my doubts.’ (PS1/Q11/P7)

PS had already been living a non-problematically split (boxed) life:

‘SM: ... when you talk about your role in the church ... there are two roles: one is the church role, so your public positional role; and one is your personal life, where you play golf, cards, told dirty jokes, and they sound fairly distinct. You are a priest one minute and then you are playing cards next telling dirty jokes. You wouldn’t tell those dirty jokes from the pulpit for instance?
PS: No, that’s right.’ (PS1/Q17/P9)

Concurrently, PS was exploring, seeking for that ‘something’ that was missing.

‘You know what it is you don’t want. You know that that is not what I want. It must be there somewhere.’ (PS3/Q104/P39)

What he found only increased his sense of dissonance.

‘And there was another little episode in my life and it was a lay organisation called Foquulare. It was started by some lay people, had no clergy in it. The church didn’t like it very much but it was there and they were people trying to live the essence of the Christian message and it sort of just grew like topsy around the world. And, at the time it was in, I was in the Philippines and I went to some of the meetings, and I loved it. It really grew on me. That reality was there and what I was doing was so different and I was feeling those contrasts as well.’ (PS3/Q85-86/P32)
Stage 3. Tipping Point (Combustion)

Eventually his tipping point came, as a spark to dry tinder, and once again his decision was immediate, and, as for the other men in this study, its advent meant that his tensions felt resolved.

‘... after six months I was in the mother house in Melbourne and the head of the organisation there was having a chat with me and he said, “You know, P[S],” he said, “I know you have raised these doubts with me before and you don’t think that you are suited for this, but,” he said, “if I were in your position,” he said, “I wouldn’t make such a major decision unless I was very close to the Holy Ghost.” And I looked at him and something snapped. I said, ‘Tomorrow I am going to Myers and I am buying a tie.’ That was it. That was it. And I did. I went to Myers and I bought myself a tie. To me that was symbolic. A break. A great release.’ (PS1/Q32-33/pp11-12)

Bridges (1995; 1996) calls this period one of lostness and of great emptiness. PS described it similarly:

‘... I made a decision to walk away from all that had been important to me for the previous at least 10 or 12 or whatever many years. And I didn’t know where I was going, what I was going to do, but I knew I had to move from that point onwards into a void, it’s like jumping off a cliff. I knew that I had to jump or move beyond, mentally, everything, and make the jump. I didn’t know what I would do. I had no idea. But I knew I had to make the break. I’d had it up to here. I’d been through their processes. They said go through that process, I’d been through that process, you know, okay. And I kept believing that I was doing the right thing each time, but it wasn’t achieving anything. It wasn’t bringing me inner peace. It wasn’t being true to myself.’ (PS1/Q36/P13)

Stage 4. Rest and Revitalisation (Ashes and Worm)

Like DW and IH, PS was so sure of his decision that he moved quickly.

‘That was it. That was it. And I did. I went to Myers and I bought myself a tie. To me that was symbolic. A break. And I knew an ex-seminarian in Canberra and I rang him up and I said, ‘Are there any jobs in Canberra?’ and he said “Yes, come and stay with us.” So I went and stayed with him and his family for a week and he got me an interview in the Public Service and that was the next stage.’ (PS1/Q32/P12)

But between the tie and before the phone call:
‘I didn’t know where in the hell I was going, I was drifting as I said. I was just drifting in Melbourne, I didn’t know what in the hell I was going to do.’ (PS3/Q40/P13)

It was at this point that he made the critical changes on which all the men’s successes in this study have rested:

- changes in relationship to his locus of authority,
  ‘SM: ... so tell me if you think it’s true or not, is that, in that moment you moved to believing your own truth and giving your own truth more validity than the Church? PS: Oh yes.’ (PS1/Q35/P13)
- and relationship to his inherent Self:
  ‘PS: See another thing that is very seductive is the power. People would come and kiss my hand. They would come and kiss my clothes when I walked into a room. I mean this for a 22-and-a-half year old!! ... You were God to them. And it was a very seductive power. (PS1/Q46-47/P16)
  SMac: And for the sake of your Self you were willing to [give that power up and] do the equivalent of sweeping floors?
  PS: ‘Yes.’ (PS1/Q48/P17)

Dealing with the consequences of his decision to leave the priesthood was a part of this stage of PS’s transition, as it was for the other men. He was shocked to understand how widespread its effects would be:

‘So I was really ostracised from that point onwards ...’ (PS1/Q14-15/P8)

‘I didn’t realise what the cost was going to be, the ramifications for my decision to leave the priesthood. When I realised that the Catholics in my town were taking it out on my parents. And my sister, who lives in a town three towns away, was also being treated in a very snide public way by the parish priest of that town. And my parents were made to feel so uncomfortable in the Catholic community that they left.’ (PS1/Q62/P22)

‘Did I tell you my family were also ostracised because of my decision, and my sister and brother-in-law were ostracised in their parish as well. I mean my decision had huge ramifications. Even my cousin who became a priest ... I went to his ordination, and I was already out at that time, and they sort of knew of me, some of the other priests that were there, and they were mulling around, and I was introduced to one guy and he wasn’t sure whether he was going to shake my hand. He sort of got half way and I went and grabbed it and shook it, and I said “You gain one; You lose one.” He didn’t like my sense of humour at that stage.’ (PS1/Q54/P18)

Very quickly, the germ of a new, worldly self had to become viable:
‘I had grown up in a seminary which is like a place for seeds really. The seeds to grow - in a hot house. And I had been in that hot house up until the age of whatever it was, 26. I came out and I didn’t know how to write a cheque. I’d never had a bank account. So I went into a bank with fear and trembling. I had never had money of my own. So all of the changes meant money, relations with women, accommodation, transport. I never had my own car. I never had my own clothing. I was developing new attitudes. Again I was at the bottom of the heap … this loss of power, and I was no longer on call 24 hours a day.’ (PS1/Q48/P17)

Stage 5. Clarification (Heliopolis)

PS looked back on his life and his changes with increasing clarity and became very sure on two things: the Catholic Church – its structure and the people in it whom he came across, did not understand him and his deep commitment to his God:

‘Because I realised that I was banging my head against the brick wall. This guy did not know where I was coming from at all. He had never come across it. He was the head of the organisation in Australia and he was a very spiritual man himself, a very nice man, a very nice man, very holy, very devout, but he didn’t have a clue where I was coming from.’ (PS1/Q34/P13)

... or what it was that he was so deeply committed to:

‘I was exposed to the various externalia of religion- the rosary beads, the cross, the pictures, the vestments - all the externals that make up the Catholic religion. All of the externals. The candle sticks, the incense, everything. There were a lot of externals. And the more I was exposed to that, the more I withdrew mentally from it and decided that the most important thing that Christ ever did wasn’t confession and all the other sacraments. The most important thing was actually learning to love your neighbour as the essence of the Christian message.’ (PS3/Q85/pp31-32)

He was also aware that, unlike those caught in religious cults,

‘I had the freedom to walk away.’ (PS1/Q44/P15)

In hindsight PS was also able to explain his tensions, which by now had become reasons, more clearly:

‘... under the reasons why a career change, I put down here: awareness of my sexuality. I put down loss of faith in the doctrines; despair that the essential core of the Christian message was not being observed in its simplest form by those who were my superiors. Some of them.’ (PS1/Q44/P16)
**Stage 6. Consolidation (Return)**
PS settled into work in the Public Service, climbing the hierarchical ‘tree’ before, once again, becoming restless.

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**Transition B - from the Australian Commonwealth Public Service**
After leaving the Catholic priesthood, PS worked in the Commonwealth Public Service for twenty years, went out into a freight-forwarding business for a year, contracted back to the Public Service for a short period, then retrained and became a Migration Agent, in which business he continues to practice.

With the hindsight of his first major move out of hierarchy, PS nevertheless felt the same confusions, but was able to more quickly identify where he was in the process and what needed to be done. It did not, however, give him business sense.

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**Stage 1: Restlessness (Sense of Impending Demise)**
‘I sit down at work and I look at the computer and I think “What am I doing here. What am I doing here?” I can’t focus very well on what I am doing, I am constantly distracted, enjoying the distraction and then go and have a cup of tea and come back and think right I am going to get stuck into this. Finding it hard to focus on those boring things I am doing at work. Mentally I have already left.’ (PS3/Q11/P4)

Once again he came to feel power, and once again felt unsatisfied. He explained the context and start of his second major transition:

‘... I suppose the power came back to what it was like being in the pulpit with 35,000 people. I mean I would sit down with the President of Switzerland at dinner or speak to the Foreign Minister about something ... But, yes, you got to mix with people in high places ... So it’s like climbing the ladder at the side of a building and getting to the top of the ladder and saying that was great but the ladder is against the wrong building ... I felt is that what it’s all about, is that all it is, is that all it is? I did feel that. Is that all it is? [Stage 1 and 2] Okay, if that’s all there is, move on.’ (PS2/Q75-76/pp26-27)
Stage 2. Exploration and Preparation (Gathering Wood; Increasing Friction)

PS set up a roving-alert radar:

‘Yes, I had been looking for a way out mentally and it just came across.’ (PS2/Q77/P27)

Boxes again

‘Now I am going to mention that there is a real pendulum between being in hierarchies and outside and following an individual path or a group path ... when I came into Foreign Affairs I had decided mentally I was going to be in it but not of it. I had an anti-establishment mentality privately in my mind, would say ‘Yes, yes,’ but internally, I was not going to be part of the establishment ... Oh yes, a very conscious decision. And that probably came across. Body language and the way you act sometimes, you don’t realise the way it comes across, but probably another reason why I never got to become an Ambassador is because of that. People realised that I was not going to be a ‘yes person’ all the time, that I had my own values and my own ... I’d give them of myself in work but not the heart, not the mind. I’d give them my mind and analysis and everything else. But the inner core of me was always separate.’ (PS2/Q65-66/P23)

Stage 3. Tipping Point (Combustion)

PS, like JL, made a leap which did not quite take him where he wanted to go:

‘So when I was offered an opportunity to start a business here in Australia I said ‘Yes, give me 24 hours to think about it,’ and, boom, I said ‘Yes’. I was ready.’ (PS2/Q75-76/pp26-27)

‘I started an international project freight forwarding company for an overseas investor ... And at the end of nine months ... we really weren’t getting the turnover in cash flow ... I didn’t lose out financially. I had a baptism of fire in an industry I didn’t know very much about ... I arranged to have that company’s business put in the hands of some experienced people and ... then moved back to the department.’ (PS3/Q13/PS-6)

Like IH, and JL after his first ‘false start’, PS did an inventory to decide his way forward:

‘... I was still trying to figure out how it all came to me. Sometime half way through the year, probably under a hot shower one morning, I probably thought, ‘This is no good long term. What skills do I really have? How can I put them together? ... how could you put them to some use? ... I could use my people skills, use my knowledge of refugees and I could help refugees where I wanted. Could be more flexible with my working hours; in
charge of what I am doing; be in control, and I wouldn't have to have a huge outlay like buying an existing business.’ (PS3/Q12/P4)

Stage 4. Rest and Revitalisation (Ashes and Worm)

To enable him to move into his new role PS made a transition decision, to be supported by hierarchy until he completed his preparations for his alternative work:

‘I am working on contract, not because I love contracting or Foreign Affairs but it is going to provide me with a financial base to launch my business and help pay the bills in the meantime. So it is safe, it is easy, and it’s going to provide me with a financial base, so why not? Again I am using it as a safe base from which to launch myself.’ (PS2/Q82-83/pp28-29)

‘I have studied for many years. Eleven years of tertiary education.’ (PS3/Q28/P9)

Stage 5. Clarification (Heliopolis)

He was very clear that his attitude to the Public Service hierarchy had changed:

‘So I still work longer than the normal hours but I have a totally different approach now that I am outside that hierarchy and being a consultant, I’m in control ... I am on the payroll on a short term contract and I decide how long I am going to be there.’ (PS1/Q56-57/P19)

To retrain and re-establish himself in paid work, this time as Migration Agent, PS combined his skills.

‘I’m starting my own business and I have been thinking about it now for six months and I’m taking all those steps to prepare myself to do it. I am becoming a migration agent, using all my five years of expertise in the refugee section, a lot of the big refuge forums, the Minister, the procedures, using all my new people skills that I have developed over the last four or five years outside the department, put together those skills, skills from the department and my humanitarian instinct skill might be able to help people and still make money and be in control.’ (PS1/Q57/P19)

He was completing his training at the time of his last interviews.

‘I suppose I see, as I said before, my current position as a launching pad for being free, freer than I have been from this sort of close hierarchy, although there is this monstrous registration and regulation and authority process that I will have to submit myself to.'
So I have to submit myself to scrutiny, public scrutiny as well as private scrutiny by the registration authority.’ (PS2/Q103/P34)

‘I have made relatively safe ground and get on with these people. So I have got a pretty good launching pad. It’s a logical progression.’ (PS2/Q110/P36)

‘So there is that fear of failure is still in there, deep, but not very strong ... because [with the freight-forwarding company] I didn’t know the business and this one I am going in with a partner who knows it ... Yes. I just can’t wait.’ (PS3/Q15 and 21/P6 and P7)

‘Protection, developing independence. Yes, that’s all there. Yes, I am trying to put in as many protections as I can.’ (PS3/Q82/P30)

‘I think I can do a good job, I am not going to have commercial premises at the beginning. I will run it from here. Just start off very slowly and if it goes it goes and if it doesn’t it doesn’t. If there are not enough clients that’s fine too but I will have known that I have tried and putting together what skills that I know would actually need to be.’ (PS1/Q61/P21)

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PS retained both the necessity and inevitability of interacting with hierarchy in his new work.

‘I know the Head of the Department. I know the Minister. I know people, not that you would use influence, but I am a known quantity to them in other fields.’ (PS2/Q109/P36)

‘I will have to be extremely careful about the advice, written advice, because if I give wrong advice it can really mess up somebody’s life and that of their whole family. So it’s a huge and very awesome responsibility, as awesome as listening to somebody’s sins ... it’s a big responsibility, a very serious one in life.’ (PS3/Q70/P25)

PS completed his training and approvals, and began his new business.

‘I suppose what I am trying to do with my next job is to put all of my previous skills together in a profession which is open, where I can control my life and not be beholden to anyone except the client, and still have the freedom of choice to say ‘no, I am sorry. I am not going to take you on for the following reasons.’ (PS1/Q75/P26)

Six years later, PS continues to work as a freelance Migration agent.

**Summary:**
PS made two exits from two major hierarchical institutions, the Commonwealth Public Service, as a symbol of secular care and organisation and, before that, an exit from the Catholic priesthood and church.

‘SM: ... it sounds like you have been weaning yourself off hierarchy.
PS: Yes, you could say so.
SMac: Bit by bit.
PS: Yes, bit by bit.’ (PS2/Q48-49/P19)

**Lasting and Cumulative Benefits**

‘I suppose I am grateful for some of the things. I’ve learnt to be frugal, because I took an oath of poverty ...’ (PS2/Q22/P10)

‘I feel as though everything I have done to date is leading me towards it: my linguistic backgrounds, different languages, put that together with my experience of other countries, put that together with my five years in the refugee business, together with my own personal training, and now the financial freedom as a launching pad. And I put it together for me to launch myself from the hierarchy and hopefully won’t have to come back.’ (PS2/Q107/P36)

‘Where is my spirituality heading now and what is left and what has changed, I suppose is what I am trying to say. The essence of the Christian message is still important. One of the big lessons I learnt in the seminary is sociology and capitalism and labour, the value of dignity of work.’ (PS3/Q86/P33)

‘... one of the continuing threads that is still there. I can mix with, well I think I can still mix with fishermen and who are totally illiterate, as well as with kings and princes. I seem to have an ability to do that.’ (PS3/Q88/P33)

**Common traits**

PS, like the other men in the study,

- shifted his locus of control from external authority to himself – ‘him-Self’
  
  ‘SM: And by your words I am gathering that you have moved to the position of the internal reality is your measure.
PS: Yes, yes, yes. And everyone has their relationship with God and the Catholic Church hasn’t cornered the market on God.’ (PS1/Q82/P29)

- felt a stranger in hierarchy, or a certain misfitting:
  
  ‘I never felt really of it. I always felt out of it.’ (PS3/Q7/P2)

- was a hard worker:
  
  ‘I never minded really hard work, working long hours, doing the hardest things, the most difficult things.’ (PS3/Q52/P20)
• moved to reprioritising relationship to Self:
  
  ‘And under the heading of value changes, funnily enough the first one I put in is the Self.’ (PS1/Q44/P16)

• was self-reflective and valued self-reflection:
  
  ‘So … reflection. Yes, I enjoy reflection.’ (PS2/Q25/P12)

• felt a capacity for choice
  
  ‘But if it doesn’t work out I’ll go and dig gold and play music and do a bit of travelling. Buy myself a new campervan.’ (PS2/Q110/P36)

And, finally, as part of his transition, and in his accompanying transformation PS was aware that:

‘I am starting to feel more, more whole, as a whole being.’ (PS3/Q95/P36)

And his intent for his future?

SM:’… you moved from hierarchy to hierarchy but as you were moving from each one I hear you developing different independencies, so that for instance, you’d have more say; you would be able to express your own personality more; the organisation would bend to you in some instances; that they would give you leeway to express in your own particular way; and they would adapt to you because whatever you had they wanted and they were willing to adapt to it to some degree. And so there was like this curve. This tilt is when it’s more your way than their way, and that you are starting to dictate the rules, or in this case where you are now, getting yourself into the position where you can much more dictate the rules And you are heading towards a point of autonomy. Would that be …

PS: Yes, absolutely right.’ (PS3/Q8/pp2-3)

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**IH in transition**

IH’s transition covered the period of his move from being a university lecturer to becoming a freelance structural engineer. The move was marked by distress and despair and, as such, is in strong contrast to the transitions of the other five men. Yet, despite the entirely different levels of emotional response, his stages of transition remained similar to those of the other men studied.
IH grew up in a loving though reserved family with strong non-mainstream Christian beliefs. For several reasons he saw himself as ‘different’:

‘It didn’t worry me that I was unusual ... I knew I was [different]. I knew I was more interested in study, in academic things, that I was a more sensitive person than the average boy. That I was interested in things that were not so cool, in today’s language, that I was not interested in some of the things that were cool, particularly competitive sports. And I was quite aware of that but it didn’t bother me at all.’ (IH1/Q68-69/P26)

‘On reflection I may have been slightly what is now called ADD ...’ (IH1/Q7/P4)

‘I had set backs. I had problems with my eyesight very early on and didn’t realise that that was one of the reasons I wasn’t doing particularly well until I discovered that and then started sitting right up in the front row.’ (IH1/Q4/P2)

He loved to build and imagine, making things like billycarts, ‘flying machines’ and other structures, encouraged principally by his mother.

‘I was very physically involved with non-competitive things like building billycarts and flying aeroplanes and jumping off roofs with umbrellas and running and hiking and that sort of thing, and bush walking ... I loved to get out in the bush and so on. I used to go to the bush every second weekend ...’ (IH1/Q32/pp11-12)

His parents shaped his life by their firm and caring guidance and views, as he later sought to shape his students’ learning, and was in turn shaped by his own deep beliefs:

‘... my parents asking me would I like to go to a private school for the final year of my schooling. And so that was a difficult decision because I was quite comfortable at this school apart from the social problems. My parents recognised that the potential was possibly not as great there to do well because the final year students at that school were not doing so well. So they offered me this opportunity of going to a private school which happened to be a church affiliated school. And I agreed.’ (IH1/Q32/P13)

The paradox of having very strong internal structures (beliefs, study regimes, expectations and behaviours), along with expectations of external personal freedoms, had continued throughout his life. He found his last year of school very difficult:

‘All of a sudden I was subjected to much more formal strict authoritarian teacher control than the more relaxed ones in the previous school.’ (IH1/Q33/pp13-14)

Poor bladder control also set him apart and affected his life and social interactions:

‘... I seemed to have problems controlling my bladder in school, in class. And I used to hang on and hang on until it was too late ... I felt that I managed to hide it. I’m sure I
didn’t … But that must have had an effect on my concentration and it must have had an effect on my relationship with others and perhaps theirs with me.’ (IH1/Q63/P25)

He was not very sporting or very academic in his early years, though he was to become very studious as he grew older, and came to see it as a foundation for future work.

‘… what you’d pick up from it I guess would be my over zealous commitment to study … and diligence.’ (IH3/Q36/P13)

He became successful in his studies by that very diligence and application:

‘… in the first cohort of degree graduates … I topped the course. It was very, very tough.’ (IH1/Q42/P19)

Persecution was a recurring theme in the memories of IH from when he was a boy, through high school bullying and later during his tertiary studies and adult work.

‘And I perceive that it may even have been a deliberate attempt to humble me by the organisation because they realised that I’d done okay in my course. I was put straight from that, having qualified now as a structural engineer, into sewerage and stormwater maintenance. And for a period of time much of my work involved me donning waders and walking through sewer mains at 3.00 a.m.’ (IH1/Q51/P22)

He drew support from his religious beliefs:

‘…”blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake for theirs is a kingdom of heaven” … That’s from the book of Matthew, chapter five, verse ten.’ (IH1/Q104/P38)

His ambivalent relationship to hierarchy remained with him:

‘When I am uncertain what I should do I would go to the Scriptures for guidance. Just as clear as that … I mean I might look through the gospels for example for guidance on what to do in a legal situation. Do not take your brother to court. Well, okay, I’d take that as absolute, right …’ (IH3/Q45/P16)

Alternated with this theme was another: that of mentors and guides as benefactors, experts and authorities, especially his parents, teachers and bosses:

‘I didn’t feel that I had the ability to judge what was better for me in that area and that Mum and Dad’s wisdom was worth listening to.’ (IH1/Q32/P13)

‘I appreciated the time [in the Department of Public Works] … And I felt very privileged to have … been able to do a degree course from a non-university at the time. And that was very satisfying to me because I know that I got a much more practical and very thorough grounding in the applied areas.’ (IH1/Q48/P21)
Stage 1: Restlessness (Sense of Impending Demise)

For some ten years IH worked at the university for ‘an amazing man’ (IH1/Q104/P38), who was a significant influence on him:

‘... with the previous founding [University Department] Head. He was a very congenial cooperative supportive person. That was the best of my working days ...’ (IH3/Q98/P31)

However, paradise did not last:

‘But the first ten years of that experience were absolutely wonderful ... I could not imagine a better work environment nor could I imagine better support from my superiors than I had from that man. However, the last eight years of that experience were quite ... they quickly developed to be quite the opposite when he retired and there was a change in leadership and things went bad and there was all sorts of oppression, physical, financial, spiritual, and I came under what I would describe as spiritual attack ... by the middle of 1997 I had become so oppressed and felt so victimised that I had been medically diagnosed as suffering from severe anxiety and depression.’ (IH1/Q104/P38)

Holding a vivid memory of a valued mentor highlighted IH’s discomfort and ill-ease in his situation, and made clear what he really valued, as well as what discomforted him.

His life became divided and pressured:

‘The first ten years or so were idyllic but after that I was conscious of that need to spend less time doing those things if I was going to spend more time with my family. But also I felt that I had to keep performing, I had to keep producing, I had to keep putting in more and more effort because the whole philosophy of the work place was one of improvements, efficiencies, productivity, and you were on a treadmill that if you were going to keep your job you had to keep running on, you know. And eventually it took over, even though you were conscious that it was taking over.’ (IH2/Q3/P2)

‘Talk to my wife about that. She feels that those years were stolen from her.’ (IH2/Q18/P8)

‘There was no negotiation, it was just constant expectation. You will do this and you will do that.’ (IH3/Q91/P29)

The theme of persecution continued through his transition process. For IH, the sense of an impending ‘death’ of his position at the university, was perceived as a concerted effort to remove him:

‘... was obvious that they decided they had to get rid of me. And there was, like, I would describe as the sense of a conspiracy around the situation.’ (IH1/Q118/P43)
Stage 2. Exploration and Preparation (Gathering Wood; Increasing Friction)

He described being subjected to physical abuse and lack of recognition:

‘There were times when I was taken by the scruff of the neck in the staircase and physically threatened if I didn’t change the results. I mean that was frequent. Because I stood for justice, correctness, honesty, and righteousness in the work place. And people knew that I stood for that and it was like there was an oppression. And I know that at times I came under very specific attacks of many kinds. So there was persecution and there was ... there were threats. And physical contact. And people would get hold of me in the staircase or verbally abuse me in the corridors or castigate me in the tea room over things.’ (IH3/Q65/P23)

‘I generated far more material than most people would do in my time at the CCAE and the university. Unfortunately it wasn’t recognised ...’ (IH3/Q39/P14)

During the eight years (IH3/Q98/P31) before he left, he felt things were falling apart, externally and in himself.

‘At that stage I was on Comcare ... until eventually the psychologist was able to help me portray a deep seated problem that had obviously been haunting me for many years. And I’ll call it the ‘Thing,’ because I can’t think of how else to describe it. The ‘Thing,’ as I’ll call it, had manifested itself to me in a vision, as a big slimy black mass about the size and texture, but far more obnoxious than a large rotting dead chook, and it had engulfed my heart for a long time ... at the time I could describe every physical attribute of this foul and evil thing in great detail from the vision. I could cut it out of my chest with a knife but it would simply coalesce. I could throw it into a fire and it would coagulate into a repugnant gooey mass. I could hurl it into the sea but it would not even dissolve away ... Finally at the next session with the prayer counsellor, the breakthrough came. I knew that I was free of this thing once and for all. And I was.’ (IH1/Q104/P39)

As he moved to the preparation stage, more positive and proactive events were talked of:

‘I had had a dream where it was, and the best way I could explain it was like heavy, heavy ships chains draped all over me just fell off. I felt light, I felt that I could float ... But I had this sense of being really free and at the same time being totally relaxed. And I just sat there and had my cup of tea. And so it was like one more step in the process of release. But I said this dream left me standing in the middle of a desert area. Now I know what a desert area is like. I have flown over Lake Eyre. And as far as I could see it was just dead flat, there weren’t even dunes. It was just dead flat all around. And I
couldn’t see anything on a horizon. I just felt released, like chains had fallen off and there I was waiting for direction. I mean which way would I go? There was no landmarks, there was nothing on any horizon all around me. It was just dead flat and smooth for as far as you could see. And so I felt that, you know direction would come. And it was sort of not long after that that all of this release came from the university.’

(DH/Q15/pp6-7)

During his transition IH recounted that he always felt his reality was being questioned, and that he needed to prove it as ‘normal’ in some way, and his actions as exemplary - by documentation, affirmation or by recognition from others.

His reality was primarily referenced from his religious community and beliefs, which he described as at odds with the culture and ethics of his workplace.

‘And I have tried to document it. Because at the time I was trying to protect myself because most of it was so unbelievable that unless it was documented nobody ever would give it any credibility. So in case I needed to prove it, I kept records.’

(DH/Q97/pp30-31)

Stage 3. Tipping Point (Combustion)

The situation came to a head when IH was threatened with academic charges:

‘All of a sudden I was accused of some terrible things ... I was supposed to have gone outside the unit outline for one of my units. That was the cardinal sin of sins ... concerned about the number of failures in my exams ... complaints about me politicking in class and undermining the new academic program and undermining other staff.’

(DH/Q118 and 119/pp 43-44)

He was horrified:

‘... despite my commitment to the place and to the students, you know all I had ever done was chosen to try and serve the students in that course. To just give them everything I had to give. All of a sudden I was accused of some terrible things ... I mean you have got an 18 year history of absolute commitment to the students and all of a sudden you are up on charges of accusation of some terrible things.’ (DH/Q118/P43)

IH described himself as:

‘I have always been a very conservative person, reluctant to make a change, wanting to stay with the status quo, do the right thing, you know not jump ship, not jump out of a frying pan into a possible fire. But not even looking over the edge to see whether there was a fire.’ (DH/Q7/P4)
So it was not surprising to discover he did not leave the university willingly:

‘I didn’t have much control over it. It was sort of forced upon me.’ (IH3/Q63/P22)

He summed it up like this:

‘Well the most significant things are what happened just all in that short space of time. A very short space of time. The key things were, the crux that came in my health and stress, and I sensed that that was tied up with the organisation or certain individuals suddenly deciding it was time they got rid of me. Then all of the psychological stuff and the prayer counselling and those couple of experiences that I’d had in church circles that I related to you, and the fact that within basically a few days or a week or two I had left the university ... At a maximum it would have been maybe three months when the critical things happened.’ (IH3/Q28/P11)

‘So to cut a long story short I was told that if I left by the following Wednesday, which was three days away, the charges would be dropped. Well the best thing I could do was get out of the place. But miraculously with some prayer within those three days I was offered a package … and so I chose to leave.’ (IH1/Q119-120/P44)

The result was immediate:

‘When I finally left there was no sense of loss whatsoever. It was truly a sense of great relief that I had finally got to the point of being able to make the decision to leave and once I’d made the decision it was absolute, there was no turning back. And I didn’t want to turn back.’ (IH3/Q53/P19)

For IH, both the cause of his discomfort (change in leadership style) and what instigated his leaving (potential charges and redundancy offer) were external events. It was not until his rest and revitalisation period that his inner volition was recognised as having a significant role in moving him forward. Until this time IH had endured and persisted in remaining in the hierarchy, even when it was clearly causing him great distress such that he was under the auspices of ComCare and negative attention for his superiors and peers.

Then:

‘I reached a point where I was no longer able to do it.’ (IH2/Q15/P7)
**Stage 4. Rest and Revitalisation (Ashes and Worm)**
IH, in keeping with his own description of himself as reluctant to change, held onto large quantities of documents from the past; records dating back to his study days and records relating to his unpleasant experiences in his last years at the university. He appeared to be holding his sense of injustice, being let down and persecuted, saving them till the day he “could speak” (IH2/Q47/P21).

‘I could take you down to the bedroom and show you the remains of some three tonnes of books and papers and notes and lecture material that I brought back from the university.’ (IH3/Q39/P14)

As in Stage 2, the first phase of Stage 4 relates to the past, and the second phase to the future. Once he had left the university behind and removed his papers from there, IH faced his future:

‘When I finally left there was no sense of loss whatsoever ... So I felt totally free and I thought, well what am I going to do with my time? Well within days, within a week of me leaving the place I had heard from a local Christian school ... they wanted some jobs done and would I be interested. I said, “Oh, yes. Why not?”’ (IH3/Q53/P9)

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**Stage 5. Clarity and Commitment (Heliopolis)**
By changing his level of engagement with daily living from mental to physical, IH was able to gain some clarity and revitalisation:

‘I’d go and do a bit of work, pick and shovel digging drains or whatever. Getting some blisters and keeping on going. It was pretty tiring physically. I wasn’t in really in good condition having done years of sedentary work. But I found it very refreshing because it was just such a blessed relief from the nonsense, the intellectual garbage and the politicking that just went on for so many years at that place.’ (IH3/Q54/P19)

During this three-month period IH, despite his strong Christian belief framework, had a vision experience which correlated to the clarification/Heliopolis phase of the Phoenix myth. It is a phase in which the new Phoenix flies to Heliopolis to lay his old self on the
altar of the Sun god (the god of clarity), to then return to earth re-invigorated, and able to move forward:

‘One day I was in church; let me tell you it’s a Pentecostal church, you know pretty outrageous by most people’s standards. But one particular morning we went into a time of prayer, worship. You know I try to really enter into this and open myself up to what God has got to say. And during this time I had a vision of actually walking into a temple, what you would call the tended[?] meeting, in the Old Testament times, where I actually went into the place of worship ... the holiest of holies is behind the curtain ... Well I actually had an experience in there, in this worship time, of actually going through that. And I literally, I laid down, I just threw down all the garbage from my life on the altar of sacrifice. So I sacrificed my life and I went to the laver and I knew that that was symbolic of clean hands and a pure heart. You know washed in the laver and moved on. And went through all those, the shew bread and the candle sticks and the altar of incense and took on the aroma that would be acceptable to the Lord and then I went boldly through the curtain into the holiest of holies and there was the altar. And I was in that holiest of holy places. And I had recently thought about, you know, spoken of the perfect numbers, Gods number, seven, and I’d had some experiences where I had thought about some issues and realised that God had a perfect number. And I’d been looking at this and I thought, there are only six items here. There is the altar of sacrifice, there is the laver, the table of shew bread, the candle sticks, the table of candles sticks representing the churches, then there’s the altar of incense, and then the holiest of holies there is the ??? I thought, this is not right. And then I realised that there is actually a seventh thing, there was a seventh thing. It was the cloud of a presence of God’s spirit. And so I then had an experience of being drawn into that ... It was literally being in the presence of the power of God. For me, it was a very, very real experience.’ (IH3/Q73 and 74/pp24-26)

After this experience, while doing manual labour, IH began looking to his future:

‘That was about the time I started to think, you know I really need to do something for the rest of my days and it would be a waste not to use my engineering knowledge. I am very confident, I am well versed, I am up with it all, I have been teaching it. So I really should just start a business. So I started making enquiries and people have said to me, “Oh you’re very brave starting your own business.” Well I can’t see the bravery in it quite frankly. All I had to do was go and pay $100 and register a business name. And work has just come.’ (IH3/Q83/P28)

He was able to review his experiences and define his changes:

‘But now that I am out of it I feel that I am totally in control. I like to feel that I am in control in a sense of having the responsibility to perform and to do something.’ (IH3/Q98/P31)
‘I think I am much easier to live with ... I have been able to spend some time with my kids ... I am freer to be able to do what I want when I want ... We’re looking to the end of the year and have got a holiday planned. At least we can think about those things whereas before we couldn’t. I have also been involved in some Outreach activities with our church and I am involved in two children’s program in the church.’ (IH3/Q101/pp32-33)

‘... I have budgeted my aims in life, my finances and my time, using similar methods, but the numbers have changed.’ (IH2/Q69/P27)

**Stage 6. Consolidation (Return)**

‘I am so excited about these changes that have happened to me.’ (IH3/Q72/P24)

IH felt he was ‘in heaven’ in his own business, even after some two years. He spoke of feeling no sense of pressure though he would still stay up all night working on something. He felt the difference was that there was commitment driving him from within, rather than any sense of external pressure.

‘SM: What I am hearing ... there is not nearly so much pressure.
IH: Oh, there’s none ... I see it as a blessing from God. I really do ... I will stay up all night ... I want to do the job well. Whatever I do I want to do it well ... It hurts me if I can’t do the job well.’ (IH3/Q85-89/pp28-29)

‘Well the best way I can explain it is that people have noticed a difference in me. I mean for example just the other day we bumped into some people ... And the wife of this person who was my boss said, “But you look so good ... you look so much better than you did when you were working at that university.” ’ (IH1/Q112/P42)

His pride in doing good work, having an opportunity to do good work and have it appreciated, was very rewarding for him:

‘And I commonly find myself being called in as the second or third engineer on the job ... And by the time they have gotten my report they are blown out of the water. Because instead of having a two or three page thrown together typed thing with grammatical inconsistencies and so on, they get my report which might be a 20 page report with photographs, with documentation, with copies of all the correspondence beautifully presented, bound together with a very professional looking account. And they get a receipt straight after. It’s all just done so promptly.’ (IH3/Q99/P32)
A strong internal connection to hierarchy remained: that of his belief structure, though the relationship between his personal power and submission to his God is not as clear-cut as before, possibly even in transition in itself:

‘... I would be the first to say that I am under the authority of God. His authority is supreme. So it’s not a ... I don’t think it’s a big-noted or a self-centred desire to be in charge; it’s a sense in which I like to do a good job.’ (IH3/Q98/P31)

An overall review of his transition process reflected the first three stages of restlessness, preparation and tipping point:

‘I felt it before I expressed it. I expressed it before it became a reality. And then the reality hit before I was able to get out.’ (IH2/Q6/P3)

Of the discomfort and challenges in his last few years, and especially the last few months at the university, and the changes that resulted, he commented:

‘... at one level a preparedness to just let go of the old regime. But at another level it was an involuntary, it was a forced change. The system and various individuals within it had become, whether in reality or by perception, totally intolerant of the perfectionist approach, the conservative, if you like to call it that, approach of trying to build on the past rather than replace the past with something new, whether or not it was feasible or better. So in the end it was, in my case, it was, I believe mostly forced, probably 80-90 per cent forced and 10-20 per cent chosen to make the change.’ (IH2/Q28/P13)

‘But I am totally at peace about it now whereas before I was stressed to the eyeballs. I was a mess. I was a heap.’ (IH1/Q114/P42)

‘It was a very uncomfortable but necessary trigger for me to begin to make a change, and a dramatic one at that. It was difficult particularly because I put my whole life into it [the University]. I had given everything to the organisation and to the people that came through it for a long, long time. I had given much more than I should have.’ (IH2/Q3/P1)

In hindsight, he felt he should have left several years before, when his mentor retired (IH3/Q95/P30) However, practicalities kept him there:

‘I realised that if I suddenly left either I would have to go to another organisation in order to get an immediate comparative level of income, or hopefully something slightly better, or if I started out on something on my own, started my own business for example, that I’d be starting from scratch and would have several years of having to build up an income ... Nevertheless I couldn’t have afforded to go a month let alone two years with a reduced income no matter how small the reduction ... I had house payments, two kids in school, and living expenses to deal with.’ (IH2/Q8/P4)
Some two and a half years later:

‘... I am just into profit at just under two years. It’s a bit over two now which I think is pretty good. So perhaps I underestimated my ability there to some extent.’ (IH2/Q8/P4)

When he finally did leave, there were no regrets:

‘And I am not avoiding the place I just don’t have any need or desire to go back.’ (IH3/Q54/P20)

IH was at pains to stress his lack of bitterness:

‘... I don’t want it to ever be perceived that I have ... that there is any vindication or ill feeling because there absolutely isn’t ... But I don’t hold any grudges. I just don’t want to be part of that system.’ (IH1/Q124/P45)

In summary, the transition IH went through was driven by external events in tension with his inner persistence and endurance, fuelled by a belief in the value of honour in righteous persecution and the honour of being persecuted. Yet he followed the same framework of transition as described for the others: restlessness and increasing discomfort; tipping point; release and rest; clarity and commitment; consolidation. His latter stage shows hallmarks, such as reviewing and reassessing, which indicate the consolidation phase, with its characteristics of future focus and certainty of self, yet acknowledging the need for ongoing change, tolerance of lack of control and capability, and patience.

‘I am still changing. It’s been difficult and it doesn’t happen over night. In some respects it’s a great relief to have the opportunity to change and you welcome it and you make changes, [and] you know you do change certain things at a routine level. But at another level it’s very difficult. There are some things that are like a mind set or like a conservatism, if you’d like to call them those. Although those things tend to have a negative connotation that are very difficult to change. I mean certain attitudes for example. My principles have not changed, probably never will. I will always stand for justice and honesty and truth and so on I think. That’s just ingrained in me. So some things won’t change, but some things probably should and will change but with difficulty.’ (IH2/Q60/P25)

He greeted that process with optimism, reflecting on how he felt things had already changed for him for the better:

‘... I have a choice in how I use my time. I didn’t feel that I had that choice. I was bound because my employer paid my wage or my salary. I had to be there at a certain time of
the morning to get my job done. And I had to be there at a certain time at night because that was, you know you had to be seen to be putting in the hours ... I now have the freedom to stay up late, get up early, not get up, do something else. At any time that I choose. The only pressure now being from clients who may want or need something done in a hurry. And so the performance is because I want to serve them, I want to do the right thing by them, not feeling compelled to do it. There is a difference there. So freedom to use one’s time as one chooses is another area of it. There are not only freedoms but there are constraints. I mean we have to watch our budget a little more closely ... So there are restrictions as well. Generally they are financial ... But the main things I guess are the freedom to speak and the freedom to use one’s time as one chooses ... I can use my time ... to fight causes ... I have challenged in writing and still am fighting several causes that I could never have considered taking on before. I did a few out of community service or ... altruistic effort to fight for truth, justice and the Australian way. But I can do more now. And I do. And I tend to do more, even at the expense of reduced income, or not getting a clients job done as soon as it should be done. Because I see some of those issues as vitally important. I see that very few people are challenging injustices in the systems that are being imposed in society.' (IH2/Q58-59/pp23-24)

And the future?

‘...when I was at school, when I was a child, I always used to say I know that I will never be a teacher. I just know that I will never be a teacher. How could I ever do that? I couldn’t do it. And I spent nearly 20 years of my life lecturing at a university or a college as it was before that. So things change.’ (IH2/Q59/P24)
**JL in transition**

JL’s transition, as researched here, was planned and prepared for. Nevertheless, its correlation with the stages of the men who had not consciously planned their transitions remained close. His move was from being a Lieutenant Colonel to owning and managing (in partnership) a successful IT business, primarily by outsourcing to government hierarchies.

JL’s approach to living was overwhelmingly proactive, success focussed and decisive:

‘You choose whether you’re going to have a reasonable day ...’ *(JL/Q84/P24)*

As a young man JL had demonstrated that same tenacity, drive and decision in his determination to follow the family tradition and go into the military. When rejected by Duntroon at his first attempt for being ‘too keen’, he learned the IQ and psychological tests, gave the answers the examiners wanted, and was accepted.

‘... because I was so keen to go to Duntroon that the psych said this bloke’s ...too keen. Almost obsessive. And they were right ... I had to fight to get to Duntroon. I actually had to stand up to the psych people.’ *(JL/Q34-35/P7)*

‘... this is a 16-year-old ... And also I learnt the IQ system and I actually learnt their whole selection procedure, which was actually documented, if you use the initiative to find it. With no help I just went and found it through university libraries and things so I knew what they were doing.’ *(JL/Q40-41/P8)*

He adopted that approach to much of his work in the military: being clear on the objectives and finding ways to meet those objectives:

‘SM: ... that’s a very heavy emphasis of fitting someone else’s criteria, isn’t it? ‘JL: Yes, kicking goals. Not unlike the corporate environment you find yourself in in private enterprise. Achieving results.’ *(JL/Q17/P4)*

He added two other elements: utilising mentors and networks. By the combination of these, he enjoyed the military and thrived in it’s culture, as he had at private school.

His father, a well-loved military man himself, had demonstrated to JL many of the honourable qualities he sought to emulate, some going against the patterns of hierarchy he fitted so well:
‘... I was influenced by my father, because he was quite a distinguished soldier and leader and he inculcated into me that little people count. In fact little people can be quite the most superior people. I mean they are in terms of value, far superior to supposed high flyers and more senior in the pecking order. They can be towers of strength and in the long run can even predominate as far as their happiness or success in life ...’
(JL2/Q8/P3)

The army taught him other things:

‘What did I get from the first couple of years in my life in the Army? I discovered there’s no such thing as justice. That is, you can’t expect, somewhat naively, to think that you’re going to, see, for your best intentions or your efforts, that you’re going to be duly rewarded. It doesn’t happen like that, life’s not like that ... You hear teenagers say, “That’s not fair.” I don’t care, I’m sorry, that’s what it’s like.’ (JL2/Q41/pp10-11)

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**Stage 1: Restlessness (Sense of Impeding Demise)**

For almost twenty years JL remained in the military, becoming restless in his thirties:

‘I was a relatively junior officer, I was only a Lieutenant Colonel at the age of 37 and I left at the age of 38 and I’m now 51” (JL1/Q1/P1)

He could see that his future in the military was limited:

‘As you get more senior you need sponsors you need champions. For instance, what happened to me was my champions were either killed or retired, and others [who] had their champions, through good health or chance, were very successful, so they took their cohort or their sphere of people they knew.’ (JL1/Q139/P26)

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**Stage 2. Exploration and Preparation (Gathering Wood; Increasing Friction)**

Just as he had researched the psychological tests for entry to Duntroon, JL began scoping alternative careers:

‘I’ll tell you how I got there ... I did the traditional thing, I applied ... and when I applied for that job, a bit like this Duntroon example when I got in, I did a number on those organisations ... I proceeded to, in a sneaky way, tell them about their organisation, what was weak with it, where it was going, where it wasn’t going. And
the Chairman of the Committee said to me, “You know more about the [company] ... than I do”. I said, ‘Well, you just have to do your homework’.” (JL1/Q167/P33)

He didn’t do it all on his own:

‘I virtually lived not so much the old boys’ network, but using networks and all that sort of thing.’ (JL2/Q100/P26)

As part of his preparation, not only did JL do forward planning, but he also prepared himself and others to let go:

‘I’d warned the system that I was going.’ (JL1/Q168/P33)

Like the other interviewees, he was adept at dividing his life into ‘boxes’:

‘SM: Which is another paradox. The unity and the nurturing and then you’ve got this ‘them versus us’ (culture). So these are almost like cells aren’t they?
JL: Yes, they’re different areas of thought, because - but it equips you well for working in a complex organisation.’ (JL1/Q117/P22)

... and had no problem with that separation:

‘SM: This characteristic, of being able to play the game and keeping one’s integrity, seems to be coming up as a common thread between people who are making good transitions; that they never identified with the structures around them. They have themselves that they identify with, and then they fit into that structure or they use that structure …
JL: They fit into the circumstances.’ (JL2/Q48-49/P12)

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**Stage 3. Tipping Point (Combustion)**

With all that preparation, JL was ready to move when circumstances came to a head:

‘... the President of the [company] rang me up the next day and he said, “I’ve got a job for you, I want you to be my number two in [ABC]”. I said ‘Yep, three months notice and I’ll be there.’ So we negotiated a salary package and I joined him. So that’s how I did it.’ (JL1/Q167/P33)

Because he had prepared the military for his leaving, it was within a month, rather than three, that he had left them for civilian business life. He moved decisively in his new direction.

Like PS, who threw off his Priest collar for a tie as soon as he decided to leave the priesthood, JL jettisoned his mess kit, a symbolic core piece of military equipment:
‘Ah yes, the dress up gear. For instance, and this happens to a number of us, when we leave we chuck the trappings away. I took my mess kit and chucked it in the bin the day I left, because that didn’t turn me on.’ (JL1/Q84/pp15-16)

With his new job, JL thought he had arrived at his next goal, was heading in his new direction and was launched in his new career. He was to be disappointed. It turned out to be merely a stepping stone on a very steep learning curve.

Stage 4. Rest and Revitalisation (Ashes and Worm)
Consequently, JL’s ‘rest’ was hardly restful, though it was still a time for self-reflection and reorientation. Like IH, who dug ditches and got blisters, then started his own business, JL had a period where he had the opportunity to reflect on what he really wanted to do, and how, while outside his comfort zone.

His new work was in a position as second-in-command for a large construction company. However, it soon became clear that the ethics of the company that he was managing were not his own:

‘They lied. They’re all liars. They didn’t step up to their responsibilities and they lied to people. They used me and it took me a little while to discover ... Different set of rules ... They conned me, yes, for a while. Then the penny dropped ... then I made a quick assessment, the enemy wasn’t just on the other side of the table, it was sitting next to me. So I just adapted to that.’ (JL1/Q169-170, and Q172-173 and Q176/pp34-35)

Over the next several years JL reorientated his work life, eventually starting, in partnership, his IT firm. Using his organisation and project management skills from the Military, he developed a thriving business. Two and a half years later, the firm was featured in the Canberra times as “the office of the future”, with “an Australia-wide network of 450 people, with 30 full-time staff on at any one time” (Heagney 1999 p.21).


Stage 5. Clarity and Commitment (Heliopolis)

JL had a clear idea of his skills and abilities:

People:

‘I’m pretty good at working through others. I’m not a high IQ person or anything. I know that, in terms of that particular - and we talked about different skills - I’ve been lucky that the world has changed a bit and I seem to have an intelligence for that. But I’m not a shooting, fishing, jumping, junior woodchuck very practical sort of person with my hands or anything. I often have a saying, that’s what Sergeants are for ...’ (JL2/Q95/P25)

Attitude:

‘I often say this, 80 per cent of any solution is keeping on keeping on, pushing on, and we were certainly taught that. That sometimes you might be wrong, but you actually get a result, but by wavering you won’t.’ (JL1/Q22/P5)

Focus:

‘Internally driven, but that internal driving says you’ve got to go external, you’ve got to actually engage the outside world there, otherwise you’re not going to get satisfaction out of life.’ (JL2/Q89/P24)

Practicalities:

‘... that’s my skill, to look broadly at things and then be particular about what we want to achieve, have the capacity to see the big picture as well as articulate that into detail, but not how to do it, what the goals are ...’ (JL1/Q61/P11)

He felt all these skills had been developed or reinforced by his military training.

However, he was not proud of everything he learnt and retained from the military:

‘I know how to manipulate people so they go completely illogical and then I’ll tell them. I’ll show them that they’re at a ridiculous point because they pushed them to the limit. You can do that and it’s not a nice part of my character. I can do that to people and I learnt it and I don’t think that’s a good thing in individuals.’ (JL2/Q113/P30)

For all his experiences, his recollections of himself as a young man, and his concept of himself at 51 years of age, were largely unchanged:
'I've learnt a lot and I’m probably quite similar to what I was when I was a kid. I don’t think I’m that different. The background. Private school, all boys, okay a year at university which was great fun, then back into a boys private school situation ... I’ve tried to do is be amenable to change, but I’ve found that the skill sets are quite good for coping with change ... So I haven’t changed that much really.’ (JL2/Q100/P26)

Stage 6. Consolidation (Return)

JL’s IT business was an opportunity to consolidate his skills and his new direction.

Needless to say, he felt many of the skills and attitudes he had learnt in the military had created a solid foundation for his business venture:

‘SM: ... you’ve created this enclave of a type of person with a type of - with a goal orientation and that’s giving you the success. So you translated that out of the military as well.
JL: Yes, I’d agree with that. That’s not to mean that we don’t have different types of people, but [I am] a bit intolerant of people that can’t produce results ... Make it work, get it to work.’ (JL2/Q34 and 36/P9)

... nurturing and guiding his people:

‘That’s what I do now [delegate an outrider]. I’ve got all these really intelligent people. I could never do what they do, except that they seem to take nurturing from being given some guidance about the big picture.’ (JL1/Q56/P10)

... using success and results focus:

‘Most of the people are outcomes oriented people and I really select them on that basis because otherwise - people don’t like paying money if people don’t produce results. It’s a funny thing, you don’t get asked back and we’re into this long term relationship – one in business - that is making sure that you do the right thing by people and you produce results. If you’re going to charge $1,500 a day they want results for it, they’re not stupid. So you’ve got to have results oriented people. That’s why we have a number of military people, not because they’re comfortable to me, far from it, some of them aren’t, but they are task oriented and that’s pretty important in management consultancy. It’s not all just wandering around being erudite. ’ (JL2/Q32/P9)

I asked him what had survived his transition from the military.

‘JL: A lot. Heavily influenced by it. I don’t quite march around, I’m not into parade or military music or the trappings of it, but I do value the - what I regard as the important things and they’re treating human beings as they should be and behaving as best I can
... I think they’re the important things, friendships and relationships with people and they enrich your life.’ (JL2/Q53/P13)

‘And it’s [honesty] the stuff of decent business relationships, because you’re in for the long-term, not for the short-term gain ... When you’re in an institution or organisation that you think you’re going to be in for life, then that’s a natural value position to take.’ (JL2/Q4-6/P2)

Organisational skills were critically important:

‘... there’s a very strong intellectual tradition, particularly in the Army, of what’s called the appreciation process ... Now the appreciation process is a step-by-step problem-solving technique that I hear my colleagues say - that have left the military in particular, no one uses this outside. It’s extremely powerful and they have been very successful because of it. What it is is, there is a deductive process which - it’s a deductive process. It says what are the factors - first of all, what is the mission, or what is the task, what are the factors impinging on the success of that task, including risks. All that very broad concept. What are my courses of action out of the “so what’s” out of those factors, what are the relative merits of those courses of action, what is the selected option as the best course, and then what is the implementation of that best course. It goes through it like that and then there’s a set way of articulating - not necessarily a set way, it’s when in doubt use it, and it’s called SMEAC and it’s situation, mission, execution, command and signals - no there’s an A in there, administration and logistics, and that’s how you can articulate your plan.’ (JL1/Q70-71/P13)

‘Now the appreciation process is a step-by-step problem-solving technique and it can lift people - this system can lift a relatively uneducated person into a highly effective manager and leader in rapid fire. There’s quite a lot of work to master this, and again it’s a guide, but you can lift soldiers or just people who are uneducated into being the most marvellous quick decision-makers and thinkers, because they’ve got the brains, and using this structured approach can work really well.’ (JL1/Q71/P13)

... as was mentoring

‘... and if you can help them you will, provided they are behaving with integrity, like businessmen, you’ll help. If a guy’s still in the military and he’s looking for a job, you’ll help him, provided that you are happy that he’s got the skills. You don’t make outrageous promises or statements to other people, you’re fair about it, but you’ll help them if you can.’ (JL1/Q106/P19)

‘SM: ... as a consultant, most of the time you spend supporting people or encouraging people in the job that they’re doing, and giving them the reassurance that they can do it, and when they do do it, they say “I can do that” and you say, “yes, that’s right”. So you’re an enabler and a nurturer?
JL: Yes.’ (JL1/Q58/P10)

... integrity
‘I don’t say integrity about tea-leafing the stationery or putting your hand in the till, I mean integrity that are more higher valued things like telling the truth, having the courage to stand up for somebody in the right way, you don’t have to shout down - you have to handle it properly - those sort of things.’ (JL2/Q67/P17)

... success focus

‘... they’ve [middle managers] got a job of keeping clients happy and satisfied that they’re being given a good product and deliver the services in a way that’s acceptable to them. Even sometimes at the expense in the sort-term where they don’t like you because you’ve actually got to say you’re not going to like what I say, but it’s the truth.’ (JL2/Q70/P18)

... value of truth

‘So to get back to your notion of morals and on ethics: I find that the military concept, where you tell the truth and you look someone in the eye and you’re consistent there, you tell what you honestly believe, even sometimes to your own detriment, that is very successful in civilian life, because you find that some people think that you’re showing a lot of courage, or you’re very strong.’ (JL2/Q4/P2)

JL, for all his love of order and systems, enjoyed elements of uncertainty:

‘I don’t know what’s going to happen from this day to the next ... I’ve got systems to cope with uncertainty, like I take notes and I know what I’ve said, or what’s been said ... but I rather enjoy the unknown. It’s served us well in the past and it will serve us well in the future.’ (JL2/Q129/P36)

His values embraced quality of life, work value and reward for effort:

‘I always say: there’s three things in life, this is part of the things in your job. Do something worthwhile, okay, make some money out of it, get rewarded, not just money, but get reward ...The third thing is, have some fun.’ (JL2/Q72/P18)

Overall, JL’s description of his transition processes were heavily characterised by references to actions, processes and systems, although he spoke frequently of his care and nurturing of people

‘... more the director of the team. Director is not the right word, more the - it’s not leading either. It could be, it’s – no, it would be leading it, but with a strong emphasis on ... nurturing and encouraging that team.’ (JL1/Q62/P11)

JL’s primary motivators were success, proving himself and doing a good job.

He drew strong support from his wife and family in this and in his successful transition out of the military into civilian business; moving from the clear status driven hierarchy
of the military to the networked, freelance organisation of his “virtual business making real returns” (Heagney 1999 p.21).

He had cleverly adapted processes from the military to a networked organisation, while retaining controls embedded in a range of agreements based on task, rather than command-and-control. Whether the difference is a matter of degree or not (short-term and task agreements rather than organisational service under command and control systems) is not possible to decide under the parameters of this research. For comparison, in the military the process was:

‘... you’ve got to work in with teams and less educated people and you start to discover that you’ve been inculcated with the view that when you’re in a team you have a role as a leader, but those members aren’t necessarily inferior or - you’re not superior because of that, you just have a particular skill or talents, or set of talents, but they may be superb in other things, things that you could never do yourself.’ (JL2/Q8/P3)

‘I’m talking about here I want this done son, go and organise it, and I don’t want a deviation unless you come back to me. I want you to organise how to do it, but here’s the broad parameters and the results.’ (JL1/Q3/P2)

‘... that just gives you a small example of the sort of direction that you’d get.’ (JL1/Q9/P3)

... while for JL’s business the process was described as:

“Mr L. said the business was essentially led by two principals in Canberra, with various external senior associates allocating further resources as their individual projects required.
The glue of the structure is the use of technology. Internet technology has freed up talented individuals so they can live in a chosen location and yet deliver work as if they were in a major city supported by significant office infrastructure ... We are attracting high calibre people because they are more interested in balancing their professional and personal lives – and yet they still want to achieve the quality and standards they’ve been used to producing and delivering to clients ... the emphasis is on clear tasking and a multi-disciplined team” (Heagney 1999).

**Conclusion/Summary of Individual Transitions**

Despite variations in their impetus for change (whether internal or external), and their motivations to resist or assist that transition, each of the men demonstrated similar experience as each other, within the same framework of stages and processes. The phases of the Phoenix myth correlated clearly to the stages demonstrated, sometimes
uncannily and surprisingly so. The variations in the men, and in their triggers, actually validated the stages through the correlations expressed within that diversity.

A summary of the six stages and the men’s collective correlations can be read in Chapters 8 and 9 of the body of the thesis.
Appendix D - Example of Interview Process, with Quotations

A summary, using references from my interviews with DW, and reflecting the general pattern of my role and the process of each of the interviews, is provided below. However, the pace, tone, depth and ease varied with each interview and with each man, depending on aspects such as his ease with me and the significance of topics that were raised. A sample outline follows:

- **setting the topic:**
  
  ‘SMac: … I’m talking here with DW as a preliminary for my PhD study in transitions of men from outside motivations to inside motivations, from hierarchies to holistic living.’ (DW1/Q3/P1)

- **deep listening:**
  
  ‘SMac: You said the same thing about external validations, that someone outside you gave you a stamp of approval. And that they made you feel a man. Is that valid? DW: Yes, it did that. And he was held in high esteem by his profession. (DW1/Q145/pp33-34)

- **compassionate, open listening:**
  
  ‘SMac: And now you’re a counsellor you want to go out on your boat. You’ve made the connection and now you’re going to sever it. It’s an interesting position to be in and to look at how you’ve brought those polarities back to yourself again to ask the same question again. You know how can I have my aloneness and yet the desire to be connected and to be involved in what people are doing? DW: That’s right. And I don’t have a sense that I’ve resolved that at all. SMac: But it’s okay that it’s unresolved? DW: Yes.’ (DW5/Q88-89/P25)

- **reflecting information – verbally and in diagrams:**
  
  ‘SM: And then after the tape was off we were talking about integrity as being a very critical point and honesty and an integration of self and that you had seen your life in boxes. You were making your life so it had no separate boxes now, and I drew the little diagram with the strands plaiting together and you felt that the plaiting where the boxes interwove with each was where you started to live and where you couldn’t deny or cover things up. And that’s where you wanted to be, in the plaiting.'
DW: That’s right yes. I think I said too that … I didn’t want that as a one off item I wanted that as a day-to-day living. Of integrating that so that it did become part of life …’ (DW3/Q19/pp5-6)

- summarising:

  ‘SMac: So work and religion and work and philosophy mirrored each other. Both have a hierarchy, both have authority, both have a masculinity.
  DW: That’s right. So that was the order of the world.
  SMac: So that’s your inner and outer world mirroring each other too?
  DW: Yes. So the idea of having something that was feminine, something that was non-hierarchical, was very mercurial if you like and just flowed and ebbed, it took me a long time to break down those inner barriers because of those set ups.’ (DW2/Q22-23/P7)

- connecting information: for example comparing different honour codes between dockworkers and Scouts:

  ‘SMac: Going back to your apprenticeship and your Scouting. They sound like very different worlds. If you put those together it sounds like you’re operating on almost different honour codes. Scouting … was the service, duty, honour. And then your apprenticeship time it was very tough, get the best out of what you could get, and be good at what you are doing because that gained you kudos. Very personally. Status.
  DW: That’s right. That’s true.’ (DW3/Q23/P6)

- discussing his capacity to change and the influence of his experiences of absence of control such as his asthma:

  ‘DW: So that was when I was off school I was usually pottering around making boats or laying flat on my back trying to breath. But it also had a sense that I, I think quite early, had a sense of my own resourcefulness in that sense.’ (DW1/Q6/P3)

  ‘SMac: … I’ll just go back to your experience that as an asthmatic you didn’t have a sense of security, didn’t have a kingdom, you couldn’t draw lines and keep them.
  DW: No.
  SMac: And yet that has given you the capacity to handle insecurity.
  DW: Yes, I think so.’ (DW3/Q42-43/P11)

- extrapolating ideas to examples, coming to manhood/becoming a ‘fine man’; Samurai sword example:

  ‘SMac: And what I’m thinking of is like the Samurai sword process which is that it’s been put in the heat, it’s been put in the cold, it’s beaten, it’s been put in the heat, it’s put in the cold. There is a name for it when you cure steel …
  DW: Temper it.
  SMac: Temper it, that’s it. That same sort of process; that you are tempering the man by giving him this bit of steel in himself, rather than using the steel against others.
  DW: Yes because it’s brittle, it breaks. See, if you harden steel it becomes brittle and it breaks easily so in a sword, where it has to strike other things and other hard things, if it’s brittle, it breaks. So you have to keep the strength there. In a sense you don’t, when
you temper steel you take away some of the hardness but you give it a softness as well, a tempering, and that gives it ability to bend and to take the hard knocks without shattering.

SMac: So lets go over this. This sounds very symbolic doesn’t it?

DW: It’s very symbolic actually. It’s a good analogy because the Samurai sword goes through five different processes and the first one the master sword maker takes the steel and blesses it and calls on the powers that be to make the sword operable and to do the work it is set out and designed to do. So the sword master then heats the steel, flattens it. Now one piece of steel in itself is weak but it’s folded over and over and over, it’s like beaten flat, and is fold over and is beaten flat, and folded over and then it’s virtually welded together so there’s about seven different layers of the steel. It’s like laminating, you know how you get your laminated piece of timber, and that also adds strength to that. So each section is like, and you can put the analogy there for each part of a man or part of a woman that develops on it’s own, it’s only a thin piece of metal that it can’t do much, but when it’s laminated together with the other ones and it becomes a whole and that’s where you get the strength. Then, when that’s folded and laminated it’s then left to cool and I think it’s left for about two months for all the stresses - see when have steel you beat it up and do all that kind of thing it puts a lot of stress on steel, but over a period of time that stress works it’s way out. And I can tell you the story of too is that steel ships when they are welded when they weld them they weld a lot of stress into it and if you put your ear against a ship that has just been built ...

SMac: Oh, the singing?

DW: The singing. It’s all the stress comes out of it. All the old fellows get a bit romantic and say the ship is talking, it’s talking. It always talks to you when you put your ear to it. But over a period of time that deteriorates ... So when, after that period, the sword maker picks up the sword again and then he heats it up to, after doing a necessary ritual on the sword, heats it up again and then it’s beaten to its shape because before it wasn’t in shape. And then it’s left for another two months for the same thing to happen. A third time that happens and then on the fourth time he really starts to work on the fine aspects of it. So it’s heated up and the temper is put into it and the way they do that is that they heat it up until it is almost white hot and then they douse it in oil and that really hardens it, it becomes very hard and it’s also very brittle.

SMac: Do they want it brittle?

DW: No, but that’s part of the process. You have to take that point of pure hardness and in that hardness it’s brittle. So if you use the sword then as soon as you struck into the sword it would break because it hasn’t got any flexibility. And then it’s totally cooled and there’s also a ritual done at that point about the hardness and the brittleness and now we’re taking the hardness and brittleness out of it and tempering it. So when you re-heat steel to a colour ... like a blue or straw colour you reduce some of the hardness, but you put a tempering into it and that’s what gives it it’s flexibility and that gives it a striking power where if you hit something hard it doesn’t break, it might bend a little or it will rebound. So then at that point the way that they do that is heat it to that
colours show in it and then it’s doused in oil again. And then that sword is then hardened and tempered.

SMac: So they do that once, tempering to colours?

DW: Once. Because if you reheat the sword after that you lose those capacities. The skill of the sword maker is knowing exactly when to quench the steel when it is hardening, and exactly when to quench the steel when being tempered.

SMac: Can you say that again. So the master skill is knowing when to quench the steel in oil?

DW: To quench the steel in oil to give it the exact amount of hardness as necessary. And when to quench it again with colours, showing it’s been tempered to get exactly the right amount of tempering. And that’s part of the skill of a master sword maker.

SMac: So I’m running the idea of a mentor parallel with this as you speak. And I get the feeling that you are in a way, too, in terms of seeing a boy’s life.

DW: Yes, that’s what I’m saying. This analogy of sword making is very much an overview of a young man, if you like, going through that process of initiation. And then the final process in the sword making is that the sword is then polished and the edges put on it. And the last time that it is heated they put clay, you know on a Samurai sword along the cutting edge there is like that pattern. Well, what they do is they put clay and mould it in those patterns on that edge, and then it is heated up, quenched in the sword and the clay, actually, is like an acid etching that goes into the sword and stays there for the life of the sword. But that’s also part of the patterning and the subtle ending of the sword. So that’s the fine tuning, if you like, of the sword. And that for me is like looking at a young man or a person coming into that sense of transition, that’s the fine tuning of that person, the last part of that transitioning process. So this is a good analogy of that process. And of course the handle is put on it and it is blessed again. And then the ritual of it being handed over. And in actual fact that ritual for me is like the handing over of a young man to the world. You know that final ritual of the initiation process where he is brought back, you know in the Masai tribe the young men are brought in from that sense of being in the bush and initiated and then they are allowed to choose their wives. It’s like that’s that last ...

SMac: When I listen to this I’m seeing a different correlation. Can I just mention it? I’d like to hear your sense of it. I sense that this is like a life and that this handing over the ritual and everything really is very late in life and that it would be actually when a man gains his wisdom mantle, where he’s seen as a real elder in the tribe and that he is seen as having achieved everything, as if he’s got the lot, he has been refined and tempered and broken and folded and heated and quenched and he has been through the lot and come out as a fine man rather than as this just being a map of coming into manhood. This is much more.

DW: … and in Aboriginal terms when a man gets to that point they call him man of high degree because he has been through that process. And there’s also women of high degree too.

SMac: So does that sound feasible?
DW: It certainly does because you could say that in that hardening and the tempering processes they make the sword, you could certainly say that being a man up to that point and that the final processes of subtle learning if you like, the subtle part of the sword making the fine instrument it is.

SMac: That you wield your power then with care and that while that is ...

DW: See a Samurai sword once it is ritualised and handed over to a Samurai it can only be drawn out to shed blood. And even if a Samurai takes it out and puts it away without drawing blood he has to cut his finger and he puts it back in so that there is actually blood drawn on that sword.

SMac: That’s respect for the task.

DW: Yes.

SMac: And a feeling of process that’s happened.

DW: As a due respect for the process. And the sense of the power of the sword. The sword is the instrument of... the power instrument of the Samurai, it’s the instrument of death, the instrument of destruction, it’s also the instrument of honour, it’s also the instrument of victory. So all those aspects are part of that ritual if you like.

SMac: It’s also the sword of commitment too isn’t it? That when you have a Samurai sword, then you are a marked man.

DW: Yes, that’s right.

SMac: And that you are committed to that code of ethics, which includes dying for your cause and that total commitment. So it is a real mark, isn’t it.

DW: It is. And it is an extremely high honour to be presented with your Samurai sword.

SMac: And it’s yours, isn’t it, for life. It just stays with you for life.

DW: Yes. When Samurai swords are given over the butt of the handle has a hollow in it and there is a reed page goes in there and it’s a history of the sword, who made it, who had it originally, who it was handed down to, and some of the Samurai swords go back to the 15th and 16th century that were used in the Second World War. And there was quite a lot of investigation by Japanese families after the war to try and find the family Samurai sword. And indeed on the American souvenir circuit if you like of the soldiers they would open the back up and if there was a reed of paper in there that would increase the value of the sword many, many times...

SMac: I think that’s really a significant thing ...

DW: But actually that is a good analogy.’ (DW3/Q63-80/pp16-20)

‘DW: ... when the Samurai was learning the sword he learns each step in itself, each stroke, and he learns each stroke to perfection. Sorry, he or she. To a point when the master could see that they have reached a point in the process for each of the strokes down really to perfection. And in doing that you lose overall skill because you concentrate on each part of it. So that the master would say, “You go to the monastery sit on the hill for three months. Don’t think about the sword and when you come back see what you’re like”.

SMac: … that was the two months when the sword sits by itself?
DW: Yes … So in actual fact when they sit in there all those skills are integrated and then they come back down out of that then they don’t think much about the skills of the sword; they just have them there. Actually where I first came across that was … of learning the interview skills for counselling. “In this book you will be going through each skill but when you are finished it, just don’t spend any time on it but they’ll be part of, you know when you go back to it you might have to think about it.” I thought it was a bit of an analogy. Each time you just take that little bit at a time and then, you don’t think about it for a while but they integrate into and it becomes part of you. And it’s like that, you know the cycle of learning, unconscious incompetent, then the conscious incompetent, to the conscious competent to the unconscious competent. So I see that’s important too in that sense of how to get young men, particularly through that period of their life.’ (DW3/Q85-87/pp21-22)

• guiding/staying on track:

‘SMac: That model we were talking about before of the person going out on their own and then returning with the knowledge is the one you’re still holding.
DW: Yes.
SMac: When the Shaman goes out to be on his own he doesn’t go out with the idea I’m going to … learn something and come back to be a wise man. So you’re still working with the traditional learning. You’re still … to me you’re not addressing that question that we’ve been circling and touching and then moving away from. What happens if you’re not part of the tribe? What if you have no differences? What if you are not any one other than yourself? Can you survive that? Not can you survive and bring back the wisdom, but can you survive that, and bring back the wisdom as a bonus or added value?.’ (DW5/Q115-116/P29)

• diverging (discussing jails):

‘SMac: Like law is so specific, you stole a car, you didn’t steal a car, you beat that woman up, you didn’t beat that woman up. But when you look at it more deeply you find that wait a minute you beat this woman up but she goaded and goaded. What are we going to do about this?
DW: … I think too there’s been a change within me, too, on the idea that if you incarcerate a person then I have held the view that if you put him in jail and whatever happens is your own lot if you like and never looked at it along the lines that you are being punished by just incarceration alone and that’s the idea of it. And the positive aspect of it can be that it’s a time to reorganise yourself or to learn and to come out with a sense of doing your time and then you’ve got something from it to continue.’ (DW3/Q5/P2)

• expanding the idea of the Phoenix, its cycle and how it relates to wider topics:

‘SMac: Okay things rot and they regenerate, things fade and they come good again, things are pruned back and they get lush. There is an acceptance in the cycle of nature of a down side or the falling back or the decaying or the withering or the minimising that we don’t accommodate in a materialistic world.
DW: That’s right yes. I think working with ships and boats also where there is a very quick deterioration of them, they’re high maintenance machines in that sense. So you have to accept that they deteriorate and you have to accept that at different times they have to be repaired and brought back to a good standard. And indeed a very accepted part of building boats is there is an unbuilt factor for corrosion and rot so that the ship is actually overbuilt to a certain extent so that it actually can retain enough strength when the rot or the rust starts to come into the structure then you might have an in built factor of say five years of corrosion before it starts to impinge upon the design strength of the structure.’ (DW3/Q3/P1)

• lapsing into conversation - it was as if it gave us both rest and thinking time - then we would revert, for example, diverging to talk about jails and men’s needs, and then reverting to talk about cycles:

‘DW: But that sense of cycles and understanding cycles and getting pleasure from watching them is something that’s been part of my life.
SMac: The Phoenix, very much.
DW: Yes.
SMac: And about the gracious willingness to accept implosion, destruction, decay, as being normal. So as we were talking just then about prison system to be able to look at the society and see what it is that is going to implode it. What is it that’s going to ... what’s the fuel that will set it up. And the Phoenix often talks about the fragrance, is talking about gracious going ... if you don’t have a gracious going then it will be by force and you don’t get to choose the fuel that you go by. You don’t get to choose the wood. You just get any old wood. There’s no beauty in that ...
DW: That can easily swamp us, yes. The idea of economic rationalism that we’ve got to be lean and mean to compete within the world global market place. If there’s no market place there or it’s in such a disarray that we’re trying to deal with that, that’s certainly going to have a really big impact on Australia. Thankfully we’re a country that has got a lot of saleable items.
SMac: But if no one can buy them?
DW: That’s the other point isn’t it?
SMac: And if we don’t have the money to buy theirs we have to learn to be self sufficient. To me that’s the worm, that’s what comes up after the Phoenix has burnt. The worm comes not as the Phoenix and that worm then turns into a Phoenix. In other words it starts new forms and then when it was strong it takes the whole nest to the Sun City, Heliopolis; gives it to the Sun God and then comes back to Earth. So it’s almost like saying you live with these problems, or the residue of the problems, the decay around the destruction long enough for you to be able to handle that destruction and to be able to deal with it and not forget it. And then when you are strong enough, then you remember Hiroshima and places like that, that have had to live with the mess of the bomb long enough not to forget it.’ (DW3/Q4-14/pp2-5)

• returning to topics of relevance:

‘SMac: Going back to your apprenticeship and your Scouting…’ (DW3/Q23/P6)
• giving female insights/point of view; for example how girls discuss relationships:

‘SMac: Just a bit of feedback on that just from a woman’s point of view. Young girls and young women spend a hell of a lot of time talking about hypothetical relationships. Their fantasy relationships because they’re relationships to do with one’s potential lover or boyfriend and they’re very unreal in that regard, they’re not tested in reality. And then when that becomes a reality and a woman gets a partner or is involved in something like that there is a post mortem if you like constantly going on of we went out this is what happened this is what happened. And so the whole process and the whole unreality is checked out all the time against reality in an ongoing process. So there’s no sense of having a finished product that has got to look good all the time. The fights are part of the drama, the disappointments are part of it, the wishes are part of it. So there’s a lot of what I call the uncertainties a lot of sliding stuff that’s not, ‘Went to the pictures and I was really upset because he looked at this girl’. There are those emotional things and confusion, the unknowns. So women talk about those. The unknowns the ineptitudes, the confusions a lot. So when you’re talking about the assumption that women talk about relationship it’s not how a good relationship works; often it’s about how the relationships that are happening around are working and what they would like but not that projection saying, ‘Oh, so and so’s relationship works really well. Why do you think it works really well? I don’t think I’ve ever heard a woman’s conversation like that until they are really mature aged that have had enough knocks to say how are we going to do this again. So that there is a slight difference in there.

DW: I appreciate that because I, that’s given me something more to think about.’

(DW3/Q30/pp8-9)

• sharing similar experiences as a way of establishing or confirming empathy, and checking I’d understood:

‘SMac: I was raised with three brothers so I didn’t get much in the way of female ... so I learned a lot of their ways and I remember using that with a young man who was on the dodgem cars and he kept coming straight at me. He thought it was funny, and of course it hurt a lot and I had glasses which jarred, and so I ran into him and his glasses fell off and he was totally distraught because it was like he didn’t understand the effect it was having when it was given back to him he was fairly distraught. But that boy’s father was really angry. He didn’t think that he should ever have that sort of experience. He should never have the consequences of his actions brought home to him in a way that pulled him up and made him aware of it ... Is that the sort of stuff you’re talking about?

DW: Yes, it is. And another indication of that is there was a show on TV, you know this wounding of the young man, getting him to understand the pain of what he does, his actions, There was show that as so poignant about this fellow who was the hero in the story. It was a French story, I think, I might have been watching SBS, but he was walking down the road and this young man was standing in the doorway and he was abusing his mother. Like he was calling her all the names under sun and absolutely going off his head and hurting her and she was reacting. So the guy just walked up to
him and touched him on the shoulder and when he looked back, he just went ‘bang’ in the nose and kept walking. Like, this man went down like a packet, just crashed to the ground, and the guy just kept walking.’ (DW3/Q52/P13)

• presenting another viewpoint:

‘SMac: To me this position of sitting in the unknown is a very powerful one. It’s a very advanced stage if you like, in the sense that my experience of men, particularly coming out of any form of structure, is that they want structure again, and you’ve referred to that in the interviews too: that insecurity. ‘You have to reclaim your territory or the relationship breaks up’; ‘she’s property you want her back’; that ‘reaffirms the territory’. DW: That’s right.
SMac: And here I’m hearing you’re moving to that stage where you are able to do that now. You’re tempted to sort of chuck the baby out with the bath water and use your old model of cutting off but you are also talking about sitting in the discomfort. You’re still presuming it has to be done alone but you’ve moved from your old way of relating to that now.
DW: I think that’s true.’ (DW5/Q90and92/P25)

• questioning the men regarding their future:

‘SMac: So am I seeing a process where you feel you’re difference, you explore your difference, you find some comfortableness with that difference and then you’re taking it back into a model that you may feel is compatible and that you’re trying that compatibility out and that you may then when it doesn’t fit go and explore the difference again? Is it a refinement process?
DW: I think that really describes it, as a refinement process. I think it is a bit like the child in the supermarket with mother whereas Mother standing there and I run off and I go and touch the things on the shelves and look around what’s happening there, and something falls over and it scares me, so I run back to Mum’s skirt and hide behind it for a little while, and gather some more strength and then I run around again, and something will happen, and I will come back again. And I think it is that sense of refining that the group and society is really the only reference point at the moment; that I have to go outside that.
SMac: So are you willing to give up the reference point and write your own reference? Own criteria?
DW: That’s very scary (Gasp)’ (DW5/Q44-45/pp13-14)

A fitting note to end on.
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