EXECUTIVE COACHING FOR
CONSCIOUS LEADERSHIP:
INSIGHT INTO INSIGHT

Cecily Moreton
BA, DipEd, BTh, BEd (Counselling), MAPS, AACC

Thesis submitted for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

2006

School of Education

University of Western Sydney
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.

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

(Signature)
Abstract

This thesis is an investigation of the practice of executive coaching for conscious leadership. The researcher, an executive coach with many years of practice as educator, chaplain, counselling psychologist, Buddhist meditator and company director, draws on case studies to present a holistic understanding of the coaching relationship. She examines how the coaching relationship enables executive managers not only to achieve their management goals, but also to gain insight, assemble meaning, become conscious and present, and grow as leaders.

The key questions for the thesis are: What does the coach do and how is it manifested through the coaching discourse? What are the key processes and variables in the coaching relationship that promote conscious leadership? In order to explore these questions, the researcher draws on literature from human relations praxis, ethics, psychology (including counselling, psychotherapy, positive psychology, educational and organisational psychology), education, theology, Buddhist practice and spirituality, leadership and leadership development, and executive coaching.

The research methodology is qualitative and quantitative, drawing on data based on an intensive coaching program designed and delivered by the researcher to managers in two organisations - a retail company and a utility company. A series of group sessions reinforced the individual coaching process. Over 300 hours of one-on-one executive coaching sessions were recorded, with 24 executive managers (12 in each company), who each participated in twelve (or equivalent) fortnightly sessions over a 6-month period. In addition, a test of emotional intelligence was given to each of the managers at the beginning and end of the coaching program, giving a quantitative measure of the changes.

The results of the coaching sessions are analysed in terms of the two companies and their participants, exploring the organisational context and outlining the benefits of coaching and the coaching relationship with each of the participants individually and in groups. Then two detailed individual case studies are presented, one client from each of the organisations in the study.

The managers in the study learned new management skills and adopted new leadership behaviours, reflecting their growth in emotional intelligence and awareness. They reflected on gaining deep awareness and insight, signifying their move to conscious leadership, and reported practical benefits of coaching in their workplace practices, e.g. improved communication skills and the ability to give and receive genuine feedback. A quantitative analysis of the emotional intelligence pre- and post-test scores confirmed these positive outcomes.

Many of the managers reported that the most significant aspect of the coaching was the quality of the relationship between them and the coach, which enabled conscious leadership to develop. Their relationship was deeply influenced by the personal qualities of the coach such as warmth, presence, qualifications, credibility, trustworthiness, openness, commitment, insight, and spiritual awareness. This made the difference between coaching for management goals alone and the development of conscious leadership.

The concepts of executive coaching and of conscious leadership are holistic phenomena. The clients experience a profound sense of feeling known, respected, accepted, cared for and valued. In essence, they experience love. What has emerged from the research is that consciousness is the ‘being’ of leadership. The attributes of conscious leadership indicate an integration of the whole person that manifests in the workplace, in their homes with their families, and in their everyday interactions and responses to the world around them.

While instrumental management goals may be achieved with qualified coaches, conscious leadership involves psychological integration via in-depth relationship and psychological interventions, these need to be experienced with a qualified practitioner with demonstrable advanced levels of personal integration and consciousness. The findings call for a more professional and holistic approach to executive coaching for leadership.
Acknowledgements

To each person who has coached me through this work, thank you.

This thesis is about relationships and conversations, about learning and living and loving. It has been written because of the wonderful conversations I have experienced in many committed loving relationships which called us into being. There have been the rich, candid conversations with the talented managers who participated in the project, who partnered with me and took the risk of being recorded with me for the research. There have been dozens of conversations with my supervisor Dr John Cameron whose meditative being shone a torch of love and light through the highways and byways of the work. There have been hundreds of hours of inspiring conversations with generous loving friends and colleagues who unswervingly believed in the power of coaching for developing consciousness and real leadership. They gave practical help and challenging thoughtful feedback and encouragement to me at every point. There has been the constant conversation with my beautiful partner Chris, sometimes with hilarity and exhilaration of insight and sometimes in peaceful rhythmic knowing silence, which carried the thesis week by week to completion. To each of you my heartfelt thanks.

I dedicate this work to my son Sam, a leader. You and your generation give me hope and confidence. May you always be inspired and guided to lead with love.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Statement of Authentication ii
Abstract iii
Acknowledgements iv
List of tables and figures viii

Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview 1
1.2 Background: a personal narrative 3
1.3 Executive coaching 13
1.4 Outline of chapters 15

Chapter 2 A REVIEW OF LITERATURE: AN INTERDISCIPLINARY SELECTION

2.1 Introduction 19
2.2 The study of human relations 20
2.3 Transformative learning: teacher training, 25
    feminism and social activism
2.4 Theology, spirituality and ethics 29
2.5 Psychology and psychotherapy 35
2.6 Leadership and organisational management 42
2.7 Executive Coaching 57
2.8 Towards Conscious Leadership 66
2.9 Conclusion 71

Chapter 3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction 74
3.2 Methodological traditions 75
3.3 Research method 77
3.4 The conscious leadership model 80
3.5 Coach attributes, skills assumptions and exercises 80
3.6 Coaching protocol 82
3.7 Pre and Post-testing of the participants 86
3.8 Analysing the data 91
3.9 Limitations 94
3.10 Conclusion 96
Chapter 4 INSIDE THE ORGANISATIONS:
COMPANY CASE STUDIES AND THE EQ-i RESULTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Introduction: the multiple layers of data</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 The organisational context</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3 Group sessions</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4 Individual sessions: Building conscious leadership</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5 Qualitative results: Overall self-reporting of individual executive coaching</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6 Quantitative data: EQ pre-and post-test indicators of change</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7 Conclusion</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chapter 5 BRIAN’S STORY: CASE STUDY 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Introduction</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2 Session 1</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3 Session 2</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4 Session 3</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5 Session 4</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.6 Sessions 5,6 and 7</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.7 Session 8 and 9</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.8 Session 10</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.9 Session 11</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.10 Session 12</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chapter 6 PENNY’S STORY: CASE STUDY 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.1 Introduction</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2 Session 1</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3 Session 2</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4 Session 3</td>
<td>208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5 Session 4 and 5</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.6 Session 6</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.7 Sessions 7 and 8</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.8 Session 9</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.9 Session 10</td>
<td>228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.11 Session 11</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chapter 7 DISCUSSION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.1 Introduction</td>
<td>238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2 Reflections on the Company case studies and the EQ results</td>
<td>239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3 Reflections on the individual case studies: Brian’s and Penny’s stories</td>
<td>254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.4 Recommendations for future research</td>
<td>281</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7.5 Towards conscious leadership through executive coaching 282

References 290

Appendices

A “The Healthy Self Living in Love” coaching handout 313
B EQ-i Sample Report 314
C Zeidner et al.’s Comparative Table of EI Measures. 319
D Participants Information Sheet and Consent Form 321
# LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table 3.1</td>
<td>Components measured by the Bar-On of EQ-i</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.1</td>
<td>Research participants</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.2</td>
<td>Participants and overall EQ-i scores</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.3</td>
<td>Means (Standard Deviations) for Total EQ-i and EQ-i Composite Scales</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.4</td>
<td>Means (Standard Deviations) for Content Sub-scales</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.5</td>
<td>Means (Standard Deviations) for Pre-Intervention Total EQ-i, EQ-i Composite Scales and Age by Company</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.6</td>
<td>Means (Standard Deviations) for Pre-Intervention Total EQ-i, EQ-i Composite Scales by Gender</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.7</td>
<td>Means (Standard Deviations) for Post-Intervention Total EQ-i, EQ-i Composite Scales and Age by Company</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.8</td>
<td>Means (Standard Deviations) for Post-Intervention Total EQ-i, EQ-i Composite Scales and Age by Gender</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.9</td>
<td>Means (Standard Deviations) for Post-Intervention Total EQ-i, EQ-i Composite Scales and Age by Gender</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.10</td>
<td>Means (Standard Deviations) for Difference Scores of Total EQ-i and EQ-i Composite Scales by Gender</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.11</td>
<td>Paired Samples T Tests for Intrapersonal and General Mood Composite Scales with Outliers Removed</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 5.1</td>
<td>Case Notes – Brian’s Job Satisfaction Values</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 5.2</td>
<td>Brian: Old Me</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 5.3</td>
<td>Brian: New Me</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 6.1</td>
<td>Case Notes – Penny’s Next Tasks</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 6.2</td>
<td>Case Notes - Penny, Session 5</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 6.3</td>
<td>Penny: Old Me</td>
<td>229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 6.4</td>
<td>Penny: New Me</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

For hundreds of years, the subject of leadership has troubled and intrigued pundits and practitioners, as well as the rest of us….In some inchoate way, we sense that despite our odyssean search, leadership remains an immanent, mysterious process. (Lipman-Blumen 1996: 325).

1.1 Overview

The fundamental purpose of this thesis is to contribute to an improvement in the practice of executive coaching for conscious leadership. When I went looking for research into leadership I was struck by the amount written on the topic and by how little we still know about ‘becoming a good leader’. As Lipman-Blumen states in her work on ‘connective leadership’, the deeper layers of meaning and rationale of leadership are still mysterious and under researched (Lipman-Blumen 1996:325-6). Even less well researched is the relationship between leadership, executive coaching and change (Smither 2003).

Aims

This study aims to provide a narrative of research and practice that brings in a cross-disciplinary understanding of the coaching relationship by uncovering the interaction of significant elements of the coaching event. It examines how the acquisition of knowledge and behaviours by executive managers through the coaching relationship helps them gain insight, assemble meaning, become conscious and present, and grow as leaders.

This thesis aims to demonstrate how the blend of skilled coach/counsellor and skilled manager is achieved discursively in the executive coaching conversation, so that managers experience their worth and potential and learn how to provide the same leadership to their staff. Through the stories of both coach and client that are outlined in the case studies I will explore how the co-constructed discourse between coach and client enables the coach to achieve both the relationship/leadership goals and the task goals without collision or tension.
Research questions

The key questions for the thesis are: What does the coach do and how does the coaching relationship unfold through the discourse? How does this relationship develop conscious leadership?

Traditionally, psychologists and coaches do not talk much about the existential dimension of therapy or coaching, about all the non-specific factors such as love or healing which may in fact be the crucial agents of change for clients. This thesis deals with the quality of the coaching relationship. While there is a plethora of material on leadership and on coaching for leadership, researchers tend to describe attributes of a good leader, or the skill sets proposed by coaches, and go no further. When coaches are observed at work, it seems that in addition to the process of developing skills, it is the quality of the relationship between coach and client that brings about positive change. This is a thesis built on practice, deep experience and reflection, endeavouring to uncover the being that underlies and infuses the doing.

The research question relates to what is really happening when the coaching process is working well, when the study of relationship building uncovers the nature of leadership. The issues that arise in coaching a healthy person who is a good leader relate to the crucial elements of a state of absolute presence and the consequent deep sense of safety that the client reaches. This research is a study of consciousness, of spirituality, of psychology, and of philosophy, placed together within the work of leadership development in organisations.

Over my many years of practice in a variety of disciplines as teacher, humanist philosopher, chaplain, counsellor, psychologist, Buddhist meditator, public speaker and coach, I am now in a position to provide a broad, cross-disciplinary view of the development of executive coaching, as well as to be able to apply particular skills in the process of executive coaching. These disciplines are like rainbow-coloured bands of a complex helix, flowing together through every experience and held together by the experiencer. In the following sections, I reflect on the major influences on my life and my professional practice, influences that are reflected in the rainbow bands of my story that appear in each chapter of the thesis. My life’s work drew upon the theories and experiences of key researchers and practitioners. Some of these practitioners in turn are discussed in the narrative that becomes the literature review of Chapter 2. Similarly, the model of executive coaching for conscious leadership that I developed, explained in Chapter 3, is another layer of the same helix of experience, drawing together many of the interdisciplinary bands of the story. In later chapters, the story of particular coaching events unfolds, drawn from the intensive research project that is the basis of this thesis. I will now go back to reflect on the
other major influences that brought me to this point.

1.2 Background: a personal narrative

This thesis brings together the personal journey and the professional and intellectual journey. I am one person. There is only my journey and my experience of the journey. I understand that a thesis is an academic discourse, and not my life's work and entire philosophy. But it also embraces these things. Through the telling of my story, I am aware that I have been consistently interested in the relationship between psychology and spirituality, between psychotherapy and spiritual healing, and in what the psychotherapist or teacher contributes to personal change through “consistent unconditional positive regard” and caring challenge, or what might be called “tough love”. My narrative, my life, is a laboratory of integrating psychological research and therapeutic and educational practice in a way that facilitates my own growth and integrity. This experience is what became crystallised into insight about leadership and into a methodology and practice for developing leaders. The process of life experience is one of feedback as is the process of coaching. Feedback is a form of reflexivity. My own reflexive shift from early clumsy fragmented understandings to insight and increasingly conscious awareness, models the subsequent work that I undertook with my clients. It is appropriate in this thesis to begin with my own journey, as it takes the reader through various levels of understanding, integrating both experience and the several intellectual disciplines which I studied and practised.

Increasingly, writers on leadership such as Ken Wilber, Stephen Covey, Scott Miller, Louis Fry and others are approaching their work in a similar way (see Chapter 2). However, there is a gap, which I am attempting to fill, in researching what it is in executive coaching that contributes to deep change in leaders and their leadership. I am writing this thesis today as the director of an executive coaching company. However, I am drawing on my own learning over many decades.

Early days
After completing my schooling in the state of Victoria, first at a little school outside the farm where I grew up as the youngest of six children, then as a boarder from the age of eight to sixteen, I enrolled in the Bachelor of Arts degree at Monash University in 1968. In the same year I discovered the Cairnmillar Institute of Human Relations in Melbourne. I had started attending a Presbyterian Church out at Prahran that was innovative, fun, and interesting and had a “younger set”. The ordained ministers who ran the parish, Dr Francis Macnab, Dr Hugh Eadie, Dr Warwick Hartin and Dr Tom Patterson were psychologists or sociologists who were building a Human Relations ministry, following ideas from Scottish Professors Cairn and Millar. These
people went on to lead key public organisations such as Relationships Australia, a national public counselling service for couples and families. I was involved at the Cairnmillar Institute for about five years, participating in the life-skills courses every fortnight and being involved in the parish as a teacher for the Learning to Live Program as we called our Sunday School. The entire program was very practical. The courses included a psychology lecture and then practical exercises and interpersonal sharing under the guidance of a trained leader. The emphasis was on practical and intelligent experience.

Cairnmillar provided me with life-skills learning, counselling, spiritual development, and a parish community. By the end of my time at Cairnmillar, I still had a lot to heal from the abuses of eight years in a boarding school institution, and a lot to learn about myself, but I had almost caught up with my peers with regard to how to be in relationships, both personal and work. Thirty years after my formative experience at the Cairnmillar Institute of Human Relations, we are still focusing on the same critical feature in leadership: Human Relations education, which I believe is closely allied to what is now referred to as Emotional Intelligence.

The key writers I was introduced to at the Cairnmillar Institute/Presbyterian Church, I value to this day: Rollo May, Victor Frankl, Carl Rogers, Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, Martin Buber, Abraham Maslow, Karen Horney, Fritz Perls, Erich Fromm, Joseph Fletcher, and Eric Berne. Some of their stories and research publications are referred to in Chapter 2. Their ideas underlie all my coaching conversations, and I often refer explicitly to them. In particular, I use Berne’s parent/adult/child model of Transactional Analysis (Berne 1961) every day, so that managers can readily conceptualise relational power and act to convert negative power dynamics to positive ones.

*Transformative learning: theological studies, teacher training, feminism and social activism*

When I expressed an interest in a vocation in the church, the ministers at the Cairnmillar Institute encouraged me. Dr Frances Macnab and Dr Hugh Eadie were looking for a suitable candidate to be a test case in the Presbyterian Assembly debate on the ordination of women. I agreed to participate, and six months before the challenge was successful, began divinity studies. My experience of the church at that time was very positive. The Presbyterian Church led public opposition to Australian involvement in the war in Vietnam. This was an extraordinary time of reflection and activism, of speaking out against the Vietnam War and of deep involvement in my spiritual community.

The significance of theological studies for me was largely due to the intellectual
depth and breadth of the faculty. The United Faculty of Theology combined Presbyterian, Anglican, Roman Catholic (Jesuit), Methodist and Congregational staff and libraries. We were challenged with big questions and made to respond with interdisciplinary analyses and solutions. It was head, heart and mind. It was psychological, theological, spiritual and political. There was no separation in my mind about these ways of thinking. Spiritual behaviour was by definition a political act for me. Ethical behaviour – taking a stand against war – was an outcome of spiritual practice. Political behaviour was spiritual behaviour. Leadership was understood as an act of faith and an inevitable responsibility. The dualism of spirit and psyche was a nonsense. For me, psychological health, power, leadership, spirituality and ethics and all our personal and social dimensions were all integrated, because I am a whole person: I am one.

My later experiences beyond the United Faculty are probably too numerous to outline in this thesis. It is impossible to separate the myriad influences that return again and again to shape and change our lives at various times. Family, friends, relationships, travel, political activism, all impact and influence, in parallel with social milieu, political context, personal life changes at the time. My theological studies were interrupted by personal circumstances, including marriage and divorce, the birth of my son, a two-year residence in Greece, the death of my father, and the awakening of my feminist consciousness.

Meanwhile, in 1972, I had also trained as a teacher, gaining a place in a pilot Diploma of Education at Monash University, where the experimental program focused on whole-person education. Children were to be taught holistically and we as trainee teachers were trained in the same way in an integrated core course. It was a revelation to me that education was rooted in both *educare* (to train or instruct) and *educere* (to lead out or develop from latent or potential existence). These concepts of education have come to form the basis of leadership development: the training of skills, the *doing*, and the facilitation of the potential of the person, the *being*.

My profound experience of otherness, alienation and eventually oppression, due to who I am, taught me more than can be learned in a classroom. By 1979 I was divorced, a single mother with a three-year-old child, and I had come out as lesbian. Back at the United Faculty of Theology, the Presbyterian Church I had been in had merged with the Methodist and Congregationalist churches, and I was now a candidate for ordination with the Uniting Church in Australia (UCA). I was excited by systematic theology – Kant, Hegel, Kierkegaard, Whitehead - but was always most at home in Practical Theology – Christian Education, Pastoral Care and Counselling, and Ethics. I loved the practice of counselling and chaplaincy training and the intellectual challenge
of ethics. The United Faculty of Theology, then located in the University of Melbourne, was a cross-denominational faculty. I loved the stimulating experience of Jesuit professors versus UCA colleague in feisty, witty class debates. These Jesuit and UCA professors introduced me to liberation theology, including feminist theologians such as Mary Daly (1968) and Letty M. Russell (1985).

Many positive themes from theological education continue to be powerful influences for me. First, the power of the Word to transform the world. Words, especially those naming the world, give order to it, and call it into being for the namer. To call is to give meaning - the meaning is in what a thing is called (for example “my car”). Accurate naming is empowering (e.g. “I am an alcoholic”) and begins the process of change. Likewise, every person is named, called, has a vocation. True naming frees us because it is entirely creative. We author-ise and become authorities in our reality. When two people are in mutual dialogue (Buber’s I-Thou 1970), they call each other into being. The biblical creation stories express this power in human existence, and it is central in the thought and practice of the revolutionary educator, Paulo Freire (1972).

The insights I gained from Freire, of empowerment and the politicisation of the learner, fitted well with feminist and other liberation psychotherapeutic models which I discovered in graduate psychology studies. To a large degree, in describing human behaviour in the past, the profession of psychology has carefully kept to constructs evidenced in quantifiable research, and there has been less exploration of the affective qualities of the therapist and the environment they create in which the client can change. Nevertheless, ever since the great Carl Rogers used the term “unconditional positive regard” and listed this and several other attributes of the therapist as crucial to successful counselling and psychotherapy and education, these qualities tend to have been assumed and “taken as read” in most psychotherapies, with the exception of the behaviourist and pharmaceutical approaches.

Training to become a registered psychologist took me into a thorough exploration of Rogers’ work, and broadened my framework. In addition to this exploration of Rogers, I was immersed for two years in systemic family therapy, human relations group work, experiential teaching, radical therapy, and in developing a more clearly educational model of therapy/counselling. Egan’s very practicable model of therapy provided me with an excellent framework for my own practice and thought. In this model, training is also, in many respects, therapy. It is noteworthy that Gerard Egan was a Catholic priest and regarded counselling as ministry.

In 1979 I returned from two years in Greece and resumed theological studies in an
obligatory Christian Education summer school. I was impressed by Dr Denham Grierson and decided to enrol in his year-long subject. Dr Grierson introduced us to dozens of interesting ideas and people and experiences. One of the simplest and most useful exercises I ever experienced was in his class. This was the Good Teacher exercise.

**The good teacher, good counsellor, good coach, good spiritual director and good leader**

**Good Teacher**

There were about 25 students in the class. We were asked to think of a person, a real person with whom we had learned something valuable, and write down their name. We also wrote down what it was we had learned with them. The person may have been a professional teacher or any person from whom we had learned something significant or valuable. We listed their personal qualities, and we jotted down their attitude towards us, and we noted how these things had made us feel. Finally, we wrote down what it was that they did that enabled us to learn this valuable learning.

Everyone wrote in silence, then in small groups we discussed our experiences, and then in the larger group we shared our answers and these were put up on the board. Denham enjoyed our group discovery that we had all answered with remarkably similar answers. Whether our learning was school mathematics or some life lesson, whether the teacher was a family friend, a workmate, or a schoolteacher, the commonalities were remarkable. And we all therefore realised that we actually knew how to teach: we needed to develop these personal qualities and we needed to relate to the learner in these ways.

The qualities of the good teacher included things like being a good listener, being accepting, patient, sensible, straightshooting, challenging, thoughtful, real, genuine, clarifying, insightful, openminded, flexible, exemplary, disciplined, intelligent, frontier pushing, and positive. The good teacher’s attitude towards us included elements such as: belief in me, being on my side, treating me as an equal, encouraging me to be adult, having my best interests at heart, acting as if I mattered, evincing goodwill and the best intentions, not imposing obligation, showing generosity and patience, challenging with love, and encouraging me to take responsibility. How did we feel? We felt cared for, stretched, valued, empowered, confident, energised, challenged, excited, achieving, trusting, and open to change. When we considered what they had done that had enabled us to learn, we said things like: through modelling, they embodied the values; we felt inspired to be what they are; they asked specific questions, we were told things we didn’t like, mutual dialogue, real talking and real listening, giving new information, and offering encouragement.

I was already an experienced secondary and tertiary teacher and a few months later I was asked to run a workshop for about 40 adult literacy teachers as part of a three day inservice for them. I ran the exercise and was delighted and amazed to find that these wonderful people who were so dedicated to helping disadvantaged illiterate adults learn to read, had the same kinds of responses as had the theology students. They too loved the process and found it immensely validating.
**Good Counsellor**

A year or so later, while retraining as a psychologist, I taught counselling skills to undergraduate nursing students. This time I reconstrued the exercise to explore what being a good counsellor meant. Again and again as I ran counselling training courses over the next few years the Good Counsellor exercise yielded the same results as the first good teacher exercise had.

**Good Coach**

In 1999 in Sydney, when I began training life coaches, I used the same exercise – and again we had the same language emerging in each group. Many participating counselling psychologists described themselves as teachers, therapists/counsellors, and coaches, and said that they did not split themselves up between the roles. They agreed that research findings for counselling would be applicable for coaching because the only real difference was the greater ego-strength of the client. Coaching is not for depressed clients – such people should be referred to counselling.

**Good Spiritual Director/ Spiritually mature person**

In 2000, at the end of a 10-day Vipassana Buddhist retreat, I was part of a lively discussion about psychology, consciousness and spirituality. I asked everyone around the table to do the exercise, this time thinking of someone who they regarded as a key teacher or mentor or spiritual director/counsellor/guide in their lives. In this informal group, each person chose a person representing all the disciplines and, again, thoroughly enjoyed the commonality of language. We all talked of the genuineness and presence of our teacher/guide. I subsequently did a retreat with Catholic nuns and in a conversation about spiritual directors the same language emerged. The nuns spoke of spiritual maturity as a key to spiritual direction.

**Good Leader**

In 2001 I gave a presentation at the Spirituality, Leadership and Management (SLAM) Conference. My presentation the previous year had been very popular, so instead of 20 people in the room we had about 50. When the point in the presentation came to do the Good Leader exercise together, I divided the group into three: business people, psychologists, and the rest. I then asked two colleagues to take a group each. Each group was unaware that they were given a different referent. The business group was asked the questions with regard to a good leader, the psychologists with regard to a psychologically healthy person, and the rest with regard to a good parent. The participants were amazed to see they had put up almost identical lists regarding the personal qualities, the attitudes of the person to the recipient, and what they had done to demonstrate good leadership/parenting/psychological health. I was presenting on my executive coaching work with managers, in which we used the BarOn EQ-i test for client feedback. Participants quickly realised that the lists of qualities we had up on the white board fitted well with the qualities of Emotional Intelligence. From a lay point of view, it was obvious that good leaders need to be psychologically healthy people, integrated and personally aware and good in interpersonal relations. In a business context, in addition to being highly intelligent, competent and visionary managers, good leaders were distinguished by superior emotional intelligence.

In 2002, I ran a new Executive Coach training program, once again incorporating the exercise. The participants, most of whom were experienced psychologists who were also committed to spiritual development practices in various traditions, were intrigued by the commonality of the language. They debated whether one could legitimately
claim that across the disciplines we were all talking about the same experience and qualities. They concluded that, insofar as any two people can claim to mean the same thing at all, these experiences meant the same across disciplines: the qualities widely recognised as defining a good teacher were the same as those of a good counsellor, good spiritual director, good teacher, good coach, good leader and psychologically healthy person. They also arrived at the view that despite their upbringing and training, and whether they were Jew, Christian, Buddhist or New Age, their personal experience had led them to view consciousness and spirituality as the same thing. Most of them affirmed that the psychological process of reassociation and reintegration of self which they had experienced themselves and had facilitated in their counselling of clients was the same as the spiritual unification of the self with the self. Furthermore, healing is brought about by the experience of a deeply loving relationship.

The reason I came to think leadership, coaching and spirituality readily fit together is the common language people used. In various practical training programs in which I have participated or which I have conducted for others, people consistently use similar words when describing the "good coach", the "good leader", the "spiritual director" and the "whole person". Typically, participants in experiential programs, whether coach training, leadership training or spiritual direction, are asked to think of a real person, someone they knew personally and who they regard as a good coach/leader/whole person/spiritual director, and to describe their qualities and way of coaching/leading etc. Since we use the same language in each of these situations, I think it is likely that we are indeed describing the same qualities. Further, the language of the methodologies is often the same or congruent. Words such as insight, wisdom, presence and authority are examples of these links.

Thirty years later I am still using Dr Denham Grierson’s powerful model to explore the Good Coach, the Psychologically Healthy Person, and the Good Leader. It was this exercise that convinced me that since all different groups across decades came up with the same descriptors, then we are probably talking about the same universal experience. Through the practice of this exercise in various contexts I gained the insight that allowed me a way to reunify the dualistic worlds of psyche and spirit, of psychology and theology.

Buddhist meditation
A significant precipitating factor for this research was my immersion in Buddhist meditation from 1989 until the present. My practising of Vipassana meditation technique as a student, and my experience of the powerful positive changes that this daily practice continues to bring to my state of mind and to my physical health, raised my awareness of the efficacy of the technique, and its application to my work with others. As in psychotherapy, I experienced positive personal change. Vipassana, translated as insight, the word I use as the sub-title for my thesis, is one of several Buddhist meditation techniques learned by all students of the Buddhist way. I was introduced to Vipassana meditation by a Vietnam war-veteran suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, who had discovered the healing of Vipassana meditation.
Lay Burmese meditation master U Ba Khin developed a 10-day intensive course well suited to lay people in Vipassana meditation in the Theravada Buddhist tradition (Snelling 1987:129). His student S.N. Goenka established centres all around the world, including several in Australia.

When reading an interview with Ron Kurtz, Buddhist and founder of the Hakomi Method of Body Centred Psychotherapy by Nayano Taylor-Newman (Taylor-Newman 1995:13-15), I was struck by the shifts he described in understanding what is effective in the psychotherapeutic event. First Kurtz saw psychotherapy as a process which the therapist guides but stays outside of. Then he became interested in the healing relationship.

And I discovered there is something we do with clients which prepares them for the work that goes on, or invites the work to happen. There is an impulse to heal within the client which lies dormant, waiting for the right conditions to unfold. The client’s healing process spontaneously emerges when the conditions are right. So I studied the healing relationship for a long time. I wanted to understand what it is about the relationship between the client and the therapist, which encourages and supports healing. What finally emerged was my understanding that it is the state of mind of the therapist that does 90% of the work. The healing is in the relationship (Kurtz in Taylor-Newman 1995:13).

So Kurtz shifted focus to the personal presence of the therapist, and their state of consciousness. Kurtz continued:

Michael Mahoney, in his book *Human Change Processes*, summarises the findings of all the latest research into what factors actually influence client change. He says that the personhood of the therapist is eight times more important than any method or technique ... No method or technique is as important as the state of mind of the therapist. I then saw the work as participatory, that is, inter-personal. As a consequence, we train our therapists to develop a particular state of consciousness - the state we call ‘loving presence’ (ibid. 14).

Ron Kurtz quotes Chogyam Trungpa, the Tibetan Buddhist teacher, saying that “the basic work of health professionals in general, and of psychotherapists in particular, is to become full human beings and to inspire full human beingness in others” (Kurtz in Taylor-Newman 1995:15). Kurtz went on to say “A full human being is authentic. They have self-knowledge and are transparent about themselves and their relationships. They show they have trust in themselves and in life. They are warm. They participate in relationship at all levels. And they have a quality of wakefulness. That is, they are able to be open to a wide range of experiences, and are able to stay focused and concentrate when needed” (ibid. 15).

Kornfield (1994) describes Vipassana meditation mindfulness practices as the heart of Buddhist meditation. Offering a “systematic training and awakening of body, heart,
and mind that is integrated with the world around us ...[it] is this central teaching that forms the basis of almost all Buddhist practice worldwide” (Kornfield 1994:9). The student practises concentration techniques as a means of developing subtler and subtler sensory awareness of the entire body. The practice of Vipassana involves sustaining extended periods of awareness at this subtle level and remaining equanimous as one experiences (in that very present state of consciousness) all the negative physical and mental memory of fear one has, the knowing that it is only memory and thus illusion, and the consequent liberation from that fear. Gradually, as all the fuel of fear (referred to as craving and aversion) is experienced in the body, that is, in the focussed integrated experience of mind/body, one becomes aware of a deep peace, the complete freedom from fear, and the essential freedom of being nothing and everything at once. This is the path to dissolution, to union with all being.

I first attended a Vipassana 10 day course because I had always been interested in spirituality; it seemed like a good idea, and here was a counselling client asking me to support him in the practice. I hated my first course. This was Vipassana Meditation as taught by S. N. Goenka in the tradition of Sayagyi U Ba Khin. In retrospect, I was so psychologically scattered and dissociated that every ten minutes, let alone every hour, was a battle. A year later, I attended another 10-day course, persisted properly with the instruction 12 hours a day, and gained enormous benefits such as calm, less defensiveness and greater openness. I took my son to a weekend course for kids and attended various courses but I was something of a dilettante. A few years later, when I was head of a university department, I became very ill and had two years off work. In those first six months, I knew Vipassana practice would help me, and as soon as I could manage to walk with the help of a walking stick I attended a course. I threw away the walking stick in a few days and went on to attend six courses that year, working solidly at this wonderful technique handed down from master to master. From this time I began to read up on the practice I had established in the previous three years, and committed to daily practice and to living by the precepts which enhance the practice.

I was best known as a therapist for anxiety conditions, and in 1992 I attended a training course in Sydney with Dr Francine Shapiro in her EMDR method for reducing the frequency and intensity of symptoms of trauma. In that seminar, I commented to her that EMDR seemed very similar to Buddhist practice, and she responded “of course”, as she was a Vipassana meditator. At last I realised that Vipassana technique is a practice for re-associating the dissociated parts of the mind, for reintegrating and reconditioning the mind, and the precepts for daily living are designed to sustain and
maintain this integration. There are many similarities to the process of western psychotherapy in Vipassana meditation. While learning meditation, the student also commits to a number of practices which will reduce negativity and create healthy constructs to sustain change when it begins to take place. These practices and precepts, including, for example, the Noble Eightfold path, are akin to practices of concrete behavioural strategies to maintain balance of the mind in psychotherapy. And in the actual meditation there are all the elements which seem to free the mind of the memory of trauma and thus of the reactive distressed behaviours. These include being in an environmental context of assured safety, practising the concrete behaviours that will support the student during times of overwhelming distressing memory, being absolutely in the body and thus reassociating the body and the mind, and staying with the full experience of the memory until it passes, taking from the experience the knowledge that it is only a memory construct, and thus experiencing great peace and calm.

What seems to be a powerful common thread between psychotherapy and meditation is the active presence of love experienced by the student/client in the presence of the teacher/therapist. This loving presence is a bridge of safety which facilitates hope that the process may be beneficial, and commitment to stay with the process – to take the risk of feeling and staying with the negativity and fear until it is gone and the transformation occurs.

Counselling psychologist
I have had decades of experience as a counselling practitioner, including fourteen years as a counselling and careers psychologist, and then many years after I progressed into management. Commitment to improving psychological practice led me to run three conferences for the Australian Psychological Society and dozens of practitioner workshops around Australia. After I moved from Victoria to New South Wales, I established a counselling practice in the North Sydney business district in 1992. I was referred clients who were managers in large business organisations such as Oracle, Westpac, Commonwealth Bank, Lend Lease, Andersen Consulting, Quicken, DMR Consulting Group, VodaFone, Department of Education & Training, Department of Defence, StateRail, Beyond Productions and WorldSchool. In my view, many of those intelligent and highly trained people who presented with symptoms such as depression and anxiety, needed mentoring to develop interpersonal skills and to deal with dysfunctional systems, so that they could perform their management roles more effectively. They described one situation after another where poor communication and consequent poor power flow prevented people from exercising effective management, let alone leadership. By taking a positive solutions-focused approach, appraising their aptitudes, interests and skills, tapping into their personal
life-drivers (the sources of meaning and purpose and energy in their lives), teaching them personal skills sets and encouraging them to implement individual and systemic interventions, substantial positive change could be brought about. With intelligent and motivated people, it was easier to bring about change rapidly.

1.3 Executive coaching

In 1998 I founded LifeCoach Pty Ltd which facilitated my transition from psychologist in private practice to organisational consultant. In 1998, in the lead up to the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney, when sporting and coaching metaphors abounded, I enthusiastically and spontaneously referred to myself as a “life-coach” - and then rushed to register the business LifeCoach Pty Ltd.

In that busy North Sydney practice I used a range of approaches or strategies that I found worked – pragmatic and results-focused with depth of meaning. In sum, I started to develop a solution-focused model based on teaching life skills, development of insight and meaning, and the healing of trauma. My own goal for my clients was that they clear away their roadblocks and gain the knowledge and skills that would allow them to become their potential. This goal has continued to be a key aspect of my coaching work: I want to help my clients learn to live!

When I first referred to myself as a Life Coach, I meant a personal coach providing one-on-one life appraisal and skills training. A few months later an American company called CoachU was established as possibly one of the first Life Coaching organisations in Australia and I realised that my work was at the cutting edge of an emerging interest in Life Coaching. I saw there was a place for an economical systematic model of coaching that would get results and which could be marketed, applied, and evaluated in organisations. Over the next eighteen months, I decided to document the systemised approach I had been developing for many years, so that these services could be marketed and others trained to do the work. This was the precursor to my doctoral research work. From July 1999 to March 2000, I trained the first twenty or so coaches in my training methodology and coaching paradigm. This involved developing a coach training program, running a pilot, revising it into a twenty-three hour program involving theory, group work and training practice. Students were coached and supervised as they coached a client. Coach trainees were selected on the basis of their qualifications, their demonstrated ability to facilitate behaviour change, and practical commitment to their own personal and spiritual growth. I insisted on a high standard of professional practice and ethics, and on their having sufficient confidence and interest to work with senior managers in organisations, including corporations. It
became clear that all of those concerns were very important. Only those who had all dimensions operating worked effectively as coaches.

Six years later, many people are now looking for a coach and many more want to be a coach. Most training is now being called coaching, and people are reinventing themselves as coaches. We have management coaches, money coaches, personal presentation coaches and career coaches. When on retreat at a Benedictine Abbey in 2000, I read an article by a Jesuit Priest whose biography said he was a “freelance ‘prayer coach’”.

Many people called themselves Life Coaches and businesses sprang up training coaches, some with little grounding in human behaviour. For me the occupation of Life Coach brought together my professional background of educator, chaplain, counselling psychologist and manager. As a psychologist, my key interests were anxiety conditions, performance counselling for singers and actors, career counselling, and the development of identity and self-esteem through teaching life skills. As a manager, I understood and enjoyed developing managers. This includes developing their leadership qualities, mentoring them to facilitate more effective communication and better understanding of power flows in their organisations. For the many who lacked mentoring, I enjoyed systematically addressing business development concerns and staff management; no doubt my interest in business development sprang from my family’s agri-businesses. As a Buddhist meditator, my key interests are the development of consciousness and spiritual healing, through the letting go of attachments including ego defences, at the same time as developing habitual mindfulness.

The interest in life coaching really accelerated in the period from 2000. I was inundated with requests for training. Speaking at professional conferences and seminars throughout 2000, I defined Life Coaching as “positive proactive psychological counselling with healthy motivated people who want to improve performance and balance in their lives” (Moreton 2000).

Susan Skiffington, who had coaching practices in the USA and Australia, was saying much the same thing. She began running courses for psychologists, assuring them that taking their skills into the business world would be the way of the future. Her definition became widely accepted:

Coaching is a conversation, a dialogue, whereby a coach and a coachee interact in a dynamic exchange to achieve goals, enhance performance and move the coachee forward to greater success (Zeus & Skiffington, 2000:pxiii).
Marketing a new service in the business world made me reflect on the antecedents of life coaching. There seemed to be four main sources reflected in four main groups of models: training models, mentoring and supervision models, performance models and psychotherapeutic models. I was in the unique position of having had training and experience in all of these. In Chapter 2, these models are explained in more detail.

The models I am most interested in exploring are psychotherapeutic models. These models are by definition committed to healing and health, to integration of the dissociated self and thence to consciousness and integrity. While these models aim to facilitate shifts to positive mood and behaviour, they are usually not directed and focused on change within a timeframe. The pace of change is determined by the capacity of the client in counselling/therapeutic work. However, my own experience of working with hundreds of men - Vietnam veterans – had made me develop a method that produced some quick results so they would then engage and trust both me and the process sufficiently to proceed with more substantial change work.

While Zeus and Skiffington (2000) acknowledge that the skills of psychotherapeutic counselling models are transferable to coaching, the sharp distinction they make between therapy and coaching leads attention away from recognising the significance of these models. Life coaching is not for those who need therapy – those emotionally damaged people who have not yet healed themselves and become integrated responsible adults – because coaching assumes a high level of agency. Yet, in my view, it is the psychotherapeutic model which most readily translates into a model for coaching for integrated, ethical and powerfully present leadership. These are the descriptors of spiritual leadership in the workplace. This model assumes the healing capacity and depth of relationship of psychotherapy. I called this model the Coaching for Conscious Leadership Model precisely because it is about the development of insight and awareness and presence which are so powerful. This model requires advanced consciousness of the coaches.

1.4 Outline of chapters

Chapter 1 has provided the context for the study, the researcher’s background, an idea of the interdisciplinary nature of the thesis, and the basis for the literature and methodology.

In Chapter 2 the traditional literature review of a thesis has been adapted to demonstrate the interdisciplinary nature of this research. I have used a metaphor (Rainbow Helix) to capture the progression of the interdisciplinary nature of the
research that endeavours to understand the intertwining, integrated nature of developing conscious leadership through executive coaching. The multiple disciplines are introduced as I walk the reader through the intellectual and experiential development of my lifelong learning pattern, from early days of human relations training to recent times of executive coaching. The metaphor is coincidentally also used by Don Beck in his important work on spiral dynamics, but with a different meaning (Beck & Cowan 1996; Cowan & Todorovic 2000; Cacioppe & Edwards 2005a). Beck is referring to the spiral of levels of organisational development (from surviving to bonding, to asserting, to organising, to achieving, to cooperating, to visioning, and then to integrating healthy culture, people well-being, effective systems and efficient processes). I am referring to my own learning spiral, and the colours of the integration of the disciplines to explain the development of my own consciousness and as well, the development towards conscious leadership of my clients through the coaching situation. I have taken the various influencing periods of my life as a way to ‘walk’ the reader through the intellectual and experiential development of my lifelong learning pattern from early days of human relations training to recent times of executive coaching for conscious leadership. Some of the key writers whom I encountered over the past thirty years are discussed, together with recent developments in those fields of psychology, leadership, education and a number of other disciplines. It will be shown that the literature reviews a selection from a wide range of fields. The sources selected reflect the story of my developing understandings of the interconnections among spiritual, emotional and business intelligence and developing conscious leadership.

In Chapter 3 the methodological traditions that I use to formulate both the qualitative and quantitative research process are discussed. The research methodology is both qualitative and quantitative, drawing on data based on an intensive coaching program designed and delivered by the researcher to managers in two organisations, one a retail and the other a utility company. In order to assure the reader that the qualitative analysis is not merely a subjective exploration of the researcher’s feelings and thoughts, the data are also triangulated through a rigorous search for the development of leadership skill sets that are the ‘instrumental’ basis for the coaching sessions, and through the self reporting of the managers regarding the overall benefits of executive coaching for conscious leadership. Chapter 3 provides details of the conscious leadership coaching protocols, so that the data that are analysed in the succeeding chapters can be understood in terms of the goals of the coach.

Chapter 4 provides the background information necessary to understand the two companies and their expectations. I then move on to describe first the group sessions that were held in both companies, and then thematically explore the individual sessions
in terms of skills sets and leadership attributes. The overall results of the qualitative process are presented from the clients’ assessments of general benefit of the coaching and the coaching relationship. Finally, the quantitative results are presented to allow for a comparison of the data arrived at from the qualitative process, and to triangulate the clients’ and coach’s perceptions of the coaching outcomes.

Chapters 5 and 6 are detailed individual case studies. Using the transcripts as well as case notes and other field notes of the individual session/conversations with the participants, the relationships are explained using the stories of two of the clients, Brian and Penny, as they progress from Session 1 to Session 12. Their stories are enhanced by quoting directly from coach and client dialogue, so that the relationship built in the coaching process is clearly described and analysed. As the story progresses for each of the clients, the role of the coach is explained and elaborated on in order to interpret the coaching protocols. In this way, the chapter is both a presentation of the data and a preliminary reflection on the process.

In Chapter 7, the findings from the ‘conversations’ are discussed in relation to the initial research questions, drawing on the literature to bring out the key emerging themes. It is in this chapter that the integration of the findings from the data brings into focus the multi-disciplinary nature of executive coaching for conscious leadership. The chapter then moves to making recommendations for ways forward in executive coaching and presents ideas for future research.

* * * * *

The subject of this research project is the coaching relationship. The thesis has progressed using a conversational genre, using personal experience, philosophical musings, rhetorical questions, spiritual and psychological insights, and the use of dialogue as story to move the concepts along and invite the reader to become another participant in the process. As I move through the thesis, I continue to ponder a number of questions. In this relationship, what is it about the person, and in particular the personal presence of the coach, that makes a difference? What about the presence of the client? Do those clients who are satisfied respond to a particular state of consciousness of the coach, a loving presence, or any special personal qualities? Is it possible for another party to observe and analyse what is actually going on in the dynamic of executive coaching regardless of how the client and coach construe the event? Is there a difference between the coach being “fully present” with the client, and the “presence” of the coach? And what’s love got to do with it - if there is something distinctive about the coach’s state of consciousness which facilitates positive change, is this properly called “loving presence”? In summary,
what factors does each party believe contribute to the positive change? Is it the state of consciousness of the coach or the relationship between client and coach or the combination of both that is more important?
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:
An Interdisciplinary Selection

There is clear evidence of a radical paradigm shift in the practice of management development - from the dominant emphasis on the superficial level of behavioural skills to the deeper and more powerful level of developing consciousness. (Harung et al.1995)

2.1 Introduction

Executive coaching for conscious leadership is an interdisciplinary construct, derived from a wide selection of theory and practice. A review of relevant sources necessarily requires an incursion into deep and plentiful, often inspiring, thoughts, beliefs, theories, experiences and practices of a variety of professions. Among the disciplines selected for exploration, those of psychology and philosophy, leadership and management, counselling and psychotherapy, theology and spirituality, education and training, stand out as clearly relevant to the study of leadership and coaching. Perhaps surprisingly, the journey through some of the literature has revealed that complementary themes have emerged from the various disciplines. Sometimes the language is different, terms change, metaphors of practice vary, but on the whole, the concerns are similar.

In my own parallel journey, which has incorporated several disciplines, I have found that at each phase, similar themes have contributed significantly to building my model of Executive Coaching for Conscious Leadership which is analysed in this thesis. The emerging story is that of developing the integrated aware self, including the language of insight, wisdom, presence, authority, respect, empathy, awareness, authenticity and ultimately full consciousness.

In this chapter, as I trace the influences from a selection of the literature across the disciplines, across the rainbow helix, I am also following my career path as I moved from the study of human relations, to teaching, to theology and ethics, to feminism, to psychology, to Buddhist meditation, to management and to executive coaching for conscious leadership. Rather than attempting to review every aspect of literature across such a wide range of disciplines, I will tell the unfolding story of the ways in which key theorists, researchers and practitioners have influenced the fields of leadership and coaching. The chapter will cover some trends of what the literature is now saying in the area and point out where there are still gaps.
The thesis is concerned primarily with what is happening in the relationship between client and coach, and how the coaching event, the coaching discourse, leads to the development of conscious leadership. Since the research covers a vast spread of interdisciplinary work, this chapter points the reader to a number of areas of relevant study in order to capture the essence of this research. The themes and ideas follow the pattern of my career, but are discussed not only through the words of writers in the period in which I was developing my understandings, but also through the reflective interpretations of contemporary writers. In other words, each area reflects the others, builds on similar themes, and finally becomes integrated into the framework of conscious leadership.

This chapter has six sections, akin to the first six of the seven strands of the rainbow, relating to various disciplines:

- the study of human relations
- transformational learning: teacher training, feminism and social activism
- theology, spirituality and ethics
- psychology and psychotherapy
- leadership and organisational management
- executive coaching

A selection from the literature provides a map for the practitioner or the scholar to guide them around the main thoroughfares needed to understand the shape of the territory. Some roads lead to a cul-de-sac, some are parallel, and some arrive abruptly at a crossroads. But most roads arrive at the same place - for example, in the sections on teacher training and leadership there are many parallels of understanding about human nature in these different disciplines, but then teaching is a leadership activity, and leadership involves educating and training people.

A concluding section of this chapter ties the story together in anticipation of demonstrating how the methodology for my research and the case studies that follow are based on and build on the evidence provided through the literature.

2. 2 The study of human relations

Looking back over a thirty-year span of my career, starting with the work undertaken at the Cairnmillar Institute of Human Relations in Melbourne in the 1970s, I am not surprised that the concept of human relations I learned then is very close to the concept of Emotional Intelligence, made internationally known by Daniel Goleman in
the 1990s. Cairnmillar introduced me to humanistic and existential psychology. Key influences from this time included Karen Horney’s Self-Analysis (1942), with her notion of letting go ego defences to get in touch with the “real self”; Victor Frankl’s *Man’s Search for Meaning* (1959) with concepts of choosing one’s attitude, logotherapy, and committing to goals and values that bring meaning and fulfilment; and Abraham Maslow’s *Toward a Psychology of Being* (1962) with his hierarchy of connative needs including self-actualisation. Other influences at this time were Rollo May’s *Love and Will* (1969) with the interesting daimonic motivational construct taken up later by James Hillman; the well-known psychology and psychotherapy works of Erich Fromm, especially *The Art of Loving* (1957), and Carl Rogers *On Becoming a Person* (1961) with the landmark concepts of genuineness, empathy and respect - unconditional positive regard. Significant breakthroughs were also being made at this time by social psychologist Eric Berne *Transactional Analysis in Psychotherapy* (1961) and *Games People Play* (1964), and theologian and ethicist Joseph Fletcher (*Situational Ethics*, 1966).

In Section 4 of this chapter, I discuss some of the influences on my thinking from the work of several psychologists and psychotherapists whom I encountered when I undertook postgraduate studies in psychology. In this section, I recall my first introduction to humanist psychology, notably the influence of Carl Rogers, from whom there is much to be learned about the relationship between therapist and client. My study of Rogers went through various iterations, from enormous regard, to later dissatisfaction with some of his therapeutic techniques and lack of political action, and back to appreciation of his emphasis on genuineness, empathy and unconditional positive regard. In the introduction to his influential work *A Way of Being* (1980) Rogers describes how he ‘discovered’ that one of his earliest groundbreaking books, *On Becoming a Person* (1961) was not only of interest to psychotherapists, but of interest to people all over the world. He states: “I believe that all of my writing since [1961] contains the realization that what is true in a relationship between therapist and client may well be true for a marriage, a family, a school, an administration, a relationship between cultures or countries.” (Rogers 1980:viii). Rogers’ 1951 work on *Client-Centred Therapy*, which I read at the Cairnmillar Institute and again when training as a psychologist, is clearly a forerunner to this conception of human relationship study in that it is relevant to all relationships, not just to the therapeutic relationship. He justifies the flexibility of psychotherapy, in the light of the criticism (in the 1950s) that the techniques may be rigid or mechanical: “The picture [of psychotherapy] is one of fluid changes in a general approach to problems of human relationships, rather than a situation in which some relatively rigid technique is more or less mechanically applied” (Rogers 1951:6).
Rogers goes on to emphasise that the attitudes and philosophical views of the counsellor are paramount and asks such questions as: “Do we see each person as having worth and dignity in his [sic] own right?... Is our philosophy one in which respect for the individual is uppermost?... Are we willing for the individual to select and choose his own values, or are our actions guided by the conviction (usually unspoken) that he would be happiest if he permitted us to select for him his values and standards and goals?” (Rogers 1951:20). What is informative and significant to this review is that Rogers states firmly, half a century ago, that psychotherapy deals primarily with the organisation and the functioning of the self (ibid.40), a statement that fits neatly with the coach’s perspective of their role in developing leadership qualities in their clients.

In A Way of Being (1980), Rogers re-examines his key theories through an autobiographical account, including his views on the concept of ‘empathy’ and what it means to be empathic - a particularly significant contribution that Rogers made to the field of counselling, therapy and human relations generally. He notes in 1980 that, contrary to his ideas in the 1950s, empathy is a process, not just a state, of being with another, where you lay aside your own views and values in order to enter another’s world without prejudice. “In some sense it means that you lay aside your self; this can only be done by persons who are secure enough in themselves that they know they will not get lost in what may turn out to be the strange or bizarre world of the other...that being empathic is a complex, demanding and strong...way of being” (Rogers 1980:143). The concept is central to my later discussion of the need for a coach to be integrated and psychologically healthy, that is, to be “present” and “conscious”, as indeed a good leader needs to be. Agape, love focused on the good of the other, is close to the Buddhist concepts of metta, a selfless and active love for others, and karuna, loving compassion for all.

In a more recent review of Rogers’ influence, Kahn (1997) traces the influences on the study of human relations through an examination of the humanistic revolution and explores modern applications of the work of several theorists. He believes that the old dilemma between empathic warmth and active exploration of the relationship are now “being transformed by modern workers into dialectic” (Kahn 1997:19).

Rogers “legitimized the therapist’s concern about the quality of the relationship between therapist and client; indeed, he made that quality the therapist’s paramount concern” (Kahn 1997:38). Rogers talked of love in the meaning of agape, a desire to fulfil the beloved, as contrasted with eros or desire to fulfil the lover. His work was
focused on an attempt to shape an answer to the question: “What should a therapist do to convey to a client that at last he or she is loved?” (Kahn 1997:39). Another influential psychotherapist, and existentialist, Rollo May (1983) defines agape as selfless love, concern for the other person’s welfare, “…not a sublimation of eros but a transcending of it in enduring tenderness, lasting concern for the other” (May 1983:19). And May asks the questions: “How is it possible that one being relates to another? What is the nature of human beings that two persons can communicate, can grasp each other as beings, have genuine concern with the welfare and fulfilment of the other, and experience some genuine trust?” (ibid.20). Importantly, Rogers believed that the theory, techniques or strategies used by the therapist did not matter as long as agape was successfully communicated and that the therapist needed to be genuine, real, transparent and fully present.

Kahn quoted two of Rogers’ students to describe empathic therapists: “…they have a manner and tone that indicate they take the relationship seriously; are aware of what the client is feeling now; and have a capacity to communicate this understanding in a language attuned to those current feelings” (Kahn 1997:.44).

In A Way of Being (Rogers 1980:116), Rogers emphasises that unconditional positive regard is imperative in creating a climate for change. As Kahn explains, “…we are not doing therapy the way the surgeon does surgery; we are [my emphasis] the therapy, and without a substantial amount of unconditional positive regard, we will not be successful” (Kahn 1997:47). Rogers believed that being one’s true self is the purpose of life and therefore self-acceptance is of profound value to a client. Rogers was also beginning to discuss the subject of consciousness and change, spirituality and transformation (Rogers 1980:129-130). He says “I am compelled to believe that I, like many others, have underestimated the importance of this mystical, spiritual dimension [of altered states of consciousness], and the power for change, profound growth and healing when our relationship transcends itself and becomes a part of something larger”.

Another influential psychoanalyst was Merton Gill, who was also deeply interested in understanding the relationship between therapist and client. In his view, according to Kahn (1997:63), “…the relationship becomes the microcosm of their lives—their confusions, their ways of relating, their longings and disappointments, hopes and frustrations. During the therapeutic hour, after all, other relationships are abstract, are at a distance. Only the therapeutic relationship is right there…".
Although some in the business world may not have agreed with the emphasis that earlier theorists placed on ‘relationship’, the most recent work in executive coaching returns to the concept as central to effective leadership (Conger 1993; Conger & Xin 2000; Day 2000), as will be seen in a later section. Kahn’s overview of the area includes the work by Heinz Kohut, who felt that many therapists were critical of their clients instead of indicating involvement and concern. Kohut has “…reminded us that defensiveness is one of the therapist’s most dangerous enemies” (Kahn 1997:121), and instead recommends the following five ways to enhance the client relationship:

- a sense of being listened to by someone truly willing to work at understanding them
- a sense of having been deeply understood
- a sense of having been accepted
- an opportunity to learn the ancient roots of their difficulties through the therapist’s explanations
- an opportunity to build new self structures, particularly new structures to compensate for old deficits (ibid 122-123)

In an interesting study by Yiannis Gabriel (1998), on the psychoanalytic contributions to the study of the emotional life of organisations, the author points out the dangers of not building empathic relationships:

Bureaucratic impersonality creates an empty space between subordinates and superiors that is filled with fantasies… Blaming, victimisation, and scapegoating not only are major ingredients of the emotional life of organisations, but derive from the nature of bureaucracy itself, rather than from maladministration. When wrongly accused, individuals frequently feel threats of annihilation out of proportion to the actual blame placed on them. The strong feelings of rage, anxiety and fear generated by such events are evidence of regression to an earlier, more vulnerable age (Gabriel 1998:307).

Gabriel believes that “feelings, emotions, and fantasies shape the world of work, rather than being mere by-products of work process” (p.308) “Organizations are complex mazes in which different emotions travel, mutate, and interact, as individuals trade in resources, information, and power, but above all, in credit and blame.” (p.309). He sums up by saying: “Learning is, therefore, no mere cognitive experience of gradual enlightenment but a frequently painful process of ‘unlearning’ past defensive and dysfunctional postures and working against inner and institutional resistances” (p.309).
In my view, the capacity for in-depth relating, i.e. undefended, conscious, intentional, loving relating, is what distinguishes a leadership coach from a task-oriented behaviour change coach. Kahn describes issues of counter transference for the therapist (and in this case he could be talking about a coach) and some of the therapists’ dilemmas. Kahn says:

…nothing in our work may be more important than our willingness to bring as much of ourselves as possible to the therapeutic session. Whether a given feeling or attitude is expressed in words is less important than that we are present in the deepest and fullest sense of that word…. [There is no need to] don a therapist mask, a therapist voice, a therapist posture, and a therapist vocabulary. They can discard those accoutrements because they have much, much more than that to give their clients (Kahn 1997:163).

Executive coaching literature is about better doing. It is still management task focussed. But leadership is about the being of the person and is focussed on their qualities, their emotional intelligence, capacity for human relationships, their insight and empathy, their ability to respond rather than react, their mindfulness and awareness, and ultimately their high level consciousness. We have moved a long way from Carl Rogers, and we have returned to his fundamental understanding that it is the relationship that is the heart of the matter. To follow Rogers’ analogy earlier, we are not simply doing leadership coaching: we are leadership coaching. Ruth Orenstein takes up this idea in the coaching psychology literature, saying that the coach’s most crucial tool in the executive coaching process is the use of self (Orenstein 2002:360).

2.3 Transformative learning: teacher training, feminism and social activism

In Chapter 1, I described how the Good Teacher workshop that I conducted with Dr Grierson in the 1970s had an important impact on me, and it is probably from that experience that I developed various understandings about teaching and learning that are important aspects of my work today as an executive coach.

In the era in which I moved from human relations studies to teacher training and theology studies, the works of feminists, social activists and radical educators were key influences on my understanding of the social contexts of human relationships. I considered feminism to be a matter of the right to choose plus mutually respectful ethical relationships; I considered political activism to be a manifestation of spiritual awareness. As I said in Chapter 1, we are each one person, and we integrate the various influences into our becoming, our consciousness, and our language.
I owe some of my interest in the praxis between liberation theory and social action and change to the great Brazilian educator Paulo Freire. His transformative learning paradigm was known as the process of conscientisation - democratic, humanistic, emancipatory, and essentially dialogic. Much of the Western world’s views on consciousness owe much to Freire and theorists who were influenced by him.

Dr Denham Grierson introduced me to Paulo Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1972). Most importantly, his subtle teaching strategy involved giving me the task of teaching the class of some thirty students about the book. At the last minute it dawned on me that unless I found a dialogic process through which to open this book to my colleagues I would betray Freire. I had been introduced to Feminism by a Jesuit Old Testament professor who directed me to read feminist theologian Mary Daly (1968). A New Testament Professor from the Uniting Church in Australia (the UCA was formed by the uniting of Presbyterian, Methodist and Congregationalist churches in Australia in the 1970’s) had also encouraged me to read liberation theologian Letty Russell (1985) and to attend her seminar in Melbourne in the early 1970’s. I had related readily to these writers and recognised that the structure and process of all communication needed to be congruent with the content. For me the most enduring feminist idea is the importance of respect, of one person towards another. Respect was defined by Carl Rogers (1951) as unconditional positive regard. Respect for another person means I value them, consult with them and endeavour to give them the right to choose about the things which affect them.

Freire’s conscientisation process for transformational learning is close to Rogers’ in that both counsellor and teacher are deeply respectful empathic listeners facilitating a conversation where the client/learner names their reality and all parties gain insight, understanding and change and are empowered to act in their own lives. Freire widened the conversation to the community. The Good Teacher/Good Leader exercise is an example of a Freirian dialogic approach creating meaning through critical reflection. Executive coaching for leadership as I practise it is a one-to-one Freirian dialogue. Further, as will be seen below, the incorporation of Berne’s transactional analysis model allows coaching to be a dialogic process developing powerful leadership qualities.

Jack Mezirow (1981) is an adult educator whose work was strongly influenced by Freire among others, and whose work on transformation through dialogue and critical reflection is widely acknowledged in the adult education literature. Mezirow refers to the need for self-examination that is triggered by a ‘disorienting event’. According to Mezirow, the transformed individual tests boundaries and assumptions and seeks a
As with transformational learning, dialogue and the process of reaching an understanding is the basis also of the client-coach relationship. Language, the action of language, is the vehicle for cultivating consciousness (O’Hara 2003). The coaching event is a language event. The action, the event, the relationship, concerns the development of conscious leadership through an intense, dynamic, undefended conversation. The Conscious Leadership Model relies on the client manifesting change through their language, as is described in Chapter Four. As one somewhat cynical reviewer of the executive coach’s work, Bob Filipczak (1998) stated: “the interpersonal skill most often listed in the executives’ debit column is that of simple listening” (Filipczak 1998:32). On the other side, he notes: “many head honchos are poor listeners largely because they don’t feel people are listening to them” (Filipczak 1998:32).

In later years, the taboo of talking about language, the communication of feelings, and the language of emotion in the workplace gradually dissipated. Communication, particularly the communication of emotion in the workplace, is a key theme taken up by Gabriel (1998). He traced three emerging discourses in the study of organisational emotions, and argues for a “rapprochement of the psychoanalytic and the social psychological traditions in addressing emotion in organizations.” (p.293). His thesis is that the language of emotion is one of the keys to understanding how leadership and relationship are experienced in organisations.

Gabriel was interested in understanding the influence on communication of emotion in groups, citing theories relating to symbolic construction, communication and dissemination. Part of the whole social construction theory (e.g. Durkheim in early 20th Century) suggested that “human sentiments are intensified when affirmed collectively. Sorrow, like joy, becomes exalted and amplified when leaping from mind to mind” (Durkheim, 1915/1961:446 cited in Gabriel 1998:296). Not all emotions are easily shared and emotions change or are transformed, for example envy-pride or love-hate. A leader may try to share enthusiasm but subordinates might feel indifferent or suspicious. Attempts to figure out why a performance may be successful with one audience or a failure with another are baffling still (Gabriel ibid.; Fineman1993).
The role of the coach in working through the communication barriers in organisations was recently taken up in an interesting essay by Ann Brooks (2004). She observed that pressure on today’s workers is increasing. Psychologically these kinds of challenges require employees to think and perhaps reconceptualise their identities, values, goals, core beliefs and behaviours. She notes: “changes may require development of different ways of communicating, new coaching and negotiation skills and the ability to shift context, think systemically, and face the potentially crushing awareness that we may have to ‘not know’ in order to be better learners and knowers”. She states that the last task may be particularly daunting for managers and supervisors and executives. (Brooks 2004:211). Her work resonates well with Carl Rogers’ work on empathy, on being there for the other. Similarly Buddhist psychology includes being able to let go of ego/self defence mechanisms in order to be fully present to the other.

Brooks draws attention to Henderson’s recent (2001) PhD study. Brooks’ reading of Henderson points out that context is a key factor in transformative learning experiences. Context can enhance or constrain authentic discourse, since the potential for creating ideal conditions depends on establishing non-competitive relationships characterised by shared trust, familiarity, and perceived common cognitive capacity (cited in Brooks 2004:214).

Another area studied by Brooks is action learning, or action reflection learning, and the work carried out by coaches using this approach (and see Conger & Xin 2000, Day 2000), and discussed in a later section on coaching in this chapter. Brooks comments that much of the research drawing on Mezirow’s work is focussed on leadership development. She claims that the essential ingredient for success is the presence of a coach who can help foster critical reflection (p.218). She cites J. O’Neil’s dissertation from Teachers College Columbia (1999): he identified strategies used by coaches such as the use of dialogue as opposed to discussion; eliciting alternative interpretations; asking challenging questions; providing support to clients to assist them engage in critical reflection; and helping clients view their problem through a systems perspective (p.219). Brooks concludes by saying that “many of us recognise our old ways of thinking and habits of practice to have lost their effectiveness”, and that transformative learning may well be “a possible educational means of securing the health and well-being of the world’s people” (p.222).

Thach (2002) shows that where dialogue consists of coaching and 360° feedback to promote self-awareness, leaders can be developed. Her research suggested that the combination of multi-rater feedback and individual coaching can increase leadership effectiveness up to 60 per cent (Thach 2002:.205). Unfortunately, of the
281 executives who participated in her research, only 17 completed the number of coaching sessions intended. It could be conjectured from my own results (see later chapters) that with coaching at more frequent intervals (every 2 weeks for 12 sessions instead of every 2 months for 4 sessions that was the intended input of coaching), the coaching input may have moved the estimated success rate up considerably.

From my early encounter with Freire to my work in executive coaching, there are links which are still clear to me. Transformational learning for transformational leadership through dialogue is a means to developing consciousness (Hunt & Conger 1999; Northouse 2000; Day 2001; Dvir et al. 2002; Reave 2005), and to the development of models of transcendental leadership such as that put forward by Sanders et al. (2003).

2.4 Theology, spirituality and ethics

In my journey through the literature, the links between activism, ethical behaviour, spirituality and then consciousness have become clearer. It was through my studies in theology as well as studies in human relations that I became interested in ethics and ethical behaviour, the social justice issues of the times, and discourses of feminist thinking. These are the foundations of learning that stimulated my later understandings of consciousness and spirituality in leadership and coaching, in this way highlighting my sense of the multiple layers and interdisciplinary nature of the process of executive coaching. The bands of the rainbow encompass ethics and spirituality in this section of the literature review, but also across the other sections.

Ethical behaviour relates to the building of trust, integrity, and fairness in relationships both at home and in the workplace. I found the work of Fletcher’s *Situational Ethics* (1966) and John Rawls’ *A Theory of Justice* (1971) resonated with the theological and philosophical teachings of the day, where justice was equated to fairness. Australia committed troops to support the USA war in Vietnam and my peers were conscripted. This was the time of the Peace Movement, and the rise of feminist political activism. In the Christian teachings of the Old Testament, justice was seen as love at a social level. Justice is the key to respect and trust, and thus to loving relationships. Similarly the Anglican theologian Joseph Fletcher’s work in *Situational Ethics* (which I encountered during my time at the Cairnmillar Institute of Human Relations in Melbourne) posed a number of situational dilemmas through which it was evident that to be ethical required one to do the most loving thing, and that this ethical behaviour may be at odds with absolute moral law. It is one of the building blocks of spiritual behaviour, which in turn expresses itself in a profound trust, or
faith, in the greater good, often translated as goodwill towards others.

Another important influence during these years of study was Lawrence Kohlberg, whose 1971 publication on the six stages of moral development was heralded as a new philosophy of ethics. Despite the critiques of Kohlberg by other philosophers of the time, his work was groundbreaking, and he went on to publish two volumes on the philosophy and the psychology of moral development (Kohlberg 1981, 1984) that formed the basis of many debates and discussions on the nature of moral development. Others were looking for stages of spiritual development which parallel stages of development in the biological, social and psychological domains (Goldman 1968). These types of theory were important influences on my growing belief that ethical behaviour, spirituality and integrity in the workplace were all connected to a sense of fairness and justice that many psychologists, still under the influence of positivist undergraduate training, were reluctant to incorporate into their counseling practice. In later publications, this awareness has been borne out through the phases of development of the concept of consciousness and leadership.

**Consciousness as a concept in spirit and ethics**
The idea of consciousness has been researched for millennia but it has only been applied to leadership and to coaching in the last few years. Understanding of consciousness, based on the spiritual, psychological or philosophical areas of knowing from eastern and western traditions, has only recently been seen as relevant to modern notions of leadership. There has also been renewed interest in early twentieth century psychotherapists and philosophers in western traditions such as Alfred North Whitehead, especially his ideas on non-dual forms of knowing (1933/1969), William James (1904), Carl Jung (1953) and others. For example, William James talked about consciousness as the primal stuff of the world, as pure experience. Consciousness was central to Carl Jung’s work, and has since been taken up in the organisational literature in different ways. His influence continues to be felt across several disciplines. In a recent article Boozer, and Forte, (2004), relate Jungian psychological types to organisational ideals and perceptions of organisational politics. The types referred to are those created by Isabel Myers and Katharine Briggs (Myers, McCauley, Quenk and Hammer 1998, cited in Boozer and Forte 2004:391 and, among many others, the MBTI, now a widely used resource in leadership, career development and organisational change.

It is interesting to see the relationship between philosophy and literature in the writing of visionaries such as Aldous Huxley, who wrote of absolute spirit, pure consciousness or the universal mind as the fundamental essence of human nature and reality. This
lies at the heart of the mystical teachings of the world’s religious traditions. From the 1950s to the 1980s, in the post-war era in the west, people like Kurt Lewin, Rogers and others were reading and using spiritual ideas and looking at the management of change. Philosophers such as Jean Paul Sartre influenced thinkers regarding existentialism, but little was translated into organisational literature, other than the influential Chris Argyris (1964; 1993) and a few other insightful leaders in this field such as Donald Schön (Argyris and Schön 1978; Schön 1983).

In eastern philosophy, some of which was translated for western readers, such as the work of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi (1963). His Transcendental Meditation method had a far-reaching impact, from The Beatles to influencing political leaders to work for peace. Another was Krishnamurti, whose first book *Education & the Significance of Life* (1953) emphasised world leadership for peace through education. His work with The Theosophical Society at the turn of the twentieth century introduced a whole generation of middleclass Europeans and subsequently Americans and Australians to Buddhist knowing. Theosophical Society publishing of eastern and other esoteric material, available through their bookshops world wide, paved the way for the New Age movement. There has been a huge outpouring of literature on eastern philosophy since the 1960s. Nevertheless, it is probably only in very recent times that eastern philosophy has appeared in western organisational literature in relation to executive leadership. Those who discussed leadership in relation to consciousness and spirituality are reviewed below.

**Consciousness, spirituality and mindfulness**

So what is consciousness and how can consciousness be understood in relation to spirituality and mindfulness? As Caccioppe outlines (1997), mindfulness is a more specific concept than conscious leadership. Mindfulness is an essential building block to consciousness, “the first ingredient in Buddha’s recipe for awakening “ (Das 1997:349). William Hart (1987), in *The Art of Living*, introduces *Vipassana* (insight) meditation as a technique that develops awareness or mindfulness, by which Goenka means “a process of deconditioning the mind” from old unaware reactive ego defences. The technique of self-observation or “truth observation” - observe, remain aware and remain equanimous - is a continuous cycle of reflexivity. The effect of continuous practice of observing and not reacting leads to wisdom and joy. Ultimately the *Vipassana* practitioner experiences complete dissolution of ego defences and progresses through stages of greater and greater consciousness to full dissolution. When the final stage is sustained the person experiences fully realised consciousness or Buddhahood - they are fully awakened.
Linking mindfulness with leadership occurs increasingly in the literature after 1995, and is discussed at various points in the thesis, including under the sub-section “Developing effective leaders” (see pages 53-54).

Earley (2002) has provided an extended overview of the social evolution of consciousness and its relationship to the contemporary world situation; this work is very helpful to place the concept of consciousness in context. Young (2002) uses Assagioli’s 1965 concept of a field of consciousness to describe that part of one’s personality, including sensations, images, thoughts, feelings, desires and impulses, of which one is directly aware. Awareness is thus the key to understanding consciousness. Another term used is ‘sensemaking’:

Sensemaking begins when there is a lack of fit between what we expect and what is encountered. It starts in that early period of confusion, when someone asks, “What is going on here?” Asking this question requires attentiveness to what is occurring around him or her…to be “mindful”… (Seiling & Hinrichs 2005: 83).

The highest level of awareness is to be aware of, to identify with the cosmos or with universal perspectives. Here the concept of consciousness is aligned with spirituality, a state of being about which Ken Wilber has theorised with such erudition.

Ken Wilber (1997, 2000a, 2000b) is one of the foremost thinkers on the integration of body, mind, spirit, and soul in self, culture and nature. He has published several major works on spirituality, and has been influential in bringing the concepts of spirituality into workplace contexts. Wilber sees spirituality as a new way to think about reality, a new language, or a new paradigm for living. It is a feature of philosophy from earliest written records and of the earliest mystical teachings that there is an absolute spirit, or pure consciousness, or the universal mind as the fundamental essence of human nature.

Cacioppe (2000) also talks about creating spirit at work, and Goleman’s concept of Emotional Intelligence in the workplace has been influential in the development of spirituality/consciousness as a fundamental concern for organisational management and conscious leadership (Conger 1994; Fairholm 1998; Fry 2003; Gialcalone & Jurkiewicz 2003; Jay, 2003; Dent et al. 2005). The notion of spiritual intelligence has been developed to describe and explore the inner motivations, values, and ethics that determine an individual’s ability to make ethical decisions, determine the most caring and moral way to respond to work situations and dilemmas (Zohar & Marshall 2000). Fry maintains that today people are deeply involved in their workplace as a site for integrating their spirituality and their work (Fry 2003: 703). There is a sense of
transcendence, or having a calling through one’s work (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz 2003). The calling is about how to make a difference in the workplace, and in so doing, in feeling a sense of social belonging, of membership, with the team, by gaining self-insight (Dent et al. 2005:637).

Moving into greater awareness then creates the sense that the “I” and “thou” (Buber 1970), or the “I” and “Other” (Sartre 1958), have a fundamental transcending connection. Consciousness, from Sartre’s perspective, comes into being around the notion of relatedness: to be conscious means to connect “I” and “other” (Young 2002:39). Similar to Wilber’s notion of a more advanced level of consciousness, the transpersonal level, the experience of this level of awareness is the foundation of all beginning Buddhist practice, the practice of mindfulness (Young 2002:40; Dent et al. 2005: 637-838), and the understanding of the interconnectedness of all phenomena (Cacioppe 1997, 2005; Wilber 2000). A fully mindful Chief Executive Officer (CEO) who understands connectedness will have the ability to plan and operate at a very high and effective level. Assagioli has asserted that humans are not complete without spiritual dimensions, and transcendence is the most inclusive level of consciousness (Sanders et al. 2003:27).

The highest level is labelled by Wilber as the mind level, which is a ‘nondual’ knowing. As Young quotes Krishnamurti (1969), “…this nondual awareness as a choiceless yet intensely alert awareness, not contaminated with thoughts, symbols, or duality; an awareness of what is, not what was, will be, should be, or might be” (cited in Young, 2002: 42). Young suggests that the CEO who moves to the highest levels of Wilber’s Spectrum of Consciousness can employ transformational leadership, and encourage the spiritual transformation of subordinates in the organisation (ibid.44; Wilber 1997). What is unclear is how to do this. This thesis attempts to address this very issue, of how executive coaching can develop transformational leadership.

Sanders et al. (2003:22) have proposed a theory of spirituality where spirituality is the “gestalt of all manifestations of an individual’s essence”. They outline a conceptual model of three structural levels of leadership accomplishment: transactional, transformational, and transcendental. They see transcendental leadership as the way the leader focuses on the development of their motivation to do things for others; the motivation to contribute. Informed by Kant’s philosophy, they state that transcendental leadership is “developing of leaders beyond the ego towards a higher influence in order to comprehend an extraordinary spiritual presence in their lives” (Sanders et al. 2003:24). This is a far cry from transactional leadership which is
essentially based on material or economic exchange, as defined by Bass (Bass 1995, cited in Sanders et al. 2003:25; Bass & Steidlmeier 1999). However, as Dent et al. also explain, spirituality values and attitudes "not only have a positive effect on one's personal life, but also on an individual's job performance" (Dent et al. 2005: 639).

Two Australian consultants who are highly respected and trusted in the business world, Ted Scott and Phil Harker discuss spirituality in the following terms:

Uniquely among living organisms we have self-awareness. Our self-awareness leads us to ask of ourselves, 'Why are we here. What is the purpose of our lives?' Human beings then are meaning makers and purpose seekers. This is the basis of our spirituality. Satisfying our physical needs enables us to physically exist. Satisfying our social needs enables us to prosper emotionally and have a sense of community. Satisfying our spiritual needs provides us with a sense of purpose and fulfilment (Scott and Harker 1998; Harker 2001).

The spiritual workplace is love-led, a place where people are empowered by an organisational culture that is open and generous, capable of thinking in groups/teams, exemplifying a climate of honesty, commitment and employees who are motivated intrinsically (Fry 2003: 693). In Louis Fry’s model of workplace spirituality, he claims that intrinsic motivation leads to better learning, performance and well-being that results from an individual's basic need for developing competence, autonomy and relatedness (Fry 2003:697). Similarly, Scott and Harker (1998) and Harker (2001) have developed a model of humanity where consciousness brings together the separate realities of ‘I’ and ‘other’, and changes our orientation from fear (fear of others, fear of the external) to love.

The choice to move from an orientation of fear, which is the natural and logical position when we identify with our unchosen and vulnerable host, to an orientation of love, is an heroic act. Yet if a social universe is to prosper it is the only choice. It is a choice between a fearful existence of continually defending a miserable isolated self or joining with the collective consciousness of the social Universe. The defining determinant of the future of humankind will be whether enough of us make the choice of love (Harker 2001).

Scott and Harker (1998) assert: “Fear leads to defence, leads to offence, leads to war, leads to death. Fear is the law of death in a social universe. Love leads to the dissolution of separateness, leads to union, leads to life. Love is the law of life”.

Sometimes, spirituality is discussed as an extra to be added into a workplace. This is dualistic. But the state of awareness and consciousness that arises from great personal insight and empathy and which has thus led to integration of the old dualistic self IS the spiritual state of union of the self with the self. This integrated state of
consciousness is the essence of high calibre leaders, as James Hillman’s seminal work on consciousness has indicated. He published *Re-Visioning Psychology* in 1976, and one of his editors stated that Hillman deserves credit for restoring the word ‘soul’ to its psychological sense.

In 1996 Hillman published *The Soul’s Code: in search of character and calling*. Here he proposes a theory of calling, which he summarises as his "acorn" theory, whereby each person has within them a unique core, a "nutshell" that is our sense of fate, individuality, genius. He maintains that the invisibility of the acorn occurs in the “how” of a visible performance, and if we examine this, we will discover cues to our authentic calling. Hillman believes we need to gain this insight and then re-imagine ourselves. However he challenges the delusion of insight through therapy – the mirror is only half the image (Hillman 1996:122). Indeed, in this thesis, I demonstrate that coaching is not a mirror but an active dialogue of exploration into finding the authentic self, the integrated self. Similarly, Buddhist practice facilitates the re-association of dissociated parts of the self. Buddhist practices lead inevitably to the dissolving of all ego defences culminating in the experience of dissolution. This is nirvana. This is the reunion of the self with the self. One is totally conscious, present. One is. This undefended state is the state of Love. In this state all fear is gone and profound healing and knowing occurs. This is transformational.

2.5 Psychology and psychotherapy

The next stage of my career was to undertake advanced postgraduate studies in counselling psychology. Once more, this move seemed a natural move towards understanding and practising ways in which people could change their behaviours and dissolve old ego defences that manifest as reactive behaviour. I was interested in understanding how we re-associate the dissociated aspect of self, and move towards integration, presence and therefore more ethical behaviour, or integrity. The links between psychology and the treatment of consciousness in the previous section are close and overlapping – they form another band, another layer of colour, in the rainbow helix. Everything is linked. Cacioppe and Edwards (2005a) have combined Don Beck’s Spiral Dynamics and Ken Wilber’s Integral theory to further explain how everything is linked, but at this point in my discussion I am focussing on the influence of psychology and psychotherapy.

Building on the human relations work, where I focussed on humanist psychotherapists such as Carl Rogers, I also studied the “classics” of psychological theory such as Abraham Maslow’s *Motivation and Personality* (1954), Eric Fromm’s *The Art of Loving*
(1956) and later *The Revolution of Hope* (1968), Eric Berne’s *Transactional Analysis in Psychotherapy* (1961) and his popular *Games People Play* (1964). I also studied Frederick (Fritz) Perl’s important work on Gestalt therapy (1969). In the work of all of these authors, there are common themes, including those of authenticity, wholeness, insight, identity and ethics. Muriel James and Dorothy Jongeward (1971) who were colleagues of Eric Berne summed up some of these concepts as follows:

A person who is not aware of how she or he acts or feels is impoverished. Lacking a core of confidence, such a person fluctuates between conflicting inner forces. This person is less than whole, having alienated parts of the self – intellect, emotions, creativeness, body feelings, or some particular behavior. A person who becomes aware and moves toward becoming a whole person is enriched (James & Jongeward 1971:12).

Transactional analysis as theorised and practised by Eric Berne was, and still is an influential area of psychological practice, and is a useful tool not only in counselling but also in coaching. An understanding of what Berne called “ego states” as part of transactional analysis, that is, the Parent, the Adult and the Child ego states, can facilitate behaviour change and the integration of what I have termed the healthy self. The healthy self is where a client is acting, thinking, and feeling in the present, dealing in an adult way with current reality rather than reacting as a child or a parent might do (Berne 1961:17ff). The Parent ego state describes attitudes and behaviours that were once incorporated in an individual in childhood, when that individual experienced criticism or over-protective behaviour from their parent, but are now expressed to others in an inappropriate context. The Child ego state is reflected in inappropriate impulsive, often reactive or unrealistic behaviours, recalling times when as a child, the individual engaged in wishful thinking, or resentment or manipulative behaviour to gain attention.

The Adult ego state, by contrast, is oriented to a sense of presence, responding rather than reacting and being fully aware of the other – which is a primary goal of Buddhist meditation practice and western psychotherapy. When freed from the negative or irrelevant influences of the Parent or Child, the individual can then make autonomous decisions and act authentically (James & Jongeward 1971: 259). In the Adult, an individual can integrate the healthy attributes of responsible Parent and playful Child. It is very useful in coaching to refer to and to practise operating in the Adult and recognise when a colleague is playing roles that reflect inappropriate Parent or Child behaviour.

The Parent-Adult-Child model provides the vehicle for understanding respect-based communication and power dynamics central to liberation philosophies including feminism. The Adult ego state is free of the reactive ego defences of the Parent or
Child position and thus the ability to habitually respond to others from the Adult position may indicate a shift from split dualistic being and doing to an integrated being and doing. The political is here spiritual.

A related therapeutic approach is that of Gestalt therapy, developed so successfully by Perls. He used the term ‘integration’ as the primary aim of Gestalt therapy, to help people become whole, “to help them to become aware of, admit to, reclaim and integrate their fragmented parts” (Perls 1969: 29). His thesis was that integration is the transition from dependence to self-sufficiency and from relying on authoritarian outer support to authentic inner support (James & Jongeward 1971: 7). Similarly, achieving autonomy is the principle goal of transactional analysis, where the individual no longer is enslaved by old habits and patterns of behaviour (Berne 1964). The integrated self, the autonomous self, is aware, conscious and present. This Adult self is also similar to what Eric Fromm calls the fully developed person (Fromm 1968: 16) and Abraham Maslow discusses in terms of the self-actualisation (Maslow 1954: 211). Moreover, Maslow’s self-actualising person fulfils what Martin Seligman calls the third level of happiness, or meaningful life, in his influential theory of positive psychology (Seligman 2002).

Perhaps the most influential movement in psychology and psychotherapy that has impacted on executive coaching is Martin Seligman’s work in positive psychology, which is transforming the discipline of organisational psychology (Seligman 2002). Seligman has maintained that the focus on pathology among psychologists has dominated the profession to the exclusion of the positive features of what makes life worth living (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi 2000:5). “Positive psychology at the subjective level is about valued subjective experiences: well-being, contentment and satisfaction (in the past); hope and optimism (for the future); and flow and happiness (in the present)”. In tracing the development of psychology as a science, he noted that humanist psychologists such as Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers in the 1950s and 1960s heralded a new perspective to the behaviourist approaches of the era immediately post World War II. And, over the last half century, Seligman and his colleagues have concluded that the “major strides in prevention (of serious psychological problems) have come largely from a perspective focused on systematically building competency, not on correcting weakness” (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi 2000:7).

Seligman’s groundbreaking work on Learned Optimism (1991) was followed in 1994 by What you can change and what you can’t and in 2002 by Authentic Happiness. By 2005, Seligman and his colleagues reported enormous interest in positive
psychology, citing hundreds of scholarly articles published on topics relating to positive psychology (Seligman et al. 2005:411). Lyubomirsky, King and Diener (2005:803) undertook extensive studies demonstrating a strong link between happiness and success, “not only because success makes people happy, but because positive affect engenders success”. Others who wrote on positive psychology included Csikszentmihalyi (1999), who combined optimal human functioning, happiness and positive psychology; Bacon (2005) whose work focussed on positive psychology and the study of human strengths and virtues; and Dahlsgaard et al. (2005) who elaborated on shared virtue and human strengths across cultures and history. Martin Seligman’s training programs in coaching are based on positive psychology; he views coaching methodologies as congruent paradigms for developing authentic happiness.

Following Seligman’s lead, I believe that quality executive coaching nurtures the energy/spirit of each person, and needs to draw on the insights of positive psychology and thus of the whole human capital of organisations. This is particularly the case when executive management skills, tailored to specific live management situations, are developed through the in-depth/in-breadth relationship with a coach seeking to change negative reactive behaviours to positive, responsible behaviours. Although coaching is a separate, though related research area in seeking positive solution-focused outcomes, there are two other counselling research sources that I have drawn upon. The first is Milton Erickson, whose work re-established hypnosis as a legitimate therapeutic tool to achieve positive change, and who is also credited with originating “brief” and “strategic” therapy, both of which tend to be positive outcome focussed processes (Betty Alice Erickson 1994:147). The second source is Scott Miller and his associates, who published evidence-based research on “what works” in psychotherapy.

Milton Erickson is reported as having once said that “therapy consists of substituting a good idea for a bad idea” (Rosen 1994: 338). Erickson’s brilliant techniques were based on his profound observation of the person, his remarkable ability to zone in with empathic insight on the underlying issues, and without needing to make explicit their unconscious roadblock, tell stories, use metaphor, communicate hypnotically and in essence help his clients to replace a bad idea with a good one. He helped them achieve legitimate goals through providing the opportunity to build productively on their own changes (Betty Alice Erickson 1994:147-148). His daughter Betty Alice stressed that metaphorical and indirect interventions were probably the most widely recognised part of Ericksonian psychotherapy (Ibid.:152; Godin & Oughourlian 1994: 184). These metaphors worked as implementers of subtle hypnotic suggestion.
Using hypnotic suggestion is not so much the clinical application of classic hypnotic phenomena such as reversible amnesia or hallucinations, but the power that can be tapped through a more indirect approach, using stories through carefully constructed language. But it is also more than cleverness in language, as Joseph Barker, an Ericksonian psychotherapist, explains:

To be able to use hypnosis...involves more than simply teaching a person how to deal with a problem, more than simply having the [client] feel supported, and more than merely providing an opportunity for [the client] to vent feelings. Using hypnosis involves creating a profound cognitive shift... (Barker 1988:26).

Hypnotic suggestion is an activity that is a self-contained therapeutic device intended to enhance responsiveness to making positive change in the client's behaviour. It is a way of imagining a scenario in a new way that changes old reactive patterns and ego defences. This is similar to my own technique of rehearsing a scenario such as a conversation with a manager and their CEO, in order to perform with Adult-Adult relating (see Chapters 5 and 6). An analogous technique is "seeding", or introducing an idea as a "hint" that is later taken up with the activity that is targeted to the actual change intended. This is like a hypnotic suggestion, but it is followed up. "Priming" is another form of hypnotic suggestion, where the therapist seeks a change in accessing a concept by presenting at an earlier time the same or a closely related concept (Geary 1994:317-219). In my coaching work with executives, the most explicit replacing of a bad idea with a good idea is the Old Me and the New Me intervention, used to help a manager shift ego-defences that have become roadblocks inhibiting their potential leadership.

I am also indebted to Erickson for his work in family therapy, an area in which I specialised for my postgraduate practice. While he never offered a family systems formulation in his work, his highly creative approach to individuals and families has frequently been discussed in terms of specific systemic factors, according to Stephen Lankton, a distinguished Ericksonian psychologist (Lankton 1988:418). My own practice in systemic family therapy made it easier for me to translate these ideas into a systemic approach to management in organisations, so that I could see the whole picture and the flows of power and communication within the organisation. Lankton discusses the ways the family organisation shapes social roles, which in turn shape communication and beliefs. He notes that there are interlocking levels of influence in the human system which when identified can be a means of designing interventions (ibid. 430).

Scott Miller (1997), who with his colleagues is a leader in psychotherapeutic research, has synthesised an extraordinary amount of evidence-based research into "what
works" in psychotherapy, and by analogy, what works in coaching. He claims that over 80% of people who undertake psychotherapy find it beneficial – it facilitates change. Some aspects of human behaviour are universals, and some are defined by social context.

Miller et al. (1997) identify four elements that contribute to change in therapy. These are:

1. **Extra-therapeutic factors** - the client accounts for 40% of all improvement.
2. **Therapy relationship factors** which researchers estimate contribute 30% of the variance in psychotherapeutic outcome. It is not about the length of time of the relationship, but the formation of a strong therapeutic alliance and this in turn depends on the “core conditions” recognised by Carl Rogers – empathy, genuineness and unconditional positive regard. “The latest research and thinking indicate that strong alliances are formed when clients perceive the therapist as warm, trustworthy, non-judgmental, and empathic”…and a “growing number of studies has found that clients' ratings of the therapeutic alliance, rather than the therapists' perceptions, are more highly correlated with outcome” (ibid.28).
3. **Model and technique factors**. Miller et al. cite Lambert (1992) whose research led to the view that the therapist’s model and technique contribute only 15% to the over all impact of psychotherapy. They conclude that therapists should worry less about right interventions or brands of therapy and “spend more time doing what they do best: understanding, listening, building relationships, and encouraging clients to find ways to help themselves” (ibid.30).
4. **Expectancy, hope and placebo factors**. Miller et al. cite Frank and Frank (1991) who found that these factors account for 15% of improvement in therapy – “research shows that merely expecting therapy to help goes a long way toward counteracting demoralisation, mobilising hope, and advancing improvement” (ibid.30). Miller et al. continue, citing Goleman (1991) that “hope and expectancy give people a measurable advantage in many areas of life – in academic achievement, managing major illness, and dealing with difficult job situations” (ibid.31). Further, studies show that “fostering a positive expectation for change may actually be a pre-requisite for successful treatment” (ibid). This hope is not an attitude that can just be adopted. To be effective this hope arises in the client in the opening moments of the relationship, the joining between client and therapist, and is due to the client’s perception of the therapist’s attitude. In my experience this perception, in turn, is based on the presence of the therapist.

Miller and his associates have since put together a comprehensive edited volume on what works in therapy (Hubble, Duncan & Miller 1999).

In my view, this emphasis on what works, on solutions-based therapy, and in some circles such as Ericksonian psychotherapy, on what is known as brief therapy, is the link that needs to be made between therapy as a “mirror” and coaching as a dynamic, goals-based process of dialogue.

Key predictors of success in therapy are that the client is in a committed personal relationship, has a good job, and quickly perceives the working alliance with the
therapist as being based on empathy, respect, genuineness and trust. Indicators of a quality therapeutic process include agreement on goals, meaning or purpose, agreement on method, congruence with client theory of change, hope and expectancy, and the therapeutic working alliance. While the therapist (or leader) is listening carefully and empathically to build agreement on goals and tasks, they are building the alliance. When the therapist’s view of goals, tasks, and how to effect change is different from the client, there will be a weaker alliance and no change.

Counsellors in social work and psychological models write of “joining” and the “therapeutic alliance” (Lejuez et al. 2006). Most would agree, in some way, these relational experiences are intense and akin to that state of consciousness of “falling in love”. In this state, it is difficult for the therapist as well as the client to be rationally aware in a conscious way of what is happening and how it is operating. The person entering the counselling or coaching room is expecting feedback and insight and is receptive to both. The state of consciousness they are in is very powerful and can be as damaging as it can be healing. Robert Langs has commented (1989:4-5) that: “The psychotherapy room is an enormously charged space. The conscious mind is occupied almost entirely by strategic manoeuvres directed toward immediate goals ... Outside of awareness, however - unconsciously if you will - emotionally charged information and meaning have an intense impact, whether or not it is recognised and dealt with by patient, therapist or both”. Langs added, “The mystics tell us that the conscious mind is asleep and that only the truth will wake us up. Psychotherapy bears out the accuracy of this characterisation” (Langs 1989:5).

While I agree with Langs’ concern with the negative impact of the therapist’s unwitting interventions on the client’s unconscious mind, I am also interested in the positive impact that the coach’s unwitting interventions may have on the client’s unconscious mind. Insight leads to truth which leads to greater awakening. When the coach is conscious, integrated and loving, aware and intentional, then every aspect of their behaviour becomes a positive intervention.

Other psychological research has focused on building healthy workplaces, where the mental as well as the physical health of people and organisations are emphasised, with a focus on enhancing productivity, satisfaction and profitability (Ducharme 2004; Jain & Sinha 2005; Kelloway & Day 2005). Ajay Jain and Arvind Sinha, management development specialists, make the point that for too long organisational psychology and management literature have focused on the traditional models of understanding stress and strain rather than the promotion of positive health, using positive psychology. Their research investigated the relevance of emotional intelligence factors in predicting positive attitudes about life and general health. Their work indicated that trust and organisational support, together with training in EI skills, were significant
factors in promoting the general health of employees, and therefore pivotal for leadership effectiveness and work productivity (Jain & Sinha 2005:260).

In another example, the research and practice of James Campbell Quick and Marilyn Macik-Frey in organisational health also draws extensively from positive psychology, transformational leadership and emotional intelligence (Quick & Macik-Frey 2004:67). They emphasise that the psychological health of the executive affects the health of the entire organisation. When an executive coach is a consulting psychologist, coaching enhances the health of the executive through the coach’s intimate dialogue with them over time, in other words, through the experience of deep interpersonal communication (ibid. 70).

It becomes clear that the separation of ideas by disciplines of psychology, or organisational leadership, or executive coaching, is artificial, as all human behaviour and endeavour can be researched through different bodies of literature. Howard Stein brings this awareness to his readers when he discusses the inner world of workplaces, and he draws on poetry, literature, music and visual art to explore the experienced world of organisations (Stein 2003). He urges management consultants and researchers to cultivate the imagination to gain greater breadth and depth of access to this inner world, to the personal, in organisational assessment and diagnosis (Stein 2003:84). He believes that art can serve as a bridge to connect the consultant with the executive. A moving example is his evocation of Robert Frost’s poem, “The Road Not Taken”, the last three lines being the best known:

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I –
I took the one less travelled by,
And that has made all the difference.

Stein comments: “Frost tells us about the difficulty of deciding. He tells us that there is not choice without some sense of loss, that one often concludes one’s choice is the better or best…When we work with corporate client individuals and organizations, this poem can serve as a reminder of the breadth and depth of choice and decisions” (Stein 2003:91).

2.6 Leadership and organisational management

My views on power, leadership, empowerment and the need for agency evolved in the context of personal and professional development. My experience of migrant
marginalisation overseas and emerging feminist consciousness were formative. I had discovered by 1979, when I resumed my theological studies, that I was a good group organiser, teacher and crisis counsellor, and I came to realise that people also need education and training, to learn new ways of personal interacting and being, and to become active agents in their social environments, instead of alienated (and often dysfunctional) victims of the social environment. I became interested in the ways in which good teachers, good spiritual guides, good counsellors, were all good leaders. Although I did not become closely involved in leadership development in organisations until I set up my own practice as a coach, the path from psychologist to coach - from dealing with those who were not psychologically healthy to those who were healthy leaders - is, in hindsight, a natural development in my own career.

This growing awareness is mirrored in the way in which leaders have been trained and developed within organisations. As described by Conger and Benjamin (1999) and Conger and Xin (2000), the early view of leadership and leadership training, was about learning functional skills suitable for understanding finance, marketing and administration. Nevertheless, leadership training was also influenced in the 1960s and 1970s by the humanist psychologists I encountered at the Cairnmillar Institute; and it was this interpersonal aspect of leadership that gained further credibility in the 1990s (Conger & Benjamin 1999). Leadership training and development in the 1990s came to be associated with transformative learning. A predominance of research in leadership has now focussed on the field of transformational leadership (Hunt & Conger 1999), and the field has recently moved dramatically toward the centrality of values, ethics, presence and consciousness. With this emphasis the notion of “training” has been increasingly approached by engaging leaders on an emotional level as well as a cognitive level in their process of leadership development. Ann Brooks talks about leadership development as “the discovery of new talents, a sense of empowerment, a deeper understanding of the inner self, and a greater sense of self-responsibility” (Brooks 2004:215). As I now read the thoughts of people like Ann Brooks, I recognise those elements of my earlier training.

The literature on leadership generally falls into a number of categories. Commonly utilised categories encompass, for example:

- The qualities and skills of a good leader
- Types and styles of leadership
- Leadership and management in the context of the workplace
- Developing effective leaders
My focus is on illuminating the relationship between leadership and coaching, and would seem to fit most appropriately into the last category. However, in this brief foray into the vast literature on leadership, I have elaborated on how each of these categories has some relevance to the model of conscious leadership discussed in this study.

**Qualities and skills of a good leader**

In the 1980s, the idealistic seventies were left to one side as the objective search for leadership traits and skills led to a massive shift in the literature on organisational change and effective leadership. Psychotherapists were focussed on remediation of psychological problems such as anxiety and depression, and the few coaches available to executives were expected to coach for effectiveness and excellence. Writers such as Yukl (1981), Boyatzis (1982), and Bass (1985, 1998) were typical of the work around leadership traits and characteristics, and behavioural change. As Laura Reave (2005:660) points out in her review of these times, there was little agreement about "universal traits…and the lists of traits gave little insight about what an effective leader actually does". While there were many exponents of the ideal, charismatic leader, Reave maintains that an overemphasis on a leader’s charisma could be unhealthy for both individuals and organisations: “When followers focus upon the identity and extraordinary qualities of the leader instead of upon their own development as individuals, they can become passive and dependent” (Reave, 2005: 661).

A list of leadership characteristics recurs across the literature - see Cacioppe (1997) Mant (1997), Gilley (1997), Cairnes (1998), Sinclair (1998), Barrett (1998), and Hammer (2000). Summarised, and not listed in any priority order, these are:

- Expertise – high level knowledge & skills relevant to the situation
- Commitment - to the purpose of the enterprise, and to action
- Psychological stability – safe, psychologically integrated, predictable and ethical
- Healthy self - strong sense of identity and self esteem (thus demonstrating high level communication skills that assert boundaries and reduce anxiety and build identity and self esteem)
- Intellectual firepower – high cognitive intelligence
- Intelligences – creative, practical, intuitive, systematic, emotional - in addition to cognitive
- Ethical
- Judgement – wisdom which comes from intelligence and deep insight
- Ability to think systemically
- Authority – evidenced both by designated role (external), and by personal
It is interesting to compare these qualities with those identified in my “good leader” exercise, described in Chapter 1.

The qualities of a leader have been discussed more recently in holistic terms rather than in relation to performance indicators. In an article entitled “What we know about leadership”, Robert Hogan and Robert Kaiser (2005:173) have created a model of leadership competencies in four domains – intrapersonal, interpersonal, business and leadership, which include many of the concepts of emotional intelligence and positive psychology discussed in the previous section. While the concepts are useful, it seems inappropriate to separate the domains of intra- and interpersonal from leadership. In my view, the inter/intrapersonal domains are the essence of relationship, which in turn enhances or limits the qualities of a good leader.

While good leaders must have good management skills, leaders must also “have the ability to win the hearts and minds of the people they lead so that they have faith that the correct values are in place even if they are not privy to the details” (Hammer 2000). Hammer sees the manager as having the ability to analyse and track the progress of multiple people assigned to multiple tasks and to help determine the best set of trade-offs when the unexpected happens, making the right judgment calls, confidently dealing with conflict, and encouraging people to grow. The leader goes beyond the skills of the manager, having a talent for empathy, a talent for understanding what people feel is key to helping convince and motivate them (Hammer 2000). Kouzes and Posner (1995, 1999) saw the leader as motivating others to have both calling and membership, and thereby encouraging the heart. This is the nature of the term “transformational leadership”. Transformational leadership as seen by these researchers is seen as requiring vision, inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation.

James Kouzes and Barry Posner, recognised authorities on transformational leadership, maintain that there are five fundamental practices of exemplary leadership, namely that leaders:

- Challenge the process
- Inspire a shared vision
- Enable others to act
- Model the way and
- Encourage the heart (Kouzes & Posner 1995)
By contrast, the typical skills of management in the literature are concerned with the important, but more skills-oriented tasks such as business planning, marketing, revenue, systems streamlining, time management, decision making, negotiation, conflict management, and project management, to name a few. Kouzes and Posner thus defined leadership as motivation to change, compared to the focus on short-term results emphasised in management. Conger and Xin confirm that the research in the 1980s and early 1990s showed that executives were better at management than leadership and were effective at creating systems but less effective communicators, motivators or inspirers (Conger & Xin 2000).

Professor Amanda Sinclair takes the notion of transformational leadership into the dynamic of the organisational context (2001). She has observed that “the discourse around leaders, such as corporate CEOs is …impoverished. Their ‘visions’ end up being narrowly framed around corporate earning power or expansion plans. Management-fashioned profiles of leaders describe them taking corporate risks but not, by and large, psychic risks. …”. She went on to say: “The idea of leadership as the solitary, out-front hero, leading the troops into battle is a very seductive one. However, it encourages us to dwell on a very one-dimensional set of performances and performances that are becoming increasingly anachronistic in a diverse workplace and international market. It also encourages us to see the leader outside of her or his history and group, to inflate their powers and potency to fix things” (Sinclair 2001:5).

Sinclair emphasised that there was a need to understand leadership “as a relationship which is collectively constructed. Leadership thus includes not just the leader traits and capabilities but also the prior needs and expectations of a group. Mostly this is an implicit and unconscious deal struck between a group and a person in whom that group agrees to trust” (Sinclair 2001:6). According to Mussig, “Leadership is a reciprocal relationship between those who lead and those who decide to follow. Any discussion of leadership must attend to the dynamics of this relationship” (Mussig 2003:73).

The notions of the leader who is trustworthy, mindful, who encourages the “heart”, lead to a discussion of “authentic leaders”, leaders who Avolio and his colleagues define as “those who are deeply aware of how they think and behave and are perceived by others as being aware of their own and others’ values/moral perspectives, knowledge and strengths; aware of the context in which they operate; and who are confident, hopeful, optimistic, resilient, and of high moral character” (Avolio & Gardner 2005:321). Authenticity is not to be confused with sincerity. Sincerity refers to the “extent to which one’s outward expression of feelings and thoughts are aligned with reality experienced by the self…rather than the extent to which one is true to the self…or one’s relationship with oneself ” (Ibid:320). Chogyam Trungpa
Rinpoche (cited in Das 2000:61) sums up the Buddhist concept of developing authentic presence:

When you meet a person who has inner authentic presence, you find he (sic) has an overwhelming genuineness, which might be somewhat frightening because it is so true and honest and real. You experience a sense of command radiating from the person of inner authentic presence ...This is not just charisma. The person with inner authentic presence has worked on himself and made a thorough and proper journey. He has earned authentic presence by letting go, and by giving up personal comfort and fixed mind.

This is the language used widely by psychologists to describe a psychologically healthy adult, the Adult self of Transactional Analysis, and of utmost importance, the qualities of emotional intelligence, which are currently the focus of leadership development.

In sum, the differences between a good manager and a truly good leader are the intra- and intra-personal qualities we commonly recognise as the presence of the person. When we say a person has presence, we are referring to the relaxed open power that shines out when a person is integrated at the core of the self, when a person feels loved and able to love well. Advanced empathy is seductive and engaging. We engage with another when we feel heard, validated and valued. The person whose behaviour communicates advanced accurate empathy, adult to adult, whether to the individual person or to a collective of people, will have a high level of authority attributed to them (Reave 2005; Fry 2003, 2005). They can only do this with authenticity when psychologically integrated. The leader is seen as having integrity, which is then reflected in ethical behaviour (Bass 1998; Reave 2005:667).

Types and styles of leadership

Another area of leadership literature concerns the perception of what kind of leader the boss is, what style he or she adopts, and how the followers respond. This was a popular area for discussion where the authoritarian, democratic and laissez-faire types of leader were constantly evoked in undergraduate workshops and basic texts. In the 1980s, influential writers included Paul Hersey and Kenneth Blanchard (1985), who developed a model of situational leadership, focusing on actual behaviour rather than general values orientation, based on the assumptions that what leaders do is more important than what they intend to do, and what leaders do to others must be task specific (Fulop & Linstead 1999:172). They proposed a situational leadership model incorporating four leadership styles, moving from highly directive to highly supportive leadership behaviour, depending on the level of competence and commitment that the person being led possessed. Once the follower was a highly
developed employee, the leader would be able to delegate responsibility to that person.

A leader’s style tends to be derived from early experiences from childhood, from school, from first encounters with leaders in the community, as well as through education and training. Jean Lipman-Blumen (1996) discussed the research that she and her colleague Harold Leavitt conducted in the 1970s on achieving styles, and traces such early influences through the work of psychologists such as David McClelland and his associates, in achievement motivation and performance (Lipman-Blumen 1996:116).

Lipman-Blumen’s work later progressed to formulate her model of Connective Leadership, which she explains emerged from a study of the behaviour of thousands of executives, the late 20th Century’s new leaders, who use connections across their complex and diverse aspects of life – political, social, organisational and personal. She identifies nine styles of leadership that together comprise “connective leadership” and which are used by individuals to achieve their objectives (Lipman-Blumen 1996:120):

- Direct set of styles, focusing on the tasks that individuals set for themselves, incorporating the styles called intrinsic, competitive and power. People who use direct styles may prefer to look to themselves to make something happen, or look to compete with others, or who like to take charge and organise, always retaining control.
- Relational set of styles, are oriented to the goals of others, and are related to the societal forces of interdependence (ibid.121) The author groups this set into collaborative, contributory and vicarious styles.
- Instrumental set of styles, where people treat everyone, themselves and others, as instruments for accomplishing their goals (ibid.123). While strategic instrumental action is sometimes seen as manipulative and Machiavellian, Lipman-Blumen maintains that “when connective leaders use instrumental styles…their ethical commitment to altruistic purposes distinguishes them from [the Machiavellian method of strategic] action for self interest” (ibid.124). This set is divided into personal, social and entrusting styles.

Lipman-Blumen maintains that we tend to use a limited repertoire of achievement styles as leaders, and we reinforce those behaviours that achieve what we set out to do. Her thesis is that leaders can learn to move easily across all nine achieving styles, as “connective leaders”, “using different combinations to respond to various circumstances” (ibid.131-135). She lists six aspects of any particular
situation that determine what style of leadership may work:

- The nature of the task
- The importance of the task
- The nature and location of key resources
- The condition of the internal environment
- The state of the external environment
- The leader’s position and longevity within the organisation

One of the key areas discussed in many works on leadership style is the question of gender differences, cultural differences, and the changing culture of organisational behaviour (Sinclair 1998; Brewis and Linstead 1999; Lipman-Blumen 1996). As Amanda Sinclair states, while few subjects have been as extensively researched as leadership, there is still no clear understanding as to what distinguishes leaders from others, and few studies exist of women and leadership (Sinclair 1998:15). Despite increasing numbers of women in corporate leadership positions, the social construction of leadership is one of masculine images of decision-makers, visionaries and meaning-makers. Sinclair then develops her thesis of how women can become leaders, especially where women in their early years of life have not been educated to accept specifically gendered role types. There are indications that the changing cultural and gendered construction of society requires new leadership paradigms. While I agree that these issues are immensely important, when I came to analyse my data I realised the way I had structured the project did not lend itself to this kind of comparative analysis.

Like many others before her, and since, Lipman-Blumen also emphasises the changing nature of our society, the fundamental shifts in the workplace environment away from old hierarchical models, and the crisis of confidence in our society where we are seeking redemptive leaders, charismatic leaders, who will assist us by miraculous means to cope with uncertainty and global political upheavals. Her model of connective leadership is one example of a new wave of leadership literature that grapples with the need for change (Fuqua & Newman 2002; Bocchino et al. 2003; Winum 2003, Dunphy et al. 2003).

Two significant areas of research in types of leadership are authentic leadership, and integral leadership. Authenticity in leaders and organisations is an emerging leadership field, which began as a way of defining openness of organizational climate, and the extent to which individuals manifest authenticity when assuming leadership roles (Novicevic & Harvey 2006:68). There are some similarities with transformational and spiritual leadership perspectives, and with ethical leadership behav-
bour (Zhu et al. 2004), but in some of the recent leadership or organisational development literature, there is a gap between the spiritual awakening that is at the heart of Buddhist practice of authenticity, for example, and the authenticity described in recent journals.

In a special issue of *The Leadership Quarterly* Bruce Avolio and William Gardner (Avolio & Gardner 2005: 319-320) acknowledge the influence of humanistic psychologists Rogers and Maslow (op.cit this thesis) in providing the intellectual heritage for thinking about authentic leadership development. They also acknowledge the conceptual roots in positive psychology, and that the construct is multi-dimensional and multi-level. In distinguishing between authentic and spiritual leadership as advanced by Fry (2003), they claim that both theories include "an implicit recognition of the role of leader self-awareness with a focus on vision and leader values and attitudes that are broadly classified as altruistic love and hope/faith...Areas of overlap between the authentic and spiritual leadership theories include their focus on integrity, trust, courage, hope and perseverance (resilience). Once again, however, the discussion of these topics is not well integrated with available theory and research on the self-systems of leaders and followers...or positive psychology...and consideration of self regulation and the moderating role of the organizational context is missing' (Avolio & Gardner 2005:331). Cooper et al. agree that the construct of authentic leadership is "still in its nascent stages" (Cooper et al. 2005:476). Cecily Cooper and her colleagues note the difficulty of clearly defining and quantitatively measuring valid constructs, and has recommended the use of qualitative investigations, such as conducting a number of case studies (ibid: 479).

Integral leadership has been comprehensively discussed by Ken Wilber in his integrative vision of body, mind and spirituality (Wilber 1997, 2000a). Ron Cacioppe and Mark Edwards (2005a) have explored a number of integral approaches to organisations, citing Wilber's definition of an integral vision as an attempt "to include matter, body, mind, soul and spirit as they appear in self, culture, and nature - a vision that attempts to be comprehensive, balanced and inclusive" (Wilber 2000a: xii, cited in Cacioppe & Edwards 2005a:230). Cacioppe and Edwards define integral as meaning whole, necessary and important, and essential to completeness, and therefore containing "three core elements: (1) the holistic nature of an entity; (2) the essential parts or constituents of an entity; and (3) the active process where whole and essential part forms completeness (Cacioppe & Edwards 2005b:231). These researchers include both the concept of spiral dynamics as described by Don Beck and Chris Cowan (Beck & Cowan 1996; Cacioppe & Edwards 2005b; Cowan & Todorovic 2000; Gibb 2003), and of Wilber's integral philosophy of AQAL, or all quadrants, all levels (Cacioppe & Edwards 2005a:232). Within Wilber's four quadrants is the all important
quadrant of the developmental stages of consciousness, which of course takes into account the other three integrating quadrants of the developmental stages of behaviour, the social (and organisational) systems, and cultural quadrant of shared meaning and world view.

The missing link is the concept of conscious leadership, whereby the leader’s “style” is not the external skills and strategies adopted, but the inner presence, the genuineness, empathy and positive regard of the leader in their relationships with others (Senge et al. 2004).

What we are seeing is a shift from a style to an essential way of being a leader. Self insight is central to behaviour change and to leadership development. Self insight is the key to psychotherapy and Buddhist practice. Some have labelled this essential core of the leader as spiritual intelligence, as Stephen Covey explains in his new work on The 8th Habit: From Effectiveness to Greatness (2004). He evokes the life of Viktor Frankl, whose writings on Man’s Search for Meaning had such an impact on me in my early training; he quotes from Haddon Klingberg’s biography of Frankl:

For Frankl, since spirituality is in its essence self-transcendence, it brings with it human freedom. But it is not freedom from as much as freedom to…. When a person exercises spiritual freedom and responsibility, there follows a host of effects: peace of mind, good conscience, and contentment (Klingberg 2001:8, cited in Covey 2004: 315).

As has been discussed earlier, the notion of spirituality in the workplace has been further analysed through the concept of spiritual intelligence, and has been developed to describe and explore the inner motivations, values, and ethics that determine an individual’s ability to make ethical decisions and determine the most caring and moral way to respond to work situations and dilemmas (Zohar & Marshall 2000).

Self-insight makes a person more aware of disparities between the way they behave and what they espouse (Argyris 1988). As people move up the ladder of awareness, of consciousness and of spirituality, then they become more integrated. Sanders, Hopkins and Geroy (2003:21) have set forth a theory that is also one of integration, integrating consciousness, moral character and faith. They maintain that the journey of leadership is primarily an internal flight to connect with a higher influence. As well, CEOs need to take responsibility for their emotions, which becomes possible as they become more integrated and more aware of their healthy selves.

Leadership and management in the context of the workplace
As with the era of the 1970s, a common theme in society as well as in the workplace has been the phenomenon of change both behavioural and organisational. Typical of the emphasis on change is Stace and Dunphy’s work in Australia on leading and
They warn against the impulse to make simple, one-dimensional change instead of seeking transformational change: “The urgency of the need to quickly implement far-reaching and often complex strategic change has led managers and change agents to search for simple solutions and the one right way” (Stace & Dunphy 1994:5). They go on to describe how leaders in organisations can take charge of change, and explore the roles that “coaches, captains, charismatics and commanders” play in making developmental and task-focused transitions, transformations and turnarounds respectively. They urge leaders to look at cultural renewal in organisations (Stace and Dunphy 2001). Dunphy has since taken the debate to another level asking how organisations can be reconstructed to support a sustainable world and what is required of leadership for commitment to human and societal well-being. In this debate Dunphy sees human consciousness as the most critical factor in our leaders (Dunphy et al. 2003).

Much of the recent management literature now focuses on the well-being of organisations, and the role of leadership behaviour in fostering healthy workplaces (Dierendonck et al. 2004; Fuqua & Newman 2002; Jain & Sinha 2005; Lyubomirsky et al. 2005), the position developed by Dunphy in terms of transforming the overall sustainability of organisations (Dunphy et al. 2003). “The move from a single-minded focus on creative short-term profits to embodying an ideological commitment to social justice and ecological diversity may also involve transformative change” (Dunphy et al. 2003:235-236).

Margot Cairnes opens one of her chapters on Approaching the Corporate Heart with the observation “the question I have been most asked is, ‘Does the corporation have a heart?’” (Cairnes 1998:162). She discusses the impact that massive changes in corporate life are bringing to the world of work, where people can no longer expect to have full-time jobs, let alone the right to a job for life. She quotes the delightful remark of George Bernard Shaw as saying that the future belongs to the unreasonable ones who don’t look backwards, but who are certain only of uncertainty and who have the ability and confidence to think completely differently (Ibid.163). Interestingly, she contends that the reason people do not believe that corporations have a heart is that they perceive the corporation rather as a child might perceive a mother. They, the child, turn up to work and try to please, do the right thing, and blame any problems or difficulties on the parent corporation, often referred to as “management”. Her point is that a “heartless” corporation, which does not take full responsibility for the growth of the individual, is actually giving responsibility, growth and life back to the individual (ibid.166). She challenges us to break the pattern of dependence and limited thinking:
We do have hearts and souls. We do have power over our own choices. We are capable of raising our self-awareness and taking responsibility for our present moment emotions, thoughts and actions, and more particularly for the psychological patterns that underlie our adult functioning (Cairnes 1998:171).

These approaches to leadership and management are a far cry from the earlier rather stultifying descriptions of how people operated in the workplace. Over the last decade or two, the literature has expanded exponentially to grapple with and embrace the global changes that are taking place, and seek leadership and management models that can cope with uncertainty and the search for meaning in the workplace.

A great deal of the vast field of leadership and management literature is beyond the purview of this thesis. From the point of view of this study the key issue is the paradigm shift towards transformational leadership and beyond to conscious leadership. As Dexter Dunphy said in an interview with Robyn Williams on ABC Radio National’s Ockham’s Razor:

The outer reality of our social worlds is a mirror reflection of the dynamic reality of our inner worlds. Inner consciousness and outer reality are intimately related and co-create each other. It follows, therefore, that to transform the world about us we must also transform our inner consciousness. The most important change agenda is internal, and intensely personal. In the end, individuals make the difference in the course of social change: our convictions, our awareness, knowledge and skills matter (Dunphy 2001).

**Developing effective leaders.**

The training and development of effective leaders is a major field of research and practice, with an extensive literature. As Alex Stol points out in her comprehensive review and evaluation of leadership training, the changes in the very notion of what actually constitutes leadership have been critical in re-shaping how leaders are trained (Stol 2005). She comments: “The shift to more psychologically oriented training reflects the shift in definition of leaders from managerially and task oriented to a recognition of the complex psychological role leaders enact, particularly in view of the dominant emphasis on transformational leadership” (Stol 2005:36). Chris Argyris (1988) was highly influential in the field of developing effective organisational learning and management. His concept of ‘double-loop learning’ where managers were encouraged to think outside the square, and to be aware of factors beyond the immediate problem, was a forerunner of later work on consciousness and mindfulness. Australian consultants Laurie Field and Bill Ford (1995) are advocates of Argyris’ work, and have written and taught extensively on the organisation as a learning organisation, including an emphasis on organisational relationship and learning. They advocate a shift from the traditional role of supervisor, the top-down model of supervisor as controlling and co-ordinating, to a supervisor working collaboratively with team leaders
and coaches/facilitators (Field & Ford 1995:88). Their advocacy of coaching as part of organisational transformation reflects the increase in published ideas of organisational transformation of the 1990s which provided indications of radical changes in how people perceived, thought and behaved at work (Butler et al. 1999).

The trends in executive education, as noted by Conger and Xin (2000), showed shifts in learning needs (from knowledge to change); learning content (from abstract to learner context); learning preference (from passive to action learning and feedback); participants (from individual study to team participation to gain buy-in and coordination of efforts); integration mechanisms (from top echelon to across the company participation); and instructors (executive teachers still the norm). In their study, although the term “executive coach” was not included as an option for instruction, over two-thirds of respondents described instructors as outside consultants/trainers, a term which could well include coaches.

One of the most influential books in the new emphasis on developing effective leaders was Daniel Goleman’s publication of *Emotional Intelligence* (1995), popularising research published by Salovey and Mayer in 1990, and later developed by Salovey and Mayer (1997) into a model of EI relating to:

- perception of emotion in self and others
- assimilation of emotion to facilitate thought
- understanding of emotion
- managing and regulating emotion in self and others

The Salovey and Mayer model was then cast as an abilities measure of emotional intelligence (Ashkanasy & Daus 2005:442). Goleman’s best-selling book influenced Reuven Bar-On, whose work on psychological well-being was published as the EQ-i scales that I use in this thesis (Bar-On 1997, 1999).

Since 1997, there has been an enormous increase in interest and debate among organisational psychologists, leadership researchers and others regarding the theoretical acceptability of emotional intelligence as a construct, and the validity and predictive capability of EQ tests for assessing clients. In 2005, the *Journal of Organizational Behavior* published a special issue devoted to the debate, where Landy (2005) claimed that it is still too early to assess the application of emotional intelligence concepts in the workplace, and Locke (2005) claimed that EI has a lack of clarity, and that EI questionnaires attempt to measure too many broad general concepts. Others have strenuously defended the importance of emotional intelligence in the workplace, and particularly in team leadership contexts (Prati et al. 2003;
Ashkanasy & Daus 2005). In the last three years, leading writers in EI have published results of further research and application, including Goleman’s 2002 publication with Boyatzis and McKee on *Primal Leadership: realizing the power of emotional intelligence* (Goleman et al. 2002).

Two other leading writers in the field, Stephen Covey and Peter Senge, have introduced both theory and practical methodologies into the realm of education and training for effective leadership. In their most recent work, each has independently brought the questions of emotions, mindfulness, and presence into the forefront (Covey 2004; Senge et al. 2004). In this way, the spiral of learning about and training for my own career path, from human relations student to executive coach, has formed another connective strand across the rainbow helix of my work.

It is becoming clear that research on consciousness in leadership as a new paradigm for the 21st Century leader has been gaining momentum since the early 1990s (Wilber 1993; Conger 1993; Harung et al. 1995). Harald Harung’s explanation of the indicators of higher states of consciousness includes being silent, expanded, restfully alert, and non-attached. The terms spirituality and mindfulness also appear in the literature (Feldman 2003). However, the majority of the literature remained in the mode of leadership traits and characteristics.

The year 1998 seems to be a turning point in the literature, with the combination of leadership, consciousness and coaching revealing the first articles on 360-degree feedback, the rise of literature on self-awareness, and the beginnings of references to spirituality in organisations. The term mindfulness is widely used from this point as well.

Langer and Moldoveanu (2000b) have investigated the relationship between mindfulness and effective communication. They state that mindful communication is, to a large extent, about mindful listening: “…listening that is unencumbered by pre-existing categories that constrain the attention of the listener to a pre-specified set of characteristics of the other.” (p.136). Ellen Langer has written extensively on the issue of mindfulness and in a practical way has contrasted this with the concept of decreasing mindlessness (Langer and Moldoveanu 2000a). The early research on mindful versus mindless behaviour was carried out in the 1970s. Langer defined mindfulness as a “state of conscious awareness characterized by active distinction drawing that leaves the individual open to novelty and sensitive to both context and perspective” (cited in Demick 2000:142). In contrast mindlessness has been seen as a “state of mind characterized by an over-reliance on past categories and
distinctions whereby the individual is context-dependent and oblivious to novel (alternative) aspects of situations” (Demick 2000:142; Langer & Moldoveanu 2000b).

Writers who have used the mindful/mindless theory show that the characteristics of good leaders must necessarily include mindful behaviour. Otherwise, leaders are unable to be aware and flexible enough to tolerate the ambiguities and complexities of life in the workplace (Feldman 2003:727; Kilburg 2004:246; Lane & Klenke 2004:70).

Leadership development through greater self-awareness and mindfulness has raised significant issues for executive coaches, as the benefits of being “present” relate closely to the psychological well-being of leaders (Brown & Ryan 2003). Brown and Ryan carried out several studies on the nature of mindfulness and mindlessness and attempted to measure mindfulness in individuals to discover the relation between states of awareness and consciousness, and states of well-being. They found that people who were mindful tended to also have greater life satisfaction, self-esteem, optimism and self-actualisation (Brown & Ryan 2003:832). These states of being bear a clear relation to measures of emotional intelligence. Brown and Ryan further noted from one of their studies that mindfulness can be cultivated by practice, a finding that resonates well with Buddhist practice (ibid. 843). In contrast, mindlessness, or the relative absence of mindfulness, can indicate defensiveness or a refusal to acknowledge or attend to a thought, emotion, motive or object of perception (ibid. 823). Martha Feldman (2003) also provides an interesting account of mindlessness, where the client or employee fails to be aware of the integrated nature of everyday performance in the workplace (and see Langer & Moldoveanu 2000b above). Buddhist practice explicitly trains the person to recondition their mind to concentrate and be mindful and aware and to remain equanimous while doing so.

Young’s analysis of consciousness focuses on the relationship between spiritual development and effective leadership. He believes that an emphasis on “transcending levels of consciousness represents one approach for coping with increasing levels of environmental complexity” (Young 2002:31). He claims that CEOs who are operating at higher levels of consciousness are less affected by impinging psychological, physiological and social factors that would tend to distort objective problem solving (ibid.).

Quality executive coaching nurtures the energy/spirit of each person and thus of the whole human capital of organisations. This is particularly the case when executive management skills, tailored to specific live management situations, are developed through the indepth/inbreadth relationship with a coach. High calibre people are
conscious – self-aware and other-aware. We say of some people that they are unconscious: they see through a glass darkly – they lack insight and knowing. They have not therefore reintegrated the dissociated parts of themselves and become psychologically integrated. Integrity, ethical behaviour, is the outcome of psychological integration.

2.7 Executive coaching

“[Executive] coaching is the style of choice that rehumanizes the modern worker” (Goldsmith et al. 2000: xvi).

In Section 7, the ideas set out in Section 6 on leaders and leadership are further developed by presenting the literature on what executive coaching is and how it contributes to the challenge of developing insight, consciousness and greater effectiveness of executive leadership. The ideas presented below relate to the nature of coaching; executive coaching goals; the qualities of the coach; the context of coaching; and spiritual leadership.

Coaching is a conversation

I endorse Susan Skiffington’s view that: “Coaching is a conversation, a dialogue, whereby a coach and a coachee interact in a dynamic exchange to achieve goals, enhance performance and move the coachee forward to greater success” (Zeus & Skiffington 2000: xiii). Yet executive coaching is only a recent phenomenon and was not readily recognised as a distinctive intervention and addressed in the literature until the mid-1990s (Kampa-Kokesch & Anderson 2001). There has been some confusion in organisations as to the difference between coaching and psychotherapy, but a number of clear distinctions can be made, including the focus on issues and organisations, the focus on successful leaders and the greater collegiality in the relationship between executive and coach. There are other substantive ways in which coaching and therapy differ such as the manager/client having a good enough level of personal skills and few unhelpful defence mechanisms, and several related issues that are addressed to some extent in this thesis.

The coach differs in many ways from the therapist, specifically in terms of goals set and time spent. Psychological counselling is for people who are not coping, and helps them to reach a point of coping. The counsellor works at the pace of the client, supporting and following them and intervening at their points of readiness. Counselling is remedial. Nevertheless, both kinds of conversation, between client and coach or client and therapist, rely on the same underlying practice: that of the quality of the relationship in the context of the coaching/counselling event (Hart et al. 2001) Similarly
Ducharme describes using a cognitive-behavioural approach to executive coaching, combining a therapeutic technique of Cognitive-Behaviour Therapy (CBT) with other coaching techniques as an approach to managing stress and developing leadership skills among executives (Ducharme 2004).

Life coaching may also include management/business coaching and mentoring. Management/business coaching is applying life-coaching skills to business situations (Fournies 2000; Morgan et al. 2005; Peltier 2001). The client is kept on track as they deal with a business issue such as the business plan, financials, systems, marketing, operational plans or staffing. The business coach, like the personal trainer, meets every week or fortnight with the client and keeps them on track to achieve the agreed business targets. Mentoring in organisations may be similar to business coaching, but the coach is usually external to the organisation whereas a mentor is usually internal, helping the individual with their management role while at the same time learning about and understanding alliances of influence and power within the organisation (Bell 2000; Lipman-Blumen 1996; Sinclair 1998). Chip Bell is adamant that effective leaders and managers should be mentors. "Mentoring must become simply that part of every leader’s role that has growth as its primary outcome" (Bell 2000: 133).

Executive coaching may include all of the above but goes beyond them to support and facilitate leadership. Many writers have aligned executive coaching with management/business coaching. For example, Kilburg defines executive coaching as

... a helping relationship between a client who has managerial authority and responsibility in an organisation and a consultant who uses a wide variety of behavioural techniques and methods to help the client achieve a mutually identified set of goals to improve his or her performance and, consequently, to improve the effectiveness of the client’s organisation within a formally defined coaching agreement (Kilburg 2000:67).

Kilburg’s work is a significant and definitive resource. His understanding of coaching focuses on coaching for executive management. Although it is desirable to have competent managers who are also good leaders, management and leadership are different. One can be a good manager without being a good leader. It is possible to be an influential leader without being a good manager, and many ordinary workers who are not managers exercise effective leadership in their work places. It is the relationship developed in the coaching event which this thesis will emphasise.

The literature on executive coaching is almost non-existent before 1990 and it was not until the late 1990s that there has been an upsurge of academic interest (Wales
Some of the earlier accounts focused on case studies of particular models of executive coaching, such as the work carried out by Helen Peters in 1996. In Stephen Horp’s (2004) review, he notes that it is only in very recent times, at the start of the 21st century, that published work on executive coaching has gone much beyond practitioner articles, books produced by coaching companies or single chapters within leadership development monographs (Horp 2004: 826). Horp’s review of Bacon and Spear’s recent publication on executive coaching (2003) provides a critique of the coaching literature, including an attempt to evaluate the effectiveness of coaching as it is practised, and is therefore a useful addition to serious investigation of what works in coaching.

Current models of coaching fall into several groups, as briefly discussed in Chapter 1:

- Training models: coaching is one-to-one training. These models focus on what helps adult to learn in organisational contexts. In the coaching relationship we are focusing on experience-based learning i.e. the client is learning about a current and real situation within which they are living or working. (Kilburg 1996; Kouzes & Posner 1995; Schein 2000: 65).

- Mentoring and supervision models. Mentoring is about transferring knowledge and advice within the culture of an organisation, a profession or an industry. Traditionally mentoring has been a hierarchical relationship but modern concepts of mentoring focus on co-operative relationship. Many organisations have attempted to provide mentoring within an organisational structure, with confusion occurring at times between this function and the supervisory expectations of some relationships. (Zeus & Skiffington 2000).

- Performance models. These are based on sports and theatre and involve envisioning in a new way i.e. hypnosis. They focus on lifting performance. Sports psychologists are now doing a lot of work in organisations, from team building programs to healing anxiety that gets in the way of performance, and teaching what we at Moreton Executive Coaching Pty Ltd call “perfect performance” hypnotic techniques (and see Peltier 2001).

Individual coaches may work from one of these first three models or a combination of them. Feedback from clients indicates that some of the techniques used by some coaches they had worked with in other companies may be antithetical to professional psychologists’ ethical practice, where clients felt traumatised by shaming and humiliation techniques. Instances described to us by our clients have involved coaches who were not trained in-depth and were not registered psychologists. When power is based on fear, people are locked into authoritarian dynamics. When power is
based on trust and respect, the power maintains mutual responsible adult relating, and inspires and motivates enormous creativity and all kinds of productivity. For these reasons I embrace the fourth group of coaching models for executive coaching.

- **Psychotherapeutic Models.** While Zeus and Skiffington (2000) acknowledge that skills of psychotherapeutic counselling models are transferable to coaching, the sharp distinction they make between therapy and coaching leads attention away from recognising the significance of this model. Practitioners and theorists such as Kilburg (1997) see this model as one where the executive coach’s task is to deal with issues of character, improving the self-awareness of the client as the goal (cited in Orenstein, 2002: 355).

The Conscious Leadership coaching model depends on the depth of insight and the richness of the relationship, which in turn depend on the degree to which the coach is able to be fully present (conscious) and powerful. Later sections of this review explore these concepts more fully. This model assumes the healing capacity and depth of relationship of psychotherapy. Applied to healthy people achieving goals and enhancing performance, the psychotherapeutic model builds leadership (see also Cairnes 1998; Miller et al. 1996; Scott & Harker 2002).

**The goals of executive coaching**

To date, few researchers have studied the effects of executive coaching on client’s behaviour change and performance improvement. Smither et al. (2003:24) state:

> In the current study, we know little about the nature or content of the executive coaching conversations [my italics]. Future research could examine whether the effects of coaching are related to the coach’s style…background… [And how it] might affect the coaching process or the outcomes of coaching. (Smither et al. 2003:31).

My thesis goes some way to fill this gap.

According to Giglio et al. (1998), coaching helps the executive focus on objectives, develops resiliency and builds interpersonal savvy – leverage for organisational transformation. The act of facing one’s work-related weaknesses head on (publicly) and presenting a strategy for success is a bold, powerful indication that a serious effort to change is taking place. Likewise, Suzy Wales (2003) in her summary of “why coaching?” indicates that the goals of coaching are to facilitate better communication, improve work/life balance, assist the client to develop internally (self-awareness and confidence) and externally (assertiveness, work/life balance etc). Her work is, like many articles, focussed on a particular project that was highly successful.
In my view, executive coaching is invariably aimed at goal/task achievement: *doing*. What is often missing is presence, leadership, relationship. What distinguishes psychotherapeutic models is the capacity to develop the *being* while working on the *doing*.

Many practitioners and researchers believe that the purpose of executive coaching is to achieve change, either in the client or in the organisation. Others talk about the purpose being to change behaviour, or to change character. Many talk about the executive as a whole person, shaped by their past, their personal lives and their work environments (Orenstein 2002:357). Others disagree, claiming that executive coaching should not involve deep disclosure or close bonding with the coach (Sperry 1993, cited in Orenstein 2002:357).

The goals of executive coaching are, in sum, one of the principal forms of developing leaders and leadership (Day 2000). In his comprehensive review of leadership training and education, David Day (2000) cites Kilburg’s (1996, 1997, 2000) important work on psychotherapeutic models of executive coaching as being essential reading for leadership development. Day believes that the real goals of executive coaching are to bring about behavioural and culture change (Katz & Miller, 1996; Day, 2000; Kotter & Cohen 2002; Lyons 2002; Orenstein 2002).

Day distinguishes *leader* development (the development of individual skills and attitudes) from *leadership* development (the “development of networked relationships among individuals that enhance cooperation and resource exchange in creating organizational value” (Day 2000: 585). This distinction is an important one from the point of view of analysing the coaching relationship, as many methods of coaching rely mostly on the human capital (leader) approach.

The Conscious Leadership model resonates particularly with Day’s social capital definition: developing relationship, effective feedback, interpersonal competence, social awareness/empathy, and social skills. While leader development remains integral to the process of building leadership through coaching, the growing understanding of what it means to be a conscious leader is also implicit in Day’s analysis of leadership development. The emphasis of leader development is *intrapersonal* competence, whereas the emphasis of leadership development is *interpersonal* competence. These competencies are, not surprisingly, two of Howard Gardner’s key intelligences in his work on multiple intelligences (Gardner 1993) and two key factors of emotional intelligence (Bar-On 1999).
It is surprising that some leadership development programs do not engage with the literature on building interpersonal competence, despite their emphasis on teamwork and democratic processes of strategic planning. For example, Roland Loup and Ron Koller (2005) discuss at length their model of “The Road to Commitment” which they claim helps change leaders and consultants “understand the people side of organizational change” (Loup & Koller 2005:73). They focus on the individual leader as the key, yet do not mention relationship building throughout their analysis.

Mark Storey (2003), in a powerful discussion of what went wrong with many corporations at the turn of the 21st Century, when so many powerful organisations were badly damaged by the wrongdoing of their corporate heads, claims that had these leaders been coached, they would not have lost their moral perspective. The goals of coaching executives, then, are not only to achieve the goals of the organization, but to obtain a “greater sense of fulfilment and well-being… [and that] coaches hold them accountable for their actions” (Storey 2003:77).

**The qualities of the coach**

In this review, the emphasis for executive coaching is on the significance of a model of coaching as a psychology model, not therapeutic or remedial, but related to positive psychology, the well-being of the person and the organisation, the factors that enable leaders to flourish, and with them, their organisations (Wasylyshyn 2001; Axelrod 2005). In recent reviews of executive coaching, it is increasingly understood that coaches must have essential knowledge and expertise in psychology in addition to expertise in business and other targeted knowledge in organisational management (Wasylyshyn 2001:11-12; Wasylyshyn 2003:97; Stern 2004:155; Axelrod 2005). Wasylyshyn writes passionately about the opportunities available for psychologists in executive coaching, as she sees that the skills and attributes of psychologists are eminently suited to the task of coaching, not only in terms of applications of psychological theory and practice, but the interpersonal skills of a psychologist: “the ability to listen and show empathy for widely differing groups, patience and the ability to adapt to change, analytical problem solving, creativity, and humour skills” (Wasylyshyn 2001:16). In her 2003 study of executive coach outcomes, she reported that the top three personal characteristics of an effective executive coach were (a) the ability to form a strong connection with the executive (86% of respondents), (b) professionalism (82%) and (c) use of a clear and sound coaching methodology (35%) (Wasylyshyn 2003:98).
This clear pointer to the importance of the coaching relationship resonates well with the focus of the work of Scott Miller et al. (1997) where relationship between counsellor and client accounted for 30% of the psychotherapeutic outcome. The relationship was also stressed by Rudisill et al. (2004), who discussed the role of consultant as confidant. Similarly, the focus of executive coaching engagements reported by Wasylyshyn (2003) reflects the stated goals of the participants whose coaching experiences are reported in this thesis. Her findings were:

• Personal behaviour change
• Enhancing leadership effectiveness
• Fostering stronger relationships
• Personal development
• Work-family integration

When the executives were asked to rate the coaching tools, high ratings were attributed to the actual coaching sessions and to the relationship with the coach, and she commented “Good chemistry with the coach, trust, confidentiality, and coach availability are key ingredients in a strong coaching alliance. Furthermore, effective coaches maintain momentum, dispense truth constructively, and truly care about the executives with whom they work” (Wasylyshyn 2003:102). Her conclusion indicates that psychologists have distinctive assets as executive coaches, particularly where they understand business, and are likely to influence high sustainability rates of learning and behaviour change where there is a “psychologically based model that includes intense scrutiny of the appropriateness of coaching for a referred executive” (ibid.106).

Paul Winum, a director of a management psychology company, was asked “what is distinctive about what psychologists can offer in developing leadership?” He responded that psychologists have five distinctive benefits:

• They can best leverage the science of human behaviour;
• They possess specialised expertise in assessment methodologies;
• They are experts in changing behaviour;
• They have specialised training in measuring results; and
• They operate under a well-developed professional code of ethics (Winum 2003:43-45).
His discussion of the competence of psychologists as executive coaches is reflected in Kilburg’s discussion of executive coaching as an emerging competency (Kilburg 1996:59) and the call by Brotman et al. to develop standards of competence for executive coaching (Brotman et al. 1998). Coaches are called upon to play numerous roles, including being a teacher, a problem-solver, a creative communicator, and one who can brainstorm using stories and metaphors (Richard 2003). Lloyd Brotman and his colleagues recommend that psychologists training to become executive coaches need a philosophical foundation that includes: their clarity about their own fallibility as change agents; inner scrutiny to guard against projecting their own issues onto the client; control of the urge to deliver instead of facilitate insights; maintaining appropriate boundaries; appropriate timing; confidentiality; and belief that the client’s and organisation’s needs will be met through the executive’s personal growth and sustained behaviour change (Brotman et al. 1998: 45).

Relationships and the organisational context of coaching
What works in coaching depends clearly on the nature of the client-coach relationship that is built up from the very first encounter (Kilburg 2000; Duncan & Miller 2000; Goldsmith et al. 2000). Several recent coaching articles describe one of the common issues that may present themselves as inhibitors of the relationship, that is, the tendency for clients to be resistant to change, and afraid of crisis, compared to the development of resilience and flexibility in the face of problems (Barrett 2004; Goldberg 2005). Resilience as an important concept in coaching has been described by Freddie Barrett as “the ability to demonstrate both strength and flexibility in the face of frightening disorder” (Barrett 2004:94). She draws upon the well known Chinese interpretation of "crisis" that is represented by two symbols, one for danger and one for hidden opportunity, noting that a resilient leader is one who views a crisis more as a hidden opportunity for bringing about change.

It is crucial that the client-coach relationship is built around the context of the organisation in which the client works. Robert Goldberg, head of the consulting organisation Insight (2005), develops an interesting critique of the efficacy of executive coaching where the context of organisation is not part of the process. He demonstrates how resistance to coaching by one executive can be turned around by the coach’s empathy for the executive’s difficult situation in his new environment. In a further twist in his article, Goldberg describes how as an executive coach interested in building
corporate change rather than in one-on-one coaching, he overcame his own resistance
to executive coaching: “I had spent years helping companies change their
management structures, strategies and processes. I had forgotten the power of
authentic helping relationships to transform leadership performance” (Goldberg 2005:
15).

The relationship between the individual, the coach and the organisation is one that
needs to be explored in more depth when critiquing various methods of executive
coaching and leadership development (Tobias 1996). It is generally agreed that the
most effective executive coaching is that which takes into account the specific
organisational situation that the client is working in, so that the investigation of
workplace relationships and the notion of spirituality in the workplace becomes a
focal point of the conversations. In a similar vein, Mike Jay talks about bringing
emotional intelligence into the workplace (Jay 2003: 6). Tobias (1996) sees an overlap
between consulting to the individual and consulting to the organisation (cited in
Orenstein 2002:358). According to Orenstein, Tobias has created “an opening for a
body of knowledge that, although virtually absent from the current literature, can
rightfully be called a direct antecedent. It encompasses theory and practice…from
the social systems thinking inherent in organizational psychology”.

An integrated strategy for training leaders to develop positive proactive relationships
within organisations has been discussed by many writers on coaching and leadership
development (Biberman & Whitty, 1997; Mitroff & Denton, 1999; Cacioppe, 2000;
Day, 2000; Dent et al., 2005). Leadership development helps people "understand
how to relate to others, coordinate their efforts, build commitments, and develop
extended social networks by applying self-understanding to social and organizational
imperatives" (Day 2000: 586; Dyer 2002). Day believes that these strategies cannot
be taught well outside the context of the work environment, as the building up of
relationships occurs in a particular location with particular groups of people (Rousseau
& Fried 2001). It is a long-term, continuous development process (Mumford et al.
2000), which is assisted through both training and executive coaching. Day cites
Olivero et al. (1997) as demonstrating that executive coaching as a follow-up to a
training program was shown to increase productivity by 88% in public sector managers,
a significantly higher increase than the results of training alone (in Day 2000:592).
2.8 Towards conscious leadership

The literature is witness to a shift from transactional leadership to transformational leadership currently taking place. Scholars write of this emerging transformational leadership as holistic, integrating consciousness, ethics, vision and action, intra and interpersonal skills. Some point to the dialogic process for developing these qualities. Few describe the nuts and bolts of what this looks and sounds like in real time.

The literature review shows that a good leader is expected to be competent, and demonstrate high-level cognitive intelligence and expertise in the arena in which they are leading. Current literature indicates that while competency is essential, it is only part of the story. In other words a good leader does need to demonstrate transactional leadership qualities, but transactional leadership, is regarded as a necessary but limited aspect of good leadership.

Further, the shift to transformational leadership involves a focus on self- and other-awareness. Transformational leadership assumes that transactional leadership is happening, but calls the leaders to a higher level of awareness, so that they are not just managing, but are also bringing their teams with them. They are visionary and there is a focus on interpersonal relationship. It is hinging on a greater self-awareness of the person and resultant increased relating skills. Several scholars note that learning through dialogue is a means to develop consciousness, transformational and also transcendental leadership. Coaching is dialogue. The qualities of leadership that came up in all the "good leader" exercises (and their antecedents of good teacher, good parent, and good coach) in fact cover the qualities of a transformational leader, including the demonstrated cognitive intelligence and expertise of transactional leadership. Many writers regard empathy, unconditional positive regard (respect) and integrity, as indicators of consciousness (Rogers1969; Hillman1996).

The transformational leader is on a personal path of transformation, and at a certain point of development in their own consciousness, the transformational leader becomes committed to fostering a culture of transformation across the work place.

In my Executive Coaching for Conscious Leadership approach, the transactional leadership goals are used as a vehicle and platform for developing a personal feedback loop, which facilitates the transformational leadership development. A lot of the key words of transformational leadership match the scale names of emotional intelligence tests such as the Bar-On EQ-i because transformational leadership includes emotional intelligence - it is a gaining of awareness, of consciousness. Leaders who experience the empowerment and value of these things going for them become
hungry for the development of higher order awareness and consciousness.

If focused executive coaching for conscious leadership is the primary variable in improved emotional intelligence, and if emotional intelligence by definition includes greater empathy, insight, awareness, optimism, happiness, optimism, responsibility, and if these things are elemental to consciousness, then emotional intelligence tests measuring shifts of emotional intelligence are measuring shifts of consciousness, at least in the early stages of the development of consciousness.

The debate about whether emotional intelligence and spirituality are related let alone similar would not occur in Buddhist thought where all are aspects of consciousness. Psychotherapeutic models of executive coaching teach a reflexive process, teach the language of empathy and observation and insight. The development of consciousness is fundamentally a process of developing insight. Measures of emotional intelligence measure insight so they measure consciousness.

Because the individual manager is in relationship with many people, their positive personal coaching results are inextricably linked to positive benefits for their teams. The complex of positive results provides leaders with a further feedback loop and positive regarding positive cultural change, including the financial bottom line benefit of transformational leadership. That positive reinforcement loop motivates them and they start to become more interested in the concept of awareness and further intra-interpersonal skills i.e. consciousness. The feedback loop is an early stage of conscious awareness, of the development of mindfulness, insight, empathy and interpersonal skills. These are the building blocks and ground for development of higher order consciousness. So there is a shift beyond the transactional management into less tangible levels of awareness of the dynamics of relationships, of ethics, of values. Once they experience the dynamic of that feedback, they seek out greater awareness and more feedback and they become active explorers in the journey.

Ultimately this seeking out and exploration of consciousness brings the leader to a new level of awareness of the interconnectedness of everything - to conscious leadership. They gain the insights that each of the hundreds of business/organisational decisions made every week matter, because everything is connected and that everything we do has a bearing on each other and the whole planet.

Transformational leadership is genuinely an element of conscious leadership, but transpersonal leadership, in Wilber's framework is a higher order of conscious leadership. Wilber's synthesis of consciousness is a remarkable model, synthesising a great range of concepts within different disciplines, and is very useful to explain the
many levels of consciousness. Wilbur's model demonstrates the integration of personal, cultural and universal consciousness through a complex of dimensions and stages. The conscious leader is journeying through their life's experience discovering and learning with every encounter, gaining greater awareness at every moment, and also providing this learning opportunity to all around them, at work, in their communities, in their families.

Since executive coaching for developing transactional management skills as a platform or vehicle for developing deeper and more powerful levels of consciousness, the executive coach also needs to be committed to their own spiritual journey and meditative practice, to the process of reflection and to ethical behaviour. The conscious leadership coach needs to be a conscious leader. The coach needs to be proactive, visionary, motivating and influencing. They have to have advanced intra and interpersonal awareness and skills to model and grandly envision what the leader can aspire to - full consciousness, far beyond the 10% of their capacity they are probably living through. The coach with insight and love and skills can shine a torch into the corners and find the fears and roadblocks limiting the person's growth. I bring my spirit to join with your spirit and together we awaken your spirit, we inspire each other to a greater level of insight and awareness and thus to consciousness. Together, through our conversation, through our inter-being, we become more and more aware of our defences/reactivities/fears, acknowledge them and let them go. We learn and implement better ways of interacting and being to replace those outmoded defences. Thus the leading coach, the conscious coach, facilitates the dissolution of ego defences and the ongoing integration of the other (the manager, the client). This modelling means that the executive is, in a business context, ultimately able to do the same. As they let go their ego defences, they find they are more integrated, more present, more ethical and therefore far more powerful. Dynamic trustful relationships allow people to dialogue, reflect and gain insight. Insight is the lynchpin of the development of basic awareness through to advanced consciousness. Both Insight and Vipassana require a context of ethical behaviour and psychological safety and a dialogic process of reflection (feedback loop) to recognise and let go ego defences until all the fuel of those defences is gone and dissolution occurs.

Regardless of the designated leadership roles, everybody in an organisation is in fact becoming a leader. Everyone on the path of consciousness is already becoming a leader. Those who are designated leaders can facilitate this, can intentionally raise consciousness, and can create a context of trust and safety that allows everyone to risk being authentic. They are consciously leading others into conscious leadership.
For those people who are relatively undefended, who are warm, helpful and approachable, the journey of developing conscious is easier. Once awakened to the process, an individual can progress rapidly.

The transactional leader makes sense of the disparate objects in their world with the rational mind - with analysis and science. The transformational leader is receptive to their inner knowing, their intuition, to creativity and is increasingly aware of the need to act ethically and being a part of a larger whole. The transformational leader is on the way to knowing what the transpersonal leader knows profoundly, that everything is connected that everything needs to be valued and balanced. To use Wilber's language the fully conscious leader is an integral leader. At every level, this person is psychologically integrated and also acting mindfully across all quadrants, integrating all.

In my experience the language that marks the transition from transactional to transformational leadership is the language of emotional intelligence. This language (e.g. self-regard, self-awareness, assertiveness, independence, self-actualisation, empathy, social responsibility, interpersonal relationship, stress tolerance, impulse control, reality testing, flexibility, problem solving, optimism, happiness) is the language for developing consciousness. The behaviours manifesting high levels of these qualities are the ground that will continue as the person grows in consciousness, right to the level of dissolution and transpersonal leadership.

The earliest published definition of conscious leadership that I have found is that of James Farr who viewed conscious leadership as a state of awareness brought freshly to every situation. "Conscious leadership consists of the art and science of leading change from a self-aware perspective, with clarity of purpose and an acute insight into others' perspectives and state of mind. This fully aware state uniquely allows leaders to properly inspire motivation in others, and to choose the most appropriate course of action, both to solve pressing problems and to effectively achieve long-term organisational goals. Key elements include insights into the follower's mind, developing a 'leader self' and operating from a high level of self-awareness."

(URL http://www.farr.net/thefarrdifference/afocusonconsciousleadership.html accessed 07.02.07).

In my view, Farr is on the right track and had moved beyond transactional leadership well ahead of his time. But he is talking of the person's awareness and consciousness only. He did not go the extra step of integrating universal consciousness.

The futurist John Renesch on the other hand, embraces what Farr outlined and
brings in ethics and the interconnectedness of all things.

Renesch writes on conscious leadership in the following ways: "Conscious leaders need to engage philosophical matters and wrestles with deeper questions such as 'what is real?'" and "The conscious person, and thus the conscious person is "both aware and personally responsible for that awareness. This consciousness is also grounded or based in clear and explicit intention...If I am aware of a problem - and I can solve it - then simply being aware of it isn't being conscious. Doing something about it is part of being conscious, of being personally responsible for what I'm aware of and what I intend." Renesch regards consciousness as grounded in awareness of wholeness, so conscious leadership is a sacred covenant to serve and is an approach distinguished by "wholeness, respect, and the interconnectedness of all things, material and immaterial, physical and spiritual." He writes: "...Conscious leadership includes conscious discernment, a principle that demands performance, integrity, competence and a non-calloused form of spiritual toughness...The conscious leader walks in physical and spiritual domains comfortably, remaining simultaneously grounded and comfortable in both... Conscious leadership is freely assumed. It is not awarded, appointed, inherited or earned...it comes from within oneself."

Conscious leadership is a subtle, complex, multi-dimensional dynamic process over the spectrum of a lifetime so it is not surprising that Renesch writes of it without giving a succinct definition. Nevertheless he goes further than Farr in insisting that the idea is empty without action, and that the conscious leader's increasing consciousness is demonstrated in their day-to-day personal and occupational decisions and actions. Their being and doing is conscious, free of fear, compassionate, respectful, mindful of all and serving the whole.

As a result of the decades-long journey through the literature that I have described in this chapter, I can say this about what is known about the conscious leader:

The conscious leader is on a developmental path to consciousness, however elementary or advanced. The conscious leader is endeavouring to be mindful, aware, present, empathic, able to respond instead of react, open, authentic. The developing conscious leader has got the tools in place to reflect on all aspects of their own behaviour, and recognise their defence mechanisms that are markers of their dualistic nature. The conscious leader is actively practising behaviours that are ethical. They are intentionally ethical, i.e. respectful of all sentient beings and caring for the welfare of others. The developing con-
scious leader actively fosters the meditative state of mind through traditional practices or modern techniques using alpha brainwave states, and experiences the calm, the intuitive knowing and immense creativity these techniques generate in all aspects of their life.

Just as consciousness is a spectrum from the most elementary sensory awareness through to identification or union with all being, in a state of non-dual knowing, so is conscious leadership a spectrum from elementary awareness through to inspired transpersonal visionary leadership.

Facilitating the development of consciousness is ultimately facilitating leadership. Conscious leadership is both a state of being (awareness) and a way of behaving (making decisions and acting consciously - ethically and responsibly). Conscious leadership envisions and motivates and influences others to seek consciousness.

### 2.9 Conclusion

This review has focussed on the interconnectedness of the many and varied approaches to such broad areas as human relations, transformational learning, theology, psychology, psychotherapy and coaching. The review is not intended to be a traditional critique of all the literature available, but rather a story that is woven around my developing understandings of the interdisciplinary nature of executive coaching. The bands of the rainbow helix revolve particularly around the interconnections between spiritual, emotional and business intelligence in developing conscious leadership. The notion of spiritual intelligence has become one of the emerging goals of executive coaching, as exemplified through the workshops in executive coaching developed by Cindy Wigglesworth, connecting spiritual, educational and business leadership (Wigglesworth 2002-2004). She brings the conversation of my own work around full circle when she discusses the notion of the "good leader":

What I find both reassuring and fascinating is that the lists [describing a good leader] look so similar from group to group. The list typically includes major religious figures from many traditions, global peace activists, local religious leaders, teachers, guidance counsellors, family members and spiritual writers. The traits that caused these people to be considered “spiritual leaders” typically includes descriptors such as: loving, kind, forgiving, peaceful, courageous, honest, generous, persistent, faithful, wise, and inspiring.

Wigglesworth has created a taxonomy of spiritual intelligence (SQ) for training leaders,
which resembles the concepts of presence, consciousness and integrity that comes with presence that I developed in my own coaching model.

With deep awareness/presence, there is integrity, and there is love. Earlier in this review, I viewed some of the key influences in developing my model of conscious leadership. Carl Rogers talked about unconditional positive regard and selfless love towards his clients. Joseph Fletcher in his work on situational ethics talked about doing the most loving thing. Stephen Fry's theory of spiritual leadership talked about the spiritual workplace being “love-led”, and Phil Harker and Ted Scott developed a model of humanity where consciousness brings together the separate realities of “I” and “other”, and changes our orientation from fear (fear of others, fear of the external) to love.

Spirituality, empathy, integrity, presence, unconditional positive regard — these are indicators of a deep awareness of self and other, of mindfulness in the coaching relationship. Zohar and Marshall (2000:238) evoke St Paul's definition of love in I Corinthians 13: “Love…rejoices in the truth; love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails”. We are not talking about any sentimental notion of love here. As Stanwell Corporation CEO Ted Scott said in a Spirituality Leadership and Management conference forum, “Love is tough. Love has to be tough”. Zohar and Marshall go on to say: “Love that is very high in spiritual intelligence is transformative — it releases us into a higher expression of ourselves and allows the other to reach beyond himself (sic)” (ibid.239).

It is clear that there are many avenues for further research into executive coaching for conscious leadership. Many of these centre around the “how” question: how are good leaders developed through coaching? How does an effective coach actually operate? What works and what doesn’t in executive coaching for leadership? How does the coaching relationship develop conscious leadership? In the next chapter I consider how I have researched these questions.
CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

“Tell me and I’ll forget; show me and I may remember; involve me and I’ll understand.”
Chinese Proverb

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I explain the research paradigm I adopted and the methodology through which I framed the research. The research program is outlined. I describe how the work was carried out with the selected participants, together with an explanation of the data gathering and analysis techniques. In particular, I outline the steps I took to analyse the data from pre- and post-test results, as well as the transcribed data from a selection of taped coaching events, together with other documents, case notes and field notes. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the ways in which I dealt with some of the issues and dilemmas of this research.

I am trained as a psychologist and am drawn to results I can count on. Yet with my humanistic and meditation background, I was drawn more towards the qualitative than towards attempting to conduct a quantitative program. I agree with Daniel Sciarra, an American professor in counsellor education, who believes the role of the qualitative researcher is defined in terms of their philosophical stance on how we know, and therefore how we prefer to investigate. “The choice between quantitative and qualitative research is more than simple appropriateness for the task at hand. It is more about philosophy of knowledge and how one understands the real” (Sciarra 1999:37). I am a practitioner. I know primarily through experience, therefore I investigate the experience of doing and being.

Nevertheless, I do use some quantitative data from psychological testing to compare the analysis of the coaching event with results from the BarOn Emotional Intelligence Inventory. Within the research process I conducted pre- and post-tests with the participants, as one indicator of change between the beginning and the conclusion of the coaching process.
I used multiple methods to triangulate the state of affairs that was experienced as “real” by the coach and the client. Of course, as David Silverman points out in his text on “doing” qualitative research, mapping one set of data upon another is complex and does not necessarily reflect a single phenomenon: “…If you treat social reality as constructed in different ways in different contexts, then you cannot appeal to a single ‘phenomenon’ which all your data apparently represent” (Silverman 2000: 99).

The third section of this chapter examines the model of conscious leadership that is being researched, explaining the protocols, the skill sets developed as an integral part of the coaching process, and the anticipated outcomes. The fourth section then outlines the ways in which the data were analysed, outlining the methodology used and the ways in which theory was being built through the analysis of the discourse of both coach and client.

3.2 Methodological traditions

My research methodology was informed by three traditions of qualitative research: action research, case study research, together with the use of some quantitative data gained by discussing the results of the pre- and post-test EQ ratings of the participants. The process was experiential. I was conducting an inductively-based inquiry into the coaching event.

Action Research – practitioner as researcher

The project arose out of my professional experience as a consultant psychologist doing executive coaching in corporations, and is intended to contribute to our understandings of ongoing practice. As such it has key elements of the Action Research cycle outlined by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988). Though not limited to the strict guidelines of Kemmis, my research included the elements of planning, acting, observing, reflecting, and revising the plan and so on to the next cycle. This methodology is intrinsically congruent with coaching where the fundamental process is giving and receiving feedback. Within the relationship of trust established between coach and client is the context for modifying practices and reviewing these as a result of feedback, and for learning how to do this with others, whether in staff appraisals or in day-to-day matters. The large feedback component of coaching readily allows for two levels of action research – both between client and coach, and between client and their colleagues in their organisation as overseen by the coach.

He makes the interesting observation that “much reflection-in-action hinges on the experience of surprise. When intuitive, spontaneous performance yields nothing more than the results expected for it, then we tend not to think about it. But when intuitive performance leads to surprises, pleasing and promising or unwanted, we may respond by reflecting-in-action” (Schön 1983: 56). While the coaching sessions were carefully planned to yield specific, anticipated awareness, change and progress, the deeply personal outcomes of the sessions depended on the individual client as well as on the particular relationship built up through the discourse, which of course varied in often surprising and insightful ways.

Lisa Hoshmand (1999) has pointed out that action research has historically been linked to the egalitarian and emancipatory values of doing qualitative research (Hoshmand 1999:18). The philosophical base of action research, usually attributed to Kurt Lewin’s work, and later to Argyris and Schön in the USA, and to Kemmis in Australia, is founded in pragmatism. It is closely allied to participatory action research (Whyte 1991), a popular method for bringing about change in communities.

Hoshmand notes that action research implies a respectful, egalitarian attitude between researcher and participant, and a sense of “collaboration with the participants whose naive perceptions and meanings are valued in a consultative, co-constructing process” (Hoshmand 1999:18). As Michael Kahn comments in his description of relationship building between client and therapist, “…an effective therapist must demonstrate the utmost respect for the client, a genuine interest in the client’s experience of the relationship, and an unflagging nondefensiveness in response to that experience” (Kahn 1997:85). Similarly, respect is a key component of any ethical coaching relationship, as is trust. In Kilburg’s discussion of executive coaching he says “Communicating basic respect [my italics] for a person and for their efforts to improve themselves and their organizations, encouraging exploration and tolerating frustration and anxiety that comes with risk-taking are all appropriate parts of the basic coaching relationship” (Kilburg 2000:115).

The ethical assumptions of trust and sincerity underlying action research design therefore appealed to me both from practical and philosophical points of view, as the necessary ingredients for consciousness and empathy. As with many practitioner research designs, however, the cycle of action research was modified to suit the coaching situation. Each of the participants experienced a similar set of coaching sessions, even though on reflection and evaluation, the design and inputs were constantly reviewed, adapted and improved.

Psychologists have spent thousands of hours endeavouring to establish which change
outcomes are the result of which therapeutic interventions. While there is increasing research evidence of efficacious interventions, there is much that is not known. Client explanations of what facilitated change are usually different from those of the consultant psychologist. Researchers examining audiovisual tapes of the whole process with client and psychologist find different explanations.

Case Study Research
Executive Coaching is tailored to an individual manager in their specific situation. The central function of feedback in coaching means that it is well suited to case study research which according to Merriam is “focused on discovery, insight and understanding from the perspectives of those being studied” (Merriam 1991:3). The same coaching protocol was used on all the clients in the research process, even though the steps were flexible and allowed the client to have some ownership of how the steps progressed. The process experienced was bounded both by the individual company manager and also by the organisation in which the client was employed.

Miles and Huberman (1994: 25) point out that qualitative researchers sometimes struggle with the questions of what the case is and where the case study leaves off. They define a case as a phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context. In my study, the bounded context is the coaching program, set inside another bounded context of the setting of the two companies, and the one-to-one coaching sessions with one client provide the micro-context. Robert Stake defines the case as an “integrated system”, which would also describe my research (Stake 1995). The coaching experience is conversational, illuminates meaning, is being used to improve practice, is descriptive, specific, heuristic, and takes place over a specific longitudinal time frame. Further, the process explores the parties’ motives, key issues and solutions. In one company, it was applied in a situation of crisis and change.

3.3 Research Method

The project involved two organisations, a retail company and a utility company, referred to in this research project as Company R and Company U respectively. The study evolved after these two companies requested my services as an executive coach for their managers. I entered into agreement with each of these companies to provide coaching for up to 12 managers from each, whereby I would run one-to-one coaching for 12 sessions of one hour each every fortnight, over a 6-month period. This is a structured protocol for the business environment, including the 12 sessions of coaching to achieve the individual’s goals in the contracted time frame. In fortnightly group sessions for each company, I introduced the concepts of leadership skill sets,
encapsulated in flow charts and explanations as handouts. These were referred to as coaching models and were taken from the training program I developed for coaches whom I trained in the protocol. The protocol included pre- and post-test appraisal, the analysis of which yielded relevant quantitative data for the research.

The agreement, as a professional development activity, was to provide a positive, proactive, one-to-one professional relationship with the purpose of developing both the managers and, in the long term, the organisations. Within this agreement and with the informed consent of the two companies and the individual managers, my stated research aim was to develop and explore how the dialogue, the development with the client of specific skills sets, and the relationship building were able to help the client achieve goals and improve performance. As a psychologist, I am bound by a code of ethics of the Australian Psychological Society and the Department of Health in NSW Australia where I am registered. More important to me than the prospect of deregistration is my own congruence and psychological integrity. For me, respect for others is a moral imperative, a goal of all coaching, and a key ingredient in the research process. Once the University of Western Sydney Human Research Ethics Panel approved the research proposal, the work began. The clients said they felt safe that confidentiality was guaranteed. All sessions were audio-taped and transcribed. Participants had access to both tape and written transcription notes and were invited to give feedback and comments on the research at every stage. Control of the process ultimately remained with the participants, who also retained the responsibility of setting their own limits on the degree of sharing.

In this research, as with my work in other companies, I engage with participants who are executive staff in organisations, from middle and senior management ranks. By definition, they are intelligent, psychologically functional and motivated people – in large organisations managers get promoted on the basis of rigorous processes such as quarterly staff reviews, a lot of professional feedback, and 360-degree staff reviews, all of which help screen out people who are incompetent.

The two companies, Company R and Company U, with which I worked were provided with initial seminar-style presentations about executive coaching to all their CEOs and senior managers. They were invited to volunteer for coaching, and the research process was clearly explained. As a result of these negotiations, 12 clients from each company became the participants. It was made clear that the basis of good coaching is trust, and people should only participate if they chose to. A detailed description of the companies and the participants are discussed in the next chapter. I have used pseudonyms and altered some company details in order to maintain anonymity,
The research took place over six months. Of the 24 participants who entered into the coaching agreement, 3 left their companies and 21 remained for the whole process. Those whose sessions were recorded and form the basis of the research are included in Chapter 4. While the descriptions of the two companies and their managers form the basis of two organisational case studies, the significance of the research lies particularly in the one-to-one coaching dialogue where it is revealed “what works”, a fundamental aim of this thesis. These coaching sessions have been called conversations, as it is essentially the dialogue between client and coach that is under scrutiny. They were enhanced by having group meetings before the individual sessions at each company, where the concepts of leadership were further developed when I shared with them the handouts and diagrams I had developed for the Executive Coaching for Conscious Leadership Training Manual.

Rather than attempting to analyse in detail every transcript (some 300 hours of taped interviews), I have taken two individuals, Brian from Company U and Penny from Company R, as case studies in their own right (see Chapters 5 and 6). It became evident that the depth of analysis based on the 2 case studies was sufficient to demonstrate the process of executive coaching. Details of the 21 individuals who completed the coaching then formed the basis of chapter 4 to provide an overview of the organisational context, the group sessions, the general insights from the 12 coaching sessions, and overall qualitative and quantitative coaching results for each participant.

As this study is primarily a qualitative study of the coaching relationship, I justified the choice of the detailed case studies of Brian and Penny based on the central focus of this thesis: to present material that would bring out the richness and authenticity of relationship between the coach and the manager; that would provide the most insight; and that would get to the core of why this process works. It was therefore necessary to select 2 people who best represented the larger group, rather than to make a selection based on the biggest shift in EQ, or the highest score, or the most powerful leaders. Both case studies illustrated the importance of workplace context of each of Company U and Company R. The choice of a male and female allowed for potential insights into possible gender differences; the ages of Brian and Penny were around the average in their companies; both represented senior management; and both were excellent examples of how executive coaching addressed the underlying relationship blocks that each of these case studies manifested.
3.4 The Coaching for Conscious Leadership Model

The primary method for the research is the gathering of a variety of data during the step-by-step protocol of the Coaching for Conscious Leadership Model. Figure 3.1 is a summary of the coaching protocol. The model is based on the Coach Training Manual which I developed through a process of action research – drafting the protocol, developing or adapting psychological tools, trialling the process with other coaches whom I trained, reflecting and evaluating the process, revising, re-drafting, and working through the steps with clients.

The discourse of the counsellor is very different from that of people in a non-counselling role: managers, for example. The former adeptly establishes a trusting relationship with the client in order to support that person towards the management of their own problem/issues/decisions. This is a person-focused approach. The power of the work appears to depend on the depth of the relationship, which in turn depends on the presence (competence and authority) of the counsellor/coach. By contrast, the manager is problem/solution-focused and will focus directly and immediately on practical ways to deal with a difficult situation. This is a task focus. The two foci would seem to be at odds, or at least, minimally combinable. The skilled coach will blend elements of the skilled counsellor (building the relationship) with elements of the skilled manager (finding effective solutions) and achieve both goals (person/task) efficiently, with no collision of goals. The ways in which this blend occurs is demonstrated in the case studies in Chapters 5 and 6.

For the Executive Coaching for Conscious Leadership model, I provided a series of handouts for clients that accompany the social skill sets designed to enhance leadership skills and bring about greater other-awareness, sensitivity, empathy, self-awareness and presence. An example of these is included as Appendix A.

3.5 Coach attributes, skills assumptions and exercises

The twelve-session coaching program provides the structure for the coach and client to build their relationship, and for the coach to work with the client to enhance their management and especially their leadership performance. The model assumes that the coach has basic counselling skills, including joining and alliance building, attending, responding, paraphrasing and reflecting, empathy, advanced empathic communication, advanced communication skills (concrete, direct, simple, immediate, assertive, respectful, and genuine), strategic goal setting, problem solving and closure. In addition, the coach must know how to help people gain knowledge and understanding, rehearse new behaviours and develop positive “can do” beliefs and
attitudes so clients change and achieve their goals. It is also assumed that the coach has done enough of their own healing and is sufficiently integrated to be present and form deep, trusting relationships with their clients.

---

### Figure 3.1: Twelve Session Executive Coaching Protocol

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>A. All Sessions to begin with:</th>
<th>B. Individual Session Focus</th>
<th>C. All Sessions to conclude with:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Join/reconnect</td>
<td>Explain process – how we will proceed today, coaching improves performance by changing attitudes and behaviours etc, client does the work, training or practice, and coach encourages, teaches, gives feedback, refocuses</td>
<td>Summarise the session - affirm what has been positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Empathise</td>
<td>Assessment via strengths, and most and least satisfactory aspects of work and life</td>
<td>Summarise new learning of the day including Point of Power, Adult Relating, Healthy Self, Conflict Resolution, Giving and Receiving Feedback etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acknowledge their strengths/achievements</td>
<td>&quot;Old Me&quot; explore problem through past concrete situations, specific behaviour and feelings – get accurate cycle “I felt, I said, I did”</td>
<td>Keep focus on goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Build rapport</td>
<td>Preliminary goals</td>
<td>Set clear strategic assignments to try this week e.g. “Notice yourself doing…” or “Give someone feedback about…” or “Seek feedback…” or meet with people targeted to become your allies and join with them”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expect positive change weekly – “what has been good this week?”</td>
<td>Clarify knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to change to achieve these goals</td>
<td>Focus on the person in actual contexts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expect initiatives and action</td>
<td>(touch on &quot;New Me&quot;)</td>
<td>The point of power is in the present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Validate all positives</td>
<td>Make a contract – “Your coach is here for you – see me in a week and call me if urgent”</td>
<td>Check on all resources - health, partner, children, family, money, friends, creativity, fun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consistently give loving honest productive feedback</td>
<td>Review first session, revisit goals</td>
<td>Farewell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consistently invite feedback re process, outcomes and coaching relationship</td>
<td>Adult self – powerful and in the present</td>
<td>Write up notes with “Next…” key-words to follow up next time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Focus on the person in actual contexts</td>
<td>Have clear milestones to recognise and measure change</td>
<td>Ensure database up to date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The point of power is in the present</td>
<td>“New Me” – develop further</td>
<td>ARE YOU ON TRACK: REVIEW IN LIGHT OF ORIGINAL GOALS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Check on all resources - health, partner, children, family, money, friends, creativity, fun</td>
<td>Thoroughly go through the “Old Me” – with measures and body focus measure on scale of 1 to 10</td>
<td>Continue managing the change – support and direct the action plan e.g teaching and rehearsing behaviours for actual context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ensure they persistently practise positive behaviours</td>
<td>Devise action plan</td>
<td>Help client evaluate action plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>positive attitude, validating others, encouraging others, building relationships with family and friends and colleagues</td>
<td>Identify new information and learning needed and how to get it</td>
<td>Refine the program and improve every step</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Develop the ‘New Me’ systematically – how true is it – with measures scale of 1 to 7</td>
<td>Review the whole process: congratulations, completion, closure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>Rehearse new behaviours relevant to week’s assignment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>Type up “New Me” and install</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>ARE YOU ON TRACK: REVIEW IN LIGHT OF ORIGINAL GOALS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

zwelve SESSION EXECUTIVE COACHING PROTOCOL © Cecily Moreton

Individual Session Protocol

Session A. All Sessions to begin with:

B. Individual Session Focus

C. All Sessions to conclude with:

• Summarise the session - affirm what has been positive
• Summarise new learning of the day including Point of Power, Adult Relating, Healthy Self, Conflict Resolution, Giving and Receiving Feedback etc
• Keep focus on goals
• Set clear strategic assignments to try this week e.g. “Notice yourself doing…” or “Give someone feedback about…” or “Seek feedback…” or meet with people targeted to become your allies and join with them”
• Farewell
• Write up notes with “Next…” key-words to follow up next time
• Ensure database up to date

---

Figure 3.1: Twelve Session Executive Coaching Protocol
3.6 Coaching Protocol.

An outline of the 12-session program is given in Figure 3.1. The reason why I am including my executive coaching protocol is to demonstrate the link between the skill sets, qualities identified in the leadership group workshops, and EQ-i subscales. The connections are found in the language and meaning attributed to that language. Through working on specific skills sets, including language, for these skills, EQ-i scores improved and managers reported external feedback of marked positive change in these areas. In this program the client undergoes a number of activities, builds up important skill sets and learns to practise new patterns of behaviour with the coach, in the workplace and in their home life. Most sessions include developing scripts to use in specific situations, rehearsing them and subsequently reviewing how well they worked and revising them for next time. By relating with an expert relater, the client experiences, reflects on and rehearses relating behaviours. Most importantly, the manager client learns to build relationships, be present, and develop conscious leadership. Each of the clustered skill sets below was developed over many years of practice as a counselling psychologist working with clients and training other psychologists. I then adapted them to suit the particular needs of executives in organisations.

Through the stories of the participants, the development of these qualities can be identified at various stages of the coaching process. The specific topics outlined here describe the interpersonal skills sets: the healthy self; the A-B-C of communication structures; Transactional Analysis (P-A-C); empathy; point of power is in the present; old and new patterns; giving and receiving feedback; and power in organizations and closure. The introductory session that was conducted with the whole group prior to the individual coaching protocol is the ‘Good Leader’ exercise described in Chapter 1.

The healthy self

One of the first coaching sessions is devoted to discussing the positive cycle of a healthy person, who has good life skills sets and strong identity and self-esteem. The group sessions that took place every fortnight provided the opportunity to engage in lifelong learning “classes” – where concepts such as the “Healthy Self” could be explored first in the group and from then on in the course of the coaching sessions.

The healthy self is a central concept and I teach it in two main ways. First, using a broad psychological framework, I teach with a flow chart showing that psychologically healthy people display affectivity, continuity, cohesion and agency. Second, I use a handout which again draws on psychological research, to show the sets of behavioural skills associated with psychological health.

It is such skills that the coaching program helps the client to develop. However, they
are "doing" tools through which the coach endeavours to assist the client to develop a deeper understanding of those attributes of empathy, presence, genuineness and love, the “being” dimension. The next phase of the coaching introduces the concept of the healthy self being the healthy leader: being present and powerful. Other key skills include dealing with difference and conflict, negotiating and persuading, and assertive communication. These are language events that can be scripted and rehearsed and improved upon. Decision-making and adjusting to change and loss are processes with linking steps of understanding. The manager who is developing as a leader also needs good judgment, which includes a balanced locus of control (allocating responsibility for successes and failures appropriately), the ability to give and receive feedback and the ability to respond instead of react.

**Communication Structures**

Throughout the coaching sessions, the coach focuses on the client’s ability to communicate clearly and constructively. From the first encounter with the client, the coach concentrates on what I call the ‘A-B-C’ communication structure, (see Figure 3.2 ) whereby clients learn to structure each conversation with a beginning, a middle and an end. Most have learned to write essays and reports with this structure. I teach them that the beginning or A is essential and those who skip the A in a conversation gain less buy-in (i.e. less interest and commitment) from people they are speaking with – they are mere managers rather than leaders. Since capacity to have good communication skills is one of the principles of good leadership, the coach models the ‘A-B-C’ of communication in every session, with every phone call, in every email.

The A is the joining of client and coach at the beginning of the conversation with news and empathic listening responses, and agreeing the agenda of the conversation. The B or the body of the conversation includes stepping through the agenda and checking parties have heard each other accurately. The C or conclusion includes summing up what has been covered, clarifying who is going to do what within what time and agreeing what will be followed up the next session, and giving encouragement and support to each other to carry out those things.
Transactional Analysis

Unlike many coaching programs, my Executive Coaching for Conscious Leadership model employs a number of psychological constructs as part of the process, given to the clients as handouts and referred to as models. One such important model used, commonly known as the Parent-Adult-Child (P-A-C) model, is derived from Eric Berne’s groundbreaking Transactional Analysis model, published in *Games People Play* (1964). The P-A-C is an excellent way to grasp power dynamics in relationships. Good leaders consistently function in the Adult-Adult dynamic. Healthy adults are reasonably integrated and become more so all the time. They are open and confident and their honest relating builds trust and power based on respect, as opposed to that of the critical parent/bully role, or the conforming submissive child. Styles vary between managers, but the structure of mature adult-to-adult communication includes immediacy, concreteness and assertiveness. Assertiveness is essential for an executive to have the capacity to defer what is appropriate, set parameters (“let’s make it work”), make decisions and insist on operationalising those decisions.

**Empathy**

In a helping relationship – whether that is coaching, counselling, teaching or parenting – empathy is perhaps the most important relationship-building ingredient. While *attending and listening* encourage us to explore problems and drop our guard, *empathy* provides the support for this often painful process because we demonstrate we have heard the affect as well as the content of what the speaker has communicated. To teach empathy, I pause the coaching conversation and reflect on an excerpt from a

---

**Figure 3.2 The A-B-C of Communication: summary of handout**

**A**

**Introduction**

Bridge
Build rapport,
Join with
them, be
empathic,
share feelings

**LISTEN**

Agree
Agenda

**B**

**Body**

Analysis
Identify key
issues, give
concrete
text examples,
check for
agreed
understanding

**C**

**Conclusion**

Action
Move to
conclusions,
solutions and
action
few minutes earlier, and ask the manager whether they thought I had genuinely understood what they had experienced, both what had happened to them and how they felt about it. I pick an example where I think it most likely they will agree. Then I ask them what I did that gave them that impression. Together we explicate how I reflected and checked and corrected my cognitive and affective understanding until it was accurate. Once they understand the language process they can then rehearse similar approaches. In coaching, it is crucial to have accurate, advanced empathy, and this can only come about with insight; that is, anticipating the real significance and implications of what is being said. At the same time developing insight makes empathy more accurate. For an experienced coach, the anticipation of a larger picture is like a musician listening to a melody and knowing the whole symphony.

**The point of power is in the present**

In this set of skills, the client explores with the coach ways of dealing with problems without collapsing personal power or attaching to the problem old ways of feeling hurt or future fears. Initially we may react with frustration to a pressing problem. By learning how to hit the “pause button”, remaining balanced and equanimous, it becomes easier to give a wiser response. The Adult of the P-A-C has the ability to respond i.e. responsibility, and thus remain a powerful adult. The particular model used in the program was developed by Matra Robertson, of Halcyon Healing (pers. comm). Like meditators the world over, Matra teaches people first to ground themselves and integrate body and mind. So we too help people to feel their feelings, then stop and calm themselves, listening to their intuition or inner spiritual knowing, or seeking advice from other people. Retraining of the mind, i.e. reconditioning, involves gaining insight, self-awareness regarding old patterns, and consciously and intentionally developing new habits/conditioning. The goals of western psychotherapy and Buddhist meditation practice are the same. Clients learn to let go of old reactive ego defences and instead, learn to be present and responsible. Integrating previously dissociated aspects of the self leads to psychological integration. This integration enables a person to act with integrity. Psychological integration/integrity is thus key to mature ethical behaviour.

*From Old patterns to New patterns*

As can be seen from Figure 3.1, coaching involves changing behaviour, and some people who experience old defensive behaviour patterns need the coach to help them move from an “old me” to a “new me” mind pattern. This is about reconditioning the mind. They need to learn new patterns of behaviour, new goals, and new ways of dealing with attitudinal roadblocks. Old defensive behaviours actually reduce a person’s power and are often recognised in aggressive/Parent or powerless/Child behaviour. Goal clarification is an important part of this process, as is an emphasis on positive attitudes and improved decision-making capacity. By the end of the sixth session, the client should be able to articulate the “new me”, and continue to develop the concept and validate the new more powerful behaviours in the second half of the coaching sessions.

**Giving and receiving feedback**

Feedback is at the heart of coaching, as it is at the heart of management and mentoring. Coaches need to model inviting and receiving feedback as a skill everyone needs for the development of self-awareness, identity and self-esteem. Similarly, the client needs to learn how to give constructive feedback when they are conducting staff reviews in the workplace. This part of the coaching process takes time and care, and is carefully structured so that the client gains maximum understanding of the process. Staff reviews
are crucial mechanisms for managers to build real relationships with their colleagues.

*Power in organisations, and closure*

Every system has a number of formal and informal power dynamics. From the very first session, clients are invited to talk about their roles and responsibilities, and through this information, I learn about the levels of power in the organisation, and form a sense of the power structures that are a focus of the coaching for leadership. The flow of power in an organisation is largely determined by the decision-making and communication processes. The coach needs to know and to enable the client to learn how to use power more constructively in the organisation by learning to think and act systemically. I teach this by mapping with the manager the management structure, identifying which roles are most powerful in their organisation, which individuals exert power most effectively and which managers are allied to which figures in the organisation. The manager learns to identify why some decisions work and others do not. They work out how they are placed in the organisation dynamic and how to improve things so they have the resources to do their job well and a career path in the organisation. The last few sessions deal with utilising the skills already taught in order to deal effectively with decision making, with leading through conflict, and putting it all together.

### 3.7 Pre- and post-testing of the participants

The EQ-i Emotional Quotient Inventory devised by Reuven Bar-On is an accepted measure of emotional intelligence in the literature, where it is compared favourably with such measures as the Multifactor Emotional Intelligence Scale (MEIS) and the MSCEIT (Bar-On 1997; Dawda & Hart 2000; Bachman 2000; Perlini et al. 2006; Kunnanutt 2004; Zeidner et al. 2004). The benefits of using Bar-On’s EQ-i in my research were that it suited the model of executive coaching I developed; it was available in Australia at the time I was searching for a suitable instrument; it was affordable for a doctoral research project; moreover, a sufficient body of evidence appeared to support the claims that Bar-On made regarding its reliability and validity for testing potential through emotional intelligence indicators. This view has since been corroborated by other studies (see Appendix C: Zeidner et al.’s comparative table of EI measures).

In all these type of testing, there are some doubt that the EQ-i can actually measure performance in the workplace, or that increased EQ-i scores on a retest indicate increased emotional intelligence (Zeidner et al. 2004). As Kunnanatt states, ‘EQ is a measure of the emotional skills of a person but is not emotional intelligence as such. It is a measure of the application of emotional intelligence to one’s personal and social life ...’ (Kunnanatt 2004:492). The test itself is a mixed model version (both cognitive and emotional), and as such is intended to predict potential, rather than claim to measure actual performance. In this regard, the EQ-i has been reported
as being used effectively to predict high occupational performance (Perlini et al. 2006:109), and others have noted that the scores of the EQ-i on high performers compared with low performers, indicate that the higher levels of EI lead to enhanced job performance (Bachman et al. 2000:176).

In terms of my own research, the EQ-i was administered as a pre-test to obtain some data prior to coaching, and in a post-test to assess whether the levels of emotional intelligence would improve following coaching. Because EQ tests such as Bar-On’s and Goleman’s are mixed models measuring more than ability, the method employed of using self-reporting invites the criticism that there could be a risk of data being influenced by familiarity of the re-test, or by an attempt to improve scores based on a social desirability factor, that participants wish to present themselves in a favourable light (Podsakoff et al. 2003:879). However, as it is shown in the data reported in Chapters 4, 5 and 6, the higher levels of EI were not only based on the test, but on the continuous feedback I gave and received during the coaching sessions. The data were triangulated by the test scores, the interviews, and the Company U and Company R evidence from the CEOs and other managers, who at no stage had access to the confidential coaching material of the individual participants or the individual EQ-i test results.

The words that emerged from the Good Leader workshops included the following: loving presence, insight, stability, authority, wisdom, good judgment, empathy, intuition, systemic thinking, big picture approach, intelligent, high level knowledge and skills, commitment, positive energy, fun. When I became familiar with the EQ-i components of the Bar-On model I realised how many of the words resonated with those of the Good Leader, and when I presented the lists on the whiteboard there was general agreement that the workshops list was similar to the EQ scales and the latter would be a useful tool - see Figure 3.3.
I found that the components measured by the Bar-On EQ-i provided me with valuable information in assessing the extent to which my clients were demonstrating emotionally “healthy” attributes. Their initial scores (the pre-test) allowed me to have a window on gauging their current ability to be successful in dealing with personal and professional demands and pressures. These pre-test scores gave me insights into how I would adapt my coaching process to suit the individual client’s needs for improving their emotional, management and leadership skills. The post-test instrument was a re-test of the same EQ-i, taken six months after the original test. The results of the post-test were then compared to those of the original tests.

Components of the EQ-i

Table 3.1 lists the five composite components of the EQ-i, and the 15 sub-scales of these components (Bar-On 1999: 3). These components are measured through a questionnaire with multiple items requiring a response between 1 and 5, from “very seldom or not true of me” to “very often true of me or true of me”. The raw scores obtained from the sub-scales are then converted to standard scores with 100 as the mean and standard deviations set at 15 points. The scores have been interpreted as illustrating that the majority of respondents will receive scores within 15 points of the mean (between 85 and 115). Generally, over 130 is considered markedly high; 120-129 very high; 110-119 high; 90-109 average; 80-89 low; 70-79 very low; and under 70 markedly low.
Table 3.1: Components measured by the Bar-On of EQ-i

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intrapersonal Components</th>
<th>Interpersonal Components</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Self-Awareness (ES)</td>
<td>Empathy (EM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assertiveness (AS)</td>
<td>Social Responsibility (RE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Regard (SR)</td>
<td>Interpersonal relationship (IR)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Actualization (SA)</td>
<td>Independence (IN)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptability Components</td>
<td>Stress Management Components</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem Solving (PS)</td>
<td>Stress Tolerance (ST)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reality Testing (RT)</td>
<td>Impulse Control (IC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility (FL)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Mood Components</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happiness (HA)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optimism (OP)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Intrapersonal Components**

*Emotional self-awareness:* the ability to recognise one’s feelings, to differentiate between them, to know what one is feeling and why, and to know what caused the feelings.

*Assertiveness:* the ability to express feelings, beliefs, and thoughts and defend one’s rights in a non-destructive manner. Assertive people are not over-controlled or shy – they are able to outwardly express their feelings without being aggressive or abusive.

*Self-Regard:* the ability to respect and accept oneself as basically good. Respecting oneself is essentially liking the way one is and is connected to having a fairly well-developed sense of identity. Self-acceptance is the ability to accept one’s perceived positive and negative aspects as well as one’s limitations and possibilities. Self-regard relates to feelings of security, inner strength, self-assuredness, self-confidence and feelings of self-adequacy.

*Self-Actualisation:* the ability to realise one’s potential capacities, becoming involved in pursuits that lead to a meaningful, rich and full life. It can mean a commitment to long-term goals, trying to do one’s best and improve oneself, and having feelings of self-satisfaction.

*Independence:* the ability to be self-directed and self-controlled in one’s thinking and actions and to be free of emotional dependence. Independent people are self-reliant in
planning and making important decisions. However, consulting others is not necessarily a sign of dependence. Independence relates to feelings of self-confidence and inner strength.

**Interpersonal Components**

*Empathy*: the ability to be aware of, to understand, and to appreciate the feelings of others. It is “tuning in” (being sensitive) to what, how and why people feel the way they do. Being empathic means being able to "emotionally read" other people. Empathic people care about others and show interest in and concern for others.

*Interpersonal relationships*: the ability to establish and maintain mutually satisfying relationships that are characterised by intimacy and by giving and receiving affection. Mutual satisfaction includes meaningful social interchanges that are potentially rewarding and enjoyable, and a sense of feeling at ease and comfortable in such relations with positive expectations concerning social intercourse.

*Social responsibility*: the ability to demonstrate oneself as a cooperative, contributing and constructive member of one’s social group. This component is associated with people with social consciousness and a basic concern for others, with interpersonal sensitivity and the ability to accept others.

**Adaptability Components**

*Problem Solving*: the ability to identify and define problems as well as to generate and implement potentially effective solutions. Problem solving is multiphasic in nature, moving from sensing a problem to a series of steps to choose the best course of action. Problem solving is associated with being conscientious, disciplined, methodical and systematic, and the desire to confront, not avoid, problems.

*Reality testing*: the ability to assess the correspondence between what is experienced and what objectively exists. It involves “tuning in” to, or “sizing up” the immediate situation, attempting to keep things in the correct perspective and experiencing things as they really are. It is associated with lucidity and clarity in perception and thought processes.

*Flexibility*: the ability to adjust one’s emotions, thoughts, and behaviour to changing situations and conditions; the ability to adapt to unfamiliar, unpredictable, and dynamic circumstances. Flexible people are agile, synergistic and capable of reacting to a change without rigidity.

**Stress Management Components**

*Stress tolerance*: the ability to withstand adverse events and stressful situations without “falling apart”, by actively and positively coping with stress. This component is similar to what has been referred to as “ego strength” and “positive coping”, and is associated with the capacity to be relaxed and composed and to calmly face difficulties, rather than surrendering to feelings of helplessness and hopelessness and anxiety. Stress tolerant people have a capacity to choose courses of action for coping, have an optimistic disposition, and a feeling that one can control or influence the stressful situation.

*Impulse control*: the ability to resist or delay an impulse, drive, or temptation to act. [In the conscious leadership model we talk about “hitting the pause button”].

**General Mood Components**
**Happiness**: the ability to feel satisfied with one’s life, to enjoy oneself and others, and to have fun. Happy people often feel good and at ease in both work and leisure; happiness is associated with a general feeling of cheerfulness and enthusiasm. It is an overall indicator of one’s overall degree of emotional intelligence and emotional functioning.

**Optimism**: the ability to look at the brighter side of life and to maintain a positive attitude, even in the face of adversity.

**Summary**

“The well-functioning, successful, and emotionally healthy individual is one who possesses a sufficient degree of emotional intelligence and an average or above average EQ score. The higher the EQ score, the more positive the prediction for general success in meeting environmental demands and pressures” (Bar-On 1999:21).

### 3.8 Analysing the data

Much of the data analysis is based on a close reading and interpretation of the “stories” presented by the clients who are participants in the research. There are numerous ways in which a transcript can be analysed, from the most micro-level analysis of the content, to a systematic discourse analysis to deconstruct the various meanings at different meaning levels of the texts, or even the less structured conversation analysis. My analysis, while taking elements of each of these forms of analysis, is through the construction of the stories revealed by the client in the coaching relationship, as they developed through dialogue with the coach. Dialogic analysis draws from approaches to understanding narrative in context. Specifically, my detailed analysis consisted of coding, classifying and elaborating on emerging themes from the dialogue. This was then used to develop the themes for reporting the results in Chapter 4, and in chapters 5 and 6 for analysing the dialogue of Brian and Penny. In this way, I was clear that I had covered the essential elements of the executive coaching process.

In general, in many ways my approach is based on the idea of constructivist learning theory, where it is claimed that knowledge and meaning are socially constructed, and in particular through the interaction of a dialogic event. My analytic process is somewhat akin to Stakes’ concept of “naturalistic generalisation”, where we draw on our tacit knowledge and intuition as well as personal experience to look for patterns that explain experience (Stake 1995). In addition to my training as a psychologist, a teacher, a counsellor and coach, my early encounter with the conscientisation work of Paulo Freire has also been clearly instrumental in the formulation of my methodological approach. Similarly, my work in feminist consciousness-raising had a crucial impact. I realised the importance of dialogue in order to achieve inner growth.
and personal awareness, and thus personal and group action and power. It is appropriate then to create an analytical framework that is constructivist and dialogic. In other words, the transcripts of the client-coach relationship reveal that indeed there was a knowledge-building dialogue, where the coach is empathising, responding, challenging, and being present and genuine while the client enters into a deeper conversation that progresses from session to session into higher levels of meaningfulness, mindfulness, presence and action.

Discourse for the purposes of this thesis concerns the social practices engaged in during the client-coach interactions. Barbara Johnstone talks of two senses of discourse: instances of communication in the medium of language, and in the plural, discourses are conventional ways of talking that both create and are created by conventional ways of thinking (Johnstone 2002:7). In this thesis I am not using discourse in the postmodernist sense of critical discourse analysis where ideology is the key to an analysis.

My aim has been to examine the discourse as a communication event, while keeping in mind that the client-coach or client-therapist relationship constitutes a particular form of discourse. As previously discussed, the discourses (in the plural) of therapy and of coaching differ: in coaching, the coach is assuming the client, an executive leader, is a psychologically healthy person, whereas in therapy the client is seeking psychological health. In practice there is sometimes an element of counselling in the coaching process. Occasionally a client is referred to a psychotherapist for counselling. Almost every manager raises a counselling issue at one or more of the sessions, and for the most part they can be incorporated into the coaching.

It is important for the reader to be clear that my use of these discourses is not the same as that of a linguist. Celia Roberts and Srikant Sarangi have discussed the ways in which the popularity of professional discourse studies in the health professions should not make ambitious claims on the applicability of their studies to solve all professionals’ problems (Roberts & Sarangi 2003:339). My aim is to use the term dialogic analysis fairly loosely to describe the reflections employed in Chapters 5 and 6.

While non-verbal language is also referred to in the data, the recorded discourses are primarily the conversational act of the coaching event. Fairclough (1993) and others would agree that the discourse, or text, could include non-verbal language, or visual presentation, and from notes taken during the coaching events, it is possible to re-create some of these cues. In addition, the researched conversations contain specific codes and practices that would be expected in a private, one-to-one
confidential dialogue between coach and client. The medium for interaction is language but the analysis of the discourse lies in what people do. Wood and Kroger (2000), in describing discourse analysis note that “language is taken to be not simply a tool for description and a medium of communication (the conventional view) but as social practice, as a way of doing things….Talk creates the social world in a continuous, ongoing way; it does not simply reflect what is assumed to be already there” (Wood & Kroger 2000: 4). Talk also embodies feeling, emotion, and can display the deep awareness and presence of the speakers. In the tradition of conversation analysis usually attributed to Harvey Sacks’ work in the 1960s, emotion was an emergent theme in demonstrating the social phenomena of conversation (Perakyla 2004:9). This is an area that I have not documented systematically, but which forms part of the understanding of the integration of the person in mind and body, in consciousness and spirituality.

It is clear that language is a form of action, and that some communicative events result in successful social action, while other events are unsuccessful. The theoretical bases for these notions include the work of Jürgen Habermas’ theory of communicative action, and in sociolinguistics, the work of J. Austin (1962). In all these theories, it is clear that it is not the words themselves that it is necessary to analyse, but the whole event, and the effects that the conversation has on subsequent behaviour and action. Wood and Kroger (2000) use the term “action identification” to describe our inferences about what is being done as a result of the conversation or non-verbal behaviour.

Barbara Johnstone (2002) treats discourse analysis not as a discipline or a sub-discipline of linguistics, but as a “systematic, rigorous way of suggesting answers to research questions posed in and across disciplines throughout the humanities and social sciences and beyond” (Johnstone 2002: 4, cited in Chaoqun Xie 2002: 542). Xie claims that the first use of the term “discourse analysis” was by Harris in 1952, referring to units of communication larger than words or sentences. Johnstone claims that discourse analysis can help in answering any question that could be asked about humans in society. While I have analysed my data and compared the conversations of one client with another, I have not attempted to try to collect data from the taped conversations quantitatively by counting the numbers of times one person or another used a particular sentence. Instead, I have used the first hand data from the tapes, as I believe that the relational experience of the coaching event is primarily to do with language. In doing the research, I found that what I was doing as coach was often facilitating the client’s ability to change their language, to frame their experiences differently as they became more conscious, more empathic, and more mindful.
3.9 Limitations

In a thesis that relies primarily on a case study, qualitative approach, considerable care needs to be taken regarding the selection of participants, and the degree to which any positive outcomes of any intervention may be generalisable or repeatable (Eisner & Peshkin 1990; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000; Denzin & Lincoln 2000). These limitations are an accepted part of the qualitative paradigm. It is a given that a selection of a numerically small cohort has in-built limitations to the compilation of data compared to a far larger cohort. In the case of this research, the initial cohort of 12 participants from each of the two Companies were invited, along with other managers in the Companies, to volunteer for the executive coaching program, and were not "hand-picked" by the researcher or by the CEOs from those companies. The sessions were confidential, so that the CEOs had no access to client information or to their EQ-i scores, in order to maintain the trusting relationship between coach, client and 'boss'.

The positive outcomes of the intervention may not be generalisable or repeatable, in that each client brings his or her own strengths and weaknesses, values and personality to the sessions, as does the coach. A crucial factor in the program is building the relationship between client and coach. The program therefore has the potential limitation of not succeeding on its own merits but in the way it is conducted. As Miller et al. have noted (Miller et al. 1999) only about 15% of a successful intervention can be attributed to the program, and 30% to the relationship between client and coach. Around 40% is the client's input.

In-depth treatment of material through the process of dialogue, interview, reflection, and discussion of implementing new skills in the workplace, provides insights into the deeper meanings of an event, or an intervention, and illuminates the processes of the research. Were this thesis solely a statistical analysis of the testing results, the explanations and reflections from self-reporting would be missing. What is seen in these participants is an overall improvement that is self-reported, including self-reporting of productivity gains, workplace relationship improvement and a statistically significant difference in the pre- and post-test scores on the Bar-On EQ-i. As Podsakoff and his colleagues state (Podsakoff et al. 2003:377), there is some criticism of the BarOn and the Goleman model of self-report, that there is difficulty in obtaining objectively 'correct' responses; some researchers, notably Mayer and Salovey, have advocated the development of more objective, performance-based ability (cognitive) indicators. Despite this limitation, increasing evidence points to increased performance through development of improved EI. These applications of EQ-i testing in workplace settings are still relatively new. For example, a recent
discussion by Perlini and Halverson (Perlini & Halverson 2006:109-119) of Reuven Bar-On's work, reports that high levels of EQ-i have been found to be associated with high levels of performance in two comprehensive applications of EQ-i, a US Air Force recruitment program and an Israeli Defence Force combat and leadership performance program (Bar-On, Handley and Fund 2005, cited in Perlini & Halverson 2006:111).

A potential limitation, that of the reliability of administering the same test in the client before and after coaching, has been addressed but not entirely resolved, by careful attention to the time lapse between the first and second test. The possibility that the client may remember the test and be able to improve the scores is discussed in Bar-On's Technical Manual (1997/1999: 26). He cautions that re-testing after “treatment” should be "at least six months between administrations".

The internal consistency and retest reliability were also carefully considered by the developers of the EQ-i, as were the various aspects of validity: content and face validity, factorial, construct, convergent, divergent, criterion, discriminant and predictive validity (Bar-On 1997/1999: 99-158). Bar-On has administered the test to some 300,000 clients over time, in a number of different countries. In terms of internal consistency, the coefficients for the EQ-i subscales were examined with Cronbach Alpha on North American samples, as well as Argentinean, German, South African, Nigerian, Israeli and Indian samples, with an average internal consistency coefficient of .76, the coefficients ranging from a 'low' of .69 (Social Responsibility) to a high of .86 (Self-Regard) (ibid.:99-100). Further work on retest reliability indicated that stability coefficients were "more than adequate", provided that the retest intervals were not too long (not more than 6 months) and not too short (to avoid risk of a memory factor). Developmental changes in the case of my research, can be attributed to the coaching, but will also be influenced by the positive responses that the client encounters through implementing some of the rehearsed new behaviours in the workplace. This does not invalidate the test scores, but rather emphasises the hypothesised strong relationship between the content of what the tests are measuring (the components of EI) and the positive attributes of leadership.

The question of desirability of the components of EI is both a strength and a limitation. Common Method Variance (CMV) is a problem of method bias, that is, bias attributable to method rather than what is being measured (Podsakoff et al. 2003:987). While most of the variables relating to method of administration were carefully tested by the EQ-i developers (Bar-On 1997/1999: 75-97), the potential for a "halo effect" highlighted by Podsakoff and his colleagues could be seen as a limitation for relying too much on the EQ-i post-test scores. Halo effects include the social desirability
factor (clients saw the desirability of increasing the EQ subscale components), and acquiescence (clients may have felt obligated to please the coach knowing the Company was paying for the sessions). Other responses could also be attributed to a transient mood state, and Bar-On warns against administering the test in conditions of high anxiety. Such potential limitations are important to take note of, and need to be seen in the light of the larger picture of this research, where the process of the coaching, the evidence from the group sessions, and the in-depth analysis of the two case studies are weighed against the evidence of significant change between the pre-test and the post-test scores.

3.10 Conclusion

This chapter has covered both my methodological approach and the methods by which I conducted the research. My role as practitioner/researcher is yet one more band in the complex rainbow helix of experience of being and becoming, and of helping others to become conscious leaders. In developing the research methodologically for the thesis, my aim has been to show how I approached the data emerging from that dialogic process. The following chapters can now be read with enhanced meaning to interpret and reflect on what occurred in each of the case studies.
Chapter 4

Inside the organisations: Company case studies and EQ-i results

Leadership is communicating to people their worth and potential so clearly that they come to see it in themselves (Covey 2004)

4.1 Introduction: The multiple layers of data

In this chapter I introduce the players in the research, the people who were participants from the two case study companies. I present the qualitative and quantitative results of the coaching process as a whole. As in any real life drama, the interplay of the people is complex and multi-layered. It presents itself as a story around the dynamics of each company as the organisational context of the research. At the same time, I delve into the story, pause and ask: What is happening in these conversations? How is the intervention by a coach developing leadership? What in my relationship with the individuals, and with the group as whole, is building insight and the other qualities of conscious leadership? How can I tell if it’s working?

The purpose of this chapter is to explore systematically the two company case studies as a whole. There are several layers and perspectives to explore, and I have separated the data into five parts.

Organisational context
By illuminating the organisational contexts of company U and Company R, I place each of the participants within their working environment, so that the company goals, the aim of the coaching intervention for company improvement, and the approach taken by the CEOs to assist their staff become the background to the coaching. Here I introduce the 21 participants who completed the process: twelve from Company U and nine from Company R.

Group sessions
Some things are best learned in a group. I started each fortnight’s coaching by bringing the group together in a training session structured as a meeting. The participants from the company worked with me for an hour to exchange news, learn new skills,
review their progress, and reinforce the one-on-one coaching sessions they were receiving. The account of the group sessions provides information based on my field notes and course outlines, the case notes and the recorded sessions. These group sessions were the main vehicle for introducing leadership and management skills, but they were flexibly organised and responsive to the needs of each of the two groups. This section provides more data on the relationship building process within each company.

Building conscious leadership

I give an overview of the research work as it applied in the coaching of all the participants in both companies. This section outlines an initial response to the two main questions of the research study: what does the coach do in the coaching process and how does the coaching relationship contribute to developing conscious leadership. The processes employed for building leadership are described within twelve themes. Vignettes of responses from the participants are used to illustrate how they responded to the coaching experience focussed on these themes. Particular examples from across the data demonstrate the interconnections and the interplay between all the elements of what constitutes coaching for conscious leadership – the leadership skills, the coaching techniques and the development of emotional intelligence. I show how participants took on board the various skills sets and applied them in their workplace.

Overall self-reporting of individual coaching

I describe through the participants’ own reports the benefits of coaching and the benefits of the coaching relationship in developing conscious leadership. This section develops an overall response from the participants to the two main research questions: what worked (for them) in coaching, and how did the coaching relationship help them to develop conscious leadership.

Quantitative results: EQ-i data

I present and analyse the statistical data from the EQ-i pre- and post-test intervention, providing quantitative data on each of the participants, and comparing the data within and between groups.

In concluding the chapter, I draw together the evidence from the data and show how the various themes developed in this chapter are not only interconnected, but they are present in every encounter with the clients. The relationship builds as we explore thoughts and feelings with increasingly deepening meaningfulness and insight, until the person develops an integrated, conscious self. This chapter is a ‘cross-section’ of the process, drawing out specific themes, illustrating the process across all the
participants, and demonstrating how the qualitative and the quantitative evidence points to successful outcomes for both groups. In the ensuing Chapters 5 and 6, in-depth case studies are provided for two of the participants, taking them through each session and demonstrating how the coaching relationship developed sequentially and dialogically over the six-month period.

4.2 The organisational context

The research was conducted in two companies, one a retail company, Company R, and the other a utility company, Company U. The 21 participants from each company have been named as follows:

Table 4.1 Research participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company U</th>
<th>Company R</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Andrew</td>
<td>Lyn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bruce</td>
<td>Mike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candy</td>
<td>Nathan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Derek</td>
<td>Olivia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric</td>
<td>Rachael</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank</td>
<td>Tom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gail</td>
<td>Sue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harry</td>
<td>Ursula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ivan</td>
<td>Penny (Chapter 6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Josh</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kevin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brian (Chapter 5)</td>
<td>(3 left the company)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Companies R and U: background

Company R was typical of retail companies in that there was a strong customer focus, which drove the company goals. Company R had considerable public support and was a local icon.

The company was located on multiple sites, one of which I labelled ‘Bluehills’, managed by my case study client Penny. Because of the multiple sites the managers rarely met. They were to some extent autonomous, and liked that, but several said they felt unsupported. Several concerns led to my being brought in; one of these was that in the last ten years there had been a series of Chief Executive Officers,
and morale in the company was low. There were also problems caused by the out of
date point-of-sale technology, which meant that the data for reporting, for making
projections, and for making important business decisions was out of date. This
situation created considerable anxiety and frustration among many of the managers.

The Board had decided to bring in consultants to assist the old staff to sort out the
future of the company. The power was therefore divided in this “old” and “new” mix,
where the experienced staff had the deep historical knowledge of the company, its
ethos, its modus operandi, and were knowledgeable about the particular requirements
e.g. for the procurement and distribution of the retail product. On the other hand, the
new consultants had business track records for innovation and excellence, were
more skilled in management, had a higher level of training, and had been charged
with the responsibility for making some major changes in the organisation. Most of
the senior staff, and indeed most staff, were female. Of the 12 managers I coached,
only 3 were male. I was dealing with the National Company Executive Officer and
five store managers as well as the chief financial officer and five other senior personnel.

The goals of the company for coaching were to increase the leadership capacity of
the staff, to look towards organisational productivity and effectiveness, and to build
the relationships among the team. My work was, for many of the staff, a new form of
professional development. The company did not have a history of providing
professional development to the managers, and their process of conducting staff
reviews was inconsistent and sporadic. In addition, there was some dread felt among
staff that some of the retail outlets might be closed or sold. Mistrust among the staff
was strong. A feeling of resentment by some staff towards having to work with yet
another CEO was also mentioned to me. The culture of the organisation was therefore
fragile, fragmented and to some extent dysfunctional because of the poor infrastructure
and poor morale. The company had such a high standing in the community, however,
that it was imperative that positive, proactive change within the company took place.

Company U was a utility company that had been government owned but had over
the last 18 months been restructured to become a corporation. The company played
a critical role in local industry. It had a guaranteed market, had a predictable business,
and was located mostly at one major site, although it had other minor sites. Some
200 staff worked in Company U. The executive was not at national level, like Company
R, but it had a far larger business to deal with, and the managers were mostly
engineers.

The staff were well supported by their Chief Executive Officer, and they had a history
of systematic professional development. Their systems for staff reviews were well in
place, they had clear job descriptions, clear career paths, and the managers were all younger than in company R, between 38 and 43 years of age (note: the age difference was not statistically significant). The CEO was well informed about his staff and articulated clear goals for the future of the company. The CEO invited me to run a seminar at one of the monthly leaders’ meetings as part of a policy of introducing stimulating new ideas to managers. When the response to this was positive he invited me back to work with a group at one of the utility plants. On the telephone he said to me that he had been impressed with how I had loved the hundreds of Vietnam veterans I had worked with and he said: “I want you to love my men”.

Given the organisational context, I was very aware of the need to satisfy not only individual goals but also organisational goals, as the well-being of an organisation depends largely on the well-being of the individual people (see Chapter 2).

4.3 Group sessions

The coaching program had two types of training process, the one-on-one sessions with each of the clients for an hour every fortnight, and a group session with all the participant managers of the company at the start of each round of coaching. Like the one-to-one coaching sessions, the group sessions followed three-part A-B-C structure. The first part (agenda) was focussed on bridging between people, making sure that we had an introductory connection. The connection with me seemed to happen very quickly and that was an insight that emerged from these sessions with all of the participants.

Next we clarified the agenda for the day’s meeting. Since most managers tended to be task focussed, we used this time for building up the inter-relationships among the managers and discussing recent events, personal wins, “good news” and general matters related to the company. Usually the second part or B part of the session focussed on one or more of the skill sets of management or leadership with plenty of lively discussion. I would introduce the ideas and we would rehearse the skills in relation to past scenarios or future possibilities. The concluding or C part of the session focussed on reviewing what we had covered and how it could be applied in the next two weeks, and agreeing “next steps” and how things would be run. For each of the companies, the group sessions followed a slightly different path, depending on the perceived needs and concerns of the group, and depending on what had arisen in the organisation in the intervening two-week period.

In Company R, the group met in the Boardroom, usually at 9am, and sat around the
Director's table. The pattern established for Company R was intended to encourage the old permanent staff managers and new contract executives to become more familiar with each other’s roles and responsibilities. Since the managers were operating at different sites, and the new consultants did not have many opportunities to meet the more established staff at the one time, these fortnightly meetings were a valued opportunity to get together.

The first “A” part of the session covered any topic that arose. For example, we would all be in awe of someone who “ran the city to surf marathon”, and interested in their story. Or there might have been business or some other news, such as someone having been selected to mentor somebody. Most of them were wins at work, which everyone actively celebrated. They all said that the groups were really good. They enjoyed listening to what other people had to say and participating across the group. It did help to fill the gap between the old and new staff. They reported that it was great to hear positive things, to be able to celebrate other people’s wins.

In Company U, the group sat on chairs in a circle around the Meeting Room and tended to be focussed around the whiteboard, which we all used to note ideas. The managers were more familiar with each other’s work and for the most part had worked together for some time, so the atmosphere was already close and more trusting than in Company R.

In the central “B” (Body) part of the meeting, the skills sessions were conducted in as interactive a way as possible. My style of teaching was to provide some stimulus material, pose some key questions and then get a dialogue happening, building on those responses to validate and then extend the knowledge in the room with any further learning. I provided easily useable handouts, which I could refer to later in the individual sessions, and rehearsed examples in the group with as much fun as possible. In every session managers would raise real situations to which we would apply the new approach.

There were twelve sessions, based on the themes of the skill-sets outlined in Chapter 3, and further discussed in section 4 of this chapter. The order of the sessions was different for the two companies, and where possible a few topics would be explored at a time, but in general, they covered the following topics:

- The Good Leader and the Healthy Self
- A-B-C of communication
- Behaviours of a healthy adult
- Adult-to-adult communication (P-A-C)
- Assertiveness
• Claiming authority
• Giving and receiving feedback
• Staff reviews
• Good Manager/Good Leader
• Adjustment to change, transition management
• Dealing with conflict
• Managing difficult cases
• Point of power is the present – respond instead of react
• Power in organisations
• Ethics

The focus of the detailed study was the individual coaching sessions which were recorded. In addition, because of the difficulties of transporting and setting up electronic equipment for recording a larger group while I was also facilitating the group, these group sessions were not systematically recorded. The order varied between companies according to situations that arose and provided the best learning context. After the first six sessions, the group sessions became less focussed on skills and more dependent on situations and issues relating to personal and organisational concerns that arose over the period of the coaching program. Each session drew on the skills that were being developed through the coaching, and allowed the groups to compare notes, to ask for clarification, and to learn through the examples thrown up by members of the group. In the following examples, drawn from my own notes and from feedback from the participants, the general approach to this part of the research is outlined.

**Good leader and healthy self**

The first session I called the “good leader”, where I raised with each group the concept of the attributes of a good leader, using their direct actual personal experience of good and bad leaders in ordinary work and life situations to provide concrete examples. Both Company U and Company R members came up with similar words. These included:

“Very intelligent, excellent organiser, savvy, confident, listened astutely, created clarity, practised what they preached, prepared to be innovative, creative/visionary, very affirming, down to earth, inner strength, strong presence, understanding/empathy, integrity, calm, big brain, politically smart, clear vision, unrestrained – ‘big’, incredibly experienced in life and work – ‘broad’, socially very aware, how things affect people, social responsibility, street wise, modest, unassuming, well presented, immodest, bold, prepared to speak out, humility, prepared to be looked up to, assured, respectful of others, strong character – very assertive, open, frank, lets people know what’s going on, saw something in me that I didn’t see, links, bridges, big picture, good time management, immediacy – straight talker, looks out for everyone on the team.”

When managers in both groups confessed to rating themselves on these words and seeing areas for development, I showed them how these compared with other groups.
They then readily saw that we were talking about the skills of the Healthy Self (see Figure 4.1 below), the focus of the second session. This was an introduction to the combination of skill sets, including the concept of assertiveness, giving and receiving feedback, confidence, asserting boundaries, delegation, making decisions, time management and adult to adult communication. I was then able to refer back to this session as I progressed through many of the concepts introduced to the group.

**Figure 4.1 Healthy Self Skills Sets**

By session three, the results of their EQ-i tests had been discussed individually, and the links were made in the group sessions between the Good Leader qualities they had identified in Group 1, the Emotional Intelligence qualities and the Healthy Self skills.

**Feedback, staff reviews and advanced feedback sessions**

Because the entire management-leadership relationship between managers and their staff is based on feedback, it is really important that the managers were able to do it well. In the second group session, I went back to basics and talked about the function of feedback in the organization, from day-to-day activities to annual staff reviews for promotion, and from positive learning through to conflict management. We would start with a refresher on giving positive feedback. All the managers found the refresher...
on positive feedback stimulating and amusing. Feedback is not only verbal. If I drink too much alcohol and wake up with a hangover, I’m getting feedback. The new driver who keeps running into the hedge to avoid running into the house while learning to reverse up the driveway is getting feedback. I made a point of gaining their agreement to do what I asked, which was to give 6 pieces of positive feedback per day at work and at home and report on it. This request led to a lot of laughter, and then I would say that I would follow it up in their individual sessions in 2 weeks. Feedback was to be personal, concrete, immediate and positive; in other words, in the assertive adult.

When I followed up two weeks later, about a third of them had forgotten to do it at all. A third had tried it and said it made them aware how difficult it was to do, that it was a struggle to do it, and they were surprised. However, a third said they had had to think about it, but it did come readily. One participant commented: “I was amazed that I thought I gave a lot of positive feedback, but to give six pieces a day at work made me realise that I only do it once or twice a day”. They got so busy they had forgotten to interact.

This feedback on their giving of positive feedback was a key to the coaching process, as it gave an opportunity to emphasise the need for commitment, and it allowed me to reinforce what was happening in the individual sessions with the whole group. Individually I would really hammer (in a caring, sharing kind of a way) the first third who had forgotten to give the feedback. This simple exercise was representative of the more sophisticated process of giving and receiving feedback in structured staff reviews upon which promotions and whole careers depend. I emphasised that the process was a valuable investment and I was keen to deliver. Basically, the leadership qualities they had identified in the good leader exercise, and had further personalised in their first individual coaching sessions, all hinge on feedback.

I kept people accountable and would not let them off the hook. I would clarify with them that most of the problems they dealt with – conflict, negativity and managing difficult people – required the skill of giving appropriate feedback. Later, it emerged that the people who “forgot” were those who scored low on emotional intelligence attributes.

The next step, in a later group session, was to talk about inviting people we trusted to give us feedback. I asked them to think about someone they could invite to give them that feedback, and then we would rehearse it in the group. I demonstrated how to receive positive feedback and how to receive challenging feedback in the adult position. For example, I received their critical feedback by summarising the content
of what they said, checking I heard accurately, thanking them for their feedback and if I agreed and felt good about the other person, I would say “I think you are on to something there. I really appreciate the feedback.” I sometimes had a conversation with them about it. If I did not agree, I still checked that I had understood it, and said: “That’s interesting, I’ll definitely think about it. I’d like to do a reality check. Help me to get that better.” I told them I might go and ask somebody else. My key point was that feedback is just feedback, a piece of information and not to be taken personally.

At this point in the session I reminded the groups about the Parent-Adult-Child model, and discussed adult-to-adult feedback. Over subsequent sessions I continued to develop a repertoire for giving and receiving feedback until they reached a point where they had all the building blocks for doing a full staff review. With regard to staff reviews, which were an important focus in the individual coaching sessions, I challenged them not to use a simplistic formula or technique, but to realise it was more about respecting the other person and giving them confidence to change.

Throughout the group sessions and at times in the one-to-one sessions, I reminded them that all the skills material was also applicable at home, and was very useful for child rearing. Many managers enjoyed that analogy and made comments such as: “I tried that on my son and it worked wonders”. The domestic examples helped the established managers from Company R to see some of the new staff as real people and helped to build trust among them. Familiar examples made each other more approachable. However, it also emerged that those who were not as robust tended to be more defensive in the group sessions.

Dealing with conflict, decision making and adult to adult communication

One of the tasks I set both groups was to see the movie Lantana, to take their partner with them, and to make sure that they made time to discuss the movie with their partner over coffee after the movie. The main purpose of this exercise was to help them to understand the dynamics of trust and how communication can be distorted through making minor errors of judgment. Lantana is an outstanding Australian movie. In the story, there is a body, two cops, a psychotherapist, a lawyer, an unemployed person, and their families. This landmark movie centres on the complex and tangled relationships of four couples who are connected in one way or another in a neighbourhood in Sydney. The movie, a powerful drama, focuses on issues of trust, love, betrayal, and the inner feelings of each of the protagonists, and raises a number of ethical dilemmas. All the characters are ordinary decent people, but half of them make common errors of judgment that become critical. The most spontaneously authentic happened to be the least socially sophisticated couple whose delight, trust and love shine across the movie. Each character, through interaction
with the others, gains extraordinarily confronting self-insight. Their subsequent shifts of awareness/consciousness, lead to behavioural changes.

We discussed in the group session how the characters dealt with the consequences that arose from those errors of judgment in the movie, and why their inability to resolve the conflicts became catastrophic. Any of us could have made some of these errors. It was not due to being malicious. Good people failed to act with integrity or to communicate candidly, and the outcome was lost integrity.

**Business management skills**
At times during the group sessions the various foundational business management skills that a good leader needs in their repertoire were discussed, and we rehearsed various strategies and techniques relating to concerns of time management, diarising, planning, delegating and other attributes of a leader with good boundaries. For some, these practical exercises were particularly useful, although most of the managers with high scores on the emotional intelligence attributes were already conversant with business management skills. These sessions allowed time to raise actual examples and discuss alternative solutions through various problem-solving strategies. I used anecdotes, metaphors, stories, and drew diagrams on the white board to illustrate points. Drawing on the managers own experiences, I could show how these skills are an outcome of assertiveness, appropriate boundaries, ability to give and receive feedback, conflict management skills and good communication. Some managers also needed coaching in how to write a business plan, in how to present a business case to the executive and even to realise that they were running a mini business within a larger business.

**Ethics**
Between Session 9 and 10, in the next group workshop I held with all the managers, I asked everyone to participate in an ethical dilemma, which our group called the “Robin Hood” exercise. I first heard this version of the story of Robin Hood from Dr Hugh Eadie at the Cairnmillar Institute of Human Relations “Big E” (ethics education for adults) program around 1970. I begin by asking, “Does everybody know the story of Robin Hood?” When most or all respond in the affirmative, smiling at childhood recollections of the story, I then tell them to forget everything they have ever heard about Robin Hood and they all laugh. I then tell a new version in an upbeat mode about how the Sheriff has captured Robin Hood and thrown him in the dungeon. Maid Marian pleads with the Sheriff asking if there is anything she can do that will lead to him to release Robin Hood. The Sheriff agrees to release Robin if she stays the night. She stays the night with him and he releases Robin Hood. Back in Sherwood Forest, the elated and surprised Robin Hood asks how they got his release. When
Maid Marian tells him, he is devastated and breaks off his relationship with her. Maid Marian is then shattered. Along comes Robin’s mate Little John, who consoles her, and persuades her to hop on the back of his horse and ride off and live happily ever after.

In the group session at Company U, reactions moved from skylarking laughter to stunned silence. A similar response occurred with the managers at Company R. As the group took in the shocking story with a lot of humour, they were then asked to rank the characters in silence, from most moral to least moral. They were also told that there are dozens of right answers, and that every answer was as correct as the others were. When they had jotted down their own four, they were asked to jot down their colleagues initials and the order in which they thought each of their colleagues would have ranked the story’s characters. In fact, in Company U, only two people had the same priority sequence in the group of twelve.

This object lesson in itself provided significant insight. I pointed out that since they all responded so differently to a hypothetical ethical question, how difficult it must be to reach consensus on the dozens of business decisions they had to make every week. I emphasised that the material was very private and they were under no obligation to confide their answers, but I invited any of them to share if they felt they could. After one said he would, they agreed they would all like to share, but I stressed to them that they must be careful to look after everyone in the group by respecting absolute confidentiality. What happened in the room should stay in the room. I emphasised that this discussion around ethical decision-making reflected their working environment. Only one person correctly picked how each other colleague ranked the characters, and he was a lower level manager.

There was a very lively discussion about why people had ranked the characters as they had. I did not say that, in the Kohlberg framework, the legalistic position would be the least mature, and overriding the rules to save a life (i.e. for love) most mature, because I did not want to shame anyone nor precipitate a competition. I would raise their responses in individual sessions. Good leaders observe where their colleagues are up to in their own personal level of consciousness and accommodate that. When they realised that they were not able to pick what the other person might say, we then had to ask: “Do we know each other?” To facilitate decision-making, the leader needs to relate effectively so that their colleagues feel known.

The participation in the Robin Hood exercise inevitably brought to the forefront of their awareness that business management and leadership is about decision-making; decision-making is about values and levels of consciousness, and therefore insight,
consciousness and self and other awareness is central to leadership.

_Spirituality and Transformational Leadership_

In several sessions the concepts of spirituality and transformational leadership were discussed. Some managers were churchgoers; some were against organised religion and thus, understandably, resisted any notions of spirituality. Nevertheless some of the managers were eager to discuss the underlying philosophy of spiritual leadership, and in the last half of the coaching program, questions of insight, spirituality, and consciousness were raised.

4.4 Individual sessions: building conscious leadership

It can be seen from the progress of the group sessions that the clients needed to have a repertoire of leadership skills and management processes as part of their ability to cope effectively with their roles in the workplace and at home. It is impossible to separate out the skills from their application in real life and, in turn, it is impossible to discuss the application of, say giving and receiving feedback, without referring to the development of good communication, interpersonal relationships, assertiveness, empathy, and other aspects of the healthy self as explained earlier. Therefore, in this section, I provide some examples of how the participants responded to, and exemplified their learning. The skills are a vehicle through which they develop their insights into themselves and how to build effective and genuine relationships with their staff.

The themes I have selected to illustrate the skills development are an elaboration of the group sessions described in the section above. They are related to the skills sets developed in my Coaching for Conscious Leadership Protocol presented in Chapter 3.

_A-B-C of communication_

The fundamental structure of all conversations, meetings, phone calls and most emails, the A-B-C of communication is modelled right from the start, and taught directly in the group sessions. A number of people commented on this skill which was the application of report and essay writing knowledge which they already knew, to all communication.

Candy was 31, a business manager who had been with Company U 10 years, starting as a chemical technician. She worked her way up from being low ranking to being a business manager. Her main role was to coordinate with Brian to provide team leader
development, to get succession planning underway and to get the business systems up to scratch. She was manager for business systems including systems for risk management, HR, authority to work etc. She was very intelligent and technically minded. She had to ensure that all the systems worked for the other managers. She was much more talkative than most of the men, bright, upbeat, fun to be around. Candy’s positive energy drew everyone to her. She was excited about assessing and setting up programs for the development of staff for the facility as a whole, and about having a say in change management. By the fourth session, Candy reported a number of positive changes that she was happy about. I had rehearsed with her the A-B-C of communication, and helped order her conversations more systematically so that everybody could be in step with her. Our biggest coaching task was for her to organise her thoughts internally.

Frank was another team leader from Company U. One of the older team managers, he had a track record of exceptional procurement negotiations and had saved the corporation millions of dollars. I liked him very much but had to work hard to understand him. His initial EQ score was 86 and his interpersonal EQ was 71. The subscales: interpersonal relationship was 64; empathy 77; assertiveness 81; happiness 89. It was not surprising that he was extremely stressed.

By our third Session, Frank reported that he had put into practice skills learned both in the group and in our one-to-one coaching sessions. At a community event at another company facility, he had given a good presentation. He had structured it with the A-B-C and carefully rehearsed the presentation and projected his voice well, and got excellent feedback. In addition, he had conducted a staff review with a difficult staff member. He reported: “It went well. No tears either side. I was more prepared. I was more assertive and definite. I was very clear about all the positives and the things needing improvement. I organised the feedback towards her being clearer with me and I set five targets with her. I was relieved and satisfied; I thought the process went well.”

Behaviour of a healthy adult
As discussed in the section on the group sessions, much of the coaching program is focussed on the notion of the psychologically healthy self. A high score on intrapersonal emotional intelligence indicators of emotional self-awareness, assertiveness, self-regard, self-actualisation and independence point to a healthy self, as do general mood components of happiness and optimism. Many of the managers presented with a fairly low score on these EQ-i components, a result which corresponded with the transcripts and case notes of my coaching sessions. For example, Rachael, a manager of a retail outlet for Company R in her late 40’s, was running one of the
busiest stores. In our first session it was apparent that Rachael was under some duress. She was intelligent and willing to cooperate in the coaching, but was feeling devastated because of a recent incident in her store. While she was on leave, a weekend manager had stolen the takings and left. In our first session, she said she was feeling particularly low. After some exploratory conversation, I realised that she had no idea how she was perceived. She had no way of taking positive feedback on board and developing a constructive, healthy sense of herself. She was totally task focussed.

I was not surprised that her EQ was 68, 22 points below the 90-110 band we wanted as a minimum. It was possible that she had scored herself low across the items, but I thought that perhaps the score reflected her actual situation. Six of the 16 sub-scale scores were under 70. Rachael’s goals were to improve her time management skills, improve staff communications and learn how to challenge staff appropriately and give critical feedback. Issues related to time management, giving and receiving feedback, dealing with conflict, delegating, are all indicators of a lack of a healthy self and poor boundaries. She may have been good at the business management side of things, i.e. numbers, but her interpersonal skills and leadership capacity were inadequate. She was two dimensional and fragile.

In the second session, using drawings of a house with no fence, no gate and no front door where people took a short cut right through her house, I literally and metaphorically illustrated for her the building of boundaries and how to develop a healthy self. She could see the double bind that one gets into when there is too much to do to be able to delegate and that we actually need then to be helped to get everything up to date so that we can keep it up to date. One of the realities she was dealing with was the overloaded state of the entire business and the fact that even if she did delegate, everyone else would be even more overloaded. Her solution was to do it all herself.

Another initial example of poor skills was Andrew, a utility station manager with Company U, employed by the company 5 years. Andrew was the manager of the entire group that I interviewed. He was managing an asset worth over 1.5 billion dollars and had seven managers reporting to him. Throughout the time I held sessions with him, including at the first session he arrived late. The best we were able to cover was, what was most and least satisfying to him i.e. the initial steps to goal setting. The things he found most satisfying about Company U were what he called the three-dimensional culture; freedom to be what he wanted to be; a high level of respect and openness and safety; room for discretionary management; and the way the workforce force pulled together in adversity. He said he was finding it difficult to find
a balance between being directive and being consultative. The things he wanted to change were to be more assertive on the management team; to develop the ability to close out on issues (i.e. be decisive); and to “get real on projects” (i.e. decide we will, decide we won’t but whatever way, decide and act).

Andrew felt overwhelmed and inadequate in the face of an overload of work. He said that after a week on holiday he felt totally overwhelmed. His ability to problem solve, to delegate, to communicate succinctly, to make decisions, to inspire action – none of these things were working. These are all boundary and language issues, and indicators of a lack of having a strong healthy self. Without these things working he could not be a good manager let alone a good leader.

Andrew consistently took the stand that he did not want to be egotistic or aggressive. I gradually formed the view that this stand may itself be an ego defence, allowing him justify his failure to exercise leadership. During our coaching sessions I helped Andrew understand that it is important to distinguish between the “present” assertiveness of the healthy self and the arrogance of the unhealthy defended self. In Andrew’s case, his good intention of avoiding being egotistic also masked a lack of healthy skills. The combination of poor self-awareness, poor interpersonal skills, overwhelming workload, and the death of an important family member made it very difficult to bring about good management skills, let alone conscious leadership skills.

A good example of a manager with a psychologically healthy self was Ursula, aged 30, and an experienced marketing professional in Company R. She had worked in Australia and overseas in an international company. She had been brought in six months before as a consultant to build the team, work on all the brands and do the business development across the company. In the six months that she had been there, she had developed a national marketing program; she had laid the foundations for each store to develop its marketing plans. She developed a new catalogue. She was reorganising the database of about a million customers to be able to operationalise the strategy. She was one of the most intelligent and aware people I worked with in Company R. Her first EQ-i score was 117 and her lowest sub-scale was 101. Overall, this is a very strong profile and she was an outstanding manager. Ursula loved the coaching sessions because they gave her language to articulate what she did spontaneously, and this allowed her to mentor her team more effectively.

At the mid-program review she said one of the good things she liked about coaching: “I apply what I learn immediately. Coaching means I stop being so busy ‘doing’ and I start analysing, evaluating, synthesising, and reflecting. The focus is on my ‘being.’”
At the end of the coaching I asked her if she thought she had become a better manager and leader. She said she thought so. “It is largely due to the coaching. I have a better understanding of who I am and what I want out of this world and how I relate to people. I really feel different from six months ago. Now I have the confidence in who I am and what I want.” In other words, she was referring to having a healthy self. An interesting thing about Ursula was that even though the EQ-i profile indicated that she was already quite psychologically healthy, she still worked on mentoring skills, on handling aggressive people (see below under Dealing with conflict) and on receiving, internalising and properly integrating positive feedback.

Adult-to-adult communication
Many of the participants commented that they enjoyed the P-A-C model, and after the group session on transactional analysis they tended to use the terminology freely about adult-to-adult communication, about parent-child dynamics, and about the need to be assertive to remain in the adult role.

A clear example of using the model is the case of Eric. Aged 40, Eric was the strategic business manager for Company U, responsible for 200 people, reporting to Andrew and then to Bill. Since the facility was only ten years old, Eric was one of the original people who had been promoted into the business management team and had been in that role for three years. Throughout our coaching, I referred to the P-A-C model. The energy had lifted in the fifth session when Eric reported that he and the team were on the front foot again, being proactive. A fire safety burn-off around the site had got out of control briefly and this raised important risk management issues. We had an extended discussion about risk management, Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) issues and accountability. Eric was clearly under pressure from Bill on the executive management team to be more promptly accountable and to have a proper manual written, but Eric was resisting being structured in this way. The interesting point about this was that he regarded Bill as patronising and patriarchal and being in the position of the Parent, while Eric said he wanted to be a responsible adult and respected as such. In this session and at the next group session, I revisited the P-A-C communication and power dynamic, to clarify the difference between the so-called independence of a rebellious child and the independence of a responsible adult. Eric clarified that he needed a good enough approach to risk management. By this he meant that, using concrete examples, he needed to establish appropriate levels of reasonableness over risk management with his supervisor, so that (1) people would be safe; (2) the procedures implemented would stand up in court and (3) he would feel OK about it. I encouraged him to contact a friend or two in another corporation and meet with them to discuss what they were doing in their companies so that he would have a benchmark.
At the next group opportunity I revisited P-A-C and used a domestic example as a metaphor. I put the question, “How do we ensure that our young children are safe crossing roads and busy supermarket car parks to get into the family car?” The whole group immediately related with numerous examples. The consensus was that it is necessary to go into the parent role of the P-A-C to ensure the child is safe at all times, firmly persisting with a protesting child until they are in the car and buckled in. At the same time, the parent educates the child and normalises how “in our family we want to be safe. We don’t want anyone to be hurt. And so we take care. We don’t run across in front of cars and we always buckle up the seatbelt.” The business managers readily volunteered that the child who resists the seatbelt is not being an independent adult, but a risk to themselves and probably others.

In this session, Eric took on board his peers’ feedback and began to see the point, but he still felt annoyed at Bill’s directive style. His view was that there was a level of immaturity and complacency on the staff; however, he didn’t recognise his own immaturity and complacency. In each session with Eric there tended to be a lack of following up on tasks. Eric kept not getting around to doing things Bill needed and saying he was weighed down and couldn’t get onto new projects. My sense was that he was somehow absent. He loved to have a long philosophical conversation but it seemed to me he was acting for me, or not actually engaged. I did find it difficult to get it all happening with Eric and I wondered if I might have done things differently. I was then surprised when in the mid-program review, Eric reported a lot of change. He said he had implemented the staff appraisal process with the team leaders. They had met off site, had a meal and done review feedback and development plans. He said: “As a result I can deal with this, I can deal with the team better and I feel energised by the process.” In the feedback session he said “Coaching has helped me understand the importance of a business plan – both for the facility, and also for the family.” He said he felt he was much more self-aware since having coaching and “I’ve become aware of the need to coach others. It’s kept me focussed on my people.”

Eric reported that while there was a culture of feedback in Company U, he particularly valued my deeper feedback because it was concrete and situational. He acknowledged that it had taken a while to connect with me but that it had become “a bit more comfortable.” He said that in the past he had enjoyed assertiveness and communication skills training, but had not translated the idea into action. Coaching on the other hand helped him to do that. He acknowledged that the only time that he had not enjoyed our sessions was when he hadn’t done his homework and he acknowledged that really it was a direct consequence that when he had not done what he had committed to do, then he got less out of it. There seemed to be a lack of congruence. I considered it likely that there had been discussion between managers
over the benefits of coaching and he had then realised others were very positive about their practical experience, and that he was repeating their phrases.

However, in every session we picked up the P-A-C model. By Session 9, Eric began to see that the best way to stay in the Adult in relation to Bill and the national executive team was to anticipate well in advance what the Board and the CEO might need and be proactive and have the material ready. In other words, fulfil his job specifications on his own terms. On the face of it this was a significant shift from being an adolescent with an anti-authoritarian chip on his shoulder towards becoming an adult manager. I was however left with a nagging sense that he was giving me right answers rather than real answers.

**Assertiveness**

Frank (see example in A-B-C of communication above) also worked on assertiveness and sharing his views in general, and his improvement every session was marked. He came into every session having practised the skills we had rehearsed, trying things out and integrating the positive feedback of the experience. After one public presentation he was approached by a headhunter. He was dazzled. Frank took seriously my challenge to share his feelings with his adult children (give emotional feedback), something he had never done. He initiated a day together on Fathers Day. Frank reported: “It was a really good day. I stood up and gave a speech in the middle of dinner and I told each one I loved them.” The response of his adult children was warm and immediate. He had begun speaking out more than usual in all business meetings and contributing more. He was meeting his staff members more regularly and delegating more. He had also steered the difficult staff member on his team into counselling. The best news was the outcome of his being more assertive with Bill. Frank was one of the few to try this out with Bill. He reported: “I feel supported. I can now come to him with ideas and he goes through the pros and cons and makes his expectations clear. There’s no doubt that my ability to communicate with others has gone up.” He added: “My confidence level is as high as it’s ever been. It’s not easy but I’m OK about giving feedback now.” He also said: “My confidence in giving public presentations has improved radically in the last 12 months. I no longer get rattled under pressure.”

Assertiveness and confidence go hand in hand. Frank’s confidence improved markedly and he reported that he was delegating effectively, inviting feedback and handling it and that he had handled the lead up to and the actual day of his daughter’s wedding with 80 people. “It was a great day.” In the post-coaching EQ test, Frank’s total had shifted from 86 to 96. The Interpersonal scale had shifted up from 71 to 87; and the sub-scale of interpersonal relationship had gone from 64 to 83. Empathy had gone
Gail, also at Company U, was the team leader of the logistics team. She had been at the Company for 2 years and was highly successful at her job, but needed to develop better relationships - clearer alliances and greater assertiveness in the Company.

Gail impressed me as an exceptionally intelligent, practical, highly professional person. From a business point of view she really was extraordinarily good. She had a stable family. Her first EQ score was 97. All composite scales and sub-scales scores were over 90, altogether a good starting base. Clearly all women in this utility company tended to be seen as having support functions, even competent women like Gail. I rehearsed with her how she could make the most of performance development review with Brian, who was stepping in for Andrew. In two years she had had no support and no mentoring nor any appropriate professional backup from Andrew to whom she reported. There had been no performance review for two years, even though there were meant to be six-monthly reviews. This was one of several things that Andrew had not followed up on, and she was particularly upset that she had not been successful in applying for her restructured job and had not received appropriate feedback. I was independently aware of two others in the company who had not been treated well.

As a result of our coaching she reported having a good performance review at first with Brian and subsequently with Andrew. She also announced that she would be leaving in a few months' time for family reasons, but the real reason was her frustration with the leadership. In the review meeting she followed the plan we had rehearsed, first with Brian and then Andrew. She said: “I followed my plan and Brian came back to me next day and apologised for what I had experienced, even though he was not personally the cause of the situation and he asked if there was any way the situation could be redeemed. I had planned and felt clearer about what to say but I had been nervous about his reaction. It all went well and at the end of the day I thought I should have done it six months ago. The big learning for me was to deal with things sooner than later.”

At the end of our coaching program, Gail acknowledged that her assertiveness had developed markedly, and she attributed much of this to the coaching. Gail reported that: “… coaching helped me to hang in there and helped me to pursue and secure opportunities for each team member.” She said that coaching helped her to be really positive and go into bat for everybody. She said: “Coaching has made an enormous difference. It has helped me to question more, to look back and think more, to speak up and say things I wouldn’t have said before and to be assertive. Before coaching I
would have sat and simmered with resentment. Now I get clear what I want to do and say it." When I asked her, what had helped her to learn these things, she said: “You ask questions. You question me about the situation and I can see it for myself. In part it was the timing. I had been through a period of self doubt and I was receptive to new understandings.” Her final comment was: “I was susceptible to recognition when I met you and you gave me that.” Gail’s second EQ was 114, up from 97. All the composite scales were over 100 and 9 sub-scales scores were over 110.

Nathan in Company R was a technical manager, who came from a non-English speaking background and was generally quiet, unassuming and not very assertive. His case was different from the others in that I sensed there were some culturally based attitudes and values around the use of language and expectations around interpersonal communication.

One of Nathan’s goals was to improve his confidence and assertiveness, and to open up his communication with the other managers. The group he had the most difficulty with were the marketing team. Their language was too "metaphorical" and he was not able to fully understand what was happening and that made him lose confidence. For example if the CEO had to “bump” his meetings, then that upset him both because “bump” has aggressive connotations, and changing meetings in his culture is rude. He said: “I’m not appreciated. My work is not important.” I coached him on how to be assertive with the marketing manager. His key line was “I’m fed up with being sidelined. You sideline me and then your figures are wrong [for my area].”

By Session Eight, Nathan had rehearsed sufficiently with me to approach the CEO and tell her how he felt when the meetings were “stuffed around”. He told her she had made so many changes he couldn’t do his job, and he reported she replied: “write a submission and I’ll hire you a helper.” He also built a good relationship with a new manager who told CEO Nathan was overloaded. He actively sought feedback from others, including Mike, and this had really lifted his confidence. His load was acknowledged, his expertise was acknowledged, his systematic thorough style was valued and people both said that they trusted his judgment about the whole IT arena. He told me that in two or three meetings he had said, “Sorry, I disagree” (e.g. about ordering wholesale product), and he realised that this speaking out was going to help his situation, not disrupt it. He said, “I am too quiet. I am determined to speak out.”

By Session 11 Nathan really felt that the CEO and the executive managers did understand him and have confidence in him. “I promise to keep my mouth open” (to speak up). He loved the phrase I used that he was a lone ranger and he said by now
he was not a lone ranger. His move towards a profile of a healthy self was indicated in his second EQ-I results. Nathan had improved his scores for the most part; he now had three scores exceeding 100, while he had had none above 100 before, and seven others that had been below 90 came above 90. Nathan’s self-awareness, assertiveness and independence and stress tolerance had increased markedly as had optimism and happiness.

*Adjustment to change*

In both companies the managers needed a great deal of flexibility to adjust to changes in the organisation. In Company R, both the new and the old staff were confronted daily with the need to adjust to change. For example, Olivia, the manager of the Sydney retail store, was mature, competent, and confident in her late 50s, but felt overloaded with the demands of the job in the new situation, the new consultants coming in and the new CEO. Her opening profile was strong. She had 25 years’ experience in management, presented herself as intelligent and efficient and it was not surprising that her EQ was good.

The main thing I was able to do in this adjustment period was to help Olivia to brainstorm how to approach the new CEO so that she was not branded as a complainer from the old staff. We clarified and then we rehearsed what to say and how to say it. In Session Four she said “I do feel the CEO listened. She definitely took on board some of my ideas but she doesn’t see just how weary and even more overloaded the old managers have become. The overload leads to a loss of joy.”

Olivia eventually was able to make a change in her role. She’d spoken to the CEO who agreed to take her out of managing a store (at Olivia’s request) and take on a different role. In this mid-coaching review she commented: “Coaching is definitely valuable in being able to talk about my concerns and talk about how to deal with things. I practised hitting the pause button so it’s less onerous handling issues and I don’t get upset as much.” She went on the say: “Coaching has crystallised what I am upset about and why I am upset, and as a result I’ve got a clearer idea of what to do and I do it.” “I feel I’ve got some power in the situation and that lifts my energy.” “It’s good to have someone to talk to about situations that I feel nervous about that are a bit tricky - to talk to someone who is outside.”

Derek was a team leader at parent Company U. He absolutely loved his wife and their pretty and sporty teenage daughters. He was athletic, fit, young (just turned 40), energetic, unassuming and unpretentious. It was great to see him being a team leader in spite of his severe speech impediment. I quickly formed the view that his stutter masked an exceptional intelligence. He had a trade background and he was
highly motivated and absolutely thrilled with the opportunities he had had at Company U. He had worked with the company for 22 years, having done his apprenticeship there and worked at different sites of the Company. He had a very positive, upbeat energy.

In Session Four and Five, (a double hour), Derek announced that he had been promoted to Manager of an entire facility and would be liaising with the manager of another facility, Ivan. He was very clear about what was involved in the role of manager. He was very excited and his family was willing to relocate. This led to new goals:

- Challenge in keeping the workforce motivated
- Getting them to have a wider vision of the business
- Overseeing older staff
- Getting the systems up and running

It was an enormous opportunity to develop personally and to help the whole Company U regional business development. In Session Six Derek reported that it was invigorating, challenging and exciting to be in the new role. He was travelling back and forth; the family was engaged in the major change project—fixing the house to sell, buying a house, finding new schools etc. He had run some “bonding programs” with his new staff and brought in a consultant to help and insisted that they used evidence-based programs, a signal to his staff that he was professional, up-to-date and comfortable with taking charge.

In our mid-program review he happily reported that he was pleased he had made moves on all his goals for change. He had a new bunch of leaders for succession training; he had enlisted his wife to work on empathy with him; he had sought feedback about dependence and independence and when it was appropriate to seek help and when it was important to exercise his own leadership. He said coaching was good: “It’s good to have the opportunity to be open and to talk about things. As a result I have developed the way I think; e.g. how to manage people. It’s really good – it’s great! I feel uplifted, excited and it’s challenging and rewarding. I always walk out feeling energised and I feel good about what I’m doing. It’s very validating. My old resentment at lack of recognition has shifted because I talked to you. As a result of coaching I applied for the management role and handled it differently and got it”.

Many of the next sessions were supporting him in the major adjustment to change he and his family faced, and helping him to keep work-life demands in balance so that he stayed healthy. His second EQ was 118, a big jump from 106. His interpersonal score had gone from 90 to 108; adaptability from 110 to 122; stress management
from 106 to 119. In addition to coaching, just being promoted was a massive boost to him. With regard to the sub-scale scores that I was most keen to see an improvement on, the empathy score rose dramatically from 80 to 109, but independence rose only from 95 to 99. Interestingly, his assertiveness went from 104 to 120. It seems that once he assured himself from someone else’s input that he was on the right track he would then be very assertive. I thought it likely that his independence scale would go up over the next couple of years.

Dealing with conflict

Lyn was from Company R, an accountant in her 50s assisting the CFO. She was a contractor, but brought in by the old guard – between both groups – and was asked to stay on to help with the transition. She enjoyed the challenge of learning how the business ticked and was excited by being part of a substantial business change. She could see both sides, being both the acquired and acquiring party. And her interest in retail was long-standing. On the down side, Lyn reported there were heavy demands to produce results (financial reports) with the old systems, and therefore getting the work done very frustrating. She said that the staff were the most challenging she had ever dealt with – adversarial, defensive, resistant, militant: “I don’t feel adequately trained to deal with it. I don’t enjoy it. It’s an unnecessary stress.” Her goals were to deal with confrontation with subordinates; to see the new vision; see the structure and how she would fit.

As the coaching progressed, Lyn said in the mid-program review that the main things she was gaining were skills in communication, she no longer felt embarrassed with praise, and she was much more confident in her presence at work and elsewhere. “I have a clearer way to communicate, you know, for example, around conflict.” She told me: “You put words to things that I am not easily able to voice and teach strategies to get clear what I think and feel and how to say it.” We agreed to continue to work on dealing with difficult people and dealing with confrontation. I found that her difficulty in confronting people harked back to her early days of childhood. When we wrote an “Old Me”, as is often the case, it was a family of origin issue. Her conflict was around “it’s unfair” “it’s only half the story.” “I’m not achieving, I feel hurt, defenceless, inadequate”. These phrases described how she felt in several work situations and they were also the words she used to describe how she felt as a child when the family said she was clumsy and a dreamer, but they did not pick up that she was suffering and there was something wrong physically.

We rehearsed how to “hit the pause button” (be non-reactive) on the old fearful reactions and instead speak confidently and responsibly with one of several scripts we devised together
By the last session, Lyn reported that her husband had said that since coaching she did not dwell on things as she used to. She said “it’s coming naturally – responding without fear. Just getting up and saying stuff.” She said she expressed more emotion and felt better for it, and this she attributed to the coaching sessions. She told me: “You deliver an honest and open relationship. I am no longer sceptical. The key thing in the last six months has been our relationship. The ideas in the group session and the books I read were helpful but they only had meaning because of the depth of our coaching relationship.” She referred to our open and non-judgmental relationship and that I had stretched her, but, “I don’t walk away feeling defensive.” She could take challenging feedback as a result. It taught her how to deal with challenging situations by being able to confide in me. “It was good to be able to express yourself without judgment and say what you’re thinking without penalty.” She said it was important that through our relationship …“you turn weaknesses into strengths”, and attributed that to her high regard for me: “It’s because of the person you are, the relationship I have with you”.

Ursula’s profile was basically healthy and strong. The greatest difficulty in her life was on the home front - she had some difficulty dealing with negative behaviour. In our opening session I encouraged her to do the things that would really look after her. In my discussion with her I advised her to find a counsellor to deal with the difficulties she was facing at home, as I anticipated that this may be the only thing holding her back. Not surprisingly her key issues at work were any negativity from staff, managing difficult people or conflicting messages from the CEO. In Session Six we spent the entire session on staff reviews, and feedback with difficult people. It was skills focussed. For example, we rehearsed how to open the meeting with a staff member, clarifying why we were meeting and how it was going to proceed. We rehearsed how to invite the team member to say what they thought was working or not working and how they felt about it. We practiced how to respond empathically to show that what they have said has been heard, how to add her view of what’s working and what’s not working. Finally we rehearsed how together to spell out the problems that need to be addressed, check that the staff member agrees what the problems are and together work out solutions and next steps.

By Session Seven, Ursula came in feeling really good. She had implemented all the skills and it had gone really well. As a result she felt good about each of her team members. One of her team had said about Ursula: “You open doors for me. You are inclusive. You are empowering. And you give practical support.” I was thrilled at this fantastic feedback. I had taught her how to give and receive feedback and she now felt validated. She had got the benefit of this management skill. She had also implemented the conversation we had rehearsed about dealing with a difficult supplier
and had got that relationship completely back on track. She had done a marketing presentation to the executive and had had very positive feedback.

At the end of the coaching sessions, Ursula reported: “I’ve learned a lot. In the past I’ve tended to avoid conflict. Now I’ve discovered when I do it’s not as bad as I think. I feel different than a year ago. I am much more clear. I’ve turned a really hideous situation into a positive one.” She also noted that she needed to loosen up and be less hard on herself. She said: “I think there are a lot of things slowly getting better. I am more empathic and inclusive. I want to be here in 12 months’ time and see all the ideas come to fruition.

**Giving and receiving feedback**

As has been discussed in the earlier group section, one of the keys to relationship building and becoming a conscious leader is the ability to give and receive feedback, both positive and negative. In every session and every group session, the many skills and attributes associated with good communication are related to this underlying capacity to communicate with genuineness and empathy. Most of the participants reported in the early individual sessions that they did not receive enough feedback themselves, and that they found it hard to give feedback, particularly if it was in any way negative, and as well if it was to their supervisor or the CEO. I was always very clear about giving feedback to my clients and inviting feedback from them. In both the mid-program and end of program review sessions, the topic of feedback was raised by all, and there was a strong tendency for them to say that they found some feedback challenging, but that it was one of the most important parts of the coaching.

Bruce’s giving and receiving feedback was a case in point. Bruce had been a reluctant starter for coaching, particularly when his EQ-I score was 86. However, when his wife and a mate both said the profile was “pretty accurate” and his wife said he ought to “give coaching a go”, we committed to the process. He found that my direct feedback to him, and my teaching him a feedback method, were very useful especially for doing staff reviews. By the middle of our program I gave him the feedback that he had a lot more energy and confidence. He agreed. He and his team handled a major engineering problem well and his confidence lifted. He was very happy that the new way he managed the team worked so well. He made a lot of effort to do other interpersonal skills courses, such as an effective negotiation seminar, public speaking. He explained that practising being more available to people had led to several calls across the company and outside the company seeking his advice on how to deal with crises. He was very happy that this increasing openness was lifting his profile. Bruce said that coaching helped him to understand the importance of hearing the views of the other business managers and integrating those views in his decisions.
when he was acting General Manager. We reflected on appropriate language for each of the business managers that would enable him to connect with each person, and rehearsed scripts for those conversations.

In Company R, Mike, the Chief Financial Officer, in his 40s, came to me with a good EQ of 102, but after the coaching the total scores rose to 122, It was John’s apparent lack of knowledge of how to build relationships and be persuasive that stood out as requiring clear, empathic coaching. Mike was quite difficult to engage with at first because he had little self-insight, little insight into others and poor empathic communication. His typical communication strategies were glib throwaway lines or clichés. The problems he had to deal with were substantial. “The staff are tired and browned off. They don’t share my work ethic. They breach confidence. There’s a lack of trust at every turn…they are very demoralised.” His goal was to build a normal working relationship that builds respect and hopefully trust. He made the point that the "old guard" were so demoralised across the company, people who were reasonably confident and competent. He felt that the new team came across as aggressive and intimidating.

Mike also found it difficult to build a good relationship with the "old guard", one of these being Lyn, his assistant accountant, who had complained that Mike put her down and was rude to her. I coached him to give feedback to Lyn in a softer style; he did and they both reported really wonderful change. I coached him how to keep his words, yet speak with a tone of care and concern and confidence, to build a better relationship, to personalise it. He told me that he was apprehensive that personal feedback might be intrusive. He found personal feedback a bit scary, a bit daunting. I persuaded him that if feedback is given with care, it is actually tremendously helpful, and that’s what a good manager does, let alone a good leader. I later gained the insight that Mike at first did not want to build relationship with staff in case he had to fire them. At the end of the coaching program, Mike reported on the honest feedback I had given to him: “You gave me some very tough feedback. That was OK (because I am robust). I took feedback on board at first because of your credentials and then we debated stuff and then I really valued you.”

*Point of power is the present – respond instead of react*

One of the techniques I teach is how to “hit the pause button", which is an essential part of the healthy self, that is, to respond instead of react and be present. This model or strategy comes from Buddhist practice – no matter what happens, we are to remain aware, remain equanimous, retain our balance and presence, and act with intelligence and compassion. Numerous examples emerge from the transcripts and my case notes. For example, Lyn, the accountant from Company R said in Session
Nine she had implemented the skills associated with the new confident “me”. She reported: “I hit the pause button and got a resolution (with one of her staff). It’s easy.” She’d given feedback to Mike the CFO and was really pleased that she had handled it really well and she had chosen not to stress about some of the issues around having a depleted number of assistants. She said she had a good fortnight of feeling confident and calm: being able to act and give feedback to Mike and doing something about the staff problem gave her power.

With Bruce at Company U, I spent some time coaching him to be more present. I gave Bruce feedback that I noticed that his speech fades at times and it seemed to be when he felt negative about the topic or tired or unwell, and I wanted him to observe his behaviour, hit the pause button and try out alternative strategies. Bruce needed to talk with a particular senior engineer, regarded by many as the best electrical engineer in the country. Whenever Bruce spoke about Don his voice would drop in volume, showing his discomfort. At the prospect of talking with Don, Bruce noted: “I feel inferior. I think Don is very clever and operationally brilliant. I am less competent.” We rehearsed how he could approach Don, connect with him, and put their relationship and some management priorities on the agenda. The coaching program finished before Bruce acted on this. While the insight about his behaviour was a revelation to him, insight alone was not enough to change his behaviour.

This example of adjustment to change by Olivia from Company R quoted earlier under the heading adjustment to change is also about being present, responding rather than reacting: “I practised hitting the pause button so it’s less onerous handling issues and I don’t get upset as much.” “Coaching has crystallised what I am upset about and why I am upset, and as a result I’ve got a clearer idea of what to do and I do it.” She went on to say: “I feel I’ve got some power in the situation and that lifts my energy.” ‘Hit the pause button’ is equivalent to being conscious and aware and remaining equanimous no matter what is happening – being present.

Claiming authority
As the participants gained skills and improved the various attributes of emotional intelligence, they gained in authority, and were more able to carry out the leadership tasks required of their roles.

One of the clear examples of a young leader claiming authority was Harry, from Company U. Aged 35, Harry was a team leader reporting to Brian. He had 33 people reporting to him. He was an electrical tradesman who had worked his way up through the ranks in the five years that he had been at Company U. In that time he had also done a diploma at a university. Harry had been team leader in this production team
Harry was being mentored by Brian, one of the case study participants (see Chapter 5), and through Brian’s presence and ability to have the power of authority without being authoritarian, he learned new skills. The combination of Harry’s fairly poor EQ result and some robust feedback from his manager Brian had convinced him that he needed to become more assertive; it gave him permission and it gave him an imperative and, in Brian’s behaviour, a model for how to do it. He said: “Brian wants me to be more confident and deal with criticism better.” Harry was proactive and applied everything he learned in coaching with his team. He commented in Session Four: “I used this morning’s feedback teaching for the rest of the day staff reviews. That was great.”

In our final session, Harry said: “We identified the behaviours that portrayed my lack of confidence and worked on them. We rehearsed and rehearsed assertiveness in a load of situations. The guys used to come and ask permission in the past, but now my perceived authority has changed. I am more assertive and we are all more adult. I am definitely a better manager. I am able to handle situations more confidently so this promotes a stronger personality and the team needs this.”

**Staff reviews**
An ongoing role of the managers was to conduct staff reviews, and in turn to receive feedback in their own staff review conducted by their supervisors. Within this process, many of the skills combined, particularly the A-B-C of communication, giving and receiving feedback, adult-to-adult assertive communication, dealing with conflict, and claiming authority. Many of the sessions dealt with the specific needs of individual clients, and the group sessions frequently referred to staff reviews. A typical situation is exemplified by Ursula’s case, from Company R, as seen under the description of dealing with conflict.

Candy, the young and highly energetic chemical technician from Company U also worked hard to improve her skills in doing staff reviews. She had made the shift from being authoritarian to being authoritative. She reported that the training in how to give and receive feedback and how to do staff reviews had been excellent. She said: “It’s very helpful for me to have a clear sequence in my mind to make feedback effective. I had never before invited feedback from my subordinates.” Structuring in
the way I had coached her to do it enabled her to get very valuable feedback. She said: “I think I am a better manager and leader – I definitely am. I have confidence in decisions I make. I really have faith that my decisions are well thought out, especially in the last two or three months, I have a lot to contribute in debates. I definitely know my words are listened to – the guys have told me that.”

Sue, the CEO from Company R, had enormous responsibility for conducting staff reviews. She was in her early 40s, and had been brought in to the Company R to turn it around, basically to rescue it. She had been there nearly six months and said that the situation was bigger, darker, more complex and ‘dodgier’ than she had realised. Sue wanted to use the coaching as a sounding board. Sue’s EQ started at 118, one of the highest of all the participants in the research, and she had a huge presence. By the middle of the coaching process, we spent some time preparing how she would conduct 360-degree reviews of the managers in a way that would build staff relationships. In particular we discussed the vocabulary for feedback. Sue anticipated that staff would want her to slow down the process of change, listening more to their point of view and being more understanding of them and their problems. Managers were saying that lack of time to do things, lack of time to deal with management issues, left them feeling inadequate. The CEO identified that she wanted managers to feel valued, she wanted to be perceived as receptive, and she wanted to be practical.

Next time I saw the CEO she said she had conducted the reviews with the managers and used it as a training process for them to conduct their reviews with their staff. She felt very good about how she had conducted the reviews. In particular the managers had given her good feedback about her better vocabulary and process. They told her that documents she had shared with them, such as budgets and plans, were very helpful, that the values she had spelt out were clearer and that work systems for doing things had definitely improved since the coaching. She used the experience and the feedback as the basis of the report of the achievements for that year to the Board. The CEO attributed the considered careful staff reviews and the concomitant feedback as being a direct result of our coaching.

Managing difficult cases
Like all the managers, Harry presented difficult cases and wanted help with how to manage them. For example, Neil, aged 34, had been a tradesman since leaving school, was bright, handsome and high energy and used to be a ‘golden child’ in the organisation until his marriage broke down and things went wrong. He was now divorced. His ex-wife and child had moved five hours’ drive away and he was angry and bitter. Harry described him as enjoying motorbikes, jet skis and rebellion. Harry said that Neil was not happy in the organisation and other team members said he
was looking elsewhere but couldn’t match the good conditions and salary. He was not performing well and was abusing privileges; he also refused to wear safety equipment whenever it suited him. He had a mantra he repeated daily to his teammates: “Remember, management hates you and can’t be trusted.” Harry observed that even in a culture as positive and supportive and nourishing as Company U, there is still a sprinkling of unhappy people who become toxic. As a result of the group training and the few individual coaching sessions, Harry was clear that he needed to deal with difficult people and gain their buy-in (commitment) and this was a skill he could learn rather than being a flaw in his character.

Another example Harry raised was a man in his mid-40s whom he described as not very stable and who had attributed his cardiac arrest to “management pressure”. Harry said: “His work is OK but his attitude is poor; he’s a bully and he intimidates people.”

In our coaching sessions, we looked at how to support both men so they stopped winding each other up. We agreed that we would prepare Harry thoroughly for the upcoming staff reviews so that he was strong, confident and assertive and in the adult and could validate every person’s strengths and join strongly with them through empathy. In particular he would be able to connect strongly with the older man and deal in a matter of fact way with his health issues as an Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) priority – first the value of the person and equally importantly as an OH&S issue for the whole team. With regard to Neil, Harry was to find out who in the entire company Neil did respect and explore these relationships as avenues for influence.

*Power in organisations*

As discussed in Chapter Three when describing the Conscious Leadership model, the decision-making and communication processes determine the flow of power in an organisation. The last few coaching sessions deal with utilising the skills already taught in order to deal effectively with decision-making, with leading through conflict, and putting it all together. The case study of Brian in Chapter Five is probably the best example in the research data of how a person takes on board the skills and techniques from coaching and deals more effectively with decision-making and in general arriving at a position of authentic authority that is present and powerful.

Another example was Candy, the chemical technician from Company U, who learned to claim her authority in a number of ways. For example, I coached her to slow down her speech and speak in a more authoritative way and find a way to resolve emotions so she could be less emotional and reactive in her dealings with people. I encouraged
her to continue with her vigorous self-education program of reading widely, attending training sessions on values, taking media training, doing an eight week toastmaster’s public speaking course and committing to a health and fitness program. Candy accompanied the CEO and another consultant on a three hour values refreshment session around all staff in groups of 30. Candy reflected that this experience had lifted her authority immensely because everybody saw her taking an active role with the well loved CEO. She identified a mantra for herself, which was: “Know yourself, accept yourself, forget yourself (i.e., detach from ego defences).” In a subsequent session, Candy discussed her personal background where she worried that her parents from a strong union background would disapprove of her becoming a manager. She acknowledged that she had been confused about power in management and leadership and at some level felt she was betraying her class by allying with management rather than the workers. As a result of her previous conversations with me, she had a long conversation with her mother who gave her blessing to Candy becoming a senior manager and celebrated her daughter’s achievement.

In this section I have attempted to provide a fair representation across the whole experience, illustrating the leadership themes as they arose with real situations with many different managers. Next, I turn to the participants’ reviews of the coaching experience.

4.5 Qualitative results: overall self-reporting of individual executive coaching

In this section, the qualitative data from 19 of the 21 clients are analysed in relation to their self-reporting on how they perceived the coaching program, in particular the benefits to them of coaching, and with that, the benefits of the coaching relationship. Although the benefits of coaching and the relationship impact are described separately in this section, the two are in reality inseparable, as it appears from the self-reporting evidence that it is the quality of the relationship that creates the conditions for positive coaching outcomes.

**Self-reported benefits of coaching**

Overall, the feedback about the benefits of coaching given to the coach by the participants in both companies indicated that they felt much happier, more at ease, more open, more competent, and they felt valued, and even different, and definitely more optimistic. The comments indicated that the participants saw coaching as a situational benefit (within the company) as well as a benefit to their personal development and wellbeing. Many of the comments from the participants in Company R particularly emphasised how because of the coaching they coped better with their difficult situation in the organisation. For example, Lyn said: “I feel much happier….It’s
coming naturally, responding without fear, just getting up and saying stuff.” Sue said: “Since coaching I’m a lot more at ease and competent.” Another overall finding was that the participants almost all commented extensively on the improvement in their professional and personal relationships as a result of the coaching.

Following are some specific benefits that were mentioned by eight managers in Company R. Not all their comments are included here as there was a good deal of repetition around general statements such as “I am a better manager” and “I am a better leader”. They also reported that they were better communicators and that they were better able to give and receive feedback, including being able to listen better. There seemed to be general consensus that coaching gave them greater confidence and they were able to be more assertive. Some of the managers focussed more on the benefits of learning particular management skills (e.g. time management, improved planning capacity), while others discussed their greater awareness, consciousness, of the qualities of leadership they were gaining. The examples below are a summary of a few additional comments that showed what was significant to individual managers.

Lyn commented that she was happier, that she could manage her time better and that her work-life balance was better.

Mike emphasised the trust that had grown between himself and members of his team as a result of the coaching. He felt that he was now more open with other managers and with his family. An important benefit to Mike was the technique of rehearsing scripts during coaching that he could then apply in the situations he was formerly uncertain about. He said that practising these strategies was very helpful.

Nathan benefited from the practice he gained in coaching in speaking slower, listening more, speaking out and practising assertiveness. He was happy that once his confidence had grown, he was receiving positive feedback from his team. The discussions over the P-A-C model were another benefit that he emphasised.

Olivia’s feedback on the benefits of coaching included her acknowledgement that she became clearer about who she was, and what was required to be a better manager. She said “I can manage my work relationships better.” As with so many of the managers, the building of better relationships among their teams was often seen as one of the greatest benefits from coaching.

Rachael’s positive response to coaching included her new ability to think strategically, and to use the many suggestions that were discussed in the coaching sessions. She said: “I have begun to brainstorm solutions with staff, and listen to them more.” She had learned to control her anger and be more positive and assertive. She was listening better and being more empathic.

Tom spoke about his generally improved management and leadership style, but
also emphasised the benefits to his family relationships, an area that several of the other managers also commented on. He said “you helped me take steps to change my situation and my attitude." The feedback he received from the coaching was helpful to him: “feedback facilitates my own knowing.”

Sue felt more at ease and more competent after the coaching, even though she was already a highly competent leader. She, like Lyn, said she had learned to have a better work-life balance, and improved stress tolerance. “I feel comfortable and in control.” The rehearsing during coaching was beneficial to her role of carrying out staff reviews: “I have a better process, my values are clearer, my systems have improved.”

Ursula commented that she had a better sense of self. “I have a better understanding of who I am and what I want out of this world and how I relate to people.” She found the rehearsing and the suggestions from coaching allowed her to formulate more concrete goals and to deal with problems better with “several approaches clear in my mind. I can apply what I learn immediately.” She felt happy that she had a clearer and improved vocabulary to communicate effectively and was more open to different views and styles of those in her team. “I can deal with conflict now”.

In Company U, the responses were similar to those managers from Company R, with some interesting differences, again related both to situational factors in the workplace and also to differing personal situations. In some ways, the coaching process at Company U followed the program more closely than at Company R, since the utility managers had greater familiarity with professional development activities and were possibly expecting to see further gains in their workplace relationships and their leadership capabilities and awareness. They had been educated in how to benefit from the process. In Company R, on the other hand, their workplace situation was particularly difficult and many of the managers had not engaged before in a professional development process. For the old staff in Company R, coaching in the workplace was something they thought might be seen as “being sent to be counselled” as in the old school of managing change where flaws were focussed on.

While Company R managers tended to emphasise their newly found skills, and their appreciation of rehearsing scripts to deal with difficult situations, Company U managers tended to comment on improved relationships both in the workplace and at home, their improved ability to conduct staff reviews (not all Company R managers had to deal with staff reviews on a regular basis), and their greater self-awareness, or consciousness. Following are some specific areas that were emphasised by the Company U managers as benefits of coaching.

Andrew said the greatest benefit of the coaching experience was the continuity of coaching, i.e. being able to discuss an issue, think about it, being able to
discuss it some more, and follow it up. He felt more confident at work and “Rehearsing and editing for later means I’m able to get it out in words and so I am more confident”. He was also pleased that the coaching had translated to his family situation, and he said his relationships at home had improved.

Bruce was enjoying work more as a benefit of coaching. He was more assertive, more aware of social dynamics and more empathic. He was pleased at his improved ability to give feedback to his team and communicate better. The greatest benefit he said was how much more open he was able to be both at home and at work. He said: “I’ve been showing my love a lot more.”

Candy emphasised the improvement in her ability to deal with what she called the practical issues. She found she was able to build better work relationships, give and receive feedback, improve conflict resolution skills and negotiation skills. She said she had gained insight about herself and her staff. “It’s very helpful for me to have a clear sequence in my mind to make feedback effective. I had never before invited feedback from my subordinates…I used to be crushed by criticism. I am now able to take feedback. I am robust…”

Derek said that the coaching was challenging and rewarding. For him the benefits included being able to handle things differently, apply new skills to management. He said “I have some tools to approach things in a different way. You teach the models and they are a starting point.” His phrase “I feel energised” was an important indication of his more integrated approach, his self-awareness. He added: “I have developed the way I think.”

Eric also reported greater self-awareness, a better focus, more organised and with a better understanding of how to develop a business plan. He benefited from “concrete” and situational feedback, the ability to “translate ideas into action.” One of the key benefits for Eric was an improvement in his relationship with his family, and planning with the family: “It was good to be on top of things, especially being a dad and a husband.”

Frank benefited from what he called “technical managerial advice” such as meeting preparation, HR strategies, diary notes, planning meetings. He reported that the language of coaching was extremely important, including rehearsing presentations, using voice, using the A-B-C of communication, the practice scripts for dealing with a difficult staff member. He noted improved relationships at home, and establishing greater trust with his team. He said “I buy time to respond instead of react…people see me more as a leader because I give them more trust.”

Gail said she felt really positive as a result of the coaching. She felt clear, more assertive, and more able to speak up. She said: “Coaching helped me to improve relationships with my team…helped me to hang in there and pursue and secure opportunities for each team member.”

Harry found the real life examples useful, and he said he was able to put processes into action as a benefit of coaching. He enjoyed the sense that others understood and trusted him more, and he learned “about having clear
consequences for (team) behaviours...As soon as you explained it was exactly the same as child rearing, it was so obvious, and it was easy to translate into an appropriate adult way.” The P-A-C model of interaction was very useful to him.

Ivan also found the P-A-C model useful, and was able to be more supportive with his team without becoming authoritarian or being the “parent”. He was more proactive, improved his management skills, and found the practical coaching in using a diary and similar planning skills were beneficial. He said he was making more effort to support his wife in making major life changes, and that his efforts were as a response to the coaching.

Josh learned to improve communication with his peers and the apprentices. For Josh, the coaching was particularly beneficial in helping him to deal with the death of his mate at work. He grew in confidence, stayed more in the adult, and was more self-aware. He said “coaching was what helped me the most [in dealing with the death].”

Kevin said that the coaching benefited him by helping him to “plan my approach and set the scene to achieve my desired outcome.” He was appreciative of learning better interpersonal skills, especially when dealing with difficult people. At the same time, he reported he became more empathic with other people's needs.

From these self-reports it is clear that there was a mix of perceived benefits, from gaining management related skills on the one hand to the development of more conscious leadership attributes on the other. The Company U managers gave more specific feedback and had a clearer understanding of the coaching process than Company R managers did in general. The conversations with each of the managers ebbed and flowed with both the coaching program, as well as with situational changes. Undoubtedly managers at Company R were under more duress. In my field notes I commented at times, “Just when things are humming along, then there will be a work or a family crisis. The coaching is not predictable.” I also noted that quite often progress will come when we have “cleared some roadblocks”; for example, often a psychological roadblock will come from their family of origin, but it was really quite striking that the language they used was the same language; that they spontaneously talked about a childhood episode and they described it in a way that was reminiscent of what they told me was happening to them in the workplace. The benefits then accrued to their new awareness of the connections between their relationships at home with their family, and at work with their team members; they then saw their leadership role in a new light.

What stood out in all the sessions was that the managers talked about feeling deeply heard, and they all talked about trust. Feeling heard and feeling a deep sense of trust go hand in hand. Feeling deeply heard at a sub-text level is the key to experiencing
a state of trust with another, which goes well beyond practical trust. It is trusting that “I can trust you with who I am.”

**Self-reported benefits of the coaching relationship**

For all of the participants, the coaching relationship was seen to be the cornerstone of the coaching process – without the richness of dialogue and the trust built up through the relationship, the deeper changes may not have occurred. While the participants commented positively on the management skills they had learned, and the practical benefits of coaching, it was only when they commented on the coaching relationship itself that they spoke openly and with some emotion of the attributes of conscious leadership that were being shared – awareness, empathy, trust, openness, undefended positive regard, commitment. Secondly, a common thread running through the feedback was that of the supportive nature of the coaching relationship. The participants commented on the caring relationship, the sense of feeling safe, of having someone take a genuine interest in their situation. The third common element was the connection between the genuine relationship and the ability to receive “tough feedback”, the sense that with a robust, open relationship it is possible to give and receive genuine feedback, both constructively positive and tough.

Following are some of the specific comments that were made in the course of the coaching process, first with the managers from Company R.

Lyn was clear that the relationship was the “key thing. You deliver an honest and open relationship. I am no longer sceptical. The ideas in the group sessions and the books I read were helpful, but they only had meaning because of the depth of our coaching relationship.”

Mike discussed the relationship in terms of respect. He respected my credentials, but most of all he felt there was a high level of respect between coach and client. He said that because of the relationship he was able to take tough feedback “on board.” He also felt that there was a sense of personal wellbeing in the relationship: “You made me feel relaxed and I trust you.”

Nathan was particularly enthusiastic about the trust and openness in the relationship, which gave him a new confidence that he had not found before in a culture where English was his second language. “Your warmth, your heart, you understand my culture plus this culture as well – if I didn’t trust you, I wouldn’t be able to open up fully and you couldn’t see my situation.” He said that through the coaching relationship he was able to increase the level of openness in other relationships at work.

Olivia stressed her feeling of being supported through the coaching relationships. She used words such as empathic, respectful, reflective, supportive, to describe the relationship. She added: “I trusted you straight away. There’s a feeling that you are not left feeling humiliated or in an undignified position or
floundering, and that your ideas will be respected and the other person’s intentions towards you are good.”

Rachael believed that the relationship meant that there was trust and she was able to explore difficult situations with complete confidence: “I relied on you for discussing the situation…and you were sincere”

Tom noted that the coaching relationship meant that he could sound out his ideas undefended, in a situation of trust. He talked about the empathic connection and the sense of realism (genuineness) about the relationship. “You made a commitment to me and you follow through, so I trust you.”

Sue was one of several managers who talked about support, care and trust and the resulting ease with which she could be open. “You and I have a trusting caring relationship…I am open to self-revelation and open to your suggestions.” She added: “Because of your help, I handled big emotional things such as the dishonest manager and the union shop-steward’s aggression. I managed them better.” She summed up with her belief that “Overall, [the relationship] was healthy and useful.”

Ursula stressed the need for the coach to be open and committed to an undefended relationship. “There’s no conflict or prejudgment in our relationship. And that takes out the power element…I feel you have my best interests at heart.” Because of this relationship, Ursula said “I hope I have learned to do exactly this with my staff.”

With Company U, the majority of the participants were male, and they were more used to undertaking professional development in the company. It might have been surmised that this coaching relationship would not have had such a profound impact as it seemed to have with the managers in Company R. It emerged that some of the coaching in Company R required a good deal of “crisis” management and thus a greater degree of personal counselling rather than leadership coaching. In Company U there was a higher level of trust and functional systems. Nevertheless, the comments made by the Company U managers revealed a similar high regard for the significance of the coaching relationship. Some of the specific comments are noted below.

Andrew (who had some difficulty at first in coping with the workload and coming to terms with his fairly low level of interpersonal and intrapersonal skills to deal with his high level of responsibility), said “It’s been pretty open and honest. I’ve struggled to articulate at times… (but) I love to sit down and have the discussions we’ve had… I walk out feeling a whole lot better.”

Bruce commented on how he appreciated my respect for his experience. He talked about the “frank” relationship, and the positive mode of feedback. Again, similarly to the comments made by managers in Company R, Bruce said: “Because of the relationship, I learned better how I interact with my family.”
Candy was particularly happy with the relationship, commenting: “Our relationship was everything. I knew you were doing it all to help me. You have to really develop the relationship to go to that depth. As a result, I’ve become very aware.”

Derek was very open to developing a productive relationship since he had just received a promotion at the time of the coaching program. He commented on the usefulness of my insights and said: “There was such a lot of trust and goodwill…It’s like a spiritual relationship.”

Eric highlighted what he experienced as a balance between my genuine interest in him and the professional role. He said “You had trust and good will. There was a good management and counselling balance.”

Frank also highlighted his feeling of being comfortable in the balance of the relationship. “I trust your confidentiality. The management-counsellor relation works well.” He added “You have a very strong identity and all the elements of a good leader yourself, particularly empathy, honesty, integrity and good communication…. You can read my problems and develop responses that I can use.”

Gail commented on the degree to which she had become self-aware. “Our relationship helped me to see things for myself…I was receptive to new understandings…I had been through a period of self doubt.”

Harry was excited about the new openness he felt and wanting to explore more of the material. “We have a high level of trust. We can talk about anything. This makes it fun – I am much more open.” He appreciated my independence: “You had no hidden agendas or biases”, my respect for him, and my ability to “portray incredible examples” through stories and metaphor. He enjoyed receiving tough feedback: “With you it’s not hurtful.”

Ivan also appreciated my presence and equanimity: “You are non-judgmental…I have confidence in you… We have a reasonable dynamic”.

Josh used the word “mentor”, and said no one else was mentoring him. He enjoyed talking in the coaching sessions, saying “You are easy to talk to; you listen and offer feedback.” With my knowledge and experience, he felt we could “talk about higher level stuff” and he said “I wish I could go another year….Now I know how to keep growing the relationship [with others]. You kept me focussed.”

Kevin also commented on the new ways he could “grow” his relationship with others. He said: “my relationship with [my team member] has turned around due to the [coaching work], both with me and also with [my team member]. We now have common ground and aims after the sessions so far. Without them we would not have progressed to where we are. We can now talk openly and honestly, sharing outcomes.”

From these short comments, it was clear that the quality of the relationship was very
important to all the managers in both companies, and this aspect of the coaching program stood out as a key to being able to change. The trusting, caring, genuine relationship provided the basis for change, as one after the other comments were made such as “with your help I handled the big emotional things” and “now I have the confidence in who I am and what I want”. In other words they were referring to having a healthy self. They gained a stronger sense of self through the in-depth empathy and possibly because they attributed a high level of authority to the coach. It seems that the coaching intervention has to be with someone whom they respect as an expert in their own field; they have to feel matched.

It was through the coaching dialogue that ideas could be discussed at length, and misconceptions could be clarified. For example, some managers mistakenly thought that assertiveness and independence were egotistic; this is a common misunderstanding for those who genuinely pursue a spiritual path. It was only in a very trusting and genuinely uncritical and caring environment that the difference between the present assertiveness of the healthy self and the arrogance of the unhealthy defended self could be discussed.

The managers commented frequently on their surprise at the depth of the coaching relationship, at engaging in a sense of professional intimacy that they rarely had experienced before. They were able to talk about love, to understand how to show empathy and at the same time be able to give tough feedback, and to “bring people out – bring the most out of people.” They were no longer wary of having to participate in a “new fad” of emotional intelligence, but were able to respond positively and be engaged in changing their behaviours. This included my suggestions that they talk to their partners about the coaching and the interpersonal communication approaches they were practising. In my field notes I commented about one manager, “By getting him to talk to his wife about the coaching, I realised that this was critical to his commitment to the process. It was important for him to check everything out for himself. Having an alternative view validated by someone he trusted, that is his wife, was a key part of the intervention.”

In the next section, the quantitative results of the emotional intelligence pre- and post-tests provide triangulated data for the self-reports and my own reflections on the coaching process.

4.6 Quantitative data: EQ-i pre- and post-test indicators of change

In Chapter 3, I described the EQ-i Emotional Quotient Inventory devised by Reuven Bar-On as one measure of emotional intelligence that suited the model of executive
coaching I had developed (see Chapter 2 for a discussion of the concept of emotional intelligence). As I explained, I found that the components measured by the Bar-On EQ-i provided me with valuable information in assessing the extent to which my clients were demonstrating emotionally “healthy” attributes. Their initial scores (the pre-test) gave me a window on their current ability to be successful in dealing with personal and professional demands and pressures. These pre-test scores gave me insights into how I would adapt my coaching process to suit the individual client’s needs for improving their emotional, management and leadership skills.

The post-test instrument was a re-test of the same EQ-i, taken six months after the original test. As described in this section, the results of the post-test were compared to those of the original tests. The differences in the scores of the composite scales were statistically significant. They provide some evidence that, when triangulated with the qualitative evidence of the case study stories, the intervention of coaching has been a major factor in improving the participants’ emotional intelligence and the related leadership skills.


**Coaching participants’ EQ-i results**
Twenty-one clients completed both the pre- and the post-intervention EQ-i. Twelve of these subjects (ten males and two females) came from Company U, comprising all the participants in the coaching program. Nine participants (three males and six females) from Company R are included (Table 4.2). The three clients from Company R who did not complete the intervention included two managers who left the company before the end of the coaching program, and one who joined the company well after the program began.
Table 4.2: Participants and overall EQ-i scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company U</th>
<th>EQ-i score pre-test</th>
<th>EQ-i score post-test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Andrew</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bruce</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candy</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Derek</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gail</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harry</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ivan</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Josh</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kevin</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brian (Chapter 5)</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company R</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lyn</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mike</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nathan</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olivia</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rachael</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sue</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ursula</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penny (Chapter 6)</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The analysis of the responses was geared to explore the extent to which:

- the intervention had an effect on the scores of the EQ-i
- the effect of the intervention on the scores of the EQ-i was different depending on the type of work the participating companies engaged in (utilities versus retail)
- the intervention had a different effect on male and female subjects.

Since there was no previous statistical research linking changes in the scores of the EQ-i to this particular intervention, the direction of the change was not predicted. However, I had already trialled the Bar-On model with other clients in my coach training program, and found that the pre-test scores were very useful in "diagnosing" aspects of emotional intelligence and leadership potential.

The reliability of the results is adequate, and from the evidence from the Bar-On developers, the interval between pre- and post-test is a reasonable time period. There is less likelihood of extraneous factors influencing the result, although workplace
and personal situational factors could potentially interfere with some of the scores (such as having a bad day, or feeling sick or having an argument with the children). Usually, however, with emotionally robust people, those factors would not be expected to have a marked effect. According to Bar-On’s research (Bar-On 1999: 100), and he cites others’ work in methodological concerns, retest intervals that are too short (e.g. less than a month) risk a memory factor contaminating variance, and intervals that are beyond six months may be affected by other developmental changes.

While I selected the Bar-On test for a variety of reasons relating to my coaching program (see Chapter 3), it is also important to note that the EQ-i has been subjected to several analyses of construct validity to “evaluate how well it actually assesses what it was designed to assess (i.e., emotional intelligence and its factorial components)” (Bar-On 1999:113). The study was carried out by correlating the inventory’s sub-scale scores with various scale scores of other measures, using several well-known questionnaires and inventories, such as the MMPI, and older versions of personality assessment. The results, which are tabulated in Bar-On’s *Technical Manual*, indicate that there were high enough correlations to suggest that the constructs were measuring what they set out to measure, but different enough to indicate a distinctiveness in the Inventory. The Bar-On EQ-i, which is particularly suited to identify potential for management of work situations, and to deal with situationally based demands, has proven to be useful in the research.

The Bar-On EQ-i questionnaire was administered privately to each participant in the research cohort, in the two different companies. For purposes of analysis, the demographic details asked for were age and gender. While the names of each participant were included in the tests so that the results could be used during the coaching sessions, the anonymity of the participants has been ensured for the analysis of the statistical results overall. A typical sample of a resource report indicating scores on the composite scales and sub-scales is shown in Appendix B.

**Results of Statistical Analysis**

The data were analysed using SPSS 13.0. A Type1 error rate of 0.01 was chosen because of the large number of statistical tests that were carried out. A chi-squared test confirmed that the difference between the companies in the proportions of female and male subjects approached significance $\chi^2 = 5.4$, d.f. = 1, p<0.02). In Company U, there were ten males and two females, whereas in Company R there were three males and six females who completed the tests. A close look at the scores by gender revealed some interesting possible trends, which are taken up in the discussion section of this analysis.
A preliminary one-way analysis of variance revealed that there was no significant difference in the mean age of the subjects of the two companies (F = 1.00, d.f. = 1,17, p > 0.05) or of the genders (F=1.38, d.f.=1,17, p > 0.05). The subjects of this study had a mean age of 39.3 years.

Separate one-way analyses of variance (ANOVAs) revealed that there were no differences between the pre-intervention EQ-i and its composite scales by company (Table 4.5) and by gender (Table 4.6). Similarly, the means of the scores on the EQ-i and its composite scales post-intervention were found to be similar in each company (Table 4.7) and for males and females (Table 4.8).

Since paired T test depends on the calculation of the differences between the pre- and the post-intervention scores (called difference scores), these difference scores were also analysed by company (Table 4.9) and by gender (Table 4.10). No significant differences in the means of the difference scores for the EQ-i and its composite scales were found by company or by gender. The data were therefore combined for the remaining analyses.

**Scores on the EQ-i**

A series of paired T Tests was carried out to determine if the changes in the scores on the EQ-i and its composite scales were statistically significant. Since means are sensitive to outliers (McNeil, 1983:163) and there was an outlier for the Intrapersonal Difference and one for the General Mood Difference scores, the analyses were repeated without the outliers for these two composite scales. Highly significant changes were confirmed for the overall EQ-i and for each of its composite scales. The significance level was the same both with and without the outliers for the Intrapersonal and the General Mood composite scales (Table 4.10; p < 0.001 for each analysis). It was therefore decided to report the results of the analyses with the outliers included in the data (Table 4.3).

For the overall EQ-i and for each of its composite scales, there was a highly significant increase in the mean scores (Table 4.3). For the overall EQ-i, there was an average increase of 10.0 points. In the individual composite scales, there was an average increase of 10.0 points for the Intrapersonal scale; 7.4 points for the Interpersonal scale; 8.7 points for the Stress Management scale; 7.7 points for the Adaptability scale and 8.5 points for the General Mood scale.
Table 4.3: Means (Standard Deviations) for Total EQ-i and EQ-i Composite Scales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Time 1 N=21</th>
<th>Time 2 N=21</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>d.f.</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total EQ (N=21)</td>
<td>96.1 (14.9)</td>
<td>106.1 (15.0)</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>p &lt; 0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composite Scale</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrapersonal (N=20)</td>
<td>96.8 (15.7)</td>
<td>106.8 (13.8)</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>p &lt; 0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal (N=21)</td>
<td>92.8 (14.5)</td>
<td>100.2 (13.6)</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>p &lt; 0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress Management</td>
<td>97.6 (11.1)</td>
<td>106.3 (11.9)</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>p &lt; 0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptability</td>
<td>99.4 (12.4)</td>
<td>107.1 (13.2)</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>p &lt; 0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Mood</td>
<td>96.7 (13.0)</td>
<td>105.1 (12.6)</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>p &lt; 0.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These results indicate a significant improvement in pre- and post-intervention scores in all composite scales and therefore in the overall EQ-i. There may have been factors other than the intervention influencing the improvement, but the qualitative data strongly indicate that the participants themselves attributed much of their improved sense of well being and confidence, and other indicators of their improved ability to deal with their workplace and home environments, to the coaching process. Based on the analysis of the whole group sessions, and the data from the individual transcripts, it is demonstrated that many coaching sessions directly focussed on skills development in the constructs measured by the EQ-i, so that it is likely that much of the improvement can be attributed to the process.

In Table 4.4, the means and standard deviations for the content sub-scales have been calculated. These sub-scales make up the composite scales (Table 4.3). There were a number of outliers in the content sub-scales difference scores, sometimes several for an individual difference score. Thus, in a sample of this size, it was not statistically meaningful to retest the significance of the difference scores without the outliers, because too much data would have been removed. The results in Table 4.4 need, therefore, to be considered with caution. Nevertheless, the results are useful for me as the coach, in interpreting possible trends and areas for improvement in
specific areas for coaching. For example, I could say that the marked increase in the
general mood of happiness is an indicator of a more healthy emotional intelligence.
I could also surmise that the less marked increase in the general mood of optimism
might be attributed to the very difficult circumstances that the participants from
Company R were facing. In terms of my analysis of the success of the coaching
program, I was particularly pleased to see the clear patterns of improvement in
emotional self-awareness, assertiveness and self-actualisation, all components that
are necessary for conscious leadership.
Table 4.4: Means (Standard Deviations) for Content Sub-scales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content Sub-scale</th>
<th>Time 1 N=21</th>
<th>Time 2 N=21</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intrapersonal</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Regard</td>
<td>99.0 (13.7)</td>
<td>105.1 (10.9)</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>p &lt; 0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Self-Awareness</td>
<td>94.6 (16.9)</td>
<td>105.1 (14.0)</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>p &lt; 0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assertiveness</td>
<td>97.0 (16.5)</td>
<td>106.3 (14.4)</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>p &lt; 0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>101.2 (11.7)</td>
<td>106.2 (11.8)</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Actualisation</td>
<td>95.9 (15.4)</td>
<td>104.7 (11.7)</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>p &lt; 0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interpersonal</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>94.6 (15.4)</td>
<td>100.6 (14.3)</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Responsibility</td>
<td>97.8 (11.2)</td>
<td>100.9 (10.6)</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal Relationship</td>
<td>90.3 (16.6)</td>
<td>99.8 (15.3)</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>p &lt; 0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stress Management</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress Tolerance</td>
<td>99.4 (13.2)</td>
<td>107.6 (13.1)</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>p &lt; 0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impulse Control</td>
<td>96.6 (15.3)</td>
<td>103.2 (14.0)</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>p &lt; 0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adaptability</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reality Testing</td>
<td>99.9 (11.2)</td>
<td>105.1 (12.3)</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td>99.7 (16.2)</td>
<td>108.1 (14.8)</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>p &lt; 0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem Solving</td>
<td>98.9 (11.5)</td>
<td>105.1 (11.1)</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>p &lt; 0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>General Mood</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optimism</td>
<td>99.6 (11.4)</td>
<td>105.0 (13.5)</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happiness</td>
<td>95.2 (15.5)</td>
<td>105.0 (12.0)</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>p &lt; 0.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When viewing the data by company and age (Table 4.5), there were no significant differences in the age groups, a result that could be expected given that the ages of the participants were not so very far apart.
Table 4. 5: Means (Standard Deviations) for Pre-Intervention Total EQ-i, EQ-i Composite Scales and Age by Company

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Company 1 n=12</th>
<th>Company 2 n=9</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>d.f.</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total EQ1</td>
<td>94.8 (9.0)</td>
<td>97.9 (20.9)</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>1,19</td>
<td>p &gt; 0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composite Scale</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrapersonal1</td>
<td>93.9 (10.6)</td>
<td>100.7 (20.9)</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>1,19</td>
<td>p &gt;0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal1</td>
<td>91.0 (10.5)</td>
<td>95.2 (18.9)</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>1,19</td>
<td>p &gt;0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress Management1</td>
<td>97.6 (9.2)</td>
<td>97.7 (13.8)</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>1,19</td>
<td>p &gt;0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptability1</td>
<td>99.9 (8.5)</td>
<td>98.7 (16.9)</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>1,19</td>
<td>p &gt;0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Mood1</td>
<td>95.0 (8.5)</td>
<td>98.9 (17.8)</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>1,19</td>
<td>p &gt;0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>(n=10) 37.4 (4.9)</td>
<td>(n=9) 41.3 (9.3)</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1,17</td>
<td>p &gt;0.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When looking at the data comparing companies and gender (Table 4.6), it was interesting to see that the overall EQ-i and the Interpersonal composite scale showed a tendency to indicate higher scores for the female participants. Although the significance was 0.013 for the interpersonal scores, not statistically significant, it may be that with a larger cohort and further research these differences would become more apparent.
Table 4.6: Means (Standard Deviations) for Pre-Intervention Total EQ-i, EQ-i Composite Scales by Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Male n=13</th>
<th>Female n=8</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>d.f.</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total EQ1</td>
<td>92.5 (12.0)</td>
<td>102.0 (18.0)</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>1,19</td>
<td>p &gt; 0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composite Scale</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrapersonal1</td>
<td>93.9 (11.2)</td>
<td>101.6 (21.3)</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1,19</td>
<td>p &gt; 0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal1</td>
<td>86.9 (10.8)</td>
<td>102.4 (15.2)</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>1,19</td>
<td>p &gt; 0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress Management1</td>
<td>96.5 (11.2)</td>
<td>99.5 (11.5)</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>1,19</td>
<td>p &gt; 0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptability1</td>
<td>96.7 (11.4)</td>
<td>103.8 (13.5)</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1,19</td>
<td>p &gt; 0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Mood1</td>
<td>95.0 (11.4)</td>
<td>99.3 (15.8)</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>1,19</td>
<td>p &gt; 0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Male n=11</td>
<td>Female n=8</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1,17</td>
<td>p &gt; 0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>37.8 (4.1)</td>
<td>41.3 (10.4)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The scores on the EQ-i and its composite scales post-intervention were found to be similar in each company (Table 4.7) and for males and females (Table 4.8).

Table 4.7: Means (Standard Deviations) for Post-Intervention Total EQ-i, EQ-i Composite Scales and Age by Company

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Company 1 n=12</th>
<th>Company 2 n=9</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>d.f.</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total EQ1 (N=21)</td>
<td>106.2 (7.3)</td>
<td>106.1 (22.1)</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1,19</td>
<td>p &gt; 0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composite Scale</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrapersonal1 (N=20)</td>
<td>106.9 (6.9)</td>
<td>106.7 (20.3)</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1,19</td>
<td>p &gt; 0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal1 (N=21)</td>
<td>99.0 (8.0)</td>
<td>101.6 (19.3)</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>1,19</td>
<td>p &gt; 0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress Management1</td>
<td>106.6 (7.3)</td>
<td>105.9 (16.7)</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1,19</td>
<td>p &gt; 0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptability1</td>
<td>107.0 (8.1)</td>
<td>107.2 (18.6)</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1,19</td>
<td>p &gt; 0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Mood1</td>
<td>104.9 (7.7)</td>
<td>105.4 (17.8)</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1,19</td>
<td>p &gt; 0.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.8: Means (Standard Deviations) for Post-Intervention Total EQ-i, EQ-i Composite Scales and Age by Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Male n=13</th>
<th>Female n=8</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>d.f.</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total EQ1</td>
<td>94.8 (9.0)</td>
<td>97.9 (20.9)</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>p &gt; 0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composite Scale</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrapersonal1</td>
<td>104.5 (8.8)</td>
<td>110.5 (19.6)</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>p &gt; 0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal1</td>
<td>95.5 (10.2)</td>
<td>107.9 (15.6)</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>p &gt; 0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress Management1</td>
<td>105.5 (11.5)</td>
<td>107.6 (13.1)</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>p &gt; 0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptability1</td>
<td>104.2 (10.9)</td>
<td>111.9 (15.9)</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>p &gt; 0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Mood1</td>
<td>102.1 (9.3)</td>
<td>110.1 (16.1)</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>p &gt; 0.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since paired T test depends on the calculation of the differences between the pre- and the post intervention scores (called difference scores), these difference scores were also analysed by company (Table 4.9) and by gender (Table 4.10). No significant differences in the means of the difference scores for the EQ-i and its composite scales were found by company or by gender. The data were therefore combined for the remaining analyses (Table 4.11).

In the Bar-On EQ-i research, the developers note that while no significant difference appear between males and females regarding overall emotional intelligence, significant but small gender differences appear for many factorial components. Normative data were collected from the United States, Nigeria, Argentina, South Africa, Germany, Israel, India and Canada. Based on the normative sample tested in the United States (Bar-On 1999:91): “females seem to have stronger interpersonal skills than males, but the latter have a higher intrapersonal capacity, are more adaptable and are better at stress management.” Bar-On goes on to say that “Women are more aware of their emotions, show more empathy, relate better interpersonally, and act more socially responsible than men; men appear to have better self-regard, are more independent, solve problems better, are more flexible, cope better with stress and are more optimistic than women” (ibid).

It would be interesting for further research to look specifically at high achieving, emotionally healthy individuals with leadership potential or in leadership positions,
and then to look at differences by age, gender, context and culture (or other demographic data such as language or socio-economic groups). Moreover, a larger data set would allow such multivariate analyses, and perhaps allow for more rigorous analysis of the changes in the sub-scales.

Table 4.9: Means (Standard Deviations) for Difference Scores of Total EQ-i and EQ-i Composite Scales by Company

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Company 1 n=12</th>
<th>Company 2 n=9</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>d.f.</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total EQ Difference</td>
<td>11.3 (7.3)</td>
<td>8.2 (7.2)</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>1,19</td>
<td>p &gt; 0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composite Scale</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrapersonal Difference</td>
<td>13.0 (9.5)</td>
<td>6.0 (7.5)</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>1,19</td>
<td>p &gt; 0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal Difference</td>
<td>8.0 (7.2)</td>
<td>6.6 (6.5)</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>1,19</td>
<td>p &gt; 0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress Management</td>
<td>9.0 (4.5)</td>
<td>8.2 (8.0)</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>1,19</td>
<td>p &gt; 0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptability Difference</td>
<td>7.1 (7.8)</td>
<td>8.6 (7.9)</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>1,19</td>
<td>p &gt; 0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Mood Difference</td>
<td>9.9 (11.4)</td>
<td>6.6 (5.7)</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>1,19</td>
<td>p &gt; 0.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.10: Means (Standard Deviations) for Difference Scores of Total EQ-i and EQ-i Composite Scales by Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Male n=13</th>
<th>Female n=8</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>d.f.</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total EQ Difference</td>
<td>10.4 (6.3)</td>
<td>9.4 (9.0)</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>1,19</td>
<td>p &gt; 0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composite Scale</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrapersonal Difference</td>
<td>10.7 (6.8)</td>
<td>8.9 (12.6)</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>1,19</td>
<td>p &gt; 0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal Difference</td>
<td>8.5 (8.1)</td>
<td>5.5 (3.6)</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1,19</td>
<td>p &gt; 0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress Management</td>
<td>9.0 (6.5)</td>
<td>8.1 (5.6)</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>1,19</td>
<td>p &gt; 0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptability Difference</td>
<td>7.5 (8.5)</td>
<td>8.1 (6.7)</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>1,19</td>
<td>p &gt; 0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Mood Difference</td>
<td>7.0 (7.1)</td>
<td>10.9 (12.4)</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>1,19</td>
<td>p &gt; 0.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.11: Paired Samples T Tests for Intrapersonal and General Mood Composite Scales with Outliers Removed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paired Differences</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mean Std. Deviation Std. Error Mean 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower Upper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrapersonal2 - Intrapersonal1</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Mood2 - General Mood1</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.7 Conclusion

The data from the company case studies in this chapter have provided multiple layers of evidence for demonstrating the strength of the coaching process to enhance the development of conscious leadership in the managers who participated in this research. The overall picture of the two companies provided the context for the coaching, clarifying the company goals, the organisational climate and the power and communication dynamics within each company. By presenting a composite picture, it was then possible to situate the managers from each of the organisations within those organisational boundaries.

I found that some skills were taught more efficiently and effectively in a group. In addition, issues that arose in the group were pursued in subsequent individual sessions, and other skills and leadership attributes that were being developed in the individual sessions were reinforced through the group, drawing on the learning from previous weeks. Outcomes from the group sessions for the individual coaching sessions were very positive. For example, the ethical issues raised by the Robin Hood exercise were taken up again individually, and how the issues of trust in relationships that arose from the story line of the Lantana movie could be followed through in the one-on-one sessions.

The group sessions provided not only a venue for skills development, but assisted with building improved relations among the managers. Surprisingly at first, it had a further benefit of encouraging some of the potentially “reluctant” managers to participate more actively in the coaching process once they saw the degree of enthusiasm and engagement of their peers. I also found that after the sixth session,
the mid-point of the 12-session coaching process, many of the group sessions focussed more on the managers supporting each other to get a better outcome from the coaching. In Company R, for example, the interaction between the “old guard” managers and the “new” management consultants encouraged the group as a whole to respond with greater empathy. The old guard could see the newer, highly skilled consultant managers performing well, and could enjoy their insights. The new managers could in turn recognise the standpoint of the more experienced staff, could raise issues with them and ask for feedback.

The main themes of the coaching process discussed in the third section identify what was happening in the coaching relationship, and how the executive managers, in addition to achieving their management goals, also gained insight, assembled meaning, became conscious and present, and grew as leaders. Although the twelve themes were used as an organising device to highlight key processes of developing conscious leadership, the skills were not taught as separate entities, but rather acted recounting a complex, multi-layered experience spent over the six months working with me, working in a one-to-one confidential and professionally intimate context. What came out strongly from their self-reporting was their obvious respect for the process, which many commented was far more beneficial than anything they had anticipated.
CHAPTER 5

BRIAN’S STORY: CASE STUDY 1

There are only two feelings, love and fear
There are only two languages, love and fear
There are only two activities, love and fear
There are only two motives, two procedures, two frameworks, two results

Love and fear
Love and fear.
Michael Leunig 1998

5.1 Introduction

Brian was a senior business manager of the utility company, aged late 30s, and trained as an electrical engineer. He had been in the industry for 15 years. At the time of the coaching, he had been in the company for 11 years and, three years before this coaching event, he had moved into the company’s management team as a business manager. He began by working directly with one production team at first, but when the company restructured a year later, Brian was given responsibility for three production teams, overseeing their team leaders. His role had evolved into helping the teams do their job, providing moral support and dealing with “people” issues. He had given up the more traditional role of being an operations supervisor. The other side of his job was working with the executive team to implement the plan, dealing with enterprise agreements, industrial relations, and the challenge of management.

Brian was seen as successful. He had six team leaders reporting to him, and reporting to the team leaders were about 90 men and a few women, compared with his colleagues who had only one or two team leaders and about 20 to 40 people reporting to them.

5.2 Session 1

From the first moment of interaction, I utilised the A-B-C structure (Agenda-Body-Conclusion), which I later made explicit with him so he could see what I did, and also begin the process of reflecting on our experience as it happened. The first few minutes were spent introducing how we were going to run this first hour together so we would connect and set the agenda, and so Brian would be completely clear about the procedure.
After referring to the ethics consent and participation forms, I said:

**Cecily:** What I’m going to do in this session is I’d like to get a feel for you and your job, what your role is, what’s working, what’s not working and so on, for you. And use that as the process to get to know you a bit. You’re very welcome to ask me stuff … because we’re going to be building a relationship to work over these six months…

…and then I’ll be getting you to reflect on not only [Company U] but a couple of other jobs you’ve done and the reason for that is to head towards, at the end of this session and certainly by the end of next session, getting a few clear concrete goals that we’re going to work on.

…And there may be management types of goals and … it might be that you want to use it [coaching] for something else and that’s fine with me, but the starting point will be looking at those management goals.

So the first thing then is to let me have a sense of your job. Brian, what’s your background prior to being a manager, your occupation… .

This is an example of the “A” of the A-B-C – connecting with him and spelling out the agenda of how we will proceed for the rest of the hour. The nature of coaching is consistently moving between the content of the conversation and the structure, process and meaning of the conversation. A good leader is able to suspend their engagement in the content and take a step back to reflect on what is happening. Our interaction was modelling that from the first moment of our meeting.

For the next fifteen minutes, Brian told the story of his work history. I got a clear idea of the breadth and depth of his work experience, the progression of his career as a manager and a leader. He brought me up to date with the matrix management structure at Company U, and who was in what role and who he reported to, who reported to him and how the dynamics worked. During this time he spoke in 300 word chunks, punctuated by my clarification questions.

**Cecily:** “When was the restructure?”

“So what’s the difference between Team A, Team B and Team C?”

“Are the teams all working well? How would you rate them…on a scale of 1 to 10 where 10 is good?”

“It’s a huge part of your budget. I mean you’ve got to get it right or you’ll stuff up on either the staff side or you’ll lose too much money on the other”

“So how many people have you got reporting to you Brian?”

After these first 15 minutes I had a good understanding of his perception of the company, who he worked with and how he related to them. He had only said positive things but I was quite aware of who he felt most confident in.
Through Brian’s account of his work and the work of the company, I learned the meta-picture of power and communication in the organisation, but in particular the part played by the client in the organisation. In this first coaching session, it is essential to establish a positive, in-depth relationship with the client so that he feels known and valued, and has a high level of respect and confidence in me. In Brian’s case this would enable him to trust me and give me authority to work with him. When I asked him to describe his work, Brian said that he loved his job and enjoyed the struggles and the performance issues. He said: “As far as coming to grips with the role of the manager, I personally feel completely comfortable with it. It suits me at this stage in my life more than anything.”

The first 15 minutes was a period of intensive listening. I was checking, clarifying and, in some instances, getting further detail. The emphasis was on the importance of him and his story and I was listening both for the content detail, and also with advanced empathy for everything else. Brian enthusiastically told the story of his career and the structure of this company. He spoke rapidly and with passion about everything from his engineering degree to the highlights of his 15 years with the industry, then focussing on his move into the management team.

…probably 3 odd years ago I moved into the management team of Company U as a business manager…We’ve got about 40 pieces of plant, and we’ve got teams to look after each of those, or strategy groups as we call them. … of those 40, some are better than others but generally as a whole, I think … they’re very good.

Brian went on to describe his teams, leaping from one idea to another in his desire to bring the teams to life for me and explain his respect for their ability as well as his concerns about their interpersonal skills:

The area that I feel they’re not so strong in is interpersonal people type aspects of the team, I still feel that there, they’re 4 or 5 I’d rank them. So it depends on what you’re measuring them against. Their ability to be autonomous in dealing with their own personal problems, their ability to deal with conflict between themselves and other people in the team, their maturity with understanding what roles of managers and leaders are and all those types of things we often are down talking at a very low level in that sort of stuff. But when you start to talk about running a piece of plant, you know getting your budget right and putting the right investment capital into it, reliability issues, availability issues, they speak at a very high level of maturity. So it’s just when you start to get into the people stuff that it, you find that it’s not so good. But I guess again, relative to other industries, it may be very good…

His approach to people and situations, how he communicated and exercised power and leadership in the organisation, came through as he continued:

So they’ve got some support from high levels of management and their own development, you know just moral support as well, cause it’s a pretty tough job… you’re right in the thick of it, the guys are at you all the time, you’re trying to empower them, so you’re trying to let go of the traditional controls you may have had as a direct supervisor…so you’re giving up
some of that control and handing that over to other people... and you’re the one having to pick up all the things that the guys don’t want to do, basically dealing with people issues...

His role as a team leader was also driven by his role in management and he brought up the important issues of trust and relationship building:

...and then I’m part of the business management group ...and we’re also looking at where this place is heading long term, so there’s also long term issues we’re dealing with, which may not necessarily be directly related to our day to day position in the hierarchy so to speak. I’ve done enterprise agreements, I do a bit on the industrial relations side of things, I was right in the thick of that EPA and I still am probably the first point of contact on site for that, I’m an enthusiastic amateur when it comes to industrial relations...If you get industrial action you can change this place forever. In the blink of an eye you’ve burnt every bridge you’ve ever built and every bit of trust. And trust can take a lot of years to build up but only a matter of days to destroy so there’s a lot of process steps in it as well and everyone’s got their finger in the pie from the government to the board to the workforce to the unions... So it’s just balancing all those stakeholders, you know and trying to maintain the relationship in your workforce so you go through that and come out the end still actually wanting to talk to each other.

His story was riveting and I was genuinely interested. He finished his summary with an enthusiastic affirmation of his love of his job.

So that was a fairly intensive part of the job...I mean, I went from engineering to this role and I’ll never go back. This is what I want to do. I love it. I mean I do, even though I was talking about the EBA (enterprise bargaining agreement) and the struggles and the performance issues with guys and that but I enjoy that, I really do enjoy that.

My focus in the first session was on two things: to build rapport and get to know each other, and second, to establish about three concrete behaviour change goals for our six months’ work together. During the first session I wanted Brian to reflect on three work situations, including his current role, identifying the most satisfying aspects and least satisfying, his strengths, areas for development, and therefore his goals. I was looking for patterns – patterns in experience, in his approach to people and situations, language, his key words, how he communicated and exercised power and leadership in an organisation because these patterns would be the key to understanding and resolving problems and motivating positive change. As he was speaking I jotted his key words into a table in my case notes(see Table 5.1 below).
### Table 5.1 Case Notes – Brian’s Job Satisfaction Values

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary of Brian’s Job Satisfaction Values</th>
<th>Overseas Co. 1</th>
<th>Overseas Co. 2</th>
<th>Australia Company U</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Most Satisfying</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Made huge amount of friends, camaraderie, common goals</td>
<td>I SURVIVED – toughest work environment 6 months</td>
<td>I have achieved anything I have wanted to – great latitude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Cultural learning re race, poverty and social justice</td>
<td>Learned completely different culture</td>
<td>Always supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1 month’s work, huge technical experience and learning</td>
<td>Huge technical learning re tendering for big projects, realities of business, streetwise</td>
<td>Company values are consistent with my own, equity, justice, ethics etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Authoritarian style of management – hierarchical organisation</td>
<td>Very impersonal workplace, friendships rare</td>
<td>We’ve got a lot of good people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Least satisfying</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Authoritarian style of management – hierarchical organisation</td>
<td>Very impersonal workplace, friendships rare</td>
<td>So many staff operate at low level of maturity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Social injustice</td>
<td>Discipline – too severe</td>
<td>Resistance to change by some (10-20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Incompetent staff</td>
<td>I WAS YOUNG – resisting change and the other culture</td>
<td>Difficulty attracting quality people to leadership positions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Poorly educated workforce</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>To change?</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I am pretty happy personally and professionally. I’d like to lift emotional maturity across the whole facility</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Brian showed he was highly articulate, motivated, with a well-developed sense of ethical standards and a strong regard for fundamental values of social justice. Brian’s experience was not only in Australia but also in two other countries, where he discovered what it was like to work in very different cultures with a completely different work ethic. He said: “…the fact that I felt like I survived that and came out at the end of it, probably a fair bit more mature than when I went it…I learned a lot about dealing
with diverse people, diverse cultures…if I did that time again, I would have dealt with it a lot differently, because I’m a bit more mature now than when I was then.” He noted that in the first overseas country he worked in it was difficult to make friends, and on reflection he felt that he tried to resist the differences rather than working with them. The second overseas posting, he felt, was easier, but he discovered another side to work: problems of extremes of wealth and poverty, inequalities at work, and unfair treatment of men at the bottom of the hierarchy who generally had very little education. His sense of social justice was fired by these experiences.

Back in Australia, Brian found the work environment easier because of the higher levels of skills training and post-secondary education among the men he worked with. He discussed the values of his current organisation as being “consistent with my own…generally the fundamental values that we live by and work by are very good…our structure and our way of trying to give people the freedom and the empowerment and all that sit well with me.” He went on to say that in his company, “We don’t have people making decisions that are obviously unethical or lack any sort of moral conviction. I see very strong moral and ethical behaviour at all levels.”

Brian’s stance was clearly highly ethical, and he saw himself as being very reluctant to let people go, even if they did not want to cooperate. When I asked him if there was some kind of welfare function in the organisation, Brian was reluctant to answer directly. After saying he did not feel it was the answer to dismiss such people, he added: “I think putting a person out on the street is the most harsh thing you can do to especially a male in his late 40s as some of those guys are. It’s just the death warrant for some of those sort of guys.” Brian added emphatically “It’s an option but I admit I don’t want to go there if I can avoid it. At Company U, we haven’t sacked anyone yet.”

To achieve behaviour change in executive coaching we need clear, concrete behavioural goals. For this reason, I asked Brian to spell out a concrete example of immaturity. The immaturity word is his analysis. I want to hear the raw data. The example he gives is that the company has a safety system that we want people to work with and “guys are just blankly refusing to use the system.” To ensure safety, work teams in an industrial site need to isolate a piece of plant and clearly sign in a uniform way that they are working on it, so that nobody else will inadvertently do something that will cause an accident. The minority of workers do not want the responsibility of being the ones in charge of a job and therefore hanging the tags because they fear they will make a mistake and be disciplined. Brian said: “They’re all saying ‘I’m not paid enough to do this…” Then I ask Brian: “What do you think the real reason is?”
Brian: I think it's a case of "I'm not comfortable with responsibility"; there's a lot to do with that. It's that "I just want to come to work, have my work handed to me, I'll do my job, I'll go home, I don't want a lot of responsibility or accountability" and even though if they say money, I don't think any amount of money would satisfy that they could live with that. So just guys that, I guess I like having people around who are prepared to take on a challenge and go for it. That's what I'd like to think I'm like a bit. So I have trouble with guys who just really live at that sort of level. I guess the other thing is that those sort of people, there's a lot of people at Company U who still have a lot of trouble with any form of change. I mean all of us are human beings, we're all pretty poor at handling massive change, but some obviously more than others and these guys really, really struggle in our environment of empowering them to take control of their working life …

Cecily: How much of that is the emotional maturity and how much of it really is the lack of intelligence and expertise?

Brian: I think the guys are bright enough. When we select them, we have a pretty rigorous selection process so we've got some fairly clever guys here, even the guys you know, the lower level trade or utility workers, even the lesser skilled guys are still pretty skilful guys. I think - I believe it's more the emotional intelligence side of things than it is about technical competence

Brian agreed that some of the work expectations should be clearer. The identified primary business goal was that the company was trying to regain clarity, and they wanted to use consequences to get people to change in order to build a more successful business.

Brian then explored the ethical dilemma of on the one hand, providing staff with dignity and respect for themselves and freedom to make mistakes, but on the other hand, that "people haven't grasped the concept of accountability". I drew the analogy of an education program pitched at primary school children who have learned to choose better behaviour, an awareness that would be good if adults "got it" too. In this exchange I was using the Parent-Adult-Child model and encouraging Brian to look at the issue as a need for creating mature Adult-Adult communication in the company.

The following excerpt from the transcript is a good example of helping Brian to see with a domestic example that he does know how to develop responsibility in a professional context and that good management is the same as good parenting.

Cecily: I've just been listening to wonderful results from getting kids, the ones who are little horrors, to cop the consequences and learn that they chose that behaviour, they didn't just do it… I heard a six-year-old say, and this kid was the kid who had the other kids in the pre school group terrorized and now he's in grade 1 and he's had 18 months of very firm parenting. He's high energy, bright kid you know, both his parents are bright and to have this kid modify his behaviour and say "look I made a bad choice Mum" that's the sort of thing we'd like to have every adult do.

Brian: Yeah. Well, see, maybe as an organisation we haven't been clear on what the expectations are. I don't know I mean you say "if you behave like this it's unacceptable, therefore this is the consequence and if you behave like this it's OK". I mean some of those sort of lines are probably fairly wide and grey, so that may be a failing on our part. You know with a child you say "you do this and I'll do this to you" you know "I'll smack you" or "I'll..." but it's quite clear what this is, maybe with our guys that's…

Cecily: So have they got very clear job descriptions and is it in their job descriptions?
Brian: A lot of our workforce is very much not like that. You know, we sort of allow a fair bit of scope for people to, some very wide boundaries within which they can work. Probably more the things that I’d be more conscious of is the behaviour that we’re expecting when you work. No so much you know, you see something needs to get done…

Cecily: But take the tagging thing I mean that is a safety issue in the entire…
Brian: Oh safety, yeah that’s, yeah we’re pretty clear on what everyone’s responsibilities are with safety. That’s probably one area we probably are prescriptive.
Cecily: But if they’re not doing what they’re meant to be doing with the tags for example it, can’t it be put in their job description, what we expect them to do?
Brian: On that system, we’re very clear. “If you do this, if you lift the tag, if you do this, it is a dismissal process. You’ll be fronting… you know the system and choose to work outside it, we will go through dismissal process with you”. That is one of the very clear, few clear rules on…
Cecily: Maybe we need to review all of those rules and have a look at what else needs to be toughened up.

It was evident from listening to the tapes again, that towards the latter part of the first session, the conversation was faster, with fewer pauses, and client and coach had established a comfortable level of mutual understanding. Indications of greater rapport include, for example, that the client said “right” several times after I summarised points, indicated agreement on what the problems might have been, and was pleased that I recognised his strengths as a business manager. There seemed to be an important point of contact in developing the coach-client relationship for the next meeting as we closed with the C of the A-B-C of communication.

Cecily: Perhaps some of the managers don’t really understand the difference between the content and the process. The difference between toughening up, I mean you can toughen up the rules but apply them in a very personal caring way or you can toughen up in the application and in fact leave the rules loose. I mean, they’re confusing those two things, you see what I’m getting at. Whereas what we want to do is toughen up the actual rules but do it in a way that is sufficiently, you know, caring and sharing.
Brian: That’s the thing, you can still be consistent with our culture of dignity and respect, we’re not out to blame people for mistakes. All those things that we hold, you know, working in a team environment, all those things we hold dear to our values, ethics and all the rest, but in there somewhere is consequential learning, you know, "these are the rules, if you stay within those rules..."
Cecily: But there is a lack of respect if in fact, I mean [drawing P_A_C model of power on whiteboard]… we have power based on fear, directive “do what I say” kind of process, or we have power based on respect and consultation, so what you’re saying is that familiarity is this sort of power and this is what we want. Well in fact you do want consultation, but, if you are their boss, you insist. There’s a loss of respect that’s actually happening at some levels…
Brian: Yeah I think so.

This is a crucial distinction between power based on fear and power based on respect. It is the difference between an authoritarian Parent-Child dynamic and a mature authoritative Adult-Adult dynamic.

Cecily: … it’s somewhere there isn’t it?
Brian: Yeah it’s just, now the guys feel that if, any disciplinary type action we take of any sort, I mean … when I say discipline here, I don’t mean sacking people… I mean even just saying “that’s not right, you will not use a car that way” or “you will…” the guys take a real offence to that, you know: “you don’t trust us any more, I thought this organisation was about trust” and you know it’s just…
Cecily: Well in fact you will lose, you know, you need to say to them “you will lose my trust … it isn’t OK to add hundreds and hundreds of dollars cost to each vehicle, it’s costing us a fortune” you know … “we are running as a business.” So what we’ve got to do, you and I have got to do is come up with what we want to achieve and then work out a positive, motivating way of getting there. Now it probably won’t, it’ll probably take more than six months but we might get stage one bedded down.

Brian: I think it’s, there’s a lot of others, I mean, others may say other issues, but it is something that we’re all grappling with a bit and...

Cecily: Yeah I know, I’m hearing that. I’m hearing that. So we need to, can you sum it up in a sentence, what are we trying to do?

Brian: I think it’s regaining some clarity on what our expectations are of our workforce and the consequences that will occur if you work outside, you know venture away from those minimum expectations.

Cecily: Why? Why do we want to do this?

Brian: Again, it’s the maturity thing…

Brian was intuitively describing the goal of a responsible and accountable workforce, and this was exactly what the Parent-Adult-Child Model addresses, as I will discuss further in Chapter 7. I had been trying to get Brian to refine it. To exercise leadership that models and develops adult responsibility and accountability in the teams, he needed to be able to have a clear picture of what he was trying to do and articulate what he wanted. In fact this conversation pre-empted the group session on the Parent-Adult-Child Model.

By the end of Session 2, I wanted to make sure that we had achievable, concrete goals. We were not just there for a chat. I concluded this session by saying that by the end of next session we wanted to have these concrete goals sorted.

From the leadership point of view, the person who is called a good leader is universally described as someone who knew us well and encouraged us and had our interests at heart. In this first session, this was the basis for Brian to feel quite well known. He had told me a lot about his narrative, I had his core values, I had the core elements of his goals and I had picked up on his feelings. In fact I really knew him quite well after the first hour. This is me exercising leadership with Brian.

5.3 Session 2

The beginning of Session 2 again utilised the A-B-C model, where I built bridges from the previous session by asking Brian to review that session. The key ideas of the first session were progressed by getting Brian to clarify his goal of developing maturity in the staff. The next steps would also be to look at his own career to progress his own professional development, and to take him through a process he could use with his staff. The process would be utilised in the upcoming staff reviews in which
he would be setting behavioural goals to develop their maturity.

I began Session 2:

**Cecily:** What I wanted to pick up with you first Brian is just a review on the first session and ask how was that for you, what was good, what worked, what ideas were you thinking about, were there any questions you wanted to ask?

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

**Cecily:** Mm.

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

**Cecily:** And how did you find it?

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

What Brian was talking about here was that in addition to the obvious business issues, leadership is about emotional responses, relationships and integrity. It seemed that until this point he had seen this as personal, i.e. non-work. He acknowledged to me: “you are good” – I had gone to a deep level with him in that first hour. He was a little shy about it, but he was acknowledging our connection.

**Cecily:** So what did you take away from that conversation then?

**Brian:** Ah, it made me – like I was trying to clear out in my own mind a little bit more about some of the stuff we talked about here and we talked about that in other forums and I’ve talked about in forums since then. So I mean I guess I’m working this out – to progress, but the stuff that I did take away that I actually sat with you and talked to you about what was good about other workplaces, what mattered to me personally and all those sorts of things. I hadn’t actually set out for probably ten years in some of those cases and talked about that but it dragged up a few memories of the past, I guess, and put a few things into a bit more perspective I guess... I hadn't put it into perspective relative to other places I've worked... I find in verbalising it makes you stop and think a bit more about it.

Brian’s summary of the first session was that he had raised “people” issues, especially the maturity of the people he was working with, and the problem of “getting quality management and quality leadership in the organisation”. He wanted practical solutions, and talked about goal setting for the company, business targets and objectives.

I asked him again, “So in five years’ time, what would you like to be doing?” Brian’s response was:

**Brian:** I’d like to be able to continue – I think what I’ve found about maturity in the ten years I’ve been in management is being able to make tough decisions, being able to do what's best from the holistic point of view… and I would like to continue to develop that ability to make those tough decisions consistent. I value the feelings of people. You know, it's a balancing act. I think that's now what's developing…

**Cecily:** In the business area, what sort of things do you think you might think about?

**Brian:** Oh, I think um ... probably in that I’ve done a lot of study in academic arenas
before, I mean more the – getting large projects done and large financial arrangements. It was more capital funding and capital budgeting and market analysis … but that’s an area that I would really like to get involved in. And getting the new projects is a whole part of what financing and what commercial arrangements you have to do for these projects and that sort of thing.

Brian was keen to develop the skills, qualities and experience he needed to jump right up to the top end of business. Interestingly, maturity is relevant. A key thing that came out of this response was that for Brian, maturity meant what psychologists describe as adult behaviour, i.e. responsible, assertive, decisive and accountable behaviour. The second issue that I hoped would emerge was Brian’s picture of his own career: to see himself as a businessman on the way to becoming a CEO. In taking him through a systematic process to look at his own career, he could then also apply this as a staff-review process with the intention of getting his staff to be more adult.

The staff review was the third major issue that was raised in Session 2. I started modelling to Brian the process by asking him what his strengths were.

Brian: My strengths?
Cecily: Mm.
Brian: Well I think – I mean things like commitment to task, and self-motivation. I think the people have a pretty strong character or makeup. I’d like to think that for this sort of role I’m pretty intellectually capable. I’m no Rhodes Scholar really but I think I could grasp things from that perspective. I think approachability has helped me over the years. I don’t go off the handle and I can relate to people pretty well.
Cecily: And you are basically stable?
Brian: Yeah. I guess I’m stable in my own personal life. The only challenge to my patience focus is my kids. In a work environment it’s been a while but I never really lose it.
Cecily: Mm, any other strengths?
Brian: You need to know your strengths and you need to know your weaknesses and, you know, to balance the two. I mean I…
Cecily: Do you want to have some of the values you described earlier?
Brian: Um, yeah, I think honesty, integrity. I think integrity is fairly well up there. What you see is what you get and I am very conscious of that. You know I have a pretty strong core set of values that I stick with, about ethics and the whole person. Integrity and ethics are my strengths I guess. And I think I’m prepared to take on any task that’s put before me…

As Brian moved into explaining further the issues of work, I started to focus on key words he used (for example of having to do more work than he should to cover for his people, of problems of performance). I then moved into questions such as “so do you really want to?” and “personally, what would it be like if…?.” These in turn moved Brian to say “hang on…it’s funny, I have to actually stop and think about it…I tend to gauge some of my own personal success to things that have happened…like, I’ve got these business type objectives and my own personal objectives. I don’t want to be too noble.”
This session then covered Brian’s ideas about his personal and work-related goals, revealing, through open questions and advanced empathic responses from me, that he wanted to develop management skills, sell himself more, be less task oriented, network more, set the scene and be strategic, and get more people to help with the doing (i.e. delegate) and not to feel guilty. He had ambition, motivation to achieve, and a set of personal goals. “I sort of have this goal and just keep pushing towards it specifically…if I were to find this organisation couldn’t satisfy this, then I would look further afield.”

I turned to the question of what strengths Brian had, and what gave him the buzz, and what drove him, what were his “drivers” as the business world refers to motivators. I then reminded him that this also needed to be done with his junior managers, to find out their drivers. He agreed and I said “Okay, so what I’ve been trying to do is go through the exercise so that you can then reflect back over this, and think about how to cope with those managers.”

Brian said he got a buzz out of making the tough unpopular decisions, such as during the enterprise bargaining process, and to come out with some level of integrity and respect. He saw it as a huge personal challenge: “It stretched me. I grew as a person and I picked up a lot of skills.”

The third concern that came up in this session was the issue of the staff reviews. I said to him that we had just gone through a process that he could use. Having covered some of the issues with his own career, we then reflected on the process in relation to the staff reviews.

**Cecily:** Now, what I’ve just done here…
**Brian:** Yeah.
**Cecily:** If you think about it I’ve asked for your strengths, and they’re wonderful strengths. I’ve asked you what gave you the buzz and what made you – drove you really and it is about personal challenge, growing and picking up skills but its challenge and growth.
**Brian:** Yeah.
**Cecily:** All right … the reason I am making a description to you is I think that this area here is also like that and that would drive you. What I’ve been trying to do is find your drivers… Now, in exactly the same way we need to find the drivers of your junior managers.
**Brian:** Yeah, that’s true.
**Cecily:** Okay. So what I’ve been trying to do is going through the exercise that you can then reflect back over this and think about how to cope with those managers.

So, if you can find the way to identify with someone and get them to come up with their strengths and … what they want to change and develop. For you, the thing to change, … this is really going to stretch you … is selling yourself and influencing people…because it appears to be against your nature.
**Brian:** Yeah, I mean I think it’s – maybe that comes from my engineering type background. I guess I would react very much about selling yourself.
Just when I’d got into step and had Brian walking beside me, seeing how he could do with his staff what I had just done with him, he tripped over a stone: selling himself and influencing people. The ability to influence people is essential to leadership. I immediately acknowledged his reluctance to be arrogant while continuing to validate the need for appropriate power.

Cecily: I mean I don’t want you to become an arrogant pig, but I do want you to feel more comfortable in this territory...
Brian: Mm.
Cecily: So if you can find out what it was that turned ... off those other people... the people who didn’t want to pursue those management jobs... then you can move forward... What do they want? For some of them it might be to have a job for life - they just want job security - for some it is “the buzz” that is some how relevant to them staying there. Often training is the mechanism or driver, and coaching can be a driver...But if we can find out what their driver is and provide that driver then we will engage them and be able to influence them.
Brian: I think you asked me after talking to a few of the guys who I’m also doing their twelve-month reviews next month, and to keep that in mind and try and structure those sessions a little bit differently.
Cecily: Okay.
Brian: I might actually put it to each of them in those reviews. I mean we are talking about their goals for the next twelve months but I want to put it to them. “What do you think your strengths and weaknesses are” for each of those guys, and do with them what I just did with you. ...

Brian referred to the lack of maturity of some of his staff and how he wanted them to step up to taking more responsibility. He was frustrated that he hadn’t got them on board. Brian said: “Maybe I’ve got to try and nail about half a dozen guys who have indicated some interest and just won’t make that final step.”

I asked Brian: “Were you a team sports person?”

Cecily: You see, were you a team sports person? Did you play a lot of sport?
Brian: I played pretty much every sport that I could get my hands on when I was younger. I played touch footy. I played pretty serious levels of touch football and squash and underwater hockey.
Cecily: And what did you love?
Brian: Pennants, competition. I love winning.
Cecily: Bingo, thank you. Now you said “I love winning.”
Brian: Yeah, in the sporting arena ... crikey I’d run through a brick wall.

Later Brian added:

Brian: You know, I’ll be running off and I don’t realise these guys are behind sort of thing, you know. It used to annoy the hell out of me. I’d make a huge break, waiting for someone to catch up and nobody could catch me.

In this last ten minutes of Session 2, I was taking Brian through a staff review process he could use with his staff. This included questions like “what are your strengths”, “what are your areas for development” (both of which as a manager he can later give
alternative feedback about), “what sports do you enjoy”, “what position do you play in those sports”, “what gives you a buzz”, “how do you imagine your life in five years’ time”.

I drew an analogy to sport and found, with no surprise, that he loved winning: “I grab the ball and run way ahead – no bugger could catch me.” Most importantly, Brian became completely unselfconscious. He was in the process. He was unguarded. He was not giving an intellectual answer, but a real answer. He spontaneously said he loved all competitive sports, he loved winning, and he loved to grab the ball and run, make a break. He only got frustrated when he found the rest of the team hadn’t kept up with him. This was a perfect metaphor for him in the workplace. With this I was able to note that in this type of sport you need the team, you need to get everyone involved, and you need to recognise the other players in the team. As we reflected on it he was struck by the power of the psychological insight. He needed to have strong relationships in the organisation, alliances he could count on to pass the ball to, so that they could all kick goals. An accurate metaphor can break through self-conscious cognitive analyses to the underlying issues and become a powerful, positive, hypnotic suggestion for change.

At this point, as a coach, I made the metaphor explicit.

Cecily: You want to get your team leaders into an alliance so that you can make the break … grab the ball and run. So … use the review to build the alliance…”So what’s the three most satisfying things at work for you?” “What are the three least satisfying things?” And “if there was one thing that you would change in the workplace that would make it a whole lot easier for you?”.

You’ve got to be very careful about your language. It’s got to be open, positive and non-judgmental language. So you say “what’s really satisfactory or satisfying regarding meaning and purpose?” [We don’t say what is good or bad – moral categories lead to judgment]. “If there is one thing that would make things better or easier for you what would it be?”

Also, I think it is important that you give them feedback, give them all the positive feedback you can and before this I want to – “I’d like to offer you some feedback and I’d like to invite you to give me some feedback.” So put that in. Explain the process. These are all the things I’m really happy with and I think there’s only one thing I’d like to see more of. Say “I’d like to see you do (whatever it is … but make it something that’s manageable… I’d like to see how you could contribute more to the team”. I mean, you invite them…

Brian: I think the process you’ve mentioned with respect to – you don’t know me from a bar of soap how I’m performing but the process you’ve gone through means you come to that yourself.

Cecily: Yes. You’ve done it too… and make sure they get the positive message.

Brian: Yeah, I think most people are more critical of themselves than we could ever be.

Cecily: And make sure at the end of the meeting with them that you give them feedback and check with them … “have I got this clear that if I could fix this and this for you it would really make a difference?” …

Brian: Mm. Okay.

Brian had said some really candid telling things at the end of the session, when he
was unguarded and enjoying the sport image. Reflecting them back to him gave him a phenomenal level of insight. At the same time he saw how the process could enrich the staff review process to cut through to a deeper level of psychological insight with the team leaders and engage them, and thus build the relationship, identify their drivers and win their commitment.

Brian: Well I think it's true to also to hold that group together. If you are in a group that's cohesive you're happy at work, you've got support structures around you and you're more inclined to want it. But that does motivate people as well. You've got to have good structured people around you and getting that team working well together sounds important.

By the end of the session, there was an agreement to work on ways of bringing in the managers in a constructive way, learn how to improve team building with them and get alliances to build relationships with key team leaders. He agreed to prepare for staff appraisals with these ideas in mind.

5.4 Session 3

In the opening five to ten minutes where we connected with each other for Session 3, Brian and I went over any positive experiences he had had over the last two weeks. He then put onto our agenda the topic of his own staff review. I put on the agenda feedback on the EQ-i which he had done between sessions. So the theme of the whole session was "feedback".

The session was psychologically and educationally a dense, multilevel experience. It was happening at a content level, and a values level. The reflection on authenticity has both psychological and ethical dimensions. The level of reflection on his potential and career path was looking at his calling, his vocation and his contribution in life. And at another level it was all about good business. We were modelling good management processes, and we were feeding back into what would be good for this corporation. Managers are generally bright and they want to think "big picture", to think broadly and deeply. Many say that their professional development tends to be two-dimensional and instrumental, but this session was multidimensional.

Brian said the last session had been “good” and he had clearly been carrying around the notes from last session. “It was good because I’ve started to do performance appraisals and development reviews”. He had integrated into the performance appraisals of the team leaders more personal and emotional material.
Brian: I still look at their goals and standards of their business, but also their goals in terms of their personal objectives … it’s also made me think a bit more about my own development, objectives and goals in the next 12 months….

Significantly, Brian was demonstrating a greater awareness of self. “…it’s also made me think a bit more about my own development objectives and goals in the next twelve months”. Another change he commented on was his decision to go to a conference that he would not otherwise have bothered with.

Brian: It’s interesting actually because I’m going away this afternoon to a conference on the national … industry which is, I guess falls a bit into that category a little bit. … If I hadn’t had that thing [EQ-i test] a couple of weeks ago I probably would have said, ‘no, don’t worry about it, it’s too expensive.’ I said, ‘Oh, stuff it, I’m going to go.’

He was able to comment on his own performance: “I’ve got a bit more to do, though, on my ability to… [get a bit deeper in the development review]…” and “I’ve still got a bit – my technique—I’ve got to work on that a bit…” Brian’s ability to reflect on his interviewing skills indicated the meta-processing needed to continue developing himself was underway.

Brian raised an issue that he was particularly concerned about – the levels of trust needed for his team to be comfortable about confiding deep personal and career interests with him. He believed that his team were “pretty good, pretty open”, and that “most of the guys have a good level of trust”, and he acknowledged that the coaching sessions were helping him to find the strategies to build trust “…it’s certainly helped me in that capacity [building trust] to do some of the things you’ve been doing with me…”

By acknowledging Brian’s progress, I affirmed his position, demonstrating I respected his decisions, with interjections of “good”, “you could build quite a lot of trust”, “good”. After he summed up these moves, I used a simple question “Well?” to give him the freedom to open up about any underlying problem or concern. His trust in me was by now established as he replied: “So, in the last few months or so – well our numbers are down like I mentioned in the last session. Our managing numbers are dropping”. He outlined the perceived problem, and I empathised with him, providing a response that indicated I was checking that I had heard his concern that his staff had a lot of potential for leadership, but few appeared able to see a solid career moves for themselves: I said: “Yes. Isn’t it interesting that you could see them as suitable, but they don’t see themselves as suitable?”

Brian’s discussion of his concern enabled me to move into the underlying issue that we both acknowledged as relevant – the question of feedback. I said: “Maybe there’s not enough feedback happening in general”. Brian agreed, and yet was puzzled as
to how this could occur. This gave me permission to make a direct challenge: “Are you giving feedback”, and also “Are you getting enough feedback?” Brian indicated that he was now open to suggestion:

Brian: Well, probably no on both counts and no it is not enough. I think that – I feel comfortable that, you know, I’ve got a pretty good relationship with my peers but having this sort of feedback as in, you know, sitting down at the table, you’re not giving them that sort of level of feedback, no I don’t think I get a lot…

I was then able to explore further the concerns that Brian had over the amount of work involved in the organisation and how the team was trying to cope. The more I empathised, modelling the process of indicating that he was being heard, the more Brian opened up.

The next ten minutes or so were taken up with Brian exploring with me the culture of the organisation, identifying the need for a balance between keeping things going and taking up new challenges. While he grappled with the problems of lack of clarity about career paths, and the potential for boredom if the job remained the same for the managers, I was seeking clarification about both the organisational goals and Brian’s position, so that I could move into the underlying leadership issues to do with assertiveness, decisiveness, and clarity of vision. His explanations were punctuated with my questions such as:

“The managing team you mean?”
“Is it clear to you?”
“I just don’t quite understand why they’re contracting market shares….”
“That would have been all part of the one company?”:
“Is this State or Federal?”
“They need hard core dollars that….”
“Who actually do you think is driving it?”

At an appropriate moment I summed up to check that I had listened correctly, and to signal to Brian that we needed to see the personal angle, so that he could become more aware of the conscious leadership model. I said:

Cecily: Coming back to what your vision is and growth of the company…does it feel like a kind of … just surviving? In a way it’s a bit parallel to this stage of life. Sometimes you keep the stability going because of the age and stage of the kids and the family… it’s a kind of dilemma. You also want something that kind of makes you jump out of bed and chase it.

My intervention was an intentional parallel process. The lack of energy was both personal and organisational. Brian then agreed:

Brian: Yeah. There is no doubt that people of this age – I’m speaking for myself here, but you just can’t move around as much as you would like to. If you bought a house, you sell the house, you have money in the house that ties you a little bit. You’re a bit nervous just moving every time and that. ….
This was a turning point in the session as I shifted gear to the issue of feedback. My thinking was that, if there is a vacuum of energy and leadership, it was likely that there was a lack of candid conversation happening in the management team. He was interested in my feedback, and also found it challenging, but he had already acknowledged the value of it so far. He had shifted in the way he was giving feedback. That suggested it was the right path, so I said to him:

**Cecily:** Have you actually thought about inviting feedback from your peers?

Later I asked “… are you being candid?” The following conversation was particularly useful as it demonstrated in his language a growing trust in me.

**Cecily:** Yes, are you being candid? Have you been able to really tell people what you think? My impression is that everybody thinks well of you, but sometimes that can even make it harder to say tough stuff to them.

**Brian:** Yes, especially when they’re friends as well. Oh, I think there is a little bit in that. It depends on whether you’ve been completely honest or just being diplomatic. I mean there’s a – trying to balance to say things in a way that are not destructive. I mean they’re constructive. But I think most of it – there’s a fair bit of candidness. I mean we could probably – there’s a bit of maturity - practice more than maturity. They’re fairly mature but maybe a bit of practice on giving and receiving feedback, we could work on a little bit, but I’ve been giving feedback for – it was not so much blunt but it may...

**Cecily:** Challenging?

**Brian:** Yeah, challenging. I thought it was pretty good. I do find at times that depending on who it is, some I know when they’ve been giving me feedback haven’t been completely committed. You can sense it. You can keep digging and digging and they wouldn’t tell you. So there are people that I still don’t think I’ve ever really got to the – probably more, not so much here but more senior management. I’ve never been quite sure if they’ve been completely candid with me.

In this conversation, Brian explored more openly how he felt about honest compared to diplomatic feedback. He summed up by saying “They’re fairly mature but maybe a bit of practice on giving and receiving feedback, we could work on a little bit…”

At last he wondered if people in the more senior management levels had been candid with him. He related a recent situation where he had not succeeded in gaining a more senior position that he applied for himself, and he was not comfortable with how it had been handled.

One of the characteristics of giving honest feedback and inviting similarly honest feedback from staff at all levels is that people are communicating in an Adult-to-Adult manner, rather than, as I pointed out when describing transactional analysis, in a Parent-Child manner. I discussed with Brian some of the handouts that we use for developing Conscious Leadership, including the handouts on Transactional Analysis, on the Healthy Self, on Feedback and on Assertive Communication. I said: “If the
skill sets are high there is low anxiety. If the skills are low, anxiety is high and to lift them all, you need only to work on any one of them. If we work on just one item, like decision-making, it would help lift all these.

Brian: Okay, you’re saying these are all related?
Cecily: Yes
Brian: Okay.
Cecily: And so that’s why I tend to go to assertiveness because it’s about getting clear what one wants and communicating that, and that involves decision making and telling people about it.

After some discussion about Brian’s experience with decision-making I said:

Cecily: So .. When people are presenting with these kinds of skills problems, they are actually issues of identity, of themselves, because time management is about getting clear what do I want and asserting my boundaries. Delegating is the same thing. It’s about making the decision, asserting the boundaries.

The conversation that ensued was very important, as we worked on what was assertive and decisive, and where it was important for subordinates not to be immature but to exercise leadership, assertiveness and maturity themselves in respect of their dealing with their peers and senior managers. I was challenging Brian to exercise leadership with his manager.

In this context we reviewed the EQ-i feedback. Brian’s total EQ was 106, which is in the median band and above the population average of 100. His strongest composite scales were the intrapersonal (self-regard, emotional self-awareness, assertiveness, independence and self-actualisation). The weakest composite scales were interpersonal (empathy, social responsibility and interpersonal relationship). Of the 15 sub-scales of the EQ-i, the weakest was interpersonal relationship, at 93. This was still adequate, but it was his weak link – no wonder when he grabbed the ball and ran, he looked back and found there was no one up there with him. It was therefore not surprising that his stress management scale was the next lowest composite scale; that is, he felt unsupported and stressed. He had high scores on most of the indicators, a good profile, and yet areas that could still be improved. I told him about half of his profile could be pushed up, but that overall I said: “I think they’re terrific.” His happiness and optimism scales, for example, were strong.

Cecily: When I look at this I think it’s a fantastic profile, I’d happily employ you anywhere, I think it’s very strong, it’s tremendous, clearly positive. You have a very strong view of yourself, you feel good about yourself. It’s borne out here by happiness. It’s strong. You are fundamentally satisfied in most areas of your life, by the looks.

Brian’s response was that he would like to push up his scores, but he summed up his feelings by saying:
Brian: I guess I wonder whether it's a goal to be there but I also want to keep being better and what form I take is whatever, but just what things. Maybe it's my nature to look at how I could be even better than that. Obviously if you’re up in here it’s not only in your work but your ability to handle your personal life and some of the issues you’ve got to deal with in that environment.

These insights from Brian were central to the development of the coaching process. It was easy for me to be fully present with Brian at this point. I responded with unconditional positive regard, as Carl Rogers would say, and I proffered my support as a coach in the most loving way. In turn, Brian’s trust became evident as he said: “Yeah, I mean that to me is – I know I’m stuck on my own personal development”. The session continued with further discussion of Brian’s profile, where I explained what some of the results meant in general, and he explained how he felt in relation to his own experience. One area, for example, seemed to indicate that Brian was a bit of a loner. While Brian had talked about how much he enjoyed being in a team sport, nevertheless he took the ball and ran with it too far ahead of the team. I said to him: “So you can do relationship quite well but it’s not probably one of your favourite things…” I went on to say: “I don’t see it as a problem … though I think it may explain why it is a little bit low. You’re not instinctively drawn to being in the middle of a crowd of people.” Brian concurred: “I can see the truth in that”.

In the process of reflecting on the EQ-i and all the skill sets associated with Emotional Intelligence, I encouraged him to do as much personal development as he could afford. This led to a conversation about whether his wife would be threatened or enjoy the process. Brian then talked about her also being an engineer in the industry. She had taken time out to have children but Brian said she was very talented and would probably enjoy it with him. I said: “You could still be here in 18 months’ time, but make that a rich 18 months. I am really glad you are going on this conference or whatever it is… I really urge you to be pushing the frontiers on all of these counts. I really urge you to say, ‘well, who can I become’?”

Brian concluded the session:

Brian: Well I guess the thing that was good was what you – you know, I’ve got a few different tools now that I can use. I’ll sit down and look at the discussions we’re having and put together a bit more of substance to the goals that I’ve set for myself, whereas before they were very much business orientated. I think maybe I won’t be able to achieve as much in that sense as I can on the personal front.

5.5 Session 4

By Session 4 Brian had got into the rhythm of executive coaching and happily began with a lot of positive news from the previous two weeks. In addition to the good news, we agreed that the agenda would be more about feedback, the staff reviews he had
done and his own review from another business manager.

The good news included that he had done the development reviews with his team leaders; he had got a lot out of the group session I had done on feedback; he had resolved he would like to do more professional development sessions; he and the other business managers had done a very interesting values session with Dr Phil Harker; and that he felt a few of the business managers were feeling more comfortable in their roles and were more forward looking.

In this session Brian’s communication style was more succinct, his thoughts more organised, and he consistently referred to “us” and “we” when talking about the organisation. Brian seemed to be more comfortable using the language we had introduced earlier, and noted how his more focussed approach to giving and receiving feedback was helping to build better relationships: “You do notice the change in the relationship when you come out of those sessions” was his comment. He continued to show how he had made progress with further insights from his work.

Brian: “...it’s sort of broken the ice...”
“...you sort of drop your guard a little bit and open up a bit”
“...there’s more trust there.”

The only negative news was the example of one of the newer managers leaving to take up a position in another organisation. Brian showed concern that he trains people up and they get moved and so we have an unstable group. “As soon as we get a guy who is pretty good, and in hot demand, then they’re released from us.” I was confident that as he talked about his staff, he was also talking about himself. He turned his concern to himself, asking what it takes to become a leader.

Throughout the session, there was a long conversation about the promotion of this team leader into a role outside of Brian’s group. In the discussion about this team leader and another three who had also moved on, was an important reflection on how in general we recognise leadership qualities in a person, and how appropriate encouragement and mentoring can help people with real potential to claim their authority. Brian said that this kind of mentoring was about giving appropriate training such as time management and delegation skills and so on, but also it was about confidence. Brian said that “you can’t put your finger on why someone’s beautiful but you just know they are. You can’t actually stop thinking about why the person is a quality leader but you just know they are.”

Brian: What I have seen is, those who I do have a relationship with, when you do those, some people are crying out to open up. I think it’s about confidence.
Cecily:... Well... that’s trust. You don’t want to come into an area that we haven’t got permission to come into.
Brian: Yeah and that’s just knowing. It’s also this confidence about it to give constructive full feedback that challenges them. It sounds very negative but I find that in most staff development, we understand all the criticisms when we have been too positive. We are reluctant to confront some tough issues, so if their review of you is not up to scratch, then you ask the guys “where are you falling down?” A lot of the guys want it. I know myself, I quite enjoy going and saying “look you’re doing a great job, good on you, keep it up”, and they walk away and they go “what was the point in that?” That doesn’t help me.

It seemed to me that Brian found it scary to give confronting feedback, and on the other hand he found it enjoyable to give positive feedback, but he thought that it was better to give realistic feedback. He wanted real (genuine, authentic) feedback. So I said:

Cecily: It depends if they make [the feedback] really concrete, then I think it’s useful. You can only start it in these interviews - to be able to say ‘look, you know, I really want to tell you something. You’ve got a heck of a lot of potential, and I really think you could do X and then you eyeball them and they know it’s the truth. A lot of feedback and staff reviews are manufactured but if it’s the truth that will really register.

He went on to say:

Brian: I think the – one of the team leaders I found very effective – I did use some of the notes before we came in. Just saying “what are your strengths? What are your weaknesses?”… Things like you put to us about if you had a choice to change something what would it be? Where do you want to be in the next five years? Where’s your career going? Trying to get a lot more on a deeper and personal level. In the past you’ve done more of that business “what do you want to achieve in the team? Where do you want to see your group heading?”

So I found that very effective, and what I did find effective in that as well was – most of the guys in that group - or all of them actually - have got a lot of potential, saying “you have a potential to get to here, however you’ve got to really – to get there – there are some things that you really need to be conscious of if you want it, but there will be roadblocks if you don’t.” A couple of guys were. How do you say things? What do you say to them? One guy just said “look you’ve got to be conscious of those things”, and another guy says” that was good feedback” so I’m getting better at it.

Cecily: It sounds like it too.

Brian then said something very important: that a reason for the improvement of the feedback was that he was preparing properly. He was thinking carefully about each person and how he wanted to run the feedback session. He was thinking about the outcome he wanted, the questions to ask and the things about which he wanted to encourage them. The conversation with me had allowed him in turn to have a properly prepared review with each of his team leaders, in conversations that were also genuine and personal. Without fail I take 15 minutes to prepare before every coaching session, but now it occurred to me that this preparation may be a good leadership practice for a manager.

Brian: This time [the staff review process is] probably the best I’ve been involved in. I think partly it was because of the chat I had with you before it, because I said, “I’m just going to walk out prepared this time” and that was the big thing that we – I
handed this stuff out to the guys and said “do some preparation before you come in”. It forced me to do some as well, and I think I could have improved them one step further, but I think I could do them better now because I cracked the ice with a couple of these guys. But some could go another step further.

Cecily: Wow! A good thing is you tell your own story, and you’re taking notice of people’s own stories.

Brian: I mean I think it’s sort of – I think too, to get trust I think you’ve got to probably give out information to allow others that probably wouldn’t be expecting you to give out, but I guess you open yourself up and you’re vulnerable, you know. I’m entrusting you with this and sometimes it’s personal. That allows them to drop their guard. You do trust a lot of people in this place. You make yourself very vulnerable.

Cecily: Well, you certainly have to be careful about boundaries and protect yourself.

Brian was validating the significance of vulnerable, candid real talk and he had taken the risk of going to this level with his team leaders and the positive feedback from them was immediate. This was very positive for his learning. It would also make it easier for his and my coaching relationship because it was a validation of our work together and he was acknowledging that he trusted me. We continued for another five or ten minutes to discuss his team leaders, and the conversation moved to his own review and the level of trust he had in his direct manager. Because of the quality of the trust in our relationship, he was able to talk in depth as he has not been able to talk with anyone else in the organisation, about the way in which his own career path had been poorly handled.

In this very important session, Brian was reflecting on the level of honesty and professionalism of his peers who were also his mates, and the next two levels of management above him in the organisation. He was reflecting on what worked and what hadn’t worked, and there was real leadership learning in that. He recognised things that had been said and done to him that as a leader he did not want to do to someone else. In telling the story, Brian was able to crystallise the impact on him and how he would have preferred it to be done. There was no doubt that the disillusionment and disappointment in the lack of honesty in the way it was handled had left a number of people feeling unmotivated.

By the end of Session 4, I recommended that Brian find a way to acknowledge to his closest business manager peer that he had some unfinished stuff with their manager and that his hunch was that others felt the same way and that once that was resolved they would be able to progress beyond the hiatus.

5.6 Sessions 5, 6 and 7

From this point the coaching conversations were in a rhythm. The client was now clear that we were going to follow the A-B-C structure, to connect with each other,
report progress, put some issues up to focus on for the session, and continue to work solidly on the initial stated goals. In the interest of efficiency, Sessions 5, 6 and 7 are analysed together, because they form a whole. In these sessions we dealt with substantial issues, which fell into four main topic areas:

- Progress with developing relationships with his team managers (substantial relationship development in line with his goals)
- Work and family pressures (parallels between parenting and managing a team, and management strategies)
- Mentoring (in depth consideration of his career path)
- Relationship with his senior managers (clearing the roadblocks so he can claim his own executive authority)

Brian was enjoying the coaching and he was amazed at how it had helped him to change the way he related to his team leaders.

Cecily:...So how are you and what’s happening and how have the last few weeks been?
Brian: Yeah, very busy, I mean - it’s amazing how you come in here and you become a bit more mentally prepared, knowing what goes on. Yeah but, probably the first few weeks started out, there was a lot of guys approaching me about some pretty hot issues, there was a lot of one on one stuff I’ve been doing, probably more in the last few weeks than in a while actually. You know on the spot, people calling me out, wanting to go through some issues that were fairly big issues for them.
Cecily: What sorts of issues?
Brian: A real selection. I had one guy who’d missed out on a recent job, very emotional about it. Went through a selection process, a very good selection process, missed out - tried to go for it a couple of times - three times actually and missed out three times. By three significant sets of people. I’ve never seen a bloke in a while who was so emotionally shattered…they were all that sort of nature - personal level sort of discussions. I mean, I’m flattered that people are comfortable to come and ask me.
Cecily: That’s great, that’s good - it means its working.

Coaching was helping Brian to be more mentally prepared and focussed. In other words, this experience of executive coaching was helping him be aware and present in the relationships with his colleagues. He was dealing with work issues but he was dealing at a much deeper level of connection with the person. He went on to reflect:” What I’ve also learned from some of these discussions is that if you don’t give good feedback … then you get a completely screwed process.” Then he went on to say:

Brian:...This person hadn’t obviously been given reasonable feedback over his life and part of that may be our fault, may have been my fault through initial feedback sessions where we weren’t honest enough, so I’ve learnt some lessons in the last few weeks and I’ll probably learn a few more - and I mean more because the whole thing about guys wanting the truth, but you don’t want to destroy a person…
Cecily: But the other thing is to handle the feedback, so that it’s not crushing, and then they will somehow deal with that.

He had got it that one has to be genuine and give quality, concrete, immediate feedback in a caring way so that people have a realistic understanding of the situation
and can make proper decisions. He also said “I think that nothing beats experience, and thinking about it.” Brian was articulating that his experience had given him insight, he could stand in the shoes of his team and empathise, and that, furthermore, coaching had taught him to stop and think what he wanted to say. I then encouraged him to have some “scripts” ready so that when people caught him on the hop he could respond instead of react. This would allow him to stay in the considered Adult position and not lose his power or in any way invalidate the other person. I gave him an example:

Cecily: When your first response is "I'll be delighted to give you feedback", you can pause and say “off the cuff there are a couple of things I can think of straight away, I can probably think of another few things that may be useful for you to work on, to change, so …, I'd like to think about this a bit more because it’s - feedback can be really helpful if it is precise and concrete”.

The following conversation explored when to give immediate feedback, when to buy time and reflect, when to give answers, and when to lead the other person to their own answers. These were straightforward management and leadership learnings. As much as possible, Brian was to provide his colleagues with a process rather than an answer so that they both stayed in the adult power position, responsible for themselves.

By using domestic examples of helping our kids choose Year 12 subjects, Brian readily saw the work parallels. We don’t actually choose the student’s subjects. They need to think through the decision. The student’s success depends on his or her own commitment to those subjects. We need to step them through a process whereby they can consider options, gather further information and make intelligent choices. Brian identified that the problem really emerges when the other person is not mature.

Brian: You know, most of the guys I think are fairly self motivated, fairly self-confident, you know, they come to you for other reasons, so you don’t need to – they come with options and they just say I’ve got these options, what do you think. I mean, they are a pleasure, but a lot of the guys haven’t got answers. They don’t know themselves, they don’t even understand the problems they’ve got.

In this conversation, Brian was getting clear on processes and principles, and on the whole they applied to this smaller group. He had to lead the team members but he had to manage carefully those who would block the whole process. He needed to help people define their problems and then they would find their own solutions.

Cecily: Your role is to engage in a conversation so that they settle down enough to think clearly about it themselves. That's the big help.
Brian: And I think that it’s about a safe environment. I think that a lot.
Brian described a tension that concerned him, that if he took the time and created a safe space and they opened up, it could be good for them but sometimes he was left unable to detach. I helped him to see that that is what counselling and coach training is about. I said to him: “My training allows me to put the file in the cupboard and I go home. Now, we need to find a way for you to leave that file behind, so that you’re not taking it home.” The tension he was struggling with was how could he support them and yet ensure that the staff were responsible for their own problems. A properly trained coach is clear that their clients are responsible for themselves.

This led into the second topic area, the issue of work-life balance, and the issue of dumping his stress into his family.

Brian: You’re on your own, doing something in the back garden and all of a sudden it will pop into your head…but you’ve got to be careful because… you tend to vent those issues at home and that’s the worst place to do it.

Cecily: I’m guessing you are not getting enough support here.

We then had a lengthy conversation about sources of support. While he had been saying that this was the best place he had ever worked and he valued everybody he was working with, at some level he was not getting the support he needed. Part of the function of coaching is to provide that support, i.e. an opportunity to vent anything and everything that is worrying him and like the Year 12 student, giving him an opportunity to clarify the issues, see the options, and deal with his emotions and progress things. Together we identified that he had two full-time jobs. With young children, there is often chronic sleep deprivation for parents. Yes he was coping, but he was tired. His main way of recharging was family weekends, so he really did not like to work weekends.

The underlying message was that Brian was reluctant to seek the support of his manager for some reason.

I was concerned to see that he was getting enough sleep and enough contemplative time because psychologically, these two things help us process and integrate the day’s events. Brian was very interested in meditation and had been introduced to relaxation, guided visualisation and elementary meditation in professional development sessions organised by the CEO in the workplace. However with high-energy young children, it would not be fair on his wife to take further time out. We discussed an enjoyable guided visualisation he could use with his children where he would take them in their imagination to the beach. Once children are habituated they will happily “go to the beach” when they are ratty.

Brian: Well, what I enjoy is when you get into bed with him and he’s great, you sit there and
read him a story, he’s asking you really dumb three-year-old questions which are really funny, you know, that’s very relaxing (laughs) and I think that he quite enjoys it too.

Cecily: What if you just hopped into his bed with a book and wait for him to arrive?

Brian: Yeah, I might just say, "I’m going to bed, if you want to come you can come, if you want to stay up, go for your life," I don’t care anymore.

Cecily: Because you really need him in bed past 8.00.

Brian: Yeah, well that might be a tactic, but it’s been all...

Cecily: It’s funny isn’t it, here we are running around having trouble managing our kids, it is funny.

Brian: It’s actually good levelling, you can’t - God, this is a bigger issue for me than all the stuff I’m dealing with out here.

Cecily: You see it’s also, when we’re not getting quiet time, relax time, good sleep quality and when really things aren’t working well at home, it just trips us up every week.

Brian: Maybe so and the biggest issues with any of the guys that I’ve dealt with here, are the ones that have got some major issues at home and it’s all about managing the whole person, there’s no question about it. Now you’d like to think that they switch off, but they don’t when they come here, not any of us. I’m just glad that we don’t have the same divorce rate as general society’s got, because that would be a nightmare.

What Brian was saying was that the “people managing” issues are the real issues and that he used to think that being an engineer manager was project management. Here he is saying that the person is a whole person and that home issues come to work for everyone. Helping people to feel happy, supported and motivated is critical to the business. He continued:

Brian: I still love the job, there’s no question, I’m more and more certain that my direction in the future is the whole issue of managing people, there’s no question of that, I mean, I couldn’t care less for the planning anymore. I used to live for the planning, but I don’t care anymore (laughs), there are other experts out there that can deal with that, so I mean, I’ve got no question at this time in my life that the whole people/HR [human resources] type management is the thing that I get the biggest buzzes out of and it charges me personally and is the most rewarding too...

Cecily: You’ve been doing great ...

The following conversation about Brian’s reluctance to delegate led into a conversation of the need to provide more mentoring to the team leaders so he could delegate more. This in turn revealed the lack of mentoring for himself. What emerged was that Brian’s own boss was a good engineer and a good person, but he was not good at relationship building or mentoring. He had not been taught how communication works in the organisation, how to deal with issues, how to use the evolving systems within the culture. Brian and I discussed the case of a colleague at another facility who was not getting mentoring but was criticised for not assuming leadership.

The conversation led to Brian’s own relationship with his senior manager. Little by little over many months we had gradually come to the point in the discussion where we could put his relationship with his senior manager Bill, on the table. He had been very validating of all of his colleagues, but from the outset, my sense was that there was an authority issue causing a roadblock in his own behaviour. In discussing how
his senior manager handled a power struggle at the other facility, Brian said spontaneously:

**Brian:** I’ve got to work out my own mind. I find that always, if there’s any issue, I feel like I am challenging Bill. I would get to that quite often, where I feel that if I push this he is going to go on the attack. Or he is going to get really frantic…I have trouble with his style, that’s all, and I’ve got to work out ...

**Cecily:** Would it be good, would it help you, to figure out a way, to work out a way for you to be able to really safely give Bill this feedback?

**Brian:** Yeah. …I’m not alone as well. There are a few of us who have talked about it…a few of us are almost scared of the guy at times and … I don’t see Bill as a role model. He’s not for me what I want to be. If that’s what my greatest strengths are going to be… So yeah, that’s one thing, I wish I could work out a way for dealing with guys like that and I think because there is a lot worse than Bill that I’m going to come up with my career … I feel he’s got a fair bit of belief in me, I mean the fact that he selected me to go into management in the first place, I mean I can’t deny that and the feedback he has given to me, although not as good as I would like, it’s probably better than a lot of others have given me and it’s been also very positive, so on the whole … it’s just that - that’s the thing that worries me, the times I think it’s a really hot issue which I really fundamentally disagree with, I sort of bury it and I get to a point and I’m just a bit reluctant to take that next step, because I feel it coming right back at me.

Brian had now identified the fundamental issue of fear and power that he needed to deal with to progress his own career. Automatically, my psychological counselling skills from years of helping hundreds of Vietnam war veterans reduce the frequency and intensity of their anxiety symptoms came to the fore. At the same time as engaging Brian in the conversation, I structured my file notes in a table format so that I would be prepared to help him clear the anxiety in a future conversation.
Table 5.2 Brian: Old Me

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The prospect of dealing with Bill</th>
<th>I do, I think...</th>
<th>I am and I feel...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If I tell him how it is.</td>
<td></td>
<td>A barrier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he’ll be very defensive</td>
<td></td>
<td>fear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and go on the attack</td>
<td></td>
<td>I feel very vulnerable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He has power over me</td>
<td></td>
<td>fear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is it going to compromise my</td>
<td></td>
<td>fear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>credibility with the guys</td>
<td></td>
<td>fear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He is not open with his thinking</td>
<td></td>
<td>I feel nervous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He has a big influence on my</td>
<td></td>
<td>I feel vulnerable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>future</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He takes things personally</td>
<td></td>
<td>I fear his aggressive reaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He will perceive me as</td>
<td></td>
<td>fear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unprofessional</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It will compromise my future – my</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>career</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

New goals:
Be candid with Bill, and get honest candid feedback on selection process.
I want to feel safe, confident and strong with Bill to talk about different issues.

I have included this extended dialogue between us regarding Brian’s relationship with his national manager, because it is typical of conversations across every organisation I work in. In Company U, there was a higher level of trust and goodwill than in many companies I have worked in. This was largely due to the outstanding leadership of the CEO who was Bill’s manager. But even here, there were significant issues of power based on fear rather than respect and trust. Brian recognised and appreciated the high level of professional competence and personal integrity of his other senior managers, and of the national managers above him. He was comfortable that not everybody was going to get on with everybody. But this particular relationship was a sticking point for him.

I would encourage Brian and coach him to be able to talk to Bill but would not intervene and be an advocate or a mediator.

**Cecily:** He’s a good man, but he’s very tough, …
**Brian:** … it’s just something with myself and I know there are … some guys that have a real issue, that just couldn’t work for him.
**Cecily:** Well, people who have had an authoritarian parent will find it extremely difficult.
**Brian:** It might be that, like my old man was like that, he was a traditional guy that, you know he was a breadwinner and a disciplinarian that was him.
**Cecily:** … that’s good, so it’s clear to you…
**Brian:** (laughs) But it’s true, it probably is that, I don’t know.
**Cecily:** …this is really good for you. I really want to help you to move past this barrier and to create a new relationship with [the executive manager]… if we could find a way here for you to be candid with Bill in a constructive situation, then that would be a big
Brian: Oh, I think so, I think that’s - it would be interesting if you had Bill here, I could just sense myself, there will be points where I will - I just wouldn’t go, I mean I just, I’ve got to get - into a comfortable position.

Family and work relationships have close parallels. My assumption was that progressing this authority issue would cause subtle but significant shifts in Brian’s relationships with Bill, with his father, and with himself. While Brian was sustaining the momentum with his team leaders in the way that he was relating to them, major business issues were being confronted by the business team and we discussed them at length in our coaching sessions.

In the family, more layers of insight and change took place that were relevant to work. Having made the connection about his fear at the prospect of challenging the executive manager, that it paralleled his father’s behaviour, he was suddenly called to gather with his family of origin to support his father whose mother was gravely ill. This gave him the opportunity to sit with his father and talk for hours.

Then within two weeks, Brian was working with the executive manager, Bill, and other colleagues on a staff selection process. Armed with new insight and self-awareness, Brian now saw what was happening as it happened. Awareness shifted to consciousness as Brian participated in the dynamic while simultaneously observing his experience as it happened. When Bill changed tack, effectively undermining Brian and another business manager, Brian recognised that he felt annoyed and all his thoughts and feelings as they happened. He chose “to hit the pause button” and think about how best to respond rather than just do the old reactions. After the meeting, Brian rang Bill to say this was not OK and that they were made to look very unprofessional. When Bill became defensive, Brian reported that he felt like retreating but this time, instead of silence and simmering, he asserted himself and said: “I don’t want to be scared to be up front and open with you.” He reflected that the brief reference to his father in the previous session had made him aware, as it had made him recall how everyone in the family was scared of their father and all behaviour was premised on “don’t upset Dad.” Brian reported that Bill was initially defensive and surprised but he did listen and thanked Brian for the call.

After this shift Brian reported that over the next two weeks a number of positive changes had occurred and things were going better at work and at home. He had had a great time with the kids, and he had had two intensive days with senior managers at another facility and built the relationships. He had had a very candid relationship building conversation with his mate who had got the job he wanted. The management team were gelling better and “we are more confident.” By asserting himself Adult to
Adult he claimed his authority and was much happier.

Since things were going so well, I took the opportunity to revisit a couple of episodes when he felt particularly threatened by his father’s anger and impatience. His father was a “big burly tradesman…he was the breadwinner and we were all scared of him”. The prospect of provoking his aggression made Brian feel completely intimidated and constantly vulnerable. A key phrase was “if you don’t do the right thing, Dad’s going to come in.” Brian recognised that he had unconsciously projected the same behaviour onto other more senior managers, and he did not need to any more. He had been unconsciously replicating the old defence mechanisms and that was a habit that now got in the way. He also recognised that he needed to consciously shift to the positive language that reflected his genuine confidence, competence and power, rather than retreat into the language of fear.

Together, we put all the negatives he described in his interactions with the executive manager, and his father, and converted them into how he would like to behave. By the end of Session 7 we had written “the New Me”. At this stage he said it was true 4-5 out of 7, where 7 is most true. He aimed to get it up to 7 out of 7.

Table 5.3  Brian: New Me

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am calm, clear, confident and in control and I feel good. I am strong.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am a competent professional man. I know who I am and what I want to be – I am assertive and self-assured and I handle situations as they arise – confidently and strongly.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I respect others and I insist on being respected.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When authorities challenge me I remain calm, clear and confident.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know I am doing what is expected of me and I speak openly.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honestly and assertively. I am confident and assertive and I feel good.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am matter of fact and real. I am respectful and I insist on being respected.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What I have to say is of value and I have a right to say it. I feel comfortable. I feel grounded and focussed and strong. I enjoy myself.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am fit and my energy is good. I feel confident and it is very satisfying when I hold my own. I am meant to be here and I can deal with whatever arises. I take pride in my work and what I have achieved and I stand tall and strong.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am robust. No matter what is said or done I can bounce back.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When others are aggressive I remain emotionally detached – I observe everyone, I get clear what I need to do and say to stay safe. I retain my inner integrity. I retain my inner power. I know who I am and where I am heading.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am calm, confident and in control.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
At the end of Session 7, we were more than half way through the coaching contract and things were really humming along.

5.7 Sessions 8 and 9

Brian was delayed, so Session 8 was short. Because he was running 40 minutes late, we pushed ahead on a quick update, focussing on the positives. Due to school holidays, it was three weeks since we had met and there was much to report. Brian said it had been a good three weeks. Major maintenance projects required big sections of the facility to be outaged and everyone was busy both doing the maintenance and maintaining supply. He said: “Down in the trenches things were working well, and there were good team meetings…I think the place is running well —better than six months ago when it was a bunfight.” Brian reported the teams were more constructive and instead of dismissing talk of values, they were actually using them. The performance was technically good and he was very happy that they were, in his view, more adult. Brian reported more confidence in the group. At home, despite his kids being sick, they were doing a lot and things were pretty good.

We still kept to a version of the A-B-C of communication, running through the dot points of the last three weeks. In this session we looked at the typed up version of the “New Me”. This was his new conscious script and self-talk.

Brian was bringing to consciousness that the old script had prevented him from holding onto his power with certain sorts of authoritarian figures. Intuitively he realised that he needed to live from a positive and powerful space to fulfil his potential.

The rest of the session we talked about power. Although he wanted to make the change, it was still confronting. We were digging quite deeply into his vulnerability emotionally and exposing and trying to clear away the detritus that was blocking his road. Brian said he had caught up with the two managers immediately senior to him. With the copy of his “New Me” in his hands, he suddenly said: “I’m [still] not comfortable with the word ‘power’.” He had previously indicated that he preferred to use words like respect and integrity. I wanted to show Brian that power is itself neither good nor bad, that we all need to be powerful, that mature adult power is respect-based power, and that he and I were in fact talking about the same thing.

Brian didn’t even want to use the word “power” in his “New Me”. He said he thought of big names like media tycoons, as “… they are powerful, but in a negative sense”. 
He agreed that the CEO he admired was powerful, and he also agreed that a leader such as Nelson Mandela was powerful in a good way, when I raised that with him:

**Cecily:** But the outcome of their power is still huge. Millions of people defer to them. You know, Mandela in particular we defer with love and respect. We still use the same word “power”.

**Brian:** Yeah, I guess if someone said what word would I like to be remembered by, it wouldn’t be powerful. There would probably other words than that.

**Cecily:** What would you like to be remembered for?

**Brian:** Integrity is probably one that springs to mind, words like that. One word is probably a bit too much to expect to wrap it up in those sorts of words.

**Cecily:** What other words?

**Brian:** Although those guys are powerful men, but if I go to my grave and no one ever says that about me it wouldn’t worry me. I think it’s more your inner power, inner strength, that’s probably where it’s more the issue than where they’re heading. They’d be fairly confident with that attitude… They just had that inner strength and inner power. But I mean it’s just really in what context you use the word.

**Cecily:** So what you’re saying is “I know who I am”. So I’d really love to have that in here [in the New Me]. Now, what I’m actually heading to with this is, to be able to shift from an old habit pattern, or way of being, which is based on fear….to a new way, which is based on love and positive energy. Then as with all learning, we need to understand, we need to practise, and we need to shift the old roadblocks…

I was making explicit the process of teaching and learning that I was using and that he could use with his staff (and children). I continued to say:

**Cecily:** So the reason I’ve been doing all of this is that I’m really quite keen – I’ve think you’ve already started practising new behaviours, trying new ways and experiencing what it’s like to be more positive and more – just practising being more comfortable around Bill and Barry and I want you to keep doing that.

My intention as a coach was to reframe power to allow him to claim power in a positive way. I was reminded of a workshop on power I had done years before where Professor Letty Russell had shown that most of us saw power as bad by definition and we felt powerless. Brian’s personal happiness and certainly his business career relied on his ability to be present and powerful. Then I said:

**Cecily:** The next time I see you might be a good time to embed this whole New Me statement as a new attitude. It will become automatic, you know. When you start to learn to drive you think consciously about putting your foot on the clutch and pressing it in and changing gears, but in no time you don’t even think about it, you just do it. So we want to get the old habit pattern out of the way and the new habit pattern embedded. …

**Brian:** Oh, yes, yeah.

In the session with Brian, I went on to validate him and to reflect on the genuine positive changes he had made in the four months since I had known him.

In these later sessions it was clear that Brian was using the new language he had learned, and he said he was getting to the core issues when he engaged with his staff. He acknowledged: “Honest feedback helps people develop. I can see how it
builds relationships, I can feel it, people come to me and it challenges me”. He was clear that honest feedback is not demeaning. Brian was able to be open and with complete trust he discussed with me his insights and his concerns about one of the team leaders.

In the last 15 minutes of Session 9, I again asked permission of Brian to do a relaxation and visualisation activity to clear away the old pattern by hypnotically embedding the new pattern. I explained again to him how hypnosis works, how we use it every day with our children and everyone around us, and how much of our positive and negative learning throughout our lives is an outcome of hypnotic suggestion. We would be collaborating to embed the New Me, a set of suggestions using his own words. The process would be transparent, exactly as I had explained to him so that he knew what to expect. In this explanation of how we would proceed with the hypnosis, I was in fact modelling the Adult-Adult power dynamic we wanted to achieve.

For “homework”, I told Brian (as with all the managers after the Robin Hood exercise [see Chapter 4]) to organise childcare and make a proper date with his partner to see the Lantana movie. I suggested he take his partner out for a drink afterwards so they could discuss the movie. I said “Make sure you do real talk.”

In each of the Session 10 conversations that followed two weeks later, the discussions around the Robin Hood exercise, and the Lantana movie experience were powerfully centred on ethical issues, and Brian was no exception. The conversations turned on the big questions of trust, integrity, honesty, and love.

We were approaching a deep and personal knowing of Conscious Leadership. This is the very integration of all the strands of the helix, to which I have referred throughout this thesis. In Brian’s case, business management knowledge, business psychology, coaching psychology, Catholicism, family therapy, ethics (Robin Hood and Lantana) all come together.

5.8 Session 10

In this Session, Brian started out again in a positive frame, saying how busy and productive he had been, and that he had been concentrating on the need for his team leaders to maintain safety standards.

Early in the session, I referred back to the moral development levels of Kohlberg, discussed when the group did the Robin Hood activity. There I had referred to people
first learning to abide by the rules, and then, once the rules were embedded, not
consciously thinking of the rules but applying them in a more mature way. I used the
analogy of the learner driver compared with the experienced driver.

_Cecily:_ One of the things that strikes me is when you’re a learner driver, you try to
make sure you’ve got your clutch and gear changes happening and you’re getting all
the mechanics of it working… And you’re also making sure that you stop at the stop
signs, red lights and that you comply with all the rules. You’re still learning, but once
you’re an experienced driver, do you think about the rules? You just do them.
_Brian:_ Mm. You probably break a few. You’re not too worried about it…. you’re able to
assess the risk of doing that. For example, you know, if I was learning there’s no way in
a million years I’d run a yellow light whereas if you’re an experienced driver you say,
"well, I’ll do that and probably I’ll be okay, ninety-nine out of a hundred."

At this point we were completely on the same wavelength. The empathy was working.
We were so in step that every phrase opened a bundle of insights for him. I moved
onto a wider example, saying “A better example than a learner driver though, is an
experienced driver who’s moved interstate or moved country…” so that I could move
forward to discuss the changes that Brian needed to deal with in Company U. I
continued the metaphor to bring in an analogy of moving countries which Brian had
dealt with in his earlier international work experience.

_Cecily:_ There’s a new set of road rules and it IS very similar. But there’s quite a bit of
difference. You’re going to be kind of concentrating on everything all at once for a
while, and in a few months it will all come naturally.

This sparked off a very serious conversation about responsibility, accountability and
liability of senior managers. The issue at stake was their having to deal with the
death by workplace accident of a worker at another company site. Four of the business
managers were discussing the issue when their executive manager Bill, and a new
safety manager joined the chat around the smoko table about safety issues and
compliance. The executive manager correctly picked up that everyone was scared
and the business managers commiserated with their boss who was under the hammer
representing the Company in the courts. This is the same executive manager, Bill,
who reminded Brian of his father. Bill now personally had to carry responsibility for
the Company. So all the business managers immediately recognised they could be
in his shoes.

Because Bill was the Company’s face in the courts, he was under enormous pressure.
The new Company Chairperson was a lawyer whose great strength was compliance.
The seriousness of the situation had everyone on edge, but the Chairperson’s strident
pressure on Bill led to Bill sending blunt reactive emails to the production and business
managers and having sharp conversations with them. As a result they were defensive
and tended to stall and push back. This, of course, made Bill more angry. Brian
spoke at length about the situation, and how much he and his peers were affronted by what they described as “Bill’s aggressive directives”, how apprehensive and defensive they all felt. At the same time Brian described Bill as “right in the firing line.”

**Cecily:** If you stand in Bill’s shoes, what’s the worst thing that he could be feeling?
**Brian:** Going to jail… So I think that if I was in his shoes, I would be particularly sensitive as well, so I’m a bit empathetic … he hasn’t come out and said that but I’ve got no doubt that is in the back of his mind.

This was a clear example of the conflict that Brian had been feeling from the outset of our sessions. On the one hand he was wound up by Bill’s behaviour and on the other he understood and cared about Bill.

**Cecily:** He needs a lot more support.
**Brian:** Yes… Bill doesn’t talk too much about [the possibility of being prosecuted] but I sort of think we’re all second guessing that he’s under a bit of pressure

**Cecily:** Why not ask him directly?

Brian was probably accurate in his empathy but he was avoiding a conversation that would connect him with Bill and show care for him.

I was challenging Brian to get out of his defensive behaviour, and to progress beyond his Robin Hood rules-based attitude to decision making with love. The key issue for the session was for Brian to be motivated by love (compassion, knowing, respect, trust, awareness) with all staff and with Bill, and I wanted to help him act with love and support for Bill, that is, to exercise leadership with Bill.

**Cecily:** But what we’ve got to do is stop and say: “This isn’t working and we really have to be able to support you”.
**Brian:** There is no question of the motives of him and other people, they are the same as ours. There is no question – no one wants anybody to be hurt or injured or killed …, and the other thing is none of us want anyone in our organisation to go to jail or cop a great fine… No one’s got a motive that’s different.

Here, Brian immediately validated his allegiance and loyalty to Bill, so I pressed on.

**Cecily:** We’ve got to keep hitting the ‘pause button’ and come back here and say “Bill, we’ve been worrying and we need to sit down with you. How can we support you and help you get what you need ?”
**Brian:** I don’t think it would take – I mean a few hours with him would probably be all that it would take. It’s just a matter of pinning him down with a group, and to say that we are not here to try and block or work against what you’re trying to achieve. I mean we’ve been starting to do that [support Bill], but we also don’t want to have to be running around like chooks, reacting to things at short notice, because that doesn’t help us deliver what he wants.

Brian was almost grasping what needed to happen, but his own frustration still dominated his thinking. Brian wants to support Bill but he doesn’t want to be given
the run around and made to react. I reminded Brian of the Parent-Adult-Child model and that he needed to stay in the adult, even in this situation with Bill.

**Cecily:** Whenever there's a lot of pressure, people stop consulting and they go into authoritarian Parent. We all go there, and keep reacting to each other. So, we've got to just hit that "pause button" with Bill, and say: "Bill, let's do whatever it takes." I think he would say: "I'm fine, I'm fine"; but I expect he is feeling quite unsupported...

I continued:

**Cecily:** But remember last time we had the domestic example of a couple arguing, and here we are going backwards and forwards and the last shout is, "AND you didn't put out the bloody rubbish bins!" We think we're arguing about the rubbish bins, but actually the bottom line of what we're arguing about is our hurt, "I don't matter, you don't give a stuff about me."

**Brian:** I know that feeling. I've had a few like that lately.

This is a very challenging situation but it's such an important concrete opportunity for Brian to make the shift and exercise conscious leadership with his manager with whom he has had his own issues. The "rubbish bin" example is teaching that it is not the apparent conflict of the explicit subject, but the underlying concept of feeling valued. There will be no resolution of the explicit problem unless the people feel valued, listened to, encouraged and in this way supported. Brian could not have done this six weeks before, let alone six months previously. He was still struggling. He says: "I was in there thinking about it from Bill’s point of view. How do I apply that with Bill? I feel like a puppy dog you know, playing the dog." Brian empathised, he understood, but he was still shy of exercising leadership with an older, more senior Bill. I immediately took up the puppy dog metaphor:

**Cecily:** You could use that on Bill. When you've got him sitting down and say "listen Bill, you know, the kids have got a dog. It's a pup, three months old and you've got to train it. It pisses everywhere, you know, and it chews up your slippers and your socks and does things that really drive you nuts. You've got to train it and you've got to take it to obedience school, and the family have got to consistently agree on how to do this. But if you hit the dog, or if you growl at it or if you kick it, it's not going to cooperate, you know. It's either going to be frightened or immobilised or if it gets big enough it's going to be really bloody nasty."

**Brian:** Bite you back.

**Cecily:** Yeah. Use that example and say to him "we're on the same team Bill, you know?" ...

**Brian:** That's what I mean. We'd be conscious of not sticking the boot into him and start to empathise with what he's dealing with. I don't think I'd like to be in his shoes right at the moment.

Brian was deeply absorbed in the conversation. He was keenly interested in this whole notion of the stages of moral development and what inhibits progress through them and what facilitates maturation to advanced stages. He reflected on stages that the development team might be at, based on their language. He picked up again on his Catholic childhood, so I took the time to show how Kohlberg’s framework could be applied to the Bible, so that he could see six stages of how God is portrayed.
from the Creator of all things in Genesis to Love Incarnate in Jesus. We can understand the earliest biblical notion of God as powerful giver and taker of life and punisher, through stages of the giver of rules to eventually stage five, manifested in Jesus, God is Love in stage six and Jesus exemplifies the moral imperative, as he must go to his destiny.

This opened up an important conversation where Brian reflected on a whole range of spiritual and ethical issues concerning him. His wife was reading a book about Jesus Christ and Leadership and encouraged him to read it. This seemed to be a first revisit to Christian theology for him. He was very interested when I mentioned that his CEO and I were both speaking at a Spirituality, Leadership and Management conference and he was excited that, through his CEO, he would soon be participating in a Richard Barrett seminar which would bring Buddhist and Yogic ideas into focus and we discussed Liberating the Corporate Soul (Barrett 1998).

The session ended as usual with my giving Brian some homework.

Cecily: So you’re going to tell me next time that you’ve talked to [your colleague and together you’ll] set up a meeting with Bill and you’re going to love Bill.
Brian: Yeah… I’ve got a lot of time for Bill. This whole discussion in the last few weeks has been very healthy for that, not just him, but using it for things to come, but it’s been an interesting process.

5.9 Session 11

The last two sessions were very upbeat and positive, consolidating learning to date and adding some new material. Brian opened Session 11 by reporting a lot of progress. He described the interviewing of the new team leaders as much more interesting because they had integrated understandings he has learned through coaching. “A lot more workers are surviving the selection process. My scepticism at the start has been put to rest, and it’s been going pretty well…A lot of the work files involve a lot more than we’ve done in the past…so that’s been interesting.” While six-months ago, potential leaders were not seeking promotion, they were doing so now. This seemed to be a direct outcome of giving more immediate and concrete feedback and the staff had appreciated it. Regular management issues were sorting out well in Brian’s view, but the big excitement was a new major project: “It’s looking pretty likely that that’s going to happen…so that’s given the place a bit of a buzz.” Brian was overdue for a significant career opportunity and since he did not want to move his young family at this point, this new opportunity was very important to him.

Brian’s excitement and enthusiasm filled the session. He was really ready for a bigger management challenge. He spoke with the confidence of a more senior
manager and enjoyed the three or four hours of strategic conversation with the top executives. As well, he reported that he was playing golf three or four times a week at dawn on the way to work before 7 am and things were really good at home. “I guess the good thing in the last couple of weeks as well is…that myself and [my wife] I mean my folks have been up once a week for dinner and we’ve gone to the movies…and we saw Lantana…bloody good movie!” The conversation continued:

Cecily: It is good, isn’t it?
Brian: Yeah, very interesting going to a movie like that with your wife (laughs). Yeah, it just had too many good reviews not to have a look at it and it’s a very thought provoking flick.
Cecily: And they are all so real, they’re all terrific.
Brian: Yeah, … it’s a bit too close, I mean, you know, the whole thing of the pressures of marriage and kids and work and you know, about letting things get stale and all the rest of it, … we had a pretty interesting chat (laughs) about … our marriage. And it was good. So it’s been good. We don’t get a chance, so we said, ”mum can you look after the kids” and we grabbed it. So it’s been good.

Brian’s discomfort at seeing these issues with his wife was similar to the discomfort he had at talking directly with Bill. Brian did not reflect on this, but I had no doubt that the in-depth conversation with his wife about their marriage improved their connection and intimacy, and this had contributed substantially to his being much happier. In Lantana, the worst breakdowns in communication occurred when those couples who did not make enough time for each other became disconnected. He went on to say:

Brian: I guess the issues that we have, are more the time for each other and I know it gets really frustrating, you devote so much energy to the kids and then work and then the kids and then… and I make an effort for myself too. So I keep saying [to my wife] ”you have to do something for yourself…”

Brian acknowledged that they were so busy with work and the kids that they risked neglecting each other. He had become so aware of this that he now included the issue of family in conversations with his team members. Brian was saying that family was more important than anything, that things worked much better when he and his wife were connecting well, and he had to consciously decide to get that relationship happening because it is a difficult balance. He went on to report some happy family times and concluded: “…so it’s been a good couple of weeks actually.”

Brian was far more confident in this session. He had enjoyed talking to the new senior manager Barry (a new position created between himself and Bill).

Brian: There’s always something I don’t always feel like saying, and I must say since he’s new, we talk a lot about work, but I’m feeling more and more comfortable that I can deal with pretty much any issues that I can strike in work environment and I guess to me, there’s less at stake; I feel when it comes down to it that if I hiccup at work, you know, I’m not going to lose. I therefore feel I probably need to think more on the home front as well, how I can make sure that that, I mean, that to me is of far greater importance than, I’d like to control all the circumstances there.
It was striking that in addition to the richer conversations with his wife, he was also talking a lot with the new manager whom he had a high regard for, and these conversations made him more comfortable and confident. The only downside of this new line of command was that he did not have to come to grips with his relationship with Bill and assert his authority there. I brought him back, however, to ask how he had progressed from last session.

Cecily: That's right. I'm going to ask about last time, remember last time we talked about Robin Hood, life motivation, and loving Bill?

Brian reported that he took his wife through the Robin Hood exercise and was delighted to find that “she felt exactly the same as me.” He reflected on this and was very assured by the view that they were “at the same point of emotional maturity.” He went on to joke about how they teased each other about her going off with Little John and how cranky he would get if she did:

Cecily: Well, you probably wouldn’t now, because now you know it.
Brian: Yeah, no. That was interesting.

Brian went on with a light-hearted but insightful reflection on a conversation he had with his Catholic parents about Robin Hood. Brian was clearly accepting that they were where they were and he had comfortably moved forward. The reactivity had gone.

The first third of the conversation involved the discussion around his family, and he was markedly happier. The rest of Session 11 was an interesting conversation around power, persuasion and influence. I introduced him to a new way of looking at power that highlighted the difference between the conventional authoritarian directive power, consultative relational power, and persuasion and influence. I said to him:

Cecily: And I brought it in here because I wanted to really talk about persuasion and influence… I think you’re so busy being consultative and collaborative that you’ve forgotten that there are appropriate times to also be directive in management.

The conversation that ensued was about persuasion or "pulling power" versus giving direction or “pushing power”. After using a number of domestic examples, “would you like to have your bath before dinner or after dinner” ["it’s not like you are going to get out of having a bath you know"], we then mapped out on the whiteboard the power structure of the section of the organisation relating to him. I explained:

Cecily: …so what I’m trying to do here is say… that one of the things that other people do really well, is quite unwittingly, act on this all the time. Whereas a lot of people with science and engineering backgrounds see this [persuasive/pulling] behaviour and portray this behaviour as kind of manipulative. I’m actually saying to you, it’s not necessarily
that. If there's a genuine intention of trust building, it's smart.

Brian: You know, I’m starting to - my line in this job, the more you can - you know… my connection is - at the moment it's through [new senior manager Barry] …Some people might see it as every chance I get I’ll be in there with him, and I used to feel a bit uneasy with that, but now I don’t if it helps me do the job easier.

Not only was Brian building the relationship overtly, and recognising that this relationship was helping him as a manager, he was also revealing another reason why he was feeling so much happier and more competent. He felt better whenever he had a quality conversation with his manager, and he was enjoying the power of influencing people, leading them to better outcomes.

I went on with another domestic example showing how persuasion is learned and that it is positive. Like the kid who figures out when to approach their parents for $10, Brian was learning to think about how and when to approach others with the issues that matter to him. Brian went on:

Brian: … Bill has very high expectations of himself, I believe. This is nothing that he’s ever fully talked about, it’s what we perceive… he is very professional and diligent and committed and all those sort of things that, you know. I think all those things are what makes up Bill. And I think that if we put him into a position where that is in any way compromised, I think he would react and I think he could react pretty violently and I think this came up with you [in our last session], where he went back to the Board and didn’t look like he had the place under control. He felt threatened by that I guess.

Cecily: Now, you can see …. If you know that these things matter to him, then you work out a strategy that is smart…. So what you know is, the things that get up his nose. He wants to know that you’re proactive…that there are initiatives happening…

Brian:….that we’re professional — we reflect the same things that he expects of himself, he expects of others and we should actually expect it of ourselves as well.

Brian had clarified that the way to be persuasive with Bill was to raise issues that were dear to Bill’s heart and alert Bill to potential intelligent solutions for those issues. Brian responded by saying that “I am quite convinced that if you do that and you do get a good result…and it’s not someone trying to bullshit to him…like he’s professional, he’s credible, he doesn’t soften any issues and if he took that to the CEO or the Board, I reckon in most cases it would fly.” I responded:

Cecily: But what we’re looking at is influencing here, which is building trust, which is doing empathy, which is understanding these issues and working out a strategy which will then be able to sort out the issues. So that the person both arrives at a solution, and they feel fully informed and then unstressed because there’s a realistic solution for it.

Brian: Yeah, I think I’m becoming far more comfortable, you know, that the company would have said “oh yeah, he’s being a bloody dictator” … We were criticising him but not understanding what his concerns and his issues are, so the thing we need is to understand what you’re dealing with in order to get the right strategy and the right outcome.

Brian was empathising with Bill, understanding that Bill needed at times to be directive, and saw how to engage with Bill in a more persuasive way. We finished the second
last session in a very strong and upbeat way.

**Brian:** …I’m becoming far more comfortable with not fighting what may come from Bill, and understanding it and dealing with it…I mean, rather than the child reacting, there’s a way of dealing with it.

**Cecily:** Well…I think it’s time that you get focussed and get strategic and get smart. It will save a lot of conflicts and he’ll start saying you guys have really matured.

### 5.10 Session 12

After an initial chat about the fact it would be Brian’s birthday the next day, I established the agenda for the session.

**Cecily:** Now Brian…I want to review, I want to give you the feedback from the EQ, and I want to have a discussion about our relationship to wrap up with. So first of all how are you? What’s happening?

Brian ran through the day-to-day business matters of the past two weeks and said: “In the past I may have danced around the issues, now I’m more inclined to deal with them.” Brian cited several examples where people on his team had given him clear positive feedback and appreciation for the team leader selection process and how it had helped them. He had been helping people see more clearly how they are perceived.

Brian talked for about 15 minutes about feedback that he had given, and feedback that he had received. In this context, he raised the issue of dealing with one of his team. He said this fellow was seen as a really good bloke, but he had got up to a microphone at an outside work social event half-drunk and denigrated another manager. The behaviour was inappropriate and we discussed whether to give feedback and if so, what to say.

**Brian:** …I said, “mate, you overstepped the mark there and if you hadn’t had a mike in front of you I reckon there would have been blood on the floor.” And that really knocked him because I had to say something. The whole discussion was starting to denigrate into a slingling match, you know. I like to see a discussion but not, not getting to that level. And he doesn’t realise he was doing it.

**Cecily:** So what happened is like any marital row, we’ve got to hit the pause button and stop the reactivity happening.

**Brian:** Yeah and I guess I try to facilitate the whole group, you know, while he’s in that group…It’s about resources, you know, sharing across the teams.

Brian was demonstrating that he cared about his mate and he also cared about all of the team. He had shown a high level of awareness and recognised that his staff member did not have that insight or awareness. Brian exercised leadership by giving feedback to his mate, something that is not common between men, even men friends.
His mate took it seriously and they sat down and had several more conversations about it over the next few days.

**Brian:** It’s just that it worries me that you’ve got a guy there who could be a lot more, you know. He won’t reach the potential he’s got because every time that happens it’s just another rung back down the ladder. He’s got a, you know, he’s lost credibility with that group. He’s then, you know, also probably lost credibility with his peers and probably with myself as well. You know, here we go again the guy still hasn’t been able to deal with this issue and if another senior manager position ever comes up he’s not going to be the guy for it and all those sort of things. So I’m just worried that, you know, he got selected for the job because of the eighty per cent that’s good but the twenty per cent will destroy it, you know.

We spent quite a lot of time discussing what practical things he could do to help develop the man’s awareness and potential, including possibly psychological counselling and coaching. Brian was clearly identifying that if you can’t deal with your reactivity, your career won’t go anywhere. People we regard well as leaders are not aggressive. They are completely professional – they suspend their own reactivity, they are fair and appropriately assertive. I told him about a conversation I had had with his very compassionate CEO:

**Cecily:** He was quite clear, he said, you know, yes we look after the person, we look after the person, we look after the person. But if the business is suffering they go.

The conversation moved to how to deal with staff who had been given a lot of help and needed to be managed out.

**Brian:** Yeah, I mean, the other thing that’ll happen is that I’ll say to both parties, "this is totally inappropriate behaviour in our environment and we’re going to have to do formal performance counselling and you’ll be on ‘one strike’ and I’ll just be sitting there rather than trying to protect you."

**Cecily:** Well tell him that. He needs to know that will be a consequence of further poor behaviour, and just say to him, "I’ll do it.”

**Brian:** Yeah, and I mean, even though he’s a mate, if I had to do it I’d do it. And the thing is [the general manager] also knows him pretty well personally. I think both of us realise there’s a point where your professional line and your personal line – we’ve got to know where to draw the line.

**Cecily:** You need to explain that to him. And say, "look I’m going to do this. This is what I want to do for you but I’ve gone as far as I can go and I’m telling you now, this doesn’t go any further or I can’t look after you and I will have to act as the manager and I don’t want that to happen. And these are the options I see.”

**Brian:** To me, I think I’d do it. But I think I’d walk away very personally disappointed, you know. That’d be something that I really think it’d break your heart. You could attempt a lot of things, try to prop them up. I think that’s part of what I’m worried about — that’d be the frustrating thing about the whole thing…so again I guess, when you take a punt on someone, you just like to see it come off.

We spent a lot of time on this ethical dilemma because of the core values in the conflict. Brian wanted to support a person and give him a fair opportunity, but that person also needed to take responsibility for himself, and the situation had to be fair
for everybody.
We reflected on all of the team leaders and how much they have all changed in the last six months, in particular Michael, whom I had coached for the last six months and whom Brian had mentored.

Cecily: Michael has changed a lot…you can see how much happier he is.
Brian: Yes and you know, I’ve seen a huge change. If you’d asked me, sort of, twelve months ago, would I allow him to do a more senior management role, I’d be a bit nervous, but now he’d be one of the first guys I’d pick… A few years ago guys refused to have this guy as a team leader. You know, spitting the dummy and carrying on “I don’t want this guy on our team” … and now I haven’t heard boo out of the detractors.

At this point we moved to our final review. Brian first talked over the things that he noticed and then we turned to the EQ-i.

Cecily: Okay. If you think over the last six months there’s been a lot of things impacting on you and coaching’s only one of them. But if you think over the last six months how have you changed? Yeah, and what do you think coaching’s done for you?

Brian referred to changes he had already mentioned above – that he was more self-aware and that he felt more competent and confident to be assertive and deal with authority figures. He then said:

Brian: …I just like the fact that it’s a pause button. Like every couple of weeks you pause and take stock. In fact I’d love to do that indefinitely. In some ways, just forcing yourself every couple of weeks to take stock of where you’re at and where you’re heading.

What is interesting is that he had taken the concept of the “pause button” from the model I had taught him (about hitting the pause button in particular situations) to a new meta-level. Now he described the coaching sessions themselves as a pause button, a time for stocktaking and review, a time for introspection and gaining insight.

Brian: I think it’s that whole thing, you become self-aware. You stop, how’s the week gone? What have I done well? What haven’t I done well? These are the things I’m struggling with, you know, and then you hit the next two weeks a little bit more aware of, you know, more consciously aware of what you’re trying to achieve…
Cecily: So one of the good things is, it’s actually been encouraging the pause button. Having a session with me makes you reflect.
Brian: Yep. I must admit that I’ve found these sessions far more beneficial than the group sessions for me. I think the group sessions are an important part but this is what I’ve found I enjoy the most.
Cecily: I think that’s the essence of it. It’s just easier for me [to teach all the models and paradigms in a group]
Brian: I think, for the content of what you’re trying to do, yeah, exactly right…but I’m certainly getting far the greatest amount out of the coaching sessions. The challenging — what I’ve found as well, with myself as well, is that challenging me makes you a bit more self-aware. Being forced to go to a few little areas… I think, very healthy to the self-awareness point of view.

Brian was clearly saying that challenging him and raising his self-awareness could only happen one-to-one. It would not have happened in a group in a business
environment. The one-to-one coaching with an intelligent emotionally stable person and a competent psychological coach can facilitate substantial and significant insight, consciousness, indeed transformation. Dialogue is a process of conscientisation. It is interesting also that “awareness” and “consciousness” were now part of his everyday language.

Cecily: When you say you’ve valued one-on-one time more than the group, what do you actually get out of it, you know, what’s it done? What’s it changed?
Brian: It’s like I said, I think it is self-awareness more than change. See I’ve had no other outlet that I felt I could comfortably discuss things. This has put things in perspective, whereas in a group session you’re obviously not getting to that level…
Cecily: So when you look at that list of, you know, that I had up on the board yesterday – all those various models that I reviewed the last fortnight. Are any of those sort of useful, did any of those stand out to you?
Brian: Feedback one was the one that I used continually since the start. I mean that’s been a huge help. Because I didn’t realise how deep a part of my role it is and the fact that I do really enjoy it and I would like to get a lot better at it. You know, this whole thing is what you do obviously that’s your profession. I’d like part of those sets of skills to be able to do similar things. And that’s probably the stand out one, I mean there’s stuff on assertiveness and I sure I got another one, the Parent Adult Child model one - I’ll probably use it continually now. You know, they’re the ones that sort of stick in my mind that I will continue to pull out. The Pause Button…that one probably doesn’t stick as much, you know.
Cecily: You managed to get [your team leader] there to use the pause button, so you must have got it!
Brian: Yeah like to me. It was the assertiveness issues dealing with more senior management. The feedback was very critical to my needs at this point in my career. So they’re the things, you know, that stuck the most. So some of those models have helped me in that whole feedback process and I’m very conscious of that now when I’m in a group, that I’m in a position of authority, but I don’t want to use that, you know, incorrectly.
Cecily: Don’t want to become authoritarian.
Brian: Yeah, so I’m now conscious that as much as I was worried about being the child with the parent so also I’m not the other way round.
Cecily: Yeah!
Brian: So it’s made me also conscious in that regard. So they’re the things that stood out the most for me. I mean the Robin Hood thing was interesting as were all the little bits and pieces. None of it was, I would say, a waste of time. Not a single item was a waste of time. It was just some things stood out more than others.

He then went on to say that he and another business manager were very keen for me to work with another group of team leaders who had just been recruited. It was so good that he now wanted others to have coaching.

Brian reflected that he sometimes came into the group sessions fielding phone calls and with a thousand things on his mind. He said “Even before the process I was far more committed to these [one-on-one sessions].” When I asked him what made him so much more committed to the coaching, he replied:

Brian: I just reckon I – before we started I don’t think we knew what we were getting ourselves in for. I think when I first came into the session, pretty much from minute one, there was a level of feedback and discussion that I’d probably been yearning for for a while that we hadn’t received. I think that it clicked straight away. I think that also, talk about safe! I mean, you certainly made the environment very safe from the start. So straightaway, probably from session one really, probably before that I didn’t consciously decide before. And like I said we’ve done a lot of the generic type group sessions. And like I said, in every single one of them I’ve learnt something but they’re not as unique, what this was.
6.1 Introduction

The CEO at Company R had only been in the role six months and was still appraising the entire situation, when the well-regarded manager of a specialist retail store died suddenly.

Penny was brought into Company R as a consultant to manage the specialist store Blue Hill by Sue, the CEO. Penny was to keep a hand on the tiller of Blue Hill, which distributed a substantial volume of Company R’s product. Sue had worked with Penny in a previous company and hired her on contract basis until the future of that store was determined. Sue had brought me into this company as an executive coach due to my experience with her and Penny in that previous company. Penny had worked at successful family companies but was keen to see if she could succeed in a wider commercial environment.

6.2 Session 1

As in all first executive coaching sessions, my purpose was to build as strong a connection with Penny as I could. Usually I base the relationship building on exploring their role, job description, and history of their time at the company, who they report to, who reports to them, and so on. Usually, hearing their story is a mechanism to engage them and assess them and the situation. With Penny, the situation was different because I was already acquainted with her, and she opened up straight away about the heavy load she was carrying in this company.

Penny and I were delighted to renew our acquaintance. I was pleased that she had this opportunity to test out her capacity and get a track record in the commercial world. It was quite a difficult situation for Penny to be faced with. From the outset, I utilised the A-B-C structure. I told her what the broad agenda was for this session.
and then embarked on it. Penny understood the coaching procedure, although it was a much more systematic and streamlined process than that she had experienced with me before. I had made the process more efficient, as companies wanted to be clear that we could deliver what we said for the price. I also wanted all managers in the research project to have an experience that was as similar as possible.

Cecily: …You’re familiar with this process but what I want to do is take it from the beginning.
Penny: Okay.
Cecily: I haven't really talked to you about your job.
Penny: No.
Cecily: And I would like to do that. I would like to just pick up where you are now. By the end of our session I hope to be moving towards what sort of things are you going to be wanting to be working on over the next six months and hopefully I will be providing you with support, new learning, attitudinal shifts and I hope we’ve got what you need.
Penny: Mm, great.
Cecily: Okay, well the first thing I want is just let me understand your actual job?

For the next ten or fifteen minutes, Penny described the state of Blue Hill, her branch of the business, punctuated by my seeking clarification, commiserating and encouraging, such as:

Cecily: “You need to grow the business by 10%”
“So, have you actually developed a business plan for that?”
“That's a huge job!”
“So just remind me, you said the last manager passed away? That must have been a big shock to everybody.”
“So you’ve stepped into grieving staff.”

Penny brought me up to date, providing a thumbnail sketch of the scenario she had walked into and where she got to in her first three months there. The immediate challenges she faced were so enormous that in this first session I did not worry about the breadth and depth of her prior work experience or the progression of her career. Though I was familiar with some of her background, I was aware I would need more detail in line with the first interviews with all the other managers. However, this situation was quite overwhelming. She has been accustomed to opening up with me and having my support, so she just told me how it was.

When I am doing Executive Coaching, the first coaching session is basically an assessment session, where I conduct a broad psychological assessment of the client (strengths, weaknesses and indications of what to work on during the coaching session) and also get a sense of the business and how they fit in it. While Penny and I had a positive rapport in the past, I did not take an in depth trusting relationship for granted. There was certainly good will, but just as every high school class tests their familiar teacher again in the first week of each new term, we needed to connect anew.
In the first part of this session I listened intensively, checking, clarifying, and nonverbally affirming my attention. Her story was complex and challenging in itself and I was absorbed with thinking about how she has been dealing with everything, in particular many levels of adaptation to change that were taking place.

All executive managers had to give support, guidance and input to the Company R management team to cover financial and organisational issues, plus day-to-day guidance and direction for their particular teams – four of them were store managers. Penny had to keep her eye on the revenue. In particular the CEO wanted the sales reps to be more accountable.

The business she managed was really a business within a business. The business consultant appraising all stores was concerned with the viability of both Blue Hill NSW and Blue Hill Qld but thought that probably a new store could be opened in another state.

Penny: …The Queensland business has been running at a loss for the last four years. The New South Wales branch has been running at a loss and was turned around by the previous manager. He did this by slashing the staff in half and taking on a repping [sales representative] position himself just to keep the costs down.

Cecily: Doing what you’d do in a small business which is get your hands dirty and hop in and do it.

Penny: Absolutely.

There were massive business challenges and massive staff trust challenges.

Cecily: So you’ve stepped in to grieving staff.
Penny: I have.
Cecily: Tricky. But they also understand that you’re actually in the position?
Penny: Yes. It was compounded by the fact that I came on and I am still there as a consultant and not an employee. That was done deliberately because Company R was still unsure what they were doing with the business. Rather than getting into redundancies, etc for a new manager they wanted to make a decision on whether they’d kick on the business first. And what’s been decided is that they will keep the business at least for one more (big sale) period and that takes us to March next year. However the staff actually don’t know this or they’d sense that there is still insecurity [and destabilise the business further].

Cecily: So, if you were actually made a permanent staff member that would ease that insecurity? They would think you were okay?
Penny: Yes, it would and the difficulty from Company R perspective, and why they decided to keep me on as a consultant, is that again they’re still unsure on what they’re going to do with Blue Hill. And I don’t yet have a proven track record, so it gives me an opportunity to prove that I can do the job and then I’ll have an opportunity to apply for the position if I want it along with any other internal applicants.

Cecily: So do the staff kind of understand that so that there’s no undermining of you?
Penny: Yes, I think they do, they do. I think they feel more comfortable with me now four months down the track. The fact that I am staying on and I see that my contract’s been renewed this is good news and as far as I am concerned I am here to stay and that’s the message I give them.

Cecily: That’s good. So that was a big one to even come into.
When her contract was renewed trust from the 20 or so staff lifted. The two biggest challenges seemed to be to get to grips with the staff issues and to introduce to them a different notion of what a manager’s role is.

**Penny:** Their communication internally on one level is actually very good and they do share a lot because they’ve not had a manager who gave them that level of support. If they had a problem they would go to the manager and his usual response was: “If you think you’ve got it tough, I’ve got it a lot tougher”. Sometimes he came up with solutions for them but he wasn’t pro-active. He didn’t have good interpersonal skills; that’s how they describe him, but he was very good at understanding and running the business [i.e. the financials]. He’d been there fifteen years on and off. He started in the warehouse and rose to the top.

He was absolutely invaluable to the company but he wasn’t really an appropriate manager as such to support that many staff. So they’re not used to having someone who takes an interest in their job and who actually wants to understand what they do, make suggestions, want it improved and is there to see the company grow. My challenge is that there are a multitude of issues in every person’s area, and it’s up to me to discriminate which area is important and give it an order of priority. I find it very challenging and…

**Cecily:** Just let me get all that.

I gathered from Penny that there had been no overall sales and marketing plan for her store. There has been no structure, no incentives scheme for the sales reps, no targets, no bonus schemes. A majority of the staff really loved the business and were really quite heroic about carrying on in difficult circumstances. Amazingly they still used manual processes because previous management had not invested in systems infrastructure. To help them with their priorities Penny said: “I need to work out who needs my input urgently and have a strategic plan to address that.” Secondly she needed to develop a sales plan with the consultant. The marketing plan had been written but they needed a more detailed sales plan so that there were targets and therefore bonuses to provide incentives. Interestingly, the staff were very collaborative and sales reps had indicated they wanted organisational targets set that still allowed them to share bonuses and look after those who worked in more difficult areas.

**Cecily:** That’s got a nice feel, too.

**Penny.** It does and that definitely is the spirit of the organisation…They are like one unit.

**Cecily:** It’s like we’re all on the same football team and just because he’s got a handicap, well so what.

**Penny:** That’s right…that my skills are worth a lot more than yours, it doesn’t matter.

**Cecily:** Have you ever worked with that sort of operation before?

**Penny:** Never.

Penny has come from a more typical competitive business arena where sales representatives joust with each other, albeit in good humour. So this is a marked change for her. I sensed that they might be also challenging her to see if she was a collaborative team player.

**Penny:** All extremely underpaid. And there has been no incentive in the past. So what I
have inherited is very resentful people, resentful staff, who believe that if they work harder and bring in more business for the company, (a) there’s no personal recognition, (b) it means a lot more work for them and a lot more work for other staff because it’s largely in your business that filters down more orders, and then the customer service people have to fulfil the orders. It means the warehouse people have got to fulfil those extra orders. It’s all an extra burden for no recognition. I’ve come bouncing in saying, “Hi, guys, you know, great to be here, you’re a fabulous team, you do your jobs very well”, which they do. They operate quite autonomously and independently and basically just get on with the job. They definitely don’t sit around; I’m convinced of that. In the busy periods they are working at nights, putting in their heart and soul because it is so frantic. They tell me stories about being up till midnight getting orders ready for the next day.

This store had been able to operate autonomously in the past and the new CEO had brought them under her wing to evaluate the entire Company R. This was because she had to address losses of millions of dollars across the company.

With regard to the old style of management compared to Penny’s expectations of management she said:

Penny: …So [the sales reps] are highly knowledgeable people across the range of [their products], so I’m comfortable and confident in the staff. I have increased – since I’ve been there I’ve put on one more sales rep. and she’s also the key product buyer, because the previous manager was the key product buyer as well as being a sales rep, as well as managing the business. So he had three jobs and it eventually killed him.

Cecily: Do they understand though? Do they understand he was on overload and covering too much territory?

Penny: Yeah, they do. What they don’t understand is what I do – my management style is different. I’m not a product buyer and I’m not a sales rep. and I come to head office for lots of meetings. I’m hardly ever there. And what they value is seeing change put into action, so the moment I come back and I talk about all these wonderful and exciting things that I’m going to be doing, things that the Company R is doing, the way Company R is changing… but some of what happens in the Company R - has no bearing on our store.

The strength of our store in the past is that they have been able to just operate completely autonomously, and that’s now changed. Since the CEO has come in she’s brought our store under her wing. Part of the reason why is, everyone probably had losses for the last five years in all States, I mean we’re talking a million dollars of losses. This is quite significant.

Cecily: Oh yeah!

Penny: In the past the CEOs haven’t quite kept their eye on the ball.

The situation that the CEO had taken on was complex and extraordinarily difficult. The situation that Penny was in was an equally fearsome subset. However, from my outsider’s point of view, Penny had little to lose and a lot to gain. The expectations of Penny were very low. If she could just keep her hands on the tiller, and prevent her boat from running onto the rocks, she would be successful. Anything better than that would be remarkable.

As I took in the enormity of her task and how daunting she was, I looked for a metaphor that would allow us to talk about the problems in a more positive upbeat way, and which would perhaps throw light onto the subject.
Then I made a comment: “What’s a metaphor that will help them understand what you actually do?” Her answer was a heavy technical explanation and then we both realised that she felt too burdened to come up with a metaphor.

**Cecily:** A straightforward metaphor that comes to my mind is of a house being renovated and here they are in a beautiful house that’s been – it’s had a great reputation, its run for forty years and it’s been a beautifully built house. It’s run very well and everybody loves it and everybody’s lived happily in it and worked happily in it or whatever, you know. It’s, as positively as you can ask them to put it and they have done stuff from time to time and, you know, fifteen years ago they put a new bathroom in and ten years ago they extended the veranda and put some glass out the back, but fundamentally they haven’t really renovated the house.

…so we’ve come to the point where a lot of maintenance needs to be done. It’s starting to run at a loss… And in fact we probably need to not just put in new carpet … we need to do a major renovation and if we don’t plan it then in fact it’s going to cost us a fortune.

…Your job, what you’re actually doing is doing a full engineer’s and builder’s report - you’re trying to draft a new plan. You’ve got to do it. In your own business you’d have it done by now, but because it’s under Company R’s umbrella you’re constantly having to check in with Company R bosses and make sure. And of course they’ve got so many business outlets that they are having a lot of trouble getting all that together.

…So, yes, you’re not looking like you’re doing much but you are in fact. In that initial phase, you’re doing the engineer’s assessment and redesigning it. Is that anywhere near what you think you’re doing?

**Penny:** That is what I’m doing. Yes, that’s very close to what I’m doing. The initial summary of [our store] though is a business that has been out there on the edge of the cliff for the last five years, for example.

**Cecily:** Okay, so it was on a wonderful headland but in fact it’s been eroded - like the houses at Harbord, remember they fell over that cliff?

**Penny:** Yes, it’s been eroded more and more over the years. Three years ago significant erosion took place.

**Cecily:** The front fence fell in a few years ago and it’s been receding and in fact we have to do something very urgent and specific.

**Penny:** Yes. There is incongruity though between – it’s still lurching on the edge of the cliff about to topple over. I’ve come along and said: “Okay, I’m going to get it to stand up, it’s going to stop lurching, I’m going to build stability, and that means spending money”. Now, that is so contrary to the last five years where they have been instructed by the previous manager to spend nothing, save constantly. And even now, and this is quite difficult, the business is still lurching. They did well as in they made a profit last year, and yet they still don’t have reassurance from Company R head-office that they are fine, safe and secure and are not going to be shut down. They know that the Queensland store is teetering.

While Penny agreed with and took on board the gist of the metaphor, it is notable that her language is more extreme (“Out there on the edge of the cliff”, “significant erosion”, “business is still lurching”, “they know that the Queensland store is teetering”). I now realised that her perception was far grimmer than I had portrayed. As she spoke, I grappled with how to empathise accurately with her and at the same time encourage her by helping her find a way forward. In other words I wanted to be realistic but I wanted to be positive.

I chose to communicate via metaphor as this helped her engage with the imagery and effectively talk about the issue without being overwhelmed. Ironically, as we progressed through the metaphor, Penny said that she was in fact proposing a physical
renovation to the premises. Rather than shift to the literal, I developed the metaphor with her ideas in mind.

Cecily: Are you going to be able to use the full grounds?
Penny: Yes.
Cecily: We want to open it up–we want more people flocking in here.
Penny: Absolutely.
Cecily: In fact we want umbrellas and people having coffee here.
Penny: Yes. It’s lovely.
Cecily: Your role, therefore, is you’re the new engineer, and everybody loved the last engineer, but basically what he’d done is, instead of dealing with this, he had been protecting his staff by saying: “All right, no playing in the garden”, and he’d been moving you back, but not really dealing with this because he was too busy. Saved a lot of cost, that was a good thing, and that needed to happen, but he actually didn’t get as far doing this. Can you take that?
Penny: Yeah, that’s great, thank you.
Cecily: Now what I’m doing though is saying you need to be winning their allegiance.
Penny: I do, and I need help in knowing how to do that.

At this point in the interview I realised we really needed to proceed through some of the other assessment tasks to get some concrete goals. Listening to her story and supporting her was important, and we also needed concrete coaching goals to help her get progress. Goals are a yardstick of change, and every few weeks we need to check our progress.

Cecily: Okay, let’s just – and there’s a whole lot more I need to hear. What I’d like to hear though right this minute is, what are the most satisfying aspects of this job? That made you laugh, didn’t it?
Penny: It’s a tough call.
Cecily: The most satisfying

Penny then listed her three satisfiers:

Penny: I’ve taken steps to increase revenue by employing two new sales reps. The enormity of the change – this is not some pissy little business that’s just got a couple of things to fix up. I’m feeling more relaxed in my interactions with the staff – I’m feeling more of a sense of belonging.

In the middle of this first session I became very aware that Penny had difficulty answering in a positive way and that her responses were all short. It was as if she had shrunk back. Penny reported that there was only one person in her store with whom she felt rapport and that she felt isolated and sometimes lonely. Penny was at a loss about how to engage the staff. I was acutely aware of the parallel with my difficulty engaging her at a deep level. Although she had been the chief driver for massive business development in a family company some years before, she seemed not to be using her knowledge here. I registered that she was feeling overwhelmed and spent some time supporting her to think through how she could engage people. I was actually trying to work out how to engage her. What emerged spontaneously had real potential.

Penny: What I am passionate about is business development and that is where I am
putting part of my energy because there are opportunities to grow the business in areas where they have not dabbled in before.

I worked hard to find the areas of competence and confidence I knew to be there from our past work. Her business suggestion drew on her past experience, taking business online, and was inspirational. I encouraged her.

Cecily: Let me just get this straight. This project, you could pilot it with your store, and then it could become a mainstream for Company R?
Penny: Absolutely, it could be. That's true.

The energy lifted as we got excited about this proposal. We then moved on to discuss how to bring this energy into the people in the store. It was difficult for her to be excited and upbeat when they were scared and grieving. I assured her that we would develop and rehearse a script around the metaphor and not to worry about taking it in to the store until she was ready.

Penny: It's a different way for me to be thinking.
Cecily: All right. If you're not ready to do it for a few months then wait.
Penny: Rehearse it. That would be good.
Cecily: But I think it would be good for them, and I'm not saying you have to live up to my energy, but it would be good for them to experience you as energised and more outgoing towards them. I think they need to feel you are doing something.

I was concerned that her fear had led to her presenting with low, quiet energy at a time when they needed strong, positive energy.

While I was interacting with her, I was simultaneously reflecting as a psychologist on the remarkable parallel that in this store, where she wanted to cast off her management training wheels, the previous manager/father had died just as her father died when she was an adolescent. I wondered if at some unconscious level she was intimidated and at risk of shrinking back too far in the way that children do in such circumstances. I also wondered if I was being overly psychological and whether I should just stick with what was presenting.

At some level Penny was ambivalent about making an outreach to build relationships with her staff, in case it became overwhelming.

Cecily: Are you consulting enough with your staff, listening to them enough?
Penny: They're good now as in, they come to me. So when I'm there I'm bombarded.

We pressed on to wrap up the session and I asked her the three least satisfying things about working there. Penny responded by listing (1) overload of projects; (2) not physically being there enough to be accessible to the team and (3) isolation from the other Company R managers. Further, the one thing that she would like to change immediately was to catch up on her backlog – clear her desk and have a clean slate.
Rather than asking her explicitly for her goals, which may have been a list of what she thought she should aim for, these four things were her spontaneous goals, arrived at in conversation. Clearing the backlog I regarded as both literally and metaphorically significant. There needed to be a way to sort out the old manager’s files and get literal and psychological closure so that she could actually get on with her job. I was very concerned that she did not have a personal assistant and that she was working weekends. We concluded the session with a determination that she get her own personal assistant.

At the closure of Session I spoke to Penny about the EQ-i and invited her to participate as part of the research so that we had a pre-coaching and post-coaching benchmark. She was comfortable with the idea and said she would do it in the next couple of weeks.

6.3 Session 2

While I wanted to support Penny in her very difficult role in a business that was struggling, I did not want us to drown in a sea of negativity. I resolved to use the A-B-C to continue to focus in the A and the C on happier positive items of discussion.

**Penny:** My birthday was yesterday.
**Cecily:** Oh, happy birthday! … It’s an auspicious date really, isn’t it?
**Penny:** Hmm. I had a lovely night…
**Cecily:** Did you?
**Penny:** … I cooked, yes. Had my family over, my children. It was beautiful. I just had the best night.
**Cecily:** Good on you. I was going to ask you, what are the good bits over the last two weeks? So, birthday.
**Penny:** Yes, that was a good bit. Other good bits at work? More and more frustrations, mainly in IT, that’s affecting the staff morale on the ground at the moment. I’ve got people that can’t come to work.
**Cecily:** Let’s come back to that in a minute. Let’s hear more good bits.
**Penny:** More good bits? I did a 10km run on Sunday… a fun run … It was good, it was hard and I felt great at the end.

I wanted to validate Penny in any and every way I could and also to discriminate between her fear, a possible habit of focussing on the negative, and what may be the reality that the business was in an appalling state. A family move meant a new phase for her. She was living each day in the present and not thinking about the future, and throughout this landmark couple of months one of her children had really been there for her in a mature adult way. The reference to living each day and enjoying the “right now” instead of thinking about the future was a reference to the Buddhist path, as she too had an active interest in Buddhist meditation.

Instead of using coaching as an emotional dumping ground, I wanted to reflect on
the positives so that the client, in this case Penny, realised what good things they had in their lives and got into the habit of valuing what is happening day to day. We chatted in a happy way about her children for over five minutes and then I brought her back to our coaching agenda.

Cecily: Well, let’s come back to last time. How were you after the session?
Penny: I found the overall session and the way that you conducted that session just extremely motivating.
Cecily: Good.
Penny: I came in feeling quite flat and I left feeling very motivated and inspired. And I felt that way for about two days afterwards…It was a lovely session, and I felt much more focussed actually. I felt I had focus, direction and understanding of the difficulties that I’m going through. So I thank you for that.

It then dawned on me that the strategy to grow the business that Penny had used so successfully in the past would not work here, so it was inevitable that she felt that her hands were tied and so her anxiety had gone up. On the other hand, Penny had progressed on some important things. Using in-house resources, she had persuaded already over-busy colleagues in the wider Company and a couple of consulting agencies to help her out, and so she showed me a new layout for the premises, a new logo, new signage, all initiatives that would encourage both management and her team.

While Penny continued to paint a grim picture of the business, we were able to acknowledge and celebrate a few wins. She had had a half-hour meeting with the CEO, which had helped determine some business priorities; for example, a budget and refurbishment. Second, she had organised to have three new positions approved, and moreover had gone through a hundred resumes and filled two of the positions. This was very exciting, even though the hiring of these new people exposed the inability of existing staff to explain their job and to train their new staff. Third, staff had made a welcome poster and a cake for her birthday and she was really delighted. She said; “I felt really appreciated, valued. Yes, and that they actually liked me.” Fourth, she had obtained approval and gone ahead and hired a new person for the sales team. In sum, she realised that in just the three months that she had been there, she had been quite proactive.

A key issue concerning Penny was that the staff were so beleaguered and fragile that any changes introduced tended to be taken personally and overwhelmed them. With outdated systems and record keeping, and a lack of job descriptions, newcomers could only learn by working beside the existing staff. A serious risk management issue was that any of them might quit before management had found out how they did their job. Penny outlined the problem in one case:

Penny: …for example, the customer service supervisor… She’s been with the company twenty years, and she knows the job extremely well but she has difficulty in articulating
what she does. I created a job description with her, so that was step one, and as she shows [the new person] what to do, she says that this is her way, that she is teaching her, and that she wants to be there, to be very hands on. So I’m just going to let that start and see how they go. Jane has been with Company R twenty years and is extremely resistant to any change. And the company is vulnerable. If she walks away, we will have difficulty finding out how she does the job and getting [anyone to replace her]…

Penny also reported that she had called a staff meeting. This was for everybody, but when two warehouse staff said they did not want to sit in a meeting and wanted to get on with the job, she quickly decided to let them do that and made more of an effort over the next week to go out and have little chats with them. In the staff meeting Penny explained Plan A, and the compromise Plan B, that she had been negotiating with Sue, the CEO.

Penny: …One of the sales reps said, “If you show her plan B, of course she’s going to go for it.”
Cecily: Good, now they know that you’re barracking for them.
Penny: …Yes. And I’ve had some wins, I’ve had three motor vehicles approved and that’s taken months of stuffing around here.
Cecily: They know too that you’re trying to get this better phone system working, that you’re getting the traffic flow reorganised and you’re actually making sure you’re looking at that stuff that’s important to them…

Usually in an organisation we have some immediate concerns but the coach is able to focus on the larger business issues. Normally, I am coaching for conscious leadership, which over a six-month period can be transformative for the manager. However, I had a parallel set of conundrums to Penny’s. While I was figuring out how to exercise leadership and support her, I was also wondering whether it was possible to develop the emotional intelligence of leadership in a crisis mode, a situation where everyone is fearful. I continued with my known strategies throughout these two or three initial sessions. I was aware of the conundrums and I was present for Penny, but I needed to think over whether the usual approach to coaching was the most constructive in this urgent situation, or whether I was being unnecessarily sucked into the sense of urgency.

In this critical period, Penny was really looking for concrete directive advice. In an extended conversation about the sales staff and the in-group out-group shifts that had occurred prior to Penny’s appointment, I firmly supported her proposed plan to deal with the situation. I also rehearsed with her possible scripts to use with these people. I brainstormed a couple of scenarios with her

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

Penny: Right.
Cecily: So do you want to take my notes on this?
Penny: Yes, that’s great.
Cecily: I would also make explicit to them that the reason why you’re going to act as sales manager to …
Penny: That alerts them to the fact of change.
Cecily: That there will be a change, that’s exactly right.

I also empathised with Penny over her embarrassment about the discrepancies between the salaries paid to the consultants and those of the staff. At the same time, I signalled a discussion of the Conscious Leadership model of Feedback and the Healthy Self, the Company R group-coaching workshop that I generally scheduled to run between Sessions 2 and 3. In this way, I could move from the particular to a more general principle of the healthy organisation.

Penny: …I need a retail shop assistant and I can’t find someone appropriate for $25,000.
Cecily: I know. One of the managers said to me, “I feel ashamed”
Penny: Yes. And I tell people [job candidates] over the phone, “I feel ashamed and embarrassed.”
Cecily: Has this been communicated to Sue? …Well the dilemma we have is that naturally the people who sell best, the people who manage best, and the people who do everything best, are psychologically healthy and they’re not going to go for a low salary. Healthy people also know “I’m worth more than that.” So then, the people who fill the positions are invariably low in self-esteem. How can they do anything with confidence and energy? That’s the double bind all the way through here.
Penny: Yes. I’ve come across some very interesting and some very strange people, many of whom have been unemployed for the last three to six months, and probably all but one had very poor interview technique.
Cecily: What you see is what you get. You are actually seeing poor communication, poor assertiveness and therefore poor delegation, poor time management, poor boundaries, poor conflict management. They all go in a bunch, and that’s the dilemma. I think it’s actually going to cost the company far more not to pay the salaries.
Penny: Absolutely.

My business-relevant comments resonated and Penny responded warmly. Penny had good business experience; what she needed was confidence. So I constantly rehearsed lines that she could use. These lines were drawn from her.

Cecily: How is Tom viewed by Stephen?
Penny: Stephen has respect for Tom because he maximises his sales in a very competitive small market. The man does brilliantly.
Cecily: Good. When they’re there, I would be certainly giving whatever positive feedback you can give to each individual. “The thing I love about you, Tom, is, you know, as Stephen has pointed out, you have a limited market and you optimise it and you’re doing a great job up there [in your regional sales area].”

I was validating Penny and using her lines. She would be validating Tom and also Stephen in front of them both and making them feel even better about each other.

The conversation progressed with a discussion along the lines of the need to come
into every meeting with positive energy and in particular to come into the next staff meeting and be upbeat. Penny tried out some lines about how she could introduce the fact that she had brought a new person into the team.

Cecily: Okay, they're all relevant answers, but I think they are steps two and three. Come back to step one, which is…Penny, I want you to be the boss. I want you to be clearly in charge. You are the one who's calling the shots, and so you set up the parameters of why you have selected this person and you go in and say, “I've got some very exciting news, I’m very pleased, we’ve had a little coup.” Okay?
Penny: That's good.
Cecily: “And it was my plan to bring in another sales rep at a later date. It is in my grand plan, it's in the budget...”
Penny: Grand plan is good.

Using the new language I provided would lift how others perceived her. She would come across as positive, clear, strong, in charge, helping her team. Penny then developed what she would say so that the content and affect meant that she would be perceived as more authoritative. The content of the message was that she was on the ball, she was being strategic, she was looking after this branch and putting their case to the CEO, and she was savvy about the industry.

We wrapped up the session by clarifying what she would do before the next session two weeks later. Just as I thought we had finished, Penny did something that is common in a counselling context – she raised a major difficult issue when there was no time left to deal with it.

Penny: See, Sue's very changeable.
Cecily: Is she?
Penny: Yes.
Cecily: In terms of making new decisions? Changing her mind?
Penny: Yes.
Cecily: Are you giving her feedback on that?
Penny: No.
Cecily: I think you need to do that. “Now Sue, is this just my illusion or is it real that you change your mind a fair bit? Because I seem to be getting contradictory directives. Can you validate that statement?”
Penny: Yes, that's about me feeling comfortable asserting myself with her. I can say that in a gentle way… it's more so when her stress levels are up. .
Cecily: And it wouldn't hurt to even say that to her. Say, “You must be under a huge amount of stress Sue, are you okay? And I'm aware that some days you're much more strong and out there, and other days you seem to be...”
Penny: “Wavering a bit.”
Cecily: Wavering a bit.
Penny: Okay.
Cecily: And it's always good for us to have more clarity than less.
Penny: Okay that's a good line.

We would need to pick up this important issue in another session, but this interaction was very interesting in itself. My suggested lines were direct and perhaps too strong. It could be that Penny needed to be able to assert herself more. Alternatively, her gentler stance could be more accurate to the situation. I took her lead and rehearsed
an empathic line, “you must be under a huge amount of stress”. This line seemed to hit the spot for Penny who finished my sentence “wavering a bit”, which I validated. Her completing my sentence indicated she was receptive and integrating the idea. That supported the view that it was not necessarily about her being assertive but about her wanting to look after Sue who was doing an extraordinarily difficult job.

6.4 Session 3

Session 3 opened on a validating note for Penny. Since we had just come from the group meeting, we opened with a conversation about issues that had arisen in the group. In particular, I had responded to comments about overloading and under-resourcing that had been endorsed by most people. Some people had said that they thought that these kinds of complaint were unhelpful. As the leader of the group, I had agreed that we wanted to be positive and yet affirmed that we needed to hear the experienced state of affairs. With Penny I said:

Cecily: You see one of the things it seems to me is that a highly functional person in this dysfunctional place will still be dominated by the overload and the systems that don’t work well... And it is not complaining. When people are complaining in that state, they are not complaining. What they are actually doing, they are orange lights flashing on the dashboard. And if that is called complaining, they will switch off their dashboard flashing lights, but the car will just crash at some point. That is a mistake some managers make. Psychologically the person is so overloaded and the system is not working... these are the warning lights and management needs to attend to it.

Penny: Yeah I felt very elated when you were saying that and I quickly glanced at the other managers and some of them seem to really pick up on what you were saying and others were kind of looking down like “oh, no, that doesn’t apply to me”. Whereas I believe that it actually is across the organisation and particularly in the executive team that you are coaching. There are probably no exceptions.

Penny demonstrated confidence in my perspective and clearly felt supported. This was an indicator that by Session 3 she had joined with me (her coach) and she was actively engaged in the process.

My reflection about the flashing lights validated Penny as functional but overloaded by a dysfunctional organisation. The EQ-i which she had completed in the previous fortnight further validated Penny when we went on to discuss the results. Her overall score was 111, which was well above the median. Typically in companies, we are working on getting mid-level managers up to 100, and she was already on 111. This profile enabled me to validate her and she could see that the company dysfunction was the major problem for everybody.

There were two major developments in this session, centred on her authority in her relationship with the CEO, and clarification of her top priorities. Penny said she had difficulty recognising her own effectiveness because of this complex situation.
Penny: ... And then telling Sue who has employed me and makes the assumption that she has hired me to do this job therefore she thinks I am capable of doing it. So for me to say, I am doing a good job over here however when I am stressed, which I am now, then I am not functioning as nearly as effectively as I would like to. And what I need from you is help with prioritising work, here's the list, let's talk about it.

At last we had the core issue that she had been floundering with. She did not want to let Sue down, vs. Sue's input. She wanted Sue to think well of her, vs. when she was stressed, she was not as effective as she would like to be. I had been teaching about giving and receiving feedback as part of the Healthy Self in the previous two group sessions, and so reframed the situation in terms of giving feedback to the CEO without invalidating herself.

Cecily: Well, remember that when we are giving somebody feedback...what we do is we give them all the positive feedback we can. You know, “you are terrific at this, this and this. There is one area I would like you to work on improving that is this”. So in other words, when you are going to talk to Sue, I would encourage you to do the same thing regarding yourself. “I have a terrific range of strengths, I am good at ABCDEFG, and what I would like from you, Sue, is practical help with X and the only reason this arises is because of the sheer overload of work and the poor systems... So if you can help me with X I reckon that would be very helpful for me. And you could see in the group, we all need to be heard and we all need practical help...”

Penny was more confident to attempt this after the EQ-i feedback. I coached her to promote her achievements and put all the positives to Sue and asked her to list them. Penny responded well, a significant shift from the first two sessions.

Penny: That I have built a cohesive and effective team, that my confidence has significantly improved over the last four months, that staff are starting to confide in me, we problem solve together, we are doing forward planning...

Cecily: Excellent, keep going, that is all good.

Penny: ...That I am mindful to make sure that the operation doesn’t run at a loss next year.

Cecily: Put that in a positive.

Penny: So I definitely...

Cecily: Instead of saying “running at a loss”, say: “I will focus on operating at a profit next year.”

Penny: And I am looking at ways we can improve and increase the way our sales are and the volume of our sales. And I have done that by employing the new sales rep and bringing in her new territory. And I think our business is a generally a much happier and overall pleasant environment for the staff to be in at the moment.

Cecily: It's all good. That is all good. I just want to enhance your authority – your key experience of a lifetime of working in your family business, yeah?

Penny: Yes.

We then went on to look at how she and her partner had collaborated to manage that business from start up to multi-million dollar success. Penny identified that the patch of business she was now running was a lot smaller, the infrastructure was poor, and that although she had outstanding business experience she did not have experience of really changing the business model. She said, “I feel like I am flying blind.” I helped her to see that even though she felt she was flying blind, the only feedback she had
had from her staff and the CEO was positive, and that she should take that on-board. She then acknowledged that she was in fact seeing the way, and that the people in her team were coming up with information, which she also utilised and incorporated and valued.

As I listened intently to her past patterns it became clear to me that her way of operating in the family business had been to brainstorm most things with her partner. They would arrive at a solution and she would implement it. The coaching relationship provided a mirror for her to recognise the patterns that had been so successful in the past. Further, she saw that that pattern was perceived differently in this context. I proposed that we find a way to replicate that past successful collaborative relationship in this context by explaining to Sue that she was not needing direction, rather that her preferred positive style was to come up with possible solutions and brainstorm them, be confident that she and the CEO were on the same page, and then operationalise them. Furthermore, I encouraged her to explain to Sue that she had brought Penny in as a short-term house-sitter/baby-sitter, by definition not making changes, and then made her the manager. This insight resonated with Penny and she said: “I decided that in order for me to make an effective change in the organisation, I had to feel that I owned the business.”

These insights made me resolve to coach her in a style reminiscent of her successful collaboration with her partner in the previous family business. Until then I knew something wasn’t quite right. Other pieces in the puzzle were her EQ-i results which were good, and the group session which brought home the dysfunctional state of the business. Then the reflection about how she had collaborated with her former business partner gave me clarity about how best to coach her. These insights, especially my making the link that she needed to replicate the elements associated with her previous business success, was a turning point in our relationship. From this point we flew along.

Having figured out how she solves problems, I used her problem-solving approach. For the remainder of the session, we stayed in the brainstorming mode, exactly as I understood she had worked with her former business partner. We spent half an hour talking through priorities: IT requirements, work changes, implement marketing campaign, choosing refurbishments.

The confidence that she got out of this conversation enabled her to acknowledge that she was now clear that she was pleasing the CEO, and that she gained a lot of energy and support both from Sue and from the executive team. She now could identify further good things that she had not said at the “A” of our session. She told
me she had had a very good sales meeting and that second, the new sales rep had started and she was very happy about that. She said that, thirdly, coaching was very valuable and seeing me was one of her top personal priorities. We concluded the session with homework, and I made a note of the six tasks she had set herself.

Table 6.1: Case Notes – Penny’s Next Tasks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For next time:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. See particular staff member to write a first cut at IT requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Get some IT person to walk through it with herself and this colleague</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Do a draft of the web-page and brochure copy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Book in a production date for the brochure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Refurbishment option 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Next time with CEO confidently let her know all her strengths and let her (CEO) know that she needs practical help from CEO on these priorities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.5 Sessions 4 and 5

In Sessions 4 and 5, Penny continued the swing of feeling, overwhelmed and despondent on the one hand, and upbeat and confident on the other. It was hard to get her to come with good things to start with. Penny came in and, despite my usual question to introduce the good things as the “A” of the A-B-C, “How are things going”, she said, “I am stressed, very stressed, and I am feeling a lot of frustration”. I said I’d come back to that and to tell me what has worked in the last two weeks.

Whereas in psychological counselling, it is usual for the client to come in and dump all the emotional stuff, especially the negative stuff since the previous session, coaching usually takes a different approach. In executive coaching, I want the opening of each session to model good business communication, and in the opening connection time we review the positive achievements the client has made in the previous week or two. In this part of the conversation the manager is being appraised and needs to be aware and appraising the other party. Further, they are building the relationship with empathic responses. In addition, a purpose of maintaining the structure is commercial. The Company pays substantial fees for executive coaching and expects an outcome, and I know that if I stick to the process I will get a positive
outcome. In Penny’s case I wanted her to come across positively and be perceived as present and powerful, I wanted her to take stock of the other person, and I wanted her to engage with the other person. I was concerned that it was likely that she began most business meetings by communicating this sense of overload and distress. I needed to discriminate between whether this was a truly difficult and understandably real situation, or whether it could have been her habitual approach to life. Alternatively, since she was familiar with the process of counselling, she could have been behaving as she thought she was expected to with a psychologist. The EQ-i had given me confidence that she was not suffering with psychological depression. Nevertheless, my persistence with opening the session with an upbeat and chatty style was wearing thin even with me. The risk if I persisted with my usual method was that she may have felt unheard and we would not have an alliance to collaborate on her change goals.

Inevitably, I said that I would come back to the stress and to tell me what had worked in the last few weeks. Penny came up with three positive items. First, she was happy with the two sales staff she had appointed.

  Penny: … [One of the new people knew the existing sales person]. They’re very, very close friends as well and we get along.
  Cecily: Good. That is good.
  Penny: So I get positive reinforcement from [the new sales person], which is nice. When I get it I suddenly realise how nice that is.

What stood out to me at that moment was that if Penny and I had established an effective alliance in the first session, she would have benefited from the executive coaching process for the previous eight to ten weeks. She would have been more positive, and been given and received more positive feedback. Here at last she described how good it was to receive positive feedback, so I immediately validated that and urged her to participate in the next group session.

Penny went on to the second positive experience of the last few weeks. She had had a really nice weekend, with a lot of pampering. She commented that her personal relationship was going well and he was a really stable anchor in her life. Essentially what happened was that she was spending all of her time off recovering. By the end of the weekend she was ready to face the next week.

  Cecily: So you were feeling so good about it until you came back and saw Sue. Let’s come back and talk about what’s happening here and the stress you feel.
  Penny: I think my stress is twofold. I can’t visibly say and put my hands on what I do that is making a difference; so what I’m doing isn’t seen, it’s not visible, and I’ve been there five months. What I’m doing is starting to develop a sense of cohesion amongst the team, laying down some structure for them to operate within, instead of little silos all over the place and lots of infighting and all sorts of games like that.
  Cecily: Yeah.
Penny: I was hoping to make some changes to the retail space, which Sue knocked on the head on Monday, and my frustration with Sue is that she’s a little changeable. I’ve said this to you before, and knowing that about her, I feel that I kind of, out of my own lack of awareness, fell into that trap. Not that it was a laid trap …

Cecily: But you’re allowed or even encouraged to review and then it changes, and it can change suddenly enough that…

Penny: Absolutely. It depends on the moment, the day of the week.

Cecily: Have you talked with other staff about this? I mean, have they had a similar experience?

Penny: No. I haven’t talked to them this morning. I’ve heard [another manager] make comments to me about Sue, but I haven’t engaged in that conversation…

Cecily: So, who else on the staff would you have the confidence to speak with about this problem because it’s the thing that gets you down most…

Here Penny felt heard by me. When she said “absolutely”, she knew I was on her wavelength. I was taking her stress seriously, and taking seriously the frustration of the CEOs apparent changeability.

Every manager must have allies – peers who can put in a good word for them to the CEO, people who report to them who will also say to their peers how much they enjoy this manager. Where possible, they need positive connections with members of the Board of Directors. When I asked “who else...” my purpose was both that she have an in-house confidante she could call on, on a daily basis, and also that she have allies who together could exercise leadership and give constructive feedback to the CEO.

The conversation that ensued was around her frustration with Sue’s apparent competing messages. When Penny then returned to her staff with different goals, she was the one seen as incompetent. For example, management had planned to sell store A and keep store B but as they got new information from the consultants, they changed tack and decided to keep store A and sell store B. This was nobody’s fault. The data, on which the earlier plan was premised, were totally inadequate due to the outdated company systems. The previous CEOs had not invested in business infrastructure for over ten years and appropriate business reports could not be generated. The current situation was nobody’s fault, but the change of tack lead to a loss of face with the staff. Penny believed she was therefore perceived as incompetent, and that made her feel depressed and angry. Her staff expressed that they felt let down by the larger business; Penny believed they felt let down by her.

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

Cecily: ... “I’m depressed because I can’t achieve. I’m depressed because I feel stuck or immobilised or invalidated to…”

Penny: Immobilised?

Cecily: Now, does immobilisation really lose your credibility, or can they understand that?

Penny: I don’t know that they see that…
It seemed to be a no win situation. This epitomised the double bind, particularly when she said she could not explain the situation to her staff. “…I can’t be seen to be disloyal [to Sue] and I won’t be.” When Penny said, “I feel frustrated and disappointed”, I shifted the conversation into looking at her options. I summed up her options as: (1) hanging in there as long as she could and remaining equanimous, as the Vipassana meditators would say; (2) driving change and sticking up for what she thought should happen; and (3) finding a different job. Penny’s immediate response was that she was definitely contemplating a new job. She said it was difficult to remain equanimous and cope with the transition because what fed her and kept her motivated was growth and change.

I asked her, “Penny, would you buy this business?” Penny replied, “It’s a tough question. No, it’s too boring.” Using her own criteria, I wanted to focus her values. She explained that there was too much work to do, undoing, relearning, creating a new culture, with people who were traumatised by the past. She would rather do a start up business. I then asked her if she saw herself there in a year or two years.

Penny: I’m on the roller coaster and I’m hurtling down at the moment. The selling period is gearing up so I feel that I don’t want to jump off right now. I mean, I’d love to, and I’m struggling some days with getting up and saying, I could do this, but I don’t actually want to so I’ve got this internal dialogue that…

At last, three months into our work, she candidly summed up our sessions to date. She had taken the opportunity both for her own learning and to help Sue out for a few months. But five months down the track it really wasn’t working for her. Penny was motivated by doing things better. And then she said: “I can’t do this.” She said there were 100 things in a day that needed fixing, plus 50 emails with more work, and she had 6 staff coming daily with dramas. She just had too much to do, and ran out of energy. The sheer quantity was too hard. “I need systems and there aren’t systems.” I summed up our conversation with a metaphor.

Cecily: You know, it’s like, we’re a milk bar and we have a huge turnover of soft drinks or whatever, and we get so caught up with keeping the fridges loaded that we don’t get time to call the refrigeration technicians or even order a new fridge. Penny: Yeah, and that’s definitely the trap I have fallen into. I mean, I’m a detail person. I’m more a detail person than a systems person …

Cecily: So we need both of those things working for you, or you’re going to go under with the detail. Penny: Yeah, and that’s what’s happening.

With this clarity, we both acknowledged that she could not do this job long term and feel comfortable. However, as long as she remained in the job, she still needed a hand. The following conversation focussed on building a relationship with Mike, the Chief Financial Officer, who was a systems person. Penny remarked that like many accountants, he was dry and did not do small talk. “He was a man of few words” she
said. We agreed he had a big brain, he thought systemically, he loved getting into the business data to make decisions, and he could be a real help to her. He had supported her to hire a new sales rep. He even came out to the shop and “did the whole thing” with her. He was not a good leader but he was a good manager.

I thought this was encouraging and we rehearsed what she could say to the CFO. I wanted her to elevate her authority and speak to him as a senior management peer, as I was confident he would then behave in a more supportive and serious “Adult to Adult” manner. I coached her how to lift her profile in a way that he would respect. He would respect numbers. She also respected numbers and understood immediately. She agreed she would speak with him about how she and her former partner started a business, ran it for about twelve years, employed hundreds of people, turned over x million a year. In saying this, I was also validating her. I actually said: “It’s like moving from a small car to a large car… but I think you are in your league running this business. It’s completely home territory.” I encouraged her to say to Mike that she and her former business partner bounced off each other. He thought systemically and she did the follow through and that she thought it would really add value if she could bounce off Mike in a similar way. I was confident that such a conversation would build rapport. By coaching her in how she could engage the CFO I was effectively participating in a parallel process as this was the key way I had engaged her.

I had Penny’s full attention and the session ended in a positive upbeat way with Penny clear about going to Mike to appropriately market herself and build an alliance with him.

Session 5 opened with a list of positives. Penny was in a better space. “I am feeling good today”. First up she said she ran in the “City to Surf” (a 14km run. My response was heartily enthusiastic. “An enormous achievement…Awesome is the word…That’s fantastic…That’s fantastic…I’m so excited…Gosh!” Penny’s response was moderate, even cool. “I felt very satisfied at the end and the hill was just not a big deal. I thought this was pretty good. I did it in 80 minutes. I was very happy.” Given that Penny was in her 40s, I asked, “Do you think you’ll do it again?” She responded, “I’ll do it every year.”

In my view, her understatement and her quiet style meant that she was not actually promoting herself effectively. Most of her business peers were unaware of her high calibre business experience or her extraordinary determination and persistence. We discussed how she ran six days a week and how meditative the training was, because she was totally in the body and focussed. She was happy that her fitness program
was good and she had had a great weekend with her partner. She was doing a massage course on weekends and “by Monday I am feeling good.” Further, she had planned and booked some things to look forward to, including weekend getaways and three week-long holiday breaks over the next six months.

I was very keen to hear how Penny had got on with Sue after the previous session. Penny reported she had had a meeting but she had not given Sue the planned feedback, “I forgot about it. Why did I forget?” She was acknowledging her avoidance, but went on with some good news.

**Penny:** I did talk to Sue about putting out positive messages that my store is very safe and secure and I kind of took myself out of the equation, so I focussed on an example that’s happening in the industry. Negative information about [my store] is out there and I’ve got to do something about that at her level which she very much agreed to, had lots of ideas… She was fabulous. It was very, very proactive. On the issue of [my store’s] future, I didn’t confront that with her. What I was talking about is that, you know, the rumours are that this store was up for sale and is going down the drain, and I wanted her to do something about counteracting that, and that’s what she readily agreed to.

**Cecily:** Good. So she’s countered the rumours, and it will be interesting to see how effective that’s been.

Penny reported that other store managers also think they are getting double messages from Sue about their future. Penny was therefore more confident in her perception but still reluctant to give feedback to Sue. So then I said: “Maybe nobody’s telling the King that, you know, he’s not got his socks on!” Penny laughed and then I said, “I don’t go so far as to say everybody’s thinking he’s got no clothes on…” Penny agreed, and I asked her what we could do in a situation like that. She pondered this and I continued, “Do you think that the King needs to know he’s got no socks on!” We both enjoyed calling Sue a king!

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

**Penny:** Definitely.

**Cecily:** Put the shoe on the other foot… what if it turned out that – what if they weren’t saying anything because they just thought: “Look it’s just me.” But what if in fact it was half a dozen staff, and they were all really frustrated …What would be the best? You would rather know, and if it were everybody, how would you rather hear about it, from the individual or from the group?

**Penny:** Probably from the individual.

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

The thing we then worked on was the prospect of giving direct feedback to the CEO, which was really daunting. We spent quite a lot of time clarifying why it was so hard to confront the CEO. We used a psychological counselling strategy for dealing with the anxiety conditions. Penny had said, “Success equals the business being allowed
to continue to build up – that equals success. Having that taken away means I’m being set up to fail.” I considered this. No wonder she did not want to talk with her peers, let alone the CEO.

Table 6.2 Case Notes - Penny, Session 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The prospect of giving Sue direct feedback</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I think, I say</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I have to say what I think”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I’ll be told it’ll be sold”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“She’ll tie me in knots”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“She’ll give negative feedback”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I’m being set up to fail”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“This job is enormous and I can’t fix it”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Drawing up the table in my case notes and showing her these notes demonstrated I had heard her properly this time. I then shifted the conversation to the notion of success. I reiterated that the family business that she and her former partner had started up had grown to be a fully-fledged, enormous, Australia-wide, in fact global, company. I spelt out that Penny’s notion of business success was bigger, better, more staff, more services and products, and so on. I commented. “If those things aren’t happening, of course you’re going to feel like a failure. If you can’t get on and do things you associate with success, then you’ll fail.” I then had Penny’s full attention.

Cecily: What if the overall success to the Company R is actually to get rid of your store? What if that means success? ... You are a crucial part of the larger Company R, by bringing your bit of business to an end successfully...What if that’s the new definition of success?  
    Penny: I could live with that if I knew that that’s actually why I was there. But I’m getting conflicting messages from Sue about keeping the business.  
    Cecily: And in your language...  
    Penny: Well I am in conflict about that.  
    Cecily: You’re getting conflicting messages about your possible success.  
    Penny: Yeah.  
    Cecily: It seems this whole issue about double messages is really caught up with your self-perceptions of success.  
    Penny: Yes.  
    Cecily: So the reason you need to sort this out with Sue is...that you need to be able to succeed, whichever way it is. It’s interesting, isn’t it?  
    Penny: It’s just wonderful. Let me just write that down.  
    Cecily: Because— once you agree, you can be quite candid and unequivocal with that— “Sue I want success.”  
    Penny: Mm.  
    Cecily: ...I want to know whether my success is going to be determined, defined by building the business, or whether I’m going to succeed at wrapping up the business; but
I need to know what I’m driving at.

Penny: Right. That’s terrific…

Cecily: …But what I’m interested in is your process, you see, and helping you to go outside your own square.

Penny: Can you just go back over the issue for me about my definition of what success is? I just want to hear that again.

Penny had absorbed the idea and we spent the next few minutes reiterating so she was completely clear. This validated her past and redefined her present definitions of success. I shared a parallel difficult example in which I had handled the wrap-up of a business. I commented that I had been really successful in my balanced dealing with that unacceptable situation in my view. I saw that as a success because I had retained my integrity. I then gained the insight that this was the key word for Penny. And I said, “Whatever you do, you retain your integrity.”

Penny’s struggle seemed to be that she was actually well integrated and she wanted to be true to herself. However, she also wanted to be loyal to her friend and colleague, the CEO, and there was an element of fear of failure.

This session was clearly another turning point for Penny. She was happier. We dealt with success for the remainder of the session. We opened with the success of her City to Surf run in 80 minutes. We went on to talk about what success meant for her, and both acknowledged that the City to Surf run was a good metaphor for her store. Penny agreed she was preparing their fitness and stamina and getting them ready for a major race. It was likely there would be a big hill, but they would be ready and they would cope. The staff could relate to the metaphor because they had been very interested and excited in her involvement in the fun run. I said that it was interesting that they took such an interest, even trying to find her in the thousands on television. I encouraged her to share more and Penny said, “I need the practice of sharing more…the time’s good at the moment to be sharing more.” She smiled and I commented, “You’ve got a wonderful smile…you’re really looking good at the moment.” Penny responded, “It’s all energy.” This line would be important in our last review session.

I then returned to rehearsing giving Sue feedback. Penny was now completely in sync with me, collaborating in the rehearsal of what she would say to Sue. Although we did not write up a “New Me” statement, we rehearsed and rehearsed positive language. Yet even when we had gone right through these conversations and she was really clear and able to feed back to me how she would approach Sue, it was not enough. I said to her, “Now, when I said I’d really like you to have a go at talking to Sue…how did your pulse go then?” she said “I felt my energy just go down.” She still found it very challenging. However, she did say it would be very good practice for
her to be assertive.

Suddenly to my frustration I noticed we had run out of time and I realised we still had not discussed how she had got on with Mike. As she had departed, I reflected that just as Penny had said, “this job is enormous and I can't fix it.” I felt the same. In these two sessions, the conversations around success were critical because of the insight we gained that success and psychological integrity went hand in hand.

6.6 Session 6

Between the formal sessions 5 and 6, I had an off site meeting with Penny. Because we were behind schedule Penny suggested we meet for a coffee or a meal. This was not recorded, although I made some case notes. Penny was upbeat, much happier and said she had got a lot out of the previous session. She said she had thought a lot about power since that time and said that the most powerful must take responsibility. Second, she had shifted her aversion to talking with her manager peers. What she had regarded as gossip she now saw could be, in the right context, positive. She saw that managers needed to share ideas with peers they trusted to do a reality check. Each should subsequently speak for themselves with the CEO. She was also much clearer about success. Success for her was now about growth and retaining her own integrity.

From the outset of Session 6, Penny was confident and on track. The major discussion on success, integrity and leadership had done its work in the intervening weeks. Penny was upbeat, with many positive things to report: she was working more to a timetable and coping reasonably well; she was happy, despite the huge workload. She was not working Saturdays and was feeling relaxed about that. She had even instituted Friday night drinks. She had discussed some pros and cons of having dinner at her place and inviting staff to dinner at her home.

Penny was able to focus on ordinary management issues. She was gearing up for the big summer sales and we discussed what to do with an older person who was seriously flustered.

To my delight Penny had completely turned around her relationship with Mike, and had had four days of working closely with him. Together they had analysed the data and arrived at the decision of which of two retail outlets to close. The store that she was managing would continue. As this would have a major impact on the staff at her store, Penny and Mike had discussed serious issues of leadership and management.
In turn she and I had a lengthy conversation about leadership. While Mike worked well with her and was very helpful to her at the financial level, she had found it difficult to establish a personal relationship with him despite her efforts. This brought home to her the importance of empathy and other aspects of emotional intelligence.

Penny was upbeat and reported having done some fun things, including climbing to the top of Sydney Harbour Bridge. After a lengthy discussion of a major family issue, we progressed to a review of our coaching work.

By the time clients get to Session 6 and are asked to provide feedback on the coach and the coaching process, they are very clear about what is involved. Their feedback needs to be concrete, candid and constructive. How they give feedback is an indicator of how well they have integrated the feedback learning and how well they are doing it in their workplace. Penny was comfortable and clear in delivering feedback to me. In reviewing where we had got to, the positives she reported were:

1. The coaching had provided her with important support through difficult times.
2. She valued positive feedback from the coach on her competencies.
3. She valued positive suggestions for problem areas.
4. There had been a major change in her emotional state (she said "oh it’s worlds apart"). In other words, in the three months she had changed from being completely overwhelmed to feeling much more at ease because she had gained insight and skills and so she felt strong and coping.
5. The one and a half hour group sessions were very useful to get to know the other staff.

On the down side, Penny said that the one and a half hours of the group coaching was also frustrating because it was too short and they couldn’t flesh out the topics or get enough connection. Secondly, the lack of trust in the group still needed attention. Thirdly, she needed to trust her own intuition.

Penny’s comment about the lack of trust in the group was a reference to the reserve of the “old guard” store managers when in the presence of the new management team brought in by Sue. Each of the new people had a great deal more confidence, energy, and interpersonal skills, which the other senior staff both admired and found daunting. I valued Penny’s observation and we agreed that it might take years to bridge this. I was very pleased about her comment on trusting her own intuition. She was reflecting that in fact her business judgment had been proved accurate so she should speak her mind more and sooner.
6.7 Sessions 7 and 8

Sessions 7 and 8 are analysed together because as in Sessions 4 and 5, there was a substantial shift from despondent to upbeat mood. Session 7 opened with Penny and me checking why we were two sessions behind everyone else in the program. We established that Penny had missed two sessions, one for a holiday week and one working interstate. We had caught up to some degree with our informal meeting and we agreed to catch up on the other one, perhaps by adding half an hour to two other sessions. We then moved on to the session proper.

Penny said first up, “I’m pretty good actually after my holiday. I got back and the sale is on, so it was full on before but now it’s extraordinarily full on.” She seemed happy, energised and busy trouble shooting, sorting any glitches in the sale. We discussed ordinary management issues; for example, the new buyer was the most productive rep, but had been used to more back office backup, so there were a number of glitches Penny had to sort out. Penny went on to raise another staffing concern.

Penny: I’ve got an ongoing issue with Stephen who I talked about before who refused to communicate with me, and that’s been no different since day one. I’m going to ask Stephen to go and represent Blue Hill at a conference that Kylie can’t attend. He’s never done this before. He resents me asking him anything.

We spent about half the session time discussing him. What Penny was saying was that because Kylie cannot go to what appears to be an important sales day, she wants Stephen to go. Once again we had a conversation around Penny asserting her authority in a complex situation. Stephen was closely allied with the past, late manager. He refused to communicate with her, participated in a negative way, ignored her, and had negative comments to make. The conundrums in the larger company made it difficult to rein him in. Because there were not yet standardised job descriptions of key performance indicators for staffing positions, it was quite difficult to use usual management procedures. Penny was unable to tell him what he was good at, tell him something she wanted changed, tell him the consequences, and give him a time frame to motivate the improvement. Other staff observed his bad attitude and clearly disliked it, but he had an important ally who did all the bookkeeping. The two of them consistently undermined Penny. When Penny was out of the store, Stephen and the bookkeeper badmouthed her.

I asked Penny, “Does anyone counter that?”

Penny: Yes, the one sales rep, Bernadette who I brought on. She’s an ally of mine who’s a sales rep and she’s a very impartial, objective person. But she has a very emotional side.
Cecily: Gee this is hard work, isn’t it?
Penny: Oh, yeah, this is a crazy one, this company. However, I’m feeling quite positive.
I’ve been there and in spite of lack of positive feedback – I’ve asked Bernadette, you know, when I’ve had grave doubts about my contribution out there, and she is very supportive. She tells me, yes, I am making inroads, I am doing a good job, I’m steering the ship well, don’t worry about those gossiping people in the corner there. She comes up with strategies from time to time of how to deal with Robert

Penny in fact gave me a double message. She wanted my advice on how to persuade him to represent the company at an industry event. She was clearly exasperated with him, but then she said:

**Penny:** His work ethic is just everything. I couldn’t fault it. I’m not too fussed at the moment about Stephen. We’re going to get through this period, and in March next year when everything settles down and they will, I will just work out what to do in March. I’m not going to dwell on that. So the immediate challenge is I have to get Stephen to go to this conference. That is Kylie’s idea. He resents Kylie.

On the one hand Penny did not want to deal with him, but on the other hand she wanted help in making him do something. The contradiction was entirely due to the double bind that she was in, and this in turn was due to the contradictory messages she was getting on her leadership. This is an example of how the behaviours of the leaders of an organisation filter down, perfectly replicated at lower levels and causing dissonance at every layer. I was also concerned that it was not her own idea, but Kylie’s, and had less commitment.

I explored the immediate situation carefully in order to get focussed on a solution, to get Stephen to attend the event. Our solution took the spotlight off Kylie and Penny, and the gist of it was that there would be benefit to him and the company. The flaw in our solution was that to persuade Stephen to go to the event and build relationships with thirty potential major customers involved modelling the very relationship that she personally did not want to have with him. Each time I suggested an approach, a script, and she seemed responsive, she would then undermine it.

**Penny:** He just doesn’t like me and he’s so pissed off with Company R not supporting Blue Hill in the three years that he’s been here, and he dwells and hangs on to that resentment and that comes between us in every conversation.

Penny seemed deeply ambivalent. She had evidence that he had been in to her office and removed material, which her personal assistant subsequently retrieved, so it was understandable that she did not want to engage with him. Penny was amazed to discover that she as manager had also been invited, and Stephen had failed to tell her, in fact had hidden this from her. She could not challenge him for fear he would resign and make things worse for store Blue Hill. That staff walk in and out of each other’s areas and remove documents illustrated the alarmingly poor boundaries and lack of respect across the organisation. Basically, there appeared to have been years of dysfunction, of people interfering and undermining each other.
We discussed various ways she could run the situation, to speak enthusiastically with him about meeting him there, to say nothing and show up on her own invitation, to say in a team meeting she was very puzzled about these invitations, and we considered the consequences and how she could use the situation to her advantage.

Cecily: This whole thing is about: “Look mate, you know, you really don’t have to be my best buddy, I don’t have to be yours, but there’s no need to have this dissonance that teeters on a complete lack of respect”.

Penny: Do you think it is lack of respect? It’s about me feeling ready to challenge his behaviour, and all I know is I annoy him as he does me. I know I can’t continue to have an employee that I actually have no interest in.

I was struck that Penny had seen the problem as her reluctance to challenge him rather than his contempt for her.

Cecily: In the end it is slightly better - but not much better - than the bashed woman having her husband back. It’s basically you saying, “you can beat me up and I’ll still have you back.” When we do that we’re signalling that we tolerate the abuse. I think your situation’s a lot better than that, but it’s really modelling to everybody around...

Penny: Mm, that’s true.

Cecily: ... completely unacceptable behaviour.

Penny: It’s also not good for me. It’s not healthy for me to tolerate this behaviour.

Cecily: That’s right.

Penny: It’s time I broke that silence.

Cecily: You say you’re not ready -is it that it’s, sort of, a stretch to be this assertive to you personally? Or is it that you don’t feel you have a strong enough power base there, like you were sort of temporary and it’s gradually got more permanent, but you don’t have the sort of standing to be able to say to him: “This isn’t on”. Or is it that he reminds you of someone, of a certain sort of male who’s abusive? Or, is it that he is a powerful spokesperson for a large group?

Penny: I think it’s all of the above. I’m avoiding a rush of confrontation. I’m unsure about my own power-base because I’m not permanent. So by default my authority is undermined because I’m a contractor, and he exerts influence via [the bookkeeper] who then contaminates the company. That’s the problem...

Cecily: How can you defuse their relationship?

Penny: I wouldn’t even attempt it?

We were both at risk at stalling on the double binds. I then used a domestic example about how parents can break up unhealthy dynamics between their children by reallocating bedrooms or bring a houseguest to stay for a while and alter the power dynamic. Penny had considered the parallel options but the store accommodation was so inappropriate, there seemed no way.

Penny: There’s no other choice. This is a highly inappropriate building for the store to be located in. And next year, as far as Mike [CFO] and Sue [CEO] are concerned, we’re leaving.

Having checked that she had not been abused in the past and that she had only had positive respectful experiences with men, I challenged her to assume her full authority. Penny did not like challenging anybody at the best of times, and it was worsened by her belief that she was only temporary and really did not have the authority. Her next
steps at the conclusion of the session were to talk to Stephen regarding the event.

In Session 8, after the last difficult session, Penny was energised. Her son, whom she had hired to do an IT job a month before, had finished up. Her adult children were responding well to a new regime she had instigated on the domestic front. We had a lengthy conversation about her son, about ways in which she could support him while he still had to grow up and take responsibility for his life. She’d had a win with Stephen at work. After the talk she had decided not to go to the event. She had not even spoken with him and it all turned out for the best. I was incredulous, but on reflection, it had been Kylie’s initiative in the first place and Penny had never really been committed to the idea, and I had not picked up on that. Perhaps if I had I would not have spent so much precious time on it. However, what was interesting was that, after my challenge to her to claim her authority, she had, and she seemed to be very much better.

Cecily: What else can we talk about that’s good for you? How are things going for you at work?

Penny: Much better. Much more confident and in control…

Cecily: That’s great. So what shifted?

Penny: I’m there more, so I’ve stopped coming in here [to head office]. And therefore the staff, the message I give is, that Blue Hill staff are my first priority, not Company R, which they didn’t think before, because I was here a number of times during the week. And I think I’ve taken on a more authoritative air and they respond well to that. They’ve had male managers, and so I’ve developed this persona that they can relate to.

Cecily: Good.

Penny: And I quite enjoy it.

Cecily: Good, that’s even better…The biggest thing is that you’re feeling stronger.

Penny: Yes, I guess that’s what’s happened; I’m feeling more confident and therefore more authoritative.

Penny was clearly relating more assertively with the CEO and the CFO. She was energised by the prospect of a decision and action. We discussed a number of elements of the negotiation and how she wanted to run things. In particular, we discussed her personal options. Penny’s confidence had markedly improved.

Penny: Yes. And I feel that I will or that I have gained respect from Sue and from Mike and they think I do a reasonable job, which is great.

Cecily: I see this big shift in you in the last probably two months, and I think it’s because you’re getting more feedback.

Penny: Yes, it’s been very helpful.

Cecily: Mike has given you a lot more feedback? Or Sue has?

Penny: Sue certainly has. And I guess in Mike’s way he has… Mike was meant to come with us when we met the potential buyer last week. Mike organised the meeting, it was he and I… but Mike … rang me at 8am in the morning to tell me that he was sick and couldn’t do it. And that Sue would only be there for an hour for lunch. I’d never met these people; I had no communications with them. All the emails back and forth had come from Mike. Sue had met with them only once.

Cecily: I reckon that goes up the top here, as a triple tick, don’t you?

Penny: I spent seven hours; I was so exhausted by the end of the day. The Company R board chairman who was at home in his jeans, agreed to back me up … he turned up
about an hour after the meeting was started … he came and did his thing, stayed until
lunchtime and then he left. Sue did come for an hour at lunch, which was nice… The
multitude of questions that they had, all the financial ones, I just said, “well we’ll have to
deer to Mike on that one” and we just moved on … So I handled it well.
Cecily: Sounds like you handled it really well.
Penny: Good experience. Yes. And I felt I was only nervous when I knew for that split
moment that Mike wasn’t going to be there, and that I actually had to wing this on my
own. The minute they arrived, I’m sitting there; we did it in a boardroom. So we had the
boardroom set up, I’m there, it’s all there, I’ve got the problems in order, and the minute
they walked in, I felt completely at ease.
Cecily: Yes!
Penny: Because I’ve done this before and in different countries with unfamiliar people.
So it was not a big deal and I was pleased.

Penny was luminous as she told the story and I practically leapt out of my seat with
excitement and celebratory enthusiasm. From the outset I had been reminding her
that she had the experience and did actually know what to do, and now at last she
had done it. She had proved her excellent business skills independently. I told her
that in the preceding two weeks I’d had an opportunity to speak with Mike informally,
where I’d said how fortunate the company was to have Penny who was an extremely
experienced businesswoman whom he could count on. He had not known that she
had built a multi-million dollar company from scratch. Penny was pleased and said:
“that would explain his attitude.” She realised that she should have promoted herself;
she should have let them know her competencies clearly, as I had urged her to do
from the start. She was delighted when I said that I had given Mike a brief account
of her former business and she thanked me. I urged her to tell both Mike and Sue
about her business experience and to keep lifting her profile. Penny was on a high.
Without the CFO, she had handled the meeting really well so that it enabled her to
claim her authority.

In addition Penny and some other women managers had had a great girls’ night out.
She said

Penny: I went out to dinner with Bernadette and Alison a couple of weeks ago and it was
so successful for all of us.
Cecily: Goodie.
Penny: We had the most wonderful rapport building session. None of us wanted to go
home. We’re going to do it again next week.
Cecily: Good, another couple of ticks.
Penny: Yes.
Cecily: A girl’s night out.
Penny: Fabulous. And I go to personal training with Sue now.

What a change. The critical intervention here seemed to have been my challenging
her to claim her authority. She knew I was on her team before I challenged her,
saying that the CEO, the CFO and the Chairman of the Board regarded her as the
manager of the store, regardless of whether she was temporary or not; the only
roadblock was in her own mind. This challenge, followed so closely by the experience of running the seven-hour meeting, completely turned her around. As a result, Penny at last had established good relationships, and allies to support her in her work situation. The contrast between Session 7 and 8 was remarkable. Her next tasks included maintaining her authority while brokering the deal between the two companies and writing a feasibility report about selling the merged companies to a third company. Penny was in her element.

6.8 Session 9

Penny began the session saying she felt pretty good; her energy was up, which in her attribution was largely due to her personal trainer and she was “firing well.” She was working some weekends because the primary administrative work had to be sorted in the next week or so, so that the deal could be implemented in two to three months’ time. Penny was dealing with a huge load and feeling fine

Penny had confirmed extension of her contract for another four months. She was being assertive with the CFO and the CEO in clarifying her position and they responded in a positive and straightforward way. The big question that was on her mind was, “what do I want? I think priority one is what I want to be doing.” I then recited the chants from peace demonstrations and she joined in spontaneously with the “now!”

Cecily: Yeah, what do you want? What do you want ... freedom! When do you want it ... now!
Penny: Now! I’d like it right now!

We spent at least ten minutes on the topic of her relationship with her former partner. Since they had parted company, they had both formed other personal relationships and their business lives had taken them apart. Now that Penny’s current job had an end date, she again faced the separation made three years earlier. She had been cushioned by friends and extended family, but I was struck by how she had not individuated from that very long relationship. I wondered to what extent her belief that she still relied on him had got in the way of claiming her authority over the past six months. At this point what mattered was to support her in this current phase. I reflected with her.

Cecily: It’s interesting isn’t it, because the kids are right at that point, too, of “who am I? What am I doing?” … It’s a point that I think is profoundly influential for parents. When our kids are young adults it’s in that sort of 18-23 year old bracket, finding out who they are; it’s in our face. “Who am I? What am I doing? What am I looking at?” I think it’s very healthy. And lot of marriages have a big shake up at that time. So, coming back to you, you next March, you say, “well who am I? What do I want? How is it going to work out?”
Penny: Here’s another opportunity. What path am I going to choose? How many options
do I want to create for myself? I’m a great believer in being proactive in making options, as well as those that fall out of the sky.

This is a conversation about choice and decisions, about identity and being her own person. I decided to focus on her values and decision making.

**Penny:** That’ll be very worthwhile. Core values are something I struggle with enormously all over the shop.

**Cecily:** Yes. I use that example of when we buy a house that I used in the group. You know, if we don’t know what we want, then we look at hundreds of houses. But if I do know what I want, that I want it to be modern, I want an aspect, I want no more renovation to be done, I want … and I just screen out a whole lot of other things because I know … those things that are important to me. What are my thoughts? What are my feelings? … So starting with pros and cons of your jobs is a really good thing to do, and quite often what I do is I put the pros at the top and the contras at the bottom, and then I convert the contras and say, well what’s the opposite of low pay, that puts it up here as high pay, or I’ve had, you know, no support from my team. It’s been awful…You know, this job would be too lonely, so up there then I put I need a supportive team. That’s important to me. And then when I get my pros, I re-jig them… What’s the most important, what are the five must haves, and what are the five that I’d really like after that?

**Penny:** All right.

**Cecily:** We can do that together. It’s very useful.

**Penny:** That would just be phenomenal because it may, yeah, perhaps earlier because I will need to make a decision …

I drew on a pad as we spoke. Having given Penny a thumbnail sketch of how we would proceed, we agreed to pick it up next time.

We followed up from the previous session. Penny said that she was still sometimes uncertain about promoting herself but her confusion was around appropriate celebration versus ego trip. I explained to her that a psychologically healthy person is able to say all the things they can do. It’s just a list. They need to be able to list their competencies so that people know the list and want to hire them.

**Penny:** … What occurred to me when you were talking at group coaching … was that I had fabulous training when I worked at the Building Society. They provided training for Branch Managers, so there was such an instant connection that I had, around the Branch Manager scenario, and sometimes my difficulty in identifying my own skill sets is that I am now confident in a whole range of different areas, I forget where I’ve learnt those skills and how I actually came to the stage that I’m at now, and I have learnt an enormous amount over 35 years…

At last Penny was validating her experience and herself. Penny reflected that her parents and siblings were introverts and boasting was taboo. Perhaps this was why she, an extravert, was unclear about when to talk about her achievements. She said it didn’t feel comfortable to promote herself. She felt uncomfortable and egotistical. In a similar vein she asked, “How do I know if what feels good is good?” Perhaps by growing up with people who in some respects were quite different from her, she had lost confidence in her own natural intuitive style. We wrapped up the session by
agreeing that before next session she would promote herself appropriately, promote her skill sets, and share stories with her executive peers.

### 6.9 Session 10

Penny looked good when she arrived. She looked positive and energised. She said that on the home front, things were good with her current partner; things were feeling much more open and the relationship was “evolving.”

The big news was that the sale of Blue Hill was happening. Most of this session was focussed on the sale and in particular what it meant for her. Decisions were soon going to need to be made regarding her options of going with her team and store to the new buyer, staying with Company R, or looking for a new role outside. Two things that came out of that were that she felt anxious about another new start but excited to have another opportunity; secondly the practical issues around a decision about “what next”? In the introductory “A” part of this session, Penny also said that they had had great fun at the staff Christmas party [the store Blue Hill staff joined all the other Company R staff for the Christmas party]. Penny was normally contained and quite restrained, and considered in all her responses, but she had got up and been a star with another younger manager who was a great dancer.

What was really interesting in this session was that we had a whole conversation about speaking up, about performing, for example in a board meeting or in an interview for a senior job. Penny would have plenty of both over the next couple of months. What was making her nervous was the prospect of a new start and having to perform and being interviewed, “I have to appear confident so they think I am the best person to do x”. The session was really built around this underlying fear, which had prevented her being a leader. This was the same fear that had caused hiccups in her being a leader from the outset. To expedite the process of succinctly identifying her fear so that we could convert that to a positive, I led her through a process and took notes in the form of an “Old Me” table (see below). I put to her: “the prospect of a board meeting. The prospect of an interview: I am? I think? I do?” As she spoke, I jotted her answers into a table format.
Table 6.3  Penny: Old Me

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Penny Old Me</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I think, I do, I say</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At the prospect of the Board Meeting/another new start as a manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have to get it right</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have to appear confident so they think I am the best person to do this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They’ll think less of me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If there’s a gap and I don’t have a skill or experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.g. parents’ dinner table – they talk shop [academics]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They seem so high powered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am waiting for criticism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My sisters are like them, they can do no wrong, they are at ease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I want space to learn and express myself</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The marvellous thing about this brief, intense exploration of how Penny thought and felt at the prospect of high-powered board meetings or job interviews was that we effectively summed up every point that she battled with in her role throughout our six months of coaching sessions. Further, we also summed up the driving issues she had struggled with throughout her life.

It was starkly apparent that the obstruction to being present and powerful was due to a residual fear epitomised by the family dinner. Penny had become a very accomplished, mature, competent woman and a very successful businesswoman. However, she was plagued by patches of low confidence. For example, when facing new situations with people she perceived as even more powerful, she tended to revert to “I am unqualified”, “they seem so high powered, they talk shop”, “I am in awe”, “I feel anxious”. The support I had wanted her to have from her peer managers had been difficult to access because they paralleled her experience with her sisters. One can’t help but wish that she had had the opportunity to clear this fear twenty years earlier. Penny said that the level of fear at the prospect of such a high-powered meeting was seven out of ten where ten was most fearful. This was a high level of anxiety.

Without delay, we quickly converted the “Old Me” into a positive “New Me”. This was going to be embedded and become her new self-talk to override her old fear. Penny had done a lot of personal development and was a Buddhist meditator so was very
comfortable with the process of bringing to awareness an old ego defence, remaining equanimous and detaching, staying calm and fully aware of the whole body and finally practising a new affirmative behaviour. We wrote the “New Me” effortlessly. When I asked her “This time on a scale of one to seven where seven is most true, how true is the New Me?” she said “four out of seven” and she wanted to get it up to seven out of seven. As it was almost the end of the session, we agreed to another twenty minutes and took the time to do a deep relaxation and meditation and embed the “New Me” hypnotically.

Table 6.4 Penny: New Me

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NEW ME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Penny</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am charming, charismatic and insightful. I am assertive and comfortable with who I am. I am confident and courageous. I feel good.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whenever I am in new situations I feel comfortable, confident and excited by the challenge. I am open to new experience in the now. I meet new people openly and warmly. I feel good about myself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No matter what others think or do or say I remain calm and confident. I feel good about myself. I move forward to people and engage with them and I make a warm connection. I am confident and chatty and I interact easily. I am at ease and I put others at ease. I am having fun. I like centre stage and enjoy the interaction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am skilled and highly qualified for the position I am in. And everyone accepts me. We are equals. I am good enough and I feel comfortable and at ease. I am “high powered” and I assume everyone’s respect and good will. I take or leave their feedback and I remain confident. I claim the space To learn and acknowledge what I don’t know and I invite them to teach me. I feel good about myself</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I typed up this “New Me” and sent it to her between sessions by email.

6.10 Session 11

Session 11 was our final session. Executive managers invariably have to reschedule a couple of sessions and sometimes even forego them. Happily, the time of the two sessions Penny had missed were made up by extending other sessions for half an hour. This was the case with this final session.

I had intended that we would follow the A-B-C protocol for our final session. I wanted to give her the feedback of the second and final EQ-i and I wanted to review our six
months’ work together and explore what had changed and why. Any professional development and training will have some evaluation and feedback process for both commercial accountability and also to continue to develop the training products. In my executive coaching for conscious leadership, when the client commits to a 12-session program, I review progress at the middle of the program and at the end. From previous years of counselling I knew that clients often do not recognise remarkable changes they have made, or they report changes that are substantial but were not the original goals. Further, human beings try to make sense of their experience; those who have less knowledge and experience of psychology may attribute the changes they have made to factors that sometimes puzzle the therapist.

Penny came in energised, said “I’ve never been better,” and wanted to tell me all the good news. She gave some examples of the previous two weeks that showed that she had integrated a lot of learning.

Penny: I’m just feeling the best I have for many years I think.
Cecily: What’s helped you to feel so good?
Penny: A combination of reasons. I think being able to look at and accept the different parts of who I am and my struggles and my difficulties and the reasons why I struggle. I feel that I’ve contextualised a whole lot of my behaviour throughout this year, and I’ve also had lots of fun. It’s like practising expressing myself over here [in the coaching sessions], and bringing that expression into the workplace, and also coming to terms with things that are issues for me - the mountains that I’m climbing, the issues with my staff, coming to terms with a huge job, slotting into a new organisation. And it’s been like working for two companies [Company R and store Blue Hill].
Cecily: It really has.
Penny: It’s like being involved in two organisations at once.
Cecily: Definitely. So it’s amazing you were able to integrate it, and actually not be falling between two horses.
Penny: Yeah. Absolutely, yeah. And I think that my skills are integrated and have got so much better this year because I’ve practised. It’s just about having the opportunity to do it and overcoming my fear that I’ll fail, fall on my face, get sacked - all those irrational things, none of which of course happened, and I feel like I’ve made it.

I was confident that Penny had experienced a transformational change. I was also confident that the thread that pulled all the previous insight and learnings and rehearsals together was the Old Me/New Me in the previous session. This attitudinal change intervention is complex and often profound. In the previous session Penny had been highly focussed and motivated by the immediate challenges she faced. She had just had a success, so she was positive and robust and receptive. Much of our skills development and reflection had proved valuable to her, so this had elevated my authority in her eyes and her trust in me. She was able to engage in a conversation linking an aspect of her childhood experience to her occasional current lack of confidence with those executives she perceived as very powerful. She had spontaneously and succinctly named the thoughts and feelings and readily collaborated to convert the negative language of that “Old Me” into the positive “New Me” language she wanted to realise.
In other words, we had a bringing to awareness of old fears and ego defences. In a safe relationship with me, she could see those things as they were. Because the old script was accurate, the conversion to the new script was intuitively a good fit. Since I always make explicit what I am doing and why I am doing it, Penny felt she was a true Adult-to-Adult collaborator. I was confident that in that focussed and thus hypnotic session, Penny had readily engaged in the relaxation and embedding of the “New Me.” Every aspect of the session had resonated with her. With that in mind, I then put the question to her.

Cecily: So how did you get past your fear, just to let me get that?
Penny: How did I get past the fear? - I think recognising and expressing my fear with you...

Cecily: Mm.
Penny: ... was very helpful, and kind of verbalising with a few other people, leading Company R. So there were a few things. Being supported by you and having coaching as an outlet was very supportive because I could actually be open, honest and frank. Then with some of the other senior managers I could relate on a certain – on an equal level, I guess – they're having difficulties, yes, I am too, and there's a few of us, maybe two or three, who were expressing their difficulties with the changes that were going on within Company R – uncertainty, all that stuff, and we're all suffering from the same issues. So, getting support and being able to vent a little appropriately.

Cecily: Mm.

What is working is the relationship with me, and she has finally managed to have peer relationships with these women. This is so important. The common theme between peer support and coaching support is actually relationship. It is in relationship that she acknowledged her vulnerability and fear and overcame it. It is relationship that she felt connected and valued and powerful.

Penny: Venting, expressing, which is really what you were saying to me when we last got together. It's really just about me sharing on a whole range of levels and I'm starting to practise that. I'm much more expressive.

Cecily: And I saw it today in the group. Oh, you were so good. You just turned the group round and led the group and everybody took it on board. It was fantastic!
Penny: Thank you.

Cecily: Oh, my God, yeah! You were just immediately following on from Sue spontaneously, reinforcing what she said and leading in to your own ideas. It was just excellent. I thought: “Wow!”

The shift from reserved observer to active participant had been striking. The leadership from the CEO was another important variable, because she was modelling a very positive way of being that was also a beautiful example of executive leadership.

At this point Penny indicated that store Blue Hill had been sold. This was an enormous tribute to her capability and the 7-hour meeting she had run with the buyers a month before. This variable also contributed to her positive energy. While she said she felt good about the deal, her dilemma was whether to leave the team or take her own next steps. As agreed in the previous session, we then spent some time clarifying her occupational values to help her decision-making processes. Even in this final
session, there was new learning for Penny, as together we constructed a table of the most satisfying and least satisfying aspects of three work situations. Normally this exercise would have been part of getting to know each other in the first session. In the first sessions with Penny we had been in crisis mode. Now at last, we returned to a process that would help her clarify her primary values and thus her identity.

**Table 6.5  Penny: Work Values**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company 1</th>
<th>Company 2</th>
<th>Company R/Store Blue Hill</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td>Joy of enrolling students</td>
<td>Huge learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfort</td>
<td>Finding and moving to new premises</td>
<td>Merger experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowing infrastructure</td>
<td>Symbols of growth</td>
<td>Organisational change at coal face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good relationships</td>
<td>Achievement</td>
<td>Good salary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill development</td>
<td>Evidence of success</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenging</td>
<td>Expanding overseas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exciting</td>
<td>Recognition</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Status</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Penny got clear that she wanted challenge and excitement but she also wanted ongoing financial security which meant a permanent position and salary or her own business rather than contract management roles. She happily said: “I feel quite excited…I feel ready for a challenge… I feel qualified to do the job.” Penny identified that the most important things for her were comfortable relationships, achievement, challenge and excitement.

The rest of the session was spent in review and wrap up, first my giving Penny feedback about the second EQ-i and Penny giving me feedback about the whole coaching experience. Penny was keen to see the results of the EQ-i retest. First I showed her the pre-coaching test to remind her that her first total EQ was 111. Since we aim at managers being 100 to 110, her original scores were already good. Her lowest scales were emotional self-awareness (96), self-actualisation (95) and problem solving (96). After six months of executive coaching, the second EQ-i showed a marked improvement. The total EQ had jumped ten points to 121. Even allowing for test familiarity, this was substantial. Emotional self-awareness was 117, self-actualisation was now 111, and problem solving had moved to 106. Interpersonal relationship had risen from 106 to 118. It is not surprising that stress tolerance went from 106 to 121 and the happiness scale had gone up from 104 to 120. All fifteen sub-scales had improved markedly. We discussed how our coaching relationship had lifted her self-awareness, which in turn improved her interpersonal relating, which improved everything.
Cecily: So stress tolerance has improved and…
Penny: I feel more relaxed and confident...I'm very happy with that.
Cecily: It fits with your sense of yourself?
Penny: Yes, it does. It’s quite close.
Cecily: … If you think about the last six months - and I'm not the only input here, there's a load of other inputs - are you a better manager, and secondly, are you a better leader?
Penny: I’m definitely a better leader because I'm feeling much more confident and comfortable in my position, and the leadership skills are something that I practised over a number of years. Am I a better manager? Yes, I think I am a better manager. I think that I’ve had to learn how to contend with the issues on such diverse scenarios, you know, how to manage relationships with my peers and be an integral player on the executive team, to leading my own team and to developing new peer relationships in my own store. Does that answer your question?
Cecily: Yes, whatever answer you give is the right answer… I’d like to think about our relationship really. What's your perception about our relationship? If you were describing our relationship to somebody who might want a coach, how would you describe it?
Penny: I would describe it as a one-to-one mentoring, and professional and emotional support in an environment that fosters growth and development, and it’s an all encompassing relationship because it’s both personal and professional. And, because the relationship is so encouraging, it made me integrate the blend of skill-sets through my personal and professional life. I don't have a division - “This is just work-related”, or “this is just what's happening in my family life.” It is actually true integration.

Penny clearly attributed her dramatic increase in confidence and energy to all the work that culminated in the last session with the “Old Me” and the “New Me”. The insight about how contemporary problematic work situations were often a replication of the family dinner table, and the subsequent embedding of a new narrative that she had developed under my guidance meant that she could implement her skills learning in an open, undefended way. I concurred with her view that a true integration had occurred. Penny went on to say: “It literally gives me courage to actually step up and be who I really am, be as fully expressed as I could be.” It was exciting to hear her use the word fully expressed. She was intuitively describing a quality that I believe is measured in the self-actualisation scale.

In addition Penny introduced the word “courage” saying not only that she had more courage, but that the courage came from the coaching relationship. I explored this with her.

Cecily: This is interesting because this word “encourage” or “courage” has as its root the French word “cœur”, which is “heart”. Interesting, it is interesting. It’s very appropriate. And, you know, the opposite of fear is courage. The opposite of fear is heart, which is both love and compassion. You know, it’s spark, passion.
Penny: It’s a spirit thing, isn’t it?
Cecily: It is.
Penny: It’s like being centred.
Cecily: Yes!

Penny’s naming of this courage as a "spirit thing" picked up her frequent reference to energy throughout our sessions. For example, towards the end of Session 5 I said, “you’re really looking good at the moment”. She had just run in a fun run and she was on a rigorous training program and she had responded, “it’s all energy.” Eastern
philosophy references to spirit define spirit as energy. Spiritual healing is equated with energetic healing, with the understanding that our energy influences the energy around us. Presence is attributed when someone is integrated and undefended. Her last phrase was “it’s like being centred.” I wanted to continue that line but I also wanted to continue the review in the limited time left. Since Penny was familiar with counselling, coaching, and the business environment, I asked her:

Cecily: … We are combining management and counselling skills here. Does that work for you? Has it worked for you? Have I had enough management stuff for you?
Penny: Mm, definitely. I think for the brief that you have here, and the short time period, I think your blend has been excellent. I think twelve months would have been more appropriate than six months, even nine months – six months was too short. The topics couldn’t be covered in nearly enough depth (I mean there were organisational constraints, this is a very stretched company) and I think now you’re so valued.

Cecily: Thanks.
Penny: So the short answer is, yes I think you did it extremely well given the short time period. You certainly had the emphasis that was - the weighting - was certainly correct. Now, I had concerns about the – some of the terminology, you know, introducing TA [transactional analysis: Parent-Adult-Child] and how was this going to fit, or not fit?

Cecily: You mean, like how would it go down?
Penny: Yeah, because it’s not a business-y thing at all, and yet they all loved it.

Cecily: All our companies do. TA [Parent-Adult-Child] is the big thing they go for.
Penny: Mm.

Cecily: They can see it, they can use it, it makes sense. It’s a great little model.
Penny: Yes.

Cecily: So I don’t think I did nearly as much management teaching at Company R as I’ve done in other companies, here. I have with a couple of people who perhaps didn’t understand some expectations of a manager.
Penny: Right.

Cecily: For example doing staff reviews and appraisals and business plans and so on. This is the role of a manager. I really didn’t do a lot of that here because we were healing. I think Sue is quite happy about it – I’m really glad she sees that.
Penny: Mm, that was very important.

Every parent and teacher and psychotherapist knows that it is extremely difficult to be proactive and progressive until distress has been responded to. We went on.

Cecily: How do you think differently at the end of the six months?
Penny: Mm, good question. I’m not nearly as reactive, I’m a better listener, my self-awareness is heightened, and therefore my awareness of my staff is heightened, and I’ve practised empathy. Just ask me the question again?

Cecily: So how do you think differently?
Penny: I’m confident, I’m more relaxed, I’m much happier.

Penny responded to a cognitive question with an affective response and went on to validate our relationship, communicating in both cognitive and affective terms.

Penny: I feel confident and comfortable enough in our relationship to tell you when I don’t agree, and that’s something I’m practising. I’m not just accepting other people’s opinions of me.

Cecily: Yes! I’m really thrilled to hear that.
Penny: That was challenging, you know, when you encouraged me to sort of step out, stand up and be heard - speak out. That’s challenging. That’s good learning and I like that. I mean I want more of that. … I appreciate being challenged.
Penny was affirming what the initial EQ-i had shown that she was reasonably robust in the first place and thus was receptive to challenge. Here she also affirms her confidence in our relationship.

Cecily: So tell me, it's something about being confident in our relationship. Can you talk any more about that? That's what I'm really wondering about. What is it about the relationship that lets growth happen? I'm exploring what is it in the relationship that lets these qualities develop. Where does the confidence come from?

Penny: I think the first step is an emotional connection, and for me a sense of acceptance, and you accepting who I am... You're genuinely interested. Your genuineness, your sharing of yourself, there's trust between us.

Cecily: And what is this trust? What is trust? Isn't it interesting? Do you know what trust is?

Penny: It needs a sense of comfort and – it's a level of confidence. I trust this much, therefore I will risk this much.

Cecily: It's about willingness to risk.

Penny: Yeah.

Cecily: What are you risking?

Penny: Risk will reveal... [laughed] I'm risking nothing really.

Mid-sentence, Penny acknowledged with humour the Buddhist insight that ultimately, there is nothing to be afraid of, that we are a bunch of ego defences protecting our fear of fear. It is about feeling comfortable enough to become confident to risk one's greatest vulnerability.

Cecily: Isn't that interesting? So it's a willingness to risk and reveal our thoughts?

Penny: Yeah, my inner self, my true self, not my persona or my façade. And my quest - and I'm a fair bit down the track because of coaching with you - is that my façade is melted away. I have put my focus and my attention into being real, being self-expressed and not having a mask for protection, because there's nothing to protect. I want to be seen, I want to be known for who I am.

This was evidence of a dramatic change in Penny, not only that she was saying so much at such a personal level, but that in the early stages she had not regarded her personal life or beliefs as appropriate discussion topics in a business context. Further, she had been fearful and reserved in conversation. Now her conversation was fluent. She spoke candidly, in depth, about core values and deep insight.

Cecily: ...What did I do or say in our relating that enabled you to take on board and act on the feedback? What enabled you to just do it?

Penny: I think it was, you know, you believing that I could. So your sense of belief in me then helped me translate it into my own sense of self-belief.

Cecily: Now, I personally believe we've all got everything we need within. But sometimes we need to have a spark lit. So I'm saying that, because I want to give it back to you. You believed that you could, and so that translated to your own sense of self-belief. So in effect you already had some sense of self-belief, but my believing in you gave you some confidence in that?

Penny: Yep.

In the concluding part of the final session, I always give feedback to my clients about my experience of working with them.
Cecily: I want to tell you how much I’ve loved working with you.
Penny: I’ve loved it too Cecily. Thank you so much.
Cecily: It’s been really good. I was excited but a bit concerned because you might feel a little uncomfortable that I’d met you before and knew more about you than perhaps I know about any of the others.
Penny: That’s true.
Cecily: I think though that the concern I had initially was completely a non-event. You have a marvellous ability to come in and just be professional, and we could go out and have a meal and be personal. I just loved the way you would come in very focussed with a situation - “Let’s do it, I want to talk about this”, and you knew how to get everything out of the session. And come back and review it and look at how it might have been done differently. Wonderful - a joy to work with you. Toss you a baton and you run with it… The progress is all there, and the only thing I would probably like to do is embed the New Me further.
Penny: I’ll work on it. That is the new me. And especially from my side, I have so much appreciated our relationship in all of its phases. I had concerns as well about how I would feel with you. So that was kind of my benchmark, but as soon as we sat down together I knew this would be fine.
Cecily: Thank you, and it was fine. Yes I was the same, and I was really glad, and then it got to the stage where I thought: “Ooh goody, I’m seeing Penny today!”.
Penny: I couldn’t wait for our sessions. It was the highlight of my fortnight.
Cecily: So thank you very much.
Penny: Thank you.

I had gone to Company R in expecting to be able to run the leadership program with the group, but I was initially floored by the difficulty that all the managers faced. They were overloaded to the point of distress. It was necessary at first to put the emphasis more on nurturance than on challenging and lifting expectations. Once I took stock and refocussed, I then saw that the primary issue was still about my building relationship to help Penny and her colleagues deal with a very difficult situation.

This case study demonstrates every aspect of relationship building between Penny and myself, epitomised and expressed so eloquently by Penny in the last session. Since Penny had some experience of psychology and also Buddhist meditation, she was comfortable with the language of ego defences, and fear being in the road of the powerful presence that is conscious leadership. Ultimately we still covered the business skills development, and followed the twelve-stage protocol of executive coaching for conscious leadership.

This case study also illustrates that an executive coach needs to completely empathise with the managers no matter what is happening in the organisational culture. Although there appeared to be more psychological emphasis, the themes of education, spiritual development, business management, and transformational leadership were all apparent, as raised by Penny at the end.
CHAPTER 7
DISCUSSION

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

7.1 Introduction

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

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

In each section, I compare and contrast the studies in the light of the research questions posed at the beginning of the thesis: What does the coach do and how does the coaching relationship unfold through the discourse? How does the coaching relationship develop conscious leadership? I want to discover from reviewing the data how, and why, deep transformational change may have occurred with some of the clients, and whether I concur with Lipman-Blumen’s comment that “leadership [development] remains an immanent, mysterious process” (Lipman-Blumen 1996: 325). While it is noteworthy that the managers achieved the business goals and EQ-i score goals they set at the beginning of the executive coaching program, my interest in this thesis is in how the relationship brought about those changes. Can examination
of the conversations between executive coach and manager shed light on this “mysterious process”? How do the data work as a prism, filtering, transforming the rainbow helix into one synthesised band of light? With these questions and reflections in mind, the final chapter brings the process full circle.

7.2 Reflections on the Company Case Studies and the EQ results

The quantitative results

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

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

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

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

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

When I review my work in theology, spirituality and ethics, my emphasis in many of the executive coaching conversations was on social justice as to respect and trust, which is key to social justice and to loving relationships. I was very focussed on developing self-awareness in the clients, in the whole concept of mindfulness and integration of the self, in consciousness (Conger 1994; Dent et al. 2005; Fry 2003; Hillman 1996; Wilber 1997; Young 2002). This level of awareness is the foundation of all Buddhist practice, the practice of mindfulness and the understanding of the interconnectedness of all phenomena. Buddhist practice emphasises the loss of dualism. When we let go of defended behaviours, we re-unite the self with the self, and become present, grounded and powerful. In Christian theological and mystical language, this is at-one-ment. The idea of consciousness resonates well with the intrapersonal components of the EQ-i scores. It is perhaps not surprising, then, that the impact of my executive coaching protocol on the clients could actually be measured quantitatively. The difference between the pre- and post-test overall scores in intrapersonal intelligence was highly significant, the mean scores of the clients moving from 96.1 to 106.1, indicating the greatest overall improvement of all the scores.
I see the EQ-i components of stress management, adaptability and general mood to be particularly important concerns for psychological leadership development, and even more so, the interpersonal components that are reflected in my belief that interpersonal communication and “feedback” are the keys to good leadership. When reviewing my studies in psychology and psychotherapy, I have noted in Chapter 2 that the links between psychology and consciousness studies are close and overlapping. For example, Martin Seligman’s (2002) renewed concept of positive psychology, based in part on the humanist psychological theoretical framework, is a clear influence on my insistence that the clients move towards a positive “New Me”. Long before I was introduced to Seligman’s work, I used positive psychology. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s I was interested in realising human potential, and later, I developed my coaching model, before reading Seligman. And it was in the 1980s during my psychology training, that I developed my use of hypnotic suggestion, owing much to Milton Erickson’s inspirational writings (B. Erickson 1994).

The increases in scores such as adaptability, assertiveness, stress management, and the general mood of optimism and happiness were keys to the achievement of conscious leadership and to the managers’ ability to be productive and effective. Gail was a good case in point, where she learned through coaching to be assertive, and once this happened, she was able to resolve a number of other issues. All the qualities of the healthy self are interrelated, but the one that I found was the most important to pick up on with my clients was assertiveness. When one is being appropriately assertive, one is in the Adult mode. This was immensely important in the coaching, and is another example of my use of counselling, another band of the rainbow helix. To change an existing behaviour involves becoming aware of the behaviour and the context that evokes that behaviour, then hitting the pause button on that old habitual reactive behaviour. Learning requires awareness, rehearsal of a new skill, and sufficient awareness to insert the new skill at the appropriate times. At an elementary level, by definition, learning new skills involves raising awareness. When a healthy response is being learned in order to replace an unhelpful reactive ego defence, then the level of awareness is far deeper. The risk (i.e. exposure to feeling vulnerable) of change is greater, but the outcome is transformational as it reintegrates the self. That awareness of the elementary and more sophisticated behaviours is brought about because of the relationship. Managers frequently say that releasing old ego defences and behaving in a new constructive way is so empowering that they experience substantial improvements of confidence, happiness, staff relationships, all of which bear on productivity of the individual, the team and the organisation.
It is beyond the purview of this thesis to attempt to measure in quantitative terms the increase in productivity of the two organisations I worked with. However, the overall qualitative comments suggest that the participants did become more productive and effective. For example, the CEO of Company R reported that as a result of the coaching she had instigated further changes to improve systems in the company, and she also attributed the improved, considered, staff reviews as a direct result of the coaching, which in turn had helped to build more productive staff relationships.

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

Researchers and consultants concerned with fostering healthy workplaces have shown how crucial the role of leadership behaviour is in ensuring the well-being of employees and their organisation (Dierendonck et al. 2004; Fuqua & Newman 2002; Jain & Sinha 2005; Lyubomirsky et al. 2005). There is also general agreement that a good leader whose qualities reflect a healthy, integrated self, with a talent for empathy and a strong personal presence will be in a position to transform organisational learning and change (Brooks 20004; Hammer 2000; Henderson 2002; Hogan & Kaiser 2005).

I noted in Chapter 2 that the psychological health of the executive affects the health of the entire organisation, citing the work of Quick and Macik-Frey that organisational health can be enhanced where leaders understand the power of positive psychology, transformational leadership and emotional intelligence (Quick & Macik-Frey 2004). These very leadership qualities are indicated in the various scales and sub-scales of the Bar-On EQ-i test, and it has been shown that the EQ scores significantly increased in the participants as a direct result of the coaching, according both to the quantitative results as well as the self-reports of the managers.
Overall benefits of coaching for building conscious leadership

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

a. Better relating

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

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

b. Integration of the self, the team and the organisation

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

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

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

According to Mussig, “Leadership is a reciprocal relationship between those who lead and those who decide to follow. Any discussion of leadership must attend to the dynamics of this relationship” (Mussig 2003:73). Sinclair (2001) also made the point that there was a need to understand leadership as a relationship that is collectively constructed,

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

In the coaching sessions, many of the managers mentioned that they had gained the insight that relationships are collectively constructed. In Company R, Gail said that coaching helped her to improve relationships with her team as a whole. Kevin talked about becoming more empathic with other people’s needs. Rachael told about brainstorming solutions with all her staff and becoming more positive. They all used words of relating such as being more open, growing trust, better management. In Company U, the language was similar; for example, Bruce talked about his growing awareness of social dynamics. Derek talked about feeling energised, and Frank discussed giving his team more trust.
This is the language used widely by psychologists to describe a psychologically healthy adult, the Adult self of Transactional Analysis, and of utmost importance, the qualities of emotional intelligence. I have already shown that the benefits of coaching were quantitatively measured through the increase in scores in the EQ-i test. With the managers’ perceived improvement in emotional intelligence qualities, they realised the significance of integrity, awareness, presence, consciousness as leadership qualities. The difference between a manager and a true leader is the presence of the person (Cacioppe 2000; Fry 2003; Senge et al. 2004; Wilber 1997). Cacioppe talks about ‘leadership wisdom’ and spirituality, the leader who lets go of self-interest and ego, and is able to respond to the needs of the team and the organisation, to be aware of spirit at work. Wilber (1997) uses the terms awareness and consciousness and integrity to articulate the personal experience of spirituality at work. Senge, like Lipman-Blumen, is among the many management consultants who assert that the leader’s ”style” is not so much about the external skills demonstrated but more about internal genuineness, and empathic relationships with others. Andrew, the general manager of Company U had the rhetoric but had not yet developed the personal reality, and was perceived as two dimensional and ineffective.

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

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

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

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

This demonstrated success in the coaching process is in essence a "solution" to the problem that Yiannis Gabriel (1998) was talking about in his study on the emotional life of organisations. He said that the dangers of not building empathic relationships led to bureaucratic impersonality, and in that bureaucratic "empty space", the best that can happen is blaming, victimisation and scapegoating. Learning, said Gabriel is not merely gradual enlightenment “but a frequently painful process of ‘unlearning’ past defensive and dysfunctional postures…” (Gabriel 1998:309). I noted in Chapter 2 that in my view, the capacity for in-depth relating, i.e., undefended and loving relating, is what distinguishes a leadership coach from a task oriented behaviour change coach. While this comment applies to my own relating with my participants,
it is that parallel process of their relating with their teams.

d. Feedback and empathy in the coaching relationship

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

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

When the participants reported on the benefits of the coaching relationship, they spoke warmly about the trust, empathy and openness they experienced with me, and they spoke about the caring relationship. A common element was the connection between the genuine relationship and the ability to receive "tough" feedback. As an example, Eric (Company U), who had at first resisted the coaching program, came to acknowledge that he particularly valued my deeper feedback because it was concrete and situational. He reported that by Session 9, he had begun to be more proactive in his job and to relate to the other managers in the Adult, rather than as an anti-authoritarian adolescent, as a result of my feedback. Bruce commented on the "frank" talk and the positive mode of feedback. Harry described my feedback as tough, saying "with you, it's not hurtful".

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

My decision to engage with two different companies for my research was in response to this accepted knowledge, so that I could compare and contrast what was happening not only with each individual, but within each of the organisations. My contract with each company was to facilitate the improvement of the organisation through coaching their executives. Another executive coach, Goldberg (2005), observed that as an executive coach interested in building corporate change rather than in one-to-one coaching, he overcame his own initial resistance to executive coaching. As was seen in Chapter 4, the feedback from the clients was clearly indicative that coaching had improved the relationships among the teams, and with improved relationships, the workplace lifted its game, and work progressed better. For example, we saw how Bruce from Company U talked about how coaching had helped him with his interpersonal skills and as a result, he and his team handled a major engineering problem (that had a risk factor of hundreds of thousands of dollars) exceptionally
well and his confidence lifted. He was very happy that the new way he managed the team worked so well.

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

h. Re-uniting the personal and professional
What was exciting for the clients, and yet what is not evident in most of the coaching literature, was the connection I made as coach between managing a work team in the organisation and, with their spouse, managing the family on the domestic front. One exception was Orenstein (2002) who linked the outcome of changed behaviour (through coaching) to change in the whole person, shaped by their past, their personal lives and their work environments. I urged all clients to practise giving positive feedback and Adult-to-Adult communication with their children as well as with their colleagues. For example, at Company U, Bruce talked about how he had made more explicit to his children how much he loved them, and how that helped him to communicate with more care and interest and encouragement with his team. As well, I was able to engage in a sense of professional intimacy that the participants had rarely experienced before. The participants were able to talk about love in the organisational context, to understand how to show empathy. I also suggested that they talk to their partners about the coaching, and realised that by getting the clients to talk to their partners, they became more committed to their personal growth. They become more integrated and able to see the organisation through a heightened state of consciousness, without separating their sense of self-at-work from self-at-home. In a sense, their partners became co-coaches.

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

With this everyday example, the managers identified with what it was like to take orders from someone who does not do the relationship building and who is authoritarian. They came back reporting how they did a lot more “A” and what remarkable changes occurred in their workplace when they took an active personal interest in others. The outcomes of their practising this behaviour provided positive reinforcement. Within days, they reported having more fun, an improvement of morale and discovering new information affecting all business decisions, just as a result of having taken the time. Moreover, they loved to do it at home as well. Lyn from Company R reported that she felt much happier as a result of using the A-B-C and learning how to give feedback, and her husband told her that since coaching she didn’t dwell on negative things like she used to. Also in Company R, Nathan had noticed he had a very different style of conversation with other managers. For example, he spoke to Mike and discovered he was a good businessman and very supportive of Nathan. He said: “Before, I didn’t know how to function in relationships. I am now talking more.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

### 7.3 Reflections on the individual case studies: Brian’s and Penny’s stories

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

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

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

Some form of dialogic or discourse analysis of the conversations between coach and client was nevertheless essential to the methodological framework of this thesis, as I explained in Chapter 3. By interrogating the data from the transcripts, I was able to gain further insight at the micro level into the specific interactions through words, phrases, tone, silence, questions and so on. At the macro level, I was able to see patterns emerging where clients gained awareness, insight, consciousness, where they responded to metaphor, where they reported on their wins at work and in their family relationships.
### TABLE 7.1
Example of Data analysis for Case Study #1: Brian

*C = client; EC = executive coach*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tape #</th>
<th>Name (C or EC)</th>
<th>Transcript</th>
<th>Executive Coach Strategy/ client response¹</th>
<th>Preliminary classification and coding for EC and C By developing skill sets²</th>
<th>Interpretation of EC or C contribution:³</th>
<th>Voice, nonverbal cues, quality of sound in voice (feeling/love/music etc cues from listening to tapes)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BR1</td>
<td>EC</td>
<td>The reason I’m exploring this with you is I thinking I wonder…I want to get an appraisal apart from your analysis of it because I might agree with you but I just wanted to know if there was another way of looking at it, and secondly it may be that I can help you work out a way to open up that.[concern about team members apparently refusing to change]</td>
<td>Re-framing the question</td>
<td>Point of power</td>
<td>Feedback plus invitation to explore an issue that obviously troubles the client, even though he speaks to the problem as their problem, not his. Opens a chance to explore what is behind the client’s feelings</td>
<td>Warm, open statement inviting confidence rather than closing off the topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EC</td>
<td>If there were just a couple of things you could change that would make life a whole lot better for you here, satisfying, pleasing….</td>
<td>Open questions</td>
<td>empathy</td>
<td>Accepting of the mostly happy situation, acknowledging there seem to be a couple of problems, but opening up invitation to elaborate.</td>
<td>Encouraging, upbeat voice, almost teasing,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ Metastatement, metaphor, encouragement, challenge, reflecting back, humour, self-disclosure parent/child/adult, ego-defences, narrative history, values clarification,
² healthy self, ABC of communication, empathy, point of power, new patterns, feedback, power
³ evidence of change through empathy, genuineness, presence, insight, clearing roadblocks etc
### TABLE 7.1
Example of Data analysis for Case Study #1: Brian

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tape #</th>
<th>Name (C or EC)</th>
<th>Transcript</th>
<th>Executive Coach Strategy/ client response ¹</th>
<th>Preliminary classification and coding for EC and C by developing skill sets ²</th>
<th>Interpretation of EC or C contribution: ³</th>
<th>Voice, nonverbal cues, quality of sound in voice (feeling/love/music etc cues from listening to tapes)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Yeah I'm pretty happy, I feel my position in life is pretty good… I'd like to shoot for a higher level of maturity across the whole [company]… probably attract some great stronger leadership around to place…</td>
<td>More open response than earlier in the session, admitting frustration to some degree</td>
<td>Providing feedback to an open question allows client to be clearer on points</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>Lots of people don’t realize they’re not grown up, that they’re actually kids… they don’t function as competent responsible adults… we’d have to work out what we’d do [to promote] adult behaviour.</td>
<td>Affirmation of client’s concern Child/adult reference</td>
<td>Conversation speeding up as session draws to a close and there seems to be an important point of contact in developing the coach-client relationship for the next meeting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sincere, focussed, strong voice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BW2 EC</td>
<td>What I wanted to pick up with you first Bob on the first session</td>
<td>Meta-statement</td>
<td>Introductory statement to display genuine interest, re-focussing the client to recall and re-connect</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Warmth in voice; upbeat, inviting trust</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ Metastatement, metaphor, encouragement, challenge, reflecting back, humour, self-disclosure parent/child/adult, ego-defences, narrative history, values clarification, ² healthy self, ABC of communication, empathy, point of power, new patterns, feedback, power ³ evidence of change through empathy, genuineness, presence, insight, clearing roadblocks etc
TABLE 7.1
Example of Data analysis for Case Study #1: Brian

C = client; EC= executive coach

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tape #</th>
<th>Name (C or EC)</th>
<th>Transcript</th>
<th>Executive Coach Strategy/ client response</th>
<th>Preliminary classification and coding for EC and C By developing skill sets</th>
<th>Interpretation of EC or C contribution:</th>
<th>Voice, nonverbal cues, quality of sound in voice (feeling/love/music etc cues from listening to tapes)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>how was that for you, what was good, what works, what ideas were you thinking about, were there any questions you wanted to ask</td>
<td>Encouragement</td>
<td>Introductory invitation for client to construct own understanding of the previous session, inviting ownership, and indicating the coach's genuine interest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>Oh I guess the schedule is pretty early. A lot of things I mentioned to you I have mentioned to a lot of other forums at the moment but it's probably more a case of a bit of a dump. I guess the thing I hadn't done before that I did with yourself was minor personal things from my past workplaces</td>
<td>Defensiveness</td>
<td>Client reluctance to acknowledge that the first session was any different from any other forum. Then, after the coach invites further comment (mmm), he goes on to say, thus entering into the first 'insight' that a relationship was beginning to form.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Voice business-like and detached, avoiding direct engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BW2 EC</td>
<td>And what did you take away from that conversation then?</td>
<td>Open question: encouragement presence</td>
<td>Gentle indication of empathic interaction,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Soft, warm, maintain eye contact</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

1. Metastatement, metaphor, encouragement, challenge, reflecting back, humour, self-disclosure parent/child/adult, ego-defences, narrative history, values clarification,
2. healthy self, ABC of communication, empathy, point of power, new patterns, feedback, power
3. evidence of change through empathy, genuineness, presence, insight, clearing roadblocks etc
### Table 7.1

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

*C = client; EC= executive coach*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tape #</th>
<th>Name (C or EC)</th>
<th>Transcript</th>
<th>Executive Coach Strategy/ client response</th>
<th>Preliminary classification and coding for EC and C By developing skill sets</th>
<th>Interpretation of EC or C contribution.</th>
<th>Voice, nonverbal cues, quality of sound in voice (feeling/love/music etc) cues from listening to tapes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td><em>I hadn’t actually set out for probably ten years in some of those cases and talked about that but it dragged up a few memories of the past, I guess, and put … a bit more perspective I guess.</em></td>
<td>Gaining perspective through reflecting back</td>
<td></td>
<td>Words such as 'dragged up', an 'perspective' used to denote reformulation of problems in the light of past experience that may not have positive connotations, or that may lead to new insights into present situation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>EC</td>
<td><em>...we were able to understand... why it didn’t work out</em></td>
<td>Summarising what was said by the client, with empathy</td>
<td>Feedback with advanced empathic response</td>
<td>Client feels understood and can continue freely. This elevates the coach's authority</td>
<td>Tentative, an element of openness in the tone to enable client to refine and name more accurately their experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BR1</td>
<td>EC</td>
<td><em>OK. So do you really want…?....personally, what would it be like for…?</em></td>
<td>Open question</td>
<td>Point of power</td>
<td>Challenges client to think from a personal view, moving away from the specific organisational context</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

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

The early sessions: building rapport
The first coaching session functions as both an assessment session as well as building rapport between the coach and the client. In this first session, the coach asks a series of specific questions which provide the parameters of the role of the client in their organisation. As the client tells their story of their work and the work of the company, the coach checks, clarifies and empathises as the main points of the story are revealed, thus building the relationship. The coach is asking the client: “Help me to understand your role”, and through the empathic and clarifying dialogue, the coach is conveying a message: “I’m genuinely and actively interested in you and your story. You matter so much I want to make sure I’ve got it right.” It is this first coaching session in which it is essential to establish a positive, in-depth relationship with the client so that they feel known and valued, and have a high level of respect and confidence in me (and see Barrett 2004; Goldberg 2005; Grayson & Larson 2000; Jay 2003).

I approached my introductory sessions with Brian and Penny differently, and I learned that by having a different approach, the outcomes were very distinct. Because I had known Penny before the coaching, I had assumed a higher level of rapport, and anticipated on her part a higher level of assurance and confidence in the process than in fact occurred. In addition, since I already had some idea of her successful
working experience before she took on the role at Company R, it took a while to discover the degree to which she felt overwhelmed by her current position with Company R. On the other hand, with Brian, I followed my usual pattern of building the client-coach relationship from scratch by engaging in a strategy that was a thorough reflection on his role, and a systematic work values clarification, which became the basis for goal setting (Bell 2000; Kilburg 1996; Lipman-Blumen 1996; Sinclair 1998).

I asked Brian to reflect on three work situations, including his current role, identifying the most satisfying aspects and least satisfying. Through this exercise I was able to see clearly the content of Brian’s stories about his work, his strengths, his areas for development, and therefore the bases of his goals. I heard what mattered to Brian.

With Brian I read the wind and the water carefully so when I pushed off our dinghy was set on a steady course. With Penny I made assumptions and the dinghy kept nudging back to the starting point until at last I read the wind and water properly – then we pushed off successfully.

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

My focus on “joining” with the client is akin to the realisation in psychotherapy that genuine “joining”, or the “therapeutic alliance” between therapist and client is far more influential in bringing about positive behaviour change than behaviour therapists traditionally predicted, believing that it was the model rather than the relationship that had more influence (Lejuez et al. 2006:456; Miller et al. 1997)

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

Tobias’ approach resonates well with the approach I take in the first session of my coaching protocol, as evidenced by the feedback I invited two weeks later from the two executives, Penny said:
Penny: I came in feeling quite flat and I left feeling very motivated and inspired. And I felt that way for about two days afterwards…It was a lovely session, and I felt much more focussed actually. I felt I had focus, direction and understanding of the difficulties that I’m going through. So I thank you for that.

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

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

Brian: … A lot of things I mentioned to you I have mentioned to a lot of other forums at the moment but it’s probably more a case of a bit of a dump.
Cecily: Mm.
Brian: I guess the thing I hadn’t done before that I did with yourself was talk about personal things from my past workplaces …
Cecily: And how did you find it?
Brian: You are very good, actually. I’ve been thinking about more that part of it than the other things I talked to you about with regards specifically to this company.

He then added:

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

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

The key to empathy is language, language that connects with a person and opens up their awareness and insight. The psychotherapeutic training and experience gives the coach the skill to know what to do with that awareness- to facilitate even greater change and enhanced relationships. Three authors who have recently looked at the competencies of executive coaches all stress that in depth coaching requires the knowledge and counselling skills of psychologists (Brotman et al. 1998; Wasylyshyn 2001; Winum 2003). Brotman et al. (1998:40) have called for a more complete understanding of what is required in executive coaching, claiming that “psychologists are uniquely qualified to define what is required to be an executive coach when sustained behavior change is the desired outcome”. Karol Wasylyshyn, who is president of a management consulting firm in the USA, Leadership Development, is
also a clinical psychologist, and has written extensively on the role of psychology in business contexts, claiming that psychologists who understand business are “distinctively equipped as executive coaches” (Wasylyshyn 2001:106), a sentiment that is endorsed by Paul Winum, who has called for further research into this area (Winum 2003:45).

My own approach also resonates with Margot Cairnes’ work on the “heart and soul” of corporations, where she argues that, contrary to the popular perception that corporations are heartless, bureaucratic and impersonal entities, it is imperative for leaders to tune into the psychological aspects of the corporation, to the need for self-awareness, and to tackle the massive changes in the present-day world of work with the ability and confidence to think, and feel, differently. Kilburg (1996) also addresses his work on executive coaching from a psychological perspective, and emphasises the importance of deep reflection. Kilburg’s description of triple-loop learning, or reflection on reflection on learning (Kilburg 1996:76) in some ways mirrors my own meditative practice, and my invitation to clients to be critically reflective. While the work of Miller et al (1997) is about counselling psychology, their emphasis on “what works” in the therapist-client relationship has been especially useful to my own work.

One of the findings of this research is therefore the extent to which I used my training in several fields, and the significance of being able to draw on psychological insight when I look at the dialogue with Brian and Penny. My rainbow helix metaphor works at the micro-level of conversation as well as in the larger picture. When Penny let me know she thought her staff were so beleaguered and fragile that any changes introduced tended to be taken personally and overwhelmed them, in effect she was also talking about her own feelings. I focussed on key words she was using, so that I could in turn give her feedback in language she connected with.

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

When asking the client to tell their story, I look for patterns – patterns in experience, in their approach to people and situations, language, their key words, how they communicate and how they exercise power and leadership in an organisation. One purpose of my attending to key words is that each of us has a unique language that
marks us, and this was one of the insights that Milton Erickson used to such advantage in his therapeutic work (Barker 1988:26). If as the coach, I clue into the unique language of the client, and am able to utilise some of those words as I respond and provide feedback, I will have the greatest empathic connection and thus engage them. This is what happened with both Brian and Penny. They may be conscious or unconscious about why they feel good. I also look for cues as to how they tackle problem solving, so that in turn I can utilise their own problem-solving strategy in relation to their own concerns, so that it will be the most comfortable fit for them. For example with Penny, my reflection about how she had collaborated with her former business partner and found solutions to business problems gave me clarity about how best to coach her. These insights, especially my making the link that she needed to replicate the elements associated with her previous business success, were a turning point in our relationship.

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

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

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

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

_Gaining trust and credibility_

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

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

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

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

Penny: ...And it’s been like working for two companies [Company R and Bluehills].
Cecily: It really has.
Penny: It’s like being involved in two organisations at once.
Cecily: Definitely. So it’s amazing you were able to integrate it, and actually not be falling between two horses.
Penny: Yeah. Absolutely, yeah. And I think that my skills are integrated and have got so much better this year because I’ve practised. It’s just about having the opportunity to do it and overcoming my fear that I’ll fail, fall on my face, get sacked - all those irrational things, none of which of course happened, and I feel like I’ve made it.

In Penny’s Case Study I discussed how she could express her fears to me because she felt safe in her coaching relationship with me. She acknowledged her vulnerability and fear and overcame it. It was through our relationship that she felt connected and valued and powerful. Leadership is both the inter-being of the relationship and the outcome of relationship, and I was modelling this. As Senge et al. (2004) point out, the concept of conscious leadership is not the leader’s external “style” or strategies adopted, but the inner presence, the genuineness, empathy and positive regard of the leader in their relationships with others.

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

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

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

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

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

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

This worked at two levels like a parallel process. It was giving him a hypnotic message about how he could himself give a hypnotic message (Godin & Oughourlian 1994). It was also an empathic summary that he had personally taken on board my feedback to him - that he, Brian, had a lot of potential. My empathic response to Brian brought to mind James Hillman’s work on a theory of calling (1996), which he summarised as his “acorn” theory, whereby each person has within them a unique core, a “nutshell” that is our sense of fate, individuality, genius, potential. Hillman believed we need to
re-imagine ourselves, to gain insight into our calling, and to discover the acorn through
the “how” of a visible performance. In several ways I was doing this with Brian. There
were three main ways. Within the first two sessions, I asked Brian to reflect on the
three most satisfying and three least satisfying aspects of his current role and two
previous roles. This was to understand his current role and to hear spontaneously
goals for change, but also to identify his innate pattern of dealing with the world,
what Hillman would call his “acorn”. A second way was to listen to his stories, for
example he had a tendency to “grab the ball and run ahead” and forget to have
alliances with other team players to achieve real successful outcomes. A third way
was to get him to imagine how he saw himself personally and professionally in five or
ten years’ time. Taken together, and with numerous other conversations over six
months, I fed back to Brian the acorn I was seeing. This message seemed to have
registered for him. I became confident that of the 12 executives I was seeing, he was
one with high-level management potential and could go all the way to be a CEO.

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

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

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

Cecily: The main thing to know with the feedback is that you have such a strong desire
to be a better person.
Brian: Yeah and I want to know that so I can, so I can be better. And the more I’m
challenged with honest, sort of, credible feedback on where I can improve. I mean I
really want it.
Cecily: It’s also — earlier you were referring to my credibility and so on. Part of I what
I want to know is, you can take this feedback if you have a level of respect and confidence
and trust in me — in what I’m saying.
Brian: Yeah. No question about it. There’s some people whose feedback you don’t
treat with the same level of seriousness as from others.

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

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

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

At the first group session, when I introduced the “good leader” exercise, I set the tone of the leadership coaching program by asking the managers to think of real people whom they actually experienced as good leaders. The group reflected on their own actual experience and that of people they knew. When the managers heard others identifying with other responses in the room they saw the discussion as personal, and therefore became more open. They found the exercise interesting and compelling, making them think critically about themselves and what kind of leader they were. The thoughtful dialogic process the groups engaged in is reminiscent of the Freirian approach to critical thinking discussed earlier. The managers were therefore prepared to compare the extent to which they had the qualities identified. The exercise also established my authority and formed an initial basis for building a constructive relationship with them. Paul Winum, a managing director of a management psychology firm, has researched what is distinctive about what psychologists have to offer in leadership development, and emphasises the
psychologist’s expertise in the core elements that underlie leadership behaviour and development. Together with other expertise, including behaviour change methodologies and assessment skills, they are in a unique position to work with executives. (Winum 2003). I would go much further than Winum, though, in discussing relationship building in terms of trust, empathy, insight and consciousness.

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

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

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

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

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

I was struck with how difficult it was for even very good managers like Penny to give
feedback and exercise leadership with their superiors. In one sense, by definition,
giving challenging feedback implies that the recipient’s behaviour is in some way
inadequate. The conundrum is that without the ability to receive challenging feedback,
we are less open to the need for change (Hammer 2000). A healthy adult is able to
receive positive feedback and revel in it, and receive challenging feedback without
ever being belittled. Kay Hammer asserts that many people are unwilling to give
tough feedback because they are afraid they will be seen to be judging their
employees. She says:

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

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

**Brainstorming and rehearsing: dealing with difficult situations**

Over and above the practical outcomes of the 12-session program, with the models
that were taught and rehearsed during the group sessions and the individual sessions,
some other outcomes emerged as significant. The Parent-Adult-Child model, the A-
B-C of communication, the feedback exercises, the ”hit the pause button” concept –
all these emerged as far more influential in embedding new behaviours than I had
anticipated. When re-reading the transcripts and the case notes, it became clear
that these models had provided a language with which the managers could recall
and relate events where they had either used the models or forgotten and were able to say explicitly how they would have acted differently. By identifying with their own experience and transforming their images of themselves through these exercises I was operating in a Freirian mode (Freire 1972) and it gave powerful messages. Paulo Freire, the Brazilian educator known for his work in literacy and conscientisation, believed that if people could see their “reality” by developing a language with which to voice their issues and concerns, they would be able to change their circumstances. Freire claimed that until people who were struggling in their lives were able to engage in critical reflection and subsequent action, they would not be able to move forward from their position of oppression or subordination to implement new ways of thinking and acting that would transform their lives and empower them. While I am not suggesting that my clients were in positions of subordination, they were, in another sense, imprisoned by their old ego defences and learned habits – which could only be replaced with new behaviours through a process of gaining self-awareness, consciousness.

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

What emerged that was unexpectedly valuable was my strategy of sharing stories and metaphors as part of the brainstorming and rehearsing, or as a way of seeking solutions to a difficult issue through non-threatening examples. From these stories they would pick up ideas and take them further, extrapolating and developing how they would apply them. The excitement of being able to think creatively with someone who understood the organisation and the power dynamics came through strongly. Then we could rehearse ways that they could put these ideas in a way that would work. This was particularly effective in Penny’s case, when I had to think creatively, and take Penny along with me, to brainstorm and rehearse ways in which to do leadership development in a crisis situation where everyone in the company was fearful.

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

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

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

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

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

What I was drawing on here was my training and experience in education. To learn a new behaviour, for example, to drive a car, we need cognitively to understand the idea of what is involved, and we need to learn the road rules. Second, we need hours and hours of supervised physical practice. Third, emotionally, we need a positive “can do” attitude (Seligman 2000). Seligman uses self-determination theory to explain the “can do”, by saying that when the three related human needs, the need for competence, the need for belongingness, and the need for autonomy are satisfied, people are intrinsically motivated, able to fulfil their potentialities, and able to seek out progressively greater challenges (Seligman 2000:10). Brian had the cognitive knowledge, he had a lot of management practice but he had had a “can’t do” attitude on this aspect of management and leadership. To facilitate the therapeutic change, that is, clear an old negative mindset, there needed to be a high level of trust between client and coach, and confidence in my professional competence. Through our conversations, Brian, like Penny, was able to make that change, and from re-reading the transcripts, I have found that it was my counselling psychology training that was at the forefront here, and my use of simple hypnotic processes (Rosen 1994).

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

Metaphor

Equally revealing, or even more so, was the impact of metaphor on building conscious leadership. In addition to the understanding of metaphor as synthesising our understanding and creativity with a deep level of meaning, it emerged that all the stories of other anonymous clients functioned as metaphors as they appealed to the imagination and resonated in a holistic way with the emotions and the cognitive intelligence, in a way very similar to metaphor. I was always aware of the power of
hypnotic suggestion. Metaphor works at a hypnotic level (B. Erickson 1994; Godin & Oughourlian 1994). Just as all parenting and educational programs use some kind of hypnotic suggestion with trust and love, verbal suggestions will resonate and register at a deeper level of meaning (Richard 2003; Stein 2003). Richard’s work stems from his interest in using creative problem solving to encourage deeper thinking and, interestingly, he suggests metaphor as a way of bringing up significant personal experiences through analogous stories in order to elicit creative choices to find solutions. Stein’s interesting approach is to deepen meaning through the use of art, music, poetry and literary examples to explore and experience the personal, inner world through imagination.

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

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

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

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

Metaphor allows the conversation to open the door of imagination and to explore a topic and discover a new way of dealing with it. Consultants and researchers need to cultivate the imagination to connect creatively with the executive to bring about greater breadth and depth in the professional and personal relationship (Stein 2003). Executive coaches need to be more creative communicators, using stories and metaphors as key dialogic strategies to engage, empathise and challenge.
Ethical dilemmas, decision making, integrity and values

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

The group session on ethics, and subsequent follow up in the individual sessions, meant that group members were learning from their experience, way beyond what I had anticipated in this particular context. It made the group see that there were dozens of valid moral positions and that a good leader needed to find a way through the differences. One of the lessons learned from this situation was that it was important for me to adapt my program immediately to respond to a management dilemma they were stuck on and this elevated my authority. It modelled that they too needed to be flexible and adaptive and pragmatic. It also made them aware that I had a theology degree with an ethics major and had been a university chaplain prior to retraining as a psychologist twenty years ago. Many of them raised spiritual issues after this. This may not have happened if I had been identified as a religious person. Both Fry (2003) and Wilber (1997) differentiate religion from spirituality. Similarly for Hillman (1996), Rogers (1969), and other writers across the spectrum of the disciplines from psychotherapy to theology, and from education to human relations, the indicators of
consciousness are spirituality, empathy, integrity, presence, unconditional positive regard. These are the indicators of a deep awareness of self and other, of mindfulness in the coaching relationship.

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

When I reflect on this, a number of possible variables contributed to that response. One was that they were encouraged to take their partner on a date to a movie; they were encouraged to have a quality conversation with their partners about the movie. Secondly, the content of the movie was personally confronting. The age of the characters was the about the same as most of my clients. Some of the key characters also had school-age children and all the characters were ordinary good people who made mistakes. Therefore another variable was that the quality of the conversations with their partners was deeply personal, and with their A-B-C skills they both listened and were heard. There seems to have been, as a result of the enriched intimacy, a benefit I could not have anticipated. Feeling good at home spins off into feeling good at work too. It was a consistent, subtle outcome. Further research needs to be done about the connections at home and work. If the primary relationship connection and intimacy is working at home and they feel heard and understood, then all dimensions of their lives work better.

*Working with psychological patterns: “Old Me, New Me”*

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

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

I have no doubt that my professional competence and confidence enabled me to identify succinctly the unhelpful pattern and efficiently progress to clearing that and embedding a more helpful pattern over a couple of sessions. I was satisfied from the feedback from the managers that this process was both liberating for them and also enhanced our coaching relationship and their confidence in me. They knew I am a psychologist who had specialised in anxiety conditions, but we also had enough “wins” already by the time we reached this activity for them to trust me and give me authority to work with them.

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

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

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

In summary, it appears that a complex set of behavioural changes and learnings occurred for the two case study clients, through the discourse, through the rapport built, through increased trust, through exemplifying leadership during the coaching process, by building on the concept of the “healthy self” (see Appendix A), and through a series of language events that enhanced deep change. When the clients were able to identify and behave in the “New Me” mode, and the feedback from the client illustrated important results in the workplace, it became evident that the coaching program had been instrumental in achieving all the levels of evaluating successful training programs identified by Kirkpatrick in his now classic training evaluation model (Kirkpatrick 1994). Kirkpatrick’s 4 levels are (a) reaction, or how well participants react to the program; (b) learning, or the extent to which participants change their attitudes, improve knowledge and increase skills; (c) behaviour transfer, the extent to which behaviour changes occur to achieve positive outcomes; and (d) results, the final outcomes, such as increased productivity, improved quality, reduced turnover and so on. While this thesis did not aim to undertake a formal evaluation in this mode, it may be a useful tool for further research.
7.4 Recommendations for future research

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

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

Such further research can also contribute to reaching a better understanding of the training and development needs of coaches in relation to their potential to enhance the communicative event. Further research is needed to discover the extent to which executive coaches need to have a background as a psychologist, whether such a professional background should be a prerequisite, and how executive coaches can be trained to develop the required level of awareness, insight, integrity and consciousness. This applies to both experienced and novice coaches (i.e. those from other fields of expertise who are setting out to be executive coaches). Micro-analytic research provides another means to demonstrate how the coach who is present and with advanced emotional intelligence uses language.

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

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

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

7.5 Towards conscious leadership through executive coaching

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

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

From the preceding sections, and also from earlier chapters, it is evident that a number of qualities characterise the coaching relationship between the executive leader and the coach, and they are all holistic in nature. The qualities include the development of mindfulness, an essential building block to insight. They all provide insight into insight, in other words, insight into awareness, integration, and consciousness. I have concluded that, in practice, there cannot be a clear distinction between what David Day (Day 2001) has highlighted as the difference between leader development (intrapersonal competence; i.e. human capital) and leadership development (interpersonal competence in the development of networked relationships; i.e. social capital). Similarly, the debates in the literature between what is emotional intelligence and what is social intelligence, or even cultural intelligence in relation to the workplace, appear to be somewhat spurious, avoiding the holistic nature of being and leadership.

Leadership includes an integration of both the intrapersonal and the interpersonal. Conscious leadership is thus a state of being. Each person has a unique core - a genius - which James Hillman called the “acorn” in The Soul’s Code (Hillman 1996). The soul (as articulated by Hillman) is an undefended state of being, a state of Love, that in Louis Fry’s thesis is altruistic love. In this state, all ego-defensive fear is gone and profound healing and knowing occurs. This is transformational. Executive coaching for conscious leadership is, in these terms, an active dialogue of exploration into finding that unique core, the integrated, connected, “present” self.

Self-knowing and other-knowing
The combination of personal and social awarenesses and skills brings about self-knowing (insight into self) and other-knowing (insight into others), akin to the Buddhist practice of vipassana meditation, which is translated from the ancient Pali as insight. In the coaching relationship, management goals provided a vehicle for building the relationship. Business skills, organisational knowledge and corporate understanding are important for managers, and needed to be fully developed as a first step. The practical business goals were achieved as the managers confirmed through their
self-reporting of the benefits of coaching and gave us a vehicle and a context (i.e. our relationship) for the development of conscious leadership. By focussing on developing conscious leadership through the coaching relationship, I could utilise these leadership qualities as parts of a larger picture. In this way I went beyond the limitations of the trait view of leadership development, because the movement of all the parts in a reassociated, integrated person became a whole which was greater than the sum of the parts. I could coach the skill sets that were congruent with the components of emotional intelligence scales, for example, working with the manager on their practical communication skills for staff reviews while developing empathic feedback, or on problem-solving while developing insight. Everyone needed new practical interpersonal behaviours so that they could respond instead of react with the old defences. The synergy of the new skills and behaviours and the insight was transformational.

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

Mindfulness occurs once one is aware of being aware. Mindfulness is giving our full attention to whatever we are doing at the time of doing it. When I am peeling potatoes mindfully, then I am experiencing the sensation of holding the potato and the knife and I am thinking about the potato and the peeling experience and the meal I am preparing. When I think about my son’s homework or my boss’s pressure then I become mindless and cut myself. Mindfulness is therefore being fully in the present, the capacity to “be in the moment”, letting go of other thoughts and preconceptions. Mindfulness can be cultivated through practice, and the conscious leader is a mindful leader aware, self actualised and intentional (Brown & Ryan 2003:832). As Ron Cacioppe has explained: “Find quality in the moment, do not get caught up in the imagined goal of some imagined future. Recognise there is no other time than now, no other place than here! Here and now is the only place quality can be experienced” (Cacioppe 1997:343).

Mindfulness is a stepping-stone to insight, and to building empathic relationship. Once experienced, it becomes part of consciousness. The whole concept of mindfulness relates to integration of the self, in consciousness (Fry 2003; Hillman 1996; Wilber
The practice of mindful awareness is the foundation of all Buddhist understanding of the interconnectedness of all phenomena. When we re-unite the self with the self, we become present, grounded and powerful.

To build relationship, one needs to be empathic. To be empathic, one needs to stand in the shoes of another person and imagine how they may feel, and share that idea and check out the accuracy of it (feedback). But to even stand in another person’s shoes and imagine they may be feeling worried, excited etc in this situation, requires that I have experienced it and have awareness from my own experience. The growth of empathy and insight go hand in hand. Insight is particularly enhanced by feedback, which is not only verbal but sensory and emotional. Once a person has grasped the value of reflection, and has learned to reflect, to examine their experience and learn from it, they have developed a feedback loop which will enhance their insight and awareness, and they are engaging in transformational learning. Without empathy, there cannot be full presence. Empathy and insight bring awareness, which is part of consciousness. Empathy and insight unite one person with the other; insight forms the bridge of inter-being between people, the trust and the acknowledgement of shared knowing that deepens our knowing of one another and of ourselves. Empathy and insight are both process and state, doing and being; they are fundamental parts of the integrated powerfully present person.

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

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

The participants were able to be receptive to feedback, because they respected the coach and they experienced respect from the coach from the first session. Initially, they all said, they respected my credibility because of my qualifications and experience, but in a short time, they personally experienced the trustworthiness of the coach, which in turn enabled them to take the risk of being vulnerable with their own stories. All the way through they used language like “I felt supported”, “I felt valued, cared for”. The language reflected that sense of being well known, of my recognising their potential, their “acorn” (Hillman 1996). Time after time the managers said they felt personally supported and trusted – “you were on my team”. And “it’s very rare in life you have a forum without a judgment or criticism – in the bunker with someone who understands people.” It was an opportunity for candour, to be genuine, no holds barred.

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

Cecily: Your role is to engage in a conversation so that they settle down enough to think clearly about it themselves. That’s the big help.
Brian: And I think that it’s about a safe environment. I think that a lot.

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

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

Responsibility – the ability to respond rather than react

Attending is “present” and responding is the key to “responsibility”. This was a new idea for many, and initially only a few were able to articulate it. But they all recognised that the leaders that they had known and admired were professional – calm and
unfazed; they had a capacity to deal with difficult situations with equanimity. They remain present, and aware, and able to respond in the most intelligent, compassionate way. Whereas with others in the workplace most of the managers had encountered reactivity and ego defences, with me they experienced non-judgmental attending and responding.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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


Argyris, C 1964, Integrating the individual and the organization, Wiley, New York.


Bell, C R 2000, Mentoring as partnership, in M Goldsmith, L Lyons & A Freas (eds.), Coaching for leadership, Jossey-Bass/ Pfeiffer, San Francisco.


Brown, K & Ryan, R 2003, 'The benefits of being present: mindfulness and its role in psychological well-being', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, vol. 84, no.4, pp.822-845


Csikszentmihalyi, M 1999, 'If we are so rich why aren't we happy', *American Psychologist*, vol.54, no.10, October, pp.821-827.


Daly, M 1973, *Beyond God the Father, Toward a Philosophy of Women's Liberation*, Beacon Press, Boston, MA.


Dierendonck, D van, Haynes, C, Borrill, C & Stride, C 2004, 'Leadership behavior and subordinate well-being', *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, vol. 9, no. 2, pp.165-175


Farr, James (Accessed 07.02.07)  
Http://www.farr.net/thefarrdifference/afocusonconsciousleadership.html


Gibb, B 2003, 'Myths, legends, and lore and cultural evolution', *Organizational Development Journal*, vol. 21, no.3, pp. 103-110.


Hubble, M, Duncan, B & Miller, S 1999, The heart and soul of change: what works in therapy, American Psychological Association, Washington, DC.


Kornfield, J 2000, After the ecstasy, the laundry: how the heart grows wise on the spiritual path, Rider, London.


Kurtz, R. 1990, Body centered psychotherapy, LifeRhythm, Mendocino, CA.


Locke, E A 2005, 'Why emotional intelligence is an invalid concept', *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 26, 4, 425-431

Loup, R & Koller, R 2005, 'The road to commitment: capturing the head, hearts and hands of people to effect change', *Organization Development Journal*, vol.23, no. 3, pp. 73-81.


Mant, A 1997, Intelligent leadership, Allen and Unwin, Crows Nest, NSW.


Maslow, A 1962, Toward a psychology of being, Van Nostrand, Princeton, N.J.


Merriam, S 1998, Qualitative research and case study applications in education, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.


Miles, M & Huberman, A M 1994, Qualitative data analysis: an expanded sourcebook, 2nd edn, Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA.


Mussig, D 2003, 'A research and skills training framework for values-driven leadership', *Journal of European Industrial Training*, vol.27, nos.2/4, pp. 73-79.


Perls, F 1969, Gestalt therapy verbatim. Real People Press, Lafayette, CA


Pollard, C W 1996, The soul of the firm, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI.


Schein, E H 2000, 'Coaching and consultation: are they the same?' in M Goldsmith, L Lyons & A Freas (eds.), Coaching for leadership, Jossey-Bass/ Pfeiffer, San Francisco.


Scott, T & Harker, P 1998, Humanity at work, Phil Harker & Assoc., Luscombe, Qld.

Scott, T & Harker, P 2002, The myth of nine to five, Richmond Ventures, North Sydney, NSW.


Wilber, K 2000b, *Integral psychology: consciousness, spirit, psychology, therapy*, Shambhala, Boston, MA.

Williams, P 2005, Coaching your kids to be leaders, Warner Faith, New York.
Winum, P C  2003, 'Developing leadership what is distinctive about what psychologists can offer', Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research, vol. 55, no.1, pp. 41-46


Zeus, P & Skiffington, S  2000, The complete guide to coaching at work, McGraw-Hill, Sydney,


THE POSITIVE CYCLE: LIVING IN LOVE
The HEALTHY PERSON has good life skills sets and > strong identity and self-esteem, i.e. affectivity, continuity, cohesion and agency so handles difference, change and loss in a positive way

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions of the Healthy Self - all are important and integrated:</th>
<th>Healthy Life Skills Sets:</th>
<th>Adjustment to Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual Self</td>
<td>I am; I believe; I know; I am worthy; I am at-one; I love; I am loved, I am love</td>
<td>• Assertive Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Self</td>
<td>I feel; I give and receive love; I trust; I respect</td>
<td>• Conflict resolution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philosophical Self</td>
<td>I value life – mine and all life; I have purpose and meaning; I am optimistic and realistic</td>
<td>• Decision making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral Self</td>
<td>I am honest &amp; responsible; I recognise consequences; I respect others</td>
<td>• Adjustment to change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual/Cognitive Self</td>
<td>I research, think, evaluate, decide, make plans, &amp; set goals</td>
<td>• Ability to give and receive constructive feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Self</td>
<td>I am well, energetic, and healthy; I do; I act</td>
<td>• Assert boundaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material/Financial Self</td>
<td>I have; I have reserves; I protect, and provide for, myself and my dependents</td>
<td>• Respect boundaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familial Self</td>
<td>I belong, I partner, I parent, I love; I protect and provide</td>
<td>• Capacity to respond instead of react</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational Self</td>
<td>I do; I work; I create and build reserves</td>
<td>• Balanced locus of control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social/Community Self</td>
<td>I share; I relate; we are</td>
<td>These skills build and maintain strong identity, self-esteem and low anxiety</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

HEALTHY SELF LIVING IN LOVE

Coaching Assumes a Person is Healthy

THE NEGATIVE CYCLE: LIVING IN FEAR
The child who is traumatised, or who was not well parented, is unable to develop all the skills, a healthy identity or self-esteem. They are unable to build good relationships, or to partner or co-parent effectively. They are reactive rather than responsive. They cannot give and take emotionally, or make mature decisions. They are likely to lack vitality and meaning, they are unfeeling or numbed, their potential is unexplored or blocked, and they are ignorant of, or have not maintained, their boundaries. If they do not have effective defences (e.g. denial), they are likely to be depressed, chaotic, anxious, and to be under or over regulating their feelings. Left unattended, they are likely to develop physical and psychological health breakdown at some stage.

Recognise the degree of self-disintegration – recognise the diminished affect; greyness and exhaustion or chronic over stimulation; fragmentation and failing apart or constriction; anxiety, depression, rages, self-destructive behaviours, hypochondrias, perversions, or addictions. In severe situations, they are intrusive, cannot set boundaries for themselves, and they have lost affectivity, continuity, cohesion and agency. They are unassertive - passive or bullies. These people are often dissociated, disintegrated, reactive and powerless. They have poor judgement and live a life full of fear. They need therapy.
Appendix B  EQ-i Report

BarOn Emotional Quotient Inventory
By Reuven Bar-On

Individual Summary Report

Name: Susan Cameron
ID: 3
Age: 0
Gender: Female
Admin. Date: July 03, 2001

The information given in this report should be used as a means of generating hypotheses and as a guide to assessment. Scores are reported as standard scores: 100 represents effective emotional functioning. Scores greater than 100 represent enhanced emotional functioning, and scores of less than 100 indicate areas that may be improved.
Total EQ

![Total EQ chart]

Composite Scales

![Composite Scales chart]
Content Subscales

**IntERpersonal:**
- Self-Regard: 109
- Emotional Self-Awareness: 123
- Assertiveness: 120
- Independence: 109
- Self-Actualization: 114

**IntRApersonal:**
- Empathy: 116
- Social Responsibility: 113
- Interpersonal Relationship: 123

**Stress Management:**
- Stress Tolerance: 113
- Impulse Control: 91

**Adaptability:**
- Reality Testing: 100
- Flexibility: 113
- Problem Solving: 117

**General Mood:**
- Optimism: 109
- Happiness: 111
Validity Indicators

Validity Comment:
The validity indicators are all in the acceptable range suggesting valid responses and results that are not unduly influenced by response style.

Inconsistency Index: 4
Impression: Positive = 116
Negative = 87
Correction: Type I = -2.88, Type II = -3.84, Type III = -4.68, Type IV = -5.64, Type V = -4.23

Positive Impression (PI) and Negative Impression (NI) Scores
The score on the Positive Impression scale (PI) was somewhat elevated. Although the elevated PI score indicates a tendency towards overly positive self-presentation, the tendency was small and should not have a major influence on the results and interpretation of the EQ-i.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score Summary</th>
<th>Adjusted Score</th>
<th>Unadjusted Score</th>
<th>Guideline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inconsistency Index</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>OK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Impression</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>OK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Impression</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>OK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL EQ:</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRAPERSONAL:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Regard</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Self-Awareness</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>Very High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assertiveness</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>Very High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Actualization</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTERPERSONAL:</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>Very High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Responsibility</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal Relationship</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>Very High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STRESS MANAGEMENT:</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress Tolerance</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impulse Control</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADAPTABILITY:</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reality Testing</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem Solving</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GENERAL MOOD:</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optimism</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happiness</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Norm Type: General nonspecific
## Item Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5 = Very Often true of me or true of me, 4 = Often true of me, 3 = Sometimes true of me, 2 = Seldom true of me, 1 = Very Seldom true or not true of me, 0 = Omitted Item
Appendix C: Zeidner et al.’s Comparative Table of EI Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Model of Emotional Intelligence</th>
<th>Ability Models</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conception of EI</td>
<td>EL viewed as a melange of competencies and general dispositions for adaptive personal functioning and coping with environmental demands. The construct encompasses multiple aspects of emotional and personal knowledge and personal functioning that are rather loosely related to emotion, including: motivation, personality traits, temperament, character, and social skills.</td>
<td>EI is viewed as a well-defined and conceptually related set of cognitive abilities for the processing of emotional information and regulating emotion adaptively.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological focus</td>
<td>Affective</td>
<td>Cognitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical model</td>
<td>Personality/Psychological adjustment</td>
<td>Intelligence/Performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typical facets</td>
<td>Self-awareness, self-motivation, self-regulation, empathy, social skills, assertiveness, stress tolerance, impulse control, coping with stress, reality testing, social problem solving, etc.</td>
<td>Emotion identification, understanding of emotions, assimilation of emotion in thought and use of emotions to enhance thought, emotion regulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of competencies</td>
<td>Anywhere from 4 to 2 dozen abilities. These can be grouped into 4 core areas: self-awareness, self-regulation/management, social awareness, relationship management and social skills (Cherniss &amp; Goleman, 2001)</td>
<td>4 major branches: identification, understanding, usage, and self-regulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morphological structure</td>
<td>Nonhierarchical—“oligarchic” organisation</td>
<td>Hierarchical model—from basic psychological processes to higher more psychologically integrated processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measurement approaches</td>
<td>Quasi-personality (self-report, Likert-type scales)</td>
<td>Competency (performance type items such as identification of emotions in pictures, identifying progressions and blends of emotions, solving problems, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examples of scales</td>
<td>Bar-On’s EQi, Schutte’s EI scale, Boyatzis and Goleman’s Emotional Competence Inventory, Cooper’s EQ Map</td>
<td>Mayer, Caruso, &amp; Salovey’s MEIS, MSCEIT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scoring of scales</td>
<td>No veridical scoring criteria. Scores obtained by linear sum of Likert-type scale response categories scored in direction of high EI</td>
<td>Consensus, Expert, and Target scoring protocols, with presumable veridical or “objective” scoring criteria</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Model of Emotional Intelligence</th>
<th>Ability Models</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Factor structure</td>
<td>Little empirical data. General factor found for individual published scales, but little evidence to support claims of multiple factors (cf. Petrides &amp; Furnham, 2000)</td>
<td>Inconsistent with 4-branch model. Exploratory factor analytic data consistent with 3 factor models of perception, understanding, regulation (Mayer, Caruso, &amp; Salovey, 2000; Roberts et al., 2001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliability of scales</td>
<td>Satisfactory (Bar-On, 1997; Dawda &amp; Hart, 2000)</td>
<td>Low to Moderate (Roberts et al., 2001); inconsistency among scoring procedures and low subtest reliabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susceptibility of items to response sets</td>
<td>Inconsistent data; some evidence for extreme item endorsement (Dawda &amp; Hart, 2000)</td>
<td>Not relevant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convergent validity (vis-a-vis ability)</td>
<td>Very low—negligible correlations with IQ (Bar-On, 2000; Derksen et al., 2002)</td>
<td>Moderate correlations of about .30 with ability (Mayer et al., 2000; Roberts et al., 2001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divergent validity (vis-a-vis personality)</td>
<td>Low discriminant validity vis-a-vis personality measures, particularly N</td>
<td>Good discriminant validity, with low correlations with “Big 5” personality facets (Roberts et al., 2001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predictive validity</td>
<td>Good, but may reflect confounding with personality (Janovics &amp; Christiansen, 2001)</td>
<td>Good, but may reflect confounding with ability (Janovics &amp; Christiansen, 2001)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D: Participants Information Sheet and Consent Form

Participants Information Sheet and Consent Form

Insight into Insight: Executive Coaching for Leadership
PhD Research Project by Cecily Moreton

This letter is to invite your participation in a research study into the discourse and relationship between executive coach and client using the Conscious Leadership Model derived from psychological counselling.

Information about Executive Coaching, the Conscious Leadership Model of Coaching, FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions), and myself is attached. I am a doctoral candidate at the University of Western Sydney, Hawkesbury. My primary supervisor is Dr John Cameron, Senior Lecturer, School of Social Ecology and Lifelong Learning - UWS, tel. 02 4570 1694.

Researchers identify 4 elements contributing to change in psychological counselling regardless of whether the work was with an individual or a group, and regardless of technique, frequency or number of sessions (Miller et al1997). These are:
1 Extra therapeutic factors - the client accounts for 40% of all improvement.
2 Therapy relationship factors which researchers estimate contributes 30% of the variance in psychotherapeutic outcome.
3 Model and technique factors. The therapist's model and technique contribute 15% to the over all impact of psychotherapy.
4 Expectancy, hope and placebo factors account for 15% of improvement in therapy.

Coaching models draw on education and training, sport, and psychological counselling models. I have developed a methodology and protocol, the Conscious Leadership Model, based on counselling models, and trained Executive Coaches. This structured protocol includes 12 sessions of coaching, adhered to closely to achieve the individual's goals in the contracted time frame. The discourse of the counsellor is very different from that of people in a non-counselling role, for example managers. The former adeptly establishes a trusting relationship with the client in order to support that person towards the management of their own problem/issues/decisions. This is a person-focused approach. The power of the work depends on the depth of the relationship, which in turn depends on the presence (competence and authority) of the counsellor/coach. By contrast, the manager is problem/solution-focused and
will focus directly and immediately on ways out of a difficult situation. This is a task focus. The two foci would seem to be at odds. The skilled coach blends elements of the skilled counsellor (building relationship) with elements of the skilled manager (finding effective solutions), and achieve both goals (person/task) efficiently, with no collision of goals.

This study seeks to discover whether counsellor research findings apply to coaching, and to achieve as full an understanding of the coaching relationship as possible. How does discourse between coach and client serve the coach to enable her to achieve both the relationship goals and the task goals with no collision or tension. What does she do and how does it unfold through the discourse? The study will seek to examine how gaining of knowledge and behaviours in the relationship helps them to gain insight and assemble meaning.

As principal researcher I have specific ethical responsibilities in respect to management of the project, including providing appropriate safeguards for participants in terms of self-disclosure and privacy issues. As I am a psychologist registered with NSW Psychologists Registration Board and a Member of the Australian Psychological Society, I am committed to their Codes of Ethics and you have recourse to both bodies, as well as the UWS Ethics and Bio-safety Committee.

If you choose to be part of the study it will involve you in 12 coaching sessions held fortnightly in your workplace in a private/confidential room over a period of 6 months. If you are a CEO you may prefer to meet in my professional rooms. I will keep a file to keep track of our coaching work that only you and I can access. The research process involves taping these interviews that will then be transcribed. Copies of your interview tapes would be available to you if requested, as would copies of any notes or transcripts from them. All notes, tapes and transcripts will remain confidential, all personal name references will be removed and pseudonyms substituted unless you give written permission to do otherwise, and no material will be available to your employer or any person from your workplace without your permission. Any identifying material of a potentially personal nature included on the tapes or transcripts will be coded and would remain confidential, unless you choose otherwise. Coded tapes will be stored securely in a locked filing cabinet under safe supervision in School or Research office facilities provided by the University. Access will remain limited to myself, a transcriber and my PhD supervisor, who would also be bound by confidentiality agreements. I affirm my intention to use all material collected with integrity and respect for individual viewpoints expressed and acknowledge I will use the material only for the thesis.
Your participation is voluntary. You are free to withdraw consent and discontinue participation at any time. Confidentiality agreements would remain in place on all prior material collected. The process of withdrawal/non-continuance would be appropriately documented in writing for the maintenance of your own as well as the project’s responsible record keeping. I will provide feedback when the research findings are written up.

Any queries regarding the above project can be directed to me cecily@accsoft.com.au, 0416 165 596 or my supervisor Dr John Cameron j.cameron@uws.edu.au or 02 4570 16694. I would also like to draw your attention to the two psychologists who are available should you feel the need for consulting/counselling services during the course of the study:
1) Sue Beecher, Lecturer, Faculty of Medicine UNSW (Sue Beecher is both a counselling psychologist and Executive Coach), tel. 9385 3427, and
2) Maria Page, Director, Institute of Applied Counselling, who is a counselling psychologist, tel. 99049333.

I look forward to working with you,

Cecily Moreton

Consent Agreement

I,_________________ have read the information above and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in the activity, realising I may withdraw at any time. I agree that research data gathered for the study may be published, provided my name is not used and my identity remains confidential.

Signature ______________ Date _____ Name of Participant (Print)_________________

Researcher Signature ______________ Date _____ Name (Print)_________________

The University requires that all participants are informed that if they have any complaint concerning the manner in which a research project is conducted it may be given to the researcher or, if an independent person is preferred, to the Ethics Officer, Human Research Ethics Committee, UWS Research Services, Locked Bag #1797, PENRITH SOUTH DC NSW 1797, Tel 02 9772 6785, Fax 02 9772 6786. All complaints will be treated confidentially and you will be notified of the outcome.