CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION

TITLE: The personal growth and career development of organisational change agents; a narrative study of the careers of experienced practitioners in an Australian setting.

PREFACE

In this introduction I deal with the circumstances that instigated this research and gave rise to the chosen methodology of engaging with a group of coresearchers through unstructured interviews.

The way in which a hypothetical framework for reviewing the growth and development of change agents in their careers was arrived at, is discussed, as is the landscape in which change agents carry on their practice.

The impetus for this study arose out of a practical challenge posed for me in 1994, when as State Manager, Staff Training and Development for NSW TAFE, I realised the need to develop organisational change consulting skills in a number of senior teachers and managers to support the major change required to enable TAFE to survive in a competitive training market.

I was led to reflect on the current paradigms of organisational change in use and to question their efficacy and ethical position, I also focused on the developmental processes, defined in the broadest terms, by which individuals pursue a career in organisational change.

I was concerned at the time to develop an accredited training program but immediately confronted the issue of whether or not a certain set of personal attributes and prior learning would be needed for success. Secondly, I needed to know whether academic study was enough or whether some form of practicum or apprenticeship was required.
The outcome of this enquiry, then, is conceived of as a program of development for individuals who wish to become practitioners in this area. An important element of such a program is an initial self-assessment process to enable new practitioners to decide whether they have the necessary capabilities, motivation and resilience to deal with the stresses and ethical dilemmas posed by the occupation.

I began to look for answers to these questions by reflecting on my own career in organisational change facilitation which then went back over seventeen years and seven organisations. Over that time I had worked in different ways with a number of people who also identified themselves as career specialists in organisational change. It was no great leap to invite them to reflect on these same issues.

From this arose not only the sample, but also the research methodology, its ontology and epistemology, for I was deeply aware of the exigencies of life as a change agent and I had developed my own strongly held values and beliefs about how to productively interact with others.

My commitment was, and is, to let the voices of my colleagues speak out of the research reporting. Coming from a background as a family therapist trained initially in the Rogerian school, and later experienced in the role of critical reflection as part of ongoing self-management, I was drawn to the unstructured interview as the means of data gathering.

In particular I had some training and experience in using narrative therapy with adolescent clients and felt it captured a way of dealing with complex material so that important issues emerged from other competing ideas and feelings.

Narrative therapy (Monk, Winslade, Crocket, Epston, 1997) focuses on the way in which people, although operating within different realities, make meaning together. Stories become constitutive of our lives. Discourses, more or less coherent sets of stories about the way the world should be, emerge and organise and regulate social relationships and ways of behaving. In this mode of enquiry no view is “right”; the parties are seen as engaged in creating new meaning by a complex process of interaction and negotiation.
Thus it is plain that a study of this kind must espouse a relativist ontology; inquiry requires full participation in the creation of personal and social knowing. As the co-inquirer, my commitment is to let the participants build their own meanings with as much authenticity as a non-judgmental intellectual stance can achieve.

"It is easy to overlook how deeply a philosophy of knowledge can affect the production of our sense of ourselves as powerful people. This is particularly important if what we take for granted is at the same time that which oppresses others. (Monk, Winslade, Crocket, Epston, 1997, p. 49)

Given this attitude to knowing, and the identity of myself as co-inquirer, colleague, and fellow practitioner, the unstructured narrative approach allows most scope for meeting the authenticity criteria for this form of constructivist inquiry (Guba 1990 in Egon & Guba 1990). Namely: ontological authenticity – the heightened awareness of one’s own constructions and assumptions, both manifest and unspoken; educative authenticity – increased awareness and appreciation (although not necessarily the acceptance) of the constructions of other stakeholders; catalytic authenticity – judged by the prompt to action generated by the inquiry and tactical authenticity – the ability to take action, to engage the political arena on behalf of oneself or participants.

Hence, I have hoped all along, in addition to assessing process in the methodology of this research, that in Guba’s words ‘action and understanding” will be important components of the outcomes which are reviewed in examining the ‘goodness’ of the work.

This work upon which I have embarked is an attempt to articulate a disclosure on behalf of an invisible, loosely allied group of practitioners whose philosophy dictates a deep commitment to reticence. Similarly, open discussion does not come easily to me, a career senior public servant, and a former family therapist and court counsellor. The greater part of my working life since the early seventies has been about confidentialities of one kind or another.

The colleagues who have become my coresearchers in this enterprise are equally cautious about their anonymity and that of the organisations with which they have worked. Hence, each co-researcher has selected a pseudonym by which to be known in the story.
There are a number of reasons for this desire to remain in the shadows:
Firstly, a belief that the real heroes of their work are the people in the organisations with whom they have shared their practice. Christian, one of the co-researchers says: ‘if I am successful, no one will remember that I had a role in shaping what happened’.
Secondly, these people have been present inside major events in the history of social, micro-economic, political and legislative reform in Australia. The details may not yet be in the public domain and may never be. The details may not be important, it is the learning captured from these experiences that is needed to create the discourse. Finally, I have been privileged as a colleague to listen to the stories of the private journeys of these people over the course of their careers. This is critical information if we are to understand the nature of the intellectual, social and emotional construction required to make a practitioner. But these are not stories any of us would necessarily feel should be told in the public domain.

Despite these concerns a deeper question has enlivened our group of coresearchers: “How to hand on the baton?” (Frances). There are few formal academic or vocational programs for change agents as yet, and little guidance as to how to become one. Our group are baby boomers, beginning to think about life after a commitment to full time work. Hence, they are concerned about the next generation of practitioners.

To begin to answer this question, it seems to me, that we need to be to articulate the discourse of what is an essentially post world war two phenomenon as a recognised practice or profession, the organisational change agent.
Discourses can be seen as systems of thought, which construct social phenomena. Discourse theory is not just a simple theoretical or epistemological approach; it implies, by asserting the radical historicity of being and therefore the purely human nature of truth, the commitment to show the world for what it is; an entirely social construction of human beings which is not grounded on any metaphysical necessity external to it – neither God, nor essential forms, nor the necessary laws of history. (Laclau 1985).

The voices in this series of stories, from which I hope a different discourse will emerge are those of men and women who came to maturity in the sixties and, were children of their times. They will talk about the many strands of thoughts and experience which shaped them and about the family and other interpersonal relationships which moulded their personalities and opportunities in life.

There are seven stories which inform this study:
Four women, Emma, Mercedes, Frances and Katherine, and three men, Richard, David and Christian.
These are not their names.
All belong to the ‘baby boomer’ generation and have practiced their profession in various organisations as both internal and external consultants, since the 70’s.
Quotations from the interviews will tell their stories; beyond this, they wish to remain anonymous.

In beginning this research I looked for the first charting of the territory to two sources; my own career and life story, and that of the theorist who has had the most profound influence on me as a professional and as a person, Fritz Perls. From this analysis I derived the starting point for a review of the principle discourses which are the seeds of this new one. The diagram at figure 1 is the result of this first pass at an overview of the landscape, with the major contributors annotated.
ANTECEDENT FACTORS TO CHANGE AGENT PRACTICE

Family Experiences
- Family of Origin
- Adult Relationships
- Socialisation, Community
  Perls (1976)

Personal Attributes
- Intelligence, Spirituality
- Mental and Emotional Dimensions
- Leadership Traits
  Rogers (1951)

Ethics
- Ethical Stance, Values
- Concepts of Power/Regulation
  in Institutions
  Pettit (1997)

Learning Experiences
- School, Academe
- Practical on the Job Mentors,
  and Role Models
  Agyris and Schon (1975)

Espoused Theories
- Science and Scientific Method
- Management and Change Theories
- Role of Professions
- Political and Gender Position
  Foucault (1979)

THE
CHANGE
AGENT

Figure 1.
This research does not privilege any one discipline over another. There are strands from psychology, anthropology, physical sciences, law, philosophy and management theory. Religion and spirituality play their part, as do art and literature.

The voices are those of individuals who have determinedly pursued not only knowledge and self-actualisation as defined by Maslow, but integrity and personal authenticity. As such, they are strong persons as they emerge from their individual stories. These are people who seek to dominate but who see themselves as facilitators, as process specialists. In this sense they operate often in the arena of the “subjugated knowledges” of which Foucault speaks in Discipline and Punishment (1977).

“Let us not ... ask why certain people want to dominate, what they seek, what is their overall strategy. Let us ask instead, how things work at the level of those continuous and uninterrupted processes which subject our bodies, govern our gestures, dictate our behaviours etc.” (Michel Foucault in Colin Gordon 1980, p. 97).

Therefore, we are operating within a curious paradox in attempting to capture at a moment in time a discourse which is an ever changing landscape of processes, of responses to the needs of people caught up in the turmoil of change. There is an inherent contradiction in giving voice to decided knowledge when the life long commitment is to listening and privileging the knowledges of others. Little wonder that the voices and the people have remained hidden.
BACKGROUND
The Landscape of the Change Agent

Anthony Giddens (1982) asserts that history and sociology are indistinguishable “We have to grasp how history is made through the active involvements and struggles of human beings, and yet at the same time both forms those human beings and produces outcomes which they neither intend nor foresee” (p. 13).

In this sense my study is both a history of organisational change in Australia over the last twenty years as seen through the eyes of some practitioners, and an analysis of the social and psychological trends and constructs which have built those events. It is appropriate for me to give an overview of how I see those events as part of an introduction to work, but I should first attempt to position myself in the landscape I am about to describe.

I have come to see myself as working in the space “Between”. Marvin Wesbord (1987) talks of the process of bringing about change as “helping people to find common ground”. I have come to see this as encouraging and enticing people to leave their established territories and venture out to explore those of the “other”. I inhabit a kind of “no person’s land” between the groups. However the “betweenness” extends to my own thoughts and the concepts with which I work.

BETWEEN THE EMOTIONAL AND PHYSICAL
THE SELF AND THE OTHER
THE NEW AND THE OLD PARADIGM

BETWEEN MANIPULATION AND LEADERSHIP
TEACHING AND COERCION
INVolEMENT AND ABUSE


There is little doubt in my mind that this is not how I am predominantly perceived by the people in the organisations within which I work. Firstly, because I work as an internal change agent in government organisations which entails occupying in most cases a senior position in the hierarchy; this brings with it perceptions of power, my own and others, which cannot be gainsaid. And secondly, because the whole aura and reputation of “change” and those associated with creating it has become negatively affected by peoples’ bitter experiences in organisations over the last twenty years.
Being placed close to the CEO of a number of organisations has allowed me to see the machinery of change in action. In many cases there has been a strong commitment to preservation of the highest social values, to integrity and to compassion. But there are many forces which constrain our ability to make these things live: financial crises, competing priorities, embedded systemic problems in ways organisations have operated in the past, corruption and waste, and over zealous single issue lobby groups, are just some of these forces.

The actualities of organisational life as they are perceived by some are realistically portrayed in these comments by Paul McCarthy, a teacher of organisation and community relations at Griffith University.

"In a post-modern society in which ‘greed is good’, and there is a fascination with the play of sexuality, violence and politics, the mask of restructuring packages our greatest fears, desires and hopes into a civilised response to turbulent global market conditions. The mask is paraded by many actors in our current economic crisis ... government ministers, consultants, chief-executive-officers, managers and bureaucrats... commonly bent on flattening organisational structures, downsizing, re-engineering and pursuing total quality management approaches... as in Greek tragedy, the mask slips to reveal the brutality of the organisational cleansing at work, including inappropriately coercive behaviours by managers.” (McCarthy, 1996).

This quotation captures what many employees, assisted by the media, have come to expect when change is mentioned: large scale disruption affecting staff numbers, career prospects, technical processes and, often most profoundly, culture. This phenomenon has become a major feature of organisational life since the 1980’s. More recent analyses of organisational change have brought to light the stress and ill-health created for individuals and the significant lack of economic outcomes resulting from these large-scale projects of reform and restructuring. David M. Gordon (1966) in his critique of managerialism in the United States of America notes that:

"In the name of trendy theories-from total quality management and process re-engineering to skill-based pay, quality improvement teams and worker
empowerment – many companies are trying to motivate their employees while downsizing and driving down wages and benefits” (p.93). Gordon argues that, as frontline workers have reduced in numbers, management has increased in real terms, not just in numbers but in supervisory rigour. “So corporations need to monitor the workers’ effort and to be able to threaten credibly to punish them if they do not perform.” (p. 5).

In these days of complex labour laws restructure (or whatever the euphemism), it may be said, is the most practical and abiding threat. In this way the push for organisational renewal can become systematically abusive and manipulative. Not that this is by any means the whole story. As I have said there is a strong body of theory and intellectual and emotional commitment, to doing things another way. Weisbord (1987) speaks of the “enthusiasm and creativity of people” through “learning, involvement, commitment, cooperation, confidence”. In the same article he speaks of the work of Eric Trist and Fred Emery, in the 50s and 60s, deriving principles of work organisation which optimised every worker’s skills, gave latitude for decision making and opportunities for learning which increase self-actualisation and place more control in workers' hands. These are the elements of a less stressful and happier working life and a more productive workplace.

In my own experience one particular change assignment stands out as exemplifying the best of these principles in operation; this was the first phase of Sydney Water reformation between 1984 and 1987. In three years, a hundred year old organisation was repositioned from a predominantly construction culture to a service culture, multi-layered processing of the Taylorist model was replaced with multi-skilled jobs by participative job redesign, and the budget drivers were changed to focus on providing for community needs, not the internal needs of the workforce and senior management.

The experience is memorable because it brought together a team of practitioners committed to social justice and participative change under the leadership of a compassionate and courageous CEO who was also economically skillful and politically aware. Only occasionally do all these conditions come together so that a change can be driven with consistency of vision, values and behaviours over a long enough period to show real and
sustained results. [For an external account of this project see *Under New Management*, Dunphy and Stace, (1990)].

Nevertheless, this was a change accompanied by severe downsizing, from 19,000 to 13,000 in the first stage, and, for many staff it meant learning new attitudes and work skills very quickly... a thing not everyone could do. It also destroyed the existing power structures in the organisation which had been dominated by engineers and redistributed power across a hierarchy that differed in professional background, values, and even gender. For many staff the change was perceived as totally destructive and ruthless, regardless of management attempts at involvement and provision of developmental and psychological help.

Paul McCarthy (1996) puts the problem this way:

> We premise our research on concerns that there are socio-economic, organisational and cultural viewpoints such as disorganised capitalism and post-modernism, which forego economic and psychological rights to protection in favour of an “ethically proper violence directed to meeting market forces” (p. 61)... or indeed political, community or ecological forces for that matter.

There is no doubt that the turbulent forces of an emerging global economy and massive social change demand new responses to question of organisation of work. The post-modern organisation, whether in manufacturing or human services, with its flatter structures built on concepts of networks and strategic alliances, and flexible, creative and participative work teams, at its best, does allow the corporation or the government to deliver what its communities want and need; and it does so with the enthusiastic concurrence of its employees.

The best expression of these organisational forms is extraordinarily difficult to achieve, especially in the timeframes modern life affords. The complexity of forces and this compression of time, it seems to me are largely responsible for unleashing the dark side of organisational change, the drama of Nietzsche’s universe...

“A monster of energies, without beginning, without end... a play of forces, a wave of forces” which in turn mobilises our fight or flight responses and hence our propensity for coercion which can become bullying, brutal and violent. (1968). Being caught up within such a process, especially if you have minimal control over what is happening can bring learning and critical reflection to a standstill. Yet it is essential for the person who is
driving the change to remain in the ‘reflective practitioner’ stance. Donald Schon (1983) has described the part reflection plays in managing the complexity, uncertainty, and ethical and values conflicts which inevitably arise in the course of such work.

Chris Argyris’ work, in particular, on double loop learning—the capacity to amend not only action strategies but also the governing variables, and on action theory, has also been influential in forming responses for change agents in the face of such situations (Argyris et al., 1985). Argyris defined two models of action theory: Model 1 whose governing variables are (a) to achieve the purpose as the actor defines it; (b) to win, not to lose; (c) to suppress negative feelings and (d) to emphasise rationality. Model II’s governing variables are (a) valid information; (b) free and informed choice; and (c) internal commitment. Argyris contends that Model I produces control-dominated behaviour, little over testing of ideas, and progressively less effective implementation, whereas Model II inclines towards behavioural strategies which seek knowledge and participation from others and hence increase effectiveness over time.

These models reflect the dilemmas, or choices, which confront the change agent driven by the constraints of reality.

This research is grounded in Model II but it is required to deal with the real impact of Model I culture which predominates in “scientifically” managed organisations.

So far I have discussed some of the negative consequences of organisational change. It would be unrealistic not to mention the very real necessity for change which does confront many organisations. Tony Mealor, in his case study of ICI Botany (Davis and Lansbury, 1996) discusses the situation at the plant in 1987 when, faced with the loss of tariff protection and a billion dollar (replacement capital) investment ICI could not afford to turn its back on the loss making enterprise. In 1987, 13250 working days were lost in industrial action at a site renowned for the bitterness and adversarialism of its industrial environment. One of the change objectives had to be to reduce this situation. By 1989, using directive and coercive strategies the figure had dropped to 9180. Following a two week strike in 1989 a more accommodating, involving strategy was adopted by union and management with the result that days lost dropped in 1990 almost to zero. Over the same
period single shift absences went from in excess of 200 to 40 (approximately) for process workers.

Similar figures can be quoted from many Australian organisations. Over time the organisation comes to run for the benefit of entrenched employee and management interests. Commonly, sick leave, shift allowances, overtime, meal and travel allowances are exploited in systematic ways. A recent study in one unit of a large government body found a small cohort of staff taking home 50% more than base salary in overtime each year while their less favoured colleagues received nil. There was a social and sexual basis to the membership requirements for the favoured group.

Other common characteristics to be found in these cultures are strong nepotism in recruitment and promotion, racial and sexual harassment, bullying, waste of resources and corruption. Frequently managers are also involved in the same activities as workers although some of their perquisites may be viewed as appropriate rewards for their status, e.g. at MWS and DR Board the senior managers pre 1983 enjoyed motor launch trips on Warragamba Reservoir while staying in the fully furnished holiday cottages, a car and driver who would also pop out for the dry-cleaning or to buy flowers for the wife’s birthday, and, of course a subsidised executive dining area at work with suitably professional table service.

Stories are legion of the patios built with bricks borrowed from work, sheep grazed on the company’s land at no cost, entire businesses conducted from company premises with all materials and equipment supplied from the same source, and of course the kick-backs to be had from purchasing contracts large and small. To this must be added the costs of roirting the workers’ compensation system which runs easily to hundreds of thousands a year in a medium sized operational organisation.

It is the task of the change agent to assist the CEO to address issues like this, frequently so that the organisation can survive. If the losses cannot be stemmed then the only alternatives will be large scale job losses or closure. But obviously, where such important economic interests, let alone power and status concerns are involved, great hostility will be generated, and a proportion of it will be directed at the person who is seen as “driving” the changes.
There is a critical secondary aspect to entrenched resistance which comes from the professions. While it may be relatively easy to convince the average reader that a dark side exists in many organisations it has not been so simple to portray the way in which medicine, law and the clergy, for example, operate to protect status which is sometimes used abusively.

In NSW the Wood Royal Commission, and in particular the ‘Paedophile Reference’ of 1996-1997 exposed much of what was happening among teachers, lawyers and clergymen. At the time I was in charge of the unit in NSW Health set up to investigate occurrences of abuse by health employees, and to put in place policies and structures to prevent further offenses. Many allegations against health professionals were not fully investigated and professional registration authorities were slow to act and inclined to minimise the seriousness of offenses.

Foucault (1975) examines the way in which these power structures began to operate as the classical age discovered the body as an object and target of power.

“The great book of Man-Machine was written simultaneously on two registers: the anatomico-metaphysical register, of which Descartes wrote the first pages and which the physicians and the philosophers continued, and the technico-political register, which was constituted by a whole set of regulations and by empirical and calculated methods relating to the army, the school and the hospital, for controlling or correcting the operations of the body” (p. 136).

In 1996-7, while working to set up systems to detect and prevent the abuse of children and other vulnerable people by health professionals I became profoundly aware of the pervasive impact of these control mechanisms set up by what Foucault refers to as ‘disciplines’, on our society and the way in which they are used, as in an exploitative organisational culture, to protect the perquisites of the power elite.

I have included some case studies later in this work to illustrate some of these behaviours because I have discovered that many people still, after all the revelations in the media, find
it difficult to believe that the professions do in fact consciously operate to protect those who systematically abuse power for personal gratification.

The importance of this phenomenon will become clear in the discussion of the forces which may have guided myself and my coresearchers to become change agents. In 1998 I moved on from Health to the Department of Corrective Services where, perhaps paradoxically, the daily confrontation with the violent and corrupt elements of our society allows much more open debate about issues of appropriate use of power and the ‘dark side’ of the organisation is continually under scrutiny. There is a tendency amongst theorists of organisational change to equate issues of “power” in the change process with a political construction of organisational life. I need to be clear that I am not talking only about ideological and partisan alignments or the building of factional support alliances when I speak of ‘power’ in this study. In some of the large scale change projects I and my coresearchers are drawing upon the manifestations of power have included death threats, physical and verbal assaults, bombings, vandalism, sabotage of plants, intimidation of various kinds and threats to families.

In terms of challenges to the power of the professions we have encountered protection of criminal activities that have included child sexual assault, child pornography, exploitation of vulnerable clients, and fraud.

These are not issues commonly discussed in the literature, and, except in reports such as the Wood Royal Commission or ICAC enquiries, they are not discussed in any detail in the public domain.

Because Corrective Services must daily face the concentrated impact of dealing with a clientele for whom such matters are a way of life, discussion of issues around power is much more open and immediate.

In the years since the Nagel Royal Commission of the late 80s this Department has transformed its approach to managing inmates from a primarily coercive, non-communicative one, to one based on individual case plans and care by multi-disciplinary teams. In the same period this has meant the professionalisation of the workforce and the introduction of concepts such as the importance of learning and self-reflection in maintaining the required standards of inmate management. This has meant a profound shift in the general workforce’s attitudes to the use of force. In coming to an understanding that,
even with some of the most damaged and violent members of the community, force is not a productive means of establishing a safe and human environment.

In this sense the Department has confronted the dark side of institutionalised coercion and works with these forces on a daily basis.

I say this in order to explain the genesis of my thinking about the undiscussable aspects of organisational change, mentioned by some theorists to be reviewed later, in particular Argyris, and the observations about the management of anxiety both in organisations generally (see Menzies studies of nursing 1970) and in change agents themselves.

In many studies these issues are treated under the heading of resistance and various strategies are suggested to deal with it, including worker involvement and the removal of the grey layer of middle management. Such discussion fails to bring to life the actuality of the personal risk and the emotional cost to the change agent of living with these forces day to day.

Paradoxically, it was my own shift to the more overt dialogue in Corrective Services which freed up my ability to reflect more clearly on this aspect of my practice as a change agent and to begin to formulate a hypothesis concerning the factors I would expect to be significant in the career and development of change agents in general.
CHAPTER TWO
THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

This chapter demonstrates the theoretical basis of our current knowledge of organisation and of work design and conditions i.e. the cultural and contextual understanding of organisational behaviour which, consciously or otherwise forms our expectations of organisational life; and the theories in use which immediately impact on the understanding and practice of the invisible college and underpin their work in organisational change.

This chapter needs to be read in the context of the responses from some of my co-participants to the question ‘What theoretical perspectives do you use in your work?’……

“Theory? Oh, any old theory will do, whatever the client seems to feel happy with, just as long as it lets me get on with the process in my own way.”

Nevertheless, as the case study material illustrates, the original organisations, church, the military, the professions of medicine and the law, have created fundamental building blocks for our organisational lives.

Foucault (1979, p. 135), describes the impact of the rise of the disciplines

“The disciplines mark the moment when the reversal of the political axis of individualisation – as one might call it – takes place.

In a disciplinary regime, on the other hand, individualisation is descending: as power becomes more anonymous and more functional, those on whom it is exercised tend to be more strongly individualised; it is exercised by surveillance rather than ceremonies, by observation rather than commemorative accounts, by comparative measures that have the ‘norm’ as reference rather than genealogies giving ancestors as points of reference; by ‘gaps’ rather than deeds.

The moment that saw the transition from historico-ritual mechanisms for the formation of individuality to the científico-disciplinary mechanisms, when the normal took over from the ancestral, and measurement from status, thus substituting for the individuality of the memorable man that of the calculable man, that moment
when the sciences of man became possible is the moment when a new technology of power and a new political anatomy of the body were implemented. We must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms; it ‘excludes’, it ‘represses’, it ‘censors’, it ‘abstract’, it ‘masks’, it ‘conceals’. In fact, power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. The individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production. (pp. 192-193)

The power that derives its legitimacy from the disciplines is interwoven with our concepts of good and evil, as reflected, for example, in our old belief in the divine right of kings. Thus, from this blending of the scientifico-disciplinary mechanisms with a religious heritage that juxtaposes good and evil comes the background of semi-articulated beliefs about our situation as members of the modern organisation. Simply that the leadership of the organisation, in defining each person and describing their role, produces through that power of definition, their reality, and labels it as ‘good’. Conversely to oppose that description or to fail to meet its expectations is to inevitably align oneself with the forces of “evil”. The case studies are intended to illustrate the darker side of this manifestation of the productive effects of power.

While this long period from the Middle Ages forms a potent precarious cultural heritage for today’s organisational theorists it would not be correct to assume that the academic discourses to which the students are exposed articulate this background as part of the average undergraduate program. All this is taken very much as the right and proper state of affairs. The beginner is more likely to be informed by an analysis such as this one from Tom Daniels’ text Perspectives on Organisational Communication (1997).

Organisations in the developed nation of today’s world function within a complex and sometimes rapidly changing economic, legal, political and social environment. This environment has evolved from our centuries of commercialisation and industrialisation, international trade, secularisation of social and governmental institutions, and compression of time and distance through technological advances in transportation and communities. (p. 20).
By and large the concept of the classical education which required a disciplined understanding of the antecedents of things has gone by the board in today’s functional business schools. The current requirements centre on scientific and classical management theory, human relations theory, human resource development theory, Follett’s administrative theory and Barnard’s executive functions analysis broadly forming the twentieth century body of knowledge prior to the 70s.

These theories arose in the context of a belief that prescriptions for improving the effectiveness of organisations could be written down and followed through by establishing control through structure, strategy and communication. The fundamental assumption underpinning these ideas is that leaders will attain and maintain control of an organisation composed of many individuals by the proper manipulation of the known variables. That to measure and describe the norms and standards with sufficient precision will produce the manifest results defined in the business plan. It is my hypothesis that the successful change agent does not subscribe to this view of the world, nevertheless they must or do have a working knowledge of the theoretical background.

In any brief review of the major theorists of the early 1900s it is traditional to mention Taylor, Fayol and Weber.

Taylor published ‘Scientific Management’ in 1911 although the most recent summary of his work was not published until 1947. He was intent on work design and processes and today he is described as the initiator of time and motion study and the assembly line as a series of discrete tasks. These tasks can be analysed into the most efficient sequences of movements and the right people selected and trained to perform them.

Foucault (1979) of course points to the origins of this concept of man as a machine in his chapter entitled ‘Docile Bodies’, referring to the military ordinances of the 1700s prescribing in detail every movement of the soldier’s body in marching and formation drills.

‘The great book of Man-the Machine was written simultaneously on two registers: anatomico-metaphysical register, of which Descartes wrote the first pages and which the physicians and philosophers continued, and the technico-political register, which was constituted by a whole set of regulations and by empirical and calculated methods relating to the army, the school and the hospital, for controlling or correcting the operations of the body.” (p. 135).
While the shortened analysis of the modern management curriculum demeans Taylor and “Taylorism” has become a term of derision in the lexicon of work redesign, the origins of these mechanistic views of the human being are, as Foucault describes, older, more deeply rooted and constitutive of fundamental and unstated elements of our discourse of modern organisational life.

To better understand these pervasive background influences, it is useful to look at relationships between religious beliefs, philosophy and the rise of mechanisms in a progressively secularising milieu.

Max Weber (1947) examined the relationship between the Protestant ethic and the rise of capitalism and outlined a theory of asceticism as an aspect of the more general human drive for salvation. In this view, the quest for certainty of salvation produced a structure of ethics by which the faithful tried to achieve control and regulation of their whole life-world. It is Turner’s (1992) postulation “that this irrational quest for certainty in the face of an absent God produced a culture of regulation” and hence gave rise to the secular callings …medicine and law, among them.

The eventual outcome of this process was the equation of business success to inner-worldly perfection as expressed in the Calvinist approach to capitalism. By this stage the Puritan tradition had separated secular success from the negative connotation it had within the Catholic tradition, which had always given a higher value to the spiritual and contemplative life.

This equation of asceticism, control and the pursuit of regulation, carried over also into the origins of science. Robert K. Merton (1990) noted that

> Various aspects of Puritan activism were not only compatible with the emergence of natural science but actually acted as a spur to the development of modern science based on instrumental rationality (p. 35).

Merton puts forward a description of science, like a calling or business, as part of an attempt to regulate and control reality in the interests of some broader religious purpose. Mysticism might lead to a flight from harsh reality, or to its simple contemplation, but this new ethic demanded the inspection of reality by rational means and its absolute control and
domination, in the interests of religious perfection. In other words this was an ethic of world mastery.

Christian theology embraces a perpetual tension between spirituality and the temptations and dangers of the flesh, the mind-body dichotomy. The soul must fly from temptation or completely dominate it. However, the safety of regulatory superstructures such as the law, the priesthood and medicine, supported by the rational methodology of natural science, provides a respite from this constant threatening uncertainty. A secure base from which to approach the task of acting in the external world in a way that does not threaten the ‘self’.

The loss of identity will, for some be seen in death, for others in the loss of salvation, while for many it will be loss of money or status. In any case the aspiration is to be on the side of the right and to be deserving of a certain future of success. In Foucault’s analysis this is a productive outcome of the power relationships.

In this world view, however, the body, our human unpredictability, becomes the enemy, associated with lack of control...at best an impediment and at worst a barrier, to success. The combined secular and religious callings were required to exert some form of control over the errant physical self. That law and the priesthood should come together to regulate the threat posed by the body is less surprising than that medicine should have joined them with such enthusiasm. In the 1600s and 1700s diet was seen as a primary means of controlling the evil propensities of the body. Temkin (1977) draws attention to the tradition of seeing the body as a machine

For the purpose of man’s conscious and purposeful life, the body can be considered as a machine that will run according to the manipulations of the machinist. And it will run all the better if it has no purpose of its own, if it is stripped of teleological assumptions and of the vegetative and animal soul with which the ancients endowed it. (p. 276).

Earlier paradigms which likened the body to social organisation, the “body politic” of Aristotle, merged into this newer tradition.
George Cheyne, a popular physician, born in Aberdeenshire in 1670, published a number of very influential works on the regulation of the body. He defined the body as "a Compages or contexture of pipes, an Hydraulic Machine, filled with a Figure of such a Nature as was transfused into by its parents". The balance of this complex machine is maintained by the correct mix of quantity and quality of food, exercise and elimination. Cheyne saw the causes of illness arising from changes in eating habits which arose in turn from civilisation and economic progress.

Since our wealth has increased and our Maceration has been extended, we have ransacked all parts of the Globe to bring together its whole Stock of materials for Riot, Luxury and to provoke Excess (1724, p. 12).

the Rich, the Lazy, the Luxurious and the Unactive who fare daintily and live voluptuously," (1733; p. 43) are pray to the ills of the day, gout, cancer, raging fevers, pleurisy’s, senile pox, measles. These maladies are exacerbated by living "in great, populous and over grown Cities;

the infinite number of Fires, Sulphureous and Bituminous, the vast expense of Tallow and Roeted Oil in Candles and Lamps; under the above ground, the Clouds and stinking Breaths, and Persperation, not to mention the Ordure of so many diseased, both intelligent and unintelligent Animals, the Crowded Churches, Churchyards and Burying Places, with Putrefying Bodies, the Sinks, Butcher-Houses, Stables, Dunghills etc and the necessary Stagnation, fermentation and Mixture of such Variety of all kinds of Atoms, are more than sufficient to putrefy, poison and infect the Air for twenty Miles around it, and which, in Time, must alter weaken and destroy the healthiest Constitutions of Animals of all Kinds (1733, p. 10).

The diseases of civilisation are those of abundance – overconsumption, overindulgence, overcrowding, further complicated by strong wines and liquors.

To overcome these impossible obstacles to health Cheyne (1742) devised a religio-medical prescription for sober living and regularity.
He classified foods into those easy to digest and those more challenging to our concoctive powers. Spring vegetables, fish, poultry as opposed to dark meats, game and stone fruit. And he recommended adjusted diets from birth to old age regulated according to the profession and activity level of the individual. Two further requirements for sound health were a regular “brisk Vomit” and great, frequent and continued Exercise, especially on Horseback.

It can be seen that Cheyne’s advice was for the middle class and beyond. Irrelevant to a working class which subsisted on cereals, with small amounts of meat and potato. However the well being of the working class was of interest to their betters for a number of reasons – the spread of contagious diseases could occur from the working class in populous areas, high levels of unemployment and economic dependency placed a burden on society in maintaining workhouses, and extensive debility and incapacity in the male population affected the supply of recruits to the military. All three circumstances converged between 1850 and the outbreak of World War II, creating a thrust towards the scientific analysis of diet and its impact on the working, and also the criminal classes.

National movements in the early 1900s promoted discipline and health through physical training, temperance, compulsory military service and the scouting movement. Regular medical inspections in schools and school meals programs reflected not just a philanthropic, but a political interest in improving the health of the lower orders.

A growing body of “scientific” studies of poverty and labour combined demography, dietetics, biology and eugenics with a political and social anxiety about the possible effect of the working class on democracy, social order and the biological basis of civilised society. The criminal, the soldier and the working man became the objects of scientific discourse and political practice.

Today’s anxieties, criminality, obesity and drug abuse, sloth, family dysfunction and anorexia, heart disease, illiteracy and unemployment are an extension of this tradition. An extension of scientific rational control over social issues, further complicated by the addition of the gender debate as a major theme.
The paradigms of wellbeing, originally generated in the context of the dominant class came to be applied as social control theorems for the lower and criminal classes.

The fears of the dominant class, of which medical practitioners formed an important element, about the threats from an overfed, overindulged, alcoholic working man, as much as from an underfed, debilitated, starved working man were undercurrents in generating the concerns with social control.

The primary aim of social control may be seen as the reduction of anxiety for a group/community/organisation about uncertainty, for their future, or non compliant behaviour of either its members or some adjacent group.

In Philip Pettit’s (1997) analysis, for example, the primary aim of regulation is to improve conformity or compliance and a secondary aim is to provide public assurance of such improved compliance. Professor Pettit defines two broad approaches to regulation depending on whether the principal focus is on compliance or on assurance.

In following an analysis of regulatory control from the 1600s it is primarily assurance centered regulation with which we are concerned. This kind of regulation tries to ensure compliance will be maximized even in the worst possible situations regardless of how improbable or frequent. In Bernard Mandeville’s (1731) works “the best arrangement remains unshaken though most men should prove knaves,” this is the regulatory philosophy which appeals to politicians and to cultures who perceive themselves, for one reason or another, as under threat.

By contrast the compliance centered approach to regulation begins with the assumption that while every one is potentially corruptible (a knave) many are motivated by civic and professional cultures which provide for honours and shame to build strong compliance with shared norms and values. Features of such a system are

- an initial attempt to select for individuals who share the culture and are positively disposed to comply;
an effort to put in place culturally supportive rewards combined with shame-based sanctions;

a reliance on knave-apt sanctions only for the most serious or repeated offences.

Prof. Pettit defines a number of negative outcomes of assurance-focused knave-apt control mechanisms:

the hiding of virtue where compliance is seen as derived from fear not virtue;

labelling in which the naturally compliant share the same label as potential offenders;

sanction dependence where even compliers come to measure their behaviour in reward and punishment terms, and to deviate if penalties seem remote;

defiance in which compliers become alienated, resentful and see themselves as undervalued because they are not trusted;

closing of ranks where penalties induce groups to band together, unwilling to blow the whistle and keen to deflect the blame onto others;

adverse selection in which spontaneous compliers are not attracted to join the group.

It can be seen from the dominance of aspirations for social control, tracing from the 1600s onwards, that the knave-apt regulatory paradigm has formed and shaped our cultural inheritance.

In satisfying the human need for a more certain future, it has merged with the empirico-scientific tradition, which also lends the promised safety of rational explanation to create our conceptual frameworks of how human organisations should be constructed and how they should function.

Those who conform to these expectations and regulatory practices are inherently “good” and are non-threatening; those who challenge the arrangements run the risk of aligning themselves with the assumed forces of “darkness”.

As the case studies demonstrate, the dominance of the accepted norms can mask the individuals who are exploiting membership of the organisation for other ends, from any kind of scrutiny or accountability.

Anyone seeking to disturb the ‘mask’ will raise anxieties about the certainty of the order of things and will run the risk of a hostile and defensive response.
Assumptions about the rightness and goodness of the dominant paradigms of order and regulation inform organisational theory and influence the responses of people in the organisation to the manifestations of these theories being played out around them.

MANAGEMENT THEORY AND HUMAN RESOURCES

To return to Taylor, and his fine division of work into its components, it can be seen that this enabled a quite complex system of control to be put in place: labourers can be paid by the “piece” of work and the complexity of each piece can be rated to fix a level of remuneration; “supervisors”, a relatively new concept in production environments, are then needed to plan and control the work because no one pieceworker has the whole picture of the production requirements.

While Taylor may have had the egalitarian expectation that worker and supervisor would cooperate and the increased productivity would benefit both, the effect of his organisational method was to reduce the labour force and increase the number and power of supervisors. It is attributed to Taylor, rightly or not, that he enshrined in our modern organisations the “leave your brain at the door” regime for production workers. In fact this can be seen as just an extension of the existing paradigm that the working man, uncontrolled, represents a threat to the settled order.

If Taylor was a primary influence on work design, then Henri Fayol, a French industrialist, influenced our views of organisational structure and management practice. He stated fourteen principles many of which are still in common use:

♦ division of work...one man, one job.

♦ authority and responsibility...authority includes the right to give orders and exact compliance. There is a distinction between positional and personal authority.

♦ discipline...fair and judicious sanctions for failure to comply.

♦ unity of command and direction ...“one head, one plan”.

♦ subordination of individual interests...the organisation comes first.
remuneration as a balance of organisational and employee needs.

- the scalar chain of authority...a structured hierarchy, from which departure only occurs in set circumstances.

- equity...people should be treated with justice and fairness, though forcefulness and sternness are also legitimate.

- stability in tenure...an employee with ability should be given time to learn the job and perform well in it.

- initiative...the ability to think and plan is seen as a valuable resource.

- esprit de corps...management's role is to promote unity and harmony. (Fayol 1949, p. 50).

Government and large bureaucracies are still characterised by most of these concepts, which assume a long term relationship between organisation and employee and a stability of organisational purpose. By now this is probably the ideal model for which many may be nostalgic. It is also a system of rules which maximises certainty and compliance.

Weber, however, is considered the originator of the modern bureaucratic machine. In Weber's view all actions in a bureaucracy are mechanistically derived from a rational system of rules based on military principles, eliminating ambiguity and giving clear descriptions of authority and responsibility at all levels. In a similar fashion to Taylor he espoused the specialisation of labour, exhaustive procedures for work performance monitoring, and selection and promotion of personnel based on technical competence. Relationships in his model, between worker and manager are seen as impersonal but just. All these models are concerned with hierarchy, control, rational systems and economic rewards. A code of justice and discipline emanating from the leaders and managers is considered a critical element in ensuring stability and maximising productivity.

Practicing managers, as well as psychologists, will know that the everyday experience of organisational life, then as now, cannot have been so orderly and rational. The infinite variety of human behaviour interacting with such a predominantly knave-apt set of principles would be likely to result in some disharmony, discord, and dysfunctionality.
Neither is it surprising that a new analysis of power and control in organisations should come from a woman, Mary Parker Follett, an American active in community organisations. Reciprocity in human interaction and the harmonious marriage of differences are the fundamental concepts in her theory of organisation. Integration of interests depends on shared power.

“Whereas power usually means power-over, the power of some person or group over some other person or group, it is possible to develop the conception of power-with, a jointly developed power, a co-active, not a coercive power...That should be one of the tests of any plan of employee representation- is it developing joint power?” (1982a; p. 72).

Follett, being female, is likely to have found it easier to take an objective view of the traditional power constructs in organisations, being aware that, in the natural order of things, she would be excluded. She was equally critical of capital and labour: “reformers, propagandists, many of our ‘best people’ are willing to coerce others in order to attain an end they think is good”. (p. 73). Her view was that pluralistic responsibility based on function, not hierarchy or rank, is essential to organisational effectiveness. Follett envisioned employee representation as participation, not just a means to gain compliance or cooperation. “Conference” was the means of ensuring participation, which was the beginning of process consulting, the major tool of the change agent. This pre-war theorist, who died in 1933, provided a substantial part of the base for the Human Resource Development model of organisational life which appeared in the 60s.

The second major theorist whose work experience in a large organisation led him to look for further explanations of the impact of human behaviour on their functioning was Chester Barnard.

Barnard recognised the importance of the informal organisation, the social and political world not reflected in the official organisation chart. He also recognised the role of communication in mediating motivational factors beyond money such as status, prestige and personal power, and in assuring willingness to cooperate to achieve organisational goals.
The psychology and management texts post 1950 frequently begin by highlighting the Hawthorne Studies, the early steps of the Human Relations School. The results of these studies (Roethlisberger and Dickson, 1939) outlined the contribution of interpersonal communication, group dynamics and employee’s attitudes and values, beyond work design and structure, in determining effectiveness.

The outcomes of these studies are commemorated in the ‘Hawthorne Effect’ the changes which occur when subjects receive the attention of researchers. The conclusion at the time was that employees’ attitudes depend on the social organisation of the groups in which they work and their positions in those groups; in short, work groups exert substantial influence on performance through their norms and group dynamics.

The Human Relations School emerged at Harvard under Elton Mayo and his colleagues, supporting a socially conscious, people oriented approach to management. These ideas were overlaid on the fundamentals of the scientific and traditional theorists who preceded them. They provided instead tools for managerial relationships, mechanisms for worker participation to improve morale leading to greater compliance with managerial authority. Communication, taught as a ‘scientific’ procedure becomes the newest and most effective control mechanism in this model, not least because it appears most benign.

Equally, the theorists of the Human Resource Development School, beginning with Maslow and his 1954 publication of the hierarchy of needs, produced the ‘employee friendly’ models of organisational manipulation. McGregor’s (1960) Theory X, Theory Y and Likert’s Four Systems (1961) make engaging reading because they offer a means for us to analyse our own behaviour at work in conjunction with the human resources professionals. They appeal to our thirst for the self knowledge which may prove to be the key to success.

The work of Maslow, with his final stage of personal growth, self-actualisation, and of McGregor with his idealised trust-building theory Y managers, have become part of the background knowledge of our large bureaucratic organisations. Likert’s four systems are more lastingly influential because his fourth system, ‘participation’ has had a major impact on subsequent organisational change practice.
Characteristics of system four include:
open communication upwards and downwards,
decentralised decision making,
accurate, free information flows,
participative goal development,
self-regulation through feedback

These elements can readily be recognised in the many manifestations of the Quality Movement which has become a staple feature of organisations since the 70s. With the addition of ‘customer focus’ and ‘use of data for decision making’ quality has been used by many organisations as the vehicle for change. Progressing from Quality Circles to Total Quality Control and then Total Quality Management, these same principles have been elaborated into ways of measuring organisational performance and engaging employees in a continuous search for improvement.

In this regard the work of W.E. Deming in forging statistical techniques for quality control provided the tools to allow the disciplined measurement of production processes enabling the goals of management to be minutely allocated to the performance plans of each employee, or, in more enlightened organisations, to each team of employees.

Ouchi’s (1978) theory Z organisation, falling as it does, between McGregor’s X and Y, moves this paradigm to take account of the observation that the speed of change in organisational goals increased. This theory espoused project teams, permanent and temporary, informal consensus seeking as a precursor to decision making, integration of employee and organisational goals but with written communication and individual accountability.

From here we move into an explosion of quite popularist management theory concerned with shaping the future, particularly in the face of accelerating changes in society and technology. The work of Peter Drucker, (1992), Kanter (1983), Peters and Waterman (1987) and Peters alone (1987, 1988). Argyris and Schon (1978) and Charles Handy (1999) are only some of the texts which made it into reasonably open circulation in the
organisations of the 80s and 90s and accompanied issues of change management onto the curricula of MBAs and the research agendas of the graduate schools of management. In the late 70s and the 80s change became the topic of the day and, at least in some arenas, the change agent began to be discussed as a discrete occupational title. This was the person who came into an organisation in transition to assist the CEO and his team to bring about, or ‘drive’ the desired change. Usually an external consultant brought ‘inside’ for a fixed period, the change agent was expected to bear the brunt of the organisation’s hostility and resistance to change and to disappear once the process was well underway, taking along all the bad memories.

This period saw the development of change management curriculum at all levels, from first line supervisor to CEO, from certificate to masters. One day ‘how to’ seminars were both popular and costly. ‘Change Management’ became a part of most managerial job descriptions.

Most of this activity was really focused on the practising manager needing to make change in her/his area. Very little of it was clearly addressed to that rather different job description of change agent.

The theorising about change again followed the earlier continuum from the rational-scientific to the sociological, human relations and psychoanalytical modes.

The tension in these approaches manifested itself in one way in a debate about the difference between management and leadership.

This debate has turned out to have some relevance for the understanding of the role of the change agent.

Krantz and Gilmore (1990) describe this issue in a paper entitled “The splitting of leadership and management as a social defence”.

The term ‘social defence’ was first used by Menzies (1960) in a paper on the nursing culture in a large English hospital. She identified that because of the anxieties aroused by nurses’ work, involving as it does, sickness and death, practices and policies were put in place to assist nurses to evade the overwhelming feelings. These included rotation and charting practices which diminished nurses’ awareness of patients as whole people, controlling empathies, repulsions and erotic impulses. The excessive diffusion of responsibility and authority served the same purpose.
Such ways of managing anxiety become institutionalised in organisational systems, impairing functioning, but allowing individuals to avoid realities which otherwise might produce threatening levels of distress.

Krantz and Gilmore argue that the split between management and leadership serves this kind of purpose and is essentially conservative. Managerialism is characterised as the "magic of technique", while leadership is seen as heroic, with the leader as saviour. These two ideologies work together to ensure that new, visionary ideas are kept at a safe distance from the organisational apparatus, tools and delegations which are essential for their realisation.

In Bion's (1961) terms both ideologies represent basic assumption dependency functioning in which the group evades anxieties stemming from confrontation with its tasks by creating a magical investment of hope and expectation in some omnipotent object. By pinning its hopes on persons, methods or texts with magic powers and not attending in detail to its own primary tasks the group can distance itself from painful awareness of its own accountability.

Many of the adjustments called for in turbulent, complex organisational systems require type II learning – change in calibration of the system, values, orientation, assumptions and basic frameworks (Argyris & Schon 1975). These are changes to established and comfortable patterns which stimulate anxieties.

These social forces are on the level of the widest social ecology of the organisation's milieu. Social defences select from themes in the wider society rather than being differentiated by the particular organisation. Managerialism, as a defence, evades anxiety by creating a sense of mastery in a technical and delimited area. Heroic leadership contains anxiety through the comforting image of the person who can magically deliver the organisation into a successful future.

Before the advent of the change management education of the 80s-90s which suggested that all leaders/managers are also change facilitators, the defensive split was brought about by separating the roles of leaders/managers (this debate was not then in vogue) from those of
change agents who could objectify the change, especially its anxiety provoking elements, and who took upon themselves the transference from the organisation as a whole and undertook to handle it productively, never detracting from the primary role of the CEO.

The analysis of the literature on the organisation of hospital based nursing services makes apparent that the nursing profession plays a key role in managing anxiety for the other members of the clinical team and for patients’ relatives. Nurse managers function as gate keepers for otherwise overwhelmingly difficult feelings. A closer examination of this nursing example will illustrate defensive splitting in action.
At the recent Senior Nurses Managers Forum N.S.W Department of Health 11-13 August 97 where I acted as facilitator, as an incidental observation I displayed the Argyris and Schon Organisational Defensive Routine –

**ORGANISATIONAL DEFENSIVE ROUTINE**

♦ CRAFT A MESSAGE THAT CONTAINS INCONSISTENCY
♦ ACT AS IF THE MESSAGE WAS NOT INTERNALLY INCONSISTENT
♦ MAKE THE AMBIGUITY AND INCONSISTENCY OF THE MESSAGE UNDISCUSSIBLE
♦ MAKE THE UNDISCUSSIBILITY OF THE MESSAGE ITSELF UNDISCUSSIBLE

ARGYRIS & SCHON 1978

There was an overwhelming and immediate reaction from the 70 nurses in the room, who identified themselves in these statements.

The function of the forum related to the recommendations of the Nursing Recruitment and Retention Task Force 1996 which dealt with the factors influencing low recruitment and retention in the profession in NSW especially rec. 8.

One of the other recommendations was no 6 related to harassment in the workplace.

*That a professional forum with colleagues (administrative and clinical) be convened by the NSW College of Nursing to address issues associated with personnel development, staff relationships and harassment in the workplace.*

The recommendation relates to the finding that a key factor in high nurse turnover is the prevalence of abusive behaviour between nurses as well as between nurses and other professionals.
The causes of such behaviour need to be looked for in the psychodynamics of the nursing function in the hospital organisation. Nurses, as gate keepers for much of the anxiety in the system, develop socially structured defence mechanisms which become part of the structure, culture and work processes of the organisation. Some of these defences are: the splitting of the nurse-patient relationship, denial of the significance of individual patients and their needs, detachment from loyalty to an individual unit, elimination of discretion by employing ritual task performance, reduced responsibility through excessive checking, collusive social redistribution of responsibility “Nurses habitually complain that other nurses are irresponsible, behave carelessly and impulsively and in consequence must be ceaselessly supervised and disciplined.” (Menzies 1988; p. 89).

At the forum we came to realise that the complaints stem from a collusive system of denial, splitting and projection that is culturally acceptable to, indeed culturally required of, nurses. Irresponsible impulses, which might slip out of control are attributed to juniors, the burden of overwhelming responsibility is identified with her seniors. Intense harsh discipline becomes the norm and unresolvable interpersonal conflict is endemic.

Other aspects of defence are obscurity of responsibility, delegation to supervisors, unrealistic attitudes to further professional development and the avoidance of change. The avoidance of change is related to the concomitant threat of dismantling these social defence structures. While this process is happening anxieties are likely to be released and become open and intense. Therefore the point of crisis is frequently reached before the need for change is faced and it will be accompanied by what may seem to be inappropriate levels and types of emotional reaction.

I have written at length on this example of social defences in action because it graphically illustrates the real nature of the challenges to making change in organisations.

In the leader vs. manager debate, the leader is seen as the visionary and the manager as the earth bound mechanic. In the change agent vs. change manager debate the change agent’s purpose must be defined as unmasking the individual threats and anxieties which are being avoided. The change manager, needing to remain affiliated with the production team, is
unlikely to fully comprehend the nature of these issues and is likely to be reluctant to take the risk of creating intense emotional reactions if productive work is to be maintained.

Many change managers will feel they have failed to “overcome resistance” for these reasons, and many change projects are seen as “failed”. The role of the change agent, acting “between” the groups and their issues is essential in addressing these defensive routines.

The literature appears to frequently confuse the roles of change agent and change manager, while, in common parlance around organisations, anyone who challenges the status quo can sometimes be called a change agent, although they are operating alone and without a strategic focus.
This confusion has not, as I indicated above, assisted in arriving at clear evaluations of the efficacy of various change activities, nor in coming to an understanding of the characteristics required of the people who implement them.

**Recent Australian Research**
The previous part of this chapter attempted to give a historic overview of the formation of theories about organisations from an international perspective. In this section I would like to narrow the scope to the formative influences at an Australian level in the recent past.
In doing so I am attempting to describe research and theorising which has been carried out by people who are quite well known to my co-participants, on occasions researching the same organisations in which they have conducted projects. Thus these theories have often arisen from the work of my coresearchers and have, in their turn, informed their further practice.

The interviews revealed the importance of the University of NSW through, in particular, Dexter Dunphy and Bill Ford, in the development of this group of change agents.

In Chapter 1, “At the Frontier”, of his 1990 text *Under New Management*, Prof Dunphy with his collaborator Doug Stace describes both a model of change and the reasons for creating one.
The model presented here deals with four major factors that must be closely coordinated by managers seeking high organisational performance. They are:

♦ The changing demands of the organisational environment:
♦ the business strategies the organisation chooses in order to succeed in that environment
♦ the organisational change strategies needed to implement business strategies;
♦ the human resource strategies and practices designed to make it all happen. (pp. 5-6).

Why a sound theoretical model is required is explained thus:

To make the most of environmental opportunities in a more competitive world, what is now needed is a better integration of organisational effort so that the maximum synergy is achieved between business, change and human resources strategies. Theory can help practitioners achieve this. There is, in the end, nothing more practical than a sound theoretical model because this allows us to generalise from past experience to new circumstances. (pp. 8-9).

His further point is made that the four factors are frequently the provinces of separate organisational specialists: corporate planners, functional executives, line managers and human resources practitioners. All of these elements need to be brought together to create a synergistic organisation-wide change. Although it is not stated at this point, this is a clear statement of the role of the change agent.
Figure 2. Understanding Business Strategy and Human Resource Strategy Links

(a) Prevailing views

HRM Strategy

(preglance)

HRM Strategy

(b) Our research

Organisational Change Strategy

Business Strategy

Business Strategy

Business Strategy

From Dunphy and Stace (1990, p. 133)
*Under New Management* is based on research with over 400 individuals through all levels of management and case studies of large scale change in thirteen organisations. From this data the theoretical model was derived and expanded upon in later papers published by the Centre for Corporate Change at the Australian Graduate School of Management (Stace & Dunphy 1991).

The model of organisational change strategies which emerged from this research is illustrated at Figure 3.

![Diagram showing the scale of change with four types of change strategies](image)

The model identifies four types of strategy against the dimensions of style, from collaborative to coercive, and four types of scale, from fine tuning to transformational. Stace & Dunphy make the following introductory comments to the paper, which was titled "Beyond Traditional Paternalistic and Development Approaches to Organisational change and Human Resource Strategies".
Successful strategic repositioning often requires radical organisational change and powerful confrontation of entrenched interest groups. Yet until recently much of the management process literature, particularly in the fields of Organisational Development (OD) and Human Resource Management (HRM), has been dominated by an ideology of tender-mindedness, advocating incremental and collaborative micro-interventions such as team building, interpersonal skills training and effective communication strategies.....The tender-minded, incremental approach contrasts strongly with the tough-minded strategies orientation of most of those who advocate radical change. (p. 1).

The theme is further amplified by reference to Hendry and Pettigrew’s (1990) work which described a similar dichotomy between ‘hard’ HRM policies derived from strategies management frameworks and the ‘personnel’ mode of HR practice, and the ‘soft’ policies derived from the human relations school. The latter are referred to as directed towards primarily human fulfillment rather than productivity and profit.

The paper goes on to consider how the two approaches may be reconciled to serve the different needs of the organisation at different times.

Many of the assumptions discussed in the first section of this chapter are revealed in this analysis. The prose supports the organisation as the regulatory force shaping the workers’ universe to ensure a sufficiency of coercion to enable the achievement of the goals of profit and productivity which are the inherent ‘good’ in this world view.

This paradigm is reinforced as the authors go on to identify four types of HR strategy and describe their characteristic conditions for use. (See Figure 5.).

Briefly to summarise the table, developmental strategies focusing on growing the individual and the team from within the organisation, use intrinsic rewards and a strong sense of culture and are referred as ‘soft;’ Task-focussed strategies emphasise the bottom line through multi-skilling, tangible rewards, formal IR arrangements and a strong business unit culture.
Paternalistic strategy refers to a centralist, rule bound approach emphasising structures and hierarchies, precedent and uniformity.

Turnaround occurs when the executive leaders drive HR for a time to achieve major restructuring and ‘break the old culture’...sometimes described as ‘tough love’. These are the ‘hard’ strategies. The underlying mindset in all of this is about what will be done to the individuals in the organisation, what array of techniques will be selected, rather than what might be done with them, using Follett’s view of conference and collaboration for example.

The conclusion of this research is stated in this way:

We conclude, therefore, that contingent rather than universal solutions are required in developing strategic organisational change and human resource strategies. In practical terms, the ‘soft’ and ‘hard’ approaches to organisational change and HRM are not irreconcilable: they are rather parts of a broader set of contingent choices available to managers, change agents and organisational stakeholders as they implement business strategies designed to maximise corporate performance.

(p. 18).

In fact, as is noted earlier in the paper, the executive level of the organisation most commonly acts in a directive, ‘hard’ mode leaving the managers lower down to use the ‘soft’ approaches with employees closer to the workplace. That is, there is not an integration of the tough and the nurturing modes, rather the two approaches are used situationally to manipulate the best bottom line outcome (p. 6).

This methodology has the effect of maintaining not only the existing power arrangements but also the existing social defence structures, to ensure that the ‘undiscussable’ remains firmly closed.

The two dominant HR strategies were found to be Task-focussed and Turnaround, both on the coercive end of the model.

The authors note that their analysis will have implications for change agents

“Change agents (internal or external) should therefore select the most effective strategy and style of change, rather than reflexively relying on a change strategy and style compatible with their own personal values”.

(p. 7).
This statement clearly indicates the importance of the question asked of my co-participants concerning ethical dilemmas. As the interviews reveal they do not accept the authors’ advice to repress their values, they seek instead to learn their way through a diagnosis of the organisation, including its defensive structures, in a manner that enables those within to discover alternative ways of being and doing.

Congruence of action and values is seen by the respondents in our study as essential for effective and authentic working relationships.

The question of how change agents function has not been the subject of a great deal of research, however there are two studies from the Centre for Corporate Change in this general area.

The first is from ‘Waldensee (1991) and deals with the influence of change agents’ schema and managerial experience on their implementation of strategy.

A knowledge of biases inherent in change agents’ schema content, the study proposes, is necessary to improve their performance in matching strategies to organisational needs.

The study had three aims:

♦ to identify whether change agents use cognitive schema as central filters in diagnosing an organisation’s current situation and planning strategies for change, and if so, what is their typical content’

♦ to study the variation in schema produced by managerial experience,

♦ to examine whether typologies of schema content can be detected.

The study is based on a sample of managers who have been responsible for change rather than dedicated change agents and compares two groups on the bases of their length of experience. (There appears to be an assumption that experience as a manager has equivalence to experience as a change agent).

The study finds that, for newer change agents, the existing communication network in the organisation is the predominant component of the cognitive schema, followed by in order: the strategy to be implemented, the future culture, the existing culture and the size of the organisation.
Table 4: Human resource strategies and conditions for their use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State/Dunphy HR Strategy</th>
<th>Conditions for Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type A. Task/Focused</td>
<td>Use when markets/products/services are undergoing major change and ‘niche’ strategies are prevalent. HR strategic must deliver the capacity for rapid structural, systems, skill and cultural changes. Strong emphasis on business unit autonomy, maximum devolution, rightsizing (continuous redeployment), outsourcing of labour.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type B. Developmental</td>
<td>Use when markets are growing and product/market innovation is desired. HR strategies must create cross-organisational synergy, and a ‘market leader’ culture. Strong emphasis on individual development, corporate culture management, developing a strong internal labour market (promotions/appointments) and team skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type C. Turnaround</td>
<td>Use when the business environment changes dramatically; when the organisation is not in fit with its environment, and when the business strategy of the organisation radically changes. HR strategies must break and abolish redundant HR practices, structures and redefine a new culture. Strong emphasis on forced downsizing, lateral recruitment, new HR systems, and radical work and job restructuring.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type D Paternalistic</td>
<td>Use only in very limited mass production situations where the organisation has an absolute monopoly on stable markets/products, HR strategies are used as devices for ‘control’ and uniformity of procedure/operations. Strong emphasis on formal detailed job descriptions, formalistic employer-employee industrial relationships, and industrial ‘awards’.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Stace & Durphy, 1991, p. 16

History of change, structure, business type, reasons for change, are not rated as important by this sample.

By contrast, for the experienced managers in the sample...current strategy in use, reasons for change, financial status, existing and future cultures, and communication network, in that order, weighed more heavily.
Waldorsee finds that “a number of change agents may be selecting strategic change implementation tactics predominately on the basis of prior experience, training, or personality factor, rather than on the basis of organisational characteristics” (p. 11).

This study demonstrates the rationalist approach to organisational life, namely that a framework of governing variables can be articulated and will enable control of the change implementation.

In this it is at variance with the process consulting, organisational learning and systems theorists who would seek to analyse the organisation in a very different way. This difference is indeed quite likely to separate change agents from practising managers.

Another paper from the Centre for Corporate Change approaches the characteristics of change agents from the competency model.

Tumer & Crawford (1992) build upon the works of Minztber (1980) Boyatzis (1982), Luthans (1988) and Cameron (1991) extending the search for linkage between competencies and aspects of performance. In particular it takes up the notion of hierarchies of competencies examined by Kolb (1986) and later by Schroeder (1989). Schröder postulated that entry level competencies are needed by all managers but at the top level further competencies are needed to carry forward change in complex and turbulent environments.

Tumer and Crawford (1992) identify two kinds of competency: corporate and personal. Corporate competencies are defined as “that set or combination of Corporate Characteristics, skills, abilities and knowledge “owned” by an organisation which results in superior performance.” (p. 3). They identify two forms of corporate competence: 1) technical relating to the creation, production and delivery of products or services 2) managerial which facilitate the direction and motivation, development and integration of people, culture, systems and structure. The two are linked in creating the organisations outcomes. Corporate competencies are seen as persisting over long periods of time. (Of course they also require long term horizons for major changes to occur).
Personal competencies are defined as those characteristics skills, abilities and knowledge “owned” by current members of the organisation and “hired” by it for whatever period. These competencies, also both technical and managerial, will be lost to the organisation when the person leaves.

Thus, via the construct of competencies, it becomes possible to introduce, in a “controlled” fashion, the untidy idea that personal characteristics of an individual influence the processes within and the outcomes achieved by organisations or as the paper puts it “the idea of management competencies provides us with a way of understanding the organisations’ pre-existing abilities, at any point of time, to deal effectively with change” (p. 4).

It remains a matter of caution to examine notions about internal individual characteristics how the authors develop the argument in this way:

“we use the term competency to describe performance in practice. The exercise of a skill, particularly under stress, is influenced by the person’s sense of confidence and self-esteem. Thus while a person may have the skills necessary for a particular competence, they may fail to apply them in practice because of an inadequate sense of self-efficacy. “Bandura (1988) identifies the effect of self-efficacy beliefs on performance ... “sources of these beliefs are identified as mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social recognition and physiological state.” (p. 9).

The postulation is that the stresses inherent in organisation change will lower managers’ sense of self-efficacy when they are asked to apply new competencies and hence enhance the likelihood of organisational failure in meeting the new situation.

A number of theorists have pointed to higher order organisational and personal competencies required to manage turbulent and complex situations. These ideas are inherent in the modern concepts of “learning” organisations. (Senge 1987).

Klein, Edge and Kass (1991) identify “meta skills” which underpin competency development in corporate areas: learning, innovating, skill categorising and embedding. These meta skills are thought to be needed to actualise both technical and managerial
competencies. An example would be the application of learning and embedding skills in information management to integrate new technologies into the organisation or to set up a debate around a strategic vision of a future state.

The authors do not suggest that many organisations are accurately aware of their current corporate competencies or of their relevance to the new state they seek to achieve. They also acknowledge that there is not a taxonomy of change-related corporate competencies but rather a need to research to identify them and reformulate the theoretical understanding of their relationship to change management.

The important observation in this paper in this context is the recognition that the organisation, intuitively or by a process of diagnosis, may identify its areas of weakness in the Corporate Competencies needed for change and may hire in new managers with these abilities and skills.

However, in the absence of the meta skills identified by Klein (1991) these individuals may achieve relatively little in the way of long term change because they fail to build up the corporate competency levels and simply take their package with them when they leave. This is of course precisely the outcome of the activities of most change agents.

Because the acquisition of the new needed competencies will challenge both the belief systems and the self-esteem of existing managers in the organisation who may want to also hold on to what has worked in the past, the chances of embedding the new skills/competencies sets are fairly low.

Nevertheless it is the role of the career change agent to accomplish this embedding of new organisational capabilities, despite the conscious and unconscious defenses of the existing culture and systems.

The model of change agent work proposed by Dunphy and Stace (1990), that of the critical link between the demands of the new business requirement and the various line and
function managers in the organisation, holds true throughout these various research studies, even though definitions have not always been consistent.

Change agents can be mistaken for HR practitioners because they are frequently expert at employing these kinds of solutions; they are mistaken at times for managers, especially when internally recruited; sometimes they are even mistaken for leaders because they share some common traits. Because of their linking role they must be comfortable with the knowledge and skills of the many areas they work between as well as with the fundamentals of the organisation’s core business.

I believe this accounts for the many different perceptions which come to light in the research.

In order to further this analysis of the way change agents work in the Australian context it is necessary to review their role in industrial relations, since this is an inextricable feature of most organisations here.

As cited earlier, Dunphy and Stace discovered four styles of change leadership: Collaborative, consultative, directive and coercive. In providing linkages and facilitation across the many functions in the organisation change agents must employ power-balancing strategies to encourage the parties to listen to each other and respect the different skills and contributions of the various units.

This is a way of working which owes much to the industrial democracy movement which underpins both the values and the techniques which operate.

The industrial democracy movement is closely associated with Socio-Technical Systems theory and both of these have exercised strong influences on the participants in this study. Elden (1996) states the underlying link which is critical to an understanding of the conceptual framework of these change agents: “conventional OD tends to sustain rather than transform hierarchical authority”. (p. 339).

Adherents of industrial democracy emphasise that the managerial levels of an organisation, either because of self-interest or a rigid mindset, frequently represent entrenched resistance to change. Gordon’s (1996) work in American organisations indicates that, in poorly planned change, supervisory and managerial positions grow at the expense of ‘operatives’, resulting in much of the lower productivity and poor cost benefit reported from many change projects.
Figure 5 from Dunphy & Stace (1990, p. 78), explains the continua from hard to soft strategies related to control vs autonomy. The facilitating role of the change agent inherently resists direct coercion because it immediately negates some of the parties to the process and renders it impossible to create true learning.

It is important, however to examine the background of industrial democracy in more depth, if for no other reason than that union opposition is one of the most frequently cited barriers to change in Australian organisations.

![Diagram showing continua from hard to soft strategies](image)

Fig. 5 Change management strategies
In political, sociological and theoretical terms the literature about, and practice of, industrial democracy from the 60’s through to the early 90’s has had a formative effect on change agents in this study. A summary of these influences can be seen in Davis & Lansbury (1996).

Paul Blumberg’s (1968) seminal text Industrial democracy: The Sociology of Participation was written in the years of optimism and risk taking for baby boomers, the 60’s.

There is hardly a study in the entire literature which fails to demonstrate that satisfaction in work is enhanced or that other generally acknowledged beneficial consequences accrue from a genuine increase in workers’ decision-making power. Such consistency of findings, I submit, is rare in social research. (p. 123).

By 1976 an article in CCH Australia titled “Industrial Democracy in Australia” (Pritchard 1976) could refer to “a tide of industrial democracy sweeping Australia.” (p. 79). At this time, however, the focus was on events in Europe; for Australians the Scandinavian countries, Britain and, to a lesser extent, Germany, provided the learning laboratories.

Ramsay (1977) traced the origins of worker participation in Britain to the end of the nineteenth century when share schemes were offered by employers, sometimes to introduce philanthropic welfare provisions for workers, sometimes to overcome pressure of union participation.

The First World War saw the development of Whiteley Councils whose terms of reference were directed towards securing permanent improvements in relations at work, working to set up joint employer-union bodies at national, district and workplace levels to regulate various aspects of employment conditions. Although many councils were established in the 1920’s, the majority lasted only a short time. The exceptions being in the public sector and a few companies such as ICI and Clark’s Shoes.

There was a resurgence of participative mechanisms during the Second World War with shared control through Joint Production and Advisory Committees, over 4,000 of which were in existence in the engineering industry alone by the mid-40’s. In the post-war era
such committees declined through lack of management support and the preference of unions for collective bargaining as the primary means of establishing conditions.

By the 1970’s, with accession to the EC, Britain began to focus on worker directors and workers councils. In 1974 the newly-elected Labour government set up the Bullock Committee of Inquiry, whose terms of reference included both whether or not workers should participate at board level and how they would do so. Employers found such representation threatening and mechanically hard to achieve. They preferred to put effort into Joint Consultative Committees and develop “bottom up” rather than “top down” processes.

The impact of these 70’s developments in Australia came through the literature and through companies whose ‘parents’ were British, e.g. ICI. As always, politicians also looked to British models as likely to ‘fit’ our culture. This became apparent in the 1980’s with the federal Government Green paper and the Accords.

However, it was primarily to Scandinavia that Australian theoreticians on Industrial Democracy turned for inspiration.

In the interwar and postwar periods the small European states developed a corporalist structure based on an ideology of social partnership to replace previously high levels of labour relations conflict. This was supported through a concentrated system of peak employer and employee confederations and voluntary coordination of their conflicting objectives through continuous bargaining including also the state and political parties.

Sweden, in particular, had a high density of union membership with the Social Democratic party constituting the main party of government from 1932 to 1976 and 1982 to 1991. Historically, Sweden had, like Australia, highly centralised wage fixing mechanisms but based on negotiation and voluntary agreements instead of regulation by law. In addition, unions were the exclusive representatives of employees with no serious attempts to set up local workers councils. There was, however, a very comprehensive union presence at the workplace level (Kjellberg 1983), generally, a similar picture to Australia.
In the 1960's Sweden's policies were economically successful with productivity increasing by 7-8 percent each year. The downside was plant closures, employee lay offs and regional imbalances triggering a complete new suite of labour law passed by Parliament which focused on job security and safety and culminating in the Co-determination Act of 1976.

For Australian practitioners and academics the Volvo motor plants during the 70's were the case study of choice because within a labour relations paradigm not dissimilar to our own, they carried out 'deep reform' efforts involving simultaneous development of work organisation, technology, production design and logistical systems (Berggren, 1993). The achievement of Volvo in reforming its organisation to achieve stability and high performance through the balancing of the power of conflicting groups in a social partnership was very appealing to Australian change agents confronted by the strongly adversarial industrial negotiating practices of the 70's.

What had been learned from these European experiences came to expression in the first Accord between the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) and the Australian Labour Party drafted before the ALP won national government in March 1983. Key features of this original and the subsequent Accords are their breadth, encompassing prices, wages, non-wage incomes, taxation, education, health and social welfare matters; the commitment of the partners to consultation and cooperation. "In this sense workers, through their representatives at the peak union council, have played a part in determining key economic, industrial and social welfare issues" (Davis & Lansbury 1996; p. 22).

Furthermore, the Accords provided explicitly far more consultation and employee participation.

The Government will support the establishment of rights for employees, through their unions, to be notified and consulted by employers about the proposed introduction of technological change. The Government will also support the establishment of fair redundancy protection for workers including a requirement on
employers to consult with unions in redundancy situations. (ACTU-ALP 1983, p. 8).

In 1984-1986 through conferences and discussion papers the Government elaborated on an agenda for change which included ideas such as more satisfying work and career for employees, increased workforce flexibility, improved quality and productivity in order to achieve economic recovery and lower unemployment.

Education and training, information sharing and appropriate consultative mechanisms, innovation and improved HR management were also seen as critical issues.

In 1986 the ACTU despatched a mission to study strategies to achieve these improvements in Western Europe. One of the six chapters in *Australia Reconstructed* (ACTU 1987) was devoted to industrial democracy, production consciousness and work and management organisation hailing industrial democracy as “crucial to the maximisation of productivity in Australia”. (ACTU 1987, p. 135).

This brief picture is completed by the joint statements issued in 1986 by the Confederation of Australian Industry, Business Council of Australia and ACTU and in 1988 by the CAI and ACTU which outlined and then elaborated on the requirement for participation, the principles linking consultation, cooperation and trust, and the different forms of consultation.

Consequently there was a fundamental shift in national wage fixing principles starting with the decision of 1987 which gave a first tier increase of $10 with a further 4% depending on industry and enterprise level negotiations to improve efficiency and implement workplace restructuring including multi-skilling, broad banding and removal of restrictive management and work practices (National Wage Case 1987).

The 1988 decision introduced “structural efficiency” – career paths, flexible work practices, and anti-discrimination as issues to be addressed – a still unfinished agenda. In 1989, continuing the same blueprint, new items for the bargaining agenda were: ‘developing
appropriate consultative procedures to deal with the day-to-day matters of concern to employers and workers” (NWC 1989, p. 10).

While it may appear that a disproportionate emphasis has been given to the history of industrial democracy it is one of the major, if not the major, common themes and binding philosophy of the “invisible college”.

As Edward Vaughan argues in his essay “The Romance & Theatre of Managing Together”, (Davis & Lansbury 1996), there is a broad ‘romantic’ vision of joint worker-boss management which draws on influences from the Hawthorne Studies, the social philosophy of Elton Mayo (1945), the image Reich (1983) evoked when he exhorted American business leaders to take their organisations to ‘the next frontier’ of new and creative enterprise, and Dunn’s (1990) reflections on the shift away from “the image of a boundary or dividing line between management and labour over which a protracted battle for control is fought, much in the manner of trench warfare” (p. 2).

This way of thinking and knowing rejects Weber’s formalistic impersonal ideal of bureaucratic management which he saw as necessary for rational and legitimate exercise of judgement and therefore control, especially where that affects others in some way. He required the manager to perform his or her role “without regard for love, hatred, and all purely personal, irrational, and emotional elements which escape calculation” (Gerth & Mills, 1970, p. 216).

Instead, it embraces all these “messy” human dimensions of behaviour and feelings, looking to find ways to be alive and following the dynamics of a continual process of consultation, collaboration, dialogue between conflicting values, needs and points of view.

In the foregoing discussions of a diversity of organisational theorising a tension is obvious between the desire for simplified, rational and linear conceptualisations and the knowledge that human experience is ‘messy’ and discursive, full of many different interwoven stories, layered and circular.
Taking up the discussion earlier in this chapter of social defenses, it would seem to me that much theory construction and strategy design is in fact a defensive routine. Among other purposes it serves, is the function of defending the change agent from anxiety about failure.

Being able to explain the change process to be implemented in an attractively rational manner and employ strategies recently publicised in a management guru’s latest text can be a way to communicate to the client what will happen during the project without needing to go into more difficult issues about power and values. In that sense the change agent may make an entry into the organisation while minimising the amount of anxiety aroused about change.

Elliott Jaques (1955) introduced the concept of social defences against anxiety. The specific hypothesis he explored was that

“one of the primary cohesive elements binding individuals into institutionalised human association is that of defence against psychotic anxiety” (p. 479).

Jaques linked the concept of identification in group formation with the processes of introjective and projective identification as elaborated by Melanie Klein (1952), a neo-Freudian. Both Jaques and Menzies, as quoted earlier in reference to studies of nursing and hospitals (1970), point to examples of organisational routines which serve this protective purpose, e.g. the first officer on a ship who plays the role of the disciplinarian and ‘deadshit’ so that the captain can be idealised as the good and protective figure; or the depersonalisation practiced by nurses in referring to the “liver in bed ten” or the “pneumonia in bed fifteen”.

These social defences operate for the most part unconsciously, are deeply ingrained and hence difficult to change. While they are usually maladaptive for the organisation’s achievement of its goals, they are very supportive for individuals under stress. The more stress is imposed by the organisation’s lack of alignment with the demands of its customers or community, the more these defences are needed. It is an easy transportation to introduce, in the form of a fad based solution, a new defensive routine as the ‘saviour’…quality or team building, for example, rather than challenge the undiscussable.

As Bain (1997) says:
To learn, whether as an individual, a group, or an organisation requires giving up ignorance, or something that is thought to be known. If it is something the individual, group, or organisation thinks it already knows, to learn, and thereby to change, is like a mini-death to a known way of being. Organisational learning, which is likely to change this known way of being, (however maladaptive it may be) will be resisted. (p. 3).

A change agent will need to work very hard to bring such issues to awareness, especially as they are likely to be buried throughout the systems of the organisation. In many cases the client in the organisation is not aware of these maladaptive processes, and if they were would not have the freedom to change them, the time or the courage. Where these circumstances are strongly manifest the experienced change agent will refuse the assignment, knowing it cannot be achieved. That would be the ethical position, however the literature is replete with injunctions to apply the latest methodology and, especially for the manager, who has had only a superficial grounding in ‘change management’, these formular approaches are enticing.

In summary, then, what kind of beliefs and theories do our experienced change agents operate within?

This overview of the theoretical landscape in which our group of change agents grew up may seem, in a disappointing way, not to have ‘come down on’ any particular model or world view.

The fundamental principle of our practice is process and critique, to entertain the pluralist voices of the organisation. Warning bells would be ringing if a particular theoretical view was seen to be in ascendency. Foucault saw theories as useful less to explain than to criticize and raise questions.

A critique is not a matter of saying that things are not right as they are. It is a matter of pointing out what kinds of assumptions, what kinds of similar, unchallenged, unconsidered modes of thought the practices we accept rest (upon)... criticism is
absolutely indispensable for any transformation... as soon as one can no longer think things as one formerly thought them, transformation becomes both very urgent, very difficult and quite possible. (Foucault, in Keitzman, 1988, p. 154).

Nevertheless, the reasonable person does expect that anyone will have a position on life, a set of philosophical and psychological beliefs about the ‘Nature of man’.

While I see these beliefs as owing much to the genome and its interaction early on with the environment, and in particular attachment figures, and being formed in the emotional and sensual awarenesses that build our knowing over time, I can discern an answer to this question for those souls who feel more comfortable in being able to place an individual politically and socially.

For my schema I am indebted to Vance Packard, who in 1978 recognised the inherent threat in the growth of organisational psychology, among other institutions and published *The People Shapers*. He took a quote from Rogers for his frontispiece:

“We can choose to use our growing knowledge to enslave people in ways never dreamed of before, depersonalising them by means so carefully selected that they will perhaps never be aware of their loss of personhood.” (Rogers, cited in Packard 1978; p. 116)

He chose to characterise modern philosophical and psychological theorists by their position on a number of key questions on the nature of Man, which seem to me to address the issues a reasonable person would want to know about in dealing with another:

1. Is Human Nature good, bad, or neutral?

Packard found that Freudians, empiricists and ethologists, to name but a few, took a basically negative view of man as self serving and driven by aggression; the behaviourists he saw as neutral along with the social learning theorists, while the neo-Freudians and humanists, Maslow and Rogers were those who took the view
that there is an innate potential for ‘goodness’ in Man, which will be expressed given the optimum conditions.

By the very definition of the way they work, members of this study take a humanist view. They believe that people can and will work together to resolve common problems and are capable of showing courage in pursuing an issue in which they have come to believe.

2. Is human behaviour the result of free will or is it almost completely determined by environment, heredity, early childhood or God?

As Packard indicates the Humanist perspective is one of moderate determinism, acknowledging the contribution of all these influences. Indeed our change agents use all of these ‘explanations’ in one way or another in their daily meaning making for clients.

3. What are the sources of human determination?

Packard derives four possible key influences: instinctual drives..province of the Freidians, ethologists and Humanists;
genetic endowment, where Eysenck has been the popular theorist;
environmental forces...where once again the Humanists feature along with the social learning theorists, Neo-Freidians, Marxists and behaviourists;
and, a poor last, spirituality, where he acknowledges that most cultures until recent times credited God with a lot of influence over us.

Along with Bowlby and Winnecot, our change agents understand behaviour to be influenced by a blend of all these forces, including an awareness of a spiritual dimension which accompanies the striving for self actualisation, so important to Maslow and Rogers.

As two of my coresearchers remarked, it has now become possible in organisations to talk about a spiritual dimension of life and hence, in some assignments where this
is an important element of the paradigm in which the organisation is moving, these issues will need to be addressed.

4. Do human beings and animals function according to the same principles of behaviour or are there innate tendencies in Man that go beyond simple animal needs?

This is not an issue that arose very much during this study, however it is possible to extrapolate from the answers to the previous questions that our group would see humans as continuous with animals, but, by virtue of a more well-endowed cortex, capable of much more elaborate cognitive processes. In this belief they do not quite fit any of Packard's groupings not being as simplistically animal as the behaviourists and the Freidians or as divorced from physiology as the Neo-Freudians. Once again a theorist like Bowlby comes closest to describing the interplay of physical and mental lives, which reflects the paradigm of awareness inhabited by the invisible college.

5. What should be done to enhance Man's future? What are the ultimate goals of human development?

Here, while Bowlby, Rogers and Senge all describe a part of the ideal, the analysis of how power is manifested in society is the most important issue. For an explanation of this, Foucault's massive work in understanding power and knowledge is an essential foundation of the understanding of where we should be going to improve our lives and organisations, in the philosophy of this group.

Maslow and Rogers talk about achieving the freedom of self-actualisation, a state in which the individual has had sufficient support and opportunity in life to be able to realise all the innate potential born in them. Change agents see this self-actualisation as located strongly within the inter-relationships of a group, organisation or community. And they see the freedom others talk about coming from the capacity to build meaning, through epistemic
learning, together with those entities in which we live and move. Freedom becomes a way of managing awareness so that no ‘other’ can oppress us in its formation.
CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

This chapter explores the methodology of this study in four aspects:

1) awareness and knowing, from the Gestalt and learning theory perspectives...leading to a view of how knowledge is built;

2) systems theory as it relates to change agents’ practice and therefore its implications for the change agents’ way of ‘being’ in the world, especially their sense of personal empowerment and integrity.

3) systems theory and learning, the way in which levels of learning and the maintenance of multiple perspectives are used by change agents to prepare and maintain themselves as authentic practitioners;

4) the interview, examining power relationships in interviewing, the role and skills of the interviewer in an in-depth interview, and the way in which knowledge is co-constructed through such interactions.

Awareness and Knowing

I have said that Perls and his creation, Gestalt Therapy, profoundly influenced my development as a change practitioner. Gestalt Therapy builds its knowing and being in a particularly strenuous commitment to a few principles which, at first blush, strike the newcomer as strangely and unnecessarily difficult:

- The whole is more than the sum of the parts
- the perceptual experience of figure and ground...the way in which the same picture can be seen as different images from one moment to the next (like the old crone and the young woman in the picture hat)
• The understanding that we must always begin our approach to a problem in the here and now...take the client where she/he is at.

These ideas become clearer if we look at the Gestalt description of awareness, which holds that experience can be divided into three kinds of awareness:

- awareness of the outside world...sensory contact with the current objects and events;
- awareness of the inside world...sensory contact with inner events in the present such as itches, muscle tensions, the physical correlates of feelings, butterflies in the tummy, a tightness in the throat:
- awareness of fantasy activity...including all mental activity beyond present awareness of ongoing experience, i.e., all explaining, imagining, interpreting, guessing, thinking, planning, remembering and anticipating.

It is really difficult to bring home the realization that everything exists in the momentary now. The past exists only as parts of present reality – things and memories that I think about as being ‘from the past’. The idea of the past is sometimes useful, but at the same time it is an idea, a fantasy that I hold now. (Stevens. 1971)

Understanding this idea places this thesis, for me, in a particularly annoying situation: because it has been written over quite a long time it represents a genre to which I cannot wholly subscribe...it comes to be an explanation and an interpretation.

So I caution the reader to take this work in the same spirit that the coresearchers offer it, simply as a moment in their awareness to be tested against the here and now.

Now

It is only this,
no draft or final manuscript
survive with which to speculate,
for I have burned them.
No edition has a date,
I distinguish no printings,
number and sign no copies
so what you hold, collector,
will not appreciate.
Do not put this on your shelf, critic,
for the special paper dissolves in air.
Read, that is all,
now is the only time
to take the wafer of our sacrament
before it vanishes.
This is all there is.
   Peter Goblen
   (from Stevens, 1971, p. 7).

The Perls’ way of thinking holds that, whether your dialogue is with another specific person or with society, it occurs in your own world of fantasy. “If there is a conflict in your dialogue, this conflict is between two parts of yourself, even if you alienate and disown one part and call it ‘society’, mother or father.” (Stevens, p. 62). Internal conflict is the enemy of action and problem solving in the outer world. Participation in outside conflicts before the internal ones are resolved creates more conflict and uses up much energy needed for action.

A further precept in the Gestalt way of thinking is to avoid ‘why’ questions which are likely to produce rationalisations and explanations, which lead you away from your awareness in the present. “If you eliminate ‘why’ and ‘because’ from your vocabulary, the only thing you will lose is some of your confusion.” (Stevens, 1971, p. 131) By contrast ‘how’ and ‘what’ questions are good since they focus on facts and processes in the present tense of your experience.

‘Explaining, seeking cause and reasons, interpreting, are all widely accepted ways of ‘understanding’ your experience. In fact they are ways of avoiding your experience’ (p. 131) interpretation, talking about experience, distances you from your awareness and
interferes with the process of learning, that is the integration of that experience into your internal world of knowing. Gregory Bateson (quoted in Hoffman, 1987) defines true knowing as not just an accumulation of facts but the growth and transformation of the self. Aristotle argued that all thinking involves an association with the body (Hett 1957). He believed that the intellect worked on evidence provided by the senses even in abstract areas such as mathematics. For this reason he proposed that the study of the psyche should be included in the study of nature.

While scientific method and positivism intervened for a time constructivists are coming back to this view and elaborating on it. Bateson (1973), a researcher in biological evolution and behaviour, put forward a new epistemology of mind arising out of systems theory and ecology…an ecology of mind. He proposed mind as an inevitable function of complexity in the interaction of organisms and the environment.

The individual mind is immanent but not only in the body. It is immanent also in pathways and messages outside the body, and there is a larger mind of which the individual mind is only a subsystem.

As you arrogate all mind to yourself, you will see the world around you as mindless and therefore not entitled to moral or ethical consideration. The environment will seem yours to exploit.” (Bateson, 1972, p. 442)

While Freud elucidated the workings of the inner mind, Bateson has suggested the way in which our minds are only parts of a larger mind. This may be what some people refer to as God, in any event it would seem to be inherent in our social and ecological systems.

This sense of connection to the free flow of energy around us is part of the way of being for which Freud and latterly the Gestalt therapy movement are striving when they speak of eliminating the wasteful expenditure of energy on inner, fantasy conflicts with parts of our fragmented selves. The concept of wholeness, integration, authenticity, as it is sometimes called in leadership literature, is the foundation of the active personality, able to explore and learn in the world.
Peter Drucker published *The Age of Discontinuity* in 1969 and among the dimensions of the future “around the year 2000” he described the way in which knowledge would be built. He contrasted the existing role of the universities as primary knowledge builders divided into separate faculties focussing on research, more pure than applied, and teaching, with the new developing role where, in his words “the best men” are drawn into consulting in the outside world and the focus is more functional and applied.

In this context of applied research and learning Drucker points also to the role of the manager in bringing together the disparate disciplines to create effective action.

His prediction holds true for the arena in which this study is set, for as builders of knowledge the coresearchers are first and foremost practitioners who explore their ways of knowing and being as a necessary part of authentic and reflexive learning, on the job.

Drucker also emphasises the interdisciplinary nature of the new way of building knowledge. As we have seen this is reflected in the role of the change agent working between functions and disciplines in the organisation to provide an integrating link to enact a new way of thinking, learning, and doing.

This shift from the pure to the applied in response to the demands of latter twentieth century life has created the environment for the change agent’s work. Incidentally, with the changing economics of university funding, it has diminished the privileged position of “pure scientific research”. In this shift the practitioner has gained some status as an enquirer and knowledge derived from everyday life has gained some legitimacy.

In a second arena theoreticians have developed from practitioners, that is the area of psychoanalysis and psychotherapy. Freud built his revolutionary concepts from observations of his patients and heavily illustrated his theoretical expositions with examples from the consulting room. Likewise, Perls left a library, not only of writings but of films and videos of his work with clients. Most often it is these examples which cause the ‘penny to drop’ and allow you to turn theory into practice. The integration of images of
others in therapeutic interactions became, through reflection, a part of me and of my practice. They created living images or fantasies in my awareness which became part of my process of knowing.

John Bowlby (1988), whose writings on attachment theory are important to this study in another way, describes what he calls his alternative framework for research. He begins by contrasting the roles of practitioner and researcher:

The aim of the practitioner is to take into account as many aspects as he can of each and every clinical problem with which he is called upon to deal. This requires him not only to apply any scientific principle that appears relevant but also to draw on such personal experience of the condition as he may have acquired and, especially to attend to that unique combination of features met with in each patient...taking all factors into account and giving each its due weight is the art of clinical judgement.

The outlook of the research scientist is quite different. In his efforts to discern general patterns underlying individual variety he ignores the particular and strives to simplify, risking thereby over-simplification (p. 40).

Bowlby goes on to point out that the wise scientist, in properly defining a limited problem and selecting the most suitable methodology to examine it, will not only elucidate the problem but may develop ideas which have broader applicability. Bowlby sees the clinician as being at an enormous advantage in being able to access deeper levels of information about a patient during the therapeutic process and in being able to intervene and directly observe the consequences.

Yet the research scientist has the advantage of a range of methods to cross check on interventions and the privilege of time to check hypotheses. They have access to animal experiments, biochemical analyses and other ingenious techniques to make creative new ways to build an information base.

Bowlby’s approach is to accept data from both methodologies, the clinical and the scientific. Hence individual case data is combined with ‘empirical’ behaviourist case
studies like those of his colleague Mary Ainsworth (Ainsworth, 1978) on children in nursery school, Harry Harlow’s studies of the effects of maternal deprivation on rhesus monkeys (Harlow and Harlow, 1965) and current ideas in evolutionary biology and neurophysiology within the psychoanalytic tradition to inform his theory building on attachment.

This approach to the acquisition of knowledge of the world around us is inherent in this study’s methodology. It is also the way change agents set about their practice.

**Systems Theory and the methodology of change**

As I have noted before, socio-technical systems theory was a large influence on my early practice as a change agent, however I soon learned to avoid using the term because it inevitably elicited a look of blank incomprehension. Whatever Emery and Trist (1981) achieved in talking to the initiated, it required the likes of Peter Senge, with his Learning Organisation publications such as *The Fifth Discipline*, (1992) to engage the world of management in a discourse about systems theory in organisations.

In an interview published in 1984 he both defines his view of systems theory and explains its levels:

> Systems dynamics is the study of complex systems, particularly complex human systems. As a field it operates on several different levels. At one level it’s a collection of data about the dynamics of specific systems, at another it’s a methodology, and at yet another level it’s a body of theory. The data level consists of insights into the dynamics of specific systems families, organisations, cities, nation-states, or even the world. At the methodological level, it’s simply a way of studying complex systems. On the theoretical level, it’s an emerging body of postulates about the abstract principles of complex systems (1984).

He goes on to say “There are no boundaries...You open up a Pandora’s Box when you say the world is an interconnected economic, sociological, cultural, ecological, spiritual system, and that there are no inherent boundaries”. (p. 62)
While Senge describes the role of system dynamics as looking for the causality that underlines the longer term patterns of change in complex systems, he acknowledges that we will never completely understand it at all levels. However, there do seem to be plateaus of insight we reach. In therapeutic practice, for example, every once in a while the therapist and patient come to a real insight that clears up problems in many different areas of the patient’s life. Certain individuals have extraordinary skills at getting people to have those sorts of insights. I have heard people say this about Fritz Perls. No one could figure out how he could do what he did...I suspect he had a deep intuitive sense of the level of causality that runs in the underlying structures of human consciousness – that level that locks people into certain dysfunctional behaviour patterns. At the deepest level of system dynamics we are trying to cultivate a unique intuitive/rational sense of when we are getting to a critical aspect of a system. You can really feel it sometimes, you know when you are getting close to a leverage point. It rarely has any correlation to the symptoms most people focus on, because in a system cause and effect are rarely closely related in time and space. That’s really the difference in our notion of causality. (p. 61)

Thus the model of reality espoused by systems theorists envisages an underlying network of interrelationships in a system which, if understood, will explain most of the long term patterns of change. I say most because systems theory also acknowledges that since systems are open ended one will never figure out the complete answer. This is a recontextualisation of rationality growing out of realising the messy complexity of human systems and resigning the ambition or fantasy that we can ultimately exercise full control over them. To quote Senge (1984) again from the same interview “To search for understanding knowing there is no ultimate answer is far more creative than searching with the idea that there is an answer out there that one must find”. (p. 61)

The definition of personal power in such a world view therefore must be about the power to influence interrelationships, not about controlling individuals or groups. This influencing potential, in Senge’s view comes from a person’s understanding of their own purpose in life and their achievement of internal alignment with that purpose. This is another way of
saying what Gestalt is saying when it talks about overcoming internal fragmentation and learning to live in the “now”.

This internal alignment provides the base for moving outside the self to use interpersonal relationships to assist others to make a similar shift towards empowerment. Understanding at this deeper level the relationships in a system, and being able to maintain personal alignment in the face of the uncertainty of working without an “answer” creates a unique ability to influence change.

**Systems Theory and Learning**

“The most socially useful learning in the modern world, is learning the process of learning, a continuing openness to experience and incorporation into oneself, of the process of change” (Rogers, 1951, p. 388).

Figure 6.

![Diagram](image)

(Bawden. 1993, p. 13)

This simple model of learning, derived from Kolb’s work implies the bringing together of theoretical and practical learning into experience incorporated into the self. Another way to describe the same relationships is to say we learn:

- propositionally for knowing
- practically for doing and
- experientially for being.

Systems theory now takes this cycle model and begins to make of it a system of enquiry, an experiential enquiry system, i.e., a methodology designed as a learning system. Between the elements of the model the relationships are recursive, i.e., all the elements can
interconnect in a variety of sequences, and this individual system is linked to and influenced by the external world.

So, just as what we do in this world is determined by the way that we see it, so too is the way we see it determined by what we are able to do in it. And just as what we experience of our world shapes the way we think about it, so too does the way we think, shape the way we experience. And always we are open to the influence of those others who comprise the socio-cultural aspects of our system environment. (Bawden, 1993, p. 25)

Having described briefly the system we need to relate it to our ways of knowing. Starting with a cognitive model of learning outlined by Kitchener (1983) who proposes that:

- Cognition (Level one learning) deals with knowing
- Meta-cognition (level two learning) deals with knowing about knowing
- Epistemic-cognition (level three learning) deals with knowing about the nature of knowledge.

Argyris’ (1978) double loop learning (the restructuring of norms and governing variables as well as direct outcomes), so important for change, depends on meta-learning and is not the initial way most people approach a problem, coming as they do from a cause and effect framework of enquiry. It is from meta-learning that we develop new methods of enquiry and how to use them (Bawden, 1993).

Epistemic-learning deals in the domain of philosophy and values and of our profound beliefs about the nature of nature. It is the level of enquiry which reaches into our deepest prevailing ways of seeing and believing in the world...sometimes called paradigms.

For this reason epistemic competence may be the most critical one of all, simply because we are frequently so much immersed in our paradigm that we are not aware of it. Living as we do in a particular community at a particular point in history the set of perspectives, mindsets or cognitive frameworks which we bring to bear on issues from day to day are so much part of ourselves that it can require real effort, and some discomfort, to endeavour to step outside them. This discomfort can also be seen as pressure towards change brought about by receiving inconsistent information from outside ourselves.
A SYSTEMIC LEARNING PROCESS

THIRD ORDER (EPISTEMIC INQUIRY)

Investigating prevailing worldviews and exploring their dialectical potential

SECOND ORDER (META) INQUIRY

Exploring the influence of prevailing worldviews, on both divergence and assimilation

FIRST ORDER INQUIRY

Assimilation

Identifying key emergent themes from the picture

Divergence

Building a "rich" picture of perception

Convergence

Designing responses to the emergent themes as desirable strategic systemic adaptations

Accommodation

Planning actions for putting designs into practice in ways which are culturally feasible

Raising the consciousness of methods of inquiry convergence and accommodation

Providing the methodological frameworks for "worldview analysis"

This provides for the three "loops" of critical inquiry: learning, meta-learning and epistemic-learning, with the process of "experiential inquiry" at the heart, and all revealed through dialogue as "critical conversations", or insightful storytelling.

Table 7: from Bawden 1995, p. 52
Burrell and Morgan (1979), taking a sociological perspective on organisations point out the significance of paradigms as they reflect beliefs about:

- the nature of nature (ontological beliefs)
- the nature of knowledge about nature (epistemological beliefs)
- the nature of our process of enquiry into nature (methodology)
- the nature of human nature

In terms of methods of enquiry four basic paradigms are evident along two axes, subjective - objective and holist - reductionist. From what has already been said it is clear that this methodology fits in the subjective, holist paradigm, the systems enquiry paradigm, called by Bawden (1993) the holonocentric paradigm. He describes it as grounded in an acceptance of the premise that ‘whole systems are somehow different from the mere sum of their parts”. (p.31).

The essence of this wholeness lies in the method of enquiry which attempts to explore the interrelationships between all of the different perspectives that different actors bring to an issue. However from this paradigm one must acknowledge the necessity of examining the perspectives of the other three as having legitimacy as ways of viewing the world and be prepared to interrogate them. In other words to consider the contribution of the reductionist ‘scientific method’ of the egocentric view that embraces subjectivism but believes the whole equals the sum of the parts, and of the eccentric paradigm which retains epistemological reliance on objectivity and believes that systems exist as separate organised entities in the ‘real’ world.

The diagram above illustrates these levels of learning and the way in which epistemic enquiry emerges out of the earlier levels.

Turning to the application of this model of learning in this study, I have already discussed at the beginning of this chapter the view of level one learning as awareness in the here and now for each individual and how it relates to levels of explaining, remembering or fantasising.

Donald Schon (1983) introduced the concept of the reflective practitioner pointing out the critical requirement for what we have referred to as level two learning, the capacity to go
back and explore the governing variables of the system within which we are working or enquiring.

As we follow the process to level three learning, the domain of philosophy and ethics we come to issues of worth, justice and social values. There are many ways to explore this domain. Ulrich’s schema (1983) is appealing because it replicates the questions a change agent will consider before taking on an assignment and this came through very clearly in the interviews in this study.

When contemplating designing a system of enquiry in an organisation or community, analysis can look at:

- the value base...what purposes are served? Whose are they? What are to be the measures of success?
- the basis of power...What are the sources of control? Who holds the resources? Who makes decisions?
- the basis of knowledge...Who holds the expertise? Will it be shared?
- the basis of legitimation...From whence is authority derived? Are these people self-reflective and accountable? Who will argue for the disempowered and those who cannot speak for themselves?

From these tests one can derive a sense of the ‘goodness’ of an intervention or enquiry without adopting a political stance.

Alternatively one can apply the authenticity criteria defined for this form of enquiry (Guba, 1990) namely:

- ontological authenticity – heightened awareness of one’s own assumptions and constructions, manifest and unspoken;
- educative authenticity – increased awareness and appreciation (although not necessarily the acceptance) of the constructions of other stakeholders;
- catalytic authenticity – judged by the prompt to action generated by the enquiry;
- tactical authenticity – the ability to take action, to engage the political arena on behalf of oneself or participants.

The construction of new knowledge and its manifestation in the transformation of the individual or organisation through the state of being thereby created, is the ultimate test of success in this kind of system of enquiry, which is at the same time a system of learning.
Torbert (1989) suggests a person must undergo “an unimaginable scale of self development before being capable of relationally valid action”. Only in the later stages of development is the person “aware that there are alternative frames, that perceptions, including one’s own, are always framed by assumptions and such assumptions can be tested and transformed”.

(p. 86)

For this relativization of enquiry we must look back to Hegel and to Marx…Hegel because he demonstrated that ideas about reality and its unchangingness are radically subject to historical chance and consequently the person who claims to know anything is historically and partially situated, so that where he/she is standing about anything ought to be known. Hegel’s idea of full self-understanding was that it would be achieved by successful identification with the absolute and infinite spirit of reason. Marx arrived to turn his notion around and situate men and women in the finite world of their material and economic lives and to use this knowledge as an instrument to transform society and its institutions. Out of synthesising these ideas has grown the contribution of Habermas in critical theory which embodies views of the liberating and subversive nature of knowledge.

Nevertheless amidst all this relativism, the commonsense position of most people says that we do hold long term sets of values and beliefs about the world and that these can be “good” or “bad” and lead to a better or worse social order. While, according to William Morris (1973) the goals of critical theory are freedom, fulfillment and self-critical awareness, we are conscious of wanting to belong to a group, a community or even a state which shares common beliefs and common meanings and interpretations of life, i.e. the social construction of reality.

Building on the inheritance from philosophers of consciousness such as Hegel, philosophers of the unconscious like Freud and Schopenhauer, and methodologists of human understanding like Weber and Habermas (Munchiello at al. 1996) interpretive methodologies have developed to explore direct lived experience, going beyond simple reporting (thin description) to describing and probing intentions, motives, meanings, contexts, situation and circumstances of actions (Denzin, 1992).
Researchers are now making new attempts to begin to consider interpretive practice for the ways that the objectivity of the world is locally accomplished and managed with reference to broad organizational, social and cultural resources, thus trying what Garfunkel (1967) called ‘artfulness’ to established interpretive structures. “The link between interpretive practice and interpretive structures provides a way of understanding the deprivatisation of experience as contemporary life is increasingly conducted in public organisational spheres” (Holstein and Gubrium 1998, p. 138).

Schutz (1962) has contributed a description of this process which fits with my earlier description of the nature of awareness;

individuals construct a stock of knowledge and use language to share typifications which build up a shared experience rendering things and occurrences recognisable to one another. We assume others perceive the world as we do, even though mistakes sometimes occur, that the world exists outside our apprehension of it. We take our subjectivity for granted overlooking its constitutive character, presuming that we intersubjectively share the same reality. (p. 140).

This intersubjectivity is an ongoing accomplishment, a set of understandings sustained from moment to moment by participants in interaction.

Hence ethnomethodology studies the members of a group in using their practical procedures for creating, sustaining and managing a sense of objective reality. The method is non-judgmental and does not look to criticize the ‘correctness’ of the members’ constructs.

The aim is to describe how conduct is explained with reference to rules, values and motives. In this methodology meanings are seen as ‘indexical’ i.e. dependent on context, socially accomplished realities are ‘reflexive’ i.e. simultaneously “in” and “about” the settings to which they orient and which they describe, “talk” and “interaction” become the primary objects of research not a means to reach some fundamental substratum. Talk is seen as the very action through which local realities are accomplished. Structure, context and content are central concerns in the review of talk as interaction.
A second strand of ethnomethodology focuses on the embodied conceptualisations and practices that practitioners within a particular domain of work recognise as belonging to that domain. (Giddens & Turner, 1987). These are studies of specific interactional practices through which order is manifested and rendered accountable in highly specific social, historical and practical circumstances... in which the practitioner discerns recognisable categories, vocabulary, organisational missions, professional orientations, group cultures and other existing frameworks for assigning meaning.

These descriptions and interactions are used to incite action among members of the group and build collective representations, reminiscent of Bateson’s (1972b) immanent mind or Senge’s (1984) deeper understanding of the system.

This approach can be traced to Emile Durkheim’s (1984) work on social forms, e.g., religion, community, family, home, as collective representations abstractly representing the organisation of peoples lives. These forces generate “institutional” or culturally embedded thinking and individual “rule-making”, so that individuals test their conclusions against these institutional contexts before accepting them as "real”.

“Indeed the organisational embeddedness of experience has so diversified the meanings of self and our social relations as to transform modern institutional life into a post modern form” (Gubrium, 1994, p. 139). Gubrium argues that, as everyday reality is increasingly grounded in diverse public settings, its rationalisation is more artful and local, less total, than in Weber’s conceptualisation. (Weber, 1947).

As Schutz (1964) notes numbers of social issues have been examined using this approach: battered wife syndrome, labour market employment and recruitment practices, carers’ responses to Alzheimers patients, women as mothers and family members, communication and medical practice. This exploration is of the activities of the group in defining behaviours into collective representations of ways of thinking and responding to challenging issues in the prevailing context.
The interview

It will be clear from this discussion that the chosen method for data collection in this kind of enquiry will be the interview or, more specifically, the in-depth interview. Until Oakley’s research (1988) on interviewing women it was often assumed that the structured or semi-structured interview was the most useful method to gain insight into the way individuals construct meaning and knowledge in their lives. In-depth interviewing aims to collect richer descriptive data by allowing the interviewee to make meanings and associations uninterrupted, as far as possible by the intrusion of another set of constructs from the interviewer. It relies on the processes of active listening and empathy, when carried out as its best, to free the individual to explore their conscious, and sometimes unconscious awareness. In this position it is assumed that the individual is striving to be consistent and to make meaning.

Various theorists hold different views about the forces which influence the individual and ‘distort’ perceptions of the self and the world. Freud (1973) saw the unconscious as intruding as mental illness, the ego psychologists Erikson and Sullivan (1953) saw immaturity arising from internal fragmentation obscuring understanding, Habermas (1987b) saw distortions arising from social institution and the work of interpretation as the restoration of human autonomy. Foucault (1979) and Bourdieu (1984) share the view that the forces are largely external to the self. Foucault sees ambient explanatory discourses, which seek power, not for people but for themselves.

Power relations are both intentional and non subjective. In fact they are intelligible, this is because they are imbued through and through, with calculation; there is no power which is exercised without a series of aims and objectives. But this does not mean that it results from the choice or decision of an individual subject; let us not look for the headquarters that presides over its rationality...the logic is perfectly clear, the aims decipherable, and yet it is often the case that no one is there to have invented them (Focault, 1979, p. 41).

In this construction the ongoing idea of power is mediated through social and organisational phenomena such as the disciplines...military, medical, religious, which are a part of our history and context. In this study all of these elements are accepted as legitimate
influences through the perceptions of the multiple stakeholders for the authenticity of the methodology.

If this pluralism is to be achieved, however, it will require certain behaviours from the interviewer.

In defining the relationship between the interviewer and interviewee issues of power and vulnerability arise (Cotterill, 1992). Perls titles his chapter on interviewing in *The Gestalt Approach* (1976) “Who is listening”.

He goes on to say

> ideally, the therapist would act in compliance with the demands of the Eastern sages ‘make yourself empty so that you can be filled’ or with Freud’s rephrasing of that concept in the demand that the therapist’s attention be free floating and he himself be free from complexes. By which is meant, in Gestalt terms the need to impose your needs on others or to ‘hook’ them into your own issues of power and control.

In Carl Roger’s (1951) explanation of the interview, the interviewer, therapist, counsellor or teacher, is strongly discouraged from imposing themselves or any of their views on the discussion, in the interests of keeping the client as the central focus.

To be of assistance to you I will put aside myself, the self of ordinary interaction, and enter into your world of perception as completely as I am able. I will become, in a sense, another self for you—an alter ego of your own attitudes and feelings—a safe opportunity for you to discern yourself more clearly, to experience yourself more truly and deeply, to choose more significantly. (p. 34-35)

To focus my whole attention and effort upon understanding and perceiving as the client perceives and understands, is a striking operational demonstration of the belief I have in the worth and significance of this individual client.”

Perls (1976) defines this by saying

The therapist must have a relational awareness of the total situation, contact with the total field—both his own needs and his reactions to the patient’s manipulations and the patient’s needs and reactions to the therapist (p. 106). And he must feel free to
express them “In so far as the therapists thought and needs pertain to the here and now of the interview they are legitimate part of the process (p. 107) Where Senge (1984) talks of ‘plateaus of insight’ into a system Perls (1976) talks of moments of renewal which can be shared between therapist and patient. He includes a quote from Emerson unannotated “We mark with light in the memory the few interviews we have had, in the dreary years of routine and of sin, with souls that made our souls wiser; that spoke what we thought; that told us what we knew; that gave us leave to be what we only were. (cited in Perls 1976, p. 105).

Behind all these attempts to define the interview process lies the issue of power. From the traditional expert model in our Western society we are familiar with in going to see the family doctor or discussing our lives with the local priest, we are accustomed to perceiving the person conducting the discussion as the more powerful in the relationship.

This is the outcome, I would suggest, of the scientific, objective attitude to enquiry and problem solving. Shulamit Reinhart (1990) puts her finger on it in this way:

These same people are socialised to control – from the pulpit, from the lectern, from Capitol Hill, in the doctor’s office, in the experimental laboratory, and in the collection of data. People not socialised to control others are well suited for qualitative research.” (p. 296).

Humanistic approaches to psychology and therapy emphasised the client’s experience and excluded a controlling therapeutic stance. Perls acted as a guide to direct the client towards certain experiences out of which insight could develop. Rogers held that the interpretations and judgements of the therapist had no place in the interaction. He emphasises that the therapist must totally resign any aspirations to a controlling position. Harriet Martineau, back in 1838, defined the essence of Roger’s position for him:

Every observer and recorder is fulfilling a function; and no one observer or recorder ought to feel discouraged, as long as he desires to be useful rather than shining; to be the servant rather than the lord of science, and a friend to the home-stayers rather than their dictator. (Martineau 1988; pp. 20-21).

Martineau reminds us that power operates at all levels of society and of knowing in society…in homes and in workplaces, wherever attempts are made to make sense of living.
It is inherent in our discourses as they organise and regulate even interpersonal relationships in a power framework. Seen in this context power is a fluid element operating in any set of interactions therefore no single person will have total control over all of the discourses and the meaning arising in them, in their life.

We should pause to note that “it is possible to argue that the entire project of developmental psychology (perhaps even the basis of the Western Education system) depends on the idea that we can achieve a particular kind of rational control over ourselves and the world in which we live.” (Monk, p. 49).

This brings us to one of the most recent developments in therapy, a product of the last decade of the twentieth century, narrative therapy. This approach to therapy begins from the philosophy of language wherein meaning arises in specific contexts and is socially constructed. We make sense of our lives in the context of our social history, shaping stories of how we came to be, who, how and where we are. This is seen as a two way process, the stories become constitutive of our lives and include the consciousness that our lives are being shaped for us by external forces. Narrative therapy focuses on the idea that, in spite of operating within different realities, people still need to make meaning together. In this mode no view is “right”, the parties are seen as engaged in creating new meaning by a complex process of negotiation mediated by stories.

Included in the aims of the process are the creation of a capacity for reflection and the enhancement of feelings of empowerment to act in the world (and hence address whatever current difficulties beset the person). The similarity to Bawden’s levels of learning is apparent.

Narrative therapists’ attitude to power can be described in these words:

It is easy to overlook how deeply a philosophy of knowledge can affect the production of our sense of ourselves as powerful people. This is particularly important if what we take for granted is at the same time that which oppresses others. (Monk 1997; p. 50).

Stories, in this mode of therapy, are created in the here and now of the therapeutic process, so that they capture in a client’s words “how I am feeling and making meaning now of my life experiences around this issue”. In this way they can include both history, sensually mediated experiences, and more abstract thought.
Game and Metcalfe (1996) postulate a process of knowing which requires to incorporate the sensual.

We might think of a knowledge process involving a movement back and forth between lived sensual experience and more abstract forms of thought, that indeed abstractions themselves might be experienced sensually, lived...Knowing, then, takes place in an encounter between the self and the world, with no attempt to transcend or master the sensual world or the encounter with it. Knowing is in life. (p. 167).

Perls developed a therapy which guided the client through encounters with sensual knowing which required intense encounters with a very observant therapist prepared to push the client towards frequently uncomfortable experiences. Narrative approaches allow the client to proceed more at their own pace and in their own style to reveal, primarily to themselves, and secondarily to the therapist as representative of the outside world, how they are making meaning of themselves...embodied in the story are feelings, sensual experiences and abstractions, but all contextualised in the here and now of their being. The story speaks for itself and once it is recorded both parties can examine its meaning and together derive a new set of meanings to take on together into living.

The “thick description” yielded from a series of such stories around one set of issues enables the enquirer to understand many emotions, nuances and subtleties which form the stuff of epistemic knowledge. It draws on a constructivist paradigm which aims to present multiple, holistic, competing, and often conflictual realities of multiple stakeholders or research participants, including the inquirer.

Thus the research method for this study proceeds by story building with the coresearchers in which the principle researcher acts as “listener” and recorder. However it must be emphasised that, although very little was said by me during each interview, much would have been communicated through body language and the emotional engagement of the particular kind which occurs when the whole attention is focused on the speaker or in this case, the story teller.
In my own case the ability to create the setting for this kind of interaction has only been developed by experience and training over many thousands of hours of therapeutic interviewing. I say this only because a person attempting to elicit in-depth interview material from a cold start without such experience would be unlikely to achieve satisfying results and might therefore criticise the method.

It is only over long hours of engagement in self-reflection as an interviewer that one develops a consistent, authentic self which can be sensed and engaged with by the client either in a one-to-one setting or in a group.

Because of the need to preserve this sense of immediate engagement these interviews were recorded in written form and fed back to each participant for verification and comment. I have found that the tape recorder provides a second, inanimate listener which disrupts the flow of interaction between the parties.

A second reason for avoiding a tape recorded interview lay in the requirement for confidentiality on the part of the coresearchers.

Finally, as many counsellors will have experienced, the tape often does not record the important quiet remarks which make all the difference to meaning.

In most cases no further questions were needed during the interview and in no case were more than three or four reminder prompts needed during the two to two and a half hours that the narrative occupied.
THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE HYPOTHESIS

My research methodology is founded in a constructivist approach and my intention was to allow the gestalt to emerge from unstructured interviews with my coresearchers. Nevertheless, limitations of the time and scope for this study, and the need to progress towards some specific outcomes, led me to formulate a series of propositions concerning which dimensions of experience would be likely to have been important in the lives of these change agents. These dimensions formed the prompts for the interview and the analytical framework for the analysis.

I used three sources for the formulation of the dimensions:

(i) an analysis of my own life experience and career development
(ii) an analysis of the life and career of Fritz Perls who produced a profound change in therapy when he created Gestalt and had through this a profound influence on my own effectiveness as an agent of change; and
(iii) a review of the literature.

I will go on to describe this process, but I would like to begin by stating its outcomes. The prompt used to commence each interview was written at the beginning of the agreement to participate in the research which each person signed:

AGREEMENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

"The purpose of this study is to identify the important factors which have led you to follow a career as a 'change agent' in organisations and the system of beliefs and understandings which underpin your practice.

For example:

- what early experiences influenced you: family, religion, education?
- what do you see as your most important attributes in developing and maintaining your career?
- what have been the challenges, the high and low points, the crises?
- what is your current view of how change agents should develop themselves?
- your view of the role at the start of your career compared with your view now;
- your important life relationships, positive and negative;
- any ethical dilemmas?
The discussion need not include these areas and it may include others you think are more relevant.

The framework for analysis arises from these general prompts which evoked the following emergent themes:
Family of origin
Adult family relationships
Schools and academe
Education vs practical experience
Mentors and role models
Concept of career
Self-assessment of key attributes
Magic and luck
Sense of community membership ... travel and immigration
Religion and spirituality
Ethical dilemmas
Crises with power

In effect these twelve dimensions exhausted the material which arose from the unstructured interviews i.e. there was no content remaining unclassified. The only material remaining consisted of anecdotes to illustrate a point and names of individuals and organisations which need to be excluded for reasons of confidentiality.

Definition of a change agent
The definition I have used in selecting my coresearchers and in proposing the dimensions which have influenced them is considerably narrower than that used by some other researchers: e.g., Ruth Dunkin (1999), in her study of change agents' perspectives of organisational change, selected twenty individuals who had been responsible for major change projects. Some were members of the organisation who were selected to carry out a special project, some were selected and imposed on the organisation, none appears to have seen change making as the major constituent of their entire career.
By contrast I have selected six other participants who, like myself, have for most of their working life, been responsible for driving change projects across a variety of organisations, i.e. they see a major part of their work as being specialists in change. Other characteristics are involvement in projects with an impact across the whole of an organisation, not just a single system change impacting on one or two parts, recognition as an expert or as successful (neither description would be welcome), either through their work being written up as academic case studies or through being in high demand by a number of organisations across different sectors, or both; having survived in practice for a number of years, in most cases around twenty.

In other words these are mature practitioners looking back on a variety of different assignments which had different individual outcomes, who can point to achievements which have been recognised as valuable and who have successfully supported themselves (and their families) to a major extent by their achievements in change. These are all baby-boomers, three males and three females, and all were working at the time of the interview. A series of common threads unite these colleagues; part of this study is aimed at making these more explicit. Although some of these people know one another, some have actually worked in the same organisation at the same time on different elements of the same change initiative without meeting, having been engaged by a third party who was aware that they shared a common ideology and approach to change processes. “I didn’t tell you about Mercedes. Back when I left Alcan I spent six weeks at Helena Rubenstein in a section managed by her. I didn’t meet her again till I studied Buddhism years later. Now we go for long walks and talks. I never knew she was working at Sydney Water on the change at the same time I was”.

Nod Miller (1993) in her thesis on personal experience in adult learning and social research refers to the term “invisible colleges” to describe such loose networks of practitioners who work together on occasion, share ideas and research, and, in subtle ways develop new members into practitioners in their own mould. Miller quotes from Derek de Solla Price (1965) who used the term to refer to the way groups develop in large, widespread scientific communities.
For each group there exists a sort of commuting circuit of institutions, research centres and summer schools giving them an opportunity to meet piecemeal, so that over an interval of a few years everybody who is anybody has worked with everybody else in the same category. Such groups constitute an invisible college...they give each man (sic) status in the form of approbation from his peers, they confer prestige, and, above all, they effectively solve a communication crisis by reducing a large group to a small select one of the maximum size that can be handled by interpersonal relationships (p. 85).

Miller goes on to speak of the overlaps between the various groups in her life...personal, professional and learning based. In all cases the groups serve to mediate the transfer of knowledge through networks loosely based on common interests, attitudes and beliefs. She contrasts the process for admission to the group in the UK to which she belongs, with the very formal process required for a similar German group active in the same domain. In the UK there operates an informal apprenticeship system, she indicates, where “older” practitioners keep an eye open for possible newcomers and allow them to work on joint projects and so gain acceptance and recognition in the group.

A similar process operates in Australia among change agents such as those who participated in this study. These are not for the most part the consultants you would meet if you went to one of the Big Six management consulting companies, although occasionally there may be a connection on a common project. The rules for admission are unstated and there is no clear way to seek entry. Not always would a given person be happy to be identified with the college and there will be long gaps in contact between members because they tend to work alone on projects and be busy in their own work. However a glance at case studies of change in Australia over the last twenty years would, if names of the change agents were mentioned, (which they are usually not) reveal the interwoven connections as they came together in one way or another to share learning and assist each other.

Therein lies the problem which resonated with each person I invited to join this study... if this form of accidental apprenticeship is how we learned, for the most part, how do we reliably replicate it to ensure a new generation can follow? As one coresearcher put it “How do we hand on the baton?” (Frances).

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This problem is made doubly difficult by the nature of the college’s attitudes to practice and by the impositions of their work.

Firstly they are active practitioners more than theoreticians or researchers. The development of theoretical constructs comes as a result of the needs of a project and may be specific to it and subsequently never published. Unless a partnership with an academic occurs, as it occasionally does, the reflexive learning which has taken place will not be passed on.

Secondly, reasons of commercial confidentiality or political sensitivity for the client often mean that the story of the change cannot be told in full or, perhaps at all. Finally, the full impact of the learning comes from living through the daily cut and thrust of the change in action, especially in the area of managing the emotions generated in the self and others. Yet there are risks in exposing someone new, unskilled and perhaps emotionally unprepared to this experience.

Thus it does not appear that the solution to the problem will come simply from the development of something like a graduate diploma in change agent practice into which anyone may enrol.

Hence the attraction for this group of coresearchers to participate in this research in order to verify the significance of these assumed barriers and identify a solution.
MY OWN JOURNEY

Since this methodology places me as one of a group of coresearchers, a member of the tribe that is the invisible college, to put it in ethnological terms, it is important that I describe my own background along a number of dimensions which are underpinning variables in the hypotheses I have developed.

Family of origin

I was an only child of older parents who both served overseas in the armed forces in World War Two. I suffered from severe anxious resistant attachment (Bowlby, 1988) as a small child refusing to be left at kindergarten and running away. Suffering from severe school phobia for years exacerbated by my mother’s death when I was fifteen. My parents had become disconnected from their own families and communities during the war and were quite isolated from the social life of the community in which we lived.

My mother was a convinced and evangelistic feminist, strongly influenced by her aunt who was a leading emancipationist in London before her marriage. Both women were trained nurses who had risen to matron status. By any standards they were very dominant personalities. I was educated as a feminist from birth in a power and conflict model which required women to take preemptive action to ensure victory over the male on all occasions.

I was expected to perform at school and go on to university to a medically oriented profession and I did as I was told. Both mother and father set high standards. I was bullied at school quite severely for a number of years.

Through my mother’s death and my father’s remoteness, in the psychological sense, I assumed an autonomous lifestyle at fifteen and was married at eighteen for the first time.

Assumptions guiding research: that power issues would arise in the family relationships in early life and there would be early striving for autonomy.
Family as an adult

I had a chaotic first marriage of eighteen years duration and began to work through my fears about separation only as it ended.

A stable and supportive second marriage has been very important to me.

I have lived in a variety of communities both urban and rural and am not associated with any community activities.

Assumptions guiding research: that there would be likely to be difficulty in forming a stable relationship as an adult.

that the change agent would not be closely aligned to a particular social group but would tend towards being a loner.

School and academe

I was unhappy at school because of shyness and bullying by the other girls, still I performed well and was dux in all my high school years. I finished too young having started at four with much crying and protest, and went straight on to university at sixteen.

Not mature enough to feel confident I selected Arts as the least threatening faculty because I seldom needed to speak to anyone, and was drawn to Psychology and Education though I had topped the State in English in the Leaving Certificate. Sydney University Psychology was all rats and stats, not a human in sight unless for experiments on perception. Although I took all courses available with a clinical bent I managed to emerge with a qualification without ever seeing a live patient.

I then commenced a research masters for the first time, studying a group of adolescent amphetamine addicts with whom I was working at the time, but as the only part time student I was very isolated and it became too difficult.

In summary, despite a quite good academic record, I did not feel my time at school and university had contributed any real skills or knowledge that was useful in the world of work.

The assumptions I carried forward to the research were: that the real learning that empowers the practitioner happens largely outside the formal methods of industry; that a sound academic training in ways of thinking and knowing is nevertheless likely to be essential;
that change agents would cope very well with such academic work and would have a good record of achievement given opportunity and motivation.

Education vs Practical Experience
I find I have always been excited by ideas and especially as a child by scientific exploration. At fifteen I won a scholarship to the first Harry Messel Summer Science School at Sydney University and enjoyed learning about the new worlds of plasma physics and rocket propulsion. It was one of my first disappointments with the established order of things to find that university study did not equip me to do the things I wanted to do namely work with couples and families in a therapeutic setting. For that I had to turn to one of the government funded agencies who provided such services and the structured training to support them. Fresh from university I was too young to be accepted for training, the minimum age was twenty-five. I took on a number of jobs in fashion, interior design and teaching to fill in the time, which in retrospect was no bad experience in fitting in to a number of very different work environments. Eventually I was accepted for training and began my useful professional career.

Based on this experience I postulated that my colleagues would also report that, while they enjoyed and valued academic learning, practical experience would be seen as more important in constructing them as effective practitioners.

Mentors and Role Models
My mentors have principally been the CEOs I have worked with in the sense that they allowed me space to learn by doing, had confidence that I would deliver and offered the occasional pieces of advice. I am not conscious of ever having a very open relationship with any of them and in that way they were probably not true mentors. In modelling my general approach to life and people outside work my mother was my role model, especially in the strength and courage she exhibited combined with the will to control her life as far as possible. From my father I got a model of ethical behaviour and a
love of learning, qualities I only became conscious of in later life. I did not identify other role models, having a rather independent and solitary turn of mind.

*Despite my own experience, I was inclined to expect that my colleagues would place mentors and role models quite high in the list of influences in their development.*

**Concept of Career**

This variable was included to tap the issue of whether or not each individual had a conscious ambition to be a change agent or whether the concept grew over a period of time or came as unexpected realisation after hearing about other practitioners. For myself I had identified before I finished my degree that I wanted to work with families and/or organisations to improve the lives of individuals within these contexts.

I had completed my first change assignments with NSW Health aged about thirty-five before I began to relate my interests to a concept of a career as a change agent moving between organisations with "change" as my true professional focus.

Once I understood that I was emboldened to move from industry to industry, health to policy making to water and sewer to sugar and mining without feeling apologetic.

*My assumption was that all of us would have somewhat similar experiences, but I was interested to know whether anyone would debate the concept of "change agent" as a career of any kind.*

**Self Assessment of key attributes**

This domain was identified to provide a view of what attributes experienced practitioners would see as important in selecting novices for training.

My own self assessment begins with intelligence and an enquiring mind, especially where human issues are concerned. Good verbal skills and a convincing style in managing groups, large and small are necessary. I would also include a good general education with the capability to produce original ideas.

But there are some personal qualities which seem necessary if I am to judge by my own experience...the capacity to work in isolation with no close allies, to remain objective even under personal threat and refrain from taking a political stance, an ability to empathise, to
walk in the other person’s shoes, resilience and a work ethic to keep going to meet commitment under pressure.

These are leadership qualities with a twist away from the self-assurance and determination to succeed usually associated with leaders in business and the professions.

*I was not expecting my coresearchers to have lists that differed very much from mine except in the areas concerning isolation and detachment (or what could be called objectivity).*

**Religion**

Religious education is likely to have played a part in all of my colleagues development given the times in which they grew up. I considered it an interesting factor for two general reasons.

First because from our religious instruction we are likely to derive our earliest exposure to the main ideas of Western thought and to understand our social system’s expectations of our behaviour.

Second, at times our religious upbringing conditions us to feelings of guilt or unworthiness which come to pervade our whole approach. Alternatively it can develop a sense of confidence and enjoyment derived from an inner spiritual awareness.

I was brought up a Catholic at a convent school although my father was an atheist. I was lucky to escape the sense of guilt many Catholics experience, probably because I was very aware of the idea of service to society as a superordinate goal from my parents’ constant discussions of their war service which validated the misery they had endured and the great disadvantages they were still suffering as a legacy.

I suppose I had some sort of idea of martyrdom. In any event I enjoyed the sense of spiritual attachment to the great history and ideology of the Church and, although the belief in the dogma has gone, the sense of a link to a spiritual way of being has remained strongly.

*My assumption, without ever having discussed religious ideas with them before, was that my colleagues would have some similar sense of an inner life.*
Ethical Dilemmas

My personal experience has been that, as a change agent one will be asked, not frequently but often enough to present a problem, to do something which is not ethical by your own standards.

These events are amongst the most hidden in the discourse of the invisible college, client confidentiality being the overriding consideration. Even after twenty years there are still too many of the “players” around in organisational life for people to be able to speak openly. Nevertheless this is a critical issue to learn to handle if one is to remain in practice.

My own way of dealing with these dilemmas is to attempt to forestall being asked the question which would lead to the dilemma. By making my values and way of working clear in advance I have found that if a CEO has in mind to do something I would find challenging to my ethical position he/she will select another way to do it. Secondly I have learned to select organisations to work within where there are important societal issues to be resolved and hence it is worthwhile to present a different set of values and style of working and leading, both to influence the major change agenda and to provide an individual role model.

My early experience, being confronted with requests to do the wrong thing, were very painful, mainly because I had not fully worked through my discovery that many of my beliefs about the political process, organised as they were around a good guy / bad guy, right against left model, were entirely naïve and erroneous.

At this point I believe my training as a counsellor, being able to separate personal feelings from the needs of the client, my low need for allies and attachments, learned from earlier disappointments, and a sense of inner ‘rightness’ derived from my religious experience, enabled me to surmount a potentially devastating situation.

*I postulated that it would be in the nature of the work that my colleagues would have had similar experiences. I was interested to see how they dealt with them.*
Magic and Luck

This dimension was included to test two ideas: the concept that “being in the right place at the right time could be an important element in shaping a career, and the related idea that some outside force which could be variously described as luck or something unexplained, like magic, destiny or fate is actually shaping the world for us.

There are many underlying elements to these ideas: religious concepts relating to the role of a supreme being in our lives as an intervenor, notions about the random nature of events, a sense of resignation to fate. My primary interest however was to understand if my colleagues felt they were in control of their lives and careers and had shaped them consciously.

It will be evident from what I have already said that I have always believed I was in control of my career. I selected the career moves I have made and have always had to conform to the government processes of application and selection on merit against a field of others. Early in life I could not fully understand why I always excelled in examinations at school and for a time I felt there was an element of magic in it. By the time I arrived at university I had figured out the role of single minded hard work in this sort of success.

My expectation was that all of us would feel the same way. One needs to believe that the world, and hence a career can be controlled in some way to believe that change can be created in an organisation by conscious effort.

Sense of Community, belonging and the role of travel

My first consciousness of this dimension came from reading the biography of Fritz Perls. (Shepard, 1975). Perls was born in a Jewish ghetto outside Berlin in 1893 into a world where, because his family still held to limited Jewish customs, neither German nor Jewish society would accept them. The impending holocaust impelled him, as a young man starting out on a career as a psychoanalyst, to immigrate to South Africa. While he and his wife developed successful practices in Johannesburg, he appears to have felt limited both by life in suburbia and the structures of the psychoanalytic method. After serving in World war II which separated him from his family, he decided to move to New York in 1946,
leaving them behind. His major work in establishing Gestalt therapy and a theoretical model occurred in this phase of his life. Incidentally at the same time he became known for his unconventional social behaviour and what many people saw as his self-centred way of life.

The many dislocations in Perls’ life reminded me of my own family background and the fact that as a child I spent long periods in both England and Switzerland with my parents, not developing strong ties to any community.

*Hence I became interested in exploring the effects of learning to live in a variety of different cultures while not feeling part of any of them as a preparation for working in a variety of organisations without the need to feel included. Learning to cope with being totally immersed in a new milieu and still being able to act according to your own values and goals, I thought, might occur through this experience of travel.*

**Crises with Power**

I leave this discussion to last because at the time of developing my hypothesis I felt intuitively that this would be a critical factor, that a personal confrontation with a powerful person or organisation, or perhaps an idea or philosophical position, which was experienced as intrusive or even abusive, would be needed to ‘sensitise’ an individual to power issues and provide the motivation to seek to change situations in which power is perceived to be abused, or to protect the powerless.

In my own case I believe I was sensitised by my own experiences with my mother who undoubtedly was always acting, in her view, in my best interests, but who daily forced me to do things which left me in a permanent state of nervous apprehension. As I have said, I was deeply attached to her and wanted to emulate her but I felt I could never succeed. She constantly threatened to put me in boarding school to improve me and “toughen me up” so that I felt quite powerless to do anything right. Even in this situation I was aware of a feeling that her behaviour was unfair and destructive.
A reading of history and my experiences of school, university, professional and organisational life have only reinforced this great disappointment with the foundations of life as they were portrayed to me in the cultural framework of my upbringing.

*My assumption was that the amount of energy and personal commitment required to maintain a stance of mediating between the powerful and the powerless as a change agent often must, had to come from a deeply felt and probably early experience of the inappropriate use of a power.*
CASE STUDIES

As I discussed in Chapter 2, Foucault developed an analysis in terms of “disciplines”, practices which operate to create both knowledge and power. Disciplines are techniques designed to observe, monitor, shape and control behaviour. Through constituting the individual – ‘the criminal’ – in a particular way, disciplines “come to know individuals more precisely, and also act on them so they operate as one wishes” (Foucault, 1977:138). The disciplines operate in many settings – the church, the army, schools and hospitals leading to what Foucault describes as “the veritable technological take-off in the productivity of power” (1980a: 119).

While this analysis is, in itself, quite easy to observe in everyday life, some of its consequences are less readily available to the gaze of the average person.

For two years, between 1996 and 1998, I set up and managed a unit of the N.S.W. Health department dedicated to investigating allegations of sexual and violent assault made against members of staff and volunteer workers, such as chaplains.

I learned then of the power of the disciplines to manage public perception so as to ensure the stability and longevity of their existence.

In the way that John Bowlby legitimises stories from clinical practice as part of research, I am seeking to use these case studies to bring to life the power of these entities to control both individuals’ lives and the discourses in the community.

I intend them to illustrate, not only the propensity of organised systems to embrace abusive behaviour within their construct of power, but also the threat posed by a needy or dysfunctional individual who uses inclusion in such a system to pursue the satisfaction of personal desires.
I also wish to illustrate the difficulty of revealing such behaviour and convincing a community or organisation to take action against it.

The stories of the co-researchers in this study all contain similar events which have shaped their passionate commitment to opposing the abuse of power in all kinds of arenas-organisational, political and community.

Many people who read these case studies react with embarrassment or incredulity. As the story teller, I have often been made to feel that it is very unhealthy, not to say tasteless, to dwell on what are, to them, clearly exceptional cases. This is not something they wish to admit to their personal awareness because it challenges the certainty and comfort of the important social role of the disciplines as fostering ‘good’ and protecting society from ‘harm’. In precisely this way are they vulnerable to the predations of this organised power and frequently suffer in silence being unable to put words to what they have experienced.

I therefore make no apology for this material, gleaned from the Health Department files. Regrettably they are not in themselves exceptional cases, but rather chosen because they illustrate quite common events.
CASE STUDY 1

In 1996 the NSW Government established the Wood Royal Commission into police corruption. The Commission began its operation by focusing on the activities of police involved primarily in drugs and associated areas of organised crime.

However, in researching the area of police protection of offenders, the Commission uncovered connections to paedophile networks which appeared to have been operating in NSW, especially the Coastal belt, for some twenty years.

The trails lead, not unnaturally to the Department of Community Services in its role of children’s protector, and, perhaps, superficially more surprisingly, to the Department of School Education. Not surprisingly in fact because folklore has always suggested that paedophiles will be attracted to work which puts them in close proximity to children.

Testimony before the Commission revealed a consistent pattern of failure to take action on teachers against whom allegations of abuse had been made. There were a variety of factors in operation:

- evidence was difficult to obtain.
- many parents did not want their children exposed to the negative experience of giving evidence.
- principals and other senior officers minimised complaints put to them and deterred other teachers from complaining about colleagues.
- some teachers were actively protected because of their “value to the school”.
- the Teachers federation was very active in protecting anyone who was subject to allegations.
- where a complaint could be substantiated the teacher was moved, sometimes to a school only a few kilometers away, or
- was permitted to resign and given a reference.

The exposure drew to attention some hundreds of cases, perhaps between 300-400, of various levels of apparent severity. It challenged the Director – General of School
Education Dr Ken Boston to do something most impressive to restore public confidence in schools and the Minister’s public standing.

Before the most damning of the revelations had become public the Commissioner for Community Services Roger West had submitted a report on children in residential care in NSW entitled “Who Cares?”. The Report revealed inadequate standards of care and protection of children from all forms of abuse and made a number of recommendations for Government action. By August 1996 the Government had convened inter agency working parties to look at better interdepartmental cooperation for the protection of children and the detection and punishment of offenders. The working parties reported by November 96.

Among the key recommendations of these groups were the setting up of “Case Management Units” in departments having the care of children, to receive and manage allegations of abuse and the criminal record screening of staff.

The departments were not slow to take up these suggestions although a long promised cabinet minute on the subject had still not been finalised by July 1997.

So, before the most damning revelations of teachers being allowed to plea bargain with the Department and leave with positive references came out in the Royal Commission, Dr Boston had set up a well resourced unit which grew from 3 to 40 staff over the ensuing months to undertake this Case Management function.

This was both fortunate and unfortunate. Fortunate in the sense that the head of the unit, Ms Roz Comber, appointed only a few months previously, was available to feature in the media spotlight when the evidence of mismanagement and misconduct emerged. Fortunate too in that she had already set in place staff and procedures for reviewing cases and managing information which arose. Unfortunate for Ms Comber in that the senior officers who had, over many years of occupancy of their roles, been privy to these ways of dealing with teachers accused of abuse, had failed to divulge to her that all these cases of collusion with others did exist, allowing her to give the Royal Commission assurances which were proven within weeks to be baseless.
This story is illustrative of some fundamental reactions of a large bureaucracy (DSE has some 60 000 teachers alone) facing major environmental challenge and the impact of these:

- Ms Comber went on a long period of sick leave, was removed from her position and placed in a less prestigious role.
- the senior legal officer who had been involved in most of the cases was taken ill and did not return to work.
- the two senior officers in the reporting line above these unfortunates have remained in place and taken no public responsibility for the occurrences.

of most interest

- officers now describe the atmosphere as “living under a big black cloud”.
- everyone is criminally record checked not only yearly but when appointed to any new role such as internal working party.
- the number of forms to be completed, for example to travel outside your office to another part of Sydney, has increased and procedures are being enforced vigorously.
- naturally trust is reported as very low between all levels of the hierarchy.
- everyone who comes into a school is being issued with a very detailed information package of child protection material and being asked to record that they have read it.

In general the department has quickly established a knave-apt regulatory process.

However to the external observer there are no apparent cultural differences emerging. The person who was seen as the figurehead within the department, representing new standards of behaviour has disappeared from view and is spoken of in the hushed tones usually reserved for dead heroes. The hierarchy remain untouched. Rather than adopting a new zeal for child protection most teachers have described the Department’s response as a “witch hunt” and a gross over reaction. The numbers of offending teachers actually prosecuted up to the end of 1998 remained quite small and their cases took a very long period to come to any finality.
While a system of ‘knave apt’ regulation was put in place by the department, in fact the teaching culture remained untouched.

The profession of teaching mobilised its public reputation, drawing on deep rooted beliefs in education as a way of reinforcing social control, to create the defense that teachers are uniquely subject to malicious and vexatious allegations, that investigations will undermine its credibility with the community, and that, as everyone knows, teachers are inherently ‘good’ people.
CASE STUDY 2

We first hear of Dr. N. in the mid-seventies. He is an up and coming specialist surgeon with an appointment at an excellent Sydney teaching hospital and a partnership in a nearby, well-to-do practice with a senior specialist of good reputation.

Quite suddenly, he leaves all this, under an undiscussable cloud, and reappears in Hobart. Once there he changes his name, however he only remains twelve months and then sets up a practice in a large NSW regional centre where, over the next twenty years, he establishes himself as a respected member of the community.

Some twenty years later we hear again of Dr. N. when he is the subject of criminal charges of indecent assault on two anaesthetized female patients, one of them a minor.

Six nursing staff from the operating theatre of the regional hospital, have together and separately witnessed his behaviour and finally banded together to report him. So reliable was he in carrying out his assaults that extra witnesses were obtained simply by one nurse asking another to observe him after an operation.

Dr N. uses his wife to try and “warn off” the patients and their relatives before the police have time to interview them. This fails, one may suspect in part because one of the local detectives has recently had his teenage daughter operated on by Dr. N.

In the final event he is tried by the District Court and found guilty, given the maximum fine and a two year good behaviour bond. The Judge, in sentencing, remarks that he has fundamentally breached the basic relationship of trust between doctor and patient but he feels sure that he will not do it again.

The Medical Tribunal, headed by another district court judge, also finds him guilty and remarks that he has shown no remorse or contrition for his deeds and in fact fails to
acknowledge them. He is struck off the register for six months and has a condition placed on his re-registration.

As soon as the six months has elapsed Dr N again applies to his local area health service for appointment as a visiting medical officer. A desperate and angry community member “tips off” the Department of Health in Sydney but only just in time. Responding to very insistent pressure from local doctors the area board is about to renew his appointment. The Director-General, after less formal representations by his agents over some weeks, have proved useless, writes to the CEO of the area asking him to show cause why this person should be appointed. The CEO responds that no other surgeons will apply for the work and he suspects the position has been black listed by the specialist college unless filled by Dr. N. Also the aboriginal children require service and the Board is of the view that Dr. N. will be totally appropriate for this role. The D.-G. replies in writing that he would advise the Board not to appoint him and he is willing to send officers to the area to provide face to face advice to them.

The Board finds that it would like to hear from these officers as it is of a mind to make the appointment still. So three Senior Executive Service officers, one human resources, one legal, one clinical policy and practice, make the journey.

The discussion is lengthy, heated and inconclusive. Clearly the majority of Board members, although they do not say so openly, find either that the crime was trivial, or do not believe it happened. The findings of two tribunals are as nothing before these beliefs.

The D.-G. is about to make his second appearance before the Wood Royal Commission, (Paedophile Reference). After the experiences of Dr Boston and his Department he would not like to have it said that his service has deliberately employed a convicted child abuser. For the first time on any matter the D.-G. issues a direction to an area health board – “do not employ Dr N”. And the Board complies with bad grace.

Meanwhile the Minister is ambushed on at least two occasions by senior medicos, given a deputation for other reasons, arguing for the immediate appointment of their colleague.
And six months later Dr N has applied to another area board and the same process has begun again.

In the months these events have covered at least four nurses have been suspended and had their services terminated on the basis of internal investigations, long before their cases have come to court, for offenses of a similar kind.

Unfortunately for them their colleagues have not rallied in support and no ministerials have been received from local associations of professionals. Their union has quietly allowed them to disappear. The likely outcome is permanent deregistration when their Board reviews their cases.

All of the officers of the Department who have fought what can only be referred to as “this battle” for twelve months have asked themselves about the attitudes and motives of all the players.

The greatest prospect of further elucidating Dr N’s behaviour was to ascertain what occurred in Sydney in the 70s. The senior medical officers in charge at the time resolutely refused to comment. The senior nursing officers are respectively dead or have Alzheimer’s Disease. Dr N’s former partner, now in his 80s, was contacted in his hospital bed. He did not remember his colleagues fondly but their disagreements had been about money. He believed Dr N left because he was nearly bankrupted and the reason he gave for changing his name was so that patients would not mistakenly identify him as a catholic (his former name was Irish).

What of the nature of his offences? They were committed in clear view of members of nursing staff while the patients were still apparently under the effect of the anaesthetic. The Judge in the District Court remarked that the older patient was an attractive young woman although, perhaps disappointingly, the child was a little on the plump side. After all if the nurses had not taken such a view of his behaviour probably these women would never have been aware that they had been manhandled by their surgeon (although other experts say that this cannot be guaranteed). Is this what lies behind the failure to take his crimes seriously?
Is the body on the operating table just a cadaver reminiscent of the days when surgeons practiced dissection only on the criminal classes? Is the proper order of things after all being preserved when members of the premier profession are at liberty with the powerless bodies of the less important?

If so how will the profession now respond to those who are arranged against them – a minister of the Crown who is one of their own, a chief medical officer of the state, a senior legal practitioner and senior health managers?

At the crux of the conflict is the medical profession’s belief that it should be self regulating, not subject to inquiries from any other law enforcement body in matters relating to their medical practice. Thus it is for the profession to judge the significance of the infringement of ethics and select a suitable penalty – in Dr N’s case six months deregistration and a condition on his new registration that he will not assist in the transfer of patients from operating table to trolley.

Clearly the profession has found the offence proven but trivial. Presumably trivial at least in part because the patients, being apparently unconscious, were not aware they were being abused.

In July 1997 Dr N. appeared before the second area Health Board which offered him the opportunity, as a matter of procedural fairness, of putting any mitigating factors before it.

Dr N argued that there had been a miscarriage of justice and implied that the six nurses who had given evidence had entered into a conspiracy against him.

This Board with little assistance from departmental officers decided unanimously, with one abstention, not to appoint. The Board was influenced by its one medical member who, when asked for his opinion, said that he was forced to advise his colleagues that in all probability these two assaults represented a tiny percentage of those Dr. N. had committed during his years of practice. He stated that he was placed in a most difficult position in having to admit this about a member of his own profession which should command his first
loyalty however he could also see that the community viewed such behaviour as unacceptable.

One conclusion which can be drawn from the case of Dr. N. is that the dominant group, convinced of the propriety of its own ethics, may easily allow its members to maintain behaviours which other members of the community would find abhorrent if they were able to know about them.

The case illustrates the powerful assumption in the community that abuse carried out by a professional in the course of ‘doing good’ to an individual is accepted, especially if the individual does not appear to have “lost “ anything by the act. It also demonstrates support by communities for the regulatory regime of one of society’s chief bulwarks against the threats posed by the “incursions of disease inherent in the common herd.” (Cheyne, 1742).
CASE STUDY 3
This may be further illustrated by the case of Dr. F. Dr F. first came to notice when some nurses at the children’s psychiatric facility at which he was employed complained to the superintendent that he was seeing some of the young male patients socially and that he had even given one boy a nurse’s home phone number and allowed him to ring her from his car phone.

Dr F.’s practice was investigated and he was suspended for nine days (at which time his appointment expired). The Credential’s Committee found that Dr. F. did not recognise proper therapeutic boundaries in forming social relationships with former patients. By mutual agreement Dr F. took up a research appointment at a university.

Four years later the Department of Community Services notified the Department of Health of concerns about Dr F.’s advocacy on behalf of a number of young boys who were not now his patients but had been at some time in the previous few years. Caseworkers and children’s court magistrates were raising concerns about Dr F.’s close relationships with these boys for which they could discern no professional reason. None of the boys had made any complaint of any form of improper treatment. Investigations once again only showed a failure to observe proper ethical boundaries. In a number of American states it is now a criminal offence to establish a relationship with a patient or a former patient. This has been legislated because of the recognition of the power relationship which exists between doctor and patient, which, once established, is deemed to be of a permanent nature. Thus to relate to the patient in a way that satisfies needs, social or other, of the doctors constitutes an abuse of power.

In the case of Dr F and his young male friends, even if there is no sexual element overt in their relationship, an abuse of this kind is still occurring albeit that the boys may not perceive the relationships as abusive. Indeed the boys are likely to feel flattered and encouraged by Dr F.’s behaviour especially as they are all victims of severely disturbed family circumstances. Given the difficulties of obtaining evidence in cases as these we may never come to know the true nature of Dr F.’s relationships with his young friends.
Dr. Carolyn Quadrio (1997) of University of NSW has examined the cases of 44 psychiatric patients who alleged sexual relationships had taken place between themselves and their therapists. She found the allegations were proven in 41 cases. These were cases of so called “consenting” adults however Dr Quadrio studied the psychological effects of the relationships in subsequent years. Most patients reported feeling “special” and singled out for their own unique qualities and hence were devastated to find that the relationship was not going to continue, or to eventuate in marriage or that they were only one of a number of patients so treated, that is; the relationship was only perceived as abusive once the true context became clear.

Dr Quadrio has not reported on the doctors’ views of their own behaviour in these cases. In a recent lecture (Conference, Health Regulation and the Law 1997), however, she identified the enormous difficulties which have confronted these patients in seeking redress for the injuries they have suffered. The difficulties arise from the impossibility of obtaining medical testimony in support of their cases and from the complexities of the law which sees these issues as civil rather than criminal matters.

At the conclusion of Dr Quadrio’s lecture the chairman of one of the Australian Medical registration boards jumped to his feet with the first question which was “How do you advise psychiatrists to protect themselves from all these frivolous and vexatious complaints?” The presumption of innocence extended to the medical professional is unshakable.

The medical profession is not alone in its organised protection of the status of its adherents and it would be unfair not to add some vignettes from another world.
CASE STUDY 4

Father Mc G grew up in a middle class Sydney suburb, the child of Irish parents. Beside his childhood home lived another Irish family, larger than his own, whose mother died suddenly when the eldest girl was in her early teens. He and his family “helped out” their neighbours over the next few years and, after he became a priest, the relationship continued through the parish activities.

The young man proved to be a priest of some charisma and developed a loyal following in the parishes in which he was placed. He was particularly popular with the women to whom he showed sensitivity and was generous with his time.

He was some fifteen years into his ministry when he was unexpectedly removed from his family oriented parish and given other duties. At the same time one of the daughters of his former next door neighbours, now a parishioner, began to feel bouts of anger in his company and became increasingly nervous and acutely depressed. She required psychiatric help over twelve months and during these sessions gradually became aware of a number of memories of sexual abuse at the hands of Fr. Mc. G. in her childhood.

Overwhelmed by guilt she eventually confronted her former friend and confidante who did not deny her statements. After an initial retreat, he sought her out, apologised and offered her financial help (her marriage having broken down owing to her depression).

At first Mrs. T. commenced civil action against the priest but as she gradually recovered she decided to put the events behind her and withdrew her action. The diocese had engaged legal assistance for Fr in the meantime and had Mrs. T., examined by a forensic psychiatrist who wrote a damning report attacking both Mrs. T. and her therapists.

Nonetheless Fr. Mc. G.’s activities had come to the notice of a Church based network of laity who investigate occurrences of abuse by the clergy. A number of young boys had complained of sexual abuse but none were willing to confront the priest or the ordeal of giving evidence. In such circumstances the group could only maintain a “watching brief”.
Thus when Fr Mc G was proposed as a Chaplain for a large children’s hospital the members of the group were in no doubt about their course of action in requesting the Department of Health to investigate his suitability for appointment.

The diocese was again quick to engage legal assistance for their member and to offer the report prepared on Mrs. T. by their psychiatrist. The bishop’s representative argued for Father’s popularity with his parishioners (despite his earlier removal from parish duties) and dedication to children and young people.

Mrs. T. and the members of the network who were interviewed made credible witnesses. Other evidence was found, with the assistance of an interested barrister, of Father having committed perjury. The Department found, on the balance of probabilities, that Fr. Mc. G. was not an acceptable person to serve as a Chaplain in a children hospital.

The bishop, the priest and their legal representative were affronted with this decision but were convinced to accept it only after the Department offered to test the case in court. The medical chief of the hospital was present during these proceedings and had reviewed the evidence.

One may imagine the Department’s surprise at receiving a copy of the letter written by the medical superintendent to Fr. Mc. G. to confirm the results of the interview. The doctor notes that the allegations cannot be substantiated beyond doubt and goes on to say that, should Father wish to return to clerical duties at some time in the future, he will be happy to be of any assistance he can!
CASE STUDY 5

Father Joe has been revered by the ethnic communities in which he has worked since the early 80’s and has been successful in raising money to support group homes in which he cares for young homeless boys from the community. When he was charged with sexual assault on one of the boys two years ago the community held a meeting in his support and invited the district representative of the Department of Community Services to attend.

Research reveals that Father Joe first came to notice in 1972 when he was moved from a housemaster’s position at a Catholic Boys boarding school in NSW to a similar position in Victoria after “differences with his superiors” about proper codes of behaviour with pupils. In Victoria allegations about his behaviour with youths at the school were published in a local newspaper but the Church investigation found nothing.

Nevertheless in 1994 the Church settled a civil claim concerning a 1972 incident out of court.

Father Joe has had his permission to care for foster children revoked by the Department of Community Services and been asked to resign from all voluntary activities associated with health services by the Department of Health.

In 1998 he re-appeared in a voluntary capacity on a Department of Corrective Services Committee formed to assist young offenders. Reassured by his former association with the church the migrant community continue to support him.
CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

This chapter describes the key elements which emerged from the interviews, and discusses their relationship to the original hypothesis. Examples drawn from each interview are given at the conclusion of each point.

Family Influences – Family of Origin

The primary influence of mother as inspiration, teacher or role model is the theme that unites this group of people. This finding was not part of the hypothesis. It held true for men and women. The influence is reported as beginning very early in life and appears to be well established in preteen years. It is reported as the mother’s insistence on “improving things”, “there has to be a better way” in reference to human and social issues as well as things and ways of doing.

Other common factors were a positive orientation towards education (with one exception) and family interactions around discipline or “manners” issues. Comparing these results to the leadership factors reported in “Leadership” (1996) those which emerge as being important learnings from the family experience are: conscientiousness, respect for others, self reliance, a vision of the future, integrity and ethics, a drive to compete, coping with hard times, a work ethic, sense of direction and commitment and intellectual stimulation.

Moral and spiritual support and a good start in life were reported by five respondents. Economic and social levels were not mentioned as important by most respondents – a contrast with Australian business leaders who reported theirs as adverse.

Looking at other dimensions three respondents report themselves as working class and four as middle class; four respondents report adverse experience with sex role issues such as
stereotyping; three report that a parent actively pursued a change agenda in regard to gender issues.

Political issues and active participation in politics were very important for three respondents.

There was little emphasis on the role of siblings.

Four respondents reported an experience of dislocation from a community either because of immigration, continual movement from place to place or overseas travel.

The hypothesis on this dimension was that this experience of isolation would encourage challenging of social constraints and values, and teach a sense of capacity to cope as an individual, acting independently. This is borne out by the self-reports of some respondents. This would be a variable worthy of further study.

The other common variable was early experience of abuse of power, either personally or through closely witnessing the abuse of others. In only one interview were early memories of this kind of stress not mentioned directly and in that case the report reflects an emotionally repressive family environment that had profound effects and required psychotherapy later in life.

Sensitisation to issues of abuse fuelled the passion to oppose the abuse of power as a primary theme of career. It guided how academic work was integrated intellectually and the choice of learned skills e.g. emphasis on participation in group dynamics and facilitation skills workshops.

Examples quotations have been included with the themes to which they were connected.

**Family (Adult)**

This variable received very little attention in any of the interviews. All respondents were currently married. All referred at some point to the value of their supportive home environment. For five of seven, marriages and separations had been critical turning points, inspiring major review or resolving issues from childhood.
“I married at eighteen as the only way to get out of home and was allowed to take my first job because my husband had overcommitted us financially. I left him needing security of income and wanting a house and my own business for freedom and flexibility.” (Emma).

“Another T intersection came when I was divorced and couldn’t work out what was going on so I plucked up the courage to go to psychodrama which has had a profound effect on my consulting – I learned to associate feelings with emotions (not physical disorders)” (Richard).

“My wife was the key influence in my going to the Bar rather than remaining in the Federal bureaucracy. The family provides much needed support, these relationships need to be nurtured and protected, otherwise it would be easy to get depressed.” (Christian).

“The real answer to when I got things together was when I married at 35” (Frances).

“I married at eighteen looking for a relationship to replace the one with my mother who had died three years before. I promised myself that I would finally grow up at thirty-seven which was when I left my first husband. Since then I’ve had a stable and importantly supportive second marriage.” (Katherine).

All respondents have always juggled marriage and family throughout their careers regardless of gender and number of children. There was no discernible difference between males and females in attitudes to roles and expectations of family life.

**School and Academe**

Leadership (1996) found the following views on school and academic influences:

- Prepares for life and career challenges
- Establishes confidence to challenge status quo
- Teaches intrinsic values
- Develops capacity to cope with the discipline of work life
- Encourages doing your best and competition
- Varied experiences
• Builds understanding of “right image”
• Provides leadership opportunities
• Reward hard work, professionalism, personality
• Develops skills in analysis

Whereas Australian leaders were very positive about the formative influences of school in their development, these respondents have little to say. One mentioned early leadership opportunities at school as important. All were obviously very able students as all went on to university level studies.

It appeared that in the free recollection interview, school did not come into the foreground. This is supported by findings in the leadership study that school “recedes into the background” and its effect becomes diffused as time goes on.

The two men who had a Christian Brothers’ education mentioned the influence of the poor quality of education and physical and mental abuse, but this arose in the context of the anger it generated, as much as the lack of educational substance.

Similarly, disappointment with university studies was a common theme. Some comments related to the academic establishment and processes, others related to the paucity of knowledge acquired which proved really useful in the world of work.

Intellectual stimulation, the capacity to analyse concepts and issues, to think strategically were the attainments from academic study valued by the group.

These are all people who were capable of higher degree studies – the one person without a degree was selected for employment by McKinsey’s whose selection policy is aimed at the top quartile in I.Q.

School Experience:
No Mention (Emma).
“Average high school in housing commission area” (Richard).
Newcastle Girls Grammar – leadership in music (Mercedes).

“At Christian Brothers I was angry at the poor quality of education. There were some inspirational lay teachers e.g. socialist economics” (David).

“At Christian Brothers I played tennis not rugby – hence I was taunted with being “a “poof” not funny at 13” (Christian).

“Very interrupted schooling – left for uni at 16” (Frances).

“At the Catholic Convent I was dux but not accepted – teased a lot, I was miserable” (Katherine).

Only two of seven respondents refer to having any leadership role – no one considers their schooling to have been of high quality or especially happy. At least two people were objects of bullying. Hence these respondents do not fit the pattern found in the leadership study.

Academic Experience

“I did not complete a degree but was selected by McKinseys anyway” (Emma).

“Important for me to have a tertiary qualification – easy because of good grades. Took a double degree in engineering science, won a scholarship to do Ph.D. and completed two thirds intending an academic career but liked it less and less – depressing – no sense of excellence, especially in teaching, or of the good of community. Left for a job in design engineering.” (Richard).

“First degree in music and education – Rotary Fellowship to University of Washington – MBA at UNSW – rarely got to class. Learned problem solving and strategy, marketing, organisational design and development. Most profound experiences were experiential learning classes with Dexter Dunphy” (Mercedes).

No Mention (David).

Did law and later studies at Harvard for Masters sponsored by federal government employer who took no interest in the outcome. It was a very stimulating experience however (Christian).
Went to university at sixteen to do social work, too young, traumatic and conflicted experience. Left the profession after six months (Frances).

Went to university at sixteen – did psychology. Started Masters at 23 but didn’t complete – didn’t fit in because I was working not a full time student (Katherine).

The responses indicate a capacity for academic work and success in doing it but not much enthusiasm for academic institutions and a sense that academic work did not produce very much of direct relevance to life in real organisations.

**Education versus Practical Experience**

This was a no contest. Practical experience, reflection as a learning methodology, the power of learning from critical events were all rated considerably more important than school or university experiences.

Apprenticeship is the model favoured for developing newcomers in this career.

“began with no degree (two years Arts/Commerce at UNSW) and secretarial experience. Learned on the job and through systematically organised in-company training, especially facilitation skills. I didn’t learn until I learned to reflect using KOLB’s model that is essentially a knowledge sharing necessity. You must invest time in this – it is a learned practice” (Emma).

“National Service was a major T intersection. I found I could do things well – I don’t know where it came from, Mum mainly. Army gave me: officer training and leadership experience, trouble shooting experience and team experience especially work with warrant officers, an interest in management. It turned my interested towards people not just technology.”

The degree was only the start of a fifteen-year apprenticeship. I learned the consulting as an apprentice with a mentor plus all kinds of short courses – people are developed on the job through a planned program of experiences with mentors and role models. But getting the right person first is critical – they must be passionate about client’s success not money – have resilience, stamina and excitement” (Richard).
“Learned to be in the spotlight with Mum from age 9. Leadership and group dynamics in a whole series of youth activities especially with Rotary. Learned to listen to others and explain issues as Miss International touring ten countries as a speaker. Experiences in a cosmetic company taught me a whole organisation can by dysfunctional and there is a lot of madness that doesn’t need to be there” (Mercedes).

“I have worked in a variety of areas – steel, retailing, mail sorting, teaching, trade unions – that’s important. I was, relatively, an academic and researcher until the cosmetics factory dispute stripped the scales from my eyes. It was a very moving experience. Since then I’ve learned the criticality of trust. I’ve learned to do excellent job redesign and culture building work in three major experiences in different large organisations” (David).

“I’ve worked on Labour campaigns in 1970 and 1972, as a research officer for the Senate, in the Law in London, seven years in Tasmania which was too small for me, then I was head hunted to the XX where as a team we achieved major changes in conciliation systems, the role of the legal profession and multi-disciplinary work processes. I learned how to transfer survival skills in the labyrinth by osmosis, teaching and standing back and seeing what works. Other things were leadership skills and the ability to inspire others, combining insight and distance, valuing the strengths of others. Masters at Harvard was a wonderful intellectual time – I learned to think differently and think things through and came back brimful of ideas. However I came back to find I’d been conned. I was given the worst job in the portfolio – no one was interested in ideas or reform – they were annoyed and suspicious” (Christian).

“Watching my parents with the Nauruans I learned that engaging with people can make a difference and a different frame of reference for success. From Dexter Dunphy’s student sensitivity workshops I began to verbalise my pain and angst and reintegrate myself. Being GM at KS taught me some issues, like managing people, are universal. You have to learn where not to be as well as where you want to go. Academic study should be about the process of dialogue in learning relationships. The Buddhist idea of detached compassion must be learned and all the stuff about living down your social conditioning you can’t learn in Academic” (Frances).
“My academic study was interesting, intellectually enriching but did not teach me to be in
any way a practitioner. That I learned on the job by trial and error and from others”
(Katherine).

Mentors / Role Models
These definitions are taken from Sarros (1996) p. 71.
Role models are persons, generally well known, living or dead, whose personal
characteristics, values and behaviours provide a standard by which we establish our own
codes of behaviour and values. The ideal, the benchmark.

Mentors are living examples whose behaviours and values guide and nurture our growth
through life and work. A guiding hand, a friend, a counsellor.
As stated in the findings under “Family of origin” mother was the primary role model and
directly influenced the choice to work as a change agent.
She was in each case remembered with a vivid emotional clarity and respect, in some cases
mixed with feelings about a dramatic separation from her point of view of the world.

This was a surprising result especially as it was equally true for men and women. Mother
was the primary influence even though all participants also had a father living with them.

All participants reported having at least one significant mentor and many had several
different stages of their careers. The main assistance provided by mentors was described as
“support” followed by a sounding board or someone with whom to reflect on key incidents.
Advice on how to deal with particular problems was also important, as was “inspiration”.

The descriptions of Mother’s role evoke John Bowlby’s concept of “a secure base” (1988)
that which is provided by the primary carer and enables the child to move out into the
world and take up activities, checking back occasionally to ensure the carer is still in place.

For every respondent – mother was the primary role model

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“Mother was a smart, knowledgeable, strong and controlling woman, a natural industrial engineer in the house – I had my early training in work study from her. At times I hated her, but over the last six years I have begun to think my capabilities were learned from her, which is hard to accept” (Emma).

“Mum was a very important woman around things not working well like the vacuum, gears or brake on the car. My whole life she’d say “there must be a better way.” (Richard).

“Mum and Dad didn’t model or expect CEO status or high public achievement.” (Richard).

“My mother was John Curtin’s private secretary – beside Mum Germaine Greer is a wimp. She instituted a belief in my self worth and my capacity to do things.” (Christian).

“Mum was a major influence, pushing boundaries, challenging old taboos and social status requirements, making things better. Talking about my career she said “I didn’t think you’d take me that literally”. (Frances)

“Mum was the strongest influence on me as I grew up – towards maximum achievement, service to others and being strongly independent.” (Katherine)

For the other two respondents mother was a person whose key characteristics were strongly emulated in early life. Both were people who moved on the public stage.

All respondents reported having a father present in the family during their childhood and adolescence however it was the mother who proved to be the influence towards a career in change.

Mentors – all respondents reported having at least one significant mentor.

“I was lucky to have a wonderful, wonderful mentors and models” (Emma). For this respondent significant mentors assisted in each major career transition.

“As a consultant I’ve had two or three mentors I think of often. An older guy who was always available to talk things over; a strong disciplined assignment manager who taught
me focus and keeping to estimates, another older guy whose values appealed to me – he said “a good assignment is one where if you walk away the client will be doing better when you come back”. (Richard).

“I found a good mentor outside the company at a critical moment when I was in conflict with the whole values and structure of the place – he suggested doing an MBA” “Bill Ford was also a key support at a critical moment” (Mercedes)

“Bill Ford is a good mate as well as a mentor.” (David)

“Bill Ford as a colleague, always supportive, a reference point over thirty years, along with Julia Moore who suggested working with Bill as a way out of my conflict with the social work profession. Bill’s group of mavericks made a home for me among like-minded people” (Frances)

“For me an Indian woman doctor who was the local head of Community health was my first mentor – she taught me the wisdom of patience and process. Gerry Gleeson taught me the value of clear thinking and decisiveness and to value good judgement and balance very highly in others. Peter Crawford taught me humanity, compassion, high intelligence and a respect for the bottom line can be combined in a difficult political context” (Katherine).

For Christian Elizabeth Evatt was the inspirational leader and the one who provided permission and encouragement for maximum achievement to be possible.

**Concept of Career**

There was a divergence of views on how to describe a career as a change agent:

- Process consultant trained to facilitate change.
- Helper, problem solver and adviser.
- Interdisciplinary independent change agent, not a manager of others.
- Leaders who get things done.
• Working with line managers providing process expertise, logistical and intellectual support, putting theory into practice.
• Change agent should not exist as a profession, it's too bloody hard.
• Teacher.
• A position of influence, not power.
• A kind of organisational therapist.

Participants were approximately evenly divided between those who identified they wished to work as change agents in their early twenties and those who found this niche as a satisfying way of working around their mid-thirties, as they realised what aspects of work were most rewarding. All spoke as if they were in control of their career choices.

Sustaining elements of the career were identified as:
• Major life review and self-insight.
• Knowing your feelings and behaviours.
• The good will of people working together to make a difference.
• Leaving someone to succeed you.
• Resolving the hardest problems of all, those of the public sector.
• Doing your best all the time, but recognising it's OK to be selfish and withdraw amicably with your integrity intact.
• Continual monitoring of your own physical and mental health.
• A network of trusted colleagues.

"Consultant and change agent are synonymous for me. I use a process model and use very little expert model stuff. I am trained in the process of facilitating change" (Emma).

“A helper, problem solver and adviser, not a boss. I do it slowly by coaching and facilitating so it has a lasting impact. That's my way.” (Richard).

“You can work with groups to make change. I learned this from youth leadership. It was not hard to organise something to happen. I went into consulting because I recognised that the organisational systems I worked in were unhealthy. I didn’t call myself a change agent
but I certainly was one. In 1980 I realised I didn’t want to run an organisation, but to be a sole operator so I could be an independent change agent, not a manager of others. I gradually moved towards more complex projects and strategic roles. I describe my work as interdisciplinary.” (Mercedes).

“My definition of a change agent is leaders who get things done. You need to have an understanding of the political and industrial issues and a desire to work with them. I don’t think I am one. I work with line managers providing process expertise, logistical and intellectual support, putting theory into practice. I don’t think ‘change agent’ should exist as a profession, it’s too bloody hard” (David).

“Change agents get down to being teachers. I find the Bar has the intellectual appeal of a crossword puzzle. I get my kicks from management and administration – nice to be in an organisation that’s cooking with gas. I like to make a difference, no one should know I’ve done it, the people should own the process. I believe in the possibility of incremental change in limited areas at vast personal cost.” (Christian).

“This is a position of influence, not power – you need a range of reference points like best practice, ethics and a small core of trusted colleagues to guard against being isolated.” (Frances).

“Early on I was drawn to working with individuals and families to make change – I trained in family therapy and transferred those ideas to organisations when I was forced by financial pressure to join the public service. I see myself as a kind of organisational therapist and have consciously pursued a career as an internal change agent, because I like to be part of the ongoing processes. I feel like it’s a family.” (Katherine).

**Planned or not**

“…accidental, a series of random opportunities…” (Emma).

“I learned I liked change work early and followed it up.” (Richard).

“ Took a number of years to realise what I was really doing.” (Mercedes).
"Politics is highest calling" – found himself unsuited to it, does change work because it is rewarding. (Christian).

"Always wanted from first days at University to make change in social systems." (Frances).

Planned to work with people and change from my early 20s.” (Katherine).

Maintaining your career

"Major life reviews are essential, as is being Schon’s reflective practitioner.” (Emma).

"Self insight is critical, know your own feelings and behaviour – keeping track of your own shifting interests.” (Emma).

“What sustains me is the incredible power of people of good will working together – shop stewards telling me the profound changes some of our shared experiences have made in their lives.” (David).

“Leaving someone to succeed you is the ultimate test of success. The public sector is the repository of all the hardest problems, that’s where real satisfaction lies for me, it’s the hardest work of all.” (Christian).

“Do I do the best I can at the time?” OK not to take on unreasonable or pointless challenges. OK to be selfish and know when to withdraw amicably with your integrity intact.” (Frances).

“Self monitoring is important all the time to maintain physical and mental health, maintaining a network of trusted colleagues.” (Katherine).

Gender issues did not figure strongly in the participant’s descriptions

The women registered the difficulties of being the only woman in some male dominated organisations and industries e.g. Mining, the waterfront, consulting firms. One woman described the problem of being “Miss International” and getting job interviews for the “wrong” reasons. But these difficulties were not described as formative influences.
One male participant described the need for diversity and gender balance in an effective consulting team.

The fact that the men in the group were so strongly identified with their mothers was reflected in their values, preferred style of work, views on equity in social systems and acknowledgement of the valuable support provided by their partners on an intellectual as well as emotional level.

**Self Assessment of Key Attributes**

At the time of developing my hypothesis I identified the following attributes as likely to be important, drawing on Sarros & Butchasky (1996) and on my own experience.

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Table 8

Those items which emerged from the interviews as important to all participants have received a tick in this table.

Sarros & Butchataley (1996) found that Australia’s leaders mentioned the following qualities as critical to good leadership: core standards and values to guide and monitor
behaviour, directly confronting problems, strategic thinking, approachable manner, decisiveness and enthusiasm, challenging workers to achieve beyond expectations, team playing, good communication, good role modelling and coaching, being a change agent, collaborative style, honesty and integrity and rationality in decision making.

The change agents’ list was only similar in some respects. Self awareness and self management, ability to build trust and relationships, commitment to values, streetwise, risk taking, the experience of suffering from the abuse of power, integration within the self and “embodying the story”, intuition, systems thinking, problem solving, structuring processes and measuring them, being non-judgemental were the factors which stood out as necessary for good practice.

Generally the change agents’ focus was more detailed and reflective. Owning qualities like intuition and risk-taking marks them as different from corporate leaders.

“I don’t know why they selected me for my first consulting job – not at all. I’ve always been a problem solver either via my mother or family events.

After four years I became MD because I was best rounded in business development, diagnostic work and managing client relationships. If you try to be in touch with your own gifts and capabilities and do it with integrity, compassion and respect it just comes back to you – I don’t know why.” (Emma) “Process consultants (change agents) need their intuition which I only owned in the last ten years; before that I only used a left brain model.” (Emma).

“As a boy I didn’t have high aspirations and didn’t realise I was bright, naïve, good at sport, fond of team activities. Like to keep my options open. First class honours and three university prizes. I wouldn’t make a good general manager – haven’t that skill set of confidence, courage of convictions, boldness. I prefer to be the boss’ adviser. Introverted, I take a very structured approach but I am now more intuitive not just logical. I place emphasis on measuring results, being non-judgemental and observing “what is.” I am confident in my diagnostic skills. (Richard).
“You have to take responsibility for your own emotional needs and not project these onto the client, as soon as possible. I learned this very early. Early demonstration of leadership ability right from primary school youth camp. Youth mayor of Newcastle was very important. Early demonstration of high abstract thinking abilities. Talent at getting this to happen in groups of people. Awareness that, as a woman, I would have to deal with a lot of issues and manage them myself. Be as good or better then senior managers. Something in me people trust. “Everyone thought I was secretly on their side on one of my very big multi-organisation jobs.” Huge risk taker – risk and change go together.” (Mercedes).

“I score high on feelings and commitment to my values like justice at work. My attributes are not common and not appreciated. I can grow a culture and develop trust which CEOs don’t have time for these days. I build long term relationships. I don’t like to “sell” myself.” (David).

‘Good leaders surround themselves with people better than themselves. I know how decision making happens from having been in positions of authority and I know my way around the labyrinth. However at 50 years of age I can look back and say “I’m still too sensitive”. I hate authority being abused therefore I work to change the culture.” (Christian)

“I question values and systems. My work is long term and continuous so I can work on the systems. Others own the change, it isn’t mine. You must be able to integrate the soft skills into your work or the emotional reactions will bring the change down, like what happens with all the fads such as TQM etc. I once worked with a backhoe operator who said “Now I’m facilitator I have something to talk to her about, So I took my wife to dinner for the first time in twenty five years.” (Frances)

“I have felt “peopled out” at times. You do personal diagnostics all the time – I’ve become more introverted as I’ve gotten older. I need more physical and mental space. There is an emotional drain requiring renewal.” (Emma).
“I get depressed when I am avoiding and I find it difficult to switch off until everything is done which is not always easy to achieve. I think about acknowledging my emotions a lot now in order to stay on track.” (Richard).

“As a child I was sad – lack of energy indicated depression. Now if I am bored or down I think:
“What am I avoiding and deal with it”. (Mercedes).

“Integration – not balance – that’s the important thing.” (Frances).

“I work within the system so I have to measure my energy carefully and balance work with other interests. “I mustn’t become too intense or lose my perspective. You have to have a detachment as well as compassion and involvement to survive.” (Katherine).

“Listen to your body and emotions and access all the bits of your story. Stop parking your feelings. Engage in pursuits the opposite of your strengths. Integration is the key.” (Frances).

Religion
A sense of spirituality, an inner life was important to all, although formal religious connections have receded. Six of seven respondents mentioned their religious upbringing – three Protestant and three Catholic. Two of the three Catholics attended a Christian Brother’s school where their experiences of abuse of various kinds were extremely important formative influences in becoming passionate about changing human systems. For all respondents a spiritual dimension to their lives is very important.

“I learned consistency (more than morality) from a strong Anglican upbringing – be true to yourself, don’t purport to be something you are not. Consultants get sucked into being God – dangerous and ineffective for both parties. Ten years ago training in Buddhism was a breakthrough for me in owning my intuition and influence. It shifted my understanding of spirituality, gave permission to listen to heart as well as head and had a major influence on
my behaviour with clients. My upbringing and Christianity had made me disown inner knowing.” (Emma).

“I can feel the mood of a group or a client now and work with it OK and not panic (as a result of getting in touch with my feelings)” (Richard).

“I grew up a Catholic with servant leadership ideals and a lot of guilt still being worked through. The central thing for me is a sense of participative justice in the world of work. I went to Christian Brothers Wollongong where they abused their power (references to recent exposés of paedophiles in Wollongong.)” “I have some real troubles with any religious background – the values are hard wired into me. I am left with an intense spirituality of my own.” (David).

“My father was Irish Catholic and I have a Christian Brother’s education where I saw the way they abused their power.” (Christian).

“I had an Irish Protestant upbringing but left the church at twelve because blind faith was insufficient.” (Frances).

“I had intense Catholic upbringing with strong Irish influences, most of which I have intellectually rejected, but I am left with the world view and spirituality instilled by it.” (Katherine).

**Ethical Dilemmas**

In every case this area elicited strong, even passionate responses. Everyone had faced such situations and, after bad experiences, had tried to develop strategies to avoid being involved or withdraw without damage, when such events seemed imminent.

Those change agents who had chosen to work primarily from within organisations, not as external consultants, had become more angry about ethical compromises and felt this was a more difficult problem to manage. The overwhelming consensus of the group is that they could not continue to practice unless they maintained a clear ethical stance and respect for
their integrity on the part of clients and their employees. Otherwise inner energy and problem solving capabilities would not be sustained and trusting relationships with all parties could not be built and maintained – so no effective practice would be possible.

In every case instances of severe possible or actual values conflicts were cited. “Integrity in leadership and business is essential – sustainability is not possible without it.” (Emma).

“I seek clients who are trustworthy and get a second opinion about them.” (Emma).

“A comfortable fit for me is when an organisation’s values guide action, culture and behaviour consistently worldwide (like the Jesuit order)” (Emma).

“Change agents share a common view that their role involves doing good via shared values. My firm doesn’t do coercive, trampling on people, change, or slash and burn. Often those assignments are ‘no brainers’ - need to satisfy a social conscience. (Richard).

“I can’t stand conflict between stated and real values. I discuss strategic decisions and dilemmas about personal integrity with a few trusted people.” (Frances).

A self-employed respondent who often works with large numbers of organisations on large projects put it slightly differently: “Often coercion is an option on my projects. I make sure I design a watertight healthy process in which coercion is not possible – otherwise I refuse the job. There can be significant choices – once people know how you work you sometimes don’t get jobs” (Mercedes).

“All the literature describes a much better workplace then people actually inhabit, for example, look at the docks dispute. It takes time and courage to involve people (in change); it can be heavy stuff but it works in the end. It is a battle about the abuse of power. I have taken some courageous stands i.e. against other managers who were doing compromising things ...to my great cost.” (David).
“I can’t be part of the system because it doesn’t fit with my values – I am constantly aware of the awful betrayal of values.” (Christian).

“At a senior level in public service it can be difficult to refuse to do compromising things – better to avoid some roles because of this.” (Katherine).

In all the stories the following elements were strong:

- Passionate commitment to their values and a belief that assignments could not be successful unless there was a ‘values fit’.
- The experience of a painful journey to reach a solid position of being able to confidently detect and reject assignments which might breach their values and integrity.
- A strong sense of betrayal by social institutions who turned out to be lacking in integrity and ethical behaviour e.g. unions, political parties, professions, leading to a sense of isolation and reliance on a few trusted colleagues.
- The observation that there is now more open discussion about ethics and about spirituality in organisations than there was thirty years ago.
- The global market and economic volatility place CEOs in difficult situations. Having to maintain viability, humane, socially aware and compassionate leadership in these situations can mean that necessary activities like major downsizing can be done ethically, and therefore can be supported by change agents with integrity.
- Integrity is an absolutely essential part of remaining sustainable in a change agent career.

Magic and Luck

This was not a variable that emerged as important as everyone. It was defined as a sense of the unexplained, with which some of the participants live quite contentedly. Having positive expectations, that generally, things turn out OK.

“I thought they were nuts, so much money for commonsense at the age of 24. There has just been an extraordinary series of connections in my life. Now I say ‘even if it is logical, if it doesn’t feel right don’t do it – always rely on gut feel’.

(Emma).
In 1976 when I was driving incredibly long mileage I had a major accident and totalled the car. Something happened, it was suddenly so peaceful. I emerged with a broken thumbnail but it took the lid off my amnesia (to the earlier traumas of abuse). I began to draw spontaneously and that allowed me to cope with my feelings and solve problems.” (Mercedes).

“There was a happy congruence of events at Botany – a lot of factors were all present and operating together – I was a lucky person to be there at such a good time. People talk about ‘weaving the Botany magic’, but you can’t transfer it to a different place with different factors necessarily.” (David).

“XX was ‘the time’ for me – an authorising environment, a unique combination of factors. I don’t pine for it.” (Christian).

“I always felt at the time there was an element of magic in my academic success especially at school. I couldn’t explain it because I never felt confident or competent. I still think of myself as basically lucky even though a lot of things have gone badly wrong.” (Katherine).

“Sydney Water was a magic time for me – the right CEO with plenty of permission and encouragement to make major changes – I do miss it.” (Katherine).

**Sense of community, travel/immigration**

This factor refers to both a sense of belonging to a place and to a social community. It looks to the influences of immigration and travel.

Only one of seven respondents did not mention any form of social or geographic dislocation. “Oh yes I started school at the age of three, in India” (Christian).

“As a family we were gypsies. Melbourne, Brisbane, Sydney, Nauru, Woomera, Canberra in my first sixteen years – new schools, people, social systems. I learned I could cope with change.” (Frances).
Another form of dislocation came through the loss of family history through the parents’ immigration or reticence in taking about the past.

Overseas travel was a further influence on at least four participants.

Being part of a cultural, social group and being strongly rooted in a place provides a support system and also, as Perl found in South Africa, a set of constructions and boundaries which can limit growth.

Learning to live without these structures, especially at an early age, appears to encourage the self-sufficiency, independence of mind and confidence to take risks which are characteristic of the change agent.

Emma was not aware of much of the history of her mother and father. She left home at eighteen and seemed to showed little interest in her community of origin. Since then she has worked for organisations with an international focus and is well travelled.

“My family shifted a lot. I had no strong sense of place. My family had no family members here in Australia so I didn’t know my extended family much.” (Richard) who now works a substantial amount of his time overseas.

“I was born in Kempsey but we moved to a little village. Post office, baker, butcher, general store and two teacher school” (Mercedes). However she began to travel internationally as a Rotary Fellow and as Miss International in her early twenties.

Christian moved from Western Australia, where the family was well known, to Tasmania to establish himself and later to London, Harvard and Sydney. The moves reflecting various career changes. He started school at 3 in India and the family later moved to Thailand.

“My parents both served overseas throughout World War Two – totally dislocated them from their communities. We came back to Australia as migrants and never picked up the
threads really. I travelled a lot overseas as a child and never felt part of things at school or socially” (Katherine).

**Crises with Power – Youth**

All but one respondent mentioned an early experience of the abuse of power. For three respondents this came from within the family – one was the subject of continual emotional abuse, one the victim of an attempt at a forced abortion, one the victim of severe, prolonged abuse. A fourth respondent experienced a traumatically dislocated experience on entering university at sixteen which was reinforced by the behaviour of the academic establishment in her faculty.

Two men experienced the Christian Brothers educational system. “Their abuse of authority, physical violence and intellectual terrorism created a rage in me and a desire to change the system.” (Christian). He went on to be active in Anti-Vietnam and Anti-Apartheid campaigns – a fact still remembered by some people in the law.

“Dealing with an abusive family background gave me huge living skills and psychic abilities. I can see minute non-verbal signals and hear minute changes of voice. Recovery from abuse has given me interaction skills I wouldn’t have got any other way. These skills help build trust. My immense respect for individuals helps them open up. I can shift now and see conflict as a doorway giving focus and being productive” (Mercedes).

“The challenges at uni at sixteen disconnected the intellectual and the personal emotional aspects of me and huge turmoil followed. Counsellors were no help because no one recognised the need to integrate the whole person. I went to war with the Psychology Department. Their definition of “professional” was omnipotent and above debate. Eventually I felt violated by the system and the profession.” (Frances).

The remaining respondent reports a “British upbringing” which caused him to be unaware of his feelings and to withdraw from people at the time I cared the most. (Richard).
Crises with Power – Adult

All the respondents have encountered in their adult careers abuses of power which have shattered their beliefs in the established order whether in the professions, politics, the Labour Movement or the organisation for which they have worked. It is difficult to capture in written quotations the depth of pain expressed in retelling these stories. For all, these confrontations with the established order have created a caution in approaching each new change assignment and a very strong commitment to self awareness to ensure psychological integration and balance is maintained and health and family are protected and nurtured. But they have also fuelled the passion to continue to fight the abuse of power wherever the opportunity arises.

“|I know just how big it is. I’ve seen all the corruption – the stock exchanges that are a sham, the political process that doesn’t work. I realised Labour was in office, but not in power. It was devastating and debilitating. You wonder if you will ever do anything again. I was on the steps of Federal Parliament on 11/11/1975 with Hawke and Norman Gunstan. Some BLF fellows were jeering Hawke shouting “Parliamentary democracy doesn’t work”. I looked across and saw a group of senior Liberal members just looking on smiling “Gotcha”. Meanwhile Hawke turned on Gunstan.”| (Christian).

“At 23 as an organiser with the Shop Assistants Union I was sent to lead a strike at a cosmetics factory. New American management was dialling up the pace of work and the women were breaking down. Management turned me away with no sensible logic or reasons, just machismo and mismanagement. The strike lasted seven weeks with food parcels and a lot of suffering. Then the union heavies came to town and sold me out. They sorted it out at the cost of a lot of friendship and respect. The use and abuse of power confronted me – it blew all my early values apart. That was the end of that kind of union work for me.” (David).

“A major crisis for me was a conflict of values with an organisation I worked for. I was on the executive after only three years, the youngest, the only female, only one with no degree, with all these aggressive males. I wanted them to walk their talk internally and they did well for six years until it was decided to float internationally. Then dollars became the
obsession and values were compromised. I was so angry at the values shift, I suffered isolation and grief and left. It had become an oppressive regime – two-faced, letting clients down, a poorer work and career environment for staff with no say in decisions. Having professionals of any kind has such a disempowering effect on everyone – no wonder we have all these problems in health, law, etc”. (Emma).

“I had a major conflict with my employer of twelve years over a new personal relationship with a consultant from another firm. They insisted I should get rid of the relationship or ruin my career. Senior people rang me and abused me. I had expected to be a “leper” but suddenly I had broken this macho male loyalty thing. It took me five years to leave, but it was never the same.” (Richard).

“At XX Board I was subjected to a personal violation campaign that went on and on. It was very vitriolic and I was under surveillance all the time. My parents were even abused at social functions – “Your daughter has taken a man’s job”. I became quite sick. I found I couldn’t make change from within.” (Frances).

“I didn’t fit the social work model and experienced the system as very punitive. No one was interested in the patients – it was a bureaucratic construct in which no one had any power. I couldn’t cope emotionally because I couldn’t present the problem coherently. I felt violated by the system and the profession.” (Frances).

“I saw the inner machinery of the Wran government at Premiers in the early 80’s – how the community and the party was “managed”. I could never have any belief in the political process again.” (Katherine).
CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS

In this final section I will address three key areas for which important implications may be drawn from these findings:

Firstly, I wish to examine the personality development of the change agent; employing a psychodynamic analysis.

Secondly, I will review the change agent’s positioning and ways of working with power in the communities and organisations which form the work environment;

Finally, I will consider educational implications with a view to suggesting ways of learning to be a change agent.

No single one of these perspectives is privileged over the other, nevertheless we must of necessity begin with the baby.

Developmental Patterns
When the unexpected result emerged from the interviews concerning the critical role of the mother in the development of these individuals, I thought immediately of John Bowlby and his attachment theory. The notion that this was a key way of understanding the fundamental first phase of growth was reinforced by the observations of anger towards individuals and institutions who were experienced as having let down most of the participants at some critical times.

Bowlby says:

It will be remembered that attachment theory was formulated to explain certain patterns of behaviour, characteristic not only of infants and young children but also adolescents and adults, that were formerly conceptualised in terms of dependency
and over-dependency. In its original formulation observations of how young children respond when placed in a strange place with strange people, and the effects such experiences have on a child's subsequent relations with his parents, were especially influential. In all subsequent work theory has continued to be tied closely to detailed observations and interview data of how individuals respond in certain situations. Historically the theory was developed out of the object-relations tradition in psychoanalysis; but it has drawn also on concepts from evolution theory, ethology, control theory and cognitive psychology. One result is the reformulation of psychoanalytic metaphysics in ways compatible with modern biology and psychology and in conformity with the commonly accepted criteria of natural science.

Attachment emphasises:

(a) the primary status and biological function of intimate emotional bonds between individuals, the making and maintaining of which are postulated to be controlled by a cybernetic system situated within the central nervous system, using working models of self and attachment figure in relationship with each other.

(b) the powerful influence on a child's development of the ways he is treated by his parents, especially his mother figure, and

(c) that present knowledge of infant and child development requires that a theory of developmental pathways should replace theories that invoke specific phases of development in which it is held a person may become fixated and/or to which he may regress.

Attachment is seen as a basic survival function aimed at achieving protection, and is primarily mediated by emotional, not verbal, communication. Careseeking and caregiving are described as basic components of human nature. The intimate bonds begun as a neonate grow and diversify in the healthy child, adolescent and adult but the models and expectations formed early remain as features of the later relationships.

A third basic component of human nature is seen as exploratory behaviour, including play and peer interactions. When an individual of any age is feeling secure he is likely to explore away from his attachment figure. When alarmed or frightened, anxious or unwell he is drawn to return to the attachment figure for comfort.

Three types of attachment pattern are identified:
i. secure, in which the individual is confident in the care and responsiveness of the parental figure and is therefore bold in exploring and manipulating the world;

ii. anxious resistant, in which the individual is uncertain that the bond will be reliable and available in time of need, and is anxious about moving away to explore outside and will try to cling to the attachment figure – threats of abandonment, however light hearted, are a common cause of this behaviour;

iii. anxious avoidant, in which the individual has no expectation of care in time of need and the expectation that he will be rebuffed.

As with all animals, individual differences dictate that there will be variations in the strength of expression of these patterns and, in some cases, some movement between them as life goes on.

Organism and environment are not two separate things, each having its own character in its own right, which come together with as little essential inter-relation as a sieve and a shovelful of pebbles thrown onto it. The fundamental characteristics of the organism are time-extended properties, which can be envisaged as a set of alternative pathways of development (Waddington, 1957; p. 54).

At conception the total array of pathways potentially open to the individual are determined by the genome, but as development proceeds and structures progressively differentiate, the number of open pathways will diminish and the difficulty of changing paths will significantly increase.

Thus a child will develop early in life working models that define expectations of security and emotional responses to separation from that security, and in addition patterns of willingness and confidence in moving out from the attachment figure to explore and relate to the world.

Maturity and the capacity to be alone implies that the individual has had the chance through good-enough mothering to build up a belief in a benign environment...Gradually the ego-supportive environment is interjected and built into the individual's personality, so that there comes about a capacity actually to be alone. Even so, theoretically, there is always someone present, someone who is ultimately and unconsciously equated with the mother..." (Winneccott, 1958; p. 416).
We cannot complete this short analysis of the dynamics of attachment without dealing with the anger also inherent in the relations with the attachment figure. We are all familiar with the child who is furious with the mother one moment for the denial of some privilege and seeking comfort and reassurance the next because of some accidental injury. As adults we observe the curious behaviour of the separated father and husband who assaults or kills the family because he loves them so much he cannot be without them. We accept that anger and hostility can be directed towards a loved person and we know from our observations that these feelings can be repressed, (because they are unacceptable and likely to damage the relationship), displaced on to a more acceptable target or attributed to others instead of the self, i.e. projected. All of these tangled complexities, while they have built up within us over time are often not part of our everyday thinking about ourselves. We would need to stop to reflect to bring them to awareness and perhaps not even then would we be fully in possession of all they mean. The implication of this is clear for anyone who wishes to reach the level of self awareness needed to operate in the system of learning and meaning making we have been describing in this study.

Change agents describe themselves as working alone to a very large degree, with a few trusted confidantes in the background. While this is described as at times uncomfortable it is also acknowledged as a necessary part of the work in order to maintain the trust of diverse groups and stakeholders and to keep open the integration of their views and needs in making meaning in a new way.

To sustain this position in the face of discomfort, and at times personal threat, demands the level and type of maturity Winnecott is describing, which in turn demands an early relationship with the primary carer which has been secure and provided a good base for development. Either that, or an extensive revision of this attachment building process at some later stage in life, through psychotherapy or through a new intimate relationship which is consistent and loving enough to enable the remodelling of the earlier experiences. While this theory certainly allows for the latter solution, practically speaking it will be difficult to achieve. One cannot prescribe an intimate relationship of the type that is needed: it will be found or not according, it would appear, to luck.
However, the more dysfunctional the current pattern of attachment behaviour the less likely that the person will form and maintain a new intimate relationship for long enough to remake the old.

Secondly, relatively few people have the insight, time, and resources to engage in psychotherapy, and, once again, finding the right therapist can be a matter of luck.

Moving into a change agent role in the full sense of the definition will prove dangerous for the person who has not achieved this level of security and self confidence. There will be major threats to self from many sources including the hostility of clients and the risk is very great that one of the modes of expressing the anger felt at the feelings of isolation and rejection that will be aroused, will surface in the work of change...with very negative consequences for both parties.

In summary, it applies equally to the change agent as to the therapist that awareness of the self and its common behaviour and thought patterns must be managed and not permitted to interfere with the work in hand. There must be satisfaction, confidence and freedom of energy in the relationship with the outside world.

Bateson (1972) who uses the term “Learning III to describe meta-learning, puts his view of the positioning of self in this mode of experience in this way:

“To the degree a person achieves Learning III, and learns to perceive and act in terms of the contexts of contexts, their self will take on a sort of irrelevance. The concept of self will no longer function as a nodal argument in the punctuation of experience.”

Reason (1991:p.11) goes on from this idea to say that this requires practitioners “who are in significant ways non-attached to their paradigms of practice and to their Self.”

I believe what this study has demonstrated is the critical role of a secure attachment base from which to move into this level of experiencing and acting in the world. We have heard through the voices of the college colleagues this has been a painful, and at times bitter struggle for some when the model derived in the secure early relationship is challenged by subsequent experience. We have also heard the purposiveness of the struggle to re-integrate the self and the heavy emphasis placed on it.
Certainly further research is required to examine the nature of the attachment bond which this study has exposed.

There are indicators that this group of people moved away from their mothers early. A number began school at four, and in one case three years of age, which would be considered problematical in terms of separation before the required level of maturation has been reached. Balancing that observation is the evidence that these were also confident people who moved easily to leadership roles early in life.

In her early twenties, for example, Mercedes was travelling the world speaking to groups about international affairs.

My interpretation of the data suggest that individuals who do not already have a secure base as defined in Bowlby’s terms will need to embark on a conscious process to develop through this impediment to practice, as a change agent, or else make the decision to engage in some other form of work.

While a secure base is a critical foundation for the successful change agent, a more sensitive analysis of its development is required to capture the likely complexity of the pathways.

In growing up other allegiances and attachments are formed, always with the internalised model derived from the secure first attachment, as a base. In this study examples of this are seen in allegiances to political systems e.g. Labour Party, to concepts such as social justice as expressed in the espoused ideals of the union movement, in adherence to ethical principles originally formed on a religious or spiritual base.

The voices of those interviewed have told of the bitter disappointment and desolation which came upon them when these beliefs were betrayed. This in turn, fuelled anger that drove them on to oppose abuse of the trust people are led to place in these apparently “good” institutions.

My conclusion is that without having achieved the situation of mature detachment from “self”, as defined, for example, by Reason, continued authentic, productive action in interrelationships with other individuals and organisations would not be possible. Confusion, isolation and depression are real threats to the health of those who become involved in such conflict without the necessary level of self development.
Positioning and Power

I have advanced the idea that the change agent works “between” in a kind of no-man’s-land amidst the conflicting parties. I have pointed to this in Dunphy’s definition of the role as working to integrate the different functional elements of an organisation to bring about a coherent strategy for whole organisation change.

The same positioning is inherent in Perls’ and Rogers’ definitions of the role of the therapist as a mediator between the disparate elements of the client’s psychic life, a detached or unbiased listener who holds up the mirror that allows the client a safe view of the self as a whole person.

The stories illustrate the change agents’ passionate commitment to ensuring that individuals and groups have the freedom, the space, to find their own solutions and way of being. Thus emerges the picture of the change agent’s role being one of holding existing power influences and structures at bay while the participants in change take a safe opportunity to explore the world they are being asked to move into. The role the good mother plays with her infant.

One way of discussing the nature of this activity begins with an analysis of the kinds of social power. French and Raven (1959) define a model which contains five types of power: reward power…the ability to provide material and non-material benefits e.g. money, love, approval, inclusion in a group;

legitimate power…the ability to validate behaviour based on the acceptance of cultural values and social structure;

referent power…derived from access to, or association with, a high prestige group;

expert power…the ability to influence through advice or help based on specialist knowledge and skills;

coercive power…based on physical force and emotional stand over tactics.
In the work of the change agent all of these types of power are to be encountered. In analysing the stories of the invisible college it is clear that their commitment is to exposing any of these attempts at imposing a social power construct in the belief that it will automatically prevent real achievement of a new way of being.

The case studies demonstrate the false promise of referent power, the dark underbelly of legitimate power and its relationship to coercion. The dangers of the expert model and the manipulation of rewards in achieving sustainable change are evidenced in the interviews by observations on the ‘Professions’ and organised political and social institutions.

To extend this analysis, then, one may look at Luke’s (1974) three dimensions of the exercise of power:

1. power arises in decision making and in non-decision making, and in the overall bias of a social or political system to consider some issues and completely exclude others;
2. power is not only operating when conflict is observable, it is operating frequently to prevent conflict arising;
3. power is used to shape the way people see their world so that they accept things as they are because they are aware of no alternative, or accept that way as ‘natural’ and unchangeable. This last type of power is that of the ruling paradigm, which as we have previously noted, is most often not consciously held and not openly discussed.

The role of the change agent is to bring these various manifestations of power to the awareness of the people in the system so that they can question the dynamics and rework them into new arrangements consciously...by making decisions knowing all the issues, surfacing and resolving undiscussable conflicts and examining the new and old paradigms.

Change agents, paradoxically as the force “between”, exercise power, choosing various ways to interrupt the existing power relationships. In realising this power accountability and ethics become critical. This dilemma about using power is resolved by the commitment to achieving the most developed level of knowing and being, what Bateson (1972) called learning III and Bawden (1995) called epistemic-learning...how we learn about the nature of our paradigms.
Bateson points out that Learning III is a tall order because it requires going beyond the safety of a paradigm and accordingly, to some extent, beyond a previously taken-for-granted sense of self.

If I stop at the level of learning II, “I” am the aggregate of those characteristics I call my “character”. “I” am my habits of acting in context and shaping and perceiving the contexts in which I act. Selfhood is a product or aggregate of Learning II. To the degree a (person) achieves Learning III, and learns to perceive and act in terms of the contexts of contexts, (their) “self” will take on a sort of irrelevance. (Bateson 1972; p. 60).

In working with groups this will involve the development of meta-frameworks which encompass the different individual frameworks in a safe way and so enable the members of the different groups to move “between” easily and enthusiastically.

I am postulating, therefore that the power of the change agent lies in creating these safe spaces in cognitive and emotional terms, which enable people to realise their own learning potential.

**Implications for Learning and Education**

Finally I have come to the point of addressing the main question of the thesis “How do you develop change agents?”

Our society’s traditional answer would begin with defining the kind of education required. Our colleagues’ stories make it clear that formal education played little real part in the critical facets of their development which were more about the issues we have discussed in the first two parts of this chapter.

However, as the literature review indicates, a very broad understanding of how our current society has developed and, taking up Dunphy’s view of the way a change agent must work across a variety of managerial functions, good knowledge of many aspects of management theory and practice are very necessary pre-requisites.

All the coresearchers emphasised that they keep up to date with current social issues as well as current management theory and research.
All coresearchers emphasised the need to constantly reflect on these new ideas and to integrate them into their own way of being as a practitioner. In this manner they are continuing the epistemic-learning process which is a vital characteristic of their personal powerfullness in the world.

Therefore any program of learning to be a change agent must be constructed upon this third level of knowing, being and learning. It will exist, not just on the experiential level which can be set up through an apprenticeship model, but also on the meta-cognitive level which creates a new relationship with the self.

Such a model is reminiscent of the training model for psychoanalysts which require the neophyte to undergo a personal analysis as part of training.

While this model has been seen as excessive and, by traditional psychiatry, somewhat demeaning, because it suggests we may all have something to sort out about our inner selves, it does offer a potential safety net before embarking on the exposed and risky pathway a change agent inevitably treads.

I do not mean, of course, a psychoanalysis in the literal sense, but rather that the developmental program must include continual requirement to act and think and discourse in this third level mode; and that personal issues that arise in dealing with power and security must be addressed during these experiences and not simply cut off from consciousness or shelved for a time that probably will never arrive.

This looks more like training for the priesthood than for a general manager. While all leaders acknowledge the personal journey and its stresses which has led them to fulfilling their role, they also acknowledge the rewards of power, status and prestige that can be realised.

This study has shown that change agents share many of the qualities of acknowledged leaders, yet they avoid that paradigm of power and hence its rewards. The work they do is predicated on their remaining in the shadows and ensuring that those for whom they work take all the recognition for what is achieved. Whatever developmental program is envisaged must, therefore encompass the
internalisation of this belief system or else be responsible for producing a race of super-power trippers with high developed manipulative skills.

In educational terms I am now discussing a curriculum and the learning methodology for its delivery. But a curriculum in itself can become a problematical issue. Fred Inglis (1985) in his political analysis of the nature of curriculum, recounts the role of institutionalised education for the great mass of the people in both protecting them from the “hideous depredations of the new economy” and oppressing them into a “new order, like its monstrous siblings, the institutions of capital and production themselves, capable of holding down the new disorder” (37). The curriculum contained the narratives of the previous social order linked to the requirements of a new need for people to adapt to the discontinuous change that came, for example with the industrial revolution. I would suggest that curriculum has an inherent tendency to involve not only a historical perspective but also a purposiveness focussed towards whatever is defined as societal improvement by its writers. Inglis gives as his example the home economics curriculum in English schools.

The school curriculum was devised by the servants of the state out of the inevitable ingredients of their class information to teach girls how to manage the tiny economics of a poor urban household and, no less pressingly, to obtain the skills necessary to domestic servants...There was much, of course, to be done. The nastiness as well as the thrills of industrial and proletarian life since 1840 had released horrors unthought of on the grimmest farm—cholera, diptheria, typhus and meningitis joined the macabre and epidemic dance of unavoidable and deathly illness and deformation led by smallpox, rickets and tuberculosis. Custom and culture could do little about these demons; the new science, especially of hygiene and dietetics, could do and did much, and the liberal reformers rightly added that to the subject. (Inglis 1985; p. 38)

By now this paradigm of curriculum and its social role has become deeply embedded in our ways of constructing the menu for what will be learned by any young apprentice. It is right to acknowledge that much good has been achieved in controlling the possible pestilences which could pray upon us by this method. However, for the development of the change
agent it would be paradoxical to employ a formatted “menu” of learning unless the oppressive and controlling aspects of its function could be removed.

In recent times this concept has emerged as self-directed learning or student-centred learning, borrowing from Rogers’(1951) terminology. This approach allows the learner to self select the material to be studied, sometimes from a wide array of choices; the teacher’s role being to assist in the critique of the issues and develop experiential integration of the material into existing knowledge and its application. Inglis describes this process thus:

There was always, from the inception of the scientific method, another theory of knowledge and knowing, one which, in specific opposition to the natural scientists, stressed the personal, intuitive, non-measurable and non-provable actualities of knowledge. This other form of knowledge is the product of our human intersubjectivity, with its forms of discourse and discursiveness, its unreasoned wrangles and chanciness, its gradual and experiential testing of circumstances until the results can be thought of as knowable; above all, such seeking to know goes on its humanly critical, self-reflexive, purposeful and intentional way about the world not in the name of knowledge for its own sake, but on urgent, voluntary errands, during which the knowledge is required to answer moral questions. (Inglis 1985; pp. 45-46).

This statement captures the nature of the change agents’ way of going about knowing, which is generally not catered for in a routine educational institution. The need for this kind of ongoing learning is what has given rise to the invisible college.

**How can the learning take place?**

Firstly, only some individuals will be likely to be suitable for this work, as we have seen in the first part of this chapter. It would be preferable that they self select on the basis of what we can tell them about the demands of the practice.
Rogers (1951) gives the following list of qualities, based on the American Psychological Society’s criteria for the selection of clinical psychologists, in describing who should be selected for training in client-centred therapy:

Superior intellectual ability and judgement
Originality, resourcefulness and versatility
“Fresh and insatiable” curiosity; a self-learner
Interest in persons as individuals rather than material for manipulation...a regard for the integrity of other persons

Insight into personality characteristics; a sense of humor
Sensitivity to the complexities of motivation
Tolerance; “unarrogance”
Ability to develop a therapeutic attitude; ability to establish warm and effective relationships with others

Industry, methodical work habits, ability to tolerate pressure
Acceptance of responsibility
Tact and cooperativeness
Integrity, self-control and stability
Discriminating sense of ethical values
Breadth of cultural background- “educated man”
Deep interest in psychology, especially its clinical aspects. (p. 434).

These qualities are clearly evident in the narratives of the coresearchers and hence I would expect that prospective practitioners would, and do, use these people as role models through the current informal processes in the invisible college. And this is a powerful form of learning in itself.

However, if a more conscious approach is needed to reinforce the informal process at a time when a generational change is imminent, then what might be the method of that approach?
To remain with Roger’s model he outlines these steps in the preparation of the therapist:

The student should have a broad knowledge of the human in various cultural settings, supplemented by the experience of living and dealing in a variety of cultures. Sensitivity and the capacity for empathy must be developed either through literature of psychodrama, the theatre, or a phenomenological approach to learning.

Security within the self is a necessity. Rogers suggests that courses in philosophy, education or religion in which the student is made to face up to “deep questions of existence may assist this development of a deeply held philosophy of life.

The experience of personal therapy is seen as valuable, to be used when the individual feels the need.

An empathic and experiential understanding of the dynamics of personality is required. In this clinical experience is invaluable.

A knowledge of research design and methodologies will assist in the organisation of new knowledge and contribution to improved practice.

Rogers goes on to mention two omissions from his list: a knowledge of the biological nature of humans and of personality theories, (as opposed to dynamics). He states that in practice he has found no difference in effectiveness between therapists with or without a biological background.

About theory he makes this interesting statement

To train a student prematurely, in a theory of personality, or even in a variety of such theories, results all too often in a dogmatic and close-minded approach to experience... The chapter on personality theory in this book is included with many reservations... By the uninitiated student... it may all too readily be interpreted as the truth, or as dogma—a rigid vessel into which experience must be wrapped, even if it does not fit. (Rogers, 1951, p. 440).
Thus experiential learning and personal development should precede theoretical studies. The pathway to being a change agent, which is, inevitably, in this model, a lifetime commitment to a way of being, is thus not a short one. To achieve the breadth of experience and understanding inherent in the model Rogers puts forward will require a number of years of integrated experiential knowledge building in a supportive environment.

Much of the criticism of change practitioners as unable or unwilling to change their strategies and models, (Dunkin, 1999) has been made on the basis of studies of people who are not this type of practitioner, i.e., they are primarily managers from a particular discipline base or leaders, who as part of their working lives are charged with introducing change.

The people in this study have dedicated their lives to the improvement of the lot of their fellows in communities or organisations. In this way they are like organisational therapists. We have seen where their passionate commitment to improvement arose, in the primary identification with a mother equally committed to positive change, and from early confrontations with the abusive nature of the power of organisations, disciplines or individuals.

We have seen that they will refuse assignments in which their primary beliefs and ethical commitments are likely to be subverted. I suspect refusal sometimes offends; not all organisational leaders have the perception and courage, to embark on this kind of "deep" approach to learning and change.

It will be for the individual reader of this study to decide what meaning, personal or professional to take away. It has been, after all only a moment in awareness.

For my coresearchers, this may be the start of a journey towards capturing the processes which have made them who they are, so that newcomers may begin to be aware of the implications of a life as a change practitioner and of the pathway that leads to that territory. The way will always be messy and, at times confusing because that is the nature of this kind of learning, but it will always be about relationships between people, discourses,
paradigms. It will always require the knowing and empathy of others, and it will always be directed towards the achievement of a whole, integrated and independent self.

As I study, as deeply as I am able, the recorded clinical cases which have been so revealing of personal dynamics, I find what seems to me to be a very significant thing. I find that the urge for a greater degree of independence, the desire for a self-determined integration, the tendency to strive, even through much pain, toward a socialised maturity, is as strong as — no, is stronger than — the desire for comfortable dependence, the need to rely upon external authority for assurance. . . . I have yet to find the individual who, when he examines his situation deeply, and feels that he perceives it clearly, deliberately chooses dependence, deliberately chooses to have the integrated direction of himself undertaken by another. When all the elements are clearly perceived, the balance seems invariably in the direction of the painful but ultimately rewarding path of self-actualisation or growth. (Rogers 1948; p. 218).
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THE PERSONAL GROWTH AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT
OF ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE AGENTS:
A NARRATIVE STUDY OF THE CAREERS OF EXPERIENCED
PRACTITIONERS IN AN AUSTRALIAN SETTING

by
Kay Lord

A Thesis presented to the
University of Western Sydney Hawkesbury
in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
of Master of Science (Hons)

November, 2000
DEDICATION

TO MY MOTHER, MERLE, - NOT FORGOTTEN.
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 whole or in part, for a degree at this or any other institution.

(Signature)
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ABSTRACT

This study was initiated by the need to develop change agent skills in a group of consultants from a large government organisation facing major challenge from a competitive market.

In order to develop a program a group of mature and experienced change agents, with around twenty years experience in a variety of different organisations in each case, was asked, through the medium of an unstructured interview, to tell the story of their own growth and development.

A model of twelve factors was developed, based on recent studies of leadership, the researcher’s own career experience and an analysis of a well known practitioner’s biography. This model was used to analyse the content of the interview material.

The historical, philosophical, sociological and psychological influences on our current models of thought and belief about life inside organisations was reviewed to provide a frame of reference for the interview material.

The study found that there were a small number of factors which distinguished the development of this group from that of leaders who had been the subject of earlier studies. These were firstly, the primary influence of the mother as role model, for both men and women. Secondly, the influence of early confrontations with established systems of power being employed in abusive ways, which developed a commitment to preserve the freedom of individuals to participate in decisions which affect their lives. Finally, a belief in the critical part ethics, integrity and the continual practice of learning for self-awareness, plays in maintaining a sustainable career as a change agent.

The conclusions for a program of development for change agents are, firstly, that prospective participants should self assess their personal experiences from childhood, their attitudes to learning and the maintenance of an integrated self as an essential
mediating between stakeholder groups. This entails developing an understanding of working with established systems of power and being prepared to interrupt them in the interests of finding common ground for joint decision making.

Secondly, the influence of practical experience far outweighs that of schooling or academic studies, important as they may be. Experiential learning and practical work should precede academic studies.

Thirdly, change agents employ what Bateson describes as type III learning, more than any particular theoretical approach, when designing organisational interventions.

The study concludes that further research into the nature of the attachment bonds formed by change agents in childhood is needed to better understand the psychological dynamics which support excellent and sustainable practice.